

mm

No. 3
december 1976

mennonite mirror



A king might miss the guiding star,
A wise man's foot might stumble;
For Bethlehem is very far
From all except the humble.

**But he who gets to Bethlehem
Shall hear the oxen lowing;
And, if he humbly kneels with them,
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- Louis F. Benson

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by E. Reginald Good

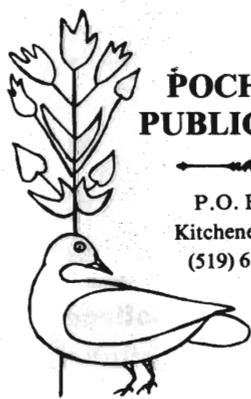
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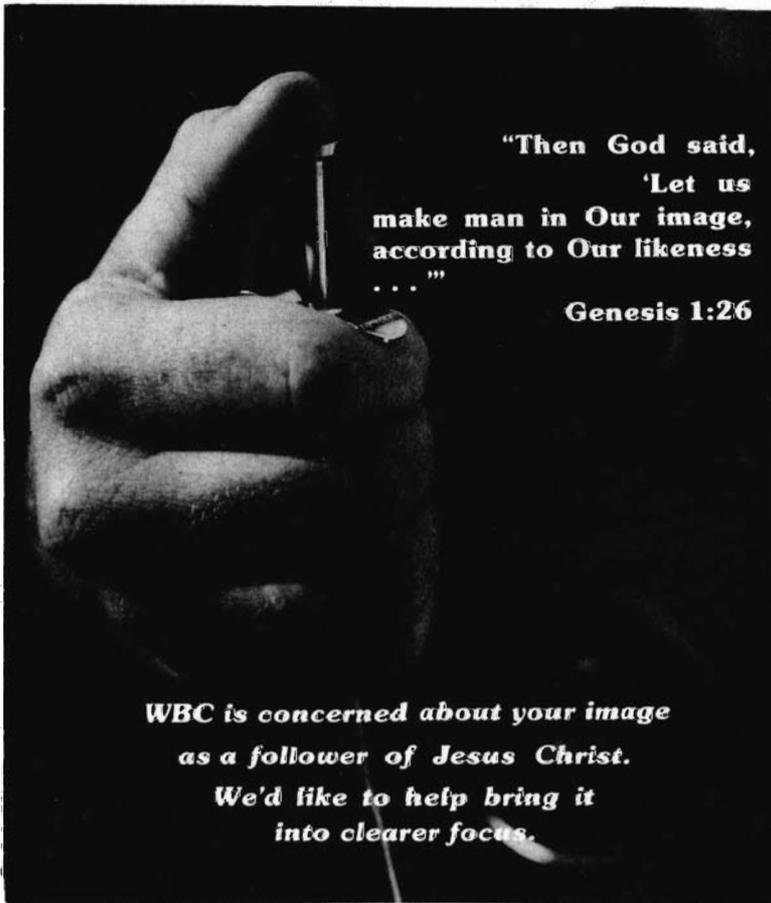
The letters are to be rearranged and written in the squares to form real words. Letters which fall into squares with a circle are to be arranged to complete the answer at the bottom of the puzzle.

A winner will be drawn at random from among all the correct entries and a cash prize will be awarded.

Entries must be sent to the Mirror Office by December 20, 1976.

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| 1:30 - 2:00 p.m. | - CHRISTMAS AT HOME |
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mennonite mirror

inside

volume 6 / number 3
december 1976

Mix-up/3

Rueben Epp in Dawson/9

Arnold Dyck published/10

Humbug to humbug/11

Morden's Farm King/12

No-fault divorce/13

Afraid to fail?/14

Review: Hiding Place/16

Review: The Marriage/17

Christmas card truth?/18

Poor man's cow/19

Manitoba News/20, 21, 22

Mein Kindheit/23

Saving Language/24

Deutsche Weihnachten/25

Carman grows/28

Our word/30

FYI: critic impressed/31

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Reuben Epp sets down Mennonite roots in Dawson Creek

by Mary M. Enns

Leew - Jeduld - Fraed - Vetreue These words translated read, "Love, Patience, Peace, Faith" and proclaim Reuben Epp's philosophy, but also his love of the low-German language. He has burnt the words indelibly into the massive Black Spruce mantel of the fireplace in their spacious living room. It is probably what you would notice first when you walk in, - and that is how the author intends it to be.

After almost half a lifetime of moving about the Epp family has now located in Dawson Creek, B. C. From Langham, Saskatchewan, they moved to British Columbia living in places like Aldergrove, then in Port McNeils logging camp (where they did their grocery shopping by water-taxi) and Nanaimo. Here Epp was asked to formulate a course in Vocational Mechanical Training. Soon it was on to Terrace with the hope of a somewhat better living for his growing family, and Prince Rupert where he was an inspector with Columbia Cellulose. In the late 1960s severe arthritis set in, necessitating the move inland to Dawson Creek where the Epps have now firmly sent down their roots.

The home they bought is on 15 acres of land. Proudly our host points out a thriving crop of barley planted and cared for by a friend, and a fine vegetable garden. The latter is Irmgard's responsibility since it is she who sees to the replenishing of the freezer. Mrs. Epp seems to have had few hours to spend frivolously. Their family of four children, Valenda, Carol, Cory and Reynold very suddenly grew into a larger unit, when, 13 years ago, the four children of the Epp's close friends were orphaned, they were, somehow, just naturally incorporated immediately into this family. Gradually three grandchildren have been added. Now, when all come home, there just has to be a large house to welcome them.

Besides her duties to this growing family Irmgard has been busy upgrading herself, studying summers at the University of Victoria. Now, with her teachers certificate safely tucked away, she is teaching full-time.

Reuben Epp enjoys living away up in the North of B. C. He works as the director of Vocational Studies at Northern Lights College.

We were invited to see the College and have lunch in their excellent cafeteria. Later, after dinner downtown, we all drove over to the Epps home. If sauna bathing is your particular pleasure you are immediately invited into the basement where a fine sauna is in full working order.

An evening with Reuben Epp in his home can become a many-faceted experience. For one thing, you'd better come equipped with at least a nodding acquaintance of his beloved low-German. If your own knowledge of this is shaky, at best, and your help-mate can't always lend a hand, you might do well, as I did, to roll in with the punches, put on a knowledgeable face and don't add too much to the conversation. Actually, in the full day we spent with him Mr. Epp spoke almost exclusively in English. This author who has given enjoyment to many audiences across Canada in the readings of his own works as well as with his records is particularly fascinated with the low-German language, its roots, its future.

This interest began years ago; he read Arnold Dyck's works and realized that the low-German could, indeed, be well written. In 1967 he discovered reams of low-German literature in Germany. Now, well into his book of Short Stories he has a yen to delve into and become better acquainted with the various low-German dialects, figures of speech, idioms, pronunciations. His trek to Europe (Flanders, Friesland, Schleswig-Holstein,



Oldenburg) in fall was specifically for this purpose.

He is researching not only the literature of the writers of the past but also those on the contemporary scene. Unofficially he had earlier received requests to do some readings there of his own works at a Krink-Abend. Epp hopes to get another record out in the not too distant future; the content here to be anecdotes roughly along the same line as his "Mang onse Leed" as well as his own and others' poetry. We asked Mr. Epp to read to us some of his favorite European Low-German stories. Listening with care we felt intrigued with the tales of the Danziger fishwives in the 'Spassige Erzählungen aus Danzig "Bowken und Pomuchelskoepp" by Hans B. Meyer.

Since there are only about 500 Mennonites or persons of Mennonite background in Dawson Creek it would take courage and fortitude to try to create an interest there at this time in the low-German language. Yet that is exactly what Reuben Epp has tried to do. He gathered together a local group and they worked on the production of a low-German play, finally performing to an audience of 400. Later (supplemented with some readings of Arnold Dyck's works) this was produced in Clearbrook, in the south of B. C. to a much larger audience.

When Reuben Epp is asked what a good old 'Punt Minist' such as himself is doing, living in a province where Mennonites are hardly low-German oriented, he smiles: "Well, for one thing, this is where my job is." When his non-Mennonite friends in town hear him talk in low-German and ask what language he is speaking, he answers "It's Low-German, a Lower Saxon language. Your own English, in a large measure stems from it." mm

Canadian Journal Publishes Translation of Arnold Dyck

by Peter D. Zacharias

Arnold Dyck (1889 - 1970), creative master of Canadian Mennonite literature, was until recently known almost exclusively to those whose cultural and linguistic home lay in the High German and Low German Mennonite milieus. With the 1974 publication of the English language translation of *Verloren in der Steppe* (*Lost in the Steppes*, translated by Henry D. Dyck), Arnold Dyck's most significant High German work became accessible to a more universal readership.

This year the tragedy *Twee Breew*, written in Low-German, Dyck's favorite vehicle of literary expression, has been translated into English by Prof. Elisabeth Peters, Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba. The translation of literary art is a formidable undertaking, indeed. Prof. Peters brings to the task a depth of feeling for the nuance of a dialect which is undeniably a part of her. She moves

with a fond familiarity in the literary-cultural "Heimat" of Arnold Dyck. While her translation manifests a concern to preserve the originality of Dyck's work, it also reveals a high regard for the demands of the contemporary English idiom. It not only preserves for new generations a powerful story of a woman caught in the turbulence of a harsh era in Mennonite history, but also shows forth Dyck's understanding of some of humanity's highest joys and deepest agonies. The reader is a beneficiary of Prof. Peters' approach to this work.

The publication of *Two Letters* in a leading Canadian literary journal should be of interest to many readers of the *Mennonite Mirror*. *The Journal of Canadian Fiction* published quarterly by Bellrock Press in co-operation with the Journal of Canadian Fiction Association and with the assistance of the Canada Council, contains belles-lettres by outstanding writer and critical articles on Canadian literature. Thanks to a Winnipeg lover of Mennonite literature, Ella Friesen, copies of the latest issue of the *Journal of Canadian Fiction* are still available. No profit is involved in Ella Friesen's venture - she has procured a quantity of the books and is selling them at the regular price of \$2.95. Her address is: Ella Friesen, 250 Waterloo St., Winnipeg, Man. She can be reached by telephone at 284-1856. mm

TV spots near completion

Two 30-second television spots, part of the "Invitation to Live" campaign are nearing completion. Representatives of the sponsoring groups met in New York last week to view the spots prior to final production.

The sound track on each spot was finalized and the spots will be readied for duplication with release in early January 1977.

Harold Weaver, executive producer, related that the actor felt he was contributing to something worthwhile. Weaver also reported that the actress who was the mother in the spot "Harried Mother" actually felt "harried" by the close of filming as she related to the three children in the spot.

These spots are part of a multi-media campaign designed to encourage person to "reach out and be a friend" to those who are lonely. Radio spots, ads, a *Media Resource Manual*, transit cards, and paperback books are also part of the campaign.

This multi-media thrust is a joint effort of the Mennonite Churches and the Church of the Brethren. Marketing in Canada is handled by Mennonite Radio and Television, Box 2, Station F., Winnipeg.

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Why not say "humbug" to a "humbug" Christmas?

by Betty Dyck

Christmas celebration should be happy occasions in family life, but all too often they end up being a time of tension. Some mothers cry, "I hate Christmas," and go on to complain about the long hours of toil in housecleaning and preparing extra food, the rising cost of gifts and exaggerate the rush and fuss accompanying the holiday. "Christmas is just a commercial bonanza," they say.

True, Christmas has lost much of its religious connotation and festivity, but the holiday can still be a feast day where we cease working and take time out to enjoy traditional gestures and moments of human conviviality.

In *The Feast of Fools*, where Harvey Cox examines the absence of festivity today, he states:

In a success-and-money oriented society we need a rebirth of patently unproductive festivity and expressive celebration.

It is much more in tune with the season to anticipate holiday festivities as a time for merriment rather than discouragement. Trouble can always be borrowed by looking on the dark side of a situation. We all know the classic complainer Scrooge, synonymous with Christmas, who labelled the excitement so much "humbug".

Christmas has always been a family fun-affair for me. To share some reminiscences I decided to adopt Dickens' idea of Christmas Past, Present and Future.

When I think of Christmas Past (as a child) I remember the excitement that built up to a crescendo culminating in the annual school concert on Christmas Eve - complete with the magic of tinselled angels, wise men in dressing gowns and a silver star suspended by a swinging thread. Long before this, shortbread snaking out of a cookie press onto a cookie sheet heralded the season, and as far back as I can remember I was allowed to help with the baking.

At that time I believed Christmas was conceived for children. On Christmas morning, my brother and I had to wait until after breakfast before we could open

gifts and this took all the patience we could muster. Then as gifts were unwrapped, we had to be careful to keep tags with the right parcel in order to write thank-you letters to relatives. There was a responsibility in receiving a gift - and also in giving one. When purchasing presents for friends and relatives we were advised to select something they would appreciate, but not to overspend.

Christmas Past includes the time after I married and our own children were young. We continued some of the traditions I grew up with and added a few from John's side. Instead of shortbread, I preferred a sugar cookie recipe that rolled out easily and cut into fancy shapes. When cooled, the children decorated the cookies with coloured icing and sparkling candies. I appreciated the boys' help in mixing the weighty fruit into the batter for the holiday cake.

Through my husband, I learned that Christmas is for grandparents, too. At many Mennonite family gatherings, the children put on a program. Recitations (often those learned for school and church concerts), songs and skits are performed for the express pleasure of grandma and grandpa. As a new member of a large family I learned further economy as we drew names beforehand and exchanged only one gift with the relatives. Everyone receives a gift, but there is no surplus.

Christmas Present offers a new challenge. Finding items to stuff stockings with is the hardest part of shopping, but also the most challenging. Buying gifts when children are small is not too difficult, but once they become teenagers it is a different story. They begin to earn enough money to satisfy their needs. To take the agony out of selection we post "want lists" on the kitchen bulletin board--not expecting everything on the list but giving a variety of inexpensive suggestions to serve as guidelines. Last year, as a joke, husband John included a Harley-Davidson. He ended up with a T-shirt sporting the insignia of the motorcycle.

Nonsense gifts are an integral part of the festivity within our immediate family

and also among the relatives. The uncles wrap up crazy gifts for each other and wait impatiently for the desired reaction when the packages are opened. One of the best jokes was the annual tie exchange between John and his brother Pete--accompanied by a letter from Santa. The same tie went back and forth for years, suffering alterations until finally there was only enough left to design a bow tie. A new tie had to be introduced and still turns up periodically, but Santa's letter became more important than the tie and now the exchange has evolved into a literary competition.

A few years ago we began wrapping family gifts with the colourful fliers that inundate the home. By carefully folding the paper to conceal the advertising, and adding some ribbon you can present an attractive looking parcel. We suffered some kidding at first, but now others have followed suit. Economics such as this leave a little extra to share with others less fortunate. A cheque is mailed to CARE at Christmas and instead of buying greeting cards at the store, we purchase UNICEF cards--a small way of showing that sharing is part of the celebration.

Looking to Christmas Future, we feel our children have some traditions to incorporate into their own Christmas celebrations once they leave home. Harvey Cox fears that:

Our social imagination has atrophied. Unlike previous generations whose visions of the society exceeded their means of accomplishing them, we suffer from a surplus of means and a shortage of vision.

We hope that our children do not suffer from a shortage of vision and that they continue to think of Christmas, not as a time for tension and extravagant gifts but for celebration, fellowship and fun. We want them to enjoy a small child's wonder and share in a grandparent's delight. It is our wish that they have learned that a gift is given freely and not reciprocally--just as God gave the world the gift of His Son born on Christmas day. mm

John Buhler makes sure things augur well for Morden and Farm King

by Roy Vogt

John Buhler, president of FARM KING CORPORATION of Morden, presides over a firm that has old roots in the town of Morden. Farm King has its origin in a company started by Adolf Krushel in 1932.

Mr. Krushel designed a grain grinder made from old car brake dums, a product which became known as the "Krushel Crusher". This name was later dropped because the children of those associated with the firm were teased in school with the rhyme:

"Krushel Crusher crush my bread;
If you don't I'll crush your head."

The business became known as Standard Gas Engine Works, and for many years was situated in downtown Morden. John Buhler married the daughter of Mr. Krushel and bought the firm in 1970. He renamed the firm Farm King after the name of an auger which the firm distributed. New facilities were opened in June 1975 in Morden's industrial park which is located in the south-west corner of the town. The firm has expanded remarkably under the leadership of Buhler since 1970. It budgeted sales of \$2½ million for 1976, which is 10 times the sales in 1970. The firm is now producing hammer mills, grinders, mixers, harrow draw bars, harrow sections, and a complete line of grain augers, mostly of the firms' own design. Markets for the product have been developed in Ontario, the prairie provinces and the United States, with Alberta proving to be the biggest single market, though the three prairie provinces are just about equal in their demand. The firm deals largely through distributors, but began setting up its own dealer system in Manitoba in October. Farm King is one of the major employers in Morden, with employment reaching a peak of 114 in busy seasons and averaging around 85.

Plans were made to begin the contract of manufacture of 1,900 tillers for John Deere in October, which gave an impetus to employment in the latter part of this year. John Buhler is extremely interested in community ventures, both those relating to his own manufacturing interest and to non-business ventures. He is on the Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute, he is a member of the Farm

Machinery Board and a member of the Alliance church of Morden, whose membership he says is made up of approximately 60 per cent people with a Mennonite background.

Mr. Buhler, though no longer a member of a Mennonite church, is extremely conscious of his Mennonite roots and proud to be considered a Mennonite. He has been active in civic politics in Morden and ran in a very close race for mayor in the last election. There is something intriguing and fascinating about his style. One has the impression that here is a man who enjoys tackling new things and is prepared to endure a certain amount of misunderstanding and outright hostility in the process. His enthusiasm and flare are attractive to those who share his visions, but apparently they have proven to be somewhat unsettling to those who wish to steer a different course.

In the Spring of 1976 Mr. Buhler was the victim of a secret attempt on the part of the council of the rural municipality of Stanley to invalidate a plan for a subdivision which he held on 60 acres bordering the artificial lake in Morden. The council

met in secret and gave first, second, and final reading at that one meeting to a by-law which would prevent Mr. Buhler from acting on his subdivision plans. Mr. Buhler appealed to the Queen's Court in Manitoba and in July Justice A. S. Dewar ruled that the council had abused its statutory powers and had acted in bad faith. Mr. Buhler's willingness to "tackle the powers that be" is typical of the dynamic approach that he takes to most problems, but the actions of the council and the subsequent trial are both a symptom and a cause of tensions that exist between him and some other members of the Morden community.

However, despite these tensions Mr. Buhler remains a strong booster of the Morden community. Though he has strong personal drives he prefers to live and work there because, he says, the overall pace is slower and more relaxed than in the city. He closed our interview with a characteristic remark: "It is good to see workers anxious to leave their work and to rush home at the end of their shift. It shows that they have something good to rush home to." mm



John Buhler and Premier Ed Schreyer

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No-fault Divorce proposed

A system of no-fault divorce and other radical changes to family law should be adopted in Canada, said a report tabled in the Federal House of Commons early this year.

Present law demands the airing of a marriage's dirty linen so that one parent or marriage partner may in the end be proved less "good" or more at "fault" and so be designated to pay the piper's piece in the loss of right to keep his or her children or the "right" to leave a marriage without acquiring substantial substance from a working partnership of many years standing as did Irene Murdoch of Alberta. She deserted, albeit because of a broken jaw inflicted on her by her estranged spouse. A woman in Manitoba at present can desert with just cause. However, if unaware that her rights must be applied for within a certain period of time she may have to forfeit a share in marital property.

Since acrimonious fights are common in the fault-finding system of marital settlements it is interesting to speculate whether anger contributes to the statistic that 75 percent of all maintenance orders in Canada are subject to default. In addition to coping with the rancour of a separation the difficulty experienced in supporting two households on one salary cannot be underestimated. According to a National Council of Welfare figure quoted in *Poor Kids* one family in ten in Canada is single-support and of single-support families headed by women an incredible 69.1 percent in 1974 lived in poverty. The question as to why women and society must pay the price for those who refuse to honor their responsibilities, namely the care of their offspring, arises. Why cannot governments arrange to ensure that proper payments go to families at all times and why cannot governments introduce an interprovincial system with enough muscle to collect maintenance from deserting parents. Far more is spent by government and society in the rehabilitation and care of children who attain adulthood under conditions of poverty, than would be spent on implementing and administering such machinery.

There are countless anecdotes about the inequity of family laws. June Menzies, in a Tribune article of March 1974 cites a case where two Canadians die, each leaving a spouse and three small children. Prior to death each had received an income of excess of \$5,000.

Each had contributed to the Canada Pension Plan since 1966. One spouse received from Canada Pension \$560, plus a monthly pension of \$71.12 and \$28.15 per month for each child, a total of \$155.57. The other spouse received \$560, no more. The reason for the difference? One of the deceased was male and the other female, proof that men need protection too!

There are many questions - For instance, do legislators recognize that women contribute to the economy by raising members of a future work force? Further, are legislators aware that in providing a comfortable home for the male spouse the woman makes it possible for him to make a greater contribution to his career? In so doing is she not entitled to pension rights, being as much a wage earner as he is? Recognition of such rights could spell out a benefit to the mate during a time when he is unemployed or ill and therefore unable to contribute to the Canada Pension Plan. He should for this period receive 50 percent of his wife's pension plan contributions. This would be possible if exploratory recommendations to the Canada Pension Plan could be implemented, namely, that 50 percent of a husband and wife's Canada Pension Plan contributions be directed to the pension of the other spouse, whether in the labor force or not. This could ensure for women an independent security and allow them to benefit from the males overall higher level of earnings.

It is obvious that injustices in family law do not surface during divorce only. Mrs. Menzies, who served as vice-chairman of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, cites other inequities. For instance, even if the Murdochs had lived happily in Manitoba and decided after many years to divide in a friendly manner, their assets, the province would order them to pay a large share of these assets in gift taxes. Or, given the event of the husband's death, the state would declare that all assets belonged to the husband and tax the widow on the estate, an estate contributed to, by her, over the years and which in fact belongs to her.

If such and similar injustices flourish under today's family law there is need for reform. Recommendations of the Manitoba Law Reform Commission will go a long way toward shaping any future laws for the Province. If proposed laws follow the guidelines or recommendations a greater degree of justice in family law should prevail. However, even more thorough legislation than that given in the Recommendations can be aimed for and can become law through the lobbying power of an informed public. Informed contact of the public with government representatives at both the federal and provincial levels can enact, hopefully, and result in positive change.

- by Hilda Matsuo

Afraid to face the prospect of academic failure in our children

by Helen Ruth Riesen

I was very interested to read Roy Vogt's editorial in the April issue of *Mennonite Mirror*, entitled "Why Can't We Face Guilt Anymore?" I was particularly struck by his assessment of parental attitudes with respect to the behaviour or misbehaviour of children in the classroom. There is merit in his point of view that present defensive attitudes of parents arise out of our reluctance to acknowledge the possibility of lying, cheating, and stealing in our children; we are unwilling to lay the burden of personal responsibility and personal guilt on their shoulders. Mr. Vogt goes on to indicate that many parents today fall into the trap of themselves assuming too much responsibility for the misdeeds of their children. They become "insecure and vulnerable, overly willing to please their children and to shield them from difficulties. Children are often clever enough to take advantage of this insecurity and transform it into protection and justification for themselves."

That seems to be increasingly true of parents today. We have no doubt all become aware of over-protective parents fiercely defending their offspring, no matter what, of children feeling they are somehow justified, no matter how inappropriate their behaviour. The result is a subsequent blurring of the distinction between polite and rude, right and wrong, good and bad.

There is a parallel situation in education as well. Parents are also afraid to acknowledge the possibility of the academic failure of their children. Hence there has been an erosion of the standards that have traditionally been applied to various grade levels. Exams have been largely abolished and failing is virtually unheard of. Could this, too, be the result of a misplaced desire to shield children from difficulties?

During the past year I have had occasion to spend a good deal of time in one of the local elementary and junior high schools. I wish now to submit some random observations in this regard.

Most of us would shy away from a return to the classroom situation of our day. I recall beginning Grade 1 with more

than 40 other children. Upon graduating from Grade 12 I was one of five; two of us went on to attend university. There was considerable competition for high marks on exams and, as I recall, the top half of the class was generally taught to, probably because the feeling was that these were the students who were interested, capable, and likely to benefit from an education. I hasten to add that the setting was rural, and those who gradually drifted away from school usually managed to become assimilated into the community in some more or less useful way.

The situation has changed. Society has become increasingly urban, technological, and affluent, and parents' expectations for their children have expanded. A high school education has come to be seen as minimal, and dropouts have become less able to assume useful roles in society.

Increasingly, the major concern has been for the student who might not pass. Various efforts have been made in his behalf, including the introduction of the general course at the secondary level, the abolishing of the externally set, provincially administered Departmental examinations, and a proliferation of options.

The onus now is squarely on the individual teacher not only to teach students but to set standards and to evaluate progress. Starting in Grade 1, programs have been set up in an attempt to enable children to progress at their own rate. This implies, in effect, that there is no such thing as failure. In St. Vital, where we live, the principal's association passed a resolution some years ago that stated that no child should skip or be held back more than once from Kindergarten through Grade 9. In practice, it seems, only very rarely does anyone repeat a grade now.

Everyone is to go at his own rate; virtually no one fails. But what *is* your rate? Who is to say? The rate is adjustable. And what about standards of achievement? They, too, must then become individualized and adjusted. Children soon learn that any rate will do. They still pass, no matter how little they learn. There are no consequences for laziness,

and to the horror of a good many teachers, the rate seems to be slower and slower.

This is not always immediately apparent at the elementary level, but it does begin to show in junior high. And I'm sure all of us have read countless articles deploring student's lack of skill and knowledge in mathematics and language arts at the secondary and university levels.

Are children lazier than they used to be? I doubt it. But they are no different from grownups in this respect. Who doesn't need standards, deadlines, commitments, or competitions to get things done? Every housewife knows how motivational it is to be expecting company. Every accountant works hard to balance his books. "Year end" puts a lot of people in our society into high gear. Do you remember what June exams used to do for us when we were students? Try looking in on our schools in June this year.

Many students simply aren't working at their studies. It was my experience to teach some Grade 9 Geometry on a volunteer basis this year. At one point I assigned a modest two or three geometry constructions for homework. I was shocked when less than 10 per cent of the class saw fit to complete the assignment. On interviewing the teacher, I found that this situation regularly prevails to the point where she no longer assigns homework. All math is done and marked in class. Her assessment of the situation was that since the curriculum is flexible and there are no exact standards set which Grade 9's must meet in order to pass math, students see homework as unnecessarily inflicted by the teacher. They see no need to exert themselves. As long as a student isn't absolutely at the bottom of the class, he is assured of passing to the next grade. This can set the stage for a conflict situation between teacher and students. The outcome is assured. The contest has the teacher on one side, trying to get students to commit themselves and to do some work. On the other side is a good-sized part of the class who, knowing they will pass anyhow, aim to put in a minimal effort. There is also subtle pressure on conscientious students not to do too much.

In the past, especially at levels where exams were externally set, both student and teacher had a stake in meeting certain standards. At its worst this manifested itself in "teaching to the exam", and in a concerted effort by all persons to "beat the system". However, there was co-operation between student and teacher, and the very fact that a day of reckoning would come was motivational for both. This co-operation at its best led to real learning; for it has always been true that an individual gets out of a situation no more than he puts in.

I would not wish to advocate a return to

the old system of exams where the entire year was won or lost during three hours. However, some combination of the present system of continual evaluation and a major final exam might be appropriate. Of course the minute we advocate evaluating the student's level of achievement relative to some arbitrary standard, we admit the possibility of failure. Some won't make it.

But look at it this way. As relatively large groups of children are passed along from grade to grade without all the prerequisite skills, by junior high the situation within the classroom becomes intolerable. The teacher is faced with a class composed of 30 or more children of widely differing abilities. Individualized instruction and rates of progress would seem to be ideal. But is it practical to assume the teacher will find time to tutor on a 1:1 or even on a small group basis? I ask you to guess at what level most of the teaching is directed. Whose rate of progress prevails? My observations lead me to believe that it is to the slow-normal group. There is a creditable effort being made to get these children to understand and to work. There is the reasonable expectation that the brighter children will assimilate the material easily. They do, of course. And then they are bored, because they are rarely taught to, and even more rarely challenged.

We have made some provisions in our system for children with learning disabilities. Nearly every school boasts a resource teacher whose function it is to work with these children and to help their teachers modify the program to suit their need. There are special classes and even special schools for children with more serious problems. The bottom half of the class is generally adequately taught to. But what of our brighter children? How often are they stimulated? Our best are as good as they ever were. But in the present system, they are not getting the attention they deserve.

And what of the self-image of those children that are simply coasting through school? They haven't failed, but then, what is passing, anyhow? By making it all so easy are we not effectively robbing them of all sense of accomplishment? Would our children not have more respect for themselves and for education if objectives were set, if students were formally tested at the end of each year, and if they were evaluated as having met or having failed to meet the objectives? Then those who passed could be justifiably proud, and a diploma would once more have meaning.

And those who failed for lack of ability or interest? We aren't all academics. Nor do we want to be. As a matter of fact, at this point in time a higher education doesn't even assure anyone of job opportunities or a good salary. Do we really feel these students are happier being moved ahead from grade to grade where material to be covered becomes increas-

ingly abstract? Or would they be left with more self-awareness and self-respect if they were honestly appraised as not being academically inclined, then streamed into job-oriented education based on their aptitudes and interests which they could pursue with dignity and purpose?

Any statement of this kind is, of necessity, a gross oversimplification of

a complex problem. The expectations of our society are reflected in our system of education. As long as we parents refuse to deal honestly with the abilities, or lack of them, of our children, as long as we try to blur the distinctions between work well done and work not well done, our schools will continue to teach too little to too many. mm

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review

Hiding Place is good religious cinema

by Al Reimer

Religious films usually fall into one of two categories: either they are blatantly propagandistic, or they are so stickily sentimental that they make *The Sound of Music* look like an exercise in cynicism. Only the pure of heart and empty of head could love such films - and how many of us would admit to being either one? The theme of religious faith is difficult to dramatize convincingly for the simple reason that faith requires a suppression of the ego rather than a dramatic release of the ego. Drama thrives on such strong emotional states as romantic love, hatred, lust, ambition, but not on meek faith or quiet steadfastness. To make a good film on the theme of faith and spiritual devotion requires that they be invested with highly visible dramatic values. Not an easy task - even in a medium of such strong visual impact as the film.

The Hiding Place comes as close to doing just that, though, as any religious film I have ever seen. After seeing this latest release of World Wide Pictures I am not surprised that Christian audiences are lining up even in Winnipeg's sub-zero weather to see it. The audience that filled the King's Theatre the other night when I was there was not a typical movie audience at all. Instead of the usual, noisy, hairy young couples with a smattering of older singles, there were staid middle-aged couples and families with young children. Most of them looked as if they felt a little out of place in a movie theatre (I assumed that many of them were Mennonites, although it's becoming difficult to identify Mennonites by appearance.) I could tell from the shocked reactions around me that many of them were getting more than they had bargained for as the scenes of Nazi atrocities unfolded. This is definitely not a film for young children.

Much of the strength of *The Hiding Place* comes from its excellent cast. Julie Harris and Eileen Heckart are two of the finest actresses in America. Both give sensitive, sympathetic performances. Even more impressive, though, is newcomer Jeannette Clift, who plays the part of Corrie ten Boom, the only member of the courageous Dutch family to survive. Miss Clift knows how to portray suffering and inner conflict so naturally that she doesn't seem

to be acting at all. Arthur O'Connell as the patriarchal, delightfully eccentric head of the family, is a trifle too loveable at times, but he too adds lustre to the film.

This true story takes place in Holland and Germany during the Nazi reign of terror. The ten Booms are a comfortable, bourgeois family of watchmakers who live their simple Christian faith with the warmth and innocence of children. When the Nazis start rounding up Jews, the family spontaneously offers its large home as a temporary hiding place for Jewish refugees trying to get out of Holland. Blithely disregarding the terrible danger, Betsy and Corrie, the spinster sisters, become the head operators of "God's Underground". They are, of course, soon discovered and arrested, and shipped off to concentration camp in Germany.

The second half of the film is an almost unrelieved sequence of brutality, torture and death. In the midst of this living hell, the sisters try to spread the healing effects of their faith among the despairing prisoners. I found this part of the film less satisfactory than the part set in Holland. Piling up scene upon scene of such unspeakable cruelty and suffering becomes, finally a preoccupation with evil and violence that itself borders on the obscene - even if the fragile faith of the sisters does manage to shed a few rays on the darkness.

The central question in the film is the same one posed by Dostoevsky in *The Brothers Karamazov*: If God is a loving God then why does He permit so much evil and suffering to exist in His creation? Human logic provides no satisfactory answer to this overwhelming question. Faith falls silent in the face of such an accusation. The sisters can not explain God's apparent indifference either. Neither can they resolve the ambiguities of belief which require them to lie, cheat and have others steal for them so that they can carry out their mission of faith. But while faith may be driven to silence, it does not cease to exist. For a while Corrie allows hate to push aside love, but when her saintly sister dies she recovers a love that is stronger than ever. In a final touch of irony, Corrie is released from prison by means of a simple clerical error, as she discovers later. God's will or random chance? Believers and non-believers will answer in different ways.

Christian viewers of this film will probably have their faith strengthened and uplifted by it. If I were a sceptic or a non-believer, however, I don't think that this film would convince me that Christian faith is stronger than evil, or that the real world is in the hands of a God with a divine sense of purpose for his creatures. I would, however, have to admit that I had learned something about both the nature of evil and the nature of faith, and that is about all I could reasonably expect from any film. mm

Honest, zestful, bold describe Mennonite Theatre's last effort

Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre's Production of Gogol's *The Marriage*, Playhouse Theatre, November 26 and 27, 1976.

A Review by Al Reimer

Much as I admire competent professionalism on the stage, I happen to think that amateur theatre has its own special charms. The MTC's dominance in this city has had the effect, I think, of making local audiences less interested in amateur productions. It's a pity because amateur theatre is often a fresh and exciting experience not in spite of its alleged deficiencies but because of them. Enthusiasm and spontaneity can sometimes compensate splendidly for lack of technique and in experience. In the end I was completely carried away by the Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre's performance of *The Marriage*, where the evening before I had come away unmoved by the MTC's current production. Polished professionalism is a wasteful bore when applied to a bad play. On the other hand a good play can work its magic even through a rough-edged amateur performance.

I found *The Marriage* to be not only honest but zestful and bold - a production that dared to take chances even if they didn't always work. Yes, some of the individual performances were a little overdone - with touches of the farcical here and there. Amateur acting often tends towards one of two extremes: either it is as stiff and mumbling as a talking sleepwalker, or else it is all arms and legs, swivelling necks and awkwardly shouted dialogue - especially when the play is a comedy. Of the two extremes, I much prefer the exuberance of the second. And that is what we mostly got in this production.

In my review of last year's production of *The Miser*, I commented on the infusion of young talent in the ranks of the Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre. In this year's production the youth movement was equally impressive. With the exception of two major and two minor roles, the cast was made up entirely of young players. And all acquitted themselves with honor. Martin Entz as the bashful suitor Podkoleschin did very well in a difficult part. It's not easy to portray such pathological shyness and foolish indecision convincingly. In the first act, young

Entz's acting tended to be a little timid and lacklustre, but he came splendidly into his own in the last act.

Ursula Froese played Agafya, the tittering maiden with the bewildering task of choosing among five suitors. Her Agafya had just the right blend of rustic modesty and giddy silliness. Again, playing the innocent young heroine on stage is not so easy - especially if you really are young and innocent. Kay Klassen was quite satisfactory as Agafya's older companion and chaperone.

The three other suitors represented strongly contrasted character types who were united only by their outrageous smugness and fatuous self-love. John Peters, Martin Enns and Gerhard Bock threw themselves into their respective roles with reckless abandon. I approved of their daring, even if it misfired from time to time. In comedy of this type it is much better to err on the side of slapstick than on the side of subtlety. John Peters as the portly, oafish Ruehrei ("Scrambled Egg"), suggested the vulgarity and grossness of the character without falling completely into caricature. He showed good comic presence. Martin Enns as Sheviakin, the lecherous marine officer, came on a little too strong in the opening scene, I thought. But he settled down nicely and also caught the broad essentials of his character. Gerhard Bock also tended to overact, so that his movements were more reminiscent of a puppet on a string than of a human being. However, he too deserves credit for a vivid if somewhat over-drawn characterization.

The star of the evening once again, as he has been so often before, was Horst Friesen as the well-meaning matchmaker. I don't know what this company would do without this reliable veteran. He can pick up a play and carry it all by himself. He tackles every role as though it has been written for his personal enjoyment. (Aside to Horst: please don't ever allow yourself to fall under a bus or eat poisonous mushrooms by mistake. The Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre would never recover from the loss.) My only criticism of his work is that he plays too directly to the audience at times - like an opera singer with one eye on the con-

ductor. But even this doesn't really matter as we watch him building up to one of his patented comic outbursts of frustrated rage or desperate lying.

Brigitte Graba as the professional matchmaker was a pleasant surprise. She came close to stealing a scene or two from Horst Friesen, no mean feat in itself. Mrs. Graba is a real find. She looks at ease, moves gracefully and speaks her lines in a very engaging manner. I find it hard to believe that this is her first acting assignment. She tried hard to catch the coarseness of the old matchmaker's character, although her handsome appearance made that difficult.

For a while I was afraid that the play wouldn't get off the ground on opening night. The first act was rather lifeless and hesitant, although Dr. Peter Friesen had some good moments as Stapan, the servant. In the second act the performance began to build and came to a lively and hilarious climax in the last act. Of the two sets I liked the second much better than the first, which looked too tatty and cramped to be the home of a country gentleman. The direction of John Enns was generally crisp and authoritative. He had obviously gone to some pains to get the proper degree of contrast among his players and to ensure that the comic climaxes were properly paced and orchestrated. I would again point out, though, that even amateur actors should be required to stay in character at all times. They must also be restrained from moving around the stage needlessly; above all, they should not be permitted to deliver so many of their speeches directly to the audience. That kind of "broadside" characterization may be tolerated in opera but it should not be encouraged in a stage play.

These minor strictures aside, I enjoyed the evening immensely. As I said last year, German theatre is alive and well in Winnipeg. It's too bad that the company hasn't got the resources to do a whole season of German plays. There will be another evening of one act plays in German at the Planetarium Auditorium, February 24 - 26. I know from personal experience how much work and care go into these annual productions. It's a shame that it all has to end after only two performances.

The recipe of the Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre is a good one though: take a handful of young Mennonite actors who have acquired a workable German accent at the Saturday German School, add a dash of Horst Friesen for seasoning, and let such experienced hands as John Enns, Heinz Janzen, Vic Wieler, Gerd Neuendorff, Fred Jansen, Reinhard Penner, Paul Neustaedter, Ernst Bock, Robert Loewen, and others too numerous to mention, do the mixing and shaking and presto - you have a Mennonite stage cocktail that is not only pleasing to the palate, but that packs a real wallop. Prosit! **mm**

Christmas cards make Bible story look too good

by Maynard Shelley

Do Christmas cards tell the truth?

Look at the scenes on the greetings piled up on your coffee table. Note the serenity of the shepherds on the hills watching their flocks by night. See the peaceful assembly of animals and spectators gathered around the manger. The holy family seems unruffled even in the flight to Egypt.

But that's not right at all. Something is out of focus. The greeting cards gloss over the hard times that Joseph and Mary lived through.

Israel of 2,000 years ago must have been much like the Middle East of today. In Galilee, terrorists were hiding in the hills waiting to swoop down on a Roman patrol too far from its home garrison. In Judea, plots against the government were being hatched in every marketplace.

Matthew and Luke didn't go into these details. They assumed that everyone knew and understood the seething bitterness that was then abroad in the land. Like your colored greeting cards, they seem to have played down the rawboned struggle.

But when you read the Bible with open eyes, you can get that chill in your blood that must have been in Joseph's. Think of the flight to Egypt. Mary and Joseph were running from a brutal king, so cruel he could kill all the children in a village. And Herod did just that.

And Herod wasn't the only one who could be violent. Out of Galilee rose the Zealots, a religious and patriotic group which saw the Romans as enemies of Jews and of their religion. They protested peacefully and nonviolently, every day and at every turn of the road. But some of the most hotheaded of the Zealots turned to violence, destroying property and waiting in ambush to kill.

Whenever the Roman soldiers could catch these Zealot guerrillas, they made an example of them. Jesus heard reports of "Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices" (Lk. 13:1); Some of the Zealot radicals fled to the wilderness to build up their strike force. In Acts 21:38, we hear the Romans talking about 4,000 terrorists, a band of outlaw Zealots whom they called Assassins and murderers. Josephus, the Jewish historian who worked for the Romans, writes about Zealot guerrillas called *Sicarii* (daggersmen - after the Latin

word for the short knife that an assassin carried under his robe).

Jesus himself was suspected of being a Zealot. At the trial before his crucifixion, He was accused of telling people not to pay taxes to Caesar, something the Zealots always did (Lk. 23:2). Certainly, several of His disciples were former Zealots, including Simon who bore the name (Lk. 6:15) and Judas Iscariot.

Few conquered nations live at peace with their conquerors. The Jews in their opposition to the Roman army of occupation were in much the same situation as that of the Palestinian Arabs today in relation to the Israeli army on Jordan's west bank. The conquered people taunted the soldiers and resisted every foreign law.

So, when "a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled" (Lk. 2:1), patriotic Jews everywhere resented this law which called for a census to enroll all the people on the Roman tax lists. They planned to resist. And many did, some with violence.

Joseph, the carpenter in Nazareth of Galilee, had a hard decision to make. The Zealots couldn't confront the Romans directly in their opposition to the census. So, they tried to raise every obstacle possible, beginning with noncooperation. Judas of Galilee, one of the founders of the Zealots, worked with the people at "the time of the census; he induced some people to revolt under his leadership" (Acts 5:37, New English Bible.)

The historian Josephus tells how the extremists made life hard for people. "For then it was that the Sicarii got together against those that were willing to submit themselves to the Romans," he says, "and treated them in all respects as if they had been their enemies, both by plundering them of what they had, by driving away their cattle, and by setting fire to their houses."

Joseph had been warned. To obey or not obey the decree of the Roman emperor was the choice. He decided to defy the terrorists, though he stood to lose his home and his life.

Joseph risked his life and that of Mary and the child to be born to do what needed to be done, even if it took him a long way from home. His house might have been burnt and his cattle stolen. Yet, he went. But even in the going, he was in great danger.

If the Christmas cards fail the test of reality, they do testify to the promise. Jesus, coming to a world of strife, did bring peace.

In those days, peace was a rare commodity, as it has always been. Jesus came to a world of unrest and turbulence. Peacelessness is in the world and inside our souls. "On earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!" (Lk. 2:14). When the angels proclaimed the prophecy of peace, the shepherds rejoiced and so can we. We needed that!

mm

Mobile home plant opens in Winkler

Winkler Grandeur Mobile Homes Ltd. is the fourth major industry to locate in Winkler in the last three years. The \$450,000, 32,000 sq. ft. plant was officially opened on November 25th by Mayor H.F. Wiebe in a grand ribbon-cutting ceremony.

The mobile home building plant is expecting to employ 50 persons and has projected a future expansion of an additional 16,000 sq. ft. as warranted. The new company was formed by a group of seven men from the southern Manitoba region between Gretna and Winkler who became inspired by Ken Ginter's idea of the company in the early part of 1976.

At the present two models, the Elite and the Western, are being built but plans are for the production of a double-wide model measuring 24' x 54'. The currently produced models both measure 14' x 72' and retail at about \$21,000. About 250 units will be made in the first year of operation. While the first mobile home is sold to a couple from Carman, the market will generally extend from Saskatchewan to Northern Ontario in Central Canada.

Ken Ginter, the power dynamo behind the new company was raised at Horn-dean and was at one time Secretary-Treasurer for the Town of Altona and Winkler. After a five year stint at Triple E as manager of the Mobile Homes division, he is presently involved as Secretary-Treasurer and General Manager of Winkler Grandeur Mobile Homes Ltd. Other shareholders of the Company are Bill Siemens, president, Abe Wiebe, vice-president, Henry Fehr, Benjamin Nickel, Arnold Brown and Harold Reimer.



One of the first Grandeur mobile homes is pulled off the assembly line. Photo courtesy of Bob Peters, Pembina Times.

The poor man's last cow

by Gerhard Fast

Translated by Al Reimer

*This story is taken from Gerhard Fast's **In the Shadow of Death**, a moving account of life in the early Soviet period. The author was banished to the northern port of Archangel, from which he subsequently made a thrilling escape by stowing away on a German ship bound for England. The incident takes place in a Mennonite settlement in Siberia several years prior to the author's arrest.*

It was the autumn of 1922. Under Bolshevik rule the taxes on farm produce were becoming heavier to bear from year to year. For many the harvest no longer sufficed to pay them. Whoever could not pay enough in grain was required to supply butchered cattle, or even sheep and pigs.

Whenever the farmers took their grain to the city 65 kilometres away, they were forced to wait long periods--sometimes for days--until they were permitted to unload it. After the granaries had been crammed full, the grain was simply dumped out in the open. Full sacks of grain served as walls, and this "granary" was finally completed with a tarpaulin roof. For days on end rain would fall on the piled grain and enormous amounts of the finest wheat would rot and spoil.

In December came the meat requisition. In our colony half the milk cows had to be slaughtered, since there was not enough other livestock. We Germans mostly had very good milk-cows, the so-called German red cows, which were valued all over Russia as exceptionally good producers.

The harshness with which we were treated at this time is illustrated by the following story.

The farmers have butchered their cattle and are to take it into town the next day. That evening there is a general assembly in the village. The mayor asks everyone in turn whether he has butchered his stock and prepared it for delivery the next day. One after the other makes his declaration. All are ready.

"Bergen?" asks the mayor.

"No!" comes the slow, hesitant answer from the rear.

"Why not?"

"I've only got the one cow. That's all

I've got. I don't have any more grain either. Our cow is the only source of nourishment for myself, my wife and our three little ones. If I butcher my cow, we'll have nothing left and my kids will have to starve."

Dead silence. No one dares to say a word. All know that Bergen has spoken the truth. He is the poorest farmer in the village, but no one can accuse him of dishonesty. Even the mayor is quiet for a moment; he, too, is familiar with Bergen's tragic situation. After a lengthy pause, during which one could have heard a fly, he addresses Bergen again:

"Bergen, can you raise your taxes through the grain requisition?"

"No, I haven't got any left."

Again a long pause.

"Bergen, how do you propose to pay your taxes then?"

"Do I really have to give up my last cow, the only food my kids have?"

"Yes, Bergen, if you haven't got anything else to pay with, then you'll have to give her up. The government is inflexible and without pity."

"All right, you can take her then, but I can't butcher her all by myself now at night," Bergen answers in a low but decisive voice.

"Men, who will help with the butchering?" the mayor asks.

Again a lengthy silence.

Help Bergen? Most of them would like to, but to help him slaughter his last cow and destroy his only source of nourishment for his children? They want no part of that.

"Friends, I understand why you don't want to help him. But he'll have to surrender the cow in any case. It's impossible for him to do the butchering alone, so he has to be given some help. Who's willing?"

Another hush.

"I'll help!" some one finally volunteers from the crowd. "I, too, - and I," says a second, a third, and a fourth.

They gather the necessary killing tools and move slowly towards Bergen's yard. Resigned now, he takes the lead. He opens the small cowshed.

"Moo," a soft call greets him. The cow recognizes her master and lows to him in the trusting expectation that he is bringing her the usual evening fodder.

For a moment Bergen stands there uncertainly. Then he pulls himself together, presses his pale lips firmly together, strides to the stall, unties the cow and leads her out into the cold, snow-covered yard.

"Moo, moo," the cow bellows as she begins to sense that all is not as it should be.

"What's the matter? What are you doing?" the wife comes running outside. When she sees the cow she cries out, "But not our cow, our only support?"

"Yes, Maria, it's got to be this way. There's nothing else to be done."

She doesn't say another word, but turns around and staggers back into the cottage.

"Moo-uh," the cow's bellow is cut off in the middle as she expires under the men's knives. From inside can be heard a loud cry, then a long, heart-rending sob. . . . The sentence has been carried out. Who will give the children their warm milk in the morning, their only sustenance?

Early next morning, when it is still pitch dark, the whole village comes to life. A large wagonload of butchered cattle departs from every farmyard. The cold weather has frozen the meat solid. Late that evening they arrive at the county town. On the way they have met thousands of farm wagons loaded with frozen meat from all the villages of the district.

"Will we be able to get rid of our meat promptly?" the farmers wonder next morning as they arise at five, swiftly hitch up their horses and start looking for the delivery depot. Nobody knows where it is. Finally they discover that it is some distance out of town.

They drive out. When they arrive, they find that thousands of wagons are there before them. At last, around eight, the officials arrive to start taking delivery of the meat. More and more wagons unload until the supply grows into a veritable avalanche of meat. After it has been weighed, the meat is simply thrown down in the open on the snow. By evening many have still not had their turn to unload. Some have to wait for days, and only after they have bribed the officials with a bottle of vodka can they get rid of their load a little sooner.

The meat lies there out in the open for months at a time because the transport train is not ready. Packs of stray dogs wander all over the mountain of meat, feasting, loitering and multiplying themselves in the frozen beef carcasses.

Here also lies Bergen's only cow.

A few kilometers away thousands of bushels of wheat lie rotting under the open skies; and beyond that a huge pile of potatoes which has been forcibly confiscated from the farmers.

And Bergen's kids cry out for bread and milk.

And in the Volga region at this time millions are starving to death. mm

do you know / weetst uck waut

Steinbach Bible Institute plans for a college program as early as next fall, says principal Harvey Plett. Board members also decided to go ahead with plans for expansion of facilities next spring.

Erich Vogt, formerly of Steinbach was invested as a member of the Order of Canada by Governor General Jules Leger this October. Vogt, a professor of nuclear physics, is vice-president of faculty and student affairs at University of British Columbia.

Mrs. Elaine Enns was singled out for special recognition during fall convocation exercises at the University of Winnipeg. Those who have spent years at part-time studies should share Mrs. Enns' pleasure. While completing over a period of eight years, a B. A. degree in geography, she held down a full-time teaching job. Mrs. Enns' husband Wayne, another geography buff, teaches that subject at Hastings Junior High School in St. Vital.

Karen Bock, of 23 Tod Drive, was one of the recipients of a major Board of Regents entrance scholarships at the University of Winnipeg. Ms. Bock received her scholarship on the basis of high performance in French. She also attended the university's Saturday morning German school last year.

Abe Warkentin, a contributor to our FYI (for your information) column, has begun a 24 month period of voluntary service with MCC (Canada). "Carillon" readers of south-eastern Manitoba will miss his weekly touch as editor of that paper.

Winnifred Warkentin, a staff member of WHO (World Health Organization) in New Delhi, India, has just returned to her position after spending a ten-week period of furlough in the Steinbach area. While enroute to WHO headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland she stopped to visit her brother, well-known geographer John Warkentin, in London. Winni assists the government of India's Directorate General of Health Services in a planning and development project which plans for continuing education programs for national nurses. Miss Warkentin worked at a similar project in Malaysia from 1966-70 and was at that time employed by the Canadian government (CIDA). From 1970-74 she was coordinator of in-service education at Winnipeg Children's Hospital, taught maternal and child nursing and furthered her own education at the University of Western Ontario.

Jake Epp, MP for Provencher on November 4 put forth a motion urging the prime minister to make representation to the government of the U.S.S.R. to stop religious persecution and oppression of Soviet Christians. Specifically Mr. Epp's concern focused on the five-year imprisonment at hard labor of Georgi Vins, Secretary for the Council for the Evangelical Christians and Baptists for the supposed crime of ministering to the congregation that elected him their pastor. The Soviet Union is committed to release such prisoners and allow them freedom of worship, according to the provisions of the United Nations Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which it has ratified.

Dates

December 10: 8:00 p.m. Westgate Christmas Program, First Menn. Church.

December 11: 7:30 p.m. Winnipeg Bible College Christmas Concert at the college auditorium in Otterburne.

December 11: 8:00 p.m. The CMBC Oratorio Choir in a presentation of Heinrich Schuetz's Christmas Story and a variety of Christmas music at Sargent Avenue Menn. Church. Included will be Jan Bender's Christmas Concertato for choir, organ, oboe and bassoon.

December 12: First Menn. Choir and orchestra with Henry Engbrecht conducting. Time, 7:30. Excerpts from Handel's Messiah. Soloists Helen Neufeld, Erika Dyck, John Martens and Nelson Lohnes.

December 12: 2:20 p.m. Steinbach Bible Inst. presenting "He is the Son of God" and "Uns ist ein Kind Geboren", at the E.M.B. Church, Steinbach.

December 19: The Treble Teens will perform at the Steinbach E.M.B. Church morning service.

December 19: 7:00 p.m. junior and senior Choirs Christmas Concert at Bethel Menn. Church with choirs under the direction of Cathy Larsen and June Friesen respectively.

Dec. 22: 1:30 p.m. Pre-Christmas closing program for parents and friends, at Gretna MCI.

Dec. 24: 5:00 and 7:00 p.m. Candlelight Services at First Menn. Church.



Herb Wiebe has left for Bangladesh where he will deal with irrigation and the development of grain storage. Herb has an agricultural and engineering degree from the University of Manitoba. He is the son of Jake and Anne Wiebe of LaRiviere, and is a member of the MB church at Manitou.



Tina Funk is spending three years in Botswana as a nursing instructor. A Grace Hospital grad, she also holds a BN from the University of Manitoba. Tina is the daughter of John and Eliese Funk of Steinbach, and is a member of Fort Garry Mennonite Brethren church.



Barbara Harms has begun a 30-month term of service as a public health nurse in Recife, Brazil. A Grace Hospital grad, she is the daughter of Bill and Trudy Harms of Gretna, and a member of the Blumenorter Mennonite congregation.

Ken Regier, of Regier and Stewart, the Winnipeg-based law firm, states that his firm now has a branch office in Steinbach. The firm practices primarily land, corporate and commercial law and occasionally deals in civil litigation and criminal law. Mr. Regier is known to "Mirror" readers as the man who successfully defended Henry Funk's right to opt out of paying labor union dues.

Louise E. Pauls of 247 Cordova Street, Winnipeg, has received the silver medal for Grade 8 singing from the Royal Conservatory of Music, Toronto. Louise is a student of Dorothy Lawson at the Brandon School of Music.



The Mclvor MB Church

The Mclvor Avenue MB Church, opening its doors on the way of its dedication October 10, 1976, has become the ninth MB church in Winnipeg. It was a project of the overcrowded North Kildonan MB church, undertaken in order to meet its urgent need to establish another congregation. The latter's pastor, Rev. Wm. Neufled and the Mclvor Avenue pastor, Rev. Allan Labun (formerly Assistant to Rev. Neufled) worked in closest harmony with the total congregation. By choice one third (251 members) of the large congregation became the members of the new "All English" church while the North Kildonan congregation remains bilingual. Said Rev. Neufled at the dedication of the new church: "The project that was intended to divide us into two churches, drew us closer together instead." Rev. Labun and his congregation now desire that their new House of Worship be "a place where God is worshipped and where the spiritual needs of many people will be met."

Winnipeg Singers under the direction of William Baerg, head of MBBC music department, made its debut in a concert performance on November 21 at the Westminster United Church. This choir was the house choir of the CBC. they have now organized to become an existence apart from the CBC and this, in order to be of value to the community at large. While keeping in close contact with the CBC and also recording for it, they are now expecting to incorporate in order to be eligible to receive government grants to further their new venture. Manitoba Arts Council has awarded the choir \$1,000 for the next two performances, these concerts to be presented in the Spring of 1977.

Roy Vogt, Editor Mennonite Mirror, was recently appointed Regional chairman (for the prairie provinces and the north west territories) of the Canadian Council of Multi Culturalism with John Munroe the minister responsible. Eugene Derksen, editor and publisher of the Carillon News, was also appointed



Allan Labun

Altona Bishop dies

The well-known bishop of the Bergthaler Mennonite Church, the Rev. David D. Schulz, died at the age of 79, on Wednesday, November 17th, in the Altona Personal Care Home. Funeral services were conducted the following Sunday, November 21st in the Altona Bergthaler Church. Ministers of the local church, Rev. H.J. Gerbrandt and Rev. J.F. Pauls addressed the large congregation, recounting the broad aspects of his ministry.

David Schulz, born March 11, 1897 in the village of Weidenfeld (near Altona), entered the ministry of the Bergthaler Church at an early age, being ordained as a minister in 1920, and as a bishop in 1926. During the course of his ministry, extending some 40 years (1920-1962), he assumed additional responsibilities and duties such as farming and serving on numerous boards, as well as leadership positions in the Manitoba and Canadian Conference of Mennonites, but always the work of the church remained his first love and concern, serving at some 700-800 weddings and funerals, and countless communion services in the various Bergthaler churches. His communion services are known to have been among the most ceremonial and majestic ever performed in southern Manitoba, and many of his adherents will fondly remember Bishop Schulz for these and many other blessings.

MCC loans seed money for inmate-run business

Mennonite Central Committee U. S. ministries members agreed at their October 4-5, 1976 meeting in Chicago to loan \$5,000 seed money for a printing business run by inmates of Clinton Minimum Security Prison, Trenton, N. J. Profits from Community Action for Vocational and Industrial Development (CAVID) will provide rehabilitation services for inmates. It is hoped that Mennonites near the prison will become involved with the CAVID program. The Mennonite Church, Alpha, N. J., the Doylestown Mennonite Church, Doylestown, Pa., have appointed contact persons for CAVID.

CAVID was first conceived by William Kestner, a prisoner in the Clinton prison, to give inmates responsibility for their development and opportunity for training that leads to meaningful employment outside prison. MCC became involved with CAVID through Kestner's relationship with Peter Dyck, MCC Europe-North Africa director. Dyck has visited and corresponded with Kestner for about four years.

The program will hire men and women inmates who have completed a graphic arts vocation program and pay them an adequate wage in a production printing plant. The plant will be part of the Clinton prison and will provide printed materials for state, county and municipal governments and other tax-supported institutions.

Dr. Siegfried Hiebert, recently appointed psychologist in Eden Mental Health Centre, Winkler, a doctoral graduate from the University of Calgary. He comes well qualified from the department of psychology in the Alberta Hospital in Ponoka.

The MBBC A Cappella Choir directed by William Baerg is preparing a Christmas program "Christmas Gallery" which is being taped at the Winnipeg Art Gallery and will be telecast on Christmas Eve at 7 p.m. Featured will be Victor Davies and his orchestra. Solosists at this gala performance are: Phyllis Thomson, soprano, Clara Belkin, cellist, Tom Jackson, vocal guitarist, Barbara Kraichy on the harp with Jan Kocman, flautist. MBBC Choir is presenting a program of Christmas music with brass ensemble on December 12 at the Portage Avenue MB Church at 9 p.m. CBC is making a broadcast recording of the program so that it will be aired several times during the Christmas season.

The Mennonite Children's Choir of Winnipeg, will present a 20th Anniversary performance, Celebration '77 on Sunday evening, January 2, 8 p.m. at the Centennial Concert Hall.



Nativity Celebration Inc. is to take place on December 19 in the form of a parade, culminating in a Worship Service at the Winnipeg Convention Centre. Since its purpose is to focus on Christ, no commercial or church advertising is to be allowed. "Christmas should be a time to reflect on the birth of Christ and worship Him. A parade is a natural way of bringing the Christmas story into the community.", feels Dave Loewen, executive director of the project. The floats depicting the nativity will be constructed by churches, family or citizen groups.



Wally Kroeker, former editorial committee member of Mennonite Mirror has been appointed editor of the "Christian Leader", a U. S. Mennonite Brethren publication, succeeding Orlando Harms who now serves as executive editor of the Leader and general manager of the MB Publishing house in Hillsboro, Kansas.



Mary Unrau, a resident of Fort Garry, was appointed secretary of Senate at the University of Manitoba in September. Ms. Unrau is a graduate of the university and formerly from Rosenfeld.



Ratzlaff to head MCC

Mennonite Central Committee (Manitoba) has announced the appointment of **Vern Ratzlaff** of Winnipeg as its new executive director replacing Arthur Driedger who has held the position for 6½ years. Ratzlaff will assume office in spring 1977 after the end of the college school year.

An instructor of philosophy and church history at Mennonite Brethren Bible College for the past 11 years, Ratzlaff has a background in education and social work. He taught for a year at Tabor College in the U.S. during a leave of



George Derksen, of Estevan, Saskatchewan, died in Regina on November 25 at age 50. He was the publisher of the Estevan Mercury. He is a native of Steinbach and a son of G.S. Derksen, founder of Derksen Printers, and was associated for a number of years with his brothers Eugene and Bruno in Steinbach. Before moving to Estevan in 1966 he had operated papers in Winkler and Deloraine.

Tom Neufeld has been appointed the new minister of the United Mennonite Church in Thompson, Manitoba.

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Meine Kindheit

von Georg Epp

An einem trüben Tage des Jahres 1928 waren meine Eltern mit mir ins Nachbardorf gegangen, wo meine Grosseltern wohnten. Ich war damals nicht ganz vier Jahre alt und kann mich nicht an unser Wandern entsinnen. Mein erstes Erleben, das fest in meiner Erinnerung sitzt, geht aber auf diesen trüben Tag zurück. Es ist ein bedrückendes, dunkles, beklemmendes Erinnerung.

Ich sehe eine Reihe von Fuhrwerken, die mit einigen wenigen Habseligkeiten beladen sind. Vor den Fuhrwerken stehen viele Menschen, kleine und grosse, und weinen. "Warum weinen die Leute?", mit dieser Frage blicke ich auf zur Mutter und stelle fest, dass Mutter auch weint. Das stimmte mich unaussprechlich traurig. Mein Vater kommt und versucht mich zu beruhigen, er erklärt, dass die Leute, die jetzt die Wagen bestiegen haben, nach Sibirien ziehen wollen. "Wollen? warum weinen sie dann?" - "Nein, Junge, sie wollen nicht, doch schweige jetzt, darüber darf man nicht sprechen..."

Es ist an einem heissen Sommertag desselben Jahres 1928. Meine Mutter hat mich zum Mittagsschlafchen in mein Zimmer gebracht. Aus suessen Schlaf fahre ich plötzlich hoch. "Feuer! Feuer! Feuer!" höre ich schreien. Schlaftrunken taumle ich mit klopfendem Herzen ans Fenster. Wasserwagen rollen mit Gepolter vorüber; Pferde schnaufen vom angestregten Lauf; Menschen laufen, schreien. . . Angst packt mich und ich laufe zur Tuer, um Mutter zu finden, doch das Haus ist leer. Wie ich in den Hof hinauslaufe, sehe ich ein Bild des

Schreckens, das grosse Nachbarhaus brennt lichterloh. Frauen jammern, Kinder weinen, Maenner schaffen, schwitzen, rennen. . . Ich stehe wie gebannt. Da ertoent aus der Ferne wieder der Ruf: "Feu-er! Feu-eu-er!" Ein Reiter kommt angaloppiert: "Ein neuer Brand ganz auf dem andern Ende des Dorfes!" Eine Gruppe Maenner springt auf Wagen und rast davon, der neuen Gefahr zu. Gegen Abend sind die Braende geloescht und mich hat man zu Bett gebracht. Endlich Ruhe. Doch um Mitternacht werde ich wieder aus dem Schlaf geschreckt: "Feuer! Feu-er! . . ." So ging es tagelang. Man kannte die Brandstifter, aber man durfte sie nicht nennen. . . Dann kam ein Auto. Ich erinnere mich an dieses Auto sehr gut, denn es war das erste Auto, das ich je gesehen hatte. Das Auto kam mit vier fremden Maennern, die schneidig angezogen waren und Revolver trugen. Als es wegfuhr, nahm es mehrere Maenner aus dem Dorfe mit. Die Menschen schienen vor dem Auto, eine panische Angst zu haben, und ich hoerte sie im Fluestertone sagen: "GPU". Von den Erwachsenen uebernahm auch ich diese Angst, und ich ver kroch mich, wenn das Auto wieder auftauchte.

Bald nach diesen Ereignissen zogen wir in ein anderes Haus ein. Fuer meine Eltern muss das ein unangenehmer Wechsel gewesen sein, jedoch ich empfand es als eine vorteilhafte Veraenderung. Auf dem neuen, grossen Hofe wohnten mehrere Familien mit Kindern, und Kinder scheren sich nicht um die Schwierigkeiten des Zusammenlebens der Erwachsenen. Das Haus war an einem kleinen kuenstlichen See gelegen, der von schattigen

Baeumen eingesaeumt war. Ein Garten schloss das Haus ein. Hier konnten wir nach Herzenslust herumtollen, und der See bot nicht nur herrliche Badegelegenheit, sondern er war auch der Bereich der "Piraten" und sonstiger Ungeheuer, mit denen wir uns auseinandersetzen mussten. Es waere ein Paradies fuer Kinder gewesen, wenn nicht wieder von irgendwelchen Erwachsenen Unheil heraufbeschworen worden waere.

Ich ging schon zur Schule und hatte neben dem ABC auch schon die Namen aller Helden der Oktoberrevolution erlernt. Das Schulleben sagte mir zu, jedoch der dauernde Zwiespalt zwischen dem, was der Lehrer uns in der Schule einzutrichtern versuchte, und dem, was Vater und Mutter lehrten, machte mich misstrauisch. Der Lehrer verlangte, dass wir nicht zur Kirche gehen sollten, mein Vater nahm mich jedoch puenktlich zur Kirche. Langsam gelang es dem Vater, alles wieder zurechtzubiegen, was in der Kinderseele von der Schule verbogen worden war, und die Schule verlor jeden Einfluss auf mein Gemuet. Ich tat meine Schularbeiten puenktlich und mein Betragen liess keine Klagen von Seiten der Lehrer zu, nur das Herz konnte die Schule nicht gewinnen - Vater blieb Autoritaet.

Ein Unheil kam 1932. Die Bauern in der Ukraine hatten nur eine schwache Ernte gehabt, und die Regierung verlangte mehr Korn als man geerntet hatte. Schliesslich schickte sie Aktivisten, die gewaltsam aus den Haeusern auch das letzte Mehl holten. Bald herrschte in der ganzen Ukraine die beruechtigte "kuenstliche Hungersnot". Elend und Tod schlichen durch die Doerfer. Das

Fruehjahr 1933 kam. Ich werde es nie vergessen. Auf der Strasse taumelten verhungerte, dem Tode nahe Menschen, da wurde Polizei eingesetzt, die diese verzweifelten Menschen aus dem Dorfe trieb. In der Sowjetunion gibt es keine Bettler. Millionen starben. Die Tuechtigkeit und weise Sparsamkeit der Mutter bewahrten uns vor dem Schlimmsten, aber ich lernte verstehen was Hunger, richtiger Hunger, ist.

Gott sei Dank gab es in meiner Kindheit, nicht nur Feuersbruenste, unheimliche Autos und Hunger. Diese duestern Erinnerungen werden nicht verdraengt, aber doch gemildert, durch die Erinnerung an ein sonniges Elternhaus. Sonnig gemacht wurde dieses Heim nicht durch Wohlstand, sondern einzig und allein durch ein liebes Elternpaar. Ich kann mich nicht erinnern, meine Mutter je launisch gesehen zu haben, auch in den schlimmsten Jahren nicht. Immer hatte sie ein freundliches Wort fuer jedermann. Der Vater war Lehrer in demselben Dorfe gewesen, da er sich jedoch entschieden weigerte, seinen christlichen Glauben zu verleugnen, hatte man ihn aus der Schule als "unzuverlaessig" entlassen. Fuer seine ehemaligen Schueler blieb er aber immer

der Lehrer. Fuer die Bewohner des Dorfes war er Berater in allen Fragen des Dorflebens. Er nahm nie Bezahlung fuer seine Dienste, und Wohlstand war fuer uns schon deshalb ausgeschlossen. Dennoch war ich reicher als viele Knaben des Dorfes. Wenn abends die Heimchen zu zirpen begannen, sassen wir mit Vater und Mutter vor dem Hause und Vater erzaehte. Meine Freunde versuchten solche Gelegenheiten nicht zu verpassen. An den langen Winterabenden sassen wir am warmen Ofen und Vater erzaehte Geschichten, die man draussen nicht erzahlen durfte, die Geschichten der Bibel. Ach, die armen Lehrer in der Schule, die uns mit so viel Aufwand zu ueberzeugen versuchten, dass da kein hoeheres Wesen sei, was konnten sie gegen den Einfluss solchen Vaters tun, der nicht ueberzeugen musste, sondern der einfach erzaehte, und ueberzeugte, weil er ueberzeugt war.

Die Jahre 1936 und 1937 schnitten wieder tief in die Kindesseele. Das waren furchtbare Jahre, die Jahre, in denen etwa zehn Millionen Menschen von der GPU nach Sibirien geschleppt wurden; und Millionen wurden kurzerhand erschossen. 1928 hatte ich mich vor dem

Auto gefuerchtet, weil die Erwachsenen sich fuerchteten, aber jetzt war das anders. Ich verstand, was geschah, und zitterte um meinen Vater und um die Brueder. Man holte den Vater mehrfach, aber jedesmal liess man ihn wieder frei. Die Angst blieb jedoch staendiger Gast in unserm Hause. Ja, ganz Russland zitterte vor den Geistern des "Arbeiterparadieses".

1938 wurden alle deutschen Schulen in Russland geschlossen, und ich trat in eine russische Mittelschule ein. Meine Zensuren waren hoch, zur Freude meiner Eltern, jedoch bald zu meinem Leidwesen. Gute Studenten sollten es als Pflicht ansehen, sich der Leninjugend anzuschliessen, ich aber weigerte mich, mit der einzigen erlaubten Ausrede: "Ich bin nicht wuerdig Mitglied dieses Jugendverbandes zu sein." Der politische Leiter wurde wuetend und hielt mich staendig unter Druck. Eines Tages; es war eine Woche vor Stalins Geburtstag, kam er wieder zu mir und sagte: "Sie werden die Stalinrede fuer unsere Schule halten." Damit legte er die vorgeschriebene Rede vor mich hin und ging. Verbluefft sass ich da. Ich las den

Who preserves the other languages

by Roy Vogt

What is the Fate of Languages Other Than English and French?

The federal government has recently issued a study on the retention and use of languages other than English and French in Canada. For those Mennonites who still use either high or low German as a mother tongue the results of this study should be of great interest. The study is entitled: *Non-Official Languages, A Study in Canadian Multiculturalism*. It is written by three scholars with the support of a government which is trying to balance a vigorous and controversial bi-lingualism program with some regard for the many other language groups that make up this country.

The authors questioned hundreds of Germans, Italians, Ukrainians, and other Canadians whose ancestry is neither English nor French, living in five cities: Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, Winnipeg, Edmonton. They wanted to determine the extent of non-official language knowledge among these citizens, the way in which the original mother tongue is used, and the degree of popular support for continued maintenance of these non-official languages.

They have made the following findings: There exists quite extensive knowledge of non-official languages in Canada. Unfortunately, "This is an immense cultural

resource which is almost lost in a single generation." Just how quickly the loss occurs from one generation to another is shown by these results: seven of 10 immigrants report full fluency in their mother tongue; such fluency is reported by only one in ten of the second generation, and has disappeared entirely in third and subsequent generations. "By the third generation the question is not one of retention but of reacquisition and primary acquisition."

It is clear from this report, as many young Mennonites have already discovered to the deep disappointment of grandparents, that the task of passing on the mother language to children "is not being successfully borne by the parents. Actually, the job of preserving language is quite possibly beyond them."

Despite this, the vast majority of those questioned hoped very much that the government, through the school system, would make it possible for their children to learn languages and cultures other than French and English. There is a strong desire to reacquire at least part of the language and culture that has been lost. "Overall, 70 per cent of the respondents support language retention, and in each group, there is majority agreement that language retention is desirable." The study is available through Mary Scorer Books in Winnipeg.

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gewoehlichen Unsinn von unserm Lehrer, Vater, Genie, Fuehrer. . . des Landes, den der dazu auserwaelhte Student mit "Begeisterung" vortragen musste. Ich wusste noch nicht, was ich tun sollte, als ich den Schlusssatz las: "Wir danken dir, Genosse Stalin, fuer unsere glueckliche Kindheit!" Dieser Satz elektrisierte mich. Ich sah Wagen mit weinenden Menschen, ich sah Feuersbruenste, die von Agenten angestiftet nach Neros Art gebraucht wurden, ich sah unheimliche Autos durch die Strassen meiner Heimat fahren, ich sah verhungerte Menschen am Strassenrand, und ich sah meine einzige Hose, die ich am Tage vorher ungluecklicherweise beschaedigt hatte. . . : "Wir danken dir, Genosse Stalin, fuer unsere glueckliche Kindheit!" Diese Heuchelei wuerde ich nicht aussprechen, niemals, es komme was da kommt!! Ich nahm den Wisch und brachte ihn dem politischen Leiter zurueck. "Diese Rede sollte ein Mitglied der Leninjugend halten", sagte ich, meine Erregung verbergend. "Sie koennen sofort Mitglied werden." "Nein." "Warum nicht?" "Ich habe meine Gruende dafuer frueher gegeben." "Gut, wir werden die Sache untersuchen!" Mit bangem Herzen ging ich nach Hause.

Am Nachmittag wurde ich zur Schule gerufen. Ich sollte mich vor der Versammlung der Partei und des Leninjugendverbandes verantworten. Ich trat ein. "Genossen, folgender Fall ist vor uns. . .", hoerte ich die Stimme des politischen Leiters. Nach laengerer Einleitung sagte er: "Ich beantrage, dass dieser Student aus der Schule ausgeschlossen werde." Ich hatte damit gerechnet, aber jetzt war es doch schmerzlicher, als ich mir eingeredet hatte. Jedoch das war noch nicht alles. Mit hoehnischer Miene fuegte er langsam hinzu: "Der Gedankengang dieses Studenten ist sehr ungesund, wir werden seinen Vater zur Verantwortung ziehen muessen. Sie koennen gehen." Der Schlag sass. Ich taumelte, mehr als dass ich ging, die Treppe hinunter. "So, ich habe mit meinem Auftreten das Urteil ueber meinen Vater gesprochen. . ." Ich sah schon das unheimliche Auto. Ich fuehlte mich unaussprechlich elend. Ploetzlich hoerte ich eilige Schritte hinter mir. Yuri Ivanovitsch, unser Lehrer fuer russische Literatur, ein junger Ukrainer, holte mich ein. Er war Vorsitzender der Leninjugend. "Geruhige dich, ich werde es verhindern, dass man deinen Vater in die Sache verwickelt. Ich werde auch gegen den Ausschluss stimmen, aber in Zukunft sieh dich vor, sonst kann ich nichts mehr fuer dich tun." "Danke, Yuri Ivanovitsch!" Ich drueckte kraeftig seine Hand. "Dass dieses unter uns bleibt ist klar." "Ich verstehe, Yuri Ivanovitsch."

Einige Monate spaeter fing der Krieg an. Ich war sechzehnmund wer fragt im Kriege nach Kindheit? mm

Deutsche Weihnachten

von Elisabeth Peters

Mit dem 1. Adventssonntag beginnt fuer uns ein schoener Abschnitt unseres Studienjahres in Goettigen. Auch in unserer Studentenwohnung am 82er Platz weihnachtet es schon. Bambi, die ihren 15. Geburtstag gefeiert hat, bringt oft eine Mitschuelerin nach Hause um irgendwelche Weihnachtsueberrassungen zu planen, und der 5 jaehrige Karl ist dieser Tage ausgelassen froehlich. "Weil's Weihnachten wird."

In den naechsten Tagen verwandelt sich der 82er Platz ueber der Strasse in einen dunklen Christwald. Christbaeume aller Art und in allen Groessen werden feilgeboten. Es faellt mir auf, wie viel Zeit man sich nimmt und wie viel Freude die Kunden scheinbar am Aussuchen ihres Baumes haben. Auch wir machen als Familie einen Spaziergang durch den Platz und kaufen einen schoenen Baum.

Frau Julia, die Gattin von Aeltesten Hildebrand, hat jeden andern Donnerstag die jungen Maedchen der Mennonitengemeinde Goettingen bei sich zum Kaffee. Hier basteln sie Strohsterne, vergoldenen Tannenzapfen, malen Weihnachtsgruesse und treiben Musik. So hat sich eine ganze Menge Christbaumschmuck bei uns angehaeuft, den wir weit mehr schaeetzen als fertig gekaufte Sachen.

Auch beim Marktplatz am Gaenseliesel ist grosser Betrieb, denn der Christmarkt ist im vollen Gange. Bude an Bude reiht sich auf dem weiten Platz, gross und klein freut sich an den Waren die feil sind. Was es da nicht gibt! Nuesse, Mandeln, Marzipan, Kerzen, Aepfel, knusperige Bretzeln, duftende Thueringer Bratwuerstle, wuerzige Pfefferkuchenherze und heissen Punsch!

Karl und ich machen jetzt fast taeglich, wenn er aus dem Kindergarten kommt, einen Rundgang durch die Geschaefstrassen, um die schoenen ausgelegten

Frau Elisabeth Peters beschreibt die Festtage die sie vor 16 Jahren waehrend des Studienjahres ihres Mannes in Deutschland erlebten. Der volle Artikel wurde im Boten veroeffentlicht. Wir bringen unseren Lesern Auszuege von damals.

Schaufenster zu bewundern. An vielen Lebensmittelgeschaeften haengt draussen neben der Tuer ein Wildschwein oder ein Hase, da Wild scheinbar waehrend der Festtage sehr beliebt ist. Karl sattelt natuerlich beim Anblick des 1. Wildschweines vom Schornsteinfeger zum Jaegerberuf um. Besonders freuen wir uns immer an dem Fenster der uns nahen Baeckerei, wo Zimtsterne, Spekulatius, Bremerklaben und Rheinische Stufen verlockend ausgebreitet sind, von den Lebkuchenhaeuschen schon gar nicht zu reden.

Am 6. Dezember sind wir zu einer Nikolausfeier im Kindergarten eingelanden, wo die Kinder beschert werden sollen. Flur und Treppengelaender sind mit Tannenzweigen geschmueckt. Von der Decke im grossen Saal haengt ein riesiger Adventskranz und an Fenster und Tueren funkeln Sternchen aus Goldpapier, die die Kleinen angefertigt hatten.

Zur Begruessung stellten die Leiterin, Lehrerinnen und Gehilfinnen sich an der grossen Saaltuer auf und singen: "Vom Himmel hoch da komm ich her." An weiss gedeckten Tischchen, die mit brennenden Kerzen und Kuchentellern gedeckt sind, sitzen je 2 Elternpaare. Dann kommt der Nikolaus und die Bescherung kann losgehen. Auch im Kindergarten ging es sehr gerecht zu. Je nach Verdienst belohnte oder bestrafte der Nikolaus die Kleinen. Die Ursel bekam fuers schoene Singen eine extra grosse Zuckertuete, aber Joerg und der boese Werner mussten fuer ihre Unarten und ihr Zanken die Rute halten. Als dann aber die ganz kleine Uschi, fast noch ein Krabbelkind, mit verhaltenem Atem mit ihrem zarten Stimmchen sang: "Heut ist ein Sternlein vom Himmel gefallen, hat's keiner gesehen? Es leuchtet uns allen. Es leuchtet uns allen mit hellichem

Schein, ins Herze hinein", da wurde es feierlich stille in dem grossen Raum. Wir waren alle unter dem Bann der gläubigen, unschuldigen Kinderwelt, und nahmen etwas von dem Weihnachtszauber mit nach Hause.

Endlich naht der Heilige Abend. Auch bei uns sieht es schon recht weihnachtlich aus, sind doch schon mehrere grosse Weihnachtspakete von zu Hause angekommen. Es ist ein langer Weg bis zum Zollamt am Nikolausbergweg, aber wir machen ihn immer recht gerne. Die Zollbeamten sind äusserst zuvorkommend. Wir haben nie Zoll gezahlt, auch wenn unsere Quota fuer Kaffee laengst ueberschritten ist.

Am Morgen des 24. schmuecken wir unseren Christbaum und legen die vielen festlich verpackten Gaben unter den Baum. Fuer Karl ist die Zeit bis zum Nachmittag unertraeglich lang. Um 3 Uhr kleiden wir uns fuer den Kirchgang an, denn um 4 wollen wir in der Jakobikirche dem Quempas-Singen beiwohnen.

Auf den Strassen herrscht schon Feiertagsstimmung. Die Geschaefte sind geschlossen; der Verkehr ist wie ausgestorben, nur Fussgaenger eilen den Kirchen zu. Wir sind eben am Geismartor angelangt, da fangen die Glocken zu laeuten an. Die Jakobikirche mit wuchtigen Schlaegen, die Marienkirche mit etwas sproedem Ton, dann St. Pauli mit seinem silberhellen Gloeckchen. Es ist Weihnachten.

Der grosse Raum der Jakobikirche fuehlt sich rasch, und bald ist kein Platz mehr frei. Ein angenehmes Halbdunkel erfuehlt die Kirche. Nur einige Kerzen am Altar erhellen das Dunkel. Da toent von oben vom Chor das schoene alte Lied aus hellen Kinderkehlen: "Vom Himmel hoch, da komm ich her", und schon bewegt sich ein Kinderchor - Kerzen tragend - in den oberen Galerien und zu beiden Seiten. Dann haelt der Pfarrer die Weihnachtspredigt; nachher werden die Kerzen wieder angezuendet, die Choere bewegen sich leise summend dem Ausgange zu. Es ist sehr schoen und stimmungsvoll.

Als wir ins Freie treten, erleben wir eine grosse Enttaeuschung. Es regnet. Es regnet in Stroemen, noch dazu ein warmer Regen, der gar keine Anstalten macht, sich in weissen Schnee zu verwandeln. Wie still, wie menschenleer die Strassen sind. Jeder feiert nach echt

deutscher Sitte nur mit der Familie. Ueberall sind Fenster hell erleuchtet, aber noch sind keine Christbaeume angezuendet. Zum erstmal verstehe ich so recht den Sinn des Eichendorfschen Gedichtes: "Markt und Strassen stehn verlassen..."

Als wir zu Hause ankommen, flammt der grosse sonst so starre Flur in hellem Lichterglanz. Unsere Wirtin hat einen grossen Kranz mit elektrischen Birnen zum Fest oben an der Decke anbringen lassen. Es kommt uns wie eine masslose Verschwendung vor, ist doch bei gewoehnlichen Zeiten der Flur mit einem automatischen Licht versehen, das sich in einer oder in ein paar Minuten ausschaltet.

Nach der Bescherung holen Behnes Bambi ab, um an der Mitternachts-

christfeier in der Marienkirche teilzunehmen. Mein Mann schlaeft und ich zerbreche mir den Kopf darueber, wie ich auf meiner elektrischen Platte, die zudem nur halb warm wird, ein gutes Weihnachtmittagessen zustande bringe. In der Nacht waechst mir der Mut, und ich entschliesse mich, auf dem Einbrenner einen Huehnerbraten zu riskieren. Ich stehe frueh auf, oeffne eine Buechse gekochtes Huhn von zu Hause, lege es in einen Kochtopf, mache einen Rosinenbobbatteig, den ich draeber giesse, decke fest zu, und lasse alles bis um 12 Uhr auf der Platte braten, wie ich hoffe. Ich habe eben beendet, da schellt es an der Tuer. Ich bin ganz verbluefft, als ein Bote vom Zollamt vor mir steht, 2 grosse Pakete aus Canada ueberreicht und mir froehliche Weihnachten wuenscht.

Drinne werden unter grossem Jubel die Pakete geoeffnet. "Zweimal Weihnachten!" ruft Karl, und bewundert lebhaft seine Geschenke. Ausserdem sehen wir erwartungsvoll dem Huehnerbraten entgegen, der ganz verlockend duftet. Ich habe aber so meine Bedenken, und mit Recht. Ein trueberes Gericht, als das in meinem Kochtopf habe ich noch nie gesehen. Da liegt der Bobbat, schwer, fahl und bleich, auf dem waessrigen jungen Huhn, das auch nicht den geringsten Anspruch auf Knusprigkeit erheben kann. Wir versuchen heldenhaft, es uns schmecken zu lassen, bis ich schliesslich vorschlage, lieber Christmascake und Halva aus dem Paeckchen zu essen. Der Vorschlag wird erleichtert und mit Dank angenommen.

Zum Abend kommen Crous und Alexander Rempel um mit uns Plumenmoos und gekochten Schincken zu essen. Tante Rose kann wieder so interessant aus ihrer Jugend erzaehlen und es wird sehr gemuetlich in unserer Studentenwohnung, die eigentlich gar nicht fuer Besuch eingerichtet ist. Aber kein Mensch bemerkt, dass nicht genuegend Besteck vorhanden ist, oder wie lange es nimmt, bis das Kaffeewasser kocht. Im Verkehr mit lieben Freunden vergeht die Zeit schnell und wir merken gar nicht wie spaet es geworden ist.

Am naechsten Tag sind wir alle bei Behnes zum Gaensebraten geladen, und am uebernaechsten zum 5 Uhr Tee bei meines Mannes Professor, Dr. Schramm, dessen Gattin eben im Wahlkampf steht

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als Kandidat fuer den Landtag. Mein Mann sitzt zur Rechten von Dr. Schramms 89 jaehrigen Mutter, einer feinen alten Dame. Es ist eine sehr internationale Gesellschaft. Ich sitze zur Rechten eines amerikanischen Geschichtsstudenten, und mein Nachbar zur anderen Seite ist ein Herr G'Nuengsch, ein Tuerke aus Ankara, der erst vor kurzem nach Goettingen kam, um zu studieren.

Am Tag nachher holt mein Mann wieder einen Leihwagen, und wir unternehmen unsere Neujahrsreise nach dem kleinen Dorfe Niederberndorf im Sauerland. Eine Verwandte von uns aus Winnipeg hatte einen deutschen Einwanderer geheiratet, dessen Schwester die Frau des Lehrers von Niederberndorf ist. Wir wussten von dieser Familie nicht, waren deshalb aber desto angenehmer ueberrascht, als wir vor Weihnachten einen herzlichen Brief von Herrn Lehrer Karl Josef Vannahme erhielten, in dem er uns zu Weihnachten oder zum Neujahr mit der ganzen Familie einlud. Wir beschloessen, die Freundlichkeit und Gastfreundschaft dieser ganz fremden Leute in Anspruch zu nehmen, und fuhren zum Silvesterabend hin.

Das Wetter ist wie im Vorfruehling. Durch Hannemuenden kommen wir, diesem alten Staedtchen mit seinen Fachwerkhaeusern, wo Werra und Fulda mit der Weser zusammenfliessen. Am Heldendenkmal nahe am Marktplatz ist der Rasen noch saftig gruen, und die Stiefmuetterchen stehen in voller Bluete. Es wird eine sehr vergnuegte Fahrt, sind wir doch alle froh, mal wieder hinauszufahren. Landschaftlich ist die Reise besonders lohnend, denn das Sauerland ist dem Schwarzwald sehr aehnlich mit seinen bewaldeten Bergen und Taelern.

Um 5 Uhr sind wir bei Vannahmes. Das ganze Haus atmet noch Feststimmung, von den Kiefernzweigen in der Vase im Flur bis zum geschmueckten Tannenbaum und dem festlich gedeckten Tisch im Wohnzimmer. Mit unseren aufmerksamen Gasgebern sind wir sehr bald ganz ungezwungen bekannt. Herr Vannahme scheint genau zu wissen, was fuer uns von Interesse ist und schlaegt vor, dass wir nach dem Abendessen in die Gastwirtschaft gehen, um die Neujahrsbraeuche auf dem Lande kennenzulernen.

Eine Gruppe junger Maenner, eigentlich noch halbe Jungen, sind schon in der Wirtsstube beim Liederueben: "Wir wuenschen dem Herrn ein' gedeckten Tisch, auf jeder Ecke 'nen gebratnen Fisch". Sie erklaren uns, dass sie um 12 Uhr durchs ganze Dorf ziehn, und jedesmal, wenn sie an den Fenstern der Bauern gesungen haben, wird gerufen: "Jungfer wirf 'ne Mettwurst raus!" "Was tut Ihr denn damit?" fragen wir. "Braten wir uns so um 5 Uhr morgens", erwidern sie. "Aber diesmal heben wir Ihnen eene grosse auf, die nehmen Sie mit nach Goettingen, und Frl. Bambi kriegt noch

extra eene". "Um 5 Uhr! Seid Ihr dann nicht sehr muede?" "I wo!" lachen sie, "um 7 Uhr sind wir alle in der Messe." Und sie sind es auch wirklich, denn nach der Messe, um 8 Uhr, sind sie schon an unserer Tuer und bringen die im Scherz versprochenen Mettwuerste.

Fuer den Neujahrsnachmittag wird Besuch erwartet. Karl Josef Vannahme hat zufaellig dem Schulrat erzaehlt, dass er Lehrer aus Amerika zu Besuch erwartet. Der Schulrat hatte gemeint, er wuerde sich gern mit meinem Mann ueber unser Schulwesen unterhalten, und Karl Josef lud ihn "mutig" ein. Ich sage bewusst "mutig", denn scheinbar ist in Deutschland die Stellung des Schulrats viel hoeher als die des Lehrers, und man verkehrt gesellschaftlich nicht. Am Neujahrmorgen ruft aber der Schulrat noch telephonisch an, ob er seine Frau und 2 Buben mitbringen duerfe, und Tante Emma. Wer Tannte Emma sei, erklart er nicht weiter.

Um 4 Uhr sind die Gaeste da, die einen aeusserst wohlgenaehten Eindruck machen. Der korpulente Schulrat voran, gefolgt von 2 dicken Buben so um 14, dann die rundliche, aber schoene Frau Schulraetin, und zuletzt eine blendende Tante Emma, schlank, mit mondernstem Haarschnitt, und goldenem Lachen; die zugereiste Schwester der Frau Schulraetin. Bald sitzen wir alle um den runden Tisch, bei so gehobener Stimmung, dass der Schulrat kaum auf Schulfragen zu sprechen kommt, und allerlei Anekdoten aus seiner Jugend erzaehlt.

Fuer den naechsten Morgen hat Karl Josef uns fuer einen Rundgang in einer Schiefermine angemeldet. Es wird viel Schiefer im Sauerland gehoben. Die Daecher und auch oft die Aussenwaende der Haeuser sind fast alle aus Schiefer hergestellt. Dieses ist bei dem vielen Regen wohl hatbarer, aber freundlicher

wirken die roten Pfannendaecher, die sonst ueblich sind. Wir nehmen unsere Plaetze ein auf dem kleinen Karren, der auf dem schmalen Gleis hinunter fuehrt in die schaurige Tiefe. "Glueck auf!" ruft man uns zu ehe wir uns in Bewegung setzen. Obwohl ich weiss, dass dies der uebliche Gruss der Bergleute ist, aehnlich wie "Bergheil", ist mir doch etwas beklommen zu Mute, als waere es ein boeses Omen. Unten ist im Hauptschacht ein Christbaum unter einer Madonnenfigur in der Bergwand aufgestellt, und die Bergfuehrer bekreuzigen sich alle. Die Gegend ist ganz katholisch. Nun fuehrt man uns in die Nebenschaechte, die schluepfrig und schaurig sind. Es ist alles sehr interessant, aber ich bin heilfro, als wir erst wieder wohlbehalten oben unterm freien Himmel sind.

"Nanu", neckt mein Mann, "einmal ist es zu hoch, wie bei Mittenwald, einmal zu tief unten." Nach einem warmen Abschied von unseren Gastgebern begeben wir uns auf den Heimweg. Die Strasse ist sehr hoch gelegen, und es faengt an zu schneien. Bald ist alles in eine dicke Schneedecke gehuellt, weich und weiss und maerchenhaft schoen. "Winter's Wonderland", sagt Bambi leise. Als wir erst unten in den Taelern sind, verwandelt sich der Schnee in Regen, und bis wir in Kassel sind, ist keine Spur von Schnee mehr zu sehen. Es daemert schon, aber dennoch gruessen uns die roten Daecher von Goettingen.

"Ich freue mich schon auf die Schule", sagt Bambi. "Ach, du mit deiner Schule!" ruft Karl, "im Kindergarten ist's viel schoener!" So schoen die Ferien waren, es kann nicht immer Weihnacht sein, und das ist gut so.

"Heut braetst du uns die Mettwurst", sagt mein Mann, "und dann ist mit dem Neujahrfeiern aufgeraemt. mm

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Carman grows by Mennonites and buildings

by Peter Paetkau

With the smaller towns fading and longer distances easily attainable, Carman has emerged as the centre of a diversified agricultural paradise on the northern portion of the Pembina Triangle.

This area bounded by the limits of Dufferin Municipality is in a state of general prosperity in 1976, and the town of Carman is in a state more properly described as a "building boom". It has taken everyone quite by surprise because no one thought that it could happen here as it did in Winkler.

Why? I sought out the question. "The Pembina Development Corporation is pulling the strings at two lower corners in southern Manitoba, at Winkler and Morden, and Carman has not been able to get any industry. About the only industry here is Western Sailcraft. What has happened here?" I asked one construction worker. "The Mennonites are here," he replied, "If it was not for the Mennonites this place would be a dead town. It is largely Mennonites that are expanding their businesses, and even Mennonite construction firms are doing the building."

Mennonites no doubt are involved, but are not the only factor, in the building boom of this town, and some of the present expansion projects are worth a quarter of a million dollars. Because of the prominence of Mennonites employed or involved in many new establishments, the Mennonite factor may appear much larger than it is. Take the two banks, for instance, which opened at the turn of the year: at the Royal Bank three out of four employees are Mennonites. At the Toronto-Dominion, Verna Bergen is the lone Mennonite on the staff. Many



are also employed at the large Co-op Shopping Centre, where a large tire shop is under construction, and whose retail business in the past year exceeded \$6 million. At Midland Collegiate there are a number of Mennonite teachers, including Ronald Peters, vice-principal. There is also one Mennonite doctor practising in Carman, Dr. J.I. Regehr.

But let us stop at the offices of the local newspaper. Inside is a beehive of activity, and the new editor, Douglas J. Penner, is one of three Mennonite editors at work in the Red River Valley. A founder of the Red River Toastmaster club (Morris) and long-time member of it, founder of the Canadian Arabian Horse Association, politician and columnist, Penner senses accurately the real reasons for all this hammering, riveting of steel girders and pile-driving racket, which he claims reflects the general prosperity of the region. "Next year Morden will be experiencing a building boom," he predicts.

While not all the changes which the *Dufferin Leader* has experienced in the last five years may be attributed to Mr. Penner, he certainly has left his mark on the paper in a short while. After the present publisher, Howard Bennett, took over the ownership of the paper in 1970 the regional concept was developed and under its umbrella has fallen an area extending "northwards midway between Portage la Prairie and Carman, west to St. Claude and Darlingford, south to the U. S. border, encompassing the centres of Winkler and Morden, and east to Lowe Farm, Morris and Sanford". With the move to become a regional newspaper the June 16 issue appeared at *The Valley Leader*, reflecting the broader newscoverage base it has adopted. Reportedly, the circulation has doubled

while news content has been increased four times.

Of necessity I ask Mr. Penner a most difficult question in the interest of MM readers. Of 50 per cent Mennonite parentage (Mennonite-Scottish) Penner is married to a fine Mennonite girl who shares his love for horses and bakes the traditional Mennonite dishes. Neither are members of a Mennonite church, although Doug has attended a Mennonite private school (MCI) and studied Mennonite history, and knows more about them than most full-blooded adherents, and makes an attempt to become acquainted with every public figure to emerge in our ranks. Does he consider himself a Mennonite, and maintain an interest in developments within our ethnic group? It is significant to note that Mr. Penner understands the ambivalent meaning of the term *Mennonite*. On one hand, he recognizes the fact that his origin of partial Mennonite parents is of Dutch descent, and admits an interset in it as much as in the Scottish descent, and therefore cannot justify any further claim to being Mennonite because that requires membership in a Mennonite denomination.

Perhaps the new Chimo Building Centre, operated by two enthusiastic Dyck brothers from Roseisle, is the facility to go up the fastest. Construction of this 40 by 100 foot building progressed at an unusual pace. Unfortunately, before the centre could be officially opened, disaster was to strike on the morning of May 10 when the premises were engulfed in flames furiously raging from one end to the other, leaving little but ashes of the \$50,000 building and its \$80,000 worth of stock. Business, however, continues as usual in a small hut moved here while a new building is being erected.

Bowies Bakery, operated in Carman by the brothers Hugh and Doug Bowie since 1947, recently changed hands when Jim Zacharias of Morden took over. Looking slightly undernourished, but very energetic, Jim has been installing sufficient equipment and making alterations otherwise necessary for the production of a wide array of baked goods. Just out of Red River Community College, where he received an Outstanding Student award, and also took a course in cake decoration, Jim and his wife Ruth, are by every appearance baking up a storm. On the shelves you will see a great assortment of palate-tempting goodies never seen here before. That is, if you are lucky and the goodies have not all been snatched away by eager customers.

Then there is Edward Wiebe's Tire Shop, currently one of the biggest tire businesses in southern Manitoba. Some years ago Ed and his brother took over from their father, who established the business. All they possessed then was a one-bay service centre and a small restaurant, managed by "Mom" Wiebe

and frequented by truckers. Just a few years ago, Ed, now sole owner, installed the best front-end equipment in town and obtained one of the most skilled front-end man available in the trade. Then the tire business mushroomed, and I recall his private car garage at the house filled to the ceiling with dozens of tires. Obviously, business was fast outgrowing the facilities - and somewhat temporarily a long and narrow shed was obtained to house the hundreds of tires kept in stock at Ed's. In 1976 Edward Wiebe has embarked upon an ambitious expansion program which will add three new buildings to his lot by the time Ken's (Hiebert) Construction has completed its work here.

Then there is Ed's cousin, Walter Wiebe, who has been operating a Massey-Ferguson dealership across the road for quite a number of years, but in 1976 has built a large new steel structure in the north-end opposite the meat processing plant. Talking to some of the mechanics just completing the assembly of another new self-propelled swather in the new shop, I was informed that W. W. Implements sells as many swathers, tractors and combines as they can get from the M-F company.

Business is also flourishing for Ken Dyck of Carman Radio and Television, and therefore a new building is under construction. With only a few large lots available, what is going to prevent Mr. Dyck from building on the still vacant lot

right in the "flood bowl"? Why, he has proven his ingenuity once again! The foundation of his building is going to extend well above previous flood levels. Triangle Construction, operated by Henry Isaak, is doing the construction. Mr. Dyck took over Carman Radio and television in 1972, together with a partner. While partners have come and gone, the owner remains established and flourishing in the entertainment field, because, as Mr. Dyck maintains: "You couldn't hope for a better place to do business".



Jim and Ruth Zacharias, the new owners of the Carman Bakery

Cornie Unger, the president and general manager of Parkway Motors, established in 1972, has been in partnership was known as Dyck's Esso. Business is also good for Unger, who in 1973 already added a fine service shop. Parkway has seen some expansion every year since. In 1974 Parkway developed a vehicle display lot and in 1975 Unger initiated another company, Coachline Body Works, at a different location. In 1976 Parkway Motors is expanding in other directions. This time parts warehouse and showroom space is receiving the benefit of the increase.

Very much aware that there are many other things of interest that I would like to talk about, I resort to a stop-over at The Burrs, the home of Paul Hiebert, who was just contemplating quietly in the garden when I approached. And immediately he pounced upon me with the announcement that his latest book, *Doubling Castle*, is finally to be published by Queenston Press. I further beg him for some final comment about Carman and in that rare Binksonian manner the old man replies quite puckishly: "Did you know that new houses are springing up in the north end of Carman like mushrooms?" and "Carman had better do something about the Tent Caterpillar!" And in the same breath Hiebert talked of his June 21st television appearance with Maara Haas on Peter Gzwoski, eyeing my pocket recorder. mm

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our word . . .

The Christian disciple has a special quality

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

Some years ago a young person said to me, "It is difficult to be honest and an optimistic Christian at the same time." I knew this young person well and I knew what he said was no mere expression of the age-old melancholy of youth. His disillusionment stemmed far more from a sincere effort to compare his dreams for a better world, in which the glory of God and the compassion of Jesus are clearly visible, with the real world that he had come to know both within his own church and outside of it. The comparison seemed to leave little room for optimism. He still had a sense of humour to counter his despair and he reminded me of the old Iymeric:

In this world's crying and grinning
We see people constantly sinning.
We trust that the story
Will end in God's glory,
But at present the otherside's winning.

Unfortunately, humour, like whistling in the dark, is not enough. Neither are platitudinous statements to the effect that "love conquers all" or "make a decision for Jesus and all will be well." Honest and sensitive people know that it isn't so. It is important to make good beginnings, and as Christians we believe that the best beginning is to decide to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, but between even the best beginning and the end there are thousands of little decisions to be made, in which such enemies as selfishness, envy, greed, and hatred can be exposed, attacked, and subdued, but are seldom clearly beaten. "When I want to do right evil lies close at hand," was the confession of even such a valiant warrior as Paul.

The honest Christian cannot deny that the almost 2,000 year attempt of the Christian Church to replace the darkness of the world with the light of the Christian faith has been at all times a tenacious struggle and at best only a partially successful one, even within the life of the church itself. But is there no light, and is the struggle to keep the flame alive a meaningless one? May Christmas serve to remind us that the answer to both of these questions can, in all honesty, be a resounding NO!

There is nothing comparable in this world to the quality of life of a genuine Christian disciple. We personally know dozens of persons who, in coping with pain, disappointment, and personal weakness, have allowed the light of God to penetrate their lives to such an extent that one can think of them as triumphant victors rather than victims. Their daily example keeps us from despairing about the human condition. Their thoughtfulness and courage bear witness to a light that shines through them but has an ultimate source beyond them which is not restricted to mere human possibilities.

Let us thank God for these many lights that illuminate our lives at Christmas. May we ourselves decide to deal with the darkness of this world not by adding to it through cynical despair but by resolving to let God create a light within us which the darkness cannot overcome.

As the poet John Banister Tabb has written:

A little Boy of heavenly birth,
But far from home to-day,
Comes down to find His ball, the earth,
That sin has cast away.
O comrades, let us one and all
Join in to get Him back His ball! R.V.

WHEN DOVES NEST

Flowerless, lidless, sightless eyes
gaze glazed past half-grown fugitives
silouetted against tropical skies,
in the wake of the casket too small
the hands too young that bear
the load too light too early to the grave.

At the market, churches, theatres, banks
the places of wealth they form their
ranks
with limbs and bodies withered, grotesque or splayed
with ill-clad children on parade
and always the pleading of the hand
outstretched
"For the love of God . . ."

Stooped in toil, alternately flayed, by sun
and rain
mutually leached, the bodies the soil,
steeped in battle on red-yellow slopes
striving to glean for another day
a hard-fought life, but with diming
hopes.

The hunger of their faces, etched with
age
or taut-skinned in youth is not the type
that one meal erases ---
---nor only food . . .

Yes . . . they demand a share,
but also are desperate that we care,
that the gifts exchanged be an expression of love
even as the word, the touch.
And only then, when love-justice is done
can the dove construct her nest again
in the branches of the olive from whence
she bore
the message amidst the flame - the
leaden death,
of poverty, hunger and war.

- by Martin V. Penner

fyi*
* for your information



Mennonite Movie wows Critic with vinyl bow tie

By Vic Penner

There's nothing like a 50-minute color film about the Mennonites to take your mind off the pillaging, plundering and even killing of World and Korean Wars, so when the yellow invitation cards for the premiere showing of *Prairie Pioneers* suddenly turned up on Remembrance Day The Frau and I decided to go.

We're not above accepting the odd freebee as long as there are no strings attached. And these came without enclosed news releases or requests for reviews. There wasn't even mention of an interview with the producer.

This could be turned into a night out. I mount a search for my vinyl bow tie.

Our arrival at the University of Winnipeg (scene of the showing) is not without its own kind of problem. Parking. We wind up on the CBC lot under dire threat of having our unauthorized vehicle towed away at our own expense. But why worry? My Manitoba Motor League membership entitles me to free towing. It's not that kind of towing, The Frau reminds me, and I agree to look elsewhere for parking space. After a few turns around the various streets around and about the U we settle for a place two blocks away and walk over only to find assorted spaces open on the staff lot. About an hour later as we leave there are even fewer staff cars around. I make a mental note of these slots for future reference.

I haven't set foot in the hallowed halls of the downtown university since I was a student there. That's 25 years ago. Nay, 30. Good grief! Then it was called United College. But obviously more has changed than the name. I've no idea, for instance, where Manitoba Hall is, much less Theatre B. We enter on the west side about the middle of the building and immediately come upon a sign pointing the way. Up the moving stairs and past the offices of L.B. Siemens and P. Pauls and there we are in Theatre B along with more than a 100 other freebees.

Now we're handed an information sheet on a Mennonite Centennial Committee letterhead. It tells about the film and its producer Otto Klassen. It also tells about three Winnipeg doctors who have helped with the film. It amazes me again how these city doctors have time for all

this extra-curricular stuff. At home our GP's don't have so much time. They're far too busy removing tonsils and repairing hernias. Well, that's the city life for you. Maybe they're specialists.

An Icelander gets up and welcomes us to the university and then one of the Mennonite doctors does the same for the Mennonite Historical Society. He also talks about the film and is later given a copy of it for the society.

The film is in color - just like the invitation promised. We like it. It has been shot in the West Reserve at the Altona Sunflower Festival and in the East Reserve at the Steinbach Pioneer Day. It's amazing how much Mennonite history Otto Klassen and Al Reimer manage to pack into those two days. Of course, there is other footage too. Even the Queen gets into it. And by the time 50 minutes are up the viewer has the feeling that Premier Schreyer is not only a Germophone but also a near-Mennonite, if not the genuine article. We notice, too, that Otto has spiced up his film with a close-up of the undraped figure of the Golden Boy. I am embarrassed and adjust my vinyl bow tie. But The Frau still rates it G.

After the showing we shake some hands and look around for the editor of *The Mennonite Mirror*. We see him not and wonder what kind of freebees he's got. Nor is the office manager of the Mirror near the exit as we take our leave. But her parents are there and we chat. We tell them we are on our way to Lac du Bonnet to visit our granddaughter and her Mama and Dada.

Not having made prior reservations at Oliver's, there's not need to cancel and we head instead for a 24-hour breakfast place. There we stare at some cold greasy eggs on a plate as we nibble the cold toast and imbibe some coffee that is scarcely a step above the "prips" of pioneer times. At the cashier's counter I try to stifle a sneeze and my bow tie comes off and falls into the bowl of mints. I pretend it isn't mine, but the cashier hands it to me with the change.

Then we head north past smoldering peat bogs to the Lake of the Cap (or is it by the Cap, or even Cap by the Lake). No matter. A warm welcome awaits.

Our Mennonite night out has expired.

mm

The Happy
Vineyard

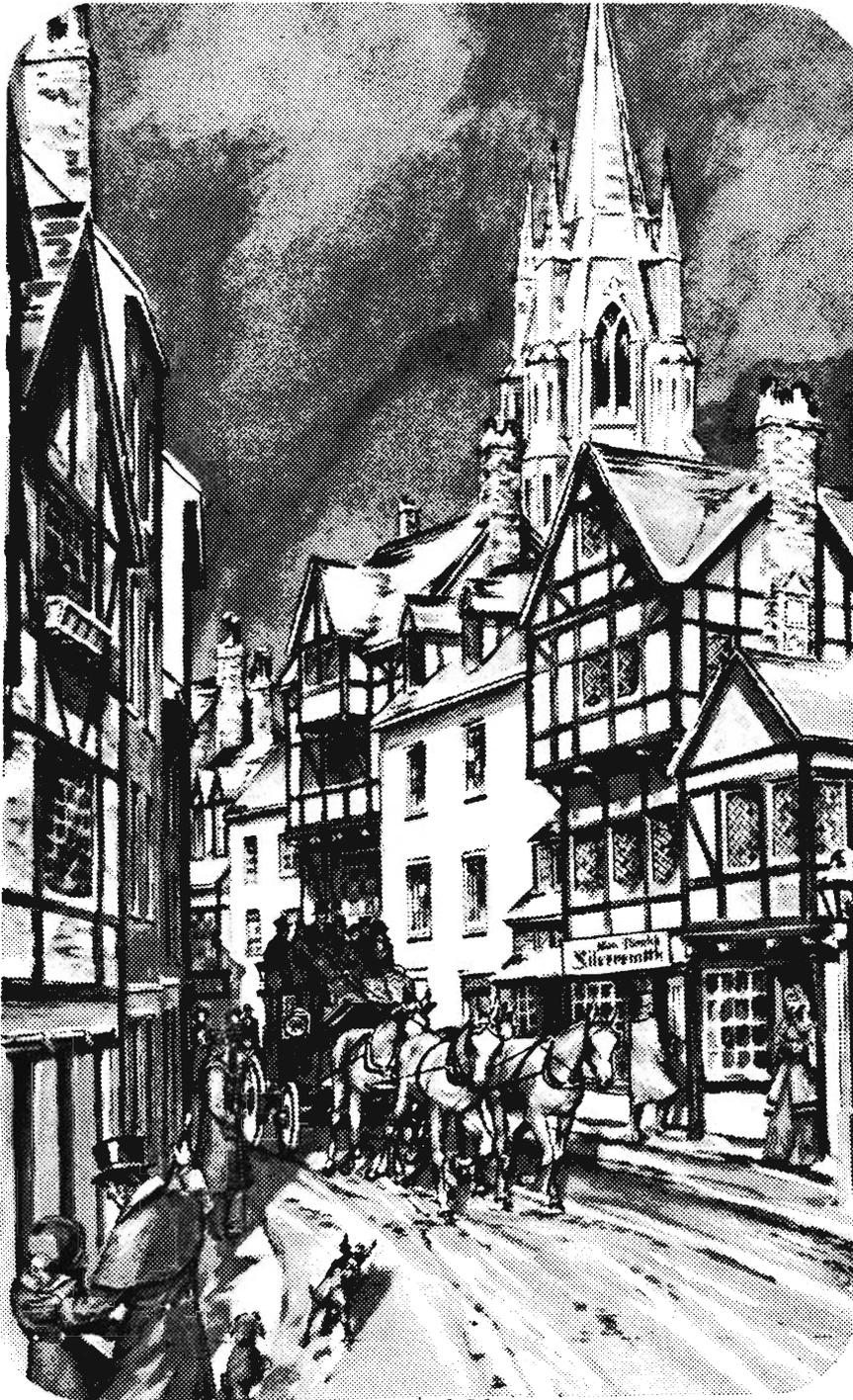
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