

mennonite mirror

B.P.K.

volume 9/number 6
february 1980



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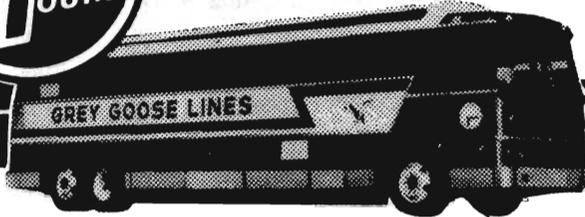


Mirror mix-up

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Since few entries for the January Mix-Up had been received by press time, a winner will be chosen in February and announced in the March issue.

Answers for the January puzzle are goal, aspire, steady, choice, intent, and petrolcon.

The letters are to be re-arranged and written in the squares to form words. Letters which fall into the squares with circles within them are to be arranged to complete the answer at the bottom of the puzzle.

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Entries must be sent to the Mirror office by February 19, 1980.

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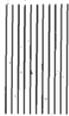
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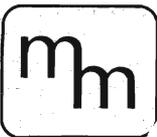
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**Take a moment to
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Ten times each year the *Mennonite Mirror* publishes a variety of news, feature articles, reviews, and creative writing that relate to Mennonites. It's a magazine intended for people who are Mennonites and who are concerned about what it means to be a Mennonite.

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Marriage and divorce II

Age, Community, Size, Church, are among factors which affect durability

Second of three parts

by Mavis Reimer

The rate of divorce among Manitoba Mennonites is low for all four years of our study—1946, 1956, 1966, and 1976. Few Mennonites seem to separate or divorce. Between 1946 and 1976, the divorce rate rose only slightly, from one per cent to three per cent.

Despite the small number of divorces in our total sample—19 in all four years—several characteristics can be isolated as being typical of this group of couples. The age of both bride and groom at marriage, the size of the community, and the church conference in which they were married proved to be factors pertinent to the likelihood of the marriage ending in divorce.

Age at Marriage

Mennonites who separate or divorce tend to have married young. In all of the divorces we noted, both bride and groom were under 30 at the time of marriage. Of the 19 divorces included in our sample, 17 brides and 16 grooms were under 25 years old.

There seems to be a general trend among Mennonites to marry younger. In both 1946 and 1956, we found only one groom between the ages of 15 and 19. By 1976, approximately eight per cent of grooms are under 20. Just over 11 per

cent of brides in 1946 are 15-19 years old. In 1976, close to one-third of the brides fall into this age category. Conversely, the 28 per cent of grooms between 25 and 29 years old in 1946 is approximately halved by 1976: only 15 per cent of grooms are in their late twenties in this year.

In 1966 and 1976, brides and grooms are younger than they were in the earlier years of our study. It is also in these years that the burden of divorces fall.

The following table suggests more precisely the relationship between age at marriage and divorce:

Age at Marriage	Divorce rate	
	Grooms	Brides
15-19	3.2%	5.1%
20-24	3.2%	1.3%
25-29	1.4%	1.9%

Last year the Mennonite Mirror decided to commission a major study of marriage and divorce among the Mennonites of Manitoba. With the assistance of a student work grant from the federal government, it asked Mavis Reimer, a native Manitoban but more recently a graduate student at Dalhousie University, to spend the summer of 1979 surveying all the Mennonite churches of Manitoba. The job was extremely difficult. Mrs. Reimer contacted each church, examined each marriage register carefully, and followed up the recorded marriages to determine how many had ended in divorce. She was assisted by another student, Chris Penner of Winnipeg. A few sample years were chosen, in keeping with scientific, statistical procedures. Dr. Leo Driedger, professor of sociology at the University of Manitoba, helped with the statistical techniques and his assistance is gratefully acknowledged.

Approximately five per cent of the marriages in which the bride was under 20 at the time of marriage ended in separation or divorce. While this figure may not seem high, it must be remembered that the overall divorce rate among the sample marriages of all four years is only 2.2 per cent. Similarly, a disproportionate number of marriages in which the groom was under 25 ended in divorce.

Size of Community

We sorted the Manitoba churches involved in our study into these classifications: urban, town, and rural. An urban church was considered to be a church located in a centre with a population of more than 10,000. A church in a centre with a population between 1,000 and 10,000 was designated a town church. Rural churches were those located in centres with populations less than one thousand.

Marriages are distributed fairly equally among the three types of churches, although urban churches do account for more of the marriages in the last two years of the study. Over all four sample years, approximately 34 per cent of marriages took place in urban churches, 39 per cent in town churches, and 27 per cent in rural churches.

Separations and divorces, however, are not distributed equally among the three locations. Of the 19 divorces in our study, 11 were urban marriages, seven town marriages, and one a rural marriage. This would make the divorce rate among the urban Mennonites of our study approximately 3.7 per cent. Among Mennonites who live in smaller communities, the rate is approximately 2.1 per cent. Among rural Mennonites,

the rate of divorce is negligible—only 0.4 per cent.

Conference

As well as classifying churches by the size of the community in which they are located, we grouped Mennonite churches into four categories based on conference affiliations. The first group is comprised of all General Conference churches, the second of all Mennonite Brethren churches. In a third category, we included all of the evangelical conferences, specifically the Evangelical Mennonite churches, the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren churches, and the Evangelical Mennonite Mission churches. The fourth category consists of the conservative conferences, the Old Colony Mennonite churches and the Chortitzer Mennonite churches.

There was some variation in the frequency of divorce among the four conference groups. In numerical terms, 11 of the 19 divorces are General Conference marriages, four are Mennonite Brethren churches, three are evangelical marriages, and one is a conservative marriage. The divorce rate for each group is as follows:

General Conference	2.7%
Mennonite Brethren	2.1%
Evangelical	1.9%
Conservative	0.9%

It is interesting to note that all three of the divorces from the 1946 and 1956 samples were marriages performed in General Conference churches.

Mixed Marriages

The total number of sample marriages in our study is 877. Of these, approximately 15 per cent are mixed marriages, marriages in which one of the couple did not name him-or her-self as a Mennonite in the marriage register.

Seven of the 19 divorces were mixed marriages, 12 were Mennonite marriages. This would make the divorce rate of marriages in which both partners are Mennonites approximately 1.6 per cent. For mixed marriages, the rate is approximately 5.4 per cent.

In the first article of this series, I suggested that, because of the relatively small sample of mixed marriages available, the calculation of the divorce rate for mixed marriages might vary slightly in a larger survey. Compared to the much lower rate for Mennonite marriages, however, the figure does reflect the fact that more mixed marriages than Mennonite marriages will end in divorce.

Conclusions and Observations

The finding that Mennonites who marry early in life are more likely to divorce than those who marry later in life is probably not surprising. The late teens and early twenties often seem to be turbulent years. Usually, this is the time when it first becomes necessary to confront major choices about vocation, education, and lifestyle. It seems reasonable to suppose that both financial and emotional pressures will be more pronounced in marriages contracted during these years.

The higher incidence of divorce in mixed marriages similarly seems to suggest that special problems occur when two people of significantly different backgrounds learn to live together.

That community size affects the divorce rate confirms our suppositions. No doubt there is both a closer scrutiny of marriages in smaller communities and a greater pressure to conform to the expectations of the community. The wide divergence between divorce rates for urban Mennonites and rural Mennonites, however, is noteworthy. The urban divorce rate is fully nine times the rural rate. Even in small towns, couples separate and divorce at five times the rate of their rural counterparts.

The variation in divorce rates among the different conferences of Mennonites is more difficult to read, however. In classifying Mennonite churches, we tried to group together churches that shared common emphases. It seemed to us that, while the General Conference represents a very mixed group of churches, it is theologically the most liberal of Mennonite conferences. In comparison with the General Conference, the

Mennonite Brethren churches tend to be more fundamentalist theologically, but more aggressive socially. For example, the Mennonite Brethren church contributes a large proportion of the politicians and businessmen among Mennonites. Like the Mennonite Brethren churches, the evangelical churches are characterized by a pietistic theology, although they are probably not as active in the business and political arenas. The Old Colony and Chortitzer churches are the most traditional and self-contained of Mennonite churches. To a greater extent than other Mennonite churches, they seem to have maintained a homogeneity of community.

The divorce rate for each of the conference groups would seem to reflect, in part, their theological and social orientations. But the relationship between the rate of divorce and the particular emphasis of a group is not a simple one. Other factors also influence the variation among the four groups. In our sample, for instance, the largest number of General Conference and Mennonite Brethren marriages were urban marriages. Evangelical marriages were concentrated in small towns, and conservative marriages were predominately rural. Brides in all groups tended to be younger than grooms. In General Conference, Mennonite Brethren, and evangelical marriages, however, the majority of brides and grooms were within a few years of each other in age. In the conservative conferences—the conference with the lowest divorce rate—the greatest percentage of grooms were between five and ten years older than their brides. Moreover, the rate of mixed marriage in the Chortitzer and Old Colony churches is negligible.

Mixed marriage, conference, size of community, and age at marriage are all, to some extent, factors in the distribution of divorces among Mennonites. But even if a Mennonite bride of 19 were to marry a non-Mennonite groom in an urban General Conference church, the odds are that the couple would persist to celebrate their fiftieth wedding anniversary.

Concluded next month



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BRANCHES: REGINA SASKATOON VANCOUVER

A Christian response to crime and punishment

First of two parts

by H.M.R. Dueck

The Christian church is no stranger to the subject of crime and punishment. It has had a long, and often commendable history of involvement in corrections, offering help to offenders who were shunned or ignored by the rest of society, and providing leadership in prison reform. Still, it has never developed a theology of corrections. ¹ The reason, suggests one writer, is that "the way of Jesus and the way of incarnation are so contradictory that the two cannot be brought together in a theological statement."²

Many would disagree, but there has, in the past decade, surfaced an accumulation of disturbing evidence to back up such a statement. As a result, there is dawning in the church, a new level of moral consciousness in regards to corrections, which is prompting questions such as: "What, in fact, is a Christian response to crime and punishment?", and, "Can such a response, if found, find credence in a non-Christian society?"

Both the questions, and the answers that are being explored in this quest for a truly Christian response to crime and punishment pose real and difficult problems for the Christian community. And as always interpretations of "what is Christian" conflict dramatically. Some see no conflict between their understanding of Christian ethics and the present criminal-justice system, while others see a great inconsistency between the system and the teachings of Christ to "love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, (and) pray for those who abuse you" (Luke 6:27, 28).

Then too there are those who think that for the church to become involved in affairs of state such as the penal system is in itself a violation of the Christian principle to be "in the world but not of it", while others, the consciousness-raisers, strongly advocate involvement as an expression of Christian

faith. They view uninvolved as a "passing by on the other side", and in violation to the heart of Christ's teaching. So the problems underlying all others are related to the church's inability to agree on what "Christian" response is.

Regardless where one stands on that question it is still no easy challenge to be asked to re-examine one's own attitudes and actions, much less change them. But moral-consciousness raisers are pointing to the ever increasing weight of evidence that a new and united "Christian" response is imperative if real justice is to be done. The church can no longer ignore this growing chorus of voices, who, like Karl Menninger,³ believe that the prison system reflects society's indulgence of vengeful retaliation, and has very little to do with effectively dealing with crime nor with upholding justice. The call is for a re-defining of justice according to Scriptural teaching, and a re-commitment to Christ-like responses to both victim and offender.

The response of the Christian community to this call has been slow, but one of the manifestations that the church's concern and involvement in the criminal-justice question has been growing has been the rise of church-sponsored organizations and programs geared to grapple with the issues and suggest and initiate solutions.

"Alternatives" is such a program, supported by a cross-section of churches and agencies, and sponsored by the Church Council on Justice and Corrections. Through this program a seminar entitled "Toward a Christian Response to Crime and Punishment" was held in Winnipeg in late 1979. It addressed itself specifically to some of the problems involved in moving towards that "Christian response" and explored some of the implications of crime and punishment for Christian people.

Speakers at the seminar were MCC's offender ministries consultant, and half-

time regional co-ordinator for the Church council on justice and corrections, Edgar Epp, and Anglican priest and program director of the Diocese of Edmonton, Rev. Tom James.

In view of the fact that the only Mennonite representation in the "Alternatives" program is the Mennonite Central Committee, and none of the Mennonite churches, it was perhaps a bit surprising that such a strong Mennonite voice was heard at the seminar, not only in terms of the lecture defining the problems relating to crime and punishment, but also in terms of suggesting and modelling alternative "Christian" solutions.

Broadly stated, the problems involved in trying to adopt a "Christian response", and raised at the seminar via Edgar Epp's lecture, an interview with Epp, and the film, "Crime, Prison and Alternatives"⁴ were: The problems existing within the Canadian Criminal-justice process, society's double standards, the "myths" regarding the criminal-justice process, and the mis-interpretation of Scripture.

Underlying the problems within the criminal-justice process, says Epp, is the fact that the laws in this country, since the white man came, have been written, interpreted, and enforced by people who have power, at the expense of, and without consideration for the people who do not have power. In our country, said Epp, status and money represent that power, and this determines how the law will be enforced. Even our court procedure depends on one's status and means, and although the system was designed to arrive at truth it has instead become a system in which cases are won or lost on the basis of technicalities. Whether or not a person will be found innocent or guilty, depends on how much he can afford to pay for a defense lawyer. Furthermore, says Epp, the state considers itself the victim, and does not find the real victim useful except to help establish the offender's

guilt. The victim is not compensated for his loss.

Along with the problems inherent in the structure of the penal system itself, Epp also raised the problem of society's double standards: it's reliance on violence for resolving conflict, while punishing violence in others, and it's pursuit of social values such as greed, while punishing those who in adopting and pursuing those values, break the law.

Then there is the problem of the commonly accepted "myths", the misinformation regarding the criminal-justice process. They are the myths that prison rehabilitates criminals, deters crime, protects the public, deals effectively and justly with crime, and brings justice to the criminal and the victim. The seminar produced some disconcerting, myth-shattering facts and figures. Facts that "don't get believed", according to Epp.

A commonly accepted notion is that prisons protect the public, deal with crime and uphold justice. But such claims were seriously questioned. Only 50 per cent of all crimes are reported at all, and of these 95 per cent go unconvicted. Furthermore, over 80 per cent of those that are convicted are incarcerated for non-violent crimes, the most common offence being against property amounting to less than \$200. Inability to pay one's fine accounts for as many as 50 per cent of the inmates in some institutions, and up to 74 per cent in Prince George jails.

"We aren't touching crime in our prisons", says Epp, "we're only punishing those who are easy to catch." For the most part, the crimes we punish are the "stupid, unsophisticated crimes". And although Epp has been challenged on the statement, he claims that more money is taken illegally in Canada each year through income tax evasion by Christians, than is taken by all bank robberies put together. Our society is not frightened by sophisticated crimes such as income tax evasion, padding expense accounts, etc., only by crimes that threaten our person or our property.

So, while the largest bulk of crime goes unpunished and even unrecognized, there is still one person per 1,000 in jail in Canada, at a cost of \$14,000 per year per prisoner, or a total of \$1.5 billion annually. What are the returns on this investment in a country with one of the highest incarceration rates in the world? Rehabilitation of the offenders? Deterrence?

Not only is the crime rate still on a steady climb, but for every 100 criminals going into prison 98.3 come out worse than when they went in. Why? According to some authorities, it is because of the dynamics of the prison. As Karl

Menninger says, "...the jail experience is a particularly horrible, painful, dehumanizing, character-destroying kind of confinement. I don't think any victim ever fully recovers from the experience. It means sustaining life for a time in an inescapable environment of evil; evil acts, evil smells, evil sounds, evil associates, evil attitudes. It is a life in an evil and corrupting atmosphere with hope dimmed and common decency smothered. There are no companions of the opposite sex, there are no consistent social contacts, no appeals to intelligence or good taste." (*America*, 2 July 1977). In the film, *Crime, Prison, and Alternatives*, an Ontario Supreme Court judge agrees: "Sending people to jail in no way rehabilitates them."

Aside from the 80 per cent who have been imprisoned for non-violent crimes, who are these criminals that society has caught and punished? Says Epp, "In the prisons you will find those that are poor, those that are young, and those from ethnic minorities." Of these, over 50 per cent will have a drinking problem, and 80 per cent will be repeaters.

What of the claims that the penal system upholds justice? Recently, a case came to light on CBC TV's "Ombudsman" program. It was the story of a man who had spent 15 years locked in maximum security in a mental institution. His crime? At the age of 19, he had tried to snatch a purse. There had been a struggle and he was apprehended. He was found mentally unfit to stand trial, could not afford a lawyer, pleaded guilty to the charge, and was committed to the mental institution under a lieutenant governor's warrant with no provision for treatment. Today, 15 years later, he is still there, still without treatment, but the bureaucratic machinery is finally beginning to move on his behalf because someone cares.

Edgar Epp related another incident where on a certain night a police officer apprehended first a drunk native who was staggering down a street, and soon after a drunk driver, the mayor of the town. The native was thrown into jail for the week-end to await trial, while the mayor was taken home and tucked into bed. Today, the native still bounces in and out of jail, while the mayor has gone on to serve in the Canadian Senate. One might well ask why the law applied differently to the native than to the mayor, and how effective has prison been for the native? There seem to be numerous variations on the theme of injustice, rather than justice being done on behalf of the victims and the offenders.

A further problem in the move "towards a Christian response to crime and punishment" according to Epp is the mis-interpretation of Scripture. Many Christians claim that Scripture supports

a punitive justice system. "The criminal must be punished", they say. While this view has many implications not dealt with at the seminar, Epp did say that it is a notion dating back to Thomas Aquinas and not to Scripture. The heart of Judeo-Christian teaching, however, according to Epp, is that justice and righteousness are synonymous. As Peter says in Acts, "those who do right" are acceptable to God. "Justice has nothing to do with being punitive", says Epp, "we need to rediscover that justice has to do with reconciliation—with healing, and not with punishing." So then, "justice is served only when you bring together the law-breaker and the victim. . . We need a right relationship with God and our fellowman. Unrighteousness results when the relationship is broken. Justice is the healing of unrighteousness."

It was a positive note on which to end a statement of the problems facing those in search of a "Christian response" to the crime and punishment question. And in spite of the magnitude of those problems, the challenge was clear. Still, a question gnawed in most of our minds: "Is there really anything we can do about it?" The alternatives which would be suggested, the cases that would be studied, the discussions that would take place, and Rev. Tom James's message "Attitudes in Action", would supply no easy answers, but they would challenge Christian people to weigh the implications of crime and punishment, and to respond as reconciliators.

Next Issue: Part B: Implications for Christian People

Footnotes:

1. Clarence Epp, *The Mennonite*, 16. Oct. 1979.
2. Epp, *ibid*.
3. Karl Menninger, psychiatrist and author of *The Crime of Punishment*.
4. "Crime, Prison and Alternatives", produced by John Watson and Pen Densham's Insight Productions Inc. Toronto, Canada.

DREDGEFUL TV

An elderly lady watched with increasing annoyance as the television comedian ran through a lengthy routine she considered to be in questionable taste. "I'm afraid," she said "that this channel is badly in need of dredging."

Manitoba news

Herman Rempel, a former Canada Manpower Centre manager at Morden turned his hand to writing and now has presented us with a Low German dictionary. The impetus for the dictionary came from his children who grew up with only a smattering of the language to their credit. At their request, he set about writing out a vocabulary for them some three years ago. One word clearly led to another until he had a book of 9,000 words. Inconsistent spelling in Low German has bothered Rempel who says that if nothing else his book will draw attention to inconsistencies and perhaps lead to a meeting wherein authors will hopefully get together a more uniform method of spelling. Rempel has contributed a chapter to the Toews and Klippenstein book, *Manitoba Mennonite Memories*. His contribution *Mavericks*, deals with people of Mennonite background who joined the armed forces and balked at Mennonite traditions.

A.K. Penner & Sons Ltd. of Blumenort is the contractor for a \$600,000 expansion and upgrading project at the Bethel Hospital in Winkler. The project will expand lab and x-ray facilities, the construction of a 3,000 sq.ft. addition for diagnostic services and the upgrading of fire and safety features, bringing safety features in line with current building code standards.

Steinbach EMC church hosted a gathering of southeast Asians and host families before Christmas. Several other gatherings of the same nature were held earlier. The afternoon service required two interpreters to deal with the various languages spoken. Pastor Francis Tung of the Chinese Mennonite church in Winnipeg was the speaker. A total of 145 people took part in the afternoon service and enjoyed the meal which followed. Around a hundred of those present were estimated to be southeast Asians. Guests came from Steinbach and from places in that vicinity.

The annual MCC (Manitoba) ladies auxiliary meeting, attended by 350 women, was held in the Landmark EM Church on October 20. Offerings for the day totalled \$2,000. Of significance among the various reports that day was the talk by Clarence Epp, director of Open Circle. He outlined the three types of services this project is providing. First is the service to Grosvenor Place, a home for adult offenders on probation, then the prison visitation program and lastly the victim offender mediation program where Murray and Margaret Barkman work as go betweens.

Mennonite monument: There will be a general meeting for all interested in establishing a monument on the legislative grounds on February 18, 8 p.m., in the North Kildonan MB church, 217 Kingsford Avenue. The monument proposes to commemorate the violent death of Mennonites in this century and is to be an undertaking of all the Mennonite brotherhood.

Martens music: An evening of fine music under the direction of John Martens is being organized by the Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre in the Auditorium of the Winnipeg Art Gallery at 8 p.m., Saturday, March 15. Tickets are available at a cost of \$3 at the door or from H. Friesen, telephone 452-1207.

Auditions: The Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre will be holding auditions for its fall production of *Leben des Galileo* by

Bertold Brecht on Sunday, February 24, at 4 p.m., in the lower auditorium of the First Mennonite Church.

SCM dinner: Rev. Ted Scott, Anglican archbishop and primate of Canada, will be the guest speaker at a fund-raising banquet of the Student Christian Movement, Winnipeg chapter, on Wednesday, March 12, at 7 p.m., in Riddell Hall of the University of Winnipeg.

Tickets may be purchased at a cost of \$25 per person, or \$40 per couple. Tax receipts are available. Information is available from Ernie Penner, 774-4265 or Marilyn Huband at 284-5514.

Proceeds from the dinner will be used to promote Christian activity on both Winnipeg University Campuses.



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Lillian Toews holds her first finished violin



Where art and craft combine in Love

by Mary M. Enns

Snow drifted bleakly across the highway as we made our way over the prairie toward Morris. Because I was anxious to see what a violin maker's workshop looked like, my interview with Lilli Ruth Schmidt-Toews (her present trade mark on the belly of her first newly built violin) was scheduled to take place in her home.

Over coffee and home-made Apfel-Kuchen in her warm, friendly kitchen I discovered that this young housewife and mother of three has sent her tendrils into a number of areas of interest. She has studied piano and painting. The painting was with Gissur Eliason at University of Manitoba. Some of her works are hung in business offices in

Winnipeg as well as in American homes and the home of the late art collector MacCauley. Her art has been shown at Manitoba Artists Association and at the Winnipeg Badminton Club. She sculpts and whittles in wood.

Those various talents have stood her in good stead now that she's doing what she's wanted more than anything, ever, to do — building violins.

Did she build her first violin from a kit, we asked, as one builds clocks and other musical instruments? She didn't, simply because she felt she needed to make a thorough study of an instrument of such fine precision and then-do or die-build one herself from scratch.

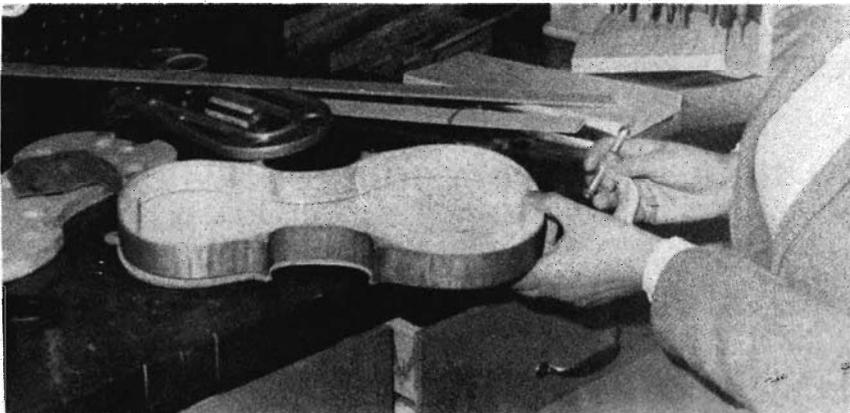
Lillian Toews is fortunate in that her husband, Arthur, a Mathematics

teacher for some 22 years at Morris Collegiate has supported her highly unusual hobby every step of the way from the very beginning. His own hobby is wood-turning. His handsome chess set of seven-inch figures of cherry and walnut wood complete with chess table graces their living room.

Their children, Darrell 17, Tamara 12 and Angelique 10, are being given a thorough musical exposure in piano and violin. They and their mother, who began her own violin study six years ago, are students of Emmanuel Horch, Winnipeg violin teacher. They perform as a family as well as in other groups. Lillian teaches five students in violin.

Clearly Lillian, 37, has had a long-standing interest in music. Originally from Arnaud, she moved to Winnipeg at age 16 to work as a receptionist at CJOB and to study voice with Nina Dempsey and later Mae Lawson. Actually, it was violin study she really had her mind on. She was advised against this as being too old. Eventually, ignoring this advice, she joined her son six years ago in violin study with Horch.

Asked why she initially began to build violins Mrs. Toews dark eyes sparkle and she breaks out into joyous laughter: "Why not? I've always wanted to play the violin and nearly always wanted to build one. I believe God gives to each of us humans talents and abilities uniquely suited to the individual. We make a great mistake in ignoring the incli-



Violin in the making

nations springing from our innermost; these are central to the very core of our being, who and what we are. But He leaves the choice to us. For me it seemed a natural progression from my love for the instrument and wood-carving to go on toward actually building a violin. When I was a child I made wheat straw violins and wooden spoon violins with flv swatter handle bows. The music produced by these was all in my head but it was glorious. Years ago I took old violins apart and studied the structure. You learn from doing, not only from studying and reading up on the art. The instrument builder is an artist whose work can only be fully appreciated when another artist, the musician shows what the instrument is capable of. That is when the skill of the builder becomes apparent—or not—as the case may be.”

She explains that the great Stradivarius built his finest, his costliest violin toward the end of his career, at perhaps 70 years of age or more.

Lillian, this contemporary craftsman, builds her own instruments (at present she is working on two) out of spruce imported from Germany. Different woods are used for various parts of the violin: the scroll, side and back pieces are made of bird's eye maple, the belly, lining and corner and end blocks of spruce, the tail piece and chin rest of rosewood, the tuning pegs and finger board of ebony. The spruce must be well seasoned for 20 years. “Eventually I hope to be looking for native B.C. spruce. Apparently some of this wood is being cut as violin wood and sent to Germany to be treated and seasoned before it comes back here for use. As time goes on I hope to season some wood myself.”

The brown horse hide glue used is also imported from Germany. It's very brittle when dry. The reason for using this glue is that it can be taken off, if necessary, for repairs of cracks developing over the years. Permanent bond glue is used only on the neck part where greatest tension occurs.

This first violin cost her an approximate \$200, and took six months to build. The procedure is a long drawn out one because, as did Stradivarius, Lillian, after building the instrument, applies 13

coats of a specialized varnish with a two week period between each coat. Twelve coats are applied with a rubbing grit and cloth, the final coat with a very fine rotten-stone. The varnish of the 13 coats varies in colour but not in type. Here's where, in the shading, Toews' painting experience is of value. The trim was in-laid into the body of the violin. The last and very important detail was the setting of the sound post. Then come the stringing, tightening and tuning. Finally, the tense moment of the first tone. Will the tone that was envisioned for it really come forth? “I was so proud and happy when I finally played my very own violin! It was like my very own baby that I had given birth to. I think I am more relaxed about Number Two.”

Men like Emmanuel and Ben Horch attest to the excellence of tone of Lillian's violin and ascribe this to her workmanship. “I never thought, when she began,” says her teacher Horch, “that she could do it. I was wrong.”

What sort of problems does she encounter? For one thing, the prohibitive costs of the Swiss and German made precision instruments she must use such as chisels, planes, measuring tools. She was able to buy a caliper costing \$450 for \$200. The wood is expensive too. Then, too, she must work with frustrations, not the least of which is the antagonism and skepticism from male craftsmen because she is a woman. Competition is fierce and attitudes toward her are hostile and sarcastic. Lillian is the only female in Manitoba and probably in Canada to be building violins. She is a member of the guild of American Luthiers, an organization that is interested in nurturing the string instrument building craft.

Her training came from books. “For Number One I used an archaic book from the Ottawa library, an analysis of violin construction published in 1860. I had a lot of encouragement from Mr. Islielson, a Winnipeg violin maker. Dedication is the prime ingredient in this business.”

Will she sell any future violins? Of course. That will help keep my operation going. I'm looking forward to the time when I can devote more time to my chosen art.” mm

Your word

Sehr geehrter Herr Editor,

Bitte tausend mal zum Entschuldigung fuer die Versaeumniss des Lese-geld zu zahlen u. danke fuer Ihren “gentle reminder.” Der M. Mirror scheint immer duenner zu werden, das ist sicher zum Teil meine Schuld, darum sende ich diesen Check fuer die verflossenen Jahre wo ich nicht gezahlt habe. Bitte schicken Sie mir den MM nicht mehr, lest ihn zwar sehr gerne, da meine Tochter ihn auch erhaelt u. wir in einem Hause wohnen ist es wirklich ueberfluessig. Hochachtungsvoll,

Ihre
M. Redekop
Winnipeg

Dear Sir:

You are doing an excellent job in your editorial work on the *Mennonite Mirror*. Among the 200 and more papers we get in Mennonite Library and Archives it is outstanding. So far you do justice to those who want it in English, some in German be it in High German or Low German.

Cornelius Krahn,
North Newton, Kansas

Leiva Umtje Reima:

Uns jevolle de jeschichte von Viktor Petasch seija. Oba wan wie Plautdietsch lese dan soll daut uck Plautdietsch senne, nich su Jantsiedtsch met aulle die ennen doa jenjaraun. Dei Enjlische wieda bruk wie uck nicht: “Interupschen”, “Exseitment”, daut tjann wie nich. Oba doawjens woa wie noch wieda lese. De Jeschikcte wiere meist toam em buk biete.

Oba nu mot wie uphiere, dann wie sent gauns reid toam “Hoassen jaejeren voaren.”

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German visitors find Manitoba an experience

by Hilda Matsuo

This year 28 youngsters, grade 10 and up, came to Canada from West Germany to spend three months living in a Manitoba home.

Karl Fast, of the department of education, who helped set up the exchange program made it a point to choose homes to the German students that represented typical Canadian families. He argued that the students would benefit from rubbing shoulders with the average Canadian family. He also made no apology for the Canadian students' language proficiency, because language schools and programs aren't set up the same way as in Germany and students are not necessarily chosen for their scholastic ability but rather for other factors, congeniality, relative maturity, etc. Students are after all, requested to live by the rules of the host household and observe lesson time, curfews, etc.

And how did the German students adjust to Canadian life? If one can use an anecdote, one parent was soon fed up with the arrogant criticism of her particular billet. Finally, she bluntly put it this way, "Look, you came here to observe us, not to change us." The youngster adjusted nicely after that and in the end didn't want to leave.

The kids who were in the two private schools in Winnipeg seemed to fare the best. They really challenged the teachers in the classroom situation as well. For some reason the German school system has done a complete turn about in the last years and participation in the classroom is emphasized. Whatever they will be, they won't be like the parents, it seems. Canadian students couldn't help but be amazed at the discussions that took place in any type of class. Certainly teachers at Westgate, for instance, says

Will Barmeier, who was in charge of the group of eight exchange students there, felt that everyone benefitted. Steinbach Regional High School had three exchanges only, but they too enjoyed excellent acceptance from the others in school and were invited to participate in extracurricular activities.

Amusingly enough, and rather typically like normal 16 year olds, the threesome, when interviewed by the *Carillon* shot off their mouths and typically the reporter picked up on the startling negatives while other remarks went more or less unheeded. One billet there was particularly embarrassed. He said something about the 'father being the boss' in the household over here and when seeing how negative it looked in print remarked, "But we always discuss it, don't we dad?" What he meant in effect was that when it came to a final word after discussion a decision was made and adhered to. He also liked rough housing with his Canadian 'dad' and spent lovely long hours in fall at tilling the soil with a powerful air-conditioned tractor. The same boy played a clarinet solo at the time of the 'parents' silver wedding anniversary in November, while the other three youngsters in the family did their stint by reciting poetry made-up for the occasion, singing, and doing a 'memory-lane' slide presentation.

All in all, the whole program so far has been considered a success. The German kids, after an initial period of cultural shock enjoyed the freedom exercised by our smaller population, the Canadian ability to just 'live' a happy life without striving, the hospitality, and the wide open spaces. They also made a very creditable showing at a meeting in fall for some 40 teachers of German and dis-

covered that it is not as necessary for Canadians to be as politically informed, certainly not at such an early age. As the emerging people of Germany's tomorrow they learned something about living and very often about real Christianity for the first time.

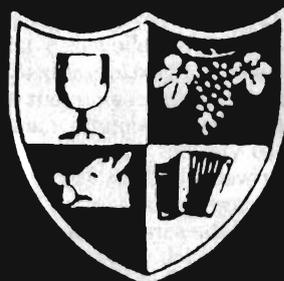
By way of a check on how the German students feel now that they have been back home for a couple of weeks, Will Barmeier rang up each of the eight youngsters who were at Westgate, when he himself went home for Christmas, and got a very positive response from both parents and students.

What is in store for the Canadian students now, is lots of hard work so courses can be finished before the students leave on April 15 for their three month stay. They will have to inure themselves to the population's impatience with less adequate German, normally coming from guest workers to that country. They will get a free trip of five days to Berlin and a reduced rate on a trip to Bonn. By and large however, they will just do what was done here, live an every-day life. Highlights here were discouraged because it is costly for one thing and the real object of the exchange is not tourism though some families will join the students in July and do some travelling.



Some of the visitors from Germany

The Happy Vineyard

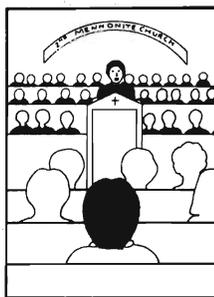


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View from pew IV in two MB Churches



This month the Mirror's two "strangers" have chosen to go separate ways. One went to the Portage Avenue MB Church while the other visited Fort Garry MB.

A visit to Portage Avenue

On Sunday, November 4, 1979, I attended the Portage Avenue Mennonite Brethren Church and participated in the morning worship service. I noted, from the program, that this 11:00 service had been preceded by a Deutscher Gottesdienst at 9:30, a prayer meeting in the Pastor's office from 9:30 to 10:00, and Sunday school at 10:00. There was, as well, a "junior Church" for 3 and 4 year olds during the regular service, a Sunday school party immediately following it, and an evening service at 7:00. From all indications the Church was a very busy place on Sundays, offering a little something for everyone.

The Portage Avenue Church is the most attractive and opulent Mennonite Church I have seen. The interior is finished in lightly stained wood and attractive carpeting. Two rows of pews were padded for the benefit of the elderly, and a peaked roof rose high above my head, supported by sturdy wooden timbers. On this bright morning, the whole church was cheerfully lit.

November 4 had been designated the Jubilee Day of Prayer for the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship and so a young member of that organization was called upon to give an eloquent account of its activities and commitments. The greeting to visitors was warm, and the choir sang well—both by itself and with the large congregation.

The text of the sermon was taken from Micah 6:8, in which we are instructed to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God. The minister developed from this a lesson which showed both his wide experience and his knowledge of the scripture. His illustrations of the text's implication were drawn from both the bible and real-life situations. I found these latter examples to be particularly interesting.

I was again impressed by the number of activities which were sponsored by the church. Four pages of the program were filled with announcements and event notices. From the number of notices concerning missionary and ser-

vice work I concluded that this congregation had a particular concern for spreading its message beyond the Church.

After the service, as I made my way back to the vestibule to retrieve my coat, I was twice stopped by members of the congregation who introduced them-

selves and initiated conversations. I am sure that anyone who has been a stranger in a church will understand that, as I recall now the Sunday morning spent at the Portage Avenue Mennonite Brethren Church, it was these two brief meetings which have left the deepest impression. — by a young person

A visit to Fort Garry

Along Pembina Highway in the area known as "hamburger haven" the Fort Garry Mennonite Brethren Church sits aloofly off the street. Large and modern in design it encompasses not only the area on which the church stands and the driveway to the street, but a large parking lot at the rear.

When I entered the church a few minutes before 11:00 a.m. the foyer was almost full but no one seemed to be going to sit down. There was no one to welcome those entering the building and I looked about for an usher as I wended my way past all the people standing at the back. After a short wait I was shown to a seat by a young man who didn't seem to be having a very good day—there was no hello or good-morning or other welcome. Neither was there any similar greeting from any of my neighbors.

When the organ prelude began, the church was almost full, and I was impressed by the large number of young people present in the pews as well as among the large choir filing in just then.

The minister, Herb Kopp, then gave the call to worship after which the choir gave a marvellous rendition of Holy, Holy, Holy. When Rev. Kopp gave the welcome following this, latecomers were filing in and it was difficult to hear. He gave a special welcome to some of the congregation by name and I felt that this man really cared for his flock. I must have missed the greeting to visitors because I didn't hear any.

A missionary home on leave then

spoke for a few minutes on her work in South America and after several more songs by this excellent choir the announcements were made. As I found in all the other churches I had already visited, this too was a very busy "community within a community" with groups of all ages participating; sponsorships of several refugee families was also nearing completion.

Rev. Kopp's sermon, *The Church: An Invincible Working Community*, was well delivered, but there was a great deal of whispering going on making it hard to concentrate.

The main points of the sermon were that the church is invincible under the lordship of the body of Christ because: 1) Christ is in the centre of the church, 2) He works through men and women who "glow with the indwelling love of God," 3) it recognizes its authority and responsibility having the power to forgive or retain sins, bind and loose."

I found this latter point quite disturbing, fearing that it was possible for us to carry this idea too far and the result could be the destruction seen in the Holdeman church when that church claimed to be all-powerful.

After the sermon, song and benediction, the minister made a point of greeting everyone at the door, reaching out to shake hands with strangers. It felt again, that he truly cared, and hopefully, his congregation will learn to show they do too.

—by an older person

How do I mortify thee. . . Let me count the ways

by Mary M. Enns

I have a lot of trouble being knowledgeable in many areas. In order not to put shame on those connected with me I try to hide my naivete.

Take basketball. I love that game and had earlier decided to support, with my presence, every game of the season. This was no easy decision to make since I get excited to the point of agitation, win or lose. When the crowd applauds a player to the bench I restrain myself from patting him on the back in my exuberance and good will. Of course I am helped in the decision when I notice that back glistening with well-earned perspiration. Then, too, I seem to feel personally responsible when my favorites get foul shots called. And, should the coach manage to get himself a technical, I look the other way and growl: "Send that ref to Siberia!"

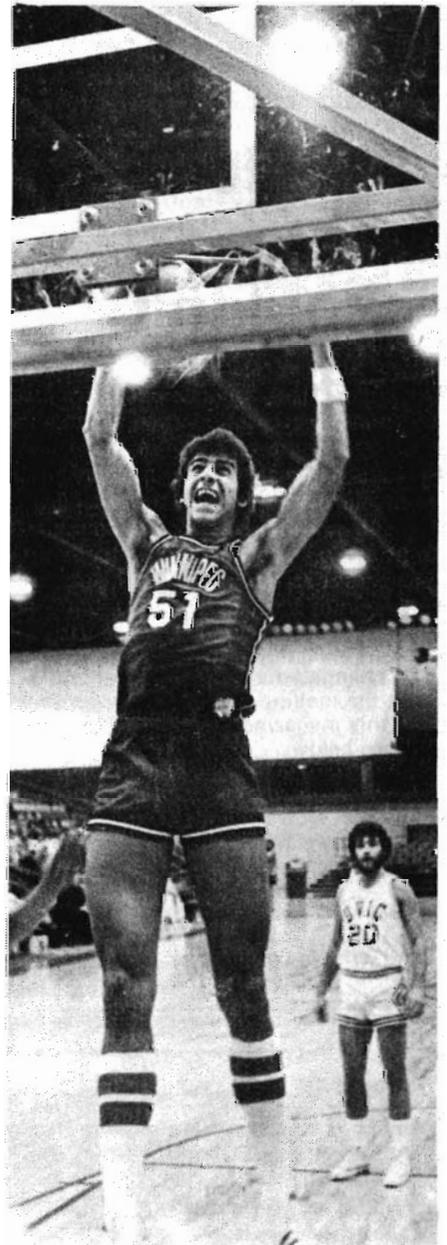
But there we all were, family and friends midst many other fans. Directly behind us sat the basketball savants like the Rs and the Ks. In front of us was a former basketball player, a spectator now because of an injured knee or something. Beside him sat an executive of some note, only I didn't know it. (Let it be said in my defense, it wouldn't have made any difference.)

Suddenly one of our team captured the ball in enemy court, and with marvelous

strength and grace sped across the floor toward his own basket. Everyone shouted with excitement. As soon as I had caught on that what was happening was for our good I too shouted, a trifle late, maybe, but still alright—if only I had left it at the usual "let's go, boys, let's go!" But in feverish enthusiasm I called, loudly, "Good travelling, Paul, very, very good!"

Behind, in front and beside me there was a sudden and total silence. I didn't feel guilty, so I didn't cringe and blush. But my escort to the game and his daughter, red of face, instantly surrounded me as though with an invisible blanket of shock or else protection against a sophisticated world. The one blurted: "What on earth do you mean?" while the other leaned over, put a restraining hand upon my arm and said, "No, no, mother, travelling is BAD." All things considered, this last remark was a foolish one to say to someone like me. No one will ever convince me that travelling is all bad. Fortunately for me the coach had heard none of this or I would have been banished from court into solitary confinement to think the rules over at my leisure.

After this I was treated ever so kindly, almost lovingly, by all in our section. Come to think of it, that's not at all the way I wanted to be treated. MM



Visit to children in Zambia was worth waiting for

This fall, Jake Harms, the leading minister at Sargent, and his wife Anne engaged in a project well worth saving for, a trip to Africa. Their children Eric and Kathy Fast are there on the last half of a three-year stint with MCC. Eric teaches in a secondary boys' school while Kathy works for a Zambian organization called "Zambian Helpers" and the local school library.

By way of background, the Eric Fast family live in Lusaka, the capital of Zambia. Zambia is a land-locked country bounded by eight other countries and has a population of over five million. The basic resource is copper and five mines

employ some 10-15,000 persons each.

Generally speaking Zambians are poor. The reasons for this are many and complex. Agriculture could be developed, but only 20 per cent of the land is utilized. In addition to this, government management doesn't always bridge the gap between theory and practise.

Some other matters that impinge on Zambians are the following. Rhodesian guerillas or "freedom fighters" who do not accept the type of black majority control of Rhodesia's black president Muserawa, hide out in Zambia since it appears that the president of Zambia is sympathetic to the cause of the "freedom fighters". On one occasion 700 guerillas died as Rhodesian bombers strafed their camp a short distance from Lusaka. In addition to this, fighters are divided, so further complicating the situation. There also are some 60-70,000 refugees, mostly women and children, from Rhodesia and Angola inside Zambia. They suffer from malnutrition, and MCC is looking for ways to help.

The social milieu seemed unique to the Harmses. Son-in-law Eric Fast told them that students at school have excellent memories, so much so that whatever lies outside their scope of comprehension is committed to memory. Since students extracurricular level of understanding is formed in a primitive setting there is a tendency to ascribe the unknown to the realm of witchcraft. Certainly even whites will not hesitate to hire a witchdoctor when other means fail. For example, a farmer who had a tractor stolen hired a witchdoctor and announced that a curse would be placed on the thief. When the tractor reappeared by next morning the farmer declared that from now on he would deal only with the witchdoctor; nothing more was stolen. They couldn't help wondering what the doctor's bill was.

Peoples' names too are unique. Names vary from the prosaic Harriet, Joyce, Dorothy and Agnes for a man's four wives, to the flowery. There was a boy

called Petrol while Toilet (Toilette?) and Loveness were girls names. Old Testament names like Gideon, Ezekial or names like Erasmus, Lucky or Zimba are more common with boys. A pure case of taking "care of the sense and the sound will take care of itself", no doubt.

Although the Harmses were fascinated by the complexity of the economy and by the differences and similarities between themselves and their children's African friends they were most struck by the magnificence of the flora and fauna of the game parks. Unfortunately, though relatively low, park entrance fees are out of reach to the average African. Hundreds of animals of the deer and antelope family abound in the parks. There are deer, lechways, impala, waterbuck, hartbuck, wildebeast, bashbucks and stately sable. There also are hippos. These grunting, spouting creatures can handily submerge for at least 15 minutes but out of water, says Harms, they look as though they had been assembled by a committee, being huge, disproportionate and extremely heavy. Full-grown elephants are huge and black and may weigh up to six tons. Food requirements run at 600 lbs. of forage per day. A couple of elephants visited the Harmses campground at night. Fortunately they didn't test the strength of their hut.

Darkness on the other side of the equator falls early, at 6:00 p.m. Time spent around a campground at night may make it seem easier to understand the culture of the African. For them the immediate moment is of consequence. Appointments often aren't kept because a chance meeting with a friend, enroute to an appointment, is more important. Time is fleeting and precious in a sense different from ours. We could perhaps see it in the majestic impact and breath-taking beauty of the Rainbow or Victoria Falls, where beauty of the moment is caught fleetingly over an abyss only to plunge thousands of feet to a gorge below. **mm**

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A visit to a refugee family and their baby

by Leona Penner

On a chilly Saturday morning in November, my interpreter friend Koh and I stood at the door of an apartment on William Avenue and knocked expectantly. We were there to interview the Soysananh family, and for me it was a totally new experience. Koh, a Chinese from Malaysia, was a fourth yr. engineering student at the University of Manitoba and an old friend. His full name was Koh Soon Siang and he had often done the work of interpreter for the Vietnam refugees in the past few months.

We knew a little of the background of this family, because they had made the headlines the week before with the birth of the first baby from among the 500 "boat people" brought to Manitoba through the MCC in cooperation with the various Mennonite churches. This family was originally from Laos, having spent two years in a refugee camp where four million others lived, surviving mainly on food from the UN. They had been able to stay together as a family of seven: parents, three sons, daughter, and daughter-in-law. Now there was an eighth member!

As we knocked, the door opened on a chain and a kindly elderly Chinese face peered at us. Then the chain was pulled back and the door opened wide as we were welcomed into the wide hallway,

where two younger men smiled at us. There were handshakes all around as Koh introduced himself and me, and then we were ushered into the dining room, where we all sat around the table and I began to ask questions. I had just started when a plump, middle-aged lady bustled in with a pot of tea and cups and saucers. It was easy to see that this was the mother of the clan as she graciously poured the tea.

I was trying to determine who was who: the father, Soon, looking much younger than his age of 59, with a kind, serene face and gentle way of speaking; the mother, Ngoe, with her dark hair and alert eyes looking very much the matriarch; the tall young son with the long hair, who was the father of the baby; and the younger, well-built son in a T-shirt, who walked about restlessly.

I listened to the sing-song language that is Mandarin as Koh asked and they answered. Yes, they were very grateful to be here and Winnipeg seemed very advanced technologically, even though the weather left much to be desired! Yes, they had applied to the authorities in Thailand as soon as they came to the refugee camp from Laos, and after two years of waiting they were told they could leave for Canada. When asked about the conditions at the camp, the father said merely that they had been fed fairly well... especially the first year, but his face was pained and he wouldn't say anymore.

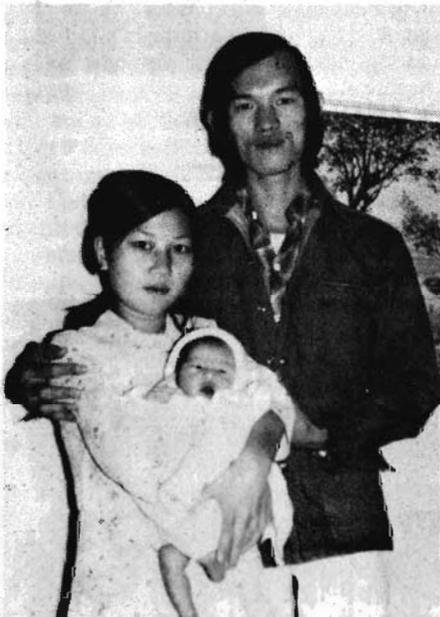
The tall son, Boupeng, smiled broadly when we asked about his baby girl born Nov. 21st and then he told us he now had a job in a furniture factory, where language was no barrier, for which he was grateful. He is also an artist, doing mainly the beautiful parchment scrolls, which require a very delicate touch in

design and lettering. He had made signs on the door frames in Chinese designating the purpose of each room and one in the living room asking that "all try to live in peace and harmony."

Two other sons, Sysanour and Bounson, had gone out for the morning, but the young man who came into the room every few minutes was Bounsri, also employed at the furniture factory. Bounsong, the youngest, was enrolled in a special class at Daniel MacIntyre Collegiate. The only member of the family not yet in Canada was a sister, Son Chanh, 21, who for medical reasons had not been allowed to join them as yet; Soon asked if there was anything I could do to speed up her arrival.

The family arrived from Bangkok October 9th on a flight that had taken nineteen hours. They were warmly greeted here by their sponsors, Ed and Lydia Bergen of the Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church, who looked after them with food, clothes, furniture and jobs, and were always willing to take them to the doctor, etc., making almost daily visits to make sure the family was all right.

As we were talking, there was a movement at the door and a slim, pale and rather frightened-looking young woman came in carrying the most beautiful ten-day-old baby imaginable. I got up to meet her, and the baby was placed in my arms, where she regarded me solemnly, then smiled, making everyone laugh and relax. The mother had had the baby by Caesarian section; little wonder she was as pale as she was. She must have had a very difficult time, perhaps not feeling too well already on arrival in a new country, and then having to go through the hospital admission with its resultant bewildering new experiences. Her Chinese doctor was a great help during this time, although Chanh seemed to understand more English than any other of the family members. She told me she had a lot of baby clothes, because Mrs. Bergen had had a baby shower for her. Washing clothes was something of a problem, as there was no way to dry clothes indoors. Otherwise, everything was fine, and the baby was eating well.



Pounpeng and Chanh and baby

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fluttering fever?
wings courting winds?
diamond glistening dandelions?
spousaled spheres?
pregnant pussy-willows?
bees suckling nature's breast?
nay.
the umbilical cord of winter shall be
severed
when again i see
the breeze's somersault in your hair
and the sun's chuckle in your eyes,
Lady of Troy.

by Jim Braun

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Two novels tell tale of Russian experience that's much-needed

DAYS OF TERROR, Barbara Smucker. Clark Irwin, 1979. 152 pages. \$8.95.
RIVER OF GLASS, Wilfred Martens. Herald Press, 1980. 223 pages.

Reviewed by Al Reimer

These two new novels reflect the growing interest of Mennonite writers of fiction in some of the more dramatic aspects and themes of the Russian Mennonite story. While these new works don't achieve the power and intensity of

such earlier novels as Rudy Wiebe's *The Blue Mountain of China* and Ingrid Rimland's *The Wanderers*, they are welcome additions to the small but growing body of Mennonite literature.

Days of Terror is designed as a children's novel, but the dramatic account of oppression and violence that fills its pages will keep most adult readers well entertained. The story traces the lives and destinies of young Peter Neufeld and his family as they ex-

perience the loss of their tranquil village existence through the upheaval and terror of the Russian Revolution and the devastating Civil War which explodes out of it. The first numbing shock the Neufelds are subjected to is the murderous frenzy of the terrorist Makhno and his peasant henchmen. Bereft of everything but their lives, the victims are further beset and savaged by a deadly epidemic of typhus. The final plague they suffer is famine. The Neufelds, however, are among the lucky thousands who are able to emigrate to Canada in the twenties. The novel ends with the family starting all over again in Steinbach, Manitoba.

Barbara Smucker is a talented writer with several other well-received books to her credit. She writes in a simple but vivid style, and knows how to create believable dramatic situations and characters. She is clearly more interested in telling a suspenseful story than in developing subtle, profound themes and symbolism. *Days of Terror* is based on thorough research of period and subject. Mrs. Smucker has read the right books, as her little bibliography shows. All the more puzzling then to the informed reader will be the host of minor but irritating historical inaccuracies and anachronisms which could have been—should have been—avoided with a little more care. Nevertheless, Mrs. Smucker's writing has so much verve, color and dramatic flair that one can easily forgive the minor defects and inconsistencies.

Days of Terror will serve as an absorbing fictional introduction to the Russian Mennonite experience in its most tragic phase and will hopefully be read by thousands of Mennonite readers young and old.

River of Glass, Wilfred Martens' first novel, cannot be recommended as strongly. It seems to be intended as an adult novel, although it is written in a style suitable for younger readers as well. This is a fictionalized account of how some desperate Russian Mennonites in the late twenties made a daring escape across the Amur River into China and freedom. John Reimer, a strong, resourceful man from the Omsk region in Siberia, is determined to get himself and family out of the Red Paradise. The Reimer family eventually makes it, but not before it has been subjected to many hardships and prolonged agonies of uncertainty and fear. The narrative point-of-view comes from teen-aged

Daughter remembers

C.N. HIEBERT WAS MY FATHER.
By Esther Horch (Winnipeg: Board of Publications, Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, 1979) pp. 196. Paperback.

Reviewed by Ruth Vogt

In this book Esther Horch, the oldest of C.N. Hiebert's seven children, paints a picture of a man who, throughout his life, sought to serve God and lead others to Him. He was born on a farm in Minnesota in 1881, and might have taken over the family farm had it not been for a youthful injury to his elbow which left him unable to bend his right arm.

In 1907 he left the farm and became a colporteur, selling Bibles for the British and Foreign Bible Society. In 1925 he accepted an invitation to take over the responsibility of the City Mission in Winnipeg. This was the first Mennonite congregation in the city, having been started by the Mennonite Brethren church in Winkler. In the 1920's the mission became the North End Mennonite Brethren church. During this time of Mennonite immigration, the Hieberts took it upon themselves to collect food, clothing and money for many of the new arrivals, and they opened their home and provided meals and lodging for many immigrants who came first to the city. C.N. Hiebert and his wife served this church for 17 years.

Mrs. Horch describes with warmth and humour what it was like to be part



of the Hiebert family—the closeness, the sharing, the opportunities to meet the many people who came into their home, the strict religious tone of the household, and also the frustration, sometimes, of being a preacher's child and having to be "an example". The portrait of her father is an honest one—she describes his weaknesses as well as his strengths. In the latter part of the book she describes without self pity the accidents and deaths which brought a degree of sorrow to the family. The reader has the impression that it is the faith in God, so important to Cornelius Hiebert, which enabled the family to cope with the tragedies they encountered.

The chapter describing Hiebert's latter years in California is a compassionate portrayal of a man coping with increasing frailty, and a reminder to the reader that we and our loved ones must walk this road sometime, and that we must give each other strength.

This book is a fitting memorial from a daughter to a father. C.N. Hiebert died in 1975 at the age of 93—"not a perfect man, but one who was lovably human."

mm

David Reimer, an alert, sensitive lad forced to grow up prematurely in a cruel, oppressive world.

Although the story is carefully researched, clearly told and well written, *River of Glass* remains a rather bland and passive novel for much of its length. It often bogs down in that pallid, stiff area of would-be fiction standing self-consciously between social documentary and the fully realized novel. The pace is slow and lacking in dramatic tension because there are too many scenes which focus on historical background and political information at the expense of personal drama and convincing characterization. Only in the last part dealing with the escape and its aftermath does the novel come fully alive. But that suspenseful, moving climax is well worth waiting for.

Days of Terror is a more successful novel than *River of Glass*, but both are worth reading and should help to keep alive the Russian-Mennonite heritage. That heritage has been amazingly well preserved in a small library of personal journals and histories—most of them in German, as one would expect. The new English fiction dealing with the heritage is now providing exciting new perspectives and dimensions of an important part of our history and culture. mm

Oskar Ajatollah: Quo Vadis

von Jack Thiessen

Leewa Johaun!

Dank fe Dienen Breef, oba daut stemmt mie doch seha trurig, daut Du mie nich jleiw west, daut mien Oskar Ajatollah so ein niedatrajtja Bädell ess. Jo, he ess ein hasselja Kozebock-selwst fe menschliche enn Koze-Standards, de bekauntliche meist eint sentt! Johaun, Du weetst, daut etj ein milda, gouda, ruhja enn frädelfa ousla Piepeschmeatja sie, oba mie oajat daut, daut Du mie nich jleewst enn daut Du de Dinja schwuat opp witt habe wesst.

Oba, "here she goes!" säd Oule Breestje enn Rußland ausa sich de lange Combinations aum easchten Mai aum Nippa uttrock. Enn here she goes, Johaun, hiea ess Oskar sien Record äwre latzte drei Monat. "Present the evidence!" säd de Rechta, enn so flie etj uck de Evidence oppe Wijschol nopp enn dann kaunst Du mie saje, aus so ein Bösa opp einem mennischen Hoff Ruhm habe doaf!

... aum 11 Oktoba wada eine Reatjning äwa \$53.36; Hoarms had die Reatjning jeitemized: Tweemol de Nacht noh Steinbach foahre enn Doktah Tjreatja watje, doamett he miene tjliene Mejalles de Oage utwusche deed aus de Wind ommschloag enn miene Mejalles einen Whif von Oskar sienen Zitronen-Scent tjreaje aus he sich bie Mitchell bie sien Kozin Susie dree Miel auf fe Holidäs opphild:

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Doa hast'ett, Johaun. Oba dauts noch lang nich aules, wiels? Jo, wiels, de List vonne Schaundtaute woat lenja. Tom Biespell: Seitdem Oskar Ajatollah sien Fight jejen Mista Plaufout jewonne haft enn he Champion jebleewe ess, enn hiea oppem Hoff Mohammed Ali spält enn rommbucheld enn spicht enn stolzeat enn Komst enn Tobak frat enn de gaunze Creation teuleid, heat'he nijch meha opp tou stintje.

De Mensche hiea oppe gaunze Ostre-

sarv sent ou jescheit sonst haude se Oskar enn mie aull fe \$325 Dusend vekkloagt, wiels? Jo, wiels aule Nobasch emm Omtjreis von sas Kilometa habe sich niee Dryasch jekofft ousda tjeep motte. Wauschliene sent hiea nich meha moud wiels wann de feine Ladies ähre Lingerie toum dreaje ruthenje dann sitt'et dei aum nächsten Morje sous wann de emm 99.44/100 % Javex Solution jeleaje habe enn ess utjefraunzt enn tratjt Liene sous ein Spannjewäv. Enn dauts aules von Oskar sienen Boatjeruch! Bie Obraum Jauntzses drei Miel von hiea haft sich de Mummtje tou Wiehnachte niee Badloakes jewenschte wiels de oule seen so aus utjefraunzdet Cheesecloth enn aules weajen Oskar sienen Perfume.

De Nobasch dichtabie habe dree Buschtjes enn groute Office enn Winnipeg schaufe enn de brinje ähre Laundry toum Weekend mett, enn Mame mott wausche. Ess seit dem Fight reatjat Oskar de Wausch so voll, daut de Buschtjes aula Promotions jetreaje enn nu ähre eajne Offices habe.

Oba waut de Nobah ess, de säd, he wull mie halpe enn wie wulle ut de Not eine Tugend moake. He meened, he wull Oskar Ajatollah biem Goade aunbinje enn dann wudd he sich Insecticide enn Pesticide spoare wiels he haud jesehne daut Eadschocketjniepasch enn Holtstjebätj bedieselde wann Oskar Haunstje Oppenowent späld. Oba waut pessead? Twee Doag lang wea Oskar Mr. Gardener enn donn wear'et so wiet: Mien Nobah bruckt tjeen D.D.T. alias Oskar meha oba he haud uck noh de tweede Nacht tjeen Goade meha. He leid en schlapt dän Oskar noh Hus enn nu wull sich mien Priemtjeschlinjel säle wiels ahm die Panz ommaklich wea. Mien Noba tjitjt no mienem Kuckeruz enn miene Bocklezschane hinjre tiensthouje Sing-Sing-Fenz enn säd lieseltjes, "Tanks, Tiesse, oba Oskar aus Gärtner ess sous Dracula Supervisor vonne Red Cross Blood Bank moake!" Wann mien Nobah aum Enj ess, dann woat he literarisch.

Enn sou kaum daut, daut etj mett däm Masterfiesta Unjaräd hild. Etj säd, "Oskar, nich blous Eigensinn sondern Gemeinschaftssinn. Du best ein Poluter Numma Eent enn etj mott nu niee Decisions moake. Entwäda etj mott hiea enne Nobaschauft ween tsastig bett tsewentig Gasmasks tou Wiehnachte

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tjeepe ouden Du mottst Die bätre. Du mottst nächsten Sinndach noh Niverville enne Sinndachschoull!" Oskar säd nuscht oba he head weens opp tou keewe enn ahm sachet nohdentjlich aus wann'a docht: "Deine Wege sind nicht meine Wege!" Oba aus etj donn noh dree Stund emm Staul nennjintj, haud Oskar jeschummelt, wiels? Jo, wiels he saut oppe Bähnetrapp enn he haud seine Kozefräuleins Doe enn Doughnut enn aule Schop ver sich vesaumelt enn predigt Revolution. Enn waut wea? He haud sien Identity jechanged, he ess nu ein Muselonkel, enn nannt sich von nu aun Omar, Oskar Ajatollah Ali! Nu sajst mol Lied: vestoh Jie nu, daut Oskar ein veloarna enn vebiestada Schindatjrät ess enn daut he nu unjrem Auctioneer-ouda unjrem Butcha-Homah kohme mott wann nich bould irjendein M.M. Läsa Barmherzigkeit prektesse woat? Aulsa waut ess nu de blanke Situation? Hie medden oppe Prärie haft sich ein gottlousa Moslim-nä, nä, tjeen aufjefollna Boatmennist-einfach manke Menniste ennjenast enn ess noch outnässig wann etj ahm siene Sinte vea-houle well!

Jo, Johaun, dauts mien Case jeajen Omar, Oskar, Ajatollah Ali. Waut sajst Du nu?

Dien ouden Frind,

Das Prinzesschen

von Hedi Knoop

Ein Prinzesschen lebte einst gefangen in einem hohen, verlassenen Turm. Wenn es zum Fenster hinaussah, so stand da eine Reihe Pappeln so weit es sehen konnte. Doch wenn der Wind diese auseinanderbog, zeigte sich hinter ihnen ein zauberhaft schoener Garten. Dann sass das Prinzesschen am Fenster und strengte seine Augen an. Ach, wenn ich doch nur einmal in jenen wunderschönen Garten hineinkoennte, dachte es, ich wollte gern mein Lebtag hier gefangen sein! Es wurde zuletzt so begierig, den Garten zu betreten, dass es sogar seine ewige Seligkeit dafuer hingegeben haette.

Wahrhaftig, eines Tages stand vor ihm ein winziges Kerlchen mit kohlschwarzen Augen und sprach: Was gibst du mir, wenn ich dich durch den Garten fuehre?

Das Prinzesschen versprach ihm alle Schaezde, die es besass, aber das Wichtlein sagte: Gold und Silber brauch ich nicht; aber du sollst mich zum Manne nehmen und zu mir in mein Haeuschen ziehen. Das Prinzesschen ueberlegte keinen Augenblick, sondern willigte ein und dachte: Wenn ich nur in den Garten gelange, dann ist mir alles andere gleichgueltig.

Das Wichtlein nahm es darauf bei der Hand und geleitete es behutsam vom Turm hinunter, durch die Pappelreihe hindurch und in den Garten hinein. Ach, war das eine Pracht! Kolobris schwirrten durch die Luft, Schmetterlinge naschten von den herrlichsten Orchideen, und Elfen tanzten auf den Rasenflaechen. Das

Prinzesschen jauchzte und klatschte vor Freude in die Haende.

Aber, obwohl es sich wehrte, zog das Wichtlein es weiter und weiter und schliesslich hinaus aus dem Zaubergarten, bis an einen steilen, schroffen Felsen. Hier muessen wir hinauf, sagte das Wichtlein, dort oben werden wir wohnen. Ach, nun musste das Prinzesschen mit Haenden und Fuessen klettern und zerriess sich dabei seine seidenen Kleider.

Oben angekommen, standen sie vor einem kleinen schmucklosen Haus, und der Wicht sagte: Nun musst du meine Suppe kochen und meine Stiefel wischen.

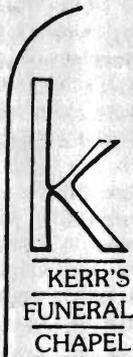
Und das Prinzesschen wuschte und kochte und putzte und flickte und fegte und buerstete, bis alle Finger wund waren.

Waer ich doch in meinem Turm geblieben, seufzte es. Zu seinem Manne aber sagte es: Du garstiger Wicht, weshalb hast du mich aus meinem Turm geholt? Bring mich sogleich wieder hinauf.

Das Wichtlein erwiderte kein Wort, zog seine gewichsten Stiefelchen an und fuehrte das Prinzesschen zurueck: den Felsen hinunter, die Pappelreihe hindurch, den Turm hinauf. Dann schloss es die Tuer von aussen zu und sagte: Nun sieh, wie du wieder hinauskommst.

Da sitzt es nun wieder, das Prinzesschen. Der Zaubergarten ist verschwunden, und wenn der Wind die Pappeln auseinanderbiegt, so steht da nur der steile, schroffe Felsen, auf dem das Wichtlein wohnt. mm

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Our word

GIVE OUR SCHOOLS A CHANCE

When we attended a public high school many years ago we gave some thought to the possibility of spending at least one year in one of our private schools. However, after speaking to some of the students in those schools we quickly changed our minds. It appeared from what we heard that our church schools were intent on placing as many restrictions as possible on their students. Relations between male and female students were actively discouraged and severe limits were placed on other forms of youthful expression.

No doubt many of the criticisms we heard were valid. Since that time, however, we have often met graduates of those schools and have been impressed by their spiritual and intellectual qualities. Either the schools were not as bad as we had been told (high school students are inclined to complain about any school they are in), or good students can survive bad schools. Both observations may be true.

Regardless of what was true in the past, the fact is that at the present time, in the province of Manitoba, we have some excellent educational institutions. Last year we were invited to spend part of a day with students in the Elim Bible Institute in Altona, discussing current economic and social issues. We accepted the invitation with some hesitation. In the back of our mind there lurked the suspicion that this was one of those schools to which—as the old theory had it—farm families sent their children after the harvest to have something to do during the winter months and possibly to meet an eligible person of the opposite sex. In other words, we had doubts about the degree of commitment to real learning that we would find in such a school. We needn't have worried. Both students and staff were extremely interested in the topics discussed, and their enthusiasm was combined with considerable knowledge. We left with an extremely positive impression of what is going on in a school like that.

The same can be said of other Mennonite church schools in Manitoba. We are personally acquainted with a number of them and in each case we are convinced that young people who attend these schools receive both a superior education and a good spiritual, moral basis for their life. Somehow these schools have been able to attract first-rate teachers, even though teaching in such schools means financial sacrifice. Within the schools one encounters a rare spirit of freedom and concern. This was noticed by the non-Mennonite students from Germany who attended several of our schools for a few months before Christmas. It was the personal contact between teacher and student and the combination of knowledge with spiritual values that deeply moved them. At least one of the students quietly became a Christian as a result of this experience—not because of any special pleading by teachers but because of the quality of life that had been experienced in the school.

Naturally our students are far from perfect, and some teachers will invariably be better than others in meeting the students' needs—but on the whole we have every reason to be grateful for the schools that we have been able to develop in the last few decades. They are probably better than we deserve, and they deserve more support from us than they are getting.

Less than 20 per cent of Mennonite young people in the junior and senior high age group are enrolled in our private schools. There are many reasons why the vast majority attend public schools instead. Unfortunately, cost is a legitimate consideration for some. Our people have become fairly

affluent, and many simply choose to spend an adequate income on "goods" other than private education, but for some the added cost of sending children to such a school is too much. It is clearly up to our churches to support these schools in such a way that tuition can be kept within reach of virtually all parents. Our schools are not, and were never intended to be, elite institutions. Many relatively poor parents sacrifice a great deal to send their children to such schools.

Financial consideration would not appear to be the main reason why many parents do not support such schools, or send their children to them. We have sympathy with those who argue that a private school cannot possibly meet the special needs of all our young people. We would be the last to deny the importance of our public school system. A society with only private, religious, schools would more than likely become an extremely intolerant society. Religion at its best is a liberating, civilizing force; at its worst it can be used to suppress people and create divisions between them. A society dominated by religious groups might be an intolerable one—as recent events in Iran demonstrate. Church and public schools provide an excellent alternative to each other. The question we are raising is not why some of our people choose the public school but why more don't support our church schools.

It may be that some people perceive education in a very narrow, limited way—as the accumulation of objective facts and useful tools with which their child will be able to make a good living. This is certainly an important aspect of education, but it is not the most important. Surely one of the most vital things we can give our children is a sense of purpose and direction, a foundation of faith and a system of values which will enable them to use their knowledge not only on their own behalf but in service to the world. Some of these values are conveyed quietly and effectively by dedicated teachers in the public school system, but that system forbids the explicit reinforcement of such values. It is in our private schools that children not only learn about the needs of other people in society but encounter people who have worked through institutions like MCC to meet such needs. Even more important, they can learn what it takes in terms of faith and spiritual growth to do the same. Our church schools cannot guarantee that their students will embrace such faith, but they alone have a charter to share such a faith with their students.

We are sometimes surprised at the objectives that parents express regarding their children. They seem to place more emphasis on intellectual prowess than on character, more on vocational advancement than the attainment of Christian maturity. Some are sending their children to other private schools because they will have a better opportunity to meet the future leaders of society in such places.

We wish that we would take more pride in our own institutions, and display more confidence in the good things that are happening there. We are convinced that nothing will so determine the fate of the Mennonite community in Canada, and with it the work of our churches and other institutions, as the church schools that God has permitted us to bring into existence. We meet in our churches for a few hours a week. In our schools our young people can spend several years with dedicated and competent staff learning to understand and to apply their faith. It is here that we will stand or fall. God has given us places to stand—let's make use of them!—**Roy Vogt**

Your word

In the December issue a short article on Low-German songs was published; this item included a Christmas song in that language. The author claimed to have heard it from a person who in turn said he had learned it in Mexico. The following letter was sent to the mirror by Ben B. Dueck, of Steinbach, who claims to be the real author. His letter demonstrates how a song can travel.

Dear Sir:

When I read the December, 1979 issue of the *Mennonite Mirror*, I was astounded to see an article by Doreen Klassen, *Daut Es Vada Vienacht*, in which a Low-German Christmas song was presented. Her last sentence: "The origin of the song is unknown" sent me on a memory trip into the past, and it also set me to

speculating how the song found its way to Mexico, where Mr. Isaac Rempel, a long-time Vorsänger, picked it up.

This song originated with me. When I was teaching eight grades in Clover Plain School at McTavish, Manitoba, in 1947, I was looking for interesting, usable Christmas music. Not finding exactly what I wanted for my class, I decided to write my own. Rather than writing both words and music, I hummed several tunes, and picked "Flow Gently, Sweet Afton" as one that my students could easily learn. The first line of the song, "Daut es wara Weenacht, we fryi ons noo" quickly suggested itself, and the others followed. To involve the audience who would be at the Christmas program, the chorus began with: "Koamt aula en horcht no de Weenachtsgeschicht." The song, when initially presented by the students on December 23, 1947, proved a great surprise and delight to the parents and

friends of the school children, and was subsequently used in other schools where I taught.

How did the song get to Mexico? I would much like to know. One theory I have on this is: many Manitoba Mennonites from the Evangelical Mennonite Church near Morris moved to Mexico in 1948. Perhaps one of my former students from Clover Plain may even have taught school in some Mennonite village in Mexico? It is entirely possible. To find out would be interesting. At any rate, I am more than glad that this small item from my pen, created under a busy rural teacher's stress, has been a blessing to others who love my mother tongue — Low German.

Sincerely,
Ben B. Dueck
Steinbach

Note: Mr. Dueck is still teaching. His field now is Grades XI and XII English in the Steinbach Regional Secondary School. His Low-German play, *De Trächtmoaka*, has delighted audiences in Manitoba, Ontario, and British Columbia.

The song has changed relatively little in 32 years of wandering. Low-German spelling to the contrary notwithstanding, here is the wording of that first version:

Weenachtsleed, 1947

1. Daut es wara Weenacht, we fryi
ons noo,
Wiel Jesus yikoami fea ons en fea yoo
He kaum ons to raddi, seen Hoat wea
so grot,
He kunn ons nich loati em Dunkel
en Not.

Chorus:

- Koamt aula en horcht no de
Weenachtsyischicht,
Koamt aula en Kickt no daut
himmlische Licht,
Reisst met de dree Weisi von dem
Moryilaund
En voat noo vom Neei met Jesus
bekaunt.
2. De Hoadi bee Beth'lem, de bleyvi
de Nacht
Uppi Schtapp bee de Schoap dort en
hildi doa Wacht;
Se headi dan platslicheen Engel-
yisang,
Daut schauld rauf von boavi, eant
word angst en bang.
 3. De Engel kaum noada, en to eant
dunn zayd:
"Wee bringi yoont Norecht von
Gleck en von Frayd;
Gott scheckt yoont oot Leev noo seen
Sehn enni Welt
Waut fail mea veat es, aus Ricktoom
en Geld."

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