

THE STATE OF MENNONITE BROTHERS HISTORICAL RESEARCH

During the past decade we have witnessed a remarkable increase in published materials related to Mennonite History. This interest in publishing has been particularly prevalent among those Mennonite groups which trace their lineage to Russian and Prussian Mennonites.

Several factors have been responsible for this "historical" interest. Possibly of greatest significance was the centennial observance, in 1974, of the coming of Russian Mennonites to North America. This observance was commemorated not only with special events but with published histories, memoirs, diaries and dramas. As this literature retold the story of settlement on the prairies it increased the need for further research into Russian and Prussian origins.

A second factor, specifically related to Mennonite Brethren, was the publication by the Board of Christian Literature of a variety of historical resource materials-- most notably "A History of the Mennonite Brethren Church," by Dr. John A. Toews (1975), and followed, in 1978, by the translation of a much broader work, embracing the history of all Mennonite groups in Russia, P.M. Friesen's "The Mennonite Brotherhood in Russia (1789 - 1910)."

A third factor was the formulation in 1969 of the Historical Commission to function as an arm of the Board of Christian Literature. Their function was to coordinate the collection, preservation and cataloging of Mennonite Brethren historical material--revitalizing an historical consciousness. As a result the 70's saw the development of three archival centers located in Winnipeg, Hillsboro and Fresno. The work of these centers functioning as places at which to do research, as well as to initiate new projects, is evident.

Fourthly, the factor of general societal interest in historical roots undoubtedly made its impact. As a result an interest in genealogy coupled with the growing awareness that one need not be embarrassed over one's religious-ethnic-cultural background resulted in dozens of published genealogies, family histories, diaries and memoirs. This interest spilled over into the church as local congregations took the initiative to publish the history of their respective congregations.

It is not the purpose of this brief paper to list all the accomplishments of the past but rather to identify the areas where research is presently in process. It begins by listing three "new" archival centers where Mennonite and Mennonite Brethren materials are being collected. Also listed are topics presently designated for research at the three Mennonite Brethren Archival Centers in North America. No attempt has been made to list all the congregations presently engaged in writing their histories, or the family genealogies that are presently being researched. Neither has any attempt been made to reflect the research being done on University campuses in Canada and the U.S.

However, by the very nature of the purpose for which we have come together today, I would invite participants to alert us, at this time, to areas of historical research which in some way reflects upon the Mennonite Brethren Church, but is not represented here.

ARCHIVAL CENTERS

South America

An archival center for Paraguayan Mennonites is presently being established in Filadelfia. Address of the Center is: Filadelfia, Fernheim, c.d.c. 984, Asuncion, Paraguay.

CENTER FOR M. B. STUDIES IN CANADA
77 HENDERSON HIGHWAY
WINNIPEG, MANITOBA R2L 1L1

Hepburn Saskatchewan

An archival center was established in 1978 for the Saskatchewan Mennonite Brethren Conference at Bethany Bible Institute. It presently functions mainly as a storage facility for archival records.

Clearbrook, British Columbia

An archival center has been established in Clearbrook. Hugo Friesen, a teacher at the Mennonite Educational Institute, is the archivist. Their first priority has been the arrangement of MEI administrative files.

Fresno, California

Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies

1. Dietrich Friesen is presently working on a book entitled, "The Development of Music in the Mennonite Brethren Church."
2. Henry Schmidt is writing a doctoral dissertation (USC) on the subject, "Continuity and Change in an Ethical Tradition: Case Study of Mennonite Brethren Church-State Relations 1917-1979."
3. Dr. J.B. Toews is presently at work on a book related to the theology of the Mennonite Brethren.
4. Dr. J.B. Toews is assisting several brethren in Germany who are writing a history of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Russia since, approximately, 1929.
5. The Center is developing an index to the Zionsbote.
6. The Center will sponsor an "H.W. Lohrenz Symposium," scheduled for May 1982. The following papers are projected:
 - 6.1 Formative cultural influences of the Central Kansas communities from 1900-1945.
 - 6.2 Leadership personalities surrounding the life and ministry of H.W. Lohrenz.
 - 6.3 Vision and concept of Christian higher education articulated in the development of Tabor College.
 - 6.4 Theology and methods of missions of the M.B Church expressed through the leadership of H.W. Lohrenz.
 - 6.5 Theological formations in doctrine and practice reflected from the era of H.W. Lohrenz' leadership.
 - 6.6 A model of churchmanship and conference leader reflected from the public ministry of H.W. Lohrenz.
 - 6.7 H.W. Lohrenz in the context of the inter-Mennonite Community.
 - 6.8 Personal reflections on the life of H.W. Lohrenz from his daughter, Mrs. Mariana Lohrenz.

Hillsboro, Kansas

Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies

1. Orlando Harms is working on "A History of Mennonite Brethren Publications."

2. Vernon Wiebe is putting together "A Pictorial Review of the Mennonite Brethren Conference (U.S. and Canada) in 1980."
3. Marvin Kroeker is writing a history of "Mennonite Brethren Missions in Oklahoma."
4. C.F. Plett is writing "The History of the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Conference."
5. Clarence Hiebert is compiling "Holdeman Documents of the 19th. Century."
6. Katie Funk Wiebe is writing a book on "Mennonite Humor."
7. Orlando Harms is writing a biography "The Life of John F. Harms."
8. Mariana Rempel is writing the "Biography of H.W. Lohrenz."
9. Jack Braun is writing "The Anna Barkman Story."
10. Wesley Prieb is writing a "Biography of P.C. Hiebert."
11. A.E. Janzen is writing his "Memoirs of a Missions Executive."
12. Richard Kyle is developing "Church Types in the Mennonite Brethren Heritage."
13. The Center is developing an index to the Christian Leader.

Winnipeg, Manitoba

Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies

1. The Center is developing an index for the Mennonitische Rundschau to include five volumes:
 - I. 1878 - 1899
 - II. 1900 - 1919
 - III. 1920 - 1939
 - IV. 1940 - 1959
 - V. 1960 - 1979Presently the years 1920 - August 1926 have been completed.
2. In cooperation with the Mennonite Historical Library (Goshen, Indiana) all available issues of the Mennonitische Rundschau will be microfilmed, 1878 - present. When completed (summer 1981) copies will be available from University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road, Dept. P.R., Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106.
3. Together with the MBBC Music Department the Center is developing a special music collection to be entitled "The Ben and Esther Horch Collection." Further plans are to concentrate on studying the history of Mennonite and Mennonite Brethren Music in Canada.
4. Helmut Huebert is researching the history of "Hirschau," Molotschna Colony, Russia.
5. Abe Dueck, Herb Giesbrecht and Allen Guenther have been compiling a book of writings and addresses of Dr. John A. Toews entitled, "People of the Way." Publication date is this winter.

6. William Neufeld is researching and writing the history of the Manitoba Mennonite Brethren Conference.
7. Anne Wiebe is researching and writing the history of the Ontario Mennonite Brethren Conference.
8. Ken Reddig is researching the history of the Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute, Winnipeg.
9. Erich Ratzlaff is doing further research on the Mennonite Brethren Church in Poland.
10. A biography and collection of sermons of the late David B. Wiens is being planned. It will be written in German, and later translated into Russian and English. M.B. Communications is thinking of using it as a gift to donors.

No. 1
Box-8
Folder-G

SEEKING A FAITH TO LIVE BY:
MODIFYING INFLUENCES UPON THE FAITH
CONFESSED BY MENNONITE BRETHERN.

BY

Herbert Giesbrecht

A Study Paper Presented at a
Symposium Sponsored by the Center for
Mennonite Brethren Studies in Canada.

November 21-22, 1980

CENTER FOR M. B. STUDIES IN CANADA
77 HENDERSON HIGHWAY
WINNIPEG, MANITOBA R2L 1L1

It has been observed, repeatedly, that the Mennonite Brethren Church has been particularly susceptible—perhaps more so than any other Mennonite community deriving from the Anabaptists—to diverse religious and theological influences from without. Whether these observers have all taken their cue from Peter M. Friesen's remarks of frustration and rebuke, uttered so early in this century, cannot be established, of course. Certainly, Friesen's outcry is explicit and sharp enough to make any sensitive and reflective Mennonite Brethren member stop and take note:

Though I am not really an 'old' Mennonite, I have for years been tired, tired, tired of the foreign influences and would like to urge all reformers ('Old' Mennonite and Brethren), especially the leaders: Stand still for a moment and ask yourself this question from the perspective of church history: What is Mennonitism? Have we perhaps forgotten to relearn that which was good, as a balance to the endless new, new, new?! Are we not losing a large and essential part of our Mennonite psyche, in the good sense? What does God want of us as a group, a fellowship: that we, while calling ourselves Mennonite, become a conglomerate of Lutheranism, Baptist, and Plymouthism, etc. (we mean in the understanding and manner of expressing our Christianity)? What is the specific direction that God has assigned to us through our original doctrines, history and present situation? Certainly we should now more seriously begin to study our own background, examine the newly acquired for its values, throw away the bal- last and deliberately, discreetly, bring the good old and the good new...into a proper relationship.

While I acknowledge this observation to be an intelligent and provocative one—one that deserves thoroughgoing examination and analysis, it is not my intention in this paper to pursue the question of its precise validity or its further implications for our sense of identity and missions as a Mennonite Brethren people. I must leave this more difficult assignment to others who are better informed and more perceptive than I can ever hope to be.² The more limited purpose which has motivated and guided my research for this paper is that of setting forth a survey, partly descriptive and partly interpretive in nature, of some obvious, at times crucial influences which (whether coming to us via specific individuals, published works, institutions, or movements) have affected the MB Church's experience since its beginnings in Russia in 1860.

My survey will be a selective one at best but it attempts to take some account at least of the principal (and some secondary) tenets and issues which are embodied in the successive MB confessions of faith. I have endeavored, in this broad survey, to hold to the sequence of doctrines (articles of faith) which is followed in the 1976 edition of our MB Confession of Faith, in the hope that this format may bring more specificity and coherence to the discussion as a whole. In some respects this latest version looks like a much simplified, and perhaps altered, rendering of our earlier statements of faith but a close study and comparison of it with them reassures one that it does not differ from them in any significant sense or on any significant matter related to our faith.

I have attempted to briefly identify, in most instances, the proximate sources of such influences and also to suggest how they affected, sometimes modified, MB experience and practice or MB understanding of specific tenets of faith. Sometimes a specific influence was recognized, and rejected (almost immediately), as an unwholesome element which threatened the doctrinal orthodoxy or the spiritual vitality and balance of the Church as a whole. At other times, the influencing idea or movement,

as the case might be, was absorbed into the religious and intellectual experience of the MB community in so natural, congruous, and ultimately beneficial a manner that it was scarcely perceived as a foreign influence. Then again, some external influences were received with much eagerness at first, only to be differently assessed later—perhaps to be regarded, even, as rather pernicious influences!

To speak of influences upon a church or brotherhood in such terms (as wholesome and unwholesome, or theologically benign and theologically malign) is to evoke the old question, and perhaps unavoidably so, about historical and intellectual objectivity in a discussion which presumes to reflect what has in fact happened among and to us. It is a question which I would much prefer to quietly overlook but that may be as precarious a course to take, amidst this group of watchful "brethren", as that of attempting to defend the approach which in fact does underlie and color my presentation.

In my opinion, it is not possible to deal helpfully with a topic such as this one, pertaining (as it does) to intellectual and religious influences, without positing a particular confessional or doctrinal stance as the frame of reference against which individual "influences" are identified and examined. The frame of reference used may itself be somewhat restrictive or otherwise inadequate but a steady and clear-cut adherence to it should help to render discussion of specific trends or tenets, as the case requires, more accessible at least, for intelligent reaction and debate. It is recognized of course that official confessions of faith do not, and cannot, reflect the full story about the beliefs and motivating conceptions which actually govern the daily living of members of a particular community of faith.⁵ Some discrepancy between confessional ideals and the realities of daily living and believing, we assume, has characterized the experience of MB even in their most saintly moods and moments. Were this not so, we may add, papers on "influences upon the MB Church" would prove to be very dull affairs indeed!

How successful I have been, in this survey, in contending with my own biases in outlook and understanding, is of course another matter. The very thought of personal bias and limitation compels me to feel very humble. Perhaps I can do no better, at this point, than to quote a few words from Sydney E. Ahlstrom whose candid confession of personal limitations, in his A Religious History of the American People, must apply to myself much more assuredly than it ever applied to Ahlstrom:

I exist in the middle of things and inherit the limitations of my situation. Not only the inadequacies of my knowledge but also my hidden presuppositions and my unexamined major premises will in due course be exposed. I encourage my readers to call attention to these shortcomings with all possible speed and thoroughness.⁴

I proceed, after so expansive an introduction, to the promised survey and begin with a consideration of several influences which first surfaced during the very earliest decades of MB experience. These specific influences—and I discuss only two of them at this stage—bear directly on the matter of how our Brethren approached and interpreted the Bible, upon their essential biblicism, to use a term which was especially dear to the late John A. Toews, a leading scholar among the MB who however never lost touch with the common mind of his people.⁵ Whether the early Brethren actually designated themselves to be "biblicists", or were able to articulate for themselves a very precise hermeneutic⁶ to guide them in the study and interpretation of the Scriptures, is really not the issue here. That they did believe themselves to be in agreement with the position and practice of Menno Simons (and other leading Anabaptist forbears), on the matter of approaching and

Interpreting the Scriptures for themselves, seems clear enough.⁷ And their published Confessions of Faith, while they do not (in any case) begin with a formal or elaborated statement (article) on the Church's attitude towards, and manner of interpreting the Scriptures, nevertheless reflect an essential biblicism throughout. It was in introductory comments only, which sometimes prefaced their official Confessions, that the Brethren gave more explicit expression to their basic biblicism. A few excerpts from the preamble ("Zur Erlaeuterung") to the 1902 Confession of Faith may serve to illustrate their general stance:

Und die Bruedergemeinde will in nichts wider die biblische Wahrheit suendigen, weder etwas dazu, noch davon thun. — Wir flehen zu Gott um die gnadenvolle untrugliche Leitung des Heiligen Geistes, sowohl zu unerschuetterlich treuem Festhalten an den alten erkannten Wahrheiten, wie auch zum Wachsen in der uns noch mangelnden Erkenntnis. — ... Diese Schriftstellen stehen im Text, nicht unter dem Text. Damit soll gesagt sein: Die Worte des 'Glaubensbekenntnisses' sind so zu verstehen, wie die inspirierten Gottesworte die betreffenden Wahrheiten aussprechen, oder: unser 'Glaubensbekenntnis' stellt sich nicht neben, sondern unter die Schrift... Es ist vorausgesetzt, dass das Bekenntnis nur gelesen und verstanden werden koenne im Zusammenhange, mit der Heiligen Schrift, aus welcher es entsprungen ist, und in welche es hineinfuehren soll.⁸

In respect to their biblicistic stance, one might argue that the early Brethren were among the authentic "sons of Pietism," or at least that they exhibited the characteristic stance and practice of those European Pietists who had remained faithful to the example once set by Spener and Francke. If, as Dale W. Brown asserts, the essential thrust of original Pietism was "that Holy Scripture alone is the rule of faith and must be understood out of itself and not from the interpretations of the church, the fathers, councils, or teachers,"⁹ the early MB were following in its train. This is not to deny the fact that they could be rather too literalistic or wooden in their interpretation of given texts, and rather dogmatic or intolerant with regard to the interpretations of others on given texts, as MB historians (notably Peter M. Friesen and Abraham H. Unruh) have conceded. In the main, however, we may grant the truth of Unruh's summary description of the early Brethren:

Auf der ganzen Linie ihres Kampfes fuer ihre Ueberzeugungen und der Antworten auf die Angriffe auf die junge MB Gemeinde finden wir bei den Vaetern der MB Gemeinde unentwegt die Treue gegen die Heilige Schrift, die ihnen von Deckel zu Deckel Gottes unfehlbares Wort Gottes war.¹⁰

A very early instance, in MB experience, of what must be considered a serious departure from such a biblicistic orientation is of course the so-called "Froehliche Richtung," which afflicted the young Church during the years between ca. 1862 and 1864. This lapse from an otherwise sound biblicism at the core of the Church involved an excessive, and indiscriminate, emphasis upon one truth of the Christian faith: the joyous experience and assurance of personal salvation, and consequently it also issued in a distorted representation of Christian faith and Christian truth viewed in their entirety. Several MB historians¹¹ have traced the antecedents of this movement in sufficient detail to show, more or less convincingly, that a causal connection between the somewhat one-sided preaching of Edward Wuest-dwelling, as it did, so largely upon the sheer grace and mercy of God as it is experienced in

the awakening and conversion of sinners—and this "exuberant" phase in MB Church experience did exist. John A. Toews has summarized this serious deficiency, in the preaching ministry of Wuest, very succinctly and yet with charity of spirit:

The emphasis on the inward experience of God's grace and its outward application¹² to all areas of life was not always kept in proper balance.

We need to remember, however, lest we castigate him too severely, that Pfarrer Wuest had only recently extricated himself, as it were, from a staid and spiritually enfeebled Lutheranism (back in Wuerttemberg) and that his ministry among the Evangelical Separatists in South Russia was still, to some degree at least, a natural outlet for and continuing expression of this liberating experience. On the other hand, it might also be argued that Wuest himself, and perhaps also those MB leaders who (for a time) were misled by the implications which they drew from Wuest's "truncated biblicism," should have given greater heed to the biblicism and admirable hermeneutic which are¹³ so clearly reflected in the sermons of a Pietistic preacher like Ludwig Hofacker¹⁴—sermons which were widely known and appreciated among Menonites at the time and which, indeed, had deeply gripped several brethren who were (soon) to become prominent members of the MB Church.

The inclination to isolate one or two tenets of faith and to allow a strong emphasis upon them to overshadow the importance or proper weight of other tenets is a very human one, and we shall have occasion to note other manifestations of it which emerged among the Brethren under the influence of specific movements or beliefs. Meanwhile, the temptation towards a rather different kind of departure from a sound and consistent biblicism confronted the MB Church in South Russia, particularly in the Molotschna (Steinbach-Gnadenfeld) and Kuban colonies, in its early association with the so-called Templar ("Friends of Jerusalem") movement.

The tangled tale of the gradual emergence of this movement, originating with the energetic and wide-ranging endeavors of Christoph Hoffmann (in Wuerttemberg, mainly) to bring about a religious awakening, and socio-ethical renewal among the German people, continuing its course in South Russia through a protracted controversy about the unorthodox teaching activities of a Johannes Lange (who had eagerly absorbed Hoffmann's religious and social ideas while studying in Kirschenhardthof bei Marbach, Wuerttemberg: 1858-61) in the newly-established "Vereinschule" at Gnadenfeld (Molotschna), and finally issuing in the establishment of a "Friends of Jerusalem" Church (1863) in Gnadenfeld, has been told by several writers and need not detain us here.¹⁵ What must concern us is the fact that what were basically rationalistic notions concerning the nature of man and of his potential capacity for religious growth and fulfilment (towards a literal Kingdom of Christ on earth) through educational and social betterment, held considerable attraction for parts, at least, of the MB community during those earlier years.

Both P.M. Friesen and A.H. Unruh acknowledge freely that members of the MB Church (in several places) drifted into the Templar movement all too readily. Friesen admits, somewhat ruefully, that the younger "intellectuals" in the Kuban MB churches became increasingly sympathetic towards the Templars, who, he adds, "had forsaken the Christian confession of faith as we comprehend it."¹⁶ He states the matter even more strongly a little further on in his book:

The influence of the Friends of Jerusalem upon the more intelligent youth of the MB Church was so strong that some feared (and others hoped) that they would totally defect to this fellowship.¹⁷

A.H. Unruh, in an attempt to understand this partial capitulation to rationalistic influence (particularly in the Kuban colony) comments upon the religious and cultural rigidity of many in the MB Church, a rigidity which, accompanied by a lack of spiritual discernment on the part of certain leaders, only served to further polarize the two religious communities. He remarks as follows:

Bruder Christian Schmidt, im Kern gesund und fuer seine Ziele begeistert, ohne Wanken und ohne Ermatten, war als Theologe und Apologete nicht immer gleich weise wie eifrig, nicht gleich mild, wie offenherzig.—Die Jugend verstumpfte; die Alten waren nicht wacker genug; die juengere Intelligenz (man konnte in diesen Doerfern wirklich von Intelligenz reden) neigte immer mehr zu den Intelligenz und Fortschritt als Religion betreibenden, vom christlichen Bekenntnisse, wie wir es als recht verstehen, abgetretenen 'Templern' oder 'Jerusalemsfreunden' zu. 18 Ihnen galt 'Bruedergemeinde' und 'Dunkelmaennertum' fuer eins.

Both Friesen and Unruh concede that the sharp rupture between the MB and Templar adherents was, in some respects, an unfortunate one, and ask, in retrospect, whether it could have been prevented. Yet they agree, and this is crucial, that the Templar movement was clearly dominated and nourished by rationalistic notions, basically, about the possibilities of spiritual change and progress—progress, that is, in the life of the individual and in the life and growth of the church. They are notions, or conceptions, which are incompatible with the confessional statements of the MB concerning the nature of man and the nature of the church, and, what is more, derive from an hermeneutical approach to the Scriptures that clearly runs counter to the approach inherent in the acknowledged biblicism of the Brethren.

At this point it may be helpful to call attention to several comments by Hartmut Lehmann which focus the rationalistic thrust, or drift at any rate, of Christoph Hoffmann's religious ideas and hopes rather effectively:

Denn Hoffmann war inzwischen zu der Ueberzeugung gekommen, dass die verdorbenen religioesen, wirtschaftlichen, sozialen und politischen Zustaende in Deutschland nur durch eine grundlegende Erneuerung der ganzen Welt behoben werden koennten, zu der Gott aber gerade die Deutschen, das Volk des neuen Bundes, berufen habe. Der neue Bund der Kinder Gottes mit ihrem Herrn konnte aber erst geschlossen werden, wie Hoffmann in dem Buch Stimmen der Weissagung ueber Babel und das Volk Gottes ausfuehrte, 'wenn die Sammlung eines Volkes Gottes im kleinsten und engsten Kreise, wenn der unaufloesliche Bund einer erneuerten christlichen Gemeinschaft vorausgegangen ist.' Hoffmann wollte dieses Werk nicht mitten in der abendlaendischen Zivilisation, sondern durch die Wiederherstellung des Tempels in Jerusalem beginnen. Von Palaestina aus beabsichtigte er 'den Nationen der Erde ein Muster des Nationallebens, richtiger Gesetzgebung und kraftvoller Handhabung der Gesetze, und ein Beispiel des daraus entspringenden Volkswohls zu geben und den allgemeinen Weltfrieden zu bewirken.'

Other kinds of deviation from a soundly conceived biblicism (with its inherent hermeneutic) which might be identified within the full scope of MB experience involve (a) the indiscriminate or ill-judged use of purely literalistic interpretation, especially with prophetic and eschatological texts, and (b) the casual, or

else misguided, accommodation to a surrounding culture and Zeitgeist, in the interpretation of a specific doctrine or ethical issue which is related to it. Since situations and influences involving these kinds of deviation pertain more directly to other articles of MB faith, discussion of them will be reserved for other portions of my paper.

It must be admitted that it has not been a simple matter for MB to retain a constant and firm hold on the kind of robust and balanced biblicism which it engendered so soon after its historical beginnings. External and internal threats to its retention, at one point or another, have recurred in every generation. And while our most discerning leaders have usually alerted their people to emerging threats and unwholesome trends, they have not always received the ready and perceptive hearing, from the rest of us, which they deserved. One of these unusually alert and concerned leaders among us was Abraham H. Unruh, and his sermons and periodical articles²⁰ can still surprise and instruct us with their richly varied reflections of Anabaptist biblicism at its best and with their penetrating insights into thoughts and trends which have threatened to weaken such biblicism among us.

Another such discerning leader among the MB, whose extant writings exemplify a profoundly rich and balanced biblicism, was Jakob Kroeker (1872-1948). His devotional, exegetical, and doctrinal books, while mostly written during his years abroad (in Wernigerode-am-Harz, Wuerttemberg), were yet widely publicized and available in South Russia.²¹ Nevertheless, his books have been largely overlooked or forgotten by his good MB "friends," both in Russia and America, as Unruh himself laments:

Bruder Jakob Kroeker stand in seinen Schriften mehr auf dem Allianzboden, sowohl in der Monatsschrift, Dein Reich Komme, als auch in seinen Schriften, unter denen sich das Werk, Das Lebendige Wort, auszeichnet. Leider haben seine Schriften in den Kreisen der Mennoniten Bruedergemeinde nicht weite Verbreitung gefunden; sie sind diesen Kreisen mehr fremd geblieben.²²

If, in this selective survey, we look next for specific ideas or movements which, in their intersection with MB experience, have held special significance for our understanding of the doctrine concerning the "nature of man and sin," we come upon little which greatly interests or disturbs us. Whatever impact Pietistic and Baptist influences may have exerted upon MB in respect to other aspects of their faith and practice, they seem not to have modified their understanding of this basic tenet in any serious way. The cumulative impact of Pietistic influence, whether through literature (books and periodicals), preaching, or congregational music, upon the MB Church, as Wilhelm Kahle and Waldemar Gutsche both clearly indicate,²³ was so soundly evangelical that little opportunity or inducement for deviation appears to have offered itself with respect to this article of faith.

The one conspicuous exception to this observation is of course Templar influence upon the MB, to which influence we have already referred. Templar teaching was destined, in the very nature of the case, to culminate in a humanistic conception of the nature of man and of sin although, admittedly, it did not arrive there in the case of all Templar adherents (especially during its earliest phase), as both Friesen and Unruh readily acknowledge. If the religious writings of Hoffmann, and of his most intimate compatriots (Christoph Paulus, Hardegg, and Ludwig Hoehn), are closely examined, particularly their utopian expectations concerning man's steady moral improvement within the context of an earthly "kingdom of God" and their reinterpretation (even reduction) of the teachings of Jesus in order to render them consonant with

such utopian expectations, the conclusion seems inevitable that basically humanistic, not evangelical, conceptions of man and sin lie at their root.

Even Eduard Wuest, who read the Sueddeutsche Warte of Hoffmann regularly and with some appreciation, perceived soon enough that something was amiss with the theology of man and his salvation which emerged from its pages. In a letter to a friend (Weingart), written in 1858, Wuest remarked:

Wahr ist es, wie die Warte das Christentum im Leben angewendet haben will, das hat eine Schneide und Art, aber in ihrer Ver-soehnungs-lehre, da hapert's.²⁴

Moreover, a perusal of the writings of later leaders in the Templar churches, in both Russia and Australia, reveals a similar humanism about the nature of man and sin. Christian Rohrer for instance, writing in Die Tempelgesellschaft, asserts concerning his Templar society:

Dadurch wuchs die Tempelgesellschaft ueber den Pietismus und seine quietistische Warten auf das Kommen des Messianischen Reiches immer mehr hinaus...Daher fordert die Tempelgesellschaft von ihren Mitgliedern kein andres Bekenntnis, als den Tatsaechlichen Glauben an das Reich Gottes, welcher die Verpflichtung zur Arbeit am Kommen desselben in sich schliesst und bedingt, wie ja die Reichgottesidea nach jeder unbefangenen Pruefung der Evangelien den Kern und Mittelpunkt der Lehre und des Wirken Jesu bildet.²⁵

And Nicholas Arndt, in the course of an account of the Templar movement as he experienced it, gives frequent expression to this kind of religious humanism. At one point, in paying tribute to a Templar friend who had just died, Arndt—without having alluded to any kind of evangelical experience whatever in the man's life, or to any hope in the resurrection for him—concludes with these words:

Lebe er fort in unserem Gedachtnis nach dem Grundzug seines Wesens, das vor Gott angenehm macht.²⁶

Individuals within the larger MB community have, as we all know, yielded to the attraction of various liberal views on the "nature of man and sin," often in the context, and under the influence of university studies or else of studies in liberal-oriented seminaries. In such cases they have, as a rule, quietly withdrawn from membership in MB churches or have kept their changed beliefs a very private matter! Of the infiltration of theological liberalism into the teaching programs of our MB "schools of higher education," with respect to the doctrine concerning the "nature of man and sin," no clear evidence has as yet emerged. Up to this point in time, whenever even the appearance of this kind of "liberalism" has emerged—as, for example, in the case of Tabor College, during the late 1940's and early 1950's²⁶—the General or Canadian or U.S. Conference, as the case may be, has been quick to react in some disciplinary sense.

My survey of modifying influences upon the theology of the MB Church turns, now, to a consideration of the doctrines concerning "man's salvation" and the "Christian life." The significant and generally positive impact of evangelical Pietism—particularly by way of Wuest's revivalistic preaching—upon MB experience and appreciation of personal salvation, has been so often acknowledged, by both MB and non-MB historians, that it needs no further argument here.²⁷ Abraham Kroeker, in his biography of Pfarrer Eduard Wuest, goes so far as to suggest that the potential benefits of Wuest's constant emphasis upon a "conversion experience" that issues in

a strong assurance of personal salvation, reached their water-shed, as it were, among the Mennonites (Mennonite Brethren, mostly) of South Russia.

The distinct contributions, to MB experience and understanding, of such widely disseminated literature—Pietistic literature, that is—as Ludwig Hofacker's sermons, Johann Arndt's Wahres Christentum, and the writings of Count von Zinzendorf, have also been duly recognized, especially by P.M. Friesen and Wilhelm Kahle.

That both the experience and understanding of personal salvation, and the life with Christ, were sometimes beclouded, during earlier phases of MB experience, by an unpleasant spirit of rigidity, narrowness of view, or dogmatism, need not surprise us. B.B. Janz, in a most interesting paper prepared for the first official MB Study Conference in America (first Conference in the sense of our current "study conferences," that is), admits with disarming candor that diverse and often unpleasant cross-currents of experience and outlook characterized the MB during the first several decades of their religious pilgrimage in Russia. One dainty morsel, selected from the rich larder of his paper, must here suffice:

Wenn die Judenchristen sich nicht von ihren erhaltenen natuerlichen und religioesen Einfluessen befreien konnten, sich diesselben nicht so leicht abschuettern konnten, so auch nicht die ersten Brueder unserer Gemeinschaft. Sie kamen von Liebenau und Gnadenfeld. In Gnadenfeld herrschte von jeher ein steifer Geist und ein aeusserlich ehrbares Wesen. Die herrschende Orthodoxy beeinflusste die Glieder, wenn man sich im sozialen Leben auch oft gehen liess. In der Kirche war man aber steif. Unser Aeltester David Duerksen sagte, er habe den Hexenschuss im Knie gehabt, so dass er seine Knie nicht biegen konnte. Das konnte man in der Kirche wohl tun, aber nicht in der Familie. Noch schwerer war es im privaten Leben den Mund fuer den Herrn aufzutun. Zu dem Einfluss von Gnadenfeld kam noch der Einfluss von Ohrloff, unter welchen Aeltester Hiebert, Abram und David Schellenberg aufgewachsen waren. Ohrloff war nicht so steif, und toleranter gegen evangelische Bewegungen. Als sich Maenner aus der grossen Gemeinde (Lichtenau, Pordenau u.s.w.) bekehrten, kam ein stark engherziger Zug unter die Brueder. So gab es eine Mischung von Gnadenfeld and Ohrloff und Lichtenau. Wie konnte dann die MB Gemeinde ein gleiches Gepraege erhalten? Es konnte nur durch die gemeinsame und gleichartige Stellung gegen alles offenbare ummoralische Wesen geschehen...

Durch Pfarrer Wuest kamen noch hinzu: der Glaube an die voellige Rechtfertigung durch das Blut Jesu, die Freude darueber, die gemeinsame Erbauung auf dieser Linie und das persoendlich Zeugnis...Was war jetzt der Charakter der MB Gemeinde? Waren sie steife Mennoniten? Waren sie gefuehlsselige Wuestianer? Waren sie dogmatisch steife Taufgesinnte? Oder wurden sie spaeter in Rueckenau Darbysten? Es ist schwer zu bestimmen.

Yet soon enough, as Janz goes on to explain, both their experience and understanding of personal salvation and the Christian life were properly clarified and deepened. Later in his discussion, Janz recounts how, during the years of World War I, when widespread revival brought MB and (old) Mennonites closer together in many ways, it was the very sharpness (firmness) of the MB conception of personal

salvation (rebirth) which rendered further cooperation between them, in Bible conferences, quite impossible as it seemed:

Da kam der Riss zwischen Mennoniten Gemeinde und MB Gemeinde in den Bibelbesprechungen, besonders betreff Wiedergeburt. Von der einen Seite wurde diesselbe als ein allmaechliches manchmal unbewusstes Wer den gelehrt, waehrend die MB Gemeinde Arbeiter es als einen durchaus bewussten Akt mit einem klaren Einst und Jetzt darstellten. Schon auf der Betrachtung in der Ohrloffer Kirche (Evangelium Johannes 3) wogte es hart durch einander. Spaeter in der Alexanderkroner Kirche noch mehr. Dort wurden die Spitzen beider Seiten sich einig, am Abend Zusammen zu vermeiden. Leider kam es dort zum vollen Riss zwischen Mennoniten Gemeinde und MB Gemeinde, und in Zukunft ging jede Seite allein.³²

In a paper prepared for the same Study Conference (1956), A.H. Unruh elaborated the MB understanding of "salvation and the Christian life" with considerable fulness. Indeed, we do not have available to us as yet, as far as I am aware, any explication of MB theology—if there be such a thing as a "MB theology"—which is as penetrating at the core as this one! In his explication, Unruh draws out the doctrinal implications (among other things) of many Scripture passages which have been cited in our MB Confessions of Faith. Concerning the doctrines of Salvation (new birth) and the Christian life, Unruh remarks:

Man machte keinen Unterschied zwischen Bekehrung und Wiedergeburt und trennte diese Erfahrung nicht von der Versiegelung des Heiligen Geistes. Man erkannte die Bekehrung als das Werk des Heiligen Geistes durch die Predigt des Wortes Gottes und nicht als das Werk des Predigers, der auf seelischem Boden zur Busse draengte. Man wollte Kinder Gottes in die Gemeinde aufnehmen und nicht Bastarde, die durch den Willen eines Mannes gezeugt waren.³³

And a little later in the same paper, he continued thus:

Beides (Rechtfertigung und Heiligung) war nach ihrer Erkenntnis das Werk des erhoehten Christus durch den Heiligen Geist auf Grund des Glaubens. Wie der Mensch sich selber nicht rechtfertigen kann, so kann der Mensch sich auch nicht aus eigener Energie heiligen, und so kann er auch nicht aus eigener Kraft einen heiligen Wandel vor Gott fuehren.³⁴

Unruh's exposition of these articles of faith—an exposition that takes account of their background in the actual experience of our Brethren—has found widespread acceptance among MB and may be regarded as an accurate reflection of their common understanding of salvation (conversion) and the Christian Life. Against this background of explanation and exposition, it becomes difficult for MB to accept the sharp criticism of one like Bernhard J. Harder (Alexandertal) who, with MB specifically in view, remarks:

Bei den Spaltungen im Mennonitentum wurde die Bekehrung als ein einmaliger Akt aufgefasst, ohne zu begreifen, dass es sich dabier um einen Anfang des Christenlebens handelt, dem die taegliche Reue und Busse folgen muesse. Der Christ lebet von der Gnade der Vergebung...

Eine extrem pietistische, stark auf Gefuehl und persoenlicher

Erfahrung basierende Froemigkeit machte aus der neuen Glaubenserkenntnis oder Erfahrung ein Dogma, und daraus entstand wiederum eine Ethik, die man auf zusammenhanglose Bibelstellen zurueckfuehrte. Diesseits und Jenseits, der heilige Gott und der religioese Mensch wurden nicht mehr auseinandergehalten,³⁵ und das fuehrte notwendig zu zerstoerenden Schlussfolgerungen.

Nevertheless, as Unruh also concedes, traditional MB conceptions of "salvation and the Christian life" have at times suffered modification, and impoverishment as well, under the influence of viewpoints or models which were not really integral to them. We must agree that MB have sometimes represented the experience of personal salvation (conversion) in unduly narrow or rigid terms and have even insisted on a crisis experience which manifests certain psychological features for all who would enter the kingdom of heaven!³⁶ Isaac W. Redekopp has suggested that the more melodramatic aspects, at least, of this kind of representation of personal salvation experience, among the early MB, owed much to the influence of the Kleine Gemeinde and of the revivalistic preaching of Pfarrer Wuest, upon them.³⁷ But one cannot overlook the fact that some of our earlier MB preachers—men like Benjamin Becker, Heinrich Huebert, and Jacob Jantz—themselves fostered this kind of understanding of "conversion experience" among the Brethren.

The truth of the matter seems to be that more rigid or stereotyped conceptions of the form which "personal salvation" experiences, or also "renewal of commitment" experiences must take have surfaced repeatedly among MB—often, as here in America during more recent decades, in dramatic response to the strongly emotional appeals associated with preaching and testimonials in certain fundamentalistic and/or charismatic circles and traditions. The so-called "Saskatoon revival movement" of the early 1970's, which affected a goodly number of MB congregations in the Prairie provinces and beyond, is only one (recent) example of such ready, and sometimes indiscriminating, response to revivalism in the fundamentalistic and Pentecostal—charismatic traditions.³⁸ The precise quality and extent of influence upon our MB churches, of this and similar revival/renewal movements, need to be ascertained and evaluated.

A similar concern, on the other hand, about the very reality (authenticity) of many "third generation" conversions among the youth of our churches, is also becoming evident among MB in our time. The newly-published book on Conversion, edited by Henry J. Schmidt (faculty member at the MB Biblical Seminary in Fresno, CA), was prepared at the request of MB leaders, as we know, in the hope that it might speak helpfully to a felt need within our larger MB community.³⁹ And a recent issue (October, 1980) of Direction is devoted, almost entirely, to the same subject and makes repeated reference to the above book. One of the articles in this significant issue, "Conversion in Anabaptist and Mennonite History," concludes with a most telling comment:

Is it possible that the center of Anabaptist theology, the adult conversion experience, is again being threatened by incongruities in practice? The solution of this extremely difficult problem is critical⁴⁰ for the recapturing of vital Christianity in the MB Church.

And the challenge of Ediger's statement will undoubtedly remain with us for yet some time to come!

But I must not fail to make reference also—and perhaps this is the appropriate place to do so—to the influence upon MB conceptions of personal salvation and the

Christian life, of revivalistic hymn traditions which find their roots (mainly) in the Moody-Sankey revival movement. What W. Kahle has asserted about the significant impact of Pietistic and revivalistic hymn traditions upon congregational singing in evangelical churches in Russia generally, during the nineteenth century, and consequently upon the very shape (the "Froemmigkeitsstypus") which the Christian life assumes among their members, applies in large measure also to the MB churches.⁴¹

Rudolf Donat, who pays some attention, in Das Wachsende Werk, to the impact of American and English revivalistic hymn traditions upon both Baptist (mainly) and Mennonite churches, reminds us that it was Ernst Gebhardt and K.H. Rappard, two prolific contributors (as translators) to the new hymn books introduced to Pietistic circles in nineteenth century Germany, who were most notably influenced by the revivalism of Moody and Sankey and, to a lesser extent, also by Robert Pearsall Smith.⁴² If we ask which hymnals were most used and appreciated by the MB, first in Russia and then also in America (until about 1940), we find that they were precisely the hymnals which had borrowed most freely, via German translations, from Moody and Sankey's Gospel Hymns.

These hymnals included Die Glaubensstimme fuer die Gemeinden des Herrn; Frohe Botschaft in Liedern, meist aus englischen Quellen ins Deutsche uebertragen; Heimatklaegen: eine Sammlung meistens aelterer, bewaehrter, Kernlieder deutschen und englischen Ursprungs; and Evangeliums—Lieder 1 und 2.⁴³ Even a casual examination of the last in this series, Evangeliums—Lieder (itself compiled by Walter Rauschenbusch and Ira Sankey), which, according to A.H. Unruh, soon became the most popular of all MB hymnals (until the 1940's), reveals a very large debt to the revivalistic tradition that goes back to Moody and Sankey.⁴⁴

The inherent shortcomings of a hymn book like the Evangelium-Lieder, with its large preponderance of hymns which focus on personal salvation,—and this frequently in a somewhat restrictive sense,—were not sufficiently recognized among the Brethren, it must be conceded, until the early 1940's. In 1945 the Committee of Reference and Counsel finally brought the need for a less derivative and more (doctrinally) adequate hymnal to the attention of the Canadian Conference:

Die Prediger unserer Gemeinden empfinden es besonders stark, dass am meisten in unsern Gemeinden gebrauchten Gesangbuch, Die Evangeliums—Lieder, sehr viel Erweckungslieder, dagegen aber fast keine Lieder fuer das Heiligungsleben hat. Das Fuersorgekomitee glaubt daher, dass es angestrebt sollte werden, ein Gesangbuch in unsern Gemeinden zu haben, dass den Anforderungen unseres Glaubenslebens entspricht und in dem auch die fast verlorengegangenen Chormelodien mehr zur Geltung kommen wuerden.⁴⁵

Why MB, during the first eighty years of their existence, have not appealed more to indigenous talent and have not manifested more concern to compile collections of hymns which would reflect the full scope, and distinctive emphases, of their confessions of faith, remains an intriguing question. That a few attempts were made, however, to move in this direction—by several MB conductors of choirs—should not be forgotten!⁴⁶

One aspect of the doctrines of personal salvation and the Christian life which is not expressly addressed in our MB Confessions of Faith but which has sometimes divided MB theologically, is the teaching concerning the "eternal security of the believer." MB Confessions of Faith have of course always implied the believer's

right to a clear assurance about the possession of salvation in Christ. They have also pointed to the continuing need, in the believer's life, "for the forgiving, chastening, and cleansing grace of the Lord."⁴⁷ They have not, as a rule, been more explicit or precise than such statements as these would indicate. Yet almost immediately after the birth of the MB Church, in the Einlage MB Church (Chortitza Colony), one segment of Church—A.H. Unruh has called it the "Baptist-predestinarian" wing of the Church—tended to veer to the side which embraced the "eternal security of the believer" as an assured and undeniable fact.⁴⁸

Some MB theologians/historians have attributed this adopted belief to an overly enthusiastic response, on the part of our MB people, to the sermons of Charles H. Spurgeon, whose sermons were already widely known in Russia through German translations. Others have attributed the more widespread adoption of the belief, here in America, especially during the heyday of the Bible institute movement, to the strong influence of several U.S. seminaries (which hold to a Calvinistic orientation in theology) upon some of our Bible school teachers.⁴⁹

That the belief in the "eternal security of the believer" was sufficiently widespread in Canada, between 1940 and 1960, to evoke some sense of concern and reaction among teachers at the MB Bible College, is very evident from articles which appeared in The Voice, especially during the 1950's,⁵⁰ and from the published sermons of A.H. Unruh in Der Ewige Sohn Gottes: Erbauliche Vortraege ueber Hebraer, Kapitel 1 bis 6 und 10 (1948) and Des Herrn Mahnung an die Gemeinden der Endzeit.⁵¹ And in his official history of the MB Church (1954), Unruh had called to the prevalence of this belief within the MB Conference:

In der Konferenz haben wir ja die Calvinistische Stroemung, die eine unbedingte Sicherheit der Glaebigen lehrt...⁵²

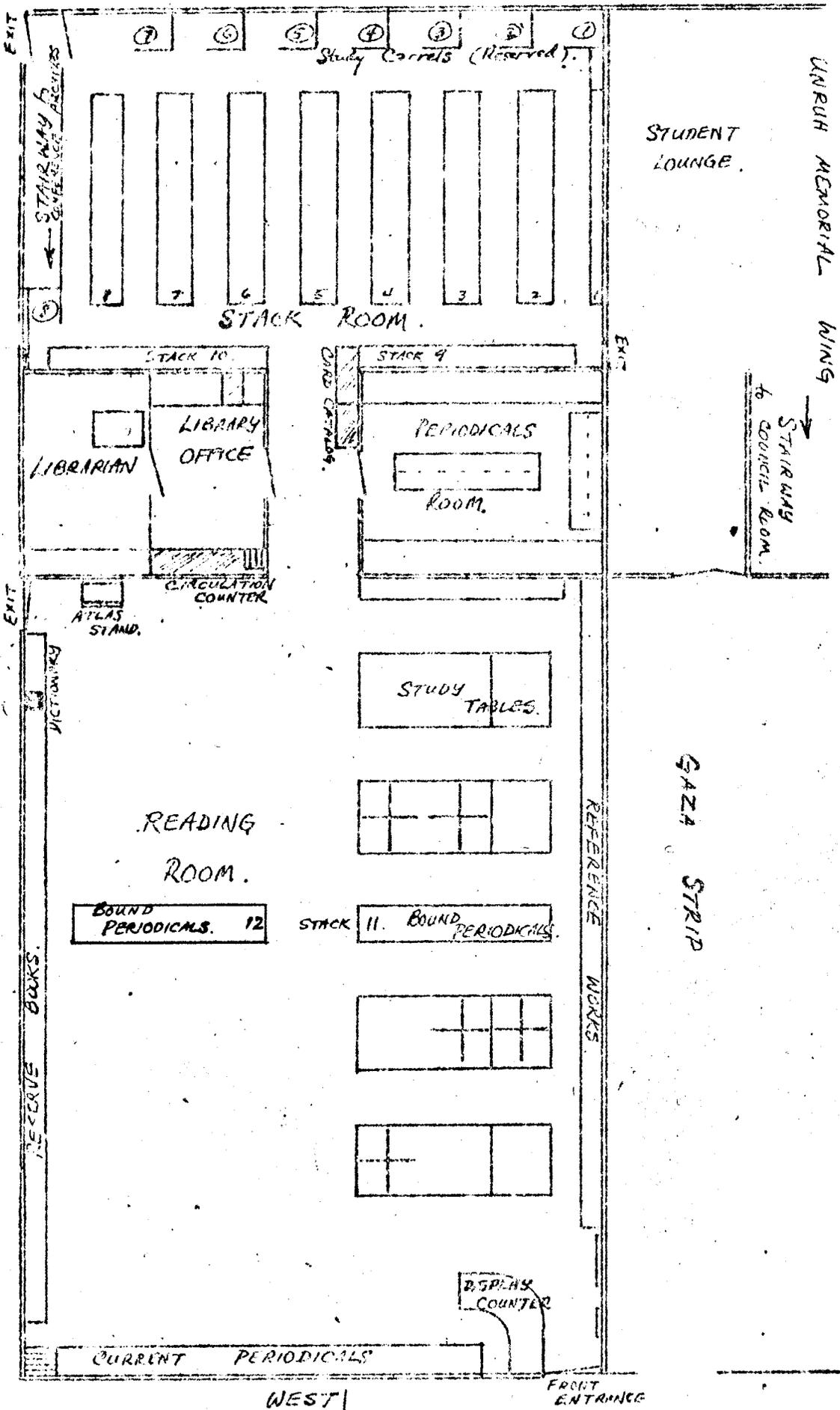
However, A.H. Unruh had taken note of the emergence of this view among MB much earlier than this—perhaps as early as 1937 or 1938. At about this time, while still teaching at the Winkler Bible Institute, he responded to a booklet, Kann Ein Kind Gottes Verloren Gehen?, which had just been issued (privately) by a certain Frank Isaac (of Winnipeg?) by way of a personal letter. The critique of Isaac's view, which constituted the heart of this letter, was later edited for publication by Heinrich P. Toews (once chairman of the Mennonite Brethren College Board) and published under the title Das Wort Sie Sollen Lassen Stan.⁵³ Unruh's critique provides a forthright and penetrating analysis of Isaac's interpretation of specific texts bearing on the teaching of "eternal security." Its implications are very clear: Isaac's teaching represents a deviation from soundly biblical theology, and a compromise of MB faith and teaching particularly when viewed against the background of the Church's confessional statements.

If the teaching of Wilhelm J. Bestvater, as reflected in both his autobiography and the periodical, Das Zeugnis der Schrift, is carefully examined, traces of his own belief in "the eternal security of the believer" surface in a variety of (sometimes unexpected) places. Several lines from a poem, which he had composed and which he set down at the conclusion of his "autobiography" (as he first wrote it), may serve as one such trace:

Dass ich geglaubt und auch gelehrt zu glauben, dass niemand kann dem Herrn ein Schaefflein rauben, das reut mich nicht.⁵⁴

Whether Bestvater's convictions on this question of doctrine were first induced by teachers encountered (only briefly) at the Light and Hope Bible Institute (Cleveland, OH) and then confirmed under the influence of such men as Harris Gregg and Arno C. Gaebelein, remains somewhat speculative. That he himself influenced the minds of other Brethren, especially while teaching at the Herbert Bible School or itinerating in various MB churches, seems more likely.⁵⁵

EAST



STUDENT LOUNGE.

UNRUIH MEMORIAL WING

STAIRWAY to COUNCIL ROOM.

STACK ROOM.

STACK 10

STACK 9

LIBRARIAN

LIBRARY OFFICE

PERIODICALS ROOM.

CIRCULATION COUNTER

ATLAS STAND.

STUDY TABLES.

READING ROOM.

BOUND PERIODICALS. 12

STACK 11. BOUND PERIODICALS.

REFERENCE WORKS

GAZA STRIP

DISPLAY COUNTER

CURRENT PERIODICALS

FRONT ENTRANCE

WEST

NORTH

SOUTH

EXIT

STAIRWAY to COUNCIL ROOM

EXIT

STAIRWAY

EXIT

A survey such as this one cannot omit consideration, also, of the ways in which the MB understanding of the church has been subjected to influential ideas and forces from without. It is clear, to begin with, that the early Brethren, partly in response to the revivalistic preaching of Wuest, appropriated a very idealistic and somewhat restrictive conception of the church. According to Wuest's own emphasis, the Christian church was to be a "pure" church in the sense, at any rate, that it admitted, and retained as members only the truly converted:

Ich predige deshalb auch Partei und bin kein Freund jener erbaermlichen 'Einheit' der Glaebigen und ungläubigen, wobei der Glaebige seinen Glauben verlieren und der Unglaebige nicht zur Erkenntnis seines Unglaubens kommen kann. Ihr Glaebigen, ihr Mitgenossen des Erbes und der Seligkeit, geht aus von der Welt, scheidet euch von den Unglaebigen, und wenn sie auch den Namen 'Pietisten' und 'Brueder' tragen...⁵⁶

And such a conception of the nature of the church the early Brethren generally accepted as being in consonance with the teachings of the New Testament as they understood them.

Bernhard J. Harder refers to this conception of the church, as adhered to by the MB, as "das Ideal der reinen Gemeinde,"⁵⁷ and attributes the strong urge towards separation, among the Brethren, mainly to the possession of this rather "unrealistic" ideal! He goes on to ascribe elements of rigidity and legalism to the MB view of the church, as also to its manifested character as one kind of church among other (Mennonite) churches of the time:

Es lag dieser Bewegung von vornherein ein Element der Gesetzlichkeit und ein schwaermerisches Vollkommenheitsideal zugrunde; ethische Fragen und Sondererkenntnisse wurden dogmatisiert. Ihr Auftreten war mit Ueberheblichkeit und einem verletzenden Richtgeist verbunden.⁵⁸

Both B.B. Janz and A.H. Unruh agree that this idealistic conception of the church did in fact prevail among the Brethren, and both attempt to suggest plausible reasons, also, for the less attractive features which marked the MB Church in its actual manifestation and behavior, and to which Harder, and others, allude.

It is possible that it was this more restrictive and purist mentality, especially as nourished under the influence of certain MB churches in the Chortitza Colony,⁵⁹ which hardened the convictions of many early MB on the question concerning the proper mode of baptism. Among such MB folk, any deviation from immersion, as the acceptable mode of baptism, was viewed with some suspicion and ill will. B.B. Janz states the matter bluntly:

Man beschloss unter diesen Einfluss, die Tauchtaufe zum Schlagbaum gegen andere Glaebige zu machen.⁶⁰

One need not recapitulate the evidence, in this connection, for a strong and lingering influence upon the Brethren of German Baptist literature and teaching concerning the importance of immersion as that biblical mode which is to be adhered to faithfully.⁶¹

But other religious, and doctrinal, forces were also at work among the MB in Russia and they served to counter this strong proclivity towards a more narrowly-

conceived understanding of the church. These forces, once again, issued from Pietistic sources (whether by way of individuals, institutions, or movements) in Germany and Switzerland, and impelled such MB as responded to their appeal towards a more spacious and generous conception of the church.

Jacob Kroeker, founder of the missionary society "Licht im Osten" and missionary statesman par excellence, ascribed his own transformed understanding of the church directly to the influence of F.W. Baedeker, whom he had first encountered in St. Petersburg:

Von da ab erschloss sich auch mir eine Kirche Christi, die
in ihrem innersten Wesen keine Konfessionellen Schranken
kennt und deren Leben das Christusleben in uns ist.⁶²

Dr. Baedeker (Plymouth Brethren preacher from England), as is well known, exerted Pietistic influence of a very positive and appealing kind among many evangelical churches⁶³ in Russia but not the least among these were the congregations of the MB Church. And MB periodicals reported, and commented upon, the preaching visits of Dr. Baedeker and other Pietistic speakers from abroad—speakers such as Ernst Stroeter⁶⁴, Georg von Viebahn⁶⁵, von Ruschewitz, G. Campbell Morgan, Mascher, Jakob Vetter⁶⁴, and Fritz Oetzbach⁶⁵—with obvious excitement and approval.⁶⁶ The preaching ministries of these visiting speakers tended towards, and indeed sometimes deliberately fostered, a more truly ecumenical ("Allianz") view of the church and of its mission to the world, among MB people, in the Chortitza, Molotschna, and Kuban colonies especially.

The "Allianz Bibelschule,"⁶⁷ which Dr. Baedeker himself had helped to establish in Berlin-Steglitz (1905)—later renamed the Wiedenest Bibelschule (1919)—was only one of several Bible schools in Europe which continued to move MB who studied at them towards a greater appreciation for other denominations and towards a broader conception of the church as such (whatever its denominational tag). Other schools which fostered a similar understanding and outlook among their students were the following: Pilgermissionsschule in St. Chrischona, the Baptist Seminary in Hamburg (where Jakob Kroeker, the theologian and missionary statesman, and several of our earliest MB missionaries had studied), the Prediger Seminar der Methodisten in Frankfurt-am-Main, the Bruederhaus in Preussischen-Bahnau, and of course Jakob Kroeker and Walter Jack's own short-term Bible school in Wernigerode-am-Harz (Wuerttemberg).

The salutary and solid impact of the Bible study program offered in Wernigerode-am-Harz (intended particularly, but not exclusively, for such as hoped to minister as missionaries, preachers, or teachers in Russia), and of Jakob Kroeker's own writing (in the periodical Dein Reich Komme ⁶⁸ as in his published books) has never been adequately acknowledged by and among MB.⁶⁹ This seems unfortunate for Kroeker's impact, as theologian and missionary spokesman, might well have become a "wellspring of renewal," to use Donald Bloesch's term, for MB in Russia and perhaps also in America. For it was Kroeker's unusual breadth of understanding, his remarkable capacity to integrate sound exegesis of Scripture with pertinent application to situations of life, and his beautiful blending of pastoral (edification) and mission (outreach) emphases, which enabled him to exert such a liberating and invigorating influence upon many evangelicals in Russia as also in Germany and other countries to the west of Germany.

About the annual Bible and Mission Conferences (held usually in Wernigerode-am-Harz) which Kroeker sponsored, with the assistance of his co-partner, (Walter Jack), and which MB representatives occasionally attended, Hans Brandenburg writes thus:

Es war das Besondere dieser Konferenzen, dass ueber die Missionsarbeit nicht ohne Beziehung zum Worte Gottes gesprochen wurde und dass dieses nicht verkundet wurde ohne Zuwendung zum Dienst der Gemeinde. Diese Verbundenheit wird leider oft vergessen.⁷⁰

And this fine theological balance, and largeness of spirit, Kroeker inevitably brought along with him to the Blankenburg Conferences in Thuringia—Conferences which he regularly attended⁷¹ and at which he sometimes also spoke. Certain other Blankenburg speakers, as we know, were quite interested in the study of eschatological themes which could be given a dispensational turn, but this was by no means Kroeker's own interest or emphasis!

A most explicit connection between the impact of ecumenical (Allianz) thinking and attitudes fostered at these Blankenburg Conferences (Thuringia) and a developing openness towards such thought among MB in southern Russia, is indicated by both B.B. Janz and A.H. Unruh. Janz remarks as follows:

Die Bekehrung einiger grossen namhaften Gutsbesitzer, davon einige Millionaere neben der Molotschna in Steinbach, Apanlee und Vorwerk Juschanlee, die Mai, 1905, in aktiver Mitwirkung und Mitgliedschaft von Bruder Jakob W. Reimer, MB Gemeinde, die Lichtfelder oder Allianzgemeinde gruendeten. Weiter das ernste Ringen von stark glaeubigen Predigern der Ohrloffer Mennoniten Gemeinde mit Prediger Peter Unruh an der Spitze vor und nach der Spaltung der Ohrloffer Gemeinde in Ohrloff I und Ohrloff II aus einer Volkskirche eine Gemeinde der Glaebigen zu reformieren, gerade in Ohrloff II, was aber unmoeglich war durch zufuehren. Man hatte stark gehofft, hier mit der Zeit ein Zentrum fuer alle Glaebigen zu schaffen, wie etwa in Blankenburg in Deutschland.⁷²

Jakob Reimer's considerable reputation, and potential for influence among the Brethren, in promoting this "Allianz" conception of the church (as also in promoting other teachings that pertain to eschatology), is freely acknowledged by A.H. Unruh:

Bruder Reimer war uns die groesste Autoritaet in der Bibelauslegung, und wir alle schauten zu ihm als zu einen geistlichen Vater auf...Er genoss grosses Ansehen in allen glaeubigen Kreisen und galt als Autoritaet in allen theologischen Fragen.⁷³

Nevertheless, it is clear that not everything that issued from Blankenburg was pronounced acceptable and good by the Brethren. B.B. Janz is bold enough, in the paper which has been quoted from repeatedly, to speak of several elements of Pietistic influence which he considered to be negative in character and effect. This openness to new understandings, and eagerness to modify MB theology, which a full identification with the spirit of Blankenburg tended to induce, also brought with it an inclination to minimize, for one thing, the Mennonite tenet of nonresistance,—on the part of Jakob Reimer and several others (Jacob Friesen and Cornelius Klassen, for example) who soon found themselves consenting to Reimer's view, notably during the "Selbstschutz" crisis of 1919.⁷⁴ Janz also speaks of an unduly tolerant attitude ("eine traurige Weitherzigkeit") in respect to certain ethical and congregational questions, as another kind of unhappy consequence of Blankenburg influence.⁷⁵

One cannot help but be reminded, by these rather pointed comments and concerns of B.B. Janz, of more recent developments within the MB community (here in Canada as

also in the U.S.) which reflect gradually changing conceptions of the church, of its congregational polity and practice, and of the nature of its leadership as well. The widespread adoption, or at least imitation, by many MB congregations, of "contemporary models of a church as an ecclesiastical democracy with individualistic independence in the local church,"⁷⁶ is a developing trend which undoubtedly owes something to the influence of certain seminaries (not in the Anabaptist or free church tradition) upon those various leaders⁷⁷ in our churches who have studied there during the middle decades of this century.

Current styles of pastoral leadership, and mounting crises within church leadership in some places, have also begun to seriously disturb our peace, as papers presented at the 1979 Study Conference (Clearbrook, B.C.) have clearly indicated. Indeed, concerns about an increasing accommodation, on the part of many MB congregations, to American evangelicalism in respect to congregational polity and congregational (pastoral) leadership patterns, had been voiced much earlier, by such MB leaders, for instance, as John H. Lohrenz (in 1950),⁷⁸ Jacob H. Quiring (in 1953),⁷⁹ Abraham H. Unruh (in 1954),⁸⁰ and John A. Toews (in 1960).⁸¹ And still the dirge concerning these trends in our churches continues,⁸² and a serious crisis, with its inherent potential for both spiritual loss and spiritual renewal, seems unavoidable.

Similar observations and concerns might be registered with respect to current attitudes, among many MB, towards the ethic of nonresistance, especially as it pertains to the support of militarism and participation in war. If the evidence suggested by the 1974 survey of Mennonite groups reported on in Anabaptism Four Centuries Later carries any weight at all, MB do not reflect a high degree of faithfulness to the ideals enshrined in their confessions of faith—on this issue.⁸²

The several modifying influences which possibly account for these changing attitudes need to be identified more specifically. That such influences also include the continuing exposure, on the part of recent generations of MB, to certain emphases reflected in "American Fundamentalism" seems obvious enough.⁸³ That these changing attitudes are a consequence of simple neglect in the teaching of doctrine, in our homes and churches, also appears likely. On this score the fears of the late Harold S. Bender, that an absorption of the polemic spirit of Fundamentalism was in fact eroding the Mennonite ethic of, and belief in nonresistance, seem to have been confirmed with respect to MB also.⁸⁴

It is only fitting that a final section in my survey take account of influences which have modified MB teaching on the subject of eschatology. We must come to speak, after all, about "last things" if we are to reach the end of this journey! The subject of MB thinking on questions of eschatology has evoked much interest and study of late,⁸⁵ and I shall not be able to add anything that is really new, in this paper. We owe a good deal to Dr. J.B. Toews, I should say at the outset, for encouraging renewed interest in the study and analysis of elements in MB eschatology which have been borrowed from non-Mennonite sources and appear not to be integral to the faith which the MB Church otherwise confesses.⁸⁶

That our earliest MB confessions, and other statements concerning their faith, do not reveal any strong or significant preoccupation with eschatology as such, appears to be pretty well established.⁸⁷ Apart from the notorious Claas Epp venture, which did in fact succeed in attracting a small number of members from the MB Church, strictly millenarian interests and influences—evoked and nourished in Russia by certain writings of such Pietistic authors as Johann A. Bengel, Lange, and Jung-Stilling—appear not to have pulled MB eschatology in their direction. And the views of Christoph Hoffmann (editor of the Sueddeutsche Warte), although they also involved a kind of millenarianism, seem to have appealed to some MB (in the Kuban area particularly, as we have noted earlier) more in terms of their social and religious

progressivism than in terms of their chiliasm as such.⁸⁸

Distinctly dispensational views which derive their inspiration directly from the teachings of John N. Darby, were however transmitted to the MB Church in Russia, as we know, via several MB preachers—notably Jakob W. Reimer—who themselves occasionally attended the Blankenburg Conferences, read the literature which issued from them, and (whenever possible) also invited Blankenburg speakers to minister to MB congregations in Russia.⁸⁹ Frederick W. Baedeker, one of the founding fathers of the Blankenburg Conference center,⁹⁰ though himself not an especially zealous advocate of Darbystic teachings, seems also to have tended towards a dispensational orientation on questions of eschatology. In any case, it seems a well-established fact that Jakob Reimer did more than possibly any other preacher in the MB Church to render Darbystic dispensationalism acceptable to the common people, although such acceptance, as Abe Dueck has suggested, "probably happened without much awareness of the implications or a thorough understanding of the alternatives."⁹¹

Nevertheless, one still wonders—in retrospect—why our MB people were more disposed, by and large, to respond warmly to the dispensational orientation of a Jakob Reimer or Ernst F. Stroeter⁹² than they were to respond eagerly to the rather different (heilsgeschichtliche) orientation projected in the powerful preaching and insightful books of a Jakob Kroeker (Wernigerode-am-Harz), for instance. One perceives that Abraham H. Unruh, himself one of the greatest among MB preachers, responded more deeply to Kroeker's approach than to that of Reimer, and ever cautioned against the adoption of a fixed eschatological scheme which owes more to certain interesting notions (imported from without) than it does to the contextual and controlled exegesis of given texts. A representative comment from Unruh, reflecting this kind of caution, follows:

Die Wachsamkeit ueber uns selbst ist bei den Einflussen von aussen zu staerken, da die oben erwaehnte Gefahr fuer ein gemischtes Christentum zunimmt. Es gibt, in den Zukunftsfragen (Eschatologie) wohl darauf zu achten, dass wir bei der apostolischen Lehre ueber die Ewigkeitsfragen formen, die mehr dem Wunsche des Herzens als der klaren Lehre des Wortes entspringt. Die MB Gemeinde sollte hinter Kanzel und Katheder eine gleichlautende Endgeschichte lehren.⁹³

Yet it is in Unruh's sermons on eschatological texts that one perceives most tangible evidence for his own largeness of view, his careful attention to context, and his unfailing focus on central, rather than peripheral, elements of truth.⁹⁴ In these respects Unruh was indeed a true "son" of, and successor to Jakob Kroeker!

That MB have differed a good deal with one another, and that they have not been nearly as widely united, on questions of eschatology, as Henry H. Janzen's article in the Mennonite Encyclopedia⁹⁵ would suggest, needs emphatic assertion in our time. Even during the days of Jakob Reimer's dominating influence as a preacher on prophetic and eschatological themes, at first among the Brethren in Russia and later also in Canada, there were always those who did ~~allow themselves~~ ^{not} to be unduly impressed by Reimer's orientation. Evidence for a diversity of understanding and view is reflected in many places: in debates carried on in the pages of the Mennonitische Rundschau,⁹⁶ in hints thrown out in the periodical Die Antwort (1934-35), edited by A.H. Unruh while still teaching at the Winkler Bible Institute, and also in recommendations or resolutions reported upon in Conference yearbooks.⁹⁷

During the earlier decades of MB experience in Canada, it would appear, the strongly Darbystic view of end-time events has been nourished by the preaching and teaching emphases of several teachers in our Bible institutes. Among these teachers

are the following: Jacob W. Reimer (at the Steinbach Bible Institute - 1931); Wilhelm J. Bestvater (at an evening Bible school in Winnipeg /1919-1921/ and later at the Herbert Bible School); Henry Regehr (at the Herbert Bible School); D.P. Esau, George D. Huebert, George W. Peters, and Jacob Epp (at the Hepburn Bible School); Henry H. Janzen (at a Bible school in Kitchener /1930's/, The Russian Bible Institute in Toronto /1943-46/, and, later, also at the Mennonite Brethren Bible College); Jacob F. Redekopp and Abram Wieler (at the Mennonite Brethren Bible Institute in Clearbrook, B.C.); and John Goerz (at the Black Creek Bible School in Black Creek, B.C.). In a few cases, the modifying influence of instruction received at other (non-Mennonite) institutions—the Light and Hope Bible Institute, in Bestvater's case, and the Northwestern Bible College (Minneapolis), in George D. Huebert's case, to cite two examples only—seems to have been at work. But in other, and perhaps in most cases, it would appear that it was simply the reading of strongly dispensational books or direct contact with dispensationally-oriented preachers who, in many cases, were popular Conference and circuit speakers, that constituted the immediate sources for this specific influence upon them.

Certainly in the case of Wilhelm J. Bestvater (1879-1969), who possibly did more than any other among the teachers cited above, to promote a dispensational outlook among our people in Canada, it was the latter alternative which particularly applied. Bestvater's own (widely-used) booklets,⁹⁸ and his articles in the periodical Zeugnis der Schrift, as also in the Zionsbote and Christian Leader, openly acknowledge his extensive borrowings from C.I. Scofield, Arno C. Gaebelein, and other dispensationalists. In a message prepared for a "Bible School Celebration" in Hepburn, SK, Bestvater testified freely, in retrospect:

The dispensational truths and the word of prophecy had a special charm for me as some of you here know. The study of the Scofield Bible Correspondence School in later years was a great help to me, and also a course from the Torrey Bible Institute.⁹⁹

Much of the course material which Bestvater offered in the evening Bible school in Winnipeg, together with P.E. Penner (1919-1921), and which students from other provinces, not only local students attended, was borrowed directly from the Scofield Bible Correspondence Course, and both Bestvater and Penner acknowledge that it was Griswood's dispensational chart ("Gottes Heilsplan")¹⁰⁰ which they used "extensively all through the years up to the present time." In the "Foreword" to his Textbuechlein in Bibel Kunde fuer deutsche Bibelschulen, Bestvater asserted:

Wir haben den dispensationellen und vorbildlichen Lehren der verschiedenen Buecher der Bibel besondere Aufmerksamkeit geschenkt, weil wir glauben, dass sie viel zum richtigen Verstaendnis der Bibel beitragen.¹⁰¹

The comment, albeit very brief, is a telling one in that it suggests the basic approach in all of Bestvater's biblical and theological studies.

One Church which Bestvater appears to have visited frequently, during his ministry in Winnipeg, is Elim Chapel, a non-denominational church which made it a continuing practice to invite well-known speakers (from the U.S., England, Australia, and elsewhere) to its pulpit—speakers who could be expected to identify fully with the strongly dispensational and prophetic interests of Sidney T. Smith, one of its principal founders.¹⁰² Some of the speakers who visited Elim Chapel during Bestvater's

time (1913-1921) and who may have influenced him decisively were R.H. Roper (Vancouver, B.C.), Dr. Harris Gregg (Chicago), William L. Pettingill (Dean of Philadelphia School of the Bible at the time), Dr. Melvin¹⁰³ Kyle (Palestine), Dr. W. Leon Tucker (New York), and A.B. Winchester (Toronto).

There is no doubt but that the books of Erich Sauer, who taught at the Wiedenest Bibelschule for many years, have also been influential in keeping a somewhat more "moderate dispensationalism" alive among MB in Canada. Several Canadian MB preachers and missionaries, we know, studied at the Wiedenest school but many more read and commended his books to others. One of our Bible school teachers, Hans Legiehn, was significantly influenced by Warns and Sauer,¹⁰⁴ and was himself an instructor at Wiedenest for some years (1933-1948). His book, Unser Glaube ist der Sieg, has been used as a text in a number of our Bible schools, in Canada and South America.

In later decades, a rather different orientation, among faculty members at the Mennonite Brethren Bible College, began to make itself felt in the Canadian MB constituency. This orientation moved away from the Darbyistic dispensationalism which had prevailed among teachers in a number of our MB Bible institutes, towards a position, gradually, which was more nearly akin to the "heils-geschichtliche" approach reflected in Jakob Kroeker's writings. It was an orientation that owed a good deal, I surmise, to the study and influence of books by George E. Ladd (Professor in New Testament Theology at Fuller Theological Seminary), who was among the first evangelicals in America (in the twentieth century) to seriously question Darbyistic interpretations of eschatology.

That this newly-emerging orientation in eschatology did not "sit well" (to use David Ewert's phrase) with many individuals in our Canadian Brotherhood, is hinted at in articles in the Voice,¹⁰⁵ the official organ of the MB Bible College at the time, and is more directly indicated in letters and articles which have appeared in the Mennonite Brethren Herald, over the years. And in 1978, the year of the MB Study Conference on Eschatology (in Fresno, CA), which was sponsored by the General Conference of MB Churches (Board of Reference and Counsel),¹⁰⁶ debate on questions of eschatology became more vigorous than ever, as letters in the Mennonite Brethren Herald and Christian Leader clearly testify.

What the final (and enduring) reaction, among MB as a whole, will be to David Ewert's very recent book, And Then Comes the End (1980), remains to be seen. The theological orientation and interpretation which underlie this book—the first book (by a representative of the MB Church) on eschatology since the days of P.E. Penner (Christ in The Scriptures), Jakob W. Reimer (The Miraculous Plan of God With Mankind), and A.J. Banman (Die Spaetere und die Letzte Zeit im Spiegel unserer Gegenwaertigen Weltkrisis als Prophetische Erfuellung)¹⁰⁷—are such that they undercut Darbyistic dispensationalism at significant points. Nevertheless, the tone of this book does not reflect a polemical intention on the part of the author. In many respects, however, Ewert's book represents the culmination of developing trends in MB thinking among teachers in our several "MB schools of higher learning," during recent decades. In my view, the book reflects a broader understanding of eschatological themes which nevertheless remains more faithful to the spirit of our earliest confessions of faith than does the Darbyistic dispensationalism which has been so popular among us for a half century or so.

This has been a selective and partial survey, although longer than it should have been! In offering it I have not presumed to tell the full story—by any means—concerning the diverse influences which have intersected with MB experience and faith since the birth of the MB Church in 1860. Nor have I attempted to properly assess the significance, in terms of its precise effect upon the life and witness of the MB Church, of each of the modifying influences touched upon in my survey. The latter

represents a task which should continue to concern and challenge us as we periodically review the religious pilgrimage of our Church.

That the MB Church has responded, and continues to respond, sometimes too eagerly or too indiscriminatingly, to social and religious influences within its immediate or also more remote environment, is obvious enough. Perhaps this very susceptibility of MB to influences coming (mainly) from without testifies, as John A. Toews once suggested, ¹⁰⁸ to a strong and wholesome impulse within the Church to capture and retain a "faith" by which it can actually live and function in the society in which it has its being. But it may also be true that this susceptibility to external influence betrays an inherent weakness in the MB Church, a weakness involving its own reluctance to undergo the rigors of thoughtful self-examination and self-correction with regard to the faith which it confesses. Surely, the only faith worth confessing is the examined faith—the kind of faith, that is, which is secure and vital enough to ever invite, and benefit from, the experience of self-examination and renewed commitment.

ENDNOTES

1. Peter M. Friesen, The Mennonite Brotherhood in Russia (1789-1910), trans. John B. Toews et al (Fresno, CA: General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, 1978), p. 310.

Several other Mennonite writers who have commented, in one way or another, upon this tendency among MB to respond all too readily to external influences are the following:

Harold S. Bender, "Outside Influences on Mennonite Thought," Mennonite Life (January 1955): 41.

Frank H. Epp, Mennonites in Canada, 1786-1920: The History of a Separate People (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1974), p. 174.

John A. Toews, A History of the Mennonite Brethren Church: Pilgrims and Pioneers (Fresno, CA: General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, 1975), p. 375.

J. Howard Kauffmann and Leland Harder, Anabaptists Four Centuries Later: A Profile of Five Mennonite and Brethren in Christ Denominations (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1975), pp. 109 and 307.

2. The remarks of Harold S. Bender, in the article cited in endnote #1, are apropos: "Such a study makes heavy demands upon the one who undertakes it. In effect it calls for a spiritual history of the entire brotherhood against the background of which the changes can be plotted and their sources and consequences laid bare. But it is just in this area that our Mennonite scholarship has been most remiss both in quantity and in depth and objectivity" (p. 34).

3. Abraham H. Unruh clearly focuses the problem which we face as soon as we are asked about the "theology of our Church," in a paper which he prepared for a Study Conference (sponsored by the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches), in 1956, "Die Grundzuege der Theologie der Vaeter der MB Gemeinde." He concludes that we are obliged, finally, to consider our confessions of faith as the most representative and authentic expressions of our "theology." A Copy of Unruh's study paper is available in the Center for MB Studies in Canada (Winnipeg).

4. Sydney E. Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972), p. XV (Foreword).

5. See, for example, his article "Die Gemeinde Radikalen Bibelleser," The Voice IV (May-June 1955): 11-14.

6. The early Brethren, like their Anabaptist forbears, demonstrated biblicism, in their actual use and application of the Scriptures, rather than defined it in very precise doctrinal terms. What Myron S. Augsburger has said of the Anabaptists, that "their approach to the Scriptures appears to have been conditioned by their first premise of a new life in Christ, not by propositions regarding doctrinal or philosophical implications" (Principles of Biblical Interpretation), would seem to hold true of the early MB as well. Augsburger actually defines, and develops further, the kind of hermeneutic that was at work, implicitly, in the biblicism of the Anabaptists and (presumably) also in the biblicism of their Mennonite descendants.

7. See John A. Toews, A History of the Mennonite Brethren Church, p. 36 and Cornelius Krahn, "Some Social Attitudes of the Mennonites of Russia," Mennonite Quarterly Review IX (October 1935): 173.

8. Glaubensbekenntnis der Vereinigten Christlichen Taufgesinnten Mennonitischen Bruedergemeinde in Russland (Halbstadt, Molotschna: Peter Neufeld Verlag, 1902): 5-7.

9. Dale W. Brown, Understanding Pietism (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978), p. 66.

10. Abraham H. Unruh, "Die Grundzuege der Theologie der Vaeter der Mennoniten Brueder Gemeinde," Study Conference Paper presented in Winnipeg, December 12-15, 1956 (Page 22).

11. These include Peter M. Friesen, Abraham H. Unruh, Abraham Kroker (Pfarrer Edward Wuest), and also John A. Toews.

12. John A. Toews, A History of the Mennonite Brethren Church, p. 365. See also pp. 31 and 66.

13. The sermons of Ludwig Hofacker, once an evangelical Lutheran pastor in Stuttgart, came to be known to Mennonites in Russia via the published collection of sermons entitled Predigten fuer alle Sonn-fest-und Feiertage (in various editions). They are sermons of great excellence which consistently maintain a delicate balance between pietistic fervor and doctrinal precision, between appeals to the mind and appeals to the heart. The following books provide biographical treatments of Hofacker: Arno Pagel, Ludwig Hofacker, Gottes Kraft in einem Schwachen (Giessen, 1959) and Julius Roessle, Ludwig Hofacker: ein Lebensbild (Giessen, 1946).

14. See Peter M. Friesen, The Mennonite Brotherhood..., pp. 281-4. According to the testimony of Elder Heinrich Huebert, Hofacker's sermons deeply affected many individuals in the Molotschna area as well.

15. Both Jakob J. Hildebrand (Chronologische Zeittafel...) and P.M. Friesen narrate the story of the Templar movement in Russia, although from somewhat different perspectives, but neither tells us much about its origins in the speculative mind and zealous activities of Christoph Hoffmann (1815-1885) in Wuerttemberg. James Urry provides some interesting information about the promulgation of Templar teaching among the Mennonites in South Russia via the Sueddeutsche Warte and Friedensglocke periodicals, in his thesis "The Closed and the Open: Social and Religious Change Amongst the Mennonites in Russia (1789-1889)" (Ph.D. dissertation, Oxford University, 1975). Heinrich Sawatzky's Templer Mennonitischer Herkunft (Winnipeg: Echo Verlag, 1955) and Christian Rohrer's Die Tempelgesellschaft oder ein Neuzeitlicher Versuch zur Verwirklichung der Verkeundigung Jesu von Nazareth (Stuttgart: Greiner und Pfeiffer, 1920) are both partisan accounts by members of the movement. Hartmut Lehmann, in Pietismus und Weltliche Ordnung in Wuerttemberg vom 17 bis 20 Jahrhundert (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1969) offers a penetrating and thoroughly fascinating account of Hoffmann's religious activities and prospects in Wuerttemberg, and of his connections with the Pilgermissionsschule in St. Chrischona (near Basel) and later (mostly unhappy) encounters with a variety of other Pietistic groups. See especially pp. 240-4.

16. Peter M. Friesen, The Mennonite Brotherhood..., p. 506.

17. Ibid., p. 542.

18. Abraham H. Unruh, Die Geschichte der Mennoniten-Bruedergemeinde, 1860-1954 (Winnipeg: Christian Press, 1954), p. 169.

19. Hartmut Lehmann, Pietismus und Weltliche Ordnung in Wuerttemberg..., p. 241.

20. Apart from his history of the MB Church (cited in #18) and several exegetical studies (cited later in this paper), Unruh contributed articles quite frequently to MB periodicals (Mennonitische Rundschau, Zionsbote, Konferenz Jugendblatt, and The Voice). He also edited Die Antwort: Eine Monatsschrift fuer Alt und Jung (1934-5) while teaching at the Winkler Bible School. His unpublished sermons are accessible to researchers in the Center for MB Studies in Canada (Winnipeg).

21. His books were frequently announced in the pages of Dein Reich Komme, which he and his partner (Walter Jack) edited, and also occasionally in Die Friedensstimme; both periodicals were familiar in many MB households.

22. Abraham H. Unruh, Die Geschichte der Mennoniten-Brudergemeinde..., p. 252. Hans Brandenburg remarks, concerning Kroeker's personal library: "Wer Kroeker's theologische Bibliothek besichtigte, war ueberrascht ueber die Weite seiner Forschung und seines Blickes. Neben den alten Biblizisten sah man die Vertreter der religionsgeschichtlichen Schule. Neben Darby's Bibel-auslegungen die rabbinischen Kommentare und Lexica. Er war ein unermuedlicher geistiger Arbeiter." In Martin Duerksen, ed., Die Krim War Unsere Heimat (Winnipeg: Selbstverlag von Martin Duerksen, 1977), p. 166.

23. Wilhelm Kahle, Aufsaezte zur Entwicklung der Evangelischen Gemeinden in Russland (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1962). See especially pp. 160-162. Also Kahle's Evangelische Christen in Russland und der Sovietunion (Kassel: J.G. Oncken Verlag, 1978), pp. 62 and 332 in particular. Waldemar Gutsche, Westliche Quellen des Russischen Stundismus (Kassel: J.G. Oncken Verlag, 1956), pp. 32-42 and chapter 4 in particular.

24. Quoted in Abraham Kroeker, Pfarrer Edvard Wuest: der Grosse Erweckungsprediger in den Deutschen Kolonien Sue drusslands (Hillsboro, KS: Mennonite Brethren Publishing House, 1903), p. 97.

25. Christian Rohrer, Die Tempelgesellschaft oder ein Neuzeitlicher Versuch zur Verwirklichung der Verkuendigung Jesu von Nazareth (Stuttgart: Greiner und Pfeiffer, 1920), p. 9.

26a. Nicholas Arndt, Erinnerungen eines Olginoers (Melbourne: Privately issued by author), p. 110.

26b. Abraham H. Unruh alludes to this situation at Tabor College in Die Geschichte der Mennoniten-Bruedergemeinde, 1860-1954: "Neben der Existenzfrage entsteht heute eine andere Frage, die schwere Kaempfe verursacht. Es handelt sich darum, ob Tabor ganz der Erkenntnis unseres Bundes sowohl auf ethischen also auch auf religioes-philosophischem Gebiete, entspricht" (p. 613).

27. John A. Toews cites a number of these historians in his chapter on "Understanding Biblical Revelation," in A History of the Mennonite Brethren Church.

28. Abraham Kroeker, Pfarrer Eduard Wuest..., p. 111.

29. Peter M. Friesen, The Mennonite Brotherhood..., p. 281-4.

30. Wilhelm Kahle, Evangelische Christen in Russland und der Sovietunion.

31. Benjamin B. Janz, "Grundzuege in Charakter der Glaubensstellung Unserer Vaeter," Study Conference Paper presented in Winnipeg, December 12-15, 1956 (Page 1).

32. Ibid., p. 4.

33. Abraham H. Unruh, "Grundzuege der Theologie der Vaeter...", p. 7.

34. Ibid., p. 8.

35. Bernhard J. Harder, Alexandertal: die Geschichte der Letzten Deutschen Stammsiedlung in Russland (Berlin: J. Kohnert Verlag, n.d.), pp. 97 and 100.

36. Dale W. Brown, in his stimulating study, Understanding Pietism (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978), has used the term "normative programmed conversion experiences" in reference to other groups similarly influenced by Pietism; see p. 11.

37. Isaac W. Redekopp, "The Development of the Concept of Conversion in the Mennonite Brethren Church" (B.D. thesis, United College, 1959), pp. 51-5.

38. Murray Phillips, instructor at Columbia Bible Institute (Clearbrook, B.C.), has made a preliminary study of the "Saskatoon revival movement," in its earlier phases, in a M.Div. thesis, "The Revival in Ebenezer Baptist Church, Saskatoon, SK." (Toronto: Central Baptist Seminary, 1973).

39. Henry J. Schmidt, ed., Conversion: Doorway to Discipleship (Hillsboro, KS: Board of Christian Literature, General Conference of MB Churches, 1980).

40. Gary Ediger, "Conversion in Anabaptist and Mennonite History," Direction IX (October 1980): 22.

41. Wilhelm Kahle, Aufsätze zur Entwicklung der Evangelischen Gemeinden in Russland. See pp. 158-9.

42. Rudolf Donat, Das Wachsende Werk: Ausbreitung der Baptisten Gemeinden durch Sechzig Jahre /1849-1909/ (Kassel: J.G. Oncken Verlag, 1960), p. 454 and pp. 485-6.

43. Die Glaubensstimme fuer die Gemeinden des Herrn was a German Baptist hymnal compiled by Julius Koebner and reflects a strong revivalistic influence (Moody-Sankey). Concerning the hymns in this compilation, Koebner remarks (in the "Foreword"): "Sieht man sich die Dichter an, so entdeckt man, dass die meisten Lieder von Nicht-Baptisten stammen." See Wesley P. Berg, "Choral Festivals and Choral Workshops Among the Mennonites of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, 1900-1960, With an Account of Early Developments in Russia" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1979) for a discussion of Mennonite, and MB, use of some of these hymn books.

44. The composers and/or translators who appear most often (by far) in Evangeliums Lieder 1 und 2 are all such (whether themselves Lutherans or Baptists) as were closely associated with the Moody-Sankey tradition: Ernst Gebhardt, Thomas Kuebler, F. Friedrich, W. Appel, and Walter Rauschenbusch.

45. See Frank C. Peters, comp., Resolutions and Recommendations of the Canadian Conference; 1961-1975 (Winnipeg: Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, 1976), p. 118.

46. See Wesley P. Berg's thesis, referred to in endnote #43, for an account of such attempts among the MB, in Russia as also in Canada.

47. This is the precise wording used in article V of the 1976 Confession of Faith of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches (Hillsboro, KS: Mennonite Brethren Publishing House, 1976), p. 14.

48. Abraham H. Unruh, Die Geschichte der Mennoniten-Bruedergemeinde..., p. 179.

49. Isaac W. Redekopp, John A. Toews (see, for instance, his article, "The Reorientation of the Teaching Ministry at the Centennial of the Mennonite Brethren Church," in The Voice VIII /November-December 1959/: 1-5 and IX /January-February 1960/: 1-3), and David Ewert.

50. See, for example, Isaac W. Redekopp, "Die Lehre von der Ewigen Sicherstellung," The Voice III (March-April 1954): 12-15; and David Ewert, "The Preservation of the Believer," The Voice VI (September-October 1957): 7-11 and VI (November-December 1957): 3-10.

51. Abraham H. Unruh and Heinrich H. Janzen, Der Ewige Sohn Gottes: Erbauliche Vortraege ueber Hebraer Kapitel 1 bis 6 und 10 (Winnipeg: Mennonite Brethren Bible College, 1948). See especially pp. 91-3. _____, Des Herrn Mahnung an die Gemeinden der Endzeit (Winnipeg: Christian Press, n.d.). See especially pp. 40, 47 and 51.

52. Abraham H. Unruh, Die Geschichte der Mennoniten-Bruedergemeinde..., pp. 602 and 613. Unruh remarks, "In der Konferenz haben wir ja die Calvinistische Stroemmung, die eine unbedingte Sicherheit der Glaebigen lehrt..." (p. 613).

53. Frank Isaac's booklet was issued by himself; in Winnipeg, in 1936. Unruh's response, Das Wort Sie Sollen Lassen Stan, was edited by H.P. Toews, and later published by Christian Press (Winnipeg) in 1964. Unruh's original response was in the form of an extended letter to Isaac; the published booklet is an edited version of the original response.

54. See Anne Rose Redekopp's biographical account (unpublished), Amazing Grace: The Life Story of William J. Bestvater (Herbert, SK: Issued by author, n.d.), p. 59. A copy of it is available in the Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies in Canada (Winnipeg).

55. Two other preachers (teachers) who may have received some stimulus from Bestvater while still residing in Saskatchewan are Jacob Thiessen and George W. Peters. The Reverend Jacob Thiessen became a fairly prominent minister in the Vancouver MB Church and George W. Peters soon left Canada (1944?) and entered upon a very active teaching career in a number of U.S. colleges and seminaries. I personally recall Thiessen's insistence on this belief in personal conversation with brethren in Vancouver MB Church circles.

56. As quoted from Pfarrer Wuest's sermons in Waldemar Gutsche's Westliche Quellen des Russischen Stundismus, p. 33.

57. Bernhard J. Harder, Alexandertal..., p. 77.

58. Ibid., p. 78.

59. Benjamin B. Janz, "Grundzuege im Charakter der Glaubensstellung Unserer Vaeter," p. 2.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

61. Others who, alongside our own MB historians (Heinrich Epp, Peter M. Friesen, Abraham H. Unruh and John A. Toews), have recounted the story of such (Baptist) influence upon the Mennonite Brethren include the following:

Joseph Lehmann, Geschichte der Deutschen Baptisten. Zweiter Teil von 1848 bis 1870 (Kassel: Verlag von J.G. Oncken Nachfolger, 1922), pp. 128-30 especially.

Waldemar Gutsche, Westliche Quellen des Russischen Stundismus, pp. 35-42 especially.

Wilhelm Kahle, Evangelische Christen in Russland und der Sovietunion, pp. 51-62 especially.

Johannes Warns, Russland und das Evangelium: Bilder aus der Evangelischen Bewegung des Soganannten Stundismus (Cassel: Verlag von J.G. Oncken Nachfolger, 1920), especially pp. 104-5.

Hartmut Lehmann, Pietismus und Weltliche Ordnung in Wuerttemberg....

An interdenominational conference, to which representatives from evangelical churches (across all of Russia, evidently) were invited, was convened in St. Petersburg in 1884. Johann Wieler was the MB representative. It was the hope of many leading brethren—men like August Liebig, Dr. F.W. Baedeker, Ivan Kargel, Lord Radstock, and Jakov Deljakov—at this Conference that a more truly ecumenical relationship among the various churches (denominations), would be established but it was the question of baptism—its proper mode—which evidently proved to be one of the most controversial and troubling questions and which prevented a realization of this strong hope of the leaders. So Wilhelm Kahle concludes in Evangelische Christen in Russland und der Sovietunion!

62. See Ann und Maria Kroeker, Ein Reiches Leben (Wuestenrot, Wuerttemberg: Kurt Reith Verlag, 1949), p. 51.

63. See R.S. Latimer, Ein Bote des Koenigs: Dr. F.W. Baedeker's Leben und Wirken (Barmen: Emil Meuller's Verlag, 1907). The ecumenical (Allianz) outlook of Baedeker is touched upon in Gutsche's Westliche Quellen des Russischen Stundismus (see pp. 60-3), in Kahle's Evangelische Christen in Russland und der Sovietunion (see pp. 59-60), and also in Donat's Das Wachsende Werk (see pp. 180-4).

64. Abe Dueck, in an article which appeared in the Newsletter of the Mennonite Brethren Historical Society of Canada /11 (June 1980): 1-2/, "Jakob Vetter: 1872-1918," draws attention to a number of issues of Die Friedensstimme which reported on the visits of Vetter in the Mennonite colonies of South Russia. For further details concerning the life and work of Vetter see Maria Vetter, Evangelist Jakob Vetter: ein Lebensbild (Verlagshaus der Deutschen Zeltmission, 1922).

65. See H. von Redern, Bruder Fritz: ein Lebensbild nach Eigenen Aufzeichnungen (Halbstadt, Taurien: Verlagsgesellschaft Raduga, n.d.).

66. Examples of such reports may be found in Dein Reich Komme (see XVII (14 December 1919): 2, in Die Mennonitische Rundschau (see, for example, XXIII (1 Januar 1902): 2), and in Die Friedensstimme (see /14 Dezember 1919/: 2).

67. See Ernst Schrupp, ed., Im Dienst von Gemeinde und Mission, 1905-1980 (Wiedenest, W. Germany: Missionshaus Bibelschule Wiedenest, 1980) for a detailed account of the founding of the Allianz (Wiedenest) Bibelschule, especially p. 14.

68. Abraham is one of the very few exceptions; see his appreciate comments on Jakob Kroeker in his Die Geschichte der Mennoniten-Brudergemeinde: 1860-1954, p. 822.

69. See Dein Reich Komme (1926, No. 2): 38-9, for an insightful description of the theological purpose and stance of Kroeker and Jack's Bibelschule in Wernigerode-am-Harz (Wuerttemberg).

70. Quoted in Martin Duerksen, ed., Die Krim War Unsere Heimat, p. 166. See Hans Brandenburg, Jakob Kroeker: ein Bevollmaechtiger Bibelausleger (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Missionsverlag, Gm BH, n.d.) for further comments on the significance of these "Missions-und Glaubenskonferenzen" (Pages 13-14).

71. Jakob Kroeker refers to his own attendance at these Blankenburg Conferences in Dein Reich Komme (1926, No. 3: 74); indeed Kroeker announced these Conferences with great regularity in the pages of his periodical. Hans Brandenburg remarks in his biography of Kroeker (see endnote #70), "Auf den Blankenburger Allianz-Konferenzen fehlte Jakob Kroeker selten. Er, der Feind alles Konfessionalismus, war insbesondere eine Verkoerperung des Allianzgedankens" (p. 5).

72. B.B. Janz, "Grundzuege im Charakter der Glaubensstellung Unserer Vaeter," p. 3.

73. Abraham H. Unruh, Die Geschichte der Mennoniten-Brudergemeinde..., p. 827.

74. Abraham Kroeker's editorial in one issue of Die Friedensstimme (XVII / 12 Juli 1919: 1) constitutes a magnificent homily on the moral inconsistency and folly of these endeavors at self-defense ("Selbstschutz") by the Mennonites in the colonies of South Russia.

75. B.B. Janz, *Ibid.*, p. 3.

76. To use Klassen's expression, in Abram J. Klassen, ed., The Seminary Story: Twenty Years of Education in Ministry, 1955-1975 (Fresno, CA: Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, 1975), p. 23.

77. The Conference Yearbook for 1951 (General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches) cites some eleven or twelve non-Mennonite seminaries in which MB pastors had studied, according to a survey taken, prior to 1951.

78. John H. Lorenz, The Mennonite Brethren Church (Hillsboro, KS: Mennonite Brethren Publishing House, 1950), p. 111.

79. Jacob H. Quiring, "Demokratic und Gemeinde," The Voice II (September-October 1953): 16-18.

80. Abraham H. Unruh, Die Geschichte der Mennoniten-Brudergemeinde..., p. 603.

81. John A. Toews, "Die Neuorientierung des Lehrstandes der Mennoniten Bruder Gemeinde an der Jahrhundertwende," The Voice VIII (November-December 1959): 1-5 and IX (January-February 1960): 1-3.

82a. John B. Toews has examined the historical context in which this accommodation to American Fundamentalism has occurred with respect to such matters as congregational polity and leadership (especially) in a paper entitled "Influences That Have Affected Educational Processes in Mennonite Brethren Schools," which was presented to an Inter-institutional Meeting of Canadian Mennonite Brethren Schools (Winnipeg) in 1976.

82b. J. Howard Kauffman and Leland Harder, Anabaptism Four Centuries Later: A Profile of Five Mennonite and Brethren in Christ Denominations (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1975). See chapter 8: pp. 131-6. Harold Jantz's editorial, "An Agenda for Peace-loving Christians," in the Mennonite Brethren Herald XIX (7 November 1980); 12-3, speaks very directly and pertinently to this observed trend.

83. Rodney J. Sawatsky traces the direct impact of American Fundamentalism (and of dispensationalism) upon the (Old) Mennonite Church during the 1930's and 1940's as it affected the Church's conception and practise of nonresistance in an MA thesis, "The Influence of Fundamentalism on Mennonite Nonresistance, 1908-1944" (University of Minnesota, 1973). Sawatsky contends that "non-theological forces, however, aided in attracting Mennonites to this movement and it was in the area of Mennonite social thought that the theologically defined nationalistic and even militaristic position of Fundamentalism was especially influential" (p. 33).

84. See Harold S. Bender, "Outside Influences on Mennonite Thought," p. 48 and also his article on "Fundamentalism" in the Mennonite Encyclopedia.

85. The Study Conference on Eschatology, which convened at the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary (Fresno, CA) January 25-27, 1978, dealt exclusively and quite extensively with the entire subject of eschatology as variously understood and interpreted by MB. Papers presented at this Conference were published as an insert in the Mennonite Brethren Herald in the 19 May 1978 issue, under the general title "Our Blessed Hope."

86. See especially his articles: "Mennonite Brethren Identity and Theological Diversity" in Paul Toews, ed., Pilgrims and Strangers: Essays in Mennonite Brethren History (Fresno, CA: Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, 1977), pp. 133-57, and "The Significance of P.M. Friesen's History for Mennonite Brethren Self-Understanding" in Abraham Friesen, ed., P.M. Friesen and His History: Understanding Mennonite Brethren Beginnings (Fresno, CA: Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, 1979), pp. 153-76, and also "The Teaching Ministry in the Mennonite Brethren Church," chapter X of Called to Teach: A Symposium, edited by David Ewert (Fresno, CA: Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, 1980).

87. See Abe Dueck's article, "How Our Fathers Understood the Hope of Christ's Coming," in Direction V (April 1976): 20-25. Mennonite Brethren confessions of faith all treat the subject of eschatology in very general terms only.

88. Compare Abraham H. Unruh, Die Geschichte der Mennoniten-Bruedergemeinde..., p. 169.

89. Jakob Kroeker's periodical, Dein Reich Komme, and Abraham Kroeker's Die Friedensstimme (less frequently so) both reported on such visits by Blankenburg speakers. A recent issue of the Mennonitische Rundschau (26 October 1977) reprinted such a news item (selected from a very early issue!) which read, in part, as follows: "In jedem Sommer gab es in Blankenburg (Thuringen) eine Allianz Konferenz, an der die Gemeinschaftsleute unter den Mennoniten regen Anteil nehmen. Dort lernten sie verschiedene hervorragende Prediger dieser Zeit kennen, die sie zu sich in die Steppe einluden" (p. 6).

90. See R.S. Latimer, Ein Bote des Koenigs..., pp. 224-5, and also Ernst Schrupp, etd., Im Dienst von Gemeinde und Mission, 1905-1980, p. 14, for material on Baedeker's association with the Blankenburg Conferences.

91. Abe Dueck, "How Our Fathers Understood the Hope of Christ's Coming," Direction V (April 1976): 23.

92. The core of Reimer's dispensationalist teaching is summarized in his published booklet, Der Wundervolle Ratschluss Gottes Mit der Menschheit (No publisher or date indicated). An accurate impression of Ernst Stroeter's strongly dispensational approach, and of his swelling prose style as well, may be gained from a reading of his booklet, Israel, das Wundervolk: ein Wort an Juden und Christen.

93. Abraham H. Unruh, Die Geschichte der Mennoniten-Bruedergemeinde..., p. 830. This is, however, not to say that Unruh castigated all who adopted a strongly dispensational (Darbyistic) stance. Some of his earlier lectures and sermons suggest a partial assimilation of elements drawn from dispensationalism, but in these matters of eschatology Unruh was always one to urge tolerance of other people's views and careful re-examination of one's own!

94. The titles of a few of Unruh's many sermons on eschatological texts and themes follow herewith: "Christus der Herr der Gemeinde" (Offenbarung 3:15-17); "Unsere Verwandlung bei der Zukunft des Herrn" (I Korinther 15); "Das Siegeslied der Vollendeten" (Offenbarung 5:8-14); "Es ist Nahe Gekommen das Ende aller Dinge" (I Petri 4:7); "Die Verwandlung der Gemeinde" (I Korinther 15:20-58); "Die Wartende Gemeinde" (2 Petri 3:11-15); "Das Warten Auf die Wiederkunft Jesu" (I Thessalonicher 1); "Die Energie des Christen am Abschluss des Zeitalters" (Roemer 13:11-14).

95. See article "Chiliasm as Accepted and Taught in the Mennonite Brethren Church" in the Mennonite Encyclopedia.

96. See, for instance, a series of articles, usually appearing under the title "Erste Auferstehung und Tausendjaehrigen Reich" (or similar title), which involved the contributors Elder Isaac Peters, Elder J.A. Wiebe (Hillsboro, KS), Peter Goossen (Lindenau, Taurien), Abraham Harder (Crimea), and Franz Dueck. These articles appeared in the following issues of the Mennonitische Rundschau: XXIII (20 August 1902): 1-2; XXIII (24 September 1902): 1-3; XXIII (24 Dezember 1902): 8; XXIV (25 February 1903): 1-2.

97. See, for example, Abraham E. Janzen and Herbert Giesbrecht, comps. We Recommend: Recommendations and Resolutions of the General Conference of the MB Churches (Fresno, CA: General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, 1978), pp. 31-32 (1951) and p. 289 (1975).

98. Wilhelm J. Bestvater, Textbuechlein in Bibelkunde fuer Deutsche Bibelschulen (Herbert, SK: Issued by author, n.d.); Textbuechlein in Glaubenslehre fuer die Herbert Bibelschule (Herbert, SK: Issued by author, n.d.); and Betrachtungen ueber das Letzte Buch der Bibel (Hillsboro, KS: Mennonite Brethren Publishing House, 1919).

99. Typed document in personal file of Wilhelm J. Bestvater at the Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies in Canada (Winnipeg).

100. See Anna Rose Redekopp's biography of her father, Amazing Grace..., p. 23. George W. Peters has acknowledged his own use of the same chart while teaching at Pacific Bible Institute (Fresno, CA).

101. Wilhelm J. Bestvater, Textbuechlein in Bibel-Kunde fuer Deutsche Bibel-schulen, "Vorwort."

102. According to information shared with author by Mrs. H.S. Rempel (Winnipeg) whose husband was similarly influenced by such visiting speakers at Elim Chapel. In his foreword to Textbuechlein in Glaubenslehre fuer die Herbert Bibel-schule, Bestvater remarks, "Der sehr gute schriftliche Bibelkursus des Dr. C.I. Scofield, das Buch ueber die Hauptlehren der Bibel von Dr. Wm. Evans, das Buch ueber Was Die Bibel Lehrt von Dr. R.A. Torrey, und das auf verschiedenen Bibel-konferenzen gesammelte Material haben uns Anleitung zu diesen Studien gegeben..."

103. An examination of the Elim Chapel church records has revealed that prophetic and eschatological themes were a major interest and concern of all the above speakers. Several selected sermon titles follow:

Dr. Harris Gregg (1917): "The Jews, the Miracle of History"; "Christ's Message to His Church, that Israel's Rejection is Not Total Nor Final" (1917 or 1918?); "The Second Coming of Christ—the Approaching Crisis of War."

William L. Pettingill: "When Will Jesus Return?"

Dr. Melvin G. Kyle (1918): "Palestine in April Glory?"

Dr. W. Leon Tucker (1918): "Will the Coming World Government Be an Autocracy, a Democracy or a Christocracy?"; "Studies in the Book of Daniel"; "War, Famine and Pestilence in the Light of Prophecy "

Other well-known speakers who visited Elim Chapel after 1921 included: William Evans, John H. Elliott (Northwestern Bible School), Harry A. Ironside, James M. Gray, George Guille, William B. Riley, A.C. Dixon, Arno C. Gaebelein (who returned very frequently), C.J. Rolls, L. Sale-Harrison, and Dr. Lewis S. Chafer.

In a church periodical issued sometime during the mid-1930's (title and precise date of issue are not indicated in the clipping), Arno C. Gaebelein reported as follows: "Besides Winnipeg I visited other places in Manitoba. In southern Manitoba I ministered in the German language among the Russian Mennonites in Winkler and Plum Coulee. I held a good week's meetings in Neepawa and also in Brandon...In British Columbia I visited a number of times Vancouver and Victoria where I held conferences in different churches."

104. See Ernst Schrupp, ed., Im Dienst von Gemeinde und Mission, 1905-1980.

105. See, for example, Frank C. Peters, "Die Eschatologie in der Predigt," The Voice VIII (July-August 1949): 1-4; Abraham H. Unruh, "Die Richtige Innere Einstellung zu dem Letzten Buche der Bibel," The Voice I (July-August 1952): 1-4; and Herbert Giesbrecht, "A Review of Paul Erb's The Alpha and Omega," The Voice V (May-June 1956): 20-23.

106. See special insert, "Our Blessed Hope," in the Mennonite Brethren Herald XVII (19 May 1978): 1-35, for papers presented at this Conference.

107. David Ewert, And Then Comes the End (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1980).

108 See John A. Toews, "Warum So Viele Richtungen Unter den Mennoniten?" The Voice II (March-April 1953): 12-15 and "Mennonite Brethren in Inter-Mennonite Endeavors" The Voice VII (July 1978): 3-10.