



## Mennonite Brethren in Three Countries:

### Comparative Profiles of an Ethno-Religious Tradition

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The nature of Mennonite Brethren identity has been called into question with increasing frequency of late, it seems, from a variety of perspectives and with several different agenda in mind. There are those who express concerns over an apparent trend toward less "faithfulness" to the Anabaptist-Mennonite theological heritage, a tendency which seems to be clearer and stronger in the U.S. than in Canada. These divergences in theological orientation appear to threaten the integrity of our confessional unity even as they further divide national conference from national conference, making problematic the viability of a North American General Conference. These concerns are evident at the institutional level as well, as mission, evangelistic, educational, and service agencies search for direction and vie for support. At the individual level, too, we hear expressions of pastoral concerns over an apparent widening of the gap between personal profession and practice. And scholarly reflections provide other ways of focusing the issues: Can Mennonite Brethren identity survive the transition from "village" to "town" to "city"? As the pluralism of the modern world permeates our boundaries and modifies our centers, will any patterns of continuity between past, present, and future be maintained? Are accommodation and assimilation inevitable for a small, immigrant, agrarian, minority, ethno-religious sub-community like the Mennonite Brethren? Do we have resources to maintain commitments to one another within a "community of memory" in view of the expressive and utilitarian individualism which increasingly characterizes contemporary western societies? How, now, can we do "ethics"?

Other recent interpreters of Mennonitism, on the other hand, have been primarily concerned with describing and explaining continuities in Anabaptist-Mennonite identity. These interpreters generally point to a growing appreciation for a pluralism in American society which emphasizes the values in, and the persistence of the ethno-religious traditions in American society. Data are cited which support the case that the Mennonites in general have, in fact, remained faithful to the Anabaptist vision, even Four Centuries Later (Kauffman and Harder); have retained a remarkably sturdy sense of ethno-religious identity (Warner) and institutional solidarity (Driedger, Paul Toews); and the Mennonite Brethren, at least, have been able to maintain a healthy "sectarian" stance, contrary to predictions that the transition to accommodated "denomination" is inexorable (Hamm).

Mennonite Brethren mission efforts add further dimensions to questions of relationships between religious and cultural identity. Communication of the Christian gospel across cultural boundaries requires some process of attempting to sort out the essential "treasure" of religious truth from the social and cultural "vessels" in which that truth has been carried. What aspects of our religious heritage merit transmission across geographic, political, and religious boundaries? What should be separated out and discarded, as we have already left behind troikas and samovars in Russia, and the German language and black hats in previous generations as appropriate, but only within a particular time and space?

One facet of these general issues focuses on the relationship between the religious and cultural dimensions of Mennonite identity. Dr. John Redekop has made this matter central in arguing for the appropriateness of a change in the name of the Mennonite Brethren conferences. He advocates a name ("Evangelical Anabaptists") which will enable Mennonite Brethren to make a clear distinction

between the "ethnic" and the theological components of our ethno-religious community of churches. He is concerned that our "ethnic" identity stands in the way of a more clearly focused Anabaptist identity, even as our religious commitments inhibit our full participation in the positive cultural aspects of our ethnic heritage as Mennonites. He suggests, further, that our evangelistic efforts are hindered by the barriers which our ethnic boundaries pose to outsiders who might otherwise find salvation among us. Internal definitions of group identity, then, are inseparable from both pastoral and evangelistic concerns for persons within and beyond our inherited ethnic boundaries. The present project differs from Redekop in that similarities and differences in the attitudes and practices of ethnic and non-ethnic Mennonite Brethren are the focus of the analysis and the study has been enlarged to include a sample of Japanese Mennonite Brethren.

#### Overview of the Study

In this paper we will report how Mennonite Brethren from three different types of "ethnic" backgrounds responded to the questions on the "Church Member Profile", an extensive survey of the religious, familial, economic, and political attitudes and practices of members of the Mennonite churches. The "Profile" was initially developed by Howard Kauffman and Leland Harder in 1972, was revised and replicated by a group of Mennonite Brethren in 1982, and in 1985 was adapted and translated into Japanese as a cooperative project involving the leaders and members of five Mennonite related groups in Japan. The data from these surveys were reorganized in order to identify some of the ways in which the responses of three types of <sup>mbers</sup> members of the Mennonite Brethren churches are similar to and differ from one another: (a) Mennonite Brethren who received their childhood socialization in M.B. homes in Canada and the U.S. ("ethnic" M.B.s who will be

called "Family" M.B.s in this report); (b) U.S. and Canadian members who did not receive their childhood socialization in M.B. homes ("non-ethnic" members who will be called "Choice" M.B.s in this report); and (c) members of the Mennonite Brethren churches in Japan (Japanese M.B.s). The fact that the survey was administered to Canadian and U.S. members in 1972 and again in 1982 enables us to note, also, some patterns of changes across this decade within the North American "ethnic" and "non-ethnic" subgroups. Items have been selected from the previously administered "Church Member Profile" questionnaire and have been re-organized into a series of new indexes with these assumptions in mind. (1)

#### Theory and Predictions

Several assumptions have guided the reformulations of the "Church Member Profile" data which are reported here. We have assumed that social structures and experiences are interrelated with religious understandings and expressions. The history of the Mennonites as a migrant minority group, accustomed to constructing community within hostile social and cultural environments, is intimately related to our particular theological understandings. In the North American social environment, the "ethnic" group has provided a form in which the immigrant Mennonite minority sub-community could express its particularity in social and cultural forms which were appropriate to the context. Faith and ethnicity, then, have been closely interrelated in the history of Mennonites in North America, as they have been in the experience of other immigrant people.

One of the theoretical issues which must be addressed, given this assumption, is whether it is possible for a sub-community to retain a distinctive cultural identity within the context of the "assimilating" power of Western cultures. The issues differ somewhat in Canada, Japan, and the United States, of course, but the basic question which is addressed by Robert Bellah and many

others remains. What "traditional" forms retain enough vitality to provide an alternative to (1) the pervasive expressive and utilitarian individualism which characterizes "modern" society, on the one hand, or, on the other hand, (2) the despotism which seems to provide the antidote to the "anomie" that accompanies the disintegration of a social order? The Mennonite response to the later peril (despotism) is told in our stories of migrations and martyrdom. But what is our response to the promise of personal and corporate acceptance and prosperity within the context of an open, democratic society which offers the freedom of a tolerant relativism in place of overt oppression?

The data have been organized around the assumption that "assimilation" is an appropriate model for an analysis of the recent experience of the Mennonite Brethren in North America. If this model is descriptive of our experience, we should expect to find that the membership of the Mennonite Brethren church is moving toward social, cultural, and religious conformity to the patterns of the surrounding society. We should find upward socio-economic mobility and a transition from agrarian to urban life. We should find increasing pluralism within the group. We should find decreasing commitments to distinctive forms of thought (including theology) and behavior (including political disengagement and ethical conservatism).

Conversely, we should expect to find increasing signs of acceptance of compatible aspects of the dominant social, cultural, and religious systems. We should find, for example, religion defined in more personal, private, and subjective terms, more concerned with self-affirmation than commitment to service within the context of peoplehood. We should find an increasing localism in religious orientation, as congregation changes from sub-group within a larger religious movement or "community of memory" to a "life style enclave." We

should find communities segmented from a life of wholeness to interaction with a limited circle of others concerned only with a limited range of interests, defined as "religious". We should find members being attracted to a theological system which offers both social acceptance (at least within the circle of persons we adopt as points of reference in the world around us) and rational consistency, such as "fundamentalism," or more generally, "evangelicalism". And we should find signs of acceptance of at least certain aspects of the "civil religion" which celebrates the legitimacy of the institutions of the state by encouraging acceptance of and participation in those institutions.

#### Summary of Findings

Before we proceed to a more detailed analysis of the data, the following is a concise and unqualified summary of some of the results of our research (TABLE I).

1. North American "Family" members tend to agree more with Anabaptist beliefs, score lower on measures of religious privatism, are more ethically conservative, and are less involved in congregational activities than "Choice" members.

2. North American "Choice" members indicate less agreement with Anabaptist beliefs, score higher on measures of religious privatism, are ethically less conservative, and are more active in congregational life.

3. Japanese members score very high on some Anabaptist items but low on others. They are more strongly oriented toward the peace position than North Americans and are rigorous in their practice of the personal devotional life but they are less actively involved in the regular programs of the congregation and they see less relationship between Christian faith and the socio-political order. They are conservative in their ethics and theology, though somewhat less so than

North American members.

Statistical summaries of these patterns for the North American groups ( The Japanese questionnaire did not contain enough comparable items) are presented in Table I.

TABLE I  
INDEX MEANS BY ETHNICITY AND DECADE:  
CANADIAN AND US MEMBERS

	1972		1982	
	CHOIC MEAN	FAMLY MEAN	CHOIC MEAN	FAMLY MEAN
ANABAPTISM	35.9	37.0	35.2	37.1*
PRIVATISM	55.5	53.9	55.5	54.0*
CONGREGATION	46.8	46.2	48.8	47.3*
ETHICS	41.3	41.6	41.3	42.0*
POLITICS	11.3	10.2*	11.3	11.5
FUNDAMENTALISM	10.6	10.5	10.7	10.7

\* Significant difference  $P = < .05$ .

#### ETHNICITY AND DEMOGRAPHY

The Fall, 1985 issue of Direction summarized some of the data which were gathered in the 1982 M.B. replication of the 1972 "Church Member Profile". The authors of the Direction report noted some of the changes which appear to have taken place during the decade: members are more likely to be older, male, college educated, and engaged in more stable, affluent occupations. The report noted that Canadian and United States members differ in significant respects, including residence patterns, gender distribution, education, and occupation.

The authors of the Direction report also celebrate the increasing ethnic diversity within the conferences. But at the same time they wonder about the implications of that new pluralism: "While greater ethnic diversity in the churches may be regarded positively as a result of greater involvement in the

world, the implications for denominational identity require further reflection." (Direction, p. 23) This report is intended to provide some information upon which that reflection may proceed.

The indexes used in this study were reconstructed from the items used in the 1982 profile of North American M.B.'s. (2) One of the central concepts under investigation in this study is "ethnicity". The notion of "ethnicity" has been defined in various ways, most of which include multiple dimensions. Driedger, for example, lists six "factors": parochial education, language, religion, endogamy, friends, and voluntary organizations. Since the original survey designed by Kauffman and Harder did not include specific attention to ethnicity as a variable, few items yield data directly related to most of these six factors. We have chosen to operationally define "ethnicity" in this study in terms of responses to a single item: "In your childhood and youth, were your parents members of the church denomination to which you now belong?" Since all respondents were members of the M.B. church, those who indicated that both parents were members during their childhood and youth were considered to be members by childhood socialization and will be termed "Family" members in this study. Members who indicated that neither parent was a member of the M.B. church during their childhood and youth will be considered to be members by Choice. We do not mean to imply in these uses of the terms that "Family" members did not enter the church voluntarily (over 90% of all North American members report that their decision to join the church was their own) nor that they did not experience conversion (over 90% also report a conversion experience). We mean, simply, to point out that some members experienced childhood socialization within the context of an ethnic Mennonite "Family" while other members entered the church through "Choice", without this background of ethnic experience. (3)

Table II summarizes changes in the distribution of North American members in the sample, by country, decade, residence, and route to membership (Family or Choice). While not presented in the TABLE, data concerning members of the Japanese MB churches will follow in the text. The TABLE indicates that Choice membership has increased over the decade from 16.2% to 25.1% in Canada and 27.5% to 32.9% in the U.S.

TABLE II  
RESIDENCE BY ETHNICITY, COUNTRY AND DECADE (PERCENT)

		CANADA 1972		USA 1972		CANADA 1982		USA 1982	
RESIDENCE		CHOICE	FAMILY*	CHOICE	FAMILY	CHOICE	FAMILY*	CHOICE	FAMILY*
VILLAGE	#	19	109	15	65	37	103	32	82
	ROW	14.8	85.2	18.8	81.3	26.4	73.6	28.1	71.9
	COL	34.5	38.4	16.5	27.1	38.9	36.4	23.4	29.3
TOWN	#	21	66	39	97	22	40	42	116
	ROW	24.1	75.9	28.7	71.3	35.5	64.5	26.6	73.4
	COL	38.2	23.2	42.9	40.4	23.2	14.1	30.7	41.4
CITY	#	15	109	37	78	36	140	63	82
	ROW	12.1	87.9	32.2	67.8	20.5	79.5	43.4	56.6
	COL	27.3	38.4	40.7	32.5	37.9	49.5	46.0	29.3
		55	284	91	240	95	283	137	280
		16.2	83.8	27.5	72.5	25.1	74.9	32.9	67.1

But the distribution of this growth in Choice membership differs by type of residence. The distribution of Choice membership within congregations varies from a low of 12.1% in Canadian urban churches in 1972 to a high of 43.4% in U.S. urban churches in 1982. The table also indicates that in Canada Choice members tend to be disproportionately represented in village and town churches while Choice membership is concentrated in urban churches in the U.S. Virtually the entire Japanese membership is resident in metropolitan areas, with fewer than 11% resident in places with a population under 100,000 and an additional 6% in rural

TABLE III  
DEMOGRAPHY BY ETHNICITY, COUNTRY AND DECADE (PERCENT)

	CANADA 1972		USA 1972		CANADA 1982		USA 1982	
SEX	CHOICE	FAMILY	CHOICE	FAMILY	CHOICE	FAMILY	CHOICE	FAMILY*
MALE	45.3	51.3	46.2	51.9	56.3	54.6	43.2	57.5
FEMALE	54.7	48.7	53.8	48.1	43.8	45.4	56.8	42.5

AGE	CHOICE	FAMILY*	CHOICE	FAMILY*	CHOICE	FAMILY*	CHOICE	FAMILY*
UNDER 20	1.7	16.5	4.4	16.7	3.1	9.5		6.0
20 - 29	6.9	12.7	23.1	13.9	15.3	18.7	13.9	14.4
30 - 44	31.0	34.2	26.4	18.4	23.5	20.1	37.5	23.9
45 - 64	41.4	25.7	25.3	25.3	31.6	36.6	21.5	20.1
65 - 74	17.2	10.2	19.8	18.8	21.4	13.7	21.5	26.1
75 +	1.7	.7	1.1	6.9	5.1	1.4	5.6	9.5

MARITAL	CHOICE	FAMILY*	CHOICE	FAMILY*	CHOICE	FAMILY*	CHOICE	FAMILY*
SINGLE	6.9	23.6	5.5	25.3	8.2	24.5	4.2	15.4
MARRIED	86.2	73.9	86.8	68.2	82.7	72.7	80.6	74.5

EDUCATION	CHOICE	FAMILY*	CHOICE	FAMILY	CHOICE	FAMILY*	CHOICE	FAMILY*
ELEM	46.6	19.7	20.9	23.4	26.3	17.1	5.7	14.1
HIGH SCH	39.7	50.7	26.4	32.8	36.8	46.9	28.4	28.2
COLLEGE	6.9	12.0	29.7	27.5	21.1	14.5	35.5	36.5
GRADUATE	6.9	17.6	23.1	16.4	15.8	21.5	30.5	21.3

\* Statistical Significance  $P = < .05$

DEMOGRAPHY BY ETHNICITY, COUNTRY AND DECADE (CONT'D)

	CANADA 1972		USA 1972		CANADA 1982		USA 1982	
OCCUPATION	CHOICE	FAMILY*	CHOICE	FAMILY*	CHOICE	FAMILY	CHOICE	FAMILY
FARMER	20.0	13.2	2.3	12.4	21.3	20.1	9.5	19.3
CLERICAL	67.3	51.8	58.1	50.3	39.3	39.7	40.0	30.9
MANAGER	1.8	15.4	10.5	13.5	19.7	19.6	21.0	19.9
PROFESSN	10.9	19.7	29.1	23.8	19.7	20.7	29.5	29.8
MOBILITY	CHOICE	FAMILY*	CHOICE	FAMILY	CHOICE	FAMILY*	CHOICE	FAMILY*
< 1 YR	1.7	4.6	6.6	3.7	2.1	2.6	2.1	1.8
< 5 YR	10.3	10.3	17.6	11.9	22.9	9.6	16.0	11.8
< 20 YR	27.6	44.7	33.0	37.9	34.4	31.5	42.4	22.5
>20 YR	60.3	40.4	42.9	46.5	40.6	56.3	39.6	63.9

\* Statistical Significance  $P = < .05$ .

areas.

Table III summarizes several demographic characteristics of the North American M.B. population. Males are in the majority among Family members in both Canada and the U.S. and in each decade while females are in the majority among Choice members (except for Canada, 1972). Females constitute a 56% majority among Japanese M.B.s. In Canada, Choice members tend to be older than Family members. Choice members tended to be concentrated in ages 20-44 in the U.S in 1972 but age differences were insignificant by 1982. Japanese members are notably younger than North American M.B.s, with only 28.4% aged 45 or older. Choice members were significantly underrepresented among unmarried members for both countries in each decade. Japanese M.B churches include larger proportions

of single members (27.5%). Because educational systems vary, precise comparisons across countries are not possible. But the data indicate Choice members were under-educated in Canada in 1972 but educational differences were insignificant by 1982. Choice members were more highly educated than Family members in the U.S. in 1982. Japanese members seem to be roughly similar to North Americans in levels of education.

In 1972, Canadian Choice members were overrepresented among farmers and clerical workers while Family members tended to be managers and professionals. In the U.S. in 1972, Choice members were more likely to be clerical workers or professionals while Family members were more likely to be farmers. Differences were not significant in 1982. Because of differences in occupational categories, comparisons with the Japanese members are, again, not very useful.

Perhaps reflecting these occupational differences, 1972 Canadian Choice members were more likely to have resided in the same location for 20 years or more while Family members were more likely to have resided in the same location 5-20 years. By 1982, Canadian Choice members were more likely to have resided in their present location for 1-5 years, Family members 20 years or more. In the U.S. in 1982, Choice members were more likely to have resided in their present location from 5-20 years, Family members 20 years or more. Japanese members have been much more mobile than North American M.B.s with only 13.2% resident in their present location for more than twenty years, though this difference probably reflects the relative youth of the Japanese membership.

The portrait of Mennonite Brethren which emerges from these data is that of a generally middle class population with some differences between countries, and, in the case of Canada and the U.S., some differences between Choice and Family members. Changes during the decade are in the direction of the increased

pluralism that often accompanies urbanization and upward socio-economic mobility.

#### ETHNIC SOLIDARITY AMONG MENNONITE BRETHREN

Family socialization has been utilized as the central indicator of ethnicity in this study in order to permit examination of relationships between this and other family-related indicators of ethnic solidarity. Table IV indicates that among members who were socialized in homes in which both parents were M.B., more Canadian than U.S. members had never belonged to another denomination. The Table also indicates that the proportion of Family members who have belonged only to the Mennonite Brethren church remains high but declines with urbanization. The changes during the decade are small in Canada but are more substantial in the U.S. The proportion of Choice members who have belonged only to the M.B. church declines between 1972 and 1982 while the proportion is smaller and remains constant in the U.S. Twenty-two percent of the Japanese respondents report previous membership in another Christian denomination, a personal religious history remarkably different from that reported by North American Choice members.

The data also indicates that within this sample of Family M.B.s who had never belonged to another denomination, approximately 60% in each country and decade married spouses who were also members of the M.B. church at the time of the wedding. In villages and towns in both countries the proportion of denominationally endogamous marriages declined during the decade while in cities (contrary to what might be expected according to the model proposed in this study) the proportions increased. Few Japanese members report that their parents were members of Mennonite churches or even of other Christian<sup>den</sup>ominations.

Only 7.4% report that their fathers were Mennonite and 10% report that their mothers were Mennonite. An additional 3.4% of fathers and 5.6% of mothers were members of another Christian denomination.

The proportion of Family members who could report that none or one member of the immediate family belonged to another denomination shows a consistent pattern of decline during the decade (with the exception of Canadian town members). Comparable data for Japanese members are not available.

TABLE IV  
ETHNIC SOLIDARITY BY ETHNICITY, COUNTRY AND DECADE (PERCENT)  
FAMILY MEMBERS ONLY

	CANADA 1972	USA 1972	CANADA 1982	USA 1982
<del>SAME DENOMINATN</del> <del>AT WEDDING - NO</del>	<i>Ever Member of Other Denomination - NO.</i>			
VILLAGE	98.1	92.3	96.1	92.6
TOWN	96.9	89.6	92.5	85.0
CITY	96.3	75.6	95.0	85.4
<del>FAMILY MEM IN</del> <del>OTHER DEN &gt;1</del>				
VILLAGE	85.8	90.8	80.4	72.8
TOWN	69.2	69.5	77.5	68.4
CITY	82.4	82.1	76.4	73.2
<del>EVER MEM OF</del> <del>OTHER DEN - YES</del>	<i>Same Denomination at Time of Wedding - Yes</i>			
VILLAGE	67.9	58.5	61.2	57.3
TOWN	66.7	58.8	47.5	58.6
CITY	55.0	51.3	59.3	64.6

Table IV reveals a general but not consistent pattern of change during the decade toward decreasing familial ethno-religious solidarity among persons who were socialized in M.B. homes. In Canada (but not the U.S.) family members became less likely to have been members of the M.B. church only. In both countries members of the immediate family are more likely to belong to another denomination. Rates of religious endogamy have generally declined. And most (but not all) of these patterns of change tend to become stronger with urban residence.

## ETHNICITY AND ANABAPTISM

The Anabaptist-Mennonite heritage includes multiple theological, social, and cultural components. The history of the M.B. church, in particular, incorporates a variety of theological traditions, including early influences from German pietists and Baptists in Russia, and, in North America influences from both the fundamentalist movement and the "rediscovery" of an "Anabaptist vision." For purposes of this report, we have developed a series of indexes which have been used to examine patterns of change in the ways these multiple theologies have been combined in the recent experiences of the North American and Japanese M.B. conferences. The indexes have been developed, specifically, to test for differences in the patterns of theological commitments which characterize Choice, Family, and Japanese Mennonite Brethren. Do Mennonite Brethren with these three types of backgrounds differ in their theological orientations? Do these patterns of difference vary by country and decade?

In this study, we have isolated four elements which we considered to be central to the Anabaptist theological tradition, were statistically correlated with each other, and provided a basis for testing for associations with other forms of religious expression. Our "Anabaptism Index" is a composite of four sub-indexes which measure these four elements of the Anabaptist theological tradition: Discipleship (three items), Pacifism (six items), Separation of Church and State (six items), and Shared Ministry (two items). Each item correlates significantly with each other item within the sub-index and within the composite Anabaptism index. Each sub-index correlates with each other sub-index and with the composite index of Anabaptism. Scores on these sub-indexes have not been weighted in our statistical analysis to equalize the differential contributions made to total scores on the Anabaptism index by sub-indexes of different numbers

of items.

The Direction report observes that some scores on similar scales vary with residence, education, and occupation. The Direction authors, as noted above, use these data to express concern with the pattern of change which they observed, fearing a growing rift between Canadian and U.S. conferences and between members who stand in the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition and those who are moving towards a North American form of evangelical Christianity. This report will summarize, compare, and contrast the responses to the Anabaptism index and its sub-indexes of members who have joined the M.B. church by Choice with those who have entered the church through Family. Japanese responses are not reported here because of the large number of index items which were missing from the Japanese version of the questionnaire.

TABLE V  
ANABAPTISM BY ETHNICITY, COUNTRY AND DECADE (MEANS)

	1972		1982		CHOICE				FAMILY			
	CHOIC MEAN	FAMLY MEAN	CHOIC MEAN	FAMLY MEAN	CAN 72	USA 72	CAN 82	USA 82	CAN 72	USA 72	CAN 82	USA 82
ANABAPTISM	35.9	37.0	35.2	37.1*	39.8cd	33.4	37.4c	33.7	39.1c	34.6	38.9	35.2
DISCIPLESHIP	8.0	8.1	7.7	8.1*	8.8cd	7.5	8.0c	7.4	8.5c	7.6	8.4c	7.7
PACIFISM	11.8	12.7*	10.8	12.0*	14.0cd	10.4	12.3c	9.7	13.9c	11.2	13.2c	10.8
SEP CHURCH/ST	13.4	13.7	14.1	14.3	14.2c	12.9	14.5c	13.8d	14.2c	13.2	14.6c	14.0d
SHARED MINIS	2.5	2.4	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.4	2.5	2.7	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.7

\* Significant difference  $P = <.05$ .

c Significant difference  $P = <.05$  based on country.

d Significant difference  $P = <.05$  based on decade.

Table V summarizes the scores of Choice and Family members, by country and decade, on the Anabaptism Index and the four sub-indexes of which it consists. The Table indicates that the mean scores of Family members are higher than the

mean scores of Choice members on the composite Index of Anabaptism. This general pattern also characterizes the U.S. membership in each decade and the Canadian membership in 1982. The exception to this pattern is the high scores reported by Canadian Choice members in 1972. Their mean score (39.8) on the Anabaptism Index is, in fact, the highest reported by any group listed in this Table. The mean score for U.S. Choice members in 1972 was, conversely, the lowest (33.4) of any group identified in the Table.

Mean scores on the Anabaptism Index are higher for Canadian members than U.S. members for each category and decade. Mean scores on the composite index of Anabaptism decline during the decade for Canadian members (both Choice and Family) and increase for U.S. members, thereby reducing the disparities in scores which existed at the beginning of the decade.

DISCIPLESHIP. Mean scores on the Discipleship sub-index generally follow the pattern of the composite Anabaptism Index. Canadian members score higher than U.S. members, and 1972 scores are higher than 1982 scores (except for U.S. Family members in 1982). Family member scores are generally higher than the scores of Choice members except for Canadian Choice members in 1972 who, again, score higher than any other group.

The distributions of Choice and Family responses to several items from each of the four Anabaptism sub-indexes are reported in Table VI. The items were selected for presentation here either (a) because they represent the clearest and strongest differentiation in each sub-index between Choice and Family members (highest level of statistical significance) or (b) because their inclusion enables comparisons with Japanese Mennonite Brethren responses. Table VI summarizes the proportion of Choice and Family members who respond positively to each item in each decade. The Table does not indicate differences between

Canadian and U.S. member responses. In the following paragraphs, several patterns of differences and similarities are briefly identified. Comments concerning some of these items include references to distinctions between Canadian and United States members which are not presented in the Table.

TABLE VI  
ITEMS FROM THE DISCIPLESHIP INDEX

QUES#	1972		1982		JAPAN
	CHOICE	FAMILY	CHOICE	FAMILY	
137 PERSECUTION	81.8%	73.6%	75.5%	77.1%	88.5%
144 DISCIPLINE	74.0	76.1	73.5	77.7	55.9
147 EXAMPLE	42.9	53.3*	38.3	45.0*	71.8

137. If Christian believers proclaim the Lordship of Christ and truly follow Him in all of life they can expect to incur severe criticism and frequent persecution from the larger society. (strongly agree\ agree)

144. The Mennonite Brethren Church should practice a thorough church discipline so that faltering or unfaithful members can be built up and restored, or in exceptional cases, excluded. (strongly agree/ agree)

147. Jesus expects Christians today to follow the pattern which he set in his own life and ministry, including such things as putting evangelism above earning a living, and deeds of mercy above family security. (strongly agree/ agree)

For example, the statement "Jesus expects Christians today to follow the pattern which he set in his own life and ministry, including such things as putting evangelism above earning a living, and deeds of mercy above family security." represents the Discipleship sub-index. The highest proportion of persons in the North American sample who Agree or Strongly Agree with this statement was found among Canadian Family members in 1972 (58.2%) and the lowest proportion (34.5%) was among U.S. Choice members in 1972. Family members consistently score higher than Choice members, Canadian scores are consistently higher than U.S scores, and 1972 scores are higher than 1982 scores (except for

Canadian Choice scores which declined during the decade). The responses of Japanese members indicate a substantially higher rate of agreement (71.8%) with this item than any North American sub-group.

Family members are, similarly, more likely than Choice members to Agree or Strongly Agree that the Mennonite Brethren church should "practice a thorough church discipline" though differences were not great enough to be statistically significant nor was change across the decade significant. Japanese members are less likely to be in agreement with this statement.

A different pattern appears in responses to the question concerning persecution of believers. The Japanese are most likely to agree with this statement, followed by Choice members in 1972. During the decade, Choice members became less likely to agree with this statement while Family members became more likely to agree, though these differences were not statistically significant.

While differences between Choice and Family members in responses to the Discipleship sub-index were not significant in 1972, these differences had become significant by 1982. The significance is due in large part to declining scores on the part of Choice members while Family members' scores remained essentially unchanged.

PACIFISM. Means on the Pacifism sub-index follow the same pattern as the Anabaptism index and the Discipleship sub-index. Respondents who Agree or Strongly Agree with the statement "The Christian should take no part in war or any war-promoting activities." reveal this pattern (Table VII). Family members are more likely to agree than Choice members. Canadian M.B.s are consistently more likely than U.S. M.B.s to agree with this statement of the Pacifist position. Respondents were more likely to respond positively in 1982 than in 1972 except among Choice members in the U.S., who declined in their rate of

TABLE VII  
ITEMS FROM THE PACIFISM INDEX

QUES#	1972		1982		JAPAN
	CHOICE	FAMILY	CHOICE	FAMILY	
139 WAR	46.6	56.2*	45.0	58.8*	94.0
178 PEACE	51.4	45.5	38.8	47.3	62.4
180 TAXES	76.6	72.4	67.3	63.6	17.9
197 CAPITAL	60.1	55.9	61.9	56.0	19.8

TABLE VIII  
RESPONSES TO THE MILITARY DRAFT

TYPE	1972		1982		JAPAN
	CHOICE	FAMILY	CHOICE	FAMILY*	
MILITARY	16.2%	7.5%	22.3%	9.6%	5.9%
NON-COMB	25.2	29.1	32.1	27.6	25.8
ALTERNATV	55.0	60.1	41.8	58.8	23.8
AVOID	1.8	2.1	2.2	2.4	32.4
ILLEGAL	1.8	1.2	1.6	1.5	11.9

\* Significant Difference P = <.05.

139. The Christian should take no part in war or any war-promoting activities. (strongly agree/ agree)

178. Mennonite Brethren should actively promote the peace position and attempt to win as many supporters to the position as possible from the larger society. (agree)

180. A member of our churches ought not to pay the proportion of his income taxes that goes for military purposes. (disagree)

183. Which one of the following positions would you take if faced with a military draft? a) regular military service b) non-combatant military service c) alternative service (I-W, VS, or Canadian alternative service) d) register, but refuse induction or service e) refuse to register.

197. Capital punishment (the death penalty for a major crime) is a necessary deterrent to crime and should not be abandoned by our national, provincial, or state governments. (agree)

positive responses to this item. Japanese members, again, indicate near unanimous (94%) support for this statement in contrast to North American responses which vary around the 50% point. Table VIII indicates how various types of Mennonite Brethren respond to a question concerning a military draft.

CHURCH-STATE SEPARATION. Scores on the Separation of Church and State index reveal similar patterns, though with less consistency. Family members score higher than Choice members except for identical scores among Canadian members in 1972. Canadian scores are, again, higher than U.S. scores. But the direction of change during the decade is the reverse of the patterns noted to this point. Scores for 1982 are higher than 1972 scores except for Canadian Choice members.

Family members are more likely than Choice members to Agree or Strongly Agree with the statement "It is against the will of God for a Christian to swear the oath demanded by the civil government on occasions." Canadian respondents are consistently more likely to agree with this statement from the Separation of Church and State index than U.S. members. Respondents were consistently more likely to strongly agree with this statement in 1972 than in 1982. This item was not included in the Japanese questionnaire because of differences in culture.

TABLE IX  
ITEMS FROM THE CHURCH STATE INDEX

QUES#	1972		1982		JAPAN
	CHOICE	FAMILY	CHOICE	FAMILY	
145 OATH	54.1	67.3*	51.3	65.3*	
195 DEMONSTRATE	55.8	51.0	43.7	43.0	20.2

145. It is against the will of God for a Christian to swear the oath demanded by the civil government on occasions. (strongly agree/ agree)

195. Christians ought not participate in peaceful demonstrations and protest marches even though they may be intended as a means of bringing about social justice. (agree)

SHARED MINISTRY. Scores on the Shared Ministry index reveal no consistent pattern. The mean score for Choice members is higher than the mean score for Family members because of the higher scores of Canadian Choice members in 1972. All other national comparisons show identical scores for Choice and Family members. Scores for 1982 are higher than 1972 in three of four comparisons. U.S. scores are higher than Canadian scores in three of four comparisons. Because the Shared Ministry index contains only two items, differences tend to be small and, because of the inconsistencies in the patterns, the sub-index contributes little to the patterns which are noted for the Anabaptist index as a whole.

The proportion of respondents who Agree or Strongly Agree with the statement "A church congregation cannot be complete unless there is an ordained minister to lead the congregation and perform the ministerial functions." is consistently greater among Family than Choice members. Scores were also consistently higher in 1982 than 1972. U.S. scores were higher in 1972 but Canadian scores were higher than U.S. scores in 1982 on this item from the Shared Ministry index. Japanese members indicate little support for this indicator of a "Shared

TABLE X  
SHARED MINISTRY INDEX

QUES#	1972		1982		JAPAN
	CHOICE	FAMILY	CHOICE	FAMILY	
149 SHARED MIN	61.1	50.8*	49.2	47.3	97.8

149. A Church congregation cannot be complete unless there is an ordained minister to lead the congregation and perform the ministerial functions.  
(strongly agree/ agree)

Ministry" understanding of the church with virtually all agreeing that an ordained minister is essential to the life of a congregation.

Several additional items which indicate Anabaptist-Mennonite interests and commitments were not included in any index (TABLE XI). Most members agree that infant baptism is not proper, though Japanese members are less likely than North Americans to agree. Japanese members were asked to indicate their opinions concerning retention of the name "Mennonite" in their church or denomination. Only 2.8% indicated that the name is an obstacle, 50.8% advocate retention of the name, and 46.4% indicate that they have no interest or opinion concerning the name "Mennonite". Given the opportunity to select an identifying characteristic from a list of four options, 49.7% of the Japanese members correctly identified Menno Simons as an early leader of the Anabaptist movement, 41.1% associated Michael Sattler with the Schleithem Confession, and 58.6% recognized Ulrich Zwingli as the leader of church reform in Zurich.

TABLE XI  
ADDITIONAL ITEM

QUES#	1972		1982		JAPAN
	CHOICE	FAMILY	CHOICE	FAMILY	
138 BAPTISM	88.4	85.2	84.5	86.4	80.6

138. Baptism is neither necessary nor proper for infants and small children. (strongly agree/ agree)

Scores on individual items from the sub-indexes, then, reveal in greater detail the general patterns shown in total responses to the composite Anabaptism index. North American Family members tend to indicate more support than Choice members for some of the basic ideals of the Anabaptist tradition. Canadian

members support these ideals more strongly than U.S. members. And attachments to these ideals have generally weakened during the decade among all sub-groups except US Family members. Japanese members score very high on items related to pacifism but they do not support political action to express these commitments. The Japanese members do not indicate support for a shared ministry. They generally reject the appropriateness of infant baptism. They are somewhat informed about Anabaptist-Mennonite history. Very few Japanese members view the name "Mennonite" as problematic.

#### PRIVATISM AND ETHNICITY

What patterns of Christian faith increase with the decline of attachments to Anabaptist-Mennonite particularities? What new spirits move into the house of Menno as the older "ghosts" of ethnic and sectarian peculiarity are exorcised? The model upon which this study is based predicts that a compatible form of religiosity from the dominant culture will be adopted as upward socio-economic mobility and cultural assimilation progress. What evidence is there that new patterns of mainstream religiosity increase with the decline of the ethno-religious tradition?

Many observers have noted that religious faith becomes increasingly personal, subjective, and private as the corporate, institutional forms of traditional religions decline with "modernization". The individualistic "voluntarism" of the evangelical Anabaptist tradition is, of course, compatible with a personal, subjective religious faith and has, in fact, contributed to the emergence of the privatized religiosity which characterizes "modernity". Do the data indicate that within the M.B. conferences movement away from the Anabaptist-Mennonite heritage is accompanied by an increase in "Privatism"? Do Anabaptism and pietism change together or do they move in opposite directions?

The Privatism Index is a composite of eight sub-indexes: Direction, Relationship to God, Personal Bible Study, Prayer, Personal Evangelism, Charismatic Experience, Positive Religious Emotion, and Negative Religious Emotion. Each sub-index consists of several items which indicate specific aspects of a personal, individualistic form of Christian faith. Indexes vary from three items (Direction, Personal Evangelism, Charismatic Experience) to five items (Relationship to God).

TABLE XII  
 PRIVATISM BY ETHNICITY, COUNTRY AND DECADE (MEANS)

	1972		1982		CHOICE				FAMILY			
	CHOIC MEAN	FAMLY MEAN	CHOIC MEAN	FAMLY MEAN	CAN 72	USA 72	CAN 82	USA 82	CAN 72	USA 72	CAN 82	USA 82
PRIVATISM	55.5	53.9	55.5	54.0*	57.5	54.2	54.7	56.0	54.7	53.0	54.1	53.8
DIRECTION	7.9	7.7	8.1	7.8*	8.1	7.7	8.0	8.1	7.8	7.7	7.9	7.7
BIBLE STUDY	9.4	9.6	9.7	9.6	10.2c	8.9	9.7	9.7	10.0c	9.1	9.8c	9.3d
RELN TO GOD	13.4	12.9*	13.1	13.2	13.9	13.2	13.2	13.1	12.9	12.9	13.1	13.4
PRAYER	13.0	12.9	13.1	13.0	13.5	12.7	12.9	13.2	13.1c	12.6	13.0	12.9
EVANGELISM	5.2	4.7*	4.7	4.5	5.4d	5.1	4.5	4.9	4.5	4.9c	4.4	4.5
CHARISMATIC	4.9	4.8	5.0	4.7*	5.0	4.9	4.9	5.1	5.0c	4.6	4.8	4.7
POSITIVE EMOT	8.1	8.0	8.3	8.0*	8.0	8.2	8.0	8.4	8.2c	7.8	8.0	7.9
NEGATIVE EMOT	6.7	7.0	6.9	7.2*	6.7	6.8	7.0	6.8	7.2c	6.7	7.3	7.1

\* Significant difference  $P = <.05$ .

c Significant difference  $P = <.05$  based on country.

d Significant difference  $P = <.05$  based on decade.

Mean scores on the Privatism Index indicate that Choice members score higher than Family members, Canadians score higher than U.S. members (except for Choice members in 1982), and that 1972 scores are higher than 1982 scores for Canadian members while 1982 scores are higher than 1972 scores for U.S. members. The highest scores are reported by Canadian Choice members in 1972, the lowest scores are reported by U.S. Family members in 1972.

TABLE XIII  
ITEMS FROM THE PRIVATISM SUB-INDEXES

QUES#	1972		1982		JAPAN
	CHOICE	FAMILY	CHOICE	FAMILY	
27 PROGRESS	78.8%	79.4%	81.4%	77.8%*	
19 PRIVATE BIB	77.0	77.6	79.8	74.9	96.4
21 GROUP BIBLE	34.0	40.5	30.2	35.6	22.1

DIRECTION

27. In regard to the quality of your spiritual life, which of the following best describes your progress during the past couple of years? (I am making definite progress/ little progress)

BIBLE STUDY

19. How often do you study the Bible privately, seeking to understand it and letting it speak to you? (frequently/daily)

21. How often do you experience a family, private, or cell group devotional period in which the Bible or other religious literature is read? (daily/more than once a day)

QUES#	1972		1982		JAPAN
	CHOICE	FAMILY	CHOICE	FAMILY	
22 CLOSE TO GOD	22.4	15.2	18.7	15.4	
25 TEMPTED	79.1	72.7*	84.0	74.4*	
20 PRAYER	82.3	82.6	86.3	86.5	82.5

RELATIONSHIP TO GOD

22. In general, how close do you describe your present relationship to God? (close/very close)

PRAYER

20. Other than at mealtime, how often do you pray to God privately on the average? (several times per day/daily)

25. When you are tempted to do something wrong, how often do you ask God for strength to do the right? (very often/often)

QUES#	1972		1982		JAPAN
	CHOICE	FAMILY	CHOICE	FAMILY	
30 WITNESS	25.7	18.0*	23.4	18.2*	18.6
36 INVITE	57.1	43.8*	53.5	47.1	54.2
40 CONVERT	66.1	54.5*	46.4	43.0	21.5

EVANGELISM

30. How frequently do you take the opportunity to witness orally about the Christian faith to persons at work, in the neighborhood, or elsewhere? (very often/often)

36. How frequently have you invited non-Christians to attend your church and/or Sunday School services? (frequently/occasionally)

40. To your knowledge, have you ever been instrumental in someone's conversion? (yes, often/yes, a few times)

QUES#	1972		1982		JAPAN
	CHOICE	FAMILY	CHOICE	FAMILY	
121 TONGUES	79.6	85.8*	84.8	87.9	
23 NEGATIVE	20.3	24.4*	16.5	19.6	
117 POSITIVE	86.0	85.4	92.3	91.0	

CHARISMATIC

121. An experience of speaking in tongues (Yes)

POSITIVE EMOTION

117. A sense of being loved by Christ (Yes I'm sure I have)

NEGATIVE EMOTION

23. How often do you feel discouraged in your efforts to live a Christian life? (very often/often).

The pattern of Choice members scoring higher than Family members is true for each sub-index except for identical scores on the Personal Bible Study Index. Family members also score higher on the Negative Emotion index which actually reflects the expected pattern of a more positive personal religiosity among Choice members than Family members. In 1972 Canadians scored higher than U.S. members in 14 of 16 comparisons. In 1982 Canadian and U.S. members' mean scores on the sub-indexes were approximately evenly divided. U.S. members' scores generally increased during the decade while Canadian scores generally declined

The direction of change, then, indicates a weak but fairly consistent pattern which is the inverse of what we have seen for the Anabaptism Index: Choice members and 1982 scores are generally higher than Family members and scores in 1972. If this pattern continues, the M.B. conferences will be increasingly characterized by a warm personal faith which does not express itself in a radically disciplined community of Christian peace.

A review of items from the Privatism index indicates that Choice members are more likely than Family members to be engaged in personal evangelism and they generally indicate higher levels of emotionality in their Christian faith. Japanese members are faithful in their practice of personal prayer and Bible study but less likely to be involved in group Bible study. They are as active as North Americans in personal witnessing but less likely to have been instrumental in someone's conversion.

#### CONGREGATIONALISM AND ETHNICITY

Robert Bellah and others, as already noted, have suggested that the meaning of the religious group gathered for fellowship and worship changes with the development of a culture which is centered, in part, on "expressive individualism". The nature of the congregation shifts from being a ~~part of~~ <sup>part of</sup> a larger "community of memory" which is grounded in a religious authority external to the self to a "life-style enclave". The "life-style enclave" is based, primarily, on the expressive needs of the individual member, is concerned with only selected segments of the total being of the member (particularly personal emotional needs and support for nuclear family relationships), and is composed of a narrowly bounded set of persons who share a limited range of common interests (including, perhaps, celebration of "symbolic ethnicity"). Bellah alerts us to

the fact that the essential meaning of congregational life might be transformed, even while the external forms continue unchanged.

With this possibility in mind, we have compared the patterns of involvement in congregational life which characterize Choice and Family members. We might expect that in communities which include Choice and Family members, the latter will feel more accepted and be more involved in the life of the congregation. To our surprise we found exactly the opposite. Choice members are more likely to be involved in the life of the congregation than Family members. This general pattern of differences reached the level of statistical significance in 1982. The pattern consistently characterizes differences between Choice and Family members in both countries and decades except for Canada in 1982. Scores on the Congregational Involvement index increased significantly for U.S. members during the decade.

TABLE XIV  
CONGREGATIONALISM BY ETHNICITY, COUNTRY AND DECADE (MEANS)

	1972		1982		CHOICE				FAMILY			
	CHOIC	FAMLY	CHOIC	FAMLY	CAN	USA	CAN	USA	CAN	USA	CAN	USA
	MEAN	MEAN	MEAN	MEAN	72	72	82	82	72	72	82	82
CONGREGATION	46.8	46.2	48.8	47.3*	47.0	46.7	46.5	50.4d	46.4	45.8	47.1	47.6d
SERVICE EXP	4.2	3.7	4.3	3.8*	3.6	4.6c	3.6	4.8c	4.0c	3.4	4.0	3.7
SERVICE ATT	5.2	5.4	5.2	5.3	5.1	5.3	4.6	5.6c	5.4	5.5	5.1	5.5c
STEWARD PERF	7.6	7.7	9.2	9.0	7.6	7.6	8.8d	9.5cd	7.7	7.7	9.0	9.0d
STEWARD ATT	8.5	8.3	8.7	8.6	8.6	8.4	8.6	8.8	8.3	8.2	8.5	8.7
IDENTIFICATN	10.6	10.3	11.0	10.6	11.2c	10.2	11.0	10.9cd	10.5c	10.0	10.6	10.6d
ASSOCIATION	10.2	10.0	10.0	9.8	10.2	10.1	9.5	10.4c	10.0	10.1	9.8	9.9

\* Significant difference  $P = <.05$ .

c Significant difference  $P = <.05$  based on country.

d Significant difference  $P = <.05$  based on decade.

A review of the sub-indexes indicates that U.S. members scored higher than Canadian members in both Service Experience and Service Attitudes. Stewardship Performance improved during the decade. Canadian members experience higher degrees of identification with the congregation, though the scores of U.S. members increased significantly during the decade. The only significant difference in association with other members is the higher scores of U.S. Choice members in 1982.

TABLE XV  
ITEMS FROM THE CONGREGATIONALISM SUB-INDEXES

QUES#	1972		1982		JAPAN
	CHOICE	FAMILY	CHOICE	FAMILY	
33	60.5%	56.2%	66.4%	59.5%*	61.8%
184	49.3	50.3	39.0	43.4	
172	63.0	59.8	71.7	63.7*	96.7

SERVICE EXPERIENCE

33. Do you presently hold, or have you held within the past three years, a position of leadership in your local congregation (minister, elder, council member, officer, S.S. teacher, committee chairman, youth group officer or sponsor, etc.) (Yes)

SERVICE ATTITUDE

184. Do you think every young person in our churches should be encouraged to devote a couple of years to some type of voluntary service whether or not he or she is faced with a draft? (yes)

STEWARDSHIP PERFORMANCE

172. Which is closest to your pattern of giving money to church budget and offerings? (I give a planned amount)

QUES#	1972		1982		JAPAN
	CHOICE	FAMILY	CHOICE	FAMILY	
28	77.6	74.5	83.5	78.5	
59	79.1	63.7*	77.6	67.4*	
39	35.1	26.1	32.6	35.7	48.1
41	29.2	34.4	31.8	36.0*	30.2
18	61.6	61.6	56.3	56.0	34.4

#### STEWARDSHIP ATTITUDE

28. In line with the world's spiritual and physical needs and your resources, how frequently do you give in offerings the amount of money you feel you should give?  
(always/usually)

#### IDENTIFICATION

59. How much spiritual inspiration and strengthening do you feel you get from a typical Sunday morning worship service in your congregation?  
(very much/ quite a lot)

39. How well do you feel you fit in with the group of people who make up your church congregation? (I fit in very well)

41. Think for a moment about whom you would list as your five closest friends (outside your family). How many of these five friends are members of your local congregation? (Four/Five)

#### ASSOCIATION

18. On the average, how often have you attended church worship services (on Sunday morning, evening, and/or other days) during the past two years? (once a week/more than once a week)

Item scores in Table XV indicate that Choice members are more likely to occupy positions of leadership in the church, to make financial offerings according to a specific plan (Japanese members virtual all give according to a planned schedule.), and experience more inspiration in worship services. Family members are more likely to have friends in the congregation. Japanese members attend worship service less regularly.

We cannot know, of course, from these data whether the surprising degree of acceptance and participation expressed by Choice members indicates that they have been truly grafted into a living spiritual vine, that they are forced to "try harder" because they are merely second-class members, that the comparative scores actually reflect disengagement on the part of some Family members, or that the nature of congregational life has subtly shifted in meaning.

## ETHICAL CONSERVATISM AND ETHNICITY

The ethnic group is defined, in part, by its cultural particularity.

Ethical standards might be considered to be one dimension of a cultural system. Delbert Wiens has described how the ethics of the traditional community differ from the ethical work demanded in a pluralistic social environment. We might expect, then, to find significant shifts in ethical positions with the transition from the relatively closed and homogeneous agrarian village to the pluralism of the urban social environment. We might expect to find that life-style standards move toward conformity with others who occupy similar positions in the urban social ecology.

Mennonite Brethren remain ethically conservative. The statistically significant difference between Choice and Family members in scores on the Ethical Conservatism index in 1982 primarily reflects the fact that more Family members have never danced or drank alcoholic beverages. Choice and Family members do not differ significantly on other sub-indexes. Canadian Family members are more conservative than U.S. members in matters related to family, sexual behavior, and abortion. The only significant changes during the decade were a decrease in Canadian Choice members' scores on the Personal Ethics subscale and an increasingly conservative stance on abortion among U.S. Family members.

The responses to items which are reported on Table ~~XVI~~ indicate that Japanese members express less opposition to marriage between Christians and non-Christians, are less likely to view marriage as a lifelong commitment, are less strongly opposed to moderate consumption of alcohol, but are more likely to oppose attendance at movies.

We find, then, few differences between Choice and Family members, indicating that Mennonite Brethren do not differ radically from other ethically conservative

TABLE XVI  
ETHICS AND ETHNICITY, COUNTRY AND DECADE (MEANS)

	1972		1982		CHOICE				FAMILY			
	CHOIC	FAMLY	CHOIC	FAMLY	CAN	USA	CAN	USA	CAN	USA	CAN	USA
	MEAN	MEAN	MEAN	MEAN	72	72	82	82	72	72	82	82
ETHICS	41.3	41.6	41.3	42.0*	43.2cd	40.1	41.9	40.9	42.4c	40.7	42.4c	41.5
FAMILY	8.0	8.1	8.2	8.2	8.3c	7.8	8.3	8.1	8.3c	7.8	8.4c	8.1
PERSONAL	13.3	13.3	13.1	13.1	13.8cd	13.0	13.2	13.1	13.4	13.1	13.1	13.1
SEXUAL	11.5	11.3	11.4	11.5	11.8c	11.3	11.5	11.4	11.5c	11.2	11.6c	11.4
DRINK/DANCE	4.2	4.7*	3.8	4.4*	4.5	4.0	3.9	3.7	4.8	4.7	4.4	4.4
ABORTION	4.1	4.1	4.7	4.6	4.6c	3.8	5.0c	4.5	4.3c	3.8	4.8c	4.4d

\* Significant difference  $P = <.05$ .

c Significant difference  $P = <.05$  based on country.

d Significant difference  $P = <.05$  based on decade.

citizens. The differences which do appear (experience of drinking alcohol and dancing) reflect residuals from an older definition of the boundary between church and world which is of decreasing significance in the new social environment. Ethical peculiarity, then, is of decreasing significance as an identifying mark of the Mennonite Brethren.

TABLE XVII  
ITEMS FROM THE ETHICS SUB-INDEX

QUES#	1972		1982		JAPAN
	CHOICE	FAMILY	CHOICE	FAMILY	
76	69.7%	68.9%	70.3%	74.2%	51.4%
132	83.9	83.4*	86.3	89.1	73.6
81	56.0	52.6	52.3	51.5	36.3
84	80.1	77.7	76.9	77.5	73.6
86	32.3	24.8*	13.0	16.4	77.9

FAMILY 76. Marriage of a Christian to a non-Christian (always wrong).  
132. Which statement best expresses your view of marriage? (a lifelong commitment).

PERSONAL 81. Drinking alcoholic beverages (moderately) (always wrong).  
84. Smoking tobacco (always wrong).  
86. Attending movies rated for adults and children (always wrong).

QUES#	1972		1982		JAPAN
	CHOICE	FAMILY	CHOICE	FAMILY	
91	95.4	90.7	97.8	96.5	
203	27.9	32.9*	20.6	27.1*	
204	52.0	75.8*	42.4	69.8*	
196	53.4	55.0	74.9	68.2*	

SEXUAL 91. Extra-marital sexual intercourse (always wrong).

#### DRINKING AND DANCING

203. Which of the following describes the extent to which you have drunk alcoholic beverages in your lifetime? (never drank any)

204. To what extent have you participated in social dancing? (never)

#### RACE RELATIONSHIP

196. Although there is no essential difference between blacks and whites, it is preferable for them not to mingle socially. (disagree)

#### POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT AND ETHNICITY

Our theoretical framework predicted that Family members would be less involved in political activity. Index scores indicate that in 1972 Choice members were more likely than Family members to be politically involved but the reverse was true in 1982 (TABLE XVIII). The political involvement of U.S. members is higher than that of Canadian members. The political involvement of U.S. family members also increased significantly during the decade, resulting in a widening gap between U.S. and Canadian members. The two items from the Political Involvement index generally reflect these patterns. They also indicate that most members vote regularly in elections but they do not feel that ministers should express political concerns from the pulpit. Japanese members respond similarly (TABLE XIX).

TABLE XVIII  
POLITICS AND FUNDAMENTALISM BY ETHNICITY, COUNTRY AND DECADE (MEANS)

	1972		1982		CHOICE				FAMILY			
	CHOIC MEAN	FAMLY MEAN	CHOIC MEAN	FAMLY MEAN	CAN 72	USA 72	CAN 82	USA 82	CAN 72	USA 72	CAN 82	USA 82
POLITICS	11.3	10.2*	11.3	11.5	9.1	12.8	9.2	12.8	8.6	12.0c	9.6	13.3c
POLITIC PERS CONG & POL	4.7	3.7*	4.9	4.7	3.3	5.6c	3.5	5.8	2.8	4.8c	3.4	5.9c
FUNDAMENTALISM	6.5	6.4	6.4	6.7	5.7	7.1c	5.7	6.9	5.8	7.2c	6.1	7.4c
	10.6	10.5	10.7	10.7	11.0	10.4	10.7	10.6	10.6	10.4	10.7	10.8d

\* Significant difference  $P = <.05$ .

c Significant difference  $P = <.05$  based on country.

d Significant difference  $P = <.05$  based on decade.

TABLE XIX  
ITEMS FROM THE POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT AND FUNDAMENTALISM SUB-INDEXES

QUES#	1972		1982		JAPAN
	CHOICE	FAMILY	CHOICE	FAMILY	
186 VOTE	78.9%	68.1%*	82.3%	80.0%	78.7%
190g PULPIT	10.3	14.3	7.3	15.6*	7.7
69 RETURN	96.0	97.5	97.1	98.9	88.8
70 CREATION	60.8	51.6	55.7	56.3	62.1
75 DAMNATION	83.8	85.8	84.0	88.9*	54.5

PERSONAL POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT

186. In how many of the elections in recent years have you voted?  
(all/most)

CONGREGATIONAL POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT

190g. Do you feel it is proper for your congregation to  
encourage the minister to discuss political issues from the pulpit? (Yes)

FUNDAMENTALISM

69. Jesus will actually return to earth some day. (definitely)

70. God created the earth and all living things in six 24-hour days.  
(definitely)

75. All persons who die not having accepted Christ as their redeemer  
and savior will spend eternity in a place of punishment and misery.  
(definitely)

## FUNDAMENTALISM AND ETHNICITY

Mennonite Brethren remain highly committed to a set of statements which reflects a conservative evangelical or fundamentalist theology. The only statistically significant difference in scores on this index was an increase in scores among U.S. Family members during the decade. Table ~~VII~~<sup>VIX</sup> indicates virtually unanimous agreement that Jesus will "actually" return to earth some day, though Japanese members express slightly less agreement with this statement. Slightly more than one half of the members in each category agree that creation "definitely" took place in six 24 hour days. Family members are more likely than Choice members to agree that the unsaved will "definitely" "spend eternity in a place of punishment". Though approximately 85% of North American members "definitely" agree with this statement, only 54.5% of Japanese members are able to do so.

### CONCLUDING SUMMARY: ETHNICITY BY COUNTRY

We began this report with some questions about the implications for the future which might be indicated in the patterns of similarities and differences between "ethnic" and "non-ethnic" members in Canada and the U.S. and the changes which these groups reflect during the decade 1972-1982. The problems related to a definition of Mennonite Brethren identity are complicated not only by diversity and change within the North American membership, but also by the expansion of our boundaries beyond the confines of the western European historical traditions to include, among others, Japanese fellow members. Some of the social, demographic, cultural, and religious differences between selected sub-groups have been reflected in the analyses of Anabaptism and other indexes which have been suggested thus far. Some generalizations, not about the indexes but about the sub-groups of members, will begin these concluding comments.

## CANADIAN MENNONITE BRETHERN

a. Canadian members generally indicate higher levels of commitment to the Anabaptist heritage, are more pious, more heavily engaged in congregational life, more ethically conservative, less involved politically, and more fundamentalistic than U.S. members. But the magnitude of these differences between the two countries declined during the decade.

b. Canadian Choice members scored very high on most dimensions of religiosity in 1972. They were stronger than any other category of members on the Anabaptism, Privatism, and Ethical Conservatism indexes and they ranked second in scores on the Fundamentalism index. Canadian Choice members' scores and relative rankings on each of these indexes declined during the decade.

c. Canadian Family members also scored high in 1972 on the Anabaptism, Privatism, and Ethical Conservatism indexes. They scored low on the Congregationalism, Political Involvement, and Fundamentalism indexes. During the decade, their scores and relative rankings declined slightly or remained approximately the same on the Anabaptism, Privatism, and Ethical Conservatism indexes. Scores on Congregationalism, Fundamentalism, and Political Involvement increased.

d. Canadian Choice and Family members' scores were more alike in 1982 than they had been in 1972.

## U.S. MENNONITE BRETHERN

a. U.S. members generally scored lower than Canadian members on the Anabaptism, Privatism, Congregationalism, Ethical Conservatism, and Fundamentalism indexes. They consistently scored higher than Canadian members on the Political Involvement index.

b. The magnitude of these differences between the two countries declined

during the decade as Canadian scores generally decreased while U.S. members' scores increased.

c. U.S. Choice members scored lower than any other group on the Anabaptism and Ethical Conservatism indexes and high on the Political Involvement index in both decades. Their scores on the Privatism, Congregationalism, Political Participation, and Fundamentalism indexes ranked high at the end of the decade.

d. U.S. Family members also scored low on Anabaptism and Privatism in both decades. During the decade their scores and relative rankings rose on the Anabaptism, Congregationalism, Ethical Conservatism, Political Involvement, and Fundamentalism indexes.

e. The scores of U.S. Family members in 1982 were generally quite close to the mean score for Choice and Family members, between countries, and across the decade except for the unusually high score of U.S. members on the Political Involvement index. The profile of U.S. Family members appears to approximate the profile towards which groups move as differences between Choice and Family, Canadian and U.S. members diminish.

#### JAPANESE MENNONITE BRETHREN

Japanese Mennonite Brethren reflect acceptance of the Anabaptist heritage in that they are committed to following the example of Jesus in personal discipleship, score high on items related to the peace position, and expect that faithful Christians will experience persecution. They do not support an understanding of the church as a disciplined community, however, nor do they accept a vision of shared ministry in the church. They are faithful in private Bible study and prayer, in personal witnessing, and they are committed to patterned financial giving. They sense personal acceptance in their congregations even though they do not share many close friendships within the

group and are frequently absent from worship services and other gatherings. They are conservative in their ethics and do not support demonstrations and political involvements as appropriate expressions of Christian faith. Their theology is also conservative, though they are not able to agree with statements of the fundamentalist position with the strength of North American members.

#### IMPLICATIONS

Theoretical Model. Some, but not all, of these data support the assimilation model of interpreting relationships between groups in contemporary society. North American Mennonite Brethren follow a typical pattern of change in experiencing upward socio-economic mobility and a transition from rural to urban life. As we do so, we become more pluralistic in our membership and less distinctive from the dominant culture in our social, religious, and cultural patterns of thought and behavior.

These general patterns appear to be similar in Canada and the United States, in spite of differences in national policy. Canadian "pluralism" does not produce the patterns of increasing ethno-religious particularity that one might expect. Neither has the "great melting pot" model which has dominated strategies of ethnic group relations in the United States accelerated the rate of assimilation as we might have expected. Convergence in Canadian and U.S. members' scores indicates, in fact, that change is moving in opposite directions from the respective national policies.

Exceptions to these patterns demonstrate that they are neither inevitable nor irreversible. Nor are they entirely undesirable. But the data do call us to honest and forthright discernment of the times in which we live if we are to experience Christian freedom from the "principalities and powers" of this present age in order to become, again, a new creation in Christ.

Evangelism. The strength of the Anabaptist commitments of Choice members in Canada in 1972 and among Japanese members on selected items, at least, indicates that the Mennonite faith tradition is not necessarily a barrier which prevents persons from outside that tradition from penetrating the boundaries. The scores which these same Choice members recorded on other scales which reflect strong commitments to the piety, active involvement in congregational life, ethical conservatism, and restrictive theology which are generally associated with evangelicalism indicate, also, that Anabaptist distinctives are not mutually exclusive of this expression of Christian faith. The low scores on many of these same scales which were reported by U.S. Choice members indicate that the growth strategy in the U.S. was different from Canadian approaches to church growth.

Christian Education and Pastoral Ministries. The dramatic decline in the levels of Canadian Choice members' commitments to Anabaptist-Mennonite distinctives would seem to indicate that the development of these commitments was not a high priority in the educational and pastoral ministries in the churches. The fact that the scores of U.S. members on indicators of Anabaptist commitments increased during the decade demonstrates that it is possible to nurture these commitments among members whether they entered the community primarily via birth and childhood socialization or by personal choice and commitment.

Mission. The Japanese Mennonite Brethren experience of selective acceptance of the Christian faith indicates, in part, the power of culture to shape both the sending and the reception of the Gospel message. The responses of the Japanese Mennonite Brethren indicate that in receiving that message, they utilized priorities which differ from those that might have been intended by the sending agencies. It is remarkable to note that a higher proportion of the Japanese membership agrees that "The Christian should take no part in war." (94%) than the

North American membership (approximately 50%). The proportions are reversed in "definitely" agree responses to the statement that "All persons who die not having accepted Christ as their redeemer and savior will spend eternity in a place of punishment and misery." (Japanese, 54.5%, North American responses approximately 85%).

Cultures shape the manner in which elements of Christian faith are interpreted and prioritized. Dialogue within the community of faith between fellow members of dramatically different cultural backgrounds can contribute to our clearer understandings of the meaning of the Kingdom of God among us. The creation of mechanisms for that dialogue should be understood as an essential component of the total mission enterprise.

Conference Identity. It is remarkable, indeed, to note that Canadian attachments to Anabaptist distinctives appear to have been at a higher level than the Anabaptist-Mennonite convictions of U.S. members at the beginning of the decade but declined during the ten year period while U.S. members' scores increased. Perhaps this tendency towards convergence indicates that the "fork in the road" which was perceived by John E. Toews (Direction) does not present us with a choice between North and South so much as a choice between alternative Christian subcommunities within the context of North American cultural pluralism and the faith stories which these varied sub-communities have inherited. The story of our immediate past is one of holding in tension a fragile combination of a Mennonite story of withdrawal from participation in the dominant institutions of the societies around us and an evangelical story which tends to be much more affirming of the dominant culture. As that dominant society becomes more open to religious and cultural pluralism (including a growing acceptance of both the religious and cultural heritage of the descendants of Menno) and as the children

of Menno also discover ways of being faithful to their tradition without the rigidity of their persecuted, migrant, minority past, perhaps we have the opportunity to create new forms which are more appropriate to the present situation than the limited options of either ethnic conservatism or evangelical accommodation. It seems doubtful that removing from our official conference designations the name, "Menno," which represents so real and essential a component of our tradition, will be helpful in creating these new forms of faithfulness to God's particular call to us. We will need rather, closer relationships with others who with us are the ethnic and spiritual heirs of the Mennonite-Anabaptist tradition.

#### Endnotes

1. The data which were utilized in this study were not designed specifically with ethnicity issues in mind. The Kauffman-Harder church member profile and the M.B. replication did not directly address the issue of relationships between faith, "ethnicity", and assimilation. We have chosen to utilize these data because of the economies afforded by their availability. We cannot know whether the patterns of difference and change which we note would appear in sharper relief if the survey instrument had been more specifically designed to test the issues which are under review in this study. Neither can we know whether a different method of data collection (e.g. interviews, participant observation, family histories) would have revealed the same or different results.

Two features of the sampling method used in 1972 and 1982 merit attention because they will alert us to caution in making generalizations from these data to the North American conferences as a whole. First, the sampling method used in 1982 included only congregations which had been in existence at the time of the initial survey in 1972, thus omitting from consideration any changes in the distribution of congregations which might have occurred within the denomination since the early 1970s. By returning to the same congregations which were included in the 1972 study, all new congregations which have been established or have joined the North American conferences since that time were excluded from the study. While there were good reasons for limiting the M.B. longitudinal study in this manner, it is important to note that we may not generalize from these data to the present overall state of the churches.

With respect to urbanization, for example, 41% of the 1982 sample reported residence in a city with a population of 25,000 or more, an increase from 36% in 1972. From this the Direction report concludes that the M.B.s had become more highly urbanized during the decade. But since the data report on the same congregations, we may only conclude from these data that some "town" residents

have re-classified themselves, perhaps because they lived in areas which grew to "city" size during the decade, or perhaps because they resided in a suburban area which became incorporated into an adjoining urban jurisdiction. But in any case we may not generalize that North American M.B.s are now 41% urban. We will note some of the differences which appear to differentiate urban members from town and village residents. If conference membership has, in fact, become more urban than the 41% reported by these members of churches which had been established prior to the early 1970s, then we might expect to find that the general profile of North American churches would be closer to the profile of the urban members reported in this study.

A second qualification relates to the inclusion of all pastors of sample churches in the sample of respondents. Perhaps some of the tendencies noted in the 1982 M.B. study (more males, more graduate education, more professionals, and higher scores on the Anabaptism scales for persons in these categories) reflect the inclusion of a higher proportion of seminary trained pastors in the sample in 1982 than in 1972 rather than actual changes in the distribution of gender, education, theology, and occupations among the member population during the decade.

2. Indexes were developed which separate attitudes from behavior. Items which inquired about attitudes, feelings, or opinions were not included in an index which asked about behavior, participation, or actions. We have chosen to separate indicators of attitude from indicators of behavior because the relationship between the two is one of the basic issues with which the church member profile is concerned. These relationships between thought and action, or faith and practice, should not be obscured by including both in a single scale. It should be noted, also, that in the Japanese version of the questionnaire, many of the items which focus on attitudes and emotions have been omitted because of our judgement that reports of behavior will have greater validity in that cultural setting. For this reason, few Japanese-North American comparisons are possible in areas such as sense of spiritual direction, personal relationship with God, and positive and negative emotions.

Indexes were developed, first, on the basis of apparent internal consistency. In order to create an index which might measure "charismatic" tendencies, for example, several items were grouped together. Correlations were then used to test whether responses to these items did in fact vary together to a statistically significant degree. The indexes which have been utilized in this study, then, have been judged by the authors to have "face validity" and this judgement has been confirmed by tests of statistically significant correlation between items included within each index.

Sub-indexes have been combined to form six composite indexes: Anabaptism, Privatism, Congregationalism, Political Participation, Ethical Conservatism, and Fundamentalism. Correlations between each of the sub-indexes within a composite index are statistically significant at the .05 level or stronger (with four exceptions). Japanese responses have not been combined into indexes because of the large number of comparable items which would be missing from most indexes.

Items for an index were selected (1) because of the strength of the correlation between scores on the item and "Choice" and "Family" membership. Items for the tables were selected which illustrate most clearly the patterns of association between "Choice" and "Family" membership and the index to which the item belongs. We have noted which patterns are strong enough to reach the .05 level of statistical significance. (2) Some items were selected because they facilitate comparisons between Japanese and North American members even though

associations between the item and types of North American members did not reach the .05 level of statistical significance.

Statistical significance means only that the distributions of responses vary together in a pattern which is unlikely to occur simply by chance.

"Significance" as used in this study has this limited meaning. The term implies neither "importance", "explanation", nor "causality". The statistical term should not be understood to imply evaluation or judgement. Statistical indicators of significant levels of association will be used only to alert us to the need for the hard work of interpretation and discernment!

3. "Family" members may generally be understood to be "ethnic" M.B.s, though there were, of course some respondents whose parents were members of the denomination but without the usual Russian Mennonite heritage. And some "Choice" members might have been raised by Russian Mennonite parents who were not members of the M.B. church during their child-rearing years. Some members whom we have classified as "Family" members, then, might not in fact share the Russian Mennonite ethnic heritage, and some persons whom we have classified as M.B.s by "Choice" might in fact be the inheritors of this ethnic tradition. But no other single item or even combination of items included in the questionnaires, in our opinion, serves as a more satisfactory indicator of "ethnicity". In a later section of this report, we will consider other indicators of ethno-religious solidarity (denominational endogamy, family members in other denominations, personal membership in another denomination) but we will examine relationships between these as additional indicators of the strength of "ethnic" continuity rather than as components of a definition of ethnic identity. In fact, the entire discussion of dimensions of religiosity (including ethics) might appropriately be included in a more complete definition of ethnicity. But for purposes of this study, we have used childhood socialization as the central indicator. We will report associations and correlations between this indicator and other social, demographic, and religious variables as part of our test of the issues with which the study is concerned.

The 54 respondents who indicated that they were raised in families in which only one parent belonged to the M.B. church have been excluded from the statistical analyses which follow. A note concerning members born into families with one parent Mennonite Brethren needs to be made. The 54 members who indicated that either mother or father but not both parents belonged to the M.B. church during the childhood and youth of the respondent were not included in the statistical analyses which are reported in this study for two reasons. First, because the total number is relatively small, statistical reports are of little value when this small total number of respondents is further sub-divided. And, second, the circumstances of persons in this situation make problematic their assignment to either the Choice or Family classification. They have, therefore, been treated as "missing cases" for purposes of statistical analyses.

It should be noted, however, that of the 54 members who report that only one parent was M.B. during their childhood and youth, 50 indicate that the M.B. parent was mother and only 4 indicate that the M.B. parent was father. Among these respondents, at least, it would appear that the faith is transmitted matrilineally rather than through the male line! A similar but weaker pattern is apparent among the Japanese sample where 10.8% report that their fathers were Christian while 15.6% report that their mothers belonged to a Christian church.

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