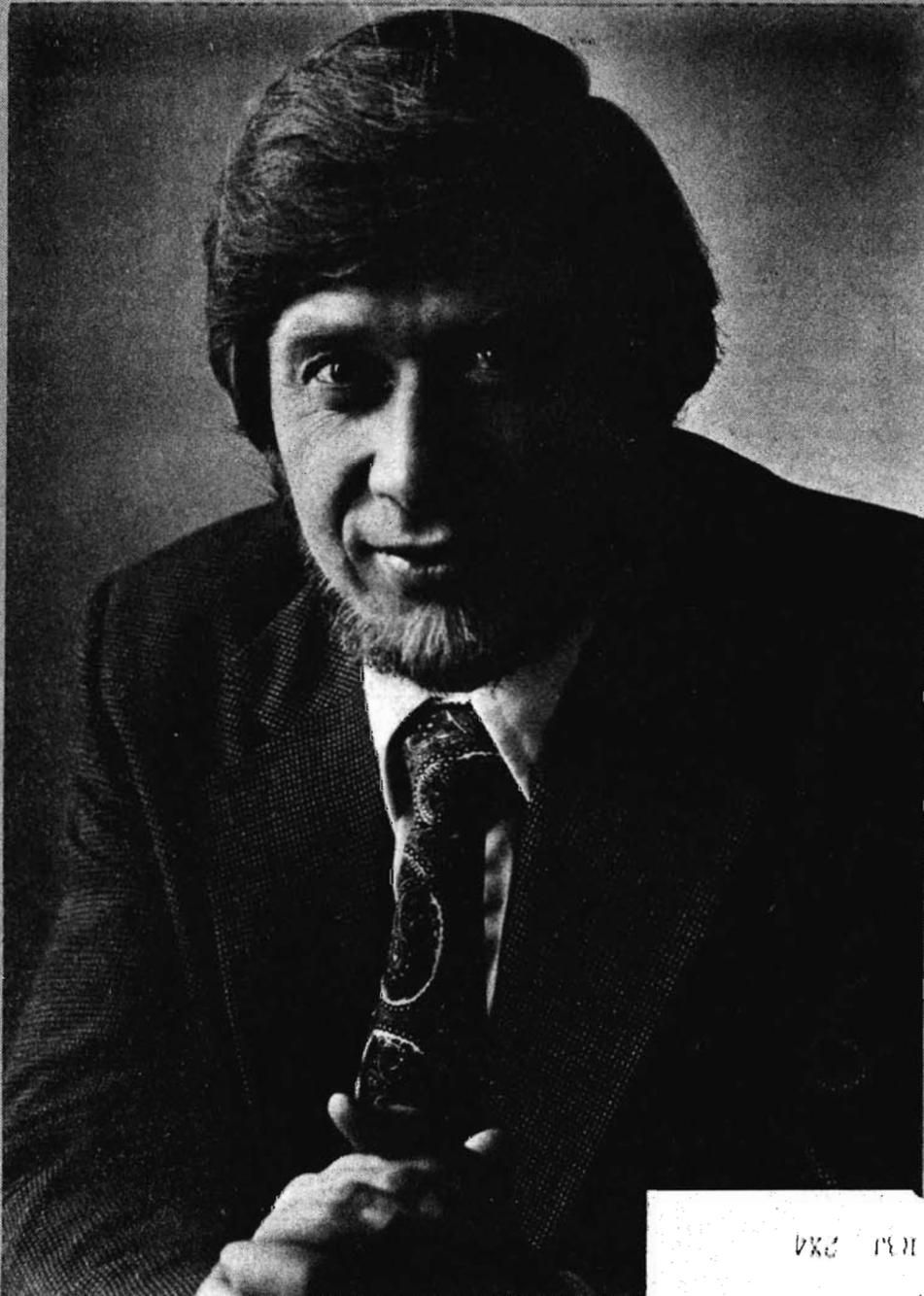


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Marriage and divorce III

Mennonite marriage characteristics define us as a distinctive community

Last of three parts

by Mavis Reimer

The primary concerns of our study, as suggested at the beginning of this series, were to discover both the present pattern of Mennonite marriages and divorces, and the changes in that pattern between the years 1946 and 1976. In the first two articles, I attempted to establish these patterns by analyzing in detail the data collected on Mennonite marriages. The purpose of this third and final article is to define the pattern of Mennonite marriages within the larger context of Canadian marriages generally.

By setting out statistics against the statistics of the Canada Year Book,¹ it is possible to compare Mennonite marital habits with those of Canadians in general in three different areas: age at marriage, incidence of mixed marriage, and rate of divorce.

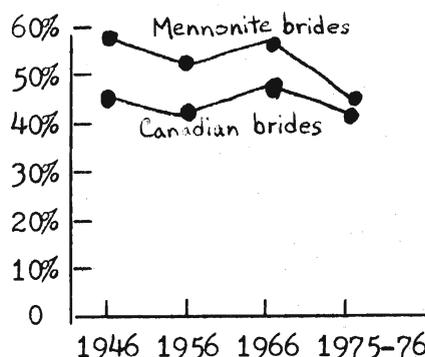
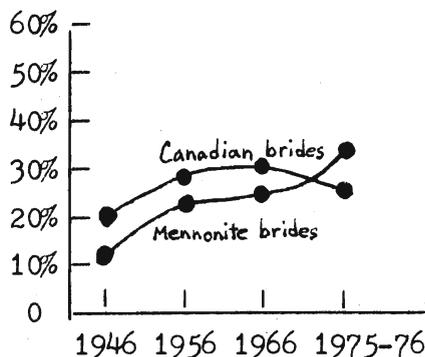
Age at Marriage

That Mennonites marry younger in 1976 than they did in 1946 has already been mentioned in the discussion of the factors of divorce. It seems as well that a Mennonite marries at an earlier age than the average Canadian does.

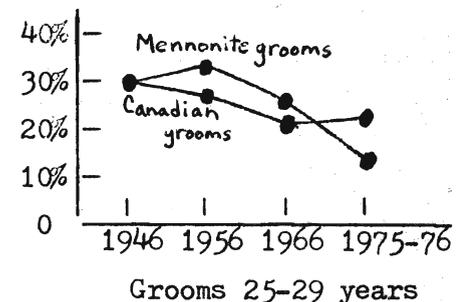
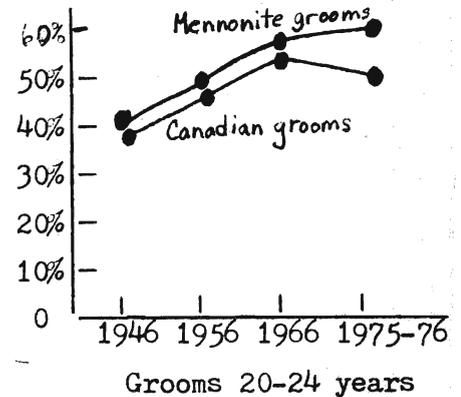
Mennonite brides in all four years of our study—1946, 1956, 1966, and 1976—are typically somewhat younger than their Canadian counterparts. More significantly, however, Mennonite women are marrying younger, while Canadian women in general are slightly older at the time of marriage. For example, the number of Canadian brides between 15 and 19 years old declined by four per cent from 1966 to 1975; the number of Mennonite brides in this age category increased by 8.5 per cent. Over this same period of time, the percentage of Canadian brides in the 25 to 29 age category increased by about four per

cent, while the percentage of Mennonite brides in their late twenties stayed the same.

The following tables suggest the differences between Mennonite brides and Canadian brides in general. The two age categories illustrated—15-19 and 20-24 years—account for more than 80 per cent of brides in all four years:



In age patterns, Mennonite grooms seem to conform more closely to the general Canadian figures. However, the percentage of Mennonite grooms between 20 and 24 years is slightly more than the Canadian percentages. Moreover, the percentage of young Mennonite grooms continued to increase between 1966 and 1976, although the overall Canadian percentage of grooms between 20 and 24 decreased. Conversely, the percentage of older Mennonite grooms—25-29 years—declined, while the Canadian figures remained the same. The graphs below illustrate these differences:



It is difficult to explain the variations between the age at marriage of Mennonites and the age at marriage of Canadians in general. The high percentage of young brides may suggest that comparatively fewer Mennonite women regard higher education or the pursuit of a career important. Possibly too, young Mennonites see marriage as less of a risk than the average Canadian youth does.

Mixed Marriages

The incidence of mixed marriage is increasing for all religious denominations. The decade between 1966 and 1976 was

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.

marked by dramatic increases in the number of intermarriages, particularly among those groups traditionally noted for their exclusivity. For example, while only 14 per cent of Roman Catholics married non-Catholics in 1966, 40 per cent did so in 1975. In the Jewish community, the incidence of mixed marriage jumped from 9 per cent in 1966 to 25 per cent in 1975.

The rise of mixed marriages among Mennonites parallels this rise among Catholics and Jews. Between 1966 and 1976, the incidence of mixed marriage more than doubled, going from 14 per cent in 1966 to 37 per cent in 1976.

In spite of the rapid changes, however, these three groups have comparatively few mixed marriages. In 1975, for example, fully 62 per cent of Baptist and 51 per cent of United Church grooms married brides of other religious denominations. The rate of mixed marriage among Mennonites in 1976 is approximately equivalent to the rate among Roman Catholics—37 per cent and 40 per cent respectively. Only the Jewish community, at 25 per cent, has a lower incidence of mixed marriage.

Divorce

The first article of this series emphasized the finding that, for the Manitoba Mennonite community, divorce is still an uncommon event. The significance of the statistical results of our study becomes more obvious when our figures are compared with Canadian figures.² The following table suggests the considerable difference between the rate of divorce among Mennonites and the rate for Manitoba and Canada in all four sample years:

	Mennonites	Manitoba	Canada
1946	1.0%	7.4%	5.7%
1956	0.9%	4.7%	4.7%
1966	3.0%	7.1%	6.5%
1975-76	2.6%	22.1%	25.0%

Unfortunately, divorce rates for specific religious denominations are not available.

Not only is the Mennonite divorce rate low in comparison with general Cana-

dian figures, but the dynamics of divorce in our community are different from those in Canadian society as a whole. For example, the Canadian rate of divorce is higher in 1946 than in 1956. At the end of World War I in 1918, divorce rates in Canada began to rise steadily, peaking in 1946 at 5.7 per cent. The Canada Year Book gives the long separation of men in the armed forces from their wives and the generally unsettled conditions in the early decades of this century as the primary reasons for this increase. After 1946, divorce rates in Canada decline to a postwar low of 1951, after which they begin to increase again.

At least one of the major reasons for this pattern of divorce in Canada—the separation of men from their families—will have been of minimal importance in the Mennonite community. Not surprisingly, then, the rate of divorce among Mennonites is the same for both 1946 and 1956.

Perhaps more noteworthy is the stability of the Mennonite divorce rate between 1966 and 1976, compared to the 18.5 per cent increase in the general Canadian rates over this decade. This dramatic increase in the number of divorces in Canada is largely attributable to the revision in 1968 of The Divorce Act. Previously, Canadian law permitted divorce only on grounds of specific marital offences, such things as adultery, physical cruelty, or mental cruelty. The 1968 amendment moved away from the notion of fault in marital breakdown, making it possible for a couple to divorce on grounds of having lived separately for three years or more.

This relaxation of the law, however, does not seem to have been of particular significance to the Mennonite community. At the time of our study, the 1976 divorce rate remained approximately the same as the 1966 figures. There may be many reasons for the infrequency of divorce among Mennonites, but the stricture of the law is evidently not one of them.

Observations and Reflections

Several times in these articles, I have spoken about the Manitoba Mennonite

community. With the various theologies, traditions, and lifestyles that are all characteristically Mennonite, it is not always obvious that Manitoba Mennonites have enough in common to be called a community.

In defining the factors of divorce in an earlier article, I necessarily focussed on some of these differences. To compare Mennonites with Canadians is general, however, is to be reminded that Mennonites comprise a distinctive and coherent community.

In none of the three categories of comparison are Mennonites typical Canadians. Canadians today are marrying older; Mennonites are marrying younger. Although mixed marriages in all denominations are on the rise, the rate among Mennonites is comparatively low. Divorce rates in Canada are escalating rapidly; among Mennonites, increases have been marginal. Between 1946 and 1975, divorce rates among Mennonites rose only two per cent.

At the conclusion of our study, this fact remains the single most important finding. If the family is indeed the cornerstone of our society, among Manitoba Mennonites at least, the foundation seems in good repair. **mm**

Footnotes

1. All Manitoban and Canadian statistics cited are based on the figures given for the years 1946, 1956, 1966, and 1975 in the Canada Year Book. Because 1975 is the last year for which Canadian statistics are presently available, I have used these figures to compare with our results for 1976.
2. The divorce rates in the Canada Year Book are calculated on a somewhat different basis than our rates are. Canadian rates are given in terms of the number of divorces per 100,000 population. The percentages I cite are based on the ratio of the rate of marriage in one year to the rate of divorce in that same year. The resulting figure represents the number of divorces *expected* to occur among the marriages contracted in that year. Our figures, on the other hand, represent the actual number of divorces among the marriages of a specific year.



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Literature and ideas among Mennonites

by Mavis Reimer

Prof. Victor G. Doerksen, head of the department of German at the University of Manitoba, was the most recent speaker in the continuing series of Mennonite Studies guest lectures at the University of Winnipeg. Addressing a group of about 50 people, Prof. Doerksen took as his title *From Jung-Stilling to Rudy Wiebe: 'Christian Fiction' and the Mennonite Imagination*.

Prof. Doerksen was primarily concerned to outline the model of experience common to much of the fictional literature popular among Mennonites. Jung-Stilling's eighteenth-century novel, *Das Heimweh*, was used to illustrate the ma-

ior aspects of this model. Although Jung-Stilling was not himself a Mennonite, his novel was very important among nineteenth-century Mennonites, prompting the migration of Russian Mennonites under Claas Epp's leadership to southeast Asia in 1880.

According to Prof. Doerksen, *Das Heimweh* is structured on an opposition between the initiated—a select group who possess the whole truth—and the outsiders, the ignorant majority. Heaven, in Jung-Stilling's novel, becomes like a secret society. Only those "in the know"—those who have the secret password, the code, or some other piece of privileged information—can hope to move toward this ultimate goal. Prof. Doerksen found the same literary model informing a novel such as Rudy Wiebe's *First and Vital Candle* (1966). While Wiebe attempts to understand his Mennonite experience within a larger context in later novels, in this early novel he seems to suggest that the search for God is above all a matter of the right vocabulary.

This particular literary model seemed to Prof. Doerksen to be problematic for several reasons. First, Canadian fiction based on this view of the world is comprehensible only by those readers familiar with the jargon of the "in-

itiated." Secondly, this literature seems to betray the complexity of human motivation. And finally, the simplistic model of this literature confuses what we know and articulate about God with the real God who cannot be circumscribed.

A lively discussion followed Prof. Doerksen's paper. Several people expressed surprise at the apparent preference of Mennonites for this kind of fiction, when histories and biographies detailing the vigorous faith of our own forefathers are so widely available. There was some question about the extent to which the model outlined was unique to Christian fiction. The same structure of initiated versus uninitiated seems, for example, to be present in popular romances as well. The relationship between this literature and the Christian fiction discussed by Prof. Doerksen was left unexplored, however, as were the reasons for the appeal of fiction employing this particular model of experience.

The next in the series of Mennonite Studies guest lectures will be delivered by Prof. Roy Vogt, also of the U of M, on Thursday, March 6, 8:00 p.m., 217 Lockhart Hall, U of W. Prof. Vogt will discuss the impact of social and economic class on current Mennonite theology. mm



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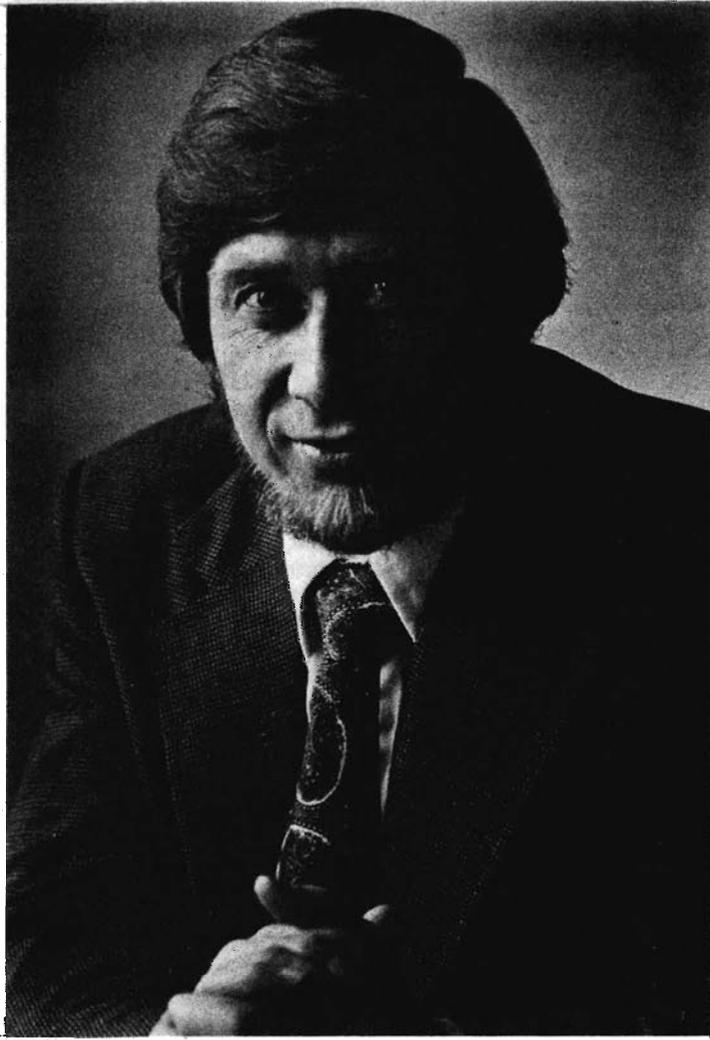
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Singing for as long as he can remember; John Martens talks about his place in music

by Mary M. Enns

"His voice is like molten gold — brilliant, shining, pure!" That's what someone remarked when John Martens sang in the Rose Bowl competition. The audience, the adjudicators, and then the media proclaimed him a winner. That was 16 years ago. What happens to a singer of this calibre in a 16 year period? How does intensive study and performance affect such a voice?

Martens believes his voice has changed little in these years. "My throat was well developed at age 26 when I began voice study. I sang very much as I sing now except that my voice has become heavier, more controlled and efficient. I don't believe there has been mechanization. Even though one does do violence

to it at some point, the throat has marvelous recuperative powers. But you do have to be healthy — mentally, physically, and spiritually."

Where did it all start? This singer who has distinguished himself in solo as well as choral and operatic works in Canada and the United States, says it was his mother, though she died when he was six years old, who laid the solid groundwork upon which his life-time love for and career in music was subsequently built. His father, too, had an excellent voice and sang heartily until the end of his life in his seventies. "Growing up on the farm near Sperling I remember making distinct choices as to the music I wanted to listen to on CBC Radio. It was then that I learned to distinguish bet-

ween the music of Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert. I loved classical music."

Having embarked upon a teaching career in the Steinbach area it wasn't until seven years later, in 1962, that he went into serious music study. He now taught junior high in Winnipeg and studied voice with Victor Martens and later with Gladys Whitehead. Singing in the annual music festival and the philharmonic choir with Sydney Bryans presented the initial challenge and experience so valuable to his development.

John and Hedy Martens then made what he considers was probably their wisest decision when they packed up their family and moved to Dallas, Texas. At Southern Methodist University he fitted together a program which, with his B.A. from the University of Manitoba, would give him a master's in music in two years and two summers. Concentrated music study continued. Another three years later (half of one year was spent replacing one of the faculty who was on sabbatical) he graduated from the University of Michigan with a Doctor of Musical Arts. As a member of a Michigan group he went on a two month singing tour in Russia. They presented a total of 28 con-

certs in major cities like Leningrad, Moscow, Odessa and others.

His rigorous program of studies completed, the family now made their home in Toronto. Here Martens joined forces with the Festival Singers of Canada. Six years ago he accepted his present teaching position at Mennonite Brethren Bible College.

We wondered whether teaching music is what he would choose to do or would he idealistically like to make a singing career his life's work? "Certainly I would," said Martens, "but the decision to come back to Winnipeg has been a good one for our family. We needed to consider our children, Lloyd now 21, Eric 19 and Rhonda 15. My wife took a teaching position at Westgate and this college has been an excellent experience for me. It has provided me with the opportunity to work with some fine singers."

Dr. Martens feels challenged in his work, particularly with the senior students. "They need to be active in things that will help them to define their potential as well as their limitations. They must try to discover how and where they might fit into the music world." A few years ago he accompanied a student study group to Germany, Austria, Italy.

Out of 20 students he teaches, hardly more than 10 per cent might conceivably be encouraged to consider a full-time career in music. Several are moving ahead into serious competition. "I would like to see some of these right next to me on stage at some time. Heidi Geddert, in her early twenties, has many things going for her including a fine technique. She has a beautiful voice. She has studied with me from the beginning and I have enjoyed watching her growth. Being involved with Mel Braun's development as a fine singer has been a great source of satisfaction to me. However, much as I enjoy this work, if I were to do what I really want to do I would do more singing of my own. The worst that could happen to me is if I were slowly to sing less and less and teach more and more, and in that way bury what was given to me. Personally, the move has been something of a sacrifice because I had to give up five years of prime singing time."

Must a singer teach in order to survive financially? Martens feels that someone on his level would have to be in the right place and Winnipeg is not that place. "Jon Vickers, internationally known, could live outside Altona and still be in

great demand. I would probably have to be in London, England or in Germany. I think I would now be prepared to make that move. . . One would have to move carefully since it would mean cutting off both Hedy's and my salary. But I'm approaching the age where I'd better start thinking about it seriously and any move would have to be made soon."

"As to performance, I'm fortunate in that there aren't too many singers who like to do, for example, the role of the Evangelist in the *Passions* of *St. John* or *St. Matthew*. It is the role I enjoy and have possibly sung more than any other. I find it uniquely suited to my style of singing but also to the manner in which I deliver a text. And there is a great deal of text there. This particular role places great demands upon the singer. The entire work hangs upon what the Evangelist says. If he fails to make himself understood or sings poorly the central focus is lost."

The next question should have been, "what do you do best, Lieder, Oratorio or Opera?" Instead it slipped out, "what is your greatest love?" An ambiguous question, but the answer gives us an insight into the make-up of this sensitive artist. "I'm an incurable if not classic romantic. I love impressionist paintings. I love the wind, the sun, the clouds, the prairie, to run in the fields. I love the meadow-lark, the bellow of a calf, the way it butts its head against a tree. The sounds of the meadow-lark and the calf are, I suppose, the earliest remembrances of my childhood. I love the music of Schubert because I have a spirit that identifies with his music. The longing and the unattainable expressed in his songs are always present. Without that longing one would probably be happier or more content. I think I enjoy singing the Lieder best. But I have a great respect for the music of Bach for one thing because he has a way of integrating the musical and the textual. I like a good text; I like words. This is what Schubert and Bach have in common."

Martens enjoys singing opera because it presents a singer with opportunities that no other medium can. Here the extremes of the voice are exploited much more than in oratorio. Opera provides scope for expression in more than just the singing.

And how does singing in opera fit into the traditionally rigid mores of Mennonites and the role of a professor at

MBBC—or are these criticisms passe? "No, they're not gone, they're there. However, if there was something I was really convinced about I don't believe the college community would stand in the way. I do face conflicts when the texts that I sing are against my particular sense of what is good. Much of the singing I do is non-sacred. To justify what you are doing by saying all of life is sacred may not be meaningful anymore. I don't consider bad music or bad texts sacred. Advice I would be open to would be from someone close to me; my wife, my friends, faculty, the church. Essentially I impose upon myself the standard that I want to adhere to."

How does he feel about contemporary religious music and Christian Rock? "I respect the works of Murray Schaeffer, a composer of good quality contemporary religious music. The music that provides me with more difficulty is that which has obviously popular roots, where the song asks for the same style in amplification, in body movement that you would expect from a popular singer and where the only difference is the text. That is incongruous. I object to its use in a worship service. For worship I would want to sing music that has proved itself, has greater dignity."

Does he think contemporary religious music is helping to bring the Christian message across to audiences, young, middle-aged and old? "Yes," says Martens, "I believe it is. The obvious text is what the older generation would pick up. Many of our young people have learned to be discriminating between good music and music just slapped together for big sales. They are developing a keen ear for text."

When does a singer of his calibre reach his performance pinnacle? "Possibly at age 45 when most football players are already retired. And then there are conceivably another 15 years of good singing ahead."

What does he do to counteract this total immersion in music?

"I go to my brother-in-law's farm, get on the tractor and cultivate a field or two. That fills an aesthetic need and gives me some relief. I go cross-country skiing and play volleyball besides being involved with Manitoba Track and Field. But singing is my life. I've sung as long as I can remember, and I don't think I will ever leave it. Something deep inside me would be destroyed if I did." mm

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Christians haven't made much of an impact in the "Corrections" field where their compassion is badly needed

Second of two parts.

by H.M.R. Dueck

The problem of crime and punishment in today's society confronts the Christian community with some awesome implications, both in terms of the attitudes it fosters as well as the actions, or inaction, it encourages.

Traditionally, the Christian response to crime and punishment has taken one of three directions: "So what? It's no concern of mine," or "What we need is harsher sentences! Bring back the noose!", or "Here is a need. Let's do something about it."

It is unfortunate however, in spite of the good intentions of this latter group, and the often commendable efforts of the church, that Christians by and large have not found acceptance in the corrections field. According to Rev. Tom James, who has worked in corrections for 15 years, the "bad image" is a reputation that Christians have earned. He says, "At best they are seen as well-meaning but uninformed; at worst, as bungling; or perhaps merely as disinterested."

The seminar, *Toward a Christian Response to Crime and Punishment*, held in Winnipeg in late 1979, served to counteract that accusation on all three counts. But only some 50 people came to hear the message — a telling commentary, it seemed, of the failure of the Christian community to respond to the monumental problems of crime and punishment, and in striking contrast to the number of people whose lives it touches. In 1978, *Statistics Canada* recorded 48,656 criminal offences in Winnipeg alone. What this means in terms of actual numbers of victims and offenders, even relating to just this one category of offence in this one city, no one hazards to estimate. The Church has not begun to come to terms with a ministry in this area, but a few individuals are catching the vision. It was they, who made the seminar a coura-

geous, and prophetic attempt to make a small start.

The inevitable question which Edgar Epp had outlined, that begged to be answered was: "Is there really anything we can do about it?" But Rev. Tom James, an Anglican minister and speaker at the seminar, believes that before the implications of what one can do can be dealt with, one must first face the implications of who one *is* as a Christian.

In his sermon *Attitudes in Action*, Rev. James said that the question we should rather ask is, "Are we being like Christ? Christian in our associations in the world, in the messages we give, in the work we do, and in the attitudes we have?" We must constantly re-examine our convictions, said Rev. James, because "What we do stems from what we believe. Our actions are the product of our attitudes." It is all too easy to be conformed to the thinking of the world and to adopt its attitudes and subsequently too, its actions.

Rev. James believes that "*compassion*" is the attitude of the Christian, taught by Scripture and exemplified by Christ. Theologian-psychiatrist, Jim Wilkes defines compassion as "an inner feeling which is expressed outwardly in a helping action." Says Rev. James, it is something "that brings us through pain, and out the other side", not something that eliminates or denies the "*pasio*", the pain and suffering, as the world attempts to do.

The criminal-justice specialist knows three kinds of suffering, or "*pasio*", said

OUR MISTAKE

In the 11th line of the opening paragraph in last month's story, *A Christian Response to Crime and Punishment*, the word "*incarnation*" should read "*incarceration*." If this amendment is made the quotation will make sense.

James. there is "*dispassion*"—the attitude of the detached professional, the "I don't want to suffer." Then there is the "*pasio*" or the deep "I suffer" of both the victim of the crime and the criminal who is being punished. But there is also the distinctively Christian version of "*pasio*", it is "*compassion*"—an affirmation of suffering of both the criminal and the victim, and a choosing to share the suffering, said Rev. James.

Rev. James quotes an American civil rights activist when he says, "The question the Christian should ask is, 'Am I my brother's *brother*?'", because if he is my brother, then the way in which I keep him may be radically different than the way in which I keep him today . . . in a ghetto, on welfare, on a reserve, in an institution."

The problem with our so-called "Christian" involvement, according to Rev. James,² is that, contrary to Christ's example, we have preached "from the rooftops", and have given handouts" at arm's length", afraid of contamination and compromise. But "this will not accomplish conversion", says James. Christ associated with "sinners": Mary Magdalene, a prostitute, Simon the Zealot, an urban guerilla, Zacchaeus, a thief. By extending compassion to them, he was able to reconcile them not only to other human beings, but to God. *Reconciliation* then, is the action that flows out of the attitude of *compassion*, says Rev. Tom James.

To demonstrate how compassion works, Rev. James gave three Scriptural examples. In the first example, the feeding of the five thousand, three aspects of how compassion works emerged.

First there was an analysis of the situation, and an identification with the cause. Jesus felt compassion for the crowd because they were hungry, and he recognized his own participation in their hunger because it was he that they had come to hear. Rev. James points out that "the notion of corporate responsibility for crime is a rather unpopular one, but to accept a share of the blame is not to excuse the other party, but to lessen the gap of alienation and to lessen the implications of rejection, thus facilitating reconciliation."

"The second part of acting with compassion", says James, "is to predict the consequences." Jesus said, "If I send them away hungry, they will faint by the

wayside." "How different," says Rev. James, "from the action of the judge who says, 'What do I care if the man I'm sentencing has a wife with a child, and is expecting another baby. It's none of my business,' or the policeman I talked to who said, 'My job is to get them (criminals) in front of the courts. I don't really care what happens after that.'" But to ignore the consequences of our actions, or to deny responsibility for them "is to fail in compassion", according to Rev. James.

The third part of compassion is action. Jesus passes the buck back to the disciples, "What are you going to do about it?" But they ask, "What good can we do with what little we have?" Says Rev. James, "We know how Jesus took the little, blessed it, and a miracle took place. If each of us takes a little piece of the action in compassion, then we begin to deal with the larger whole. But so many people are quite willing to stand back and criticize the massive problem and do nothing about even one little bit of the hunger. . . . There are at least 500,000 people in Winnipeg, and how many are prepared to become visitors to the 200 in Stony Mountain that need visitors?"

In the past, much of the emphasis has been on showing compassion to the offender, but the victim suffers as well and

needs compassion too says Rev. James. The account of the Good Samaritan graphically illustrates the prevalent attitudes within our society towards the victim: "What's yours is mine and I'll take it, What's mine is mine and I'll keep it," and What's mine is yours and I'll share it." Says James, there is risk, personal inconvenience, and cost in getting involved, but because of his compassion, the Good Samaritan takes a hand in transforming what might well have been a very angry and hurt victim.

In Rev. James's third illustration of how compassion works, he showed how the prodigal son's father avoided "smother-love" while exercising compassion. "We fail in our compassion", said Rev. James, "if we fail to allow the offender to suffer through whatever he is committed to do." If we try to kill the pain, we may well deny the growth. Clarence Epp, of MCC's Open Circle agrees but he believes that the Church must also face the implications of sharing that load of debt with the offender.

For Rev. Tom James, the bottom line is reconciliation. The Christian stands between the criminal and the victim, extending a hand to both to touch their suffering, to share it with them, and thus to help them become reconciled to each other, to society, and to God. This is at least part of what it means to be Christian.

But if there are sweeping implications concerning "Who we are as Christians," there are equally staggering implications concerning what we do, or perhaps, what we don't do in regards to crime and punishment.

In an article, *The Gospel in Prisons* (*The Mennonite* 16 Oct. 1979), Clarence Epp questions the Church's support of the present criminal-justice system. He believes that the prison system which brands criminals as worse sinners than other people, dehumanizes human beings, and fosters mistrust, anger and hatred is so contrary to the message of the Gospel, that both the verbal message and our well-intended actions "come under suspicion."

Still, change comes slowly, and Clarence Epp himself is working hard to give credence to the Christian message even within the framework of the present system. Through MCC's Open Circle, Epp matches volunteer visitors with prison inmates, in hopes that the inmate will get the message that someone does care. As the brochure states, "It is an opportunity for Christians to express their faith in a practical way." For Clarence Epp, involvement can mean among other things, learning to know the inmates, sharing a time of Bible study with them, and finding a Christian family that will take in an ex-con when his "time" is up.

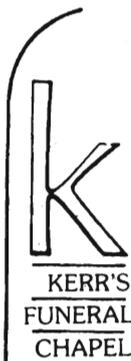
There are other Christians in the

system too, putting hands and feet to their Christian witness. They are to be found in the ranks of the chaplains, the social workers, and the volunteers. And there the Christian guards, policemen, judges, lawyers, parole officers, and many more working within the system. Theirs is no easy task.

But some rather distinctive alternatives to prison have been introduced in recent years, by society, but also by the Christian community. These programs take inmates out of the prisons, back into the community where, according to some authorities, it is possible once more for them not only to hear, but to see and experience the true Gospel message. MCC's Grosvenor Place, a Winnipeg half-way house for offenders, Youth Orientation Units (YOU) for young male offenders in Alberta, and Man to Man in British Columbia, are just some of MCC's initiatives in the Corrections field.

Its newest and most innovative program, however, is the Victim-Offender-Mediation Program, thus far only in use in Ontario and Manitoba. An alternative to prison, it initiates a process by which the victim and the offender are brought together by a mediating agent to resolve their personal feelings about one another, as well as to carry out some

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tangible form of restitution. It is an attempt to re-discover the meaning of relationships, instead of merely applying "the right law in the right place."

Still in its infancy, this program's full potential is yet to be realized, but so far, it is meeting with a satisfying response. Interestingly, initial skepticism about the program related to the potential hostility of the victim, should he want "his pound of flesh", rather than to the potential hostility or threat posed by the offender. Still, there is some doubt regarding the extent of this program's application to violent crime situations. But as one MCC'er aptly put it, "You don't dive into the deep end when you're just learning to swim."

At the inter-church seminar, *Toward a Christian Response to Crime and Punishment*, it was the MCC models that were introduced and explored as examples of a Christian response to the problem. But according to Edgar Epp, there is evidence that where the Mennonite community has such programs, the individual members become complacent and fail to get involved personally. They think they are already involved vicariously. Says Epp, "It becomes very difficult to ask people to go beyond simply the giving of money... to the giving of themselves to change lives."

But it is the personal involvement of Christian people, finally, that can best demonstrate to the world a Christian response. Besides becoming involved in programs that minister to both the victim and the offender, there is a need for people to speak out to judges, to Members of Parliament, to the media in an effort to stem the tide of hostility towards the offender and to suggest a willingness to explore alternatives to prison. Support is needed in local churches for victims and offenders alike. And Christians everywhere must speak out for, and live by Scriptural values rather than adopting the values of the world. These were among the suggestions offered at the seminar in answer to the probing question, "Is there really anything we can do about it?"

So if there is to be a "Christian" response to crime and punishment, every Christian must re-evaluate his attitudes in the light of Scripture, and then be willing to pick up "a little piece of the action." For some it will mean going by way of "Samaria", risking contact with the "outcasts" or "sinners"; for some it will mean cost in terms of time, or energy; for some it will mean becoming vulnerable. But why not? We ourselves are "captives, set free," how can we offer less to our "brothers"? **mm**

Footnotes:

1. J.T.L. James, "Christ, the Christian, and the Criminal."
2. James, *ibid*.

PRIVATE MENNONITE SCHOOLS GET SET FOR CHORAL FESTIVAL

Choirs representing private Mennonite schools from Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia will be participating in a choral festival to be held in Winnipeg on the weekend of March 28-30.

The choristers will assemble in Winnipeg on Friday night and will spend the weekend in preparation for a gala concert to be held on Sunday, March 30 at 7:30 p.m. in the Centennial Concert Hall. The highlight of this concert will be the 400 voice mass choir, which will perform under the direction of Henry J. Engbrecht. The concert will also feature several individual school choirs.

This annual event is sponsored by the Canadian Association of Mennonite Schools (CAMS), an organization formed to promote the unity and cause of the private Canadian Mennonite schools,

both secondary and post-secondary. The following schools will be represented at the festival: Mennonite Educational Institute, Clearbrook, B.C.; Bethany Bible Institute, Hepburn, Saskatchewan; Swift Current Bible Institute, Swift Current, Saskatchewan; Rosthern Junior College, Rosthern, Saskatchewan; Eden Christian College, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario; Rockway Mennonite School, Kitchener, Ontario; Mennonite Collegiate Institute, Gretna, Manitoba; Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute, Winnipeg, Manitoba; Elim Bible Institute, Altona, Manitoba; Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Tickets will be available from participating schools. **mm**

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View from the Pew V

A visit to Sargent Mennonite



SECOND VIEW

Among the street where each small house sits right next door to another small house and the lawns are tiny and the trees rather few, Sargent Avenue Mennonite church jets out rather starkly on the corner of Sargent Avenue and Garfield Street.

It resembles some of the pictures of the Russian Mennonite churches and I would be interested in knowing whether that's where the architect took his inspiration from.

Parking is a problem because there is no parking lot, so all the streets for blocks around are filled with cars for every service. The Sunday morning I was there I thought I was early and so was amazed at having to park so far away—after all I thought I was 15 minutes early.

But it turned out, much to my surprise, that I was late; the service had been in progress for at least five minutes by the time I got in the door. Not only does Sargent Avenue have Sunday school at 9:30 a.m. but their *Gottesdienst* starts at 10:45 a.m.

My neighbor greeted me with a hellow and smile and handed me her church bulletin for which I was very grateful. As I glanced at it I noticed the names of the pastor and music director were on the cover as well as their home and office numbers. That in itself give the impression of accessibility to a newcomer. Perhaps the names and phone numbers of the Sunday school director and the youth worker also could be added.

A Psalm on the cover was in both English and German as was the *Schriftwort* on the inside: "If the Holy Spirit is to produce good fruit in our lives, then we have to sow good seed (Phil. 2, 2)."

I had missed the first song by the choir and the congregational response but appreciated the prayer by Rev. Jake Harms, the minister. The welcome to all which followed this was partly in English and partly in German, which I soon came to see would be the pattern for the whole service, therefore providing for both young and old.

When it was time for the an-

FIRST VIEW

On October 28 I attended the Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church and participated in the morning worship service. The church is large, but plain, and on this morning it housed a large congregation which filled every available pew. Children of elementary school age occupied the front pews and remained there for the whole service.

The Sargent Avenue Church offers a single service on Sunday mornings which contains sermons and hymns in both English and German. Members of the congregation who are bilingual would no doubt benefit from these services much as they would from the all-English or all-German services offered at most of our churches; but for those who are not bilingual, the virtues of such a mixture are questionable. I do not speak German (I don't know if that makes me representative of young Mennonites or not), so for half of the service I had only a rough idea of what was going on. Although, for one service, I enjoyed the challenge of using my incomplete German to keep up with the German sermon and hymns, I don't think that I would consider joining the church before learning to speak German properly. The choice of a bilingual service would seem to be a compromise between pressures to preserve the Mennonite Germanic tradition and pressures to adapt the English which most Mennonites now use in their everyday lives. From the size of the congregation, it seemed that most people were happy with the result.

Two sermons were given on this Sunday. The German sermon was given by the regular minister, while the English was delivered by a visiting minister. The latter was entitled "The body illustrates the use of spiritual gifts," and was based on 1. Cor. 12:12-27, in which Paul draws an analogy between the complementary functions of bodily parts and the church—which is composed of distinct peo-

ple with distinct talents and contributions, and yet remains a unified whole. The minister developed from this analogy an elaboration of the manner in which different groups and individuals cooperate within our Mennonite Church, and aim at a common goal. Significantly, he also turned his attention to the phenomena of the charismatic movement, the most recent manifestation of a tendency which periodically asserts itself in Mennonite communities and indicates, perhaps, that our Mennonite churches are not providing the type of religious experience which some of their members need or want. The minister explained that he approved of this movement so long as it was complementary to the goals of the established Church, but that, to the extent it created dissension and afflicted the unity of the Church, he did not think it was a good thing. Considering the Mennonite tradition of religious dissent, the minister's position seemed somewhat ironic; it is also difficult to imagine a movement, such as the charismatic movement, developing in the first place if it did not represent a potentially divisive cleavage with Church doctrine or practice.

One of the features of the service which particularly impressed me was the excellent musical program. Under the direction of Bernie Neufeld, the choir and congregation sang beautifully some unfamiliar, yet pleasant, songs. For one selection, the words were projected onto the wall with an overhead projector so that the congregation might sing along. The programme announcements included several notices of practices for the various choirs which Sargent Avenue supports, along with the usual mission-work and Bible study notices.

All in all, the service was enjoyable. As I mentioned, I got little out of the German sermon, but the English sermon provided food for thought and the music was excellent. — by a young person

nouncements and I looked over the bulletin, there didn't seem to be an evening free.

George Ens, former principal of the Mennonite Collegiate Institute, Gretna, then gave a message entitled *The Body Illustrates the Use of Spiritual Gifts*, based on 1 Corinthians 2: 12 to 27. Among the highlights of his message was the fact that just as various parts of our body work together for the good of the whole, just so does each segment of the church body. Pensioners and professionals, children and young people, blue collar workers and farmers, are all equally important. Our backgrounds are similar, with many of our forefathers being refugees from Russia who sacrificed to give us the kinds of lives we have today. Now it is up to us not to let our affluence and the "good life" corrode our spirituality.

Rev. Ens is an excellent speaker and he used several anecdotes which made his listeners smile. One was about a friend who was asked if children crying in church bothered him; he had replied "Not nearly as much as adults sleeping."

After the choir's next song, Rev. Harms gave the *Predigt* in German. His theme was I Peter 4, 8 to 10. He also spoke well and people were attentive. If the children were a bit restless that was very understandable after sitting since 9:30.

Von des Himmels Thron, was the next number by the choir, again much enjoyed. Then *The Segenspruch*, followed by one of my all-time favorites for the closing hymn, *So lang mein Jesus lebt*.

— by an older person

YOUR CHOICE

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Manitoba news



Peter Hamm, professor of missions, sociology and cultural anthropology at Mennonite Brethren Bible College since 1970 has been appointed by the Board of Missions/Services to the Africa/Asia/Europe desk. He replaces Bill Wiebe who is returning to British Columbia. Hamm and his wife Betty served in India from 1958-1970. He received his Ph.D. from McMaster University; his wife is a head nurse in Concordia.

Peter Peters, a physical education teacher in Steinbach, recently became a member of the Boxing and Wrestling Commission. This commission is responsible for the supervision of boxing and wrestling in Manitoba.

Gayle Wiebe, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Bernie Wiebe, Winnipeg, was named recipient of a \$500 Chown Centennial Scholarship at the University of Manitoba. A 1979 graduate of Westgate she is currently a first year student in Education majoring in music education.

The *Mennonite Mirror* congratulates the *Courier*, formerly *Der Nordwesten*, on the celebration of its 90th anniversary.

The annual meeting, Project 80s, Building for People, of the *Camp Arnes Society* took place on February 11 at Elmwood MB church. Plans for a new retreat centre were presented.



Jim Penner, president of Penner Foods, Steinbach, was elected first vice Chairman of the Canadian Federation of Retail Grocers at a recent meeting in Toronto. Penner Foods is the largest independent grocer in Manitoba with stores in Winnipeg, Steinbach, Altona.

Peter Letkeman, professor of Chemistry at the University of Brandon recently became a member of the Manitoba Research Council.

Dr. E.H. Stobbe, University of Manitoba plant scientist, told the 1979 Agronomists Conference in Winnipeg that Manitoba farmers would like to grow winter wheat, for good reasons — earlier harvesting, higher yields, better timing for seeding and better competition with weeds. He said research is needed on the potential for growing winter wheat under zero tillage and to develop varieties resistant to stem and leaf rust.

Helmut Klassen, Canadian Mental Health Association executive secretary, announced that its 1980 conference is to take place on May 7-9 on the campus of Mennonite Brethren Bible College. Projected theme: Contemporary Issues facing the Church-Sponsored Service Program. Dr. David Schroeder, professor at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, will address delegates and guests on the subject of *Christian ethics*.

How Mennonite Politicians Fared in the February 18 Elections: According to initial press reports, 16 members of the Mennonite community were candidates in the federal election. Of these 16, 5 were Conservatives, 4 Liberal, 3 Independent, 2 NDP, 1 Marxist-Leninist, and 1 Libertarian. Winners were: **Benno Friesen** (Conservative, British Columbia), **Jake Epp** (Conservative, Manitoba), and **Keith Penner** (Liberal, Ontario). Losers were **Jack Suderman** (Liberal) and **John Pankratz** (Independent) of British Columbia; **E. Neufeld** (Marxist-Leninist) of Saskatchewan; **Herman Rempel** (NDP), **George Elias** (Independent), **Peter Penner** (Independent) and **John Froese** (Conservative) of Manitoba; and **John Reimer** (Conservative), **Jake Froese** (Conservative), **David Wiebe** (Liberal), **Frank Epp**, (Liberal), **Don Redekop** (Libertarian), and **Arnold Peters** (NDP) of Ontario.

Canadian Mennonite Bible College will host its annual peace conference March 7-9. The theme this year is: The Power of Jesus and His Church. Resource persons are Peter Ediger, director of Mennonite voluntary service and co-pastor of the Arvada Mennonite Church, Arvada, Colorado; David Schroeder, professor of New Testament, CMBC; Adolf Ens, Dean and professor of History, CMBC; and Gerald Loewen, media consultant and artist.

Dr. Don Hustad, organist, composer, conductor and lecturer was the guest clinician at Winnipeg Bible Institute Music Seminar in late January. This was sponsored jointly by WBI and the Manitoba Music Committee and presented unique opportunity to choir members, conductors and accompanists in Manitoba.

John Bender, a graduate of Sir Wilfred Laurier University and writer-editor at Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Indiana, for 10 years, has resigned his position to continue studies at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, to work as a free-lance writer and serve as a caretaker of Elkhart's Prairie Street Cemetery.

Susanna Penner, Steinbach's oldest resident at 103, died on December 17 at her residence in the Personal Care Home. Born in 1876 she was one of the earliest children born in Canada to Mennonite immigrants.

About 100 Southeast Asia refugees from a number of Manitoba points took part in a worship service at Steinbach Evangelical Mennonite Church. Guests were treated to a Chinese supper after the service. Future refugee gatherings will be held at the church every third Saturday of the month.

Kathy Plett, Winnipeg, was appointed by the Mennonite Board of Missions on a 21 month teachers-aide assignment to Brownsville, Texas. Her work will be in a Mennonite church operated Day Care Centre. After receiving her BA from the University of Manitoba she has taught for nine years.

The staff of the **Mennonite Reporter**, an inter-Mennonite publication hosted its ninth annual meeting at the Sargent Avenue Mennonite church on February

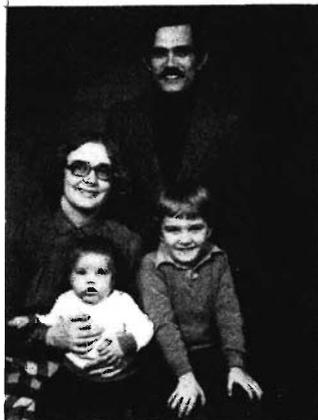
Representatives from all provinces attended the Board and Membership meetings on Friday and Saturday. The sessions ended with the Saturday evening banquet. Allan Siebert, western representative of MR brought some fresh insights into future topics projected by this publication. Ron Rempel, newly appointed editor of the MR focused on the function of such a paper: they want to be comfortable with the paper reporting on the life of the church, reflecting what it is, the unity and the commonality that does exist, to mirror and to mold. "A good vehicle to cultivate is that of humor. We are also on the lookout to expand beyond Mennonite news." Peter Wiebe, cellist, accompanied by Esther Wiebe provided the music for the evening. Allan Kroeker presented two of his films: *How much land does a man need?* based on a story by Leo Tolstoy and *Tudor King* which was based on a story of Rudy Wiebe.

Liverpool and London, England where thanks to Canadian International Development Agency or CIDA funding, Margaret was able to spend a year at her studies. Emphasis centred on her specialty, tropical skin diseases. In Nairobi, which boasts a population of 1.8 million, Margaret again enjoys CIDA funding and plans to do both clinical and research work on skin diseases. Nuoi's primary concern is to see that the boys settle into a new routine without too much change, and then look about for something else to keep himself occupied. Margaret says that in their few months back home it has been good for them, particularly for Nuoi, to be able to assist new families coming from Vietnam. Nuoi for instance, has been able to help refugees with the intricacies of getting past the red tape of shipping parcels to relatives left behind. Refugees have been heartened too by being able to speak to a new Canadian already familiar with a culture so different from the one in Vietnam.

Julius Toews and Lawrence Klippenstein were awarded the Margaret McWilliams medal for their jointly-edited version of *Mennonite Memories: Settling in Western Canada*. The book is a revised version of a volume published in 1974 under the title *Manitoba Mennonite Memories* by Mr. Toews. The McWilliams medal is awarded annually by the Manitoba Historical Society.

Third Story, the children's television series produced by Mennonite Brethren Communications in Winnipeg, is now running in the U.S. as part of a Monday night schedules of the Christian Broadcasting Network. CBN has about 1,100 cable stations in its satellite hookup and it picked up the 13-week series to run on a free-time basis.

Richard Krahn of Niverville, Man. is serving a three-year term of service with MCC in agricultural extension in Recife, Brazil. He attended Winnipeg Bible College and is a graduate of the U. of Man. He has been farming in Niverville.



Margaret Fast and her husband **Le Nuoi**, who left Vietnam in 1975 to make a new home for themselves in Canada, more for the sake of their eldest child **Jonathan** than anything else, left for Nairobi, Kenya, on the fourth of February. With them also went the latest addition to the family, young **Isaak**, now 10 months old. The family only recently returned to Canada from

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SOLOISTS:

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Alto — *Irena Welhasch*
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Bass — *Dan Lichti*

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Tickets: \$3.50, \$4.50, \$5.50, \$6.50

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FROM THE SCHOOLS

Beginning with this edition, the Mirror will regularly publish items written by students at the Mennonite high schools. This is the first of such reports and comes from Westgate.

I spent a short week at St. Amant Center for children (This will be difficult to write because my space is limited).

I spent time with many different children. Each individual child, left me in amazement, extending my questions and creating another depth to a new field of emotions.

The teacher becomes a learner, the learner becomes a teacher. It is hard for me to explain something I do not entirely understand. The children are all beautiful, as all children are. They deserve a chance to become themselves and we are chosen to give them that chance.

God has given us all a gift. It is up to us to become aware of his giving. At the point of understanding I question myself.

St. Amant may not always accomplish the ultimate motive but they try to encounter the smallest spark of joy, weighed uniquely by each individual beholder.

I will continue my experience at St. Amant and I will continue to learn. I would like to give a sincere thanks to all the children and staff that welcomed my questions and made me feel a part of their community. by Linda Wall

MENNONITE COOKING CLASSES

The Mennonite cooking classes that were offered by Westgate mothers during interterm were both beneficial and filling. Several types of Mennonite foods were prepared, including Borscht, Werenke, Plume Mousse, Kielke, and others. All of the students that took part in this course not only involved themselves in eating the food but also in preparing it. This is where the skill came in. Anyone can eat Werenke but can everyone make them so that the cottage cheese doesn't come out when they are boiling. All of the things learned in these classes I'm sure will not quickly be forgotten. by Kathy Penner

'Interterm' is the name given to a week of minicourses, tours, and projects. This week is meant to give students a break between semesters and a chance to learn about a variety of different topics such as woodwork, photography, Mennonite cooking, outdoor education and many more.

6 Möglichkeiten Benzin zu sparen

Ein "tune-up" ist sehr wichtig.

Wenn das Auto nicht in bester Ordnung ist, kostet es viel Benzin und Geld. Wählen Sie Ihren Mechaniker mit grösster Vorsicht. Sie können durchschnittlich etwa 10% Verbesserung im Benzinverbrauch erwarten.

Fahren Sie langsamer auf der Autobahn!

Mit 110 km/h Geschwindigkeit verbrauchen Sie etwa 20% mehr Benzin als mit 90 km/h. Vermindern Sie die Geschwindigkeit bis auf 90 km/h. Es spart Energie, Geld und - weil es sicherer ist - es erhält vielleicht Ihr Leben.

Autoreifen richtig aufgepumpt halten!

Die Reifen auf empfohlenem maximum Luftdruckstand halten, spart Benzin ohne das es etwas kostet.

Achten Sie auf Ihre Fahrgewohnheiten!

Vermeiden Sie schnelles Losfahren und plötzliches Bremsen. Anstatt mehrere kurze Strecken zu fahren, verbinden Sie diese zu einer längeren Fahrt. Vermeiden Sie den "rush-hour" Verkehr.

Am besten lassen Sie das Auto zu Hause.

Fahren Sie mit dem Bus, oder mit mehreren Leuten im Auto, oder mit dem Fahrrad, oder gehen Sie zu Fuss. Zu Fuss zum "corner-store" - anstatt zu fahren - ist ein Schritt, der sich lohnt.

Wenn Sie an ein neues Auto denken, dann denken Sie an ein kleines!

Je schwerer das Auto, desto mehr der Benzinverbrauch. Bedenken Sie, das jedes zusätzliche 1000 Pfund Autogewicht erfordert pro Jahr 150 bis 170 mehr Gallonen Benzin. Teures Fahren!

NATIVE RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT TAKES SHAPE

The Native Resource Development project of MCC (Canada) is taking shape. Menno Wiebe, director of native concerns for MCC (Canada) reported to the annual meeting in Vineland, Ontario, that the program has "taken root" and it is projected that it will be extended to all the provinces from Ontario westward, and also Labrador.

"The Wild Rice venture has increased through the good work of Henry Fast," Menno related, "as he has developed the packaging and marketing of wild rice and other local products." Earlier MCC (Canada) personnel designed and constructed wild rice processing equipment, appropriate for local community use.

Menno reported that a series of re-

quests have now come to MCC (Canada) for managerial personnel to serve Native communities in a variety of economic ventures.

The MCC (Canada) annual meeting also heard the report of the executive

committee appointment of a native concerns advisory council. This council consists of five meeting members and a further 15 corresponding members.

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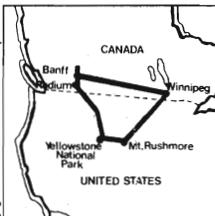


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BLACKHILLS-YELLOWSTONE TOUR

TOUR NO. CT6 - 14 DAYS - WINNIPEG DEPARTURE
The highlights of this tour include Mt. Rushmore National Park, the widely acclaimed Black Hills Passion Play as well as a tour of Yellowstone National Park. We also visit Glacier National Park, Radium Hot Springs area and the mile high playground of Banff.
June 13th - July 4th



NEWFOUNDLAND GASPE - CABOT TRAIL TOUR

TOUR NO. CT8 - 26 DAYS - WINNIPEG DEPARTURE
The many highlights of this tour will include travel via the Cabot Trail in Nova Scotia followed by the ferry sailing from North Sydney to Argentina, Newfoundland. We will visit one of North America's oldest cities, Saint John's. En route you will also see Toronto, Montreal, Quebec City and Ottawa.
June 6th, June 20th

June 6th, June 20th

ALASKA-PACIFIC OCEAN TOUR

TOUR NO. CT7 - 21 DAYS - WINNIPEG DEPARTURES
The many highlights of this tour will include a Circle Tour of Whitehorse, Dawson Creek, Fairbanks. We will also travel from Whitehorse to Skagway via the Narrow Gauge White Pass Yukon Railroad. We will also board the Alaska State Ferry for a sailing from Alaska to Prince Rupert.
June 5th, June 26th, July 10th, July 24th, August 7th.

Special Note: Also inquire about our Special Tour to ALASKA, departing Winnipeg on June 19th (includes Anchorage and Mt. McKinley).

CANADIAN ROCKY-PACIFIC OCEAN TOUR

TOUR NO. CT9 - 15 DAYS - WINNIPEG DEPARTURE
The Yellowhead Highway takes us to Edmonton and Jasper, where we will tour the entire park area. We will also board the Queen of Prince Rupert for a sailing to Kelsey Bay, British Columbia. After a two night stay in Vancouver on the return we will enjoy the scenic splendors of Banff, Alberta.
July 1st, July 25th



Phone 775-8046



Vor 100 Jahren: Eine fast unglaubliche und doch wahre Geschichte

von Harry Loewen

Die Welt ist dem Untergang nahe. Der Antichrist wird bald seine Herrschaft ueber die Gottlosen in den westlichen Laendern aufrichten. Doch fuer die Braut Jesu Christi, der wahren Gemeinde Gottes, hat der Herr einen Ort der Zuflucht bestimmt. Dieser Zufluchtsort ist im fernen Asien, suedoestlich vom Kaspischen Meer, wo keine Unmoral, Zerfall und Gottlosigkeit mehr sein werden. Dorthin muss sich die Gemeinde Jesu so bald wie moeglich begeben, um dem Zorne des Antichristen zu entgehen. In den Wuesten Asiens wird die Gemeinde dem wiederkehrenden Christus entgegengehen. So lehrte Claas Epp in der mennonitischen Kolonie an der Wolga.

Von diesem Glauben beseelt und angetrieben, verkauften mehrere mennonitische Familien ihr Land und Eigentum, packten ihre Habseligkeiten auf Wagen, und begaben sich in einem grossen Treck in ein unbekanntes Land und in eine ungewisse Zukunft. Sie verliessen ihre bluhenden Siedlungen und Bauerhoefe an der Wolga und in der Ukraine, denn sie glaubten die Stimme Gottes klar vernommen zu haben. 1880 verliess der erste Treck die Wolga-Gegend. Andere kamen bald nach, auch aus der mennonitischen Kolonie Molotschna.

Die Gottessucher wussten, dass sie sich grossen Gefahren und vielen Strapazen auf dem Wege zu ihrem Paradies aussetzten. Lange unbekannte Strecken mussten gefahren und heisse Wuesten durchquert werden. Die Auswanderer begaben sich in Laender, deren Sprachen und Sitten sie nicht kannten. Ihre Verwandte und Freunde rieten ihnen, oft unter Traenen, in der Heimat zu bleiben, doch ohne Erfolg. Die Geliebte eines Auswanderers beging Selbstmord, weil sie gegen ihren Willen zurueckgehalten wurde. Als der junge Mann die erschuetternde Nachricht erhielt, brach er mit seinen Nerven zusammen, und man fuerchtete, dass auch er sich das Leben nehmen wuerde. Doch nichts konnte die Enthusiasten umstimmen. Sie waren bereit ihrem fanatischen Fuehrer Claas Epp zu folgen, so wie die Kinder Israel einst Moses durch die Wueste ins gelobte Land folgten.

Wer war dieser Claas Epp und was bewegte diese Mennoniten in Zentralasien ihr Heil und ihren Gott zu suchen?

1794 erschien in Deutschland ein Buch von dem Wissenschaftler und

Augenarzt Heinrich Jung-Stilling, einem Freunde Goethes. Sein allegorischer Roman *Das Heimweh* erzaehlt im Sinne von Bunyans *Die Pilgerreise* die Geschichte von Menschen, die unter den Tataren in der Gegend von Samargand und Buchara in Zentralasien das gelobte Land suchen. Dieses Buch wurde von den Mennoniten Russlands vielfach gelesen, und gegen Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts uebte es einen grossen Einfluss auf ihre Erwartungen und Hoffnungen aus.

Als in den siebziger Jahren des 19. Jahrhunderts die mennonitischen "Privilegien" (wie die Wehrlosigkeit, die deutsche Sprache und das Schulwesen) in Russland bedroht wurden, dachten viele Mennoniten an auswandern. Viele wanderten auch nach Amerika und Kanada aus. Doch die kleine Claas Epp-Gruppe zog in die entgegengesetzte Richtung, nach Zentralasien, wo, laut Jung-Stillings Buch, der Herr die Seinen vor dem Uebel bewahren wuerde.

Claas Epp war eigentlich ein ganz kluger Kopf, doch war er von einem Bewusstsein der goettlichen Sendung und wohl auch vom Fanatismus derart ergriffen, dass er selbst glaubte, dass Gott ihn zum Propheten erwählt hatte. 1878 veroeffentlichte er ein Buch, in dem er den Propheten Daniel und die Offenbarung Jesu Christi deutete und auf die damaligen Verhaeltnisse in Russland anwandte. Unermuedlich predigte und lehrte er, dass Asien und nicht Amerika das gottgewollte Ziel der frommen Mennoniten sei und dass die Erloesung nur dort zu suchen waere. Sein Ernst und seine Beredsamkeit waren ueberzeugend.

Nachdem die Auswanderer von der russischen Regierung die Ausreiseerlaubnis bekommen hatten und der Gouverneur von Turkestan, Konstantin von Kaufmann, ihnen Land und Glaubensfreiheit in ihrer neuen Heimat versprochen hatte, gab es fuer die Reise lustigen keine Bedenken mehr. Das Ziel winkte in der Ferne und Gott selbst schien den Weg fuer sie bereitet zu haben.

Der Weg nach Turkestan (heute die Sowjetischen Republiken Kasachstan, Usbekistan und Turkmenistan) war sehr land und beschwerlich. Die Reise dauerte etwa fuenfzehn Wochen. Heisser und trockener Wind, brennende Sandwuesten, und Hunger und Durst mussten ueberstanden werden. Im Laufe der Reise erkrankten viele Kinder und vierzehn starben und mussten am

Wegrand oder im Wuestensand begraben werden. Doch nichts konnte die Auswanderer lange aufhalten. An jedem Morgen fingen sie den Tag mit Gebet und Andacht an, und dann ging es weiter.

Als die Mennoniten in Zentralasien angekommen waren, merkten sie bald, dass sie sich nicht im Paradies befanden, sondern unter Tataren und Turkmenen, deren Sitten und Gebraeuche ihnen unbekannt waren und die ihnen Schwierigkeiten bereiteten. Die Mennoniten wurden oft von Turkmenen beraubt und bedroht. Pferde wurden gestohlen, Haeuser wurden eingebrochen, und mennonitische Verteidiger wurden verwundet. Der schwache Selbstschutz der Mennoniten hatte wenig Erfolg gegen die Rauber.

Eines nachts wurde ein Mennonit, Heinrich Abrahms, von den Einheimischen ermordet, weil sie seine Frau stehlen wollten. Abrahms Leiche, von mehreren Dolchwunden und einem Kopfschuss entstellt, wurde von Peter Unruh gefunden. Unruh lief den Moerdern nach und rief, "Ihr Diebe und Moerder, was habt ihr getan!" Darauf wurde Unruh von etwa fuenfzig Maennern umringt und angeschrien, er solle sich hinknien und zu seinem Gott beten, denn er wuerde nun sterben muessen, weil er sie Diebe und Moerder genannt haette. Der Lutheraner Johann Drake, der auch mit den Mennoniten nach Turkestan gekommen war, stellte sich zwischen Unruh und die Moerder und bat: "Erschiesst mich, denn ich habe keinen auf der Welt, der mich vermissen oder um mich weinen wuerde. Dieser aber hat eine Frau und Kinder, die ihn brauchen." Nachdem die Banditen sich besprochen hatten, liessen sie beiden Mennoniten das Leben und die Freiheit.

Inzwischen gab es fuer die Mennoniten Schwierigkeiten und Beschwerden anderer Art. Die Ernten blieben aus, und das bisschen Gruene, was noch geblieben war, wurde von den Heuschrecken zerstoert. Claas Epp wurde fast unertraeglich. Er hatte prophezeit, dass Christus am 8. Maerz 1889 erscheinen wuerde, um die Seinigen zu entruecken. In weissen Kleidern wurde der Herr an dem bestimmten Tag und an einem bestimmten Ort erwartet. Als Christus nicht erschien, entstanden Uneinigigkeiten unter den Gemeindegliedern und Epp wurde beschuldigt, die Glaebigen irrefuehrt zu haben. Epp erklarte, dass Christus sein Kommen nur aufgeschoben haette und dass man sich geduldig verhalten sollte. Er gab auch bekannt, dass er (Epp) zum Sohn Christi erhoben worden war. Aus der herkoemmlichen Dreieinigkeit Gottes war nun eine goettliche Vierfalt entstanden, mit Claas Epp als vierte Person in der Gottheit. Einige Familien verliessen Epp

und hoechstens fuefzehn hielten es noch mit dem Propheten.

Nach diesen schweren und enttauschenden Erfahrungen, wanderte eine Anzahl von Mennoniten nach Amerika aus. Ihre Nachkommen befinden sich heute in Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Manitoba und Saskatchewan. Andere blieben in Zentralasien. Etwa 5000 Mennoniten leben heute noch in der Grossen Treck-Gegend in Russland. Auch Claas Epp blieb in Zentralasien. Er wurde 75 Jahre alt und starb an Magenkrebs am 19. Januar 1913, nur fuef Tage nachdem seine geliebte Frau Elisabeth gestorben war. Noch zehn Jahre nach dem Tode des mennonitischen Propheten, glaubten seine Anhaenger, dass Christus bald wiederkommen wuerde und zwar mit Claas Epp. Doch diese Hoffnung kam zu Ende, als die sowjetische Regierung die mennonitischen Bauernhoefe in Kollektivwirtschaften verwandelte und die widerstrebenden Familien in den weiteren Osten verbannete.

Ein farbenreiches Kapitel mennonitischer Geschichte war zu Ende gekommen. Wer diese Geschichte eingehender studieren moechte, der lese das Buch von Fred Richard Belk, *The Great Trek of the Russian Mennonites to Central Asia 1880-1884* (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania und Kitchener, Ontario: Herald Press, 1976).mm

MCC Casette Tapes

The following tape cassettes are available for program resources on two current themes:

Doing Justice to the Sojourner

by Dr. George Epp, president of CMBC; a recording of an address given to the January meeting of MCC (Canada), in Ontario.

Hoes or Handouts

(relief or development), by Edgar Stoesz, associate executive secretary, MCC overseas service.

Both tapes may be ordered at a cost of \$3 from:



MCC (Canada)
201 - 1483 Pembina Highway
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3T 2C8

Jaun Schmedt en aundre Menschen

von Victor Peters

Horndean licht aum Hoachwajch. De Staudt licht noaden vom Wajch. Na waut het hia Staudt. Horndeansche Radekopp — he wea von Mexiko tridjjetrokken — saed, wann ewa Meddach ene Koh op'm Highway stund, wea de gaunse Staudt em Schauten. En he haud recht.

Waut wea doa en Horndean? En Elevaeta, en Stoa woant Isaak Schroeda rannnd, Hiebat sien Cafe, ne Post, twe Garagen, poa Weatfruejis, dree Lehrasch, en Schoalbesorja Jinta. Schliesslich noch en poa Foarma woant dicht aune Staudt wohnden. Foats sueden vom Hoagwajch wohnden Schmedt en Siemes. Von de Behrend Siemesche woad etj sajen daud de daud baste backen en koaken kunn, en gauns Hondean. Auf Bultje oda Twebaktjis, Pie oda Borsch, daud jelung emma. Bie Siemes kaum etj foaken.

Uck Schmedt wohnd sueden, so aus etj saed. De Hoachwajch es vendog jepaevd, oba donn wea daud bloss Gravel en Mudd. vom Hoagwajch auf oba wear it em Farjoa en noam Rejen tjneedep Blot. Jiedamaun, aus Tjint oda Groata troag en Horndean bie sonne Tiet Gummstewel. Wann Schmedt von Aultoneiw oda von Rosenfeld no Hues kaum, mussst he siene Koa biem Highway parken en bat tues to foat goanen. Doaraun haud he wenig Freid. He bruckt dann strenge Wead, so daud de Weatfrue Jaunsche, woant ope Atj woand, schwind aere Tjinatjis nenropt. Wiels de Wead woant Schmedt bruckt haud he nich ene Siendachschoal jeleat.

Schmedt wea en Liberal. Sien Frint en Autoneiw, Drusch Wiebe wea en Konservativ. Etj jlew wens he wea konservativ. Enes Doags wea etj gorats bie Schmedt aus Wiebe hankaum. Daud wea donn aus Wally Milla, daud wea Gretnasche Milla, ons MLA, en de haud Sieden jeswitscht, streden sich de beid ewa Milla — beid waren jeijen Milla, oba uet aundre Jrind. Etj hilt ewajens op Milla.

Schmedt haud egentlich sullt Lawyer woaren. He kunn so ewazeugt reden. Wann he de Jeschicht fetald wo en Bankreiba en Kulle den Bankea dotjeschoaten haud, en saed: "Woarom rannnd he uck Kraftchenko hinjaraun? He wisst je Kraftchenko haud emma ene Flint oda en Massa bie sich," dann ded eanem Kraftchenko meist let. De wort spoada en Headingly jehongen.

Aus etj daud easchte moal noch saed, "Na so schwind haud Kraftchenko uck nich scheten sullt," tjitjt Schmedt mie stiew aun: "Due wudst nich scheten wann Du so vael Jelt bie di hautst en eana di hinjaraun rannnd?" Etj blef dann stell. Wiels Schmedt wea uck mien Skip.

Daud haud etj meist nich moal erwaeht, wie curlden top. Lumber-Yard Derksen, Dietrich Friesen, daud wea Garage-Friesen, Schmedt en etj wearen en Team. Horndean haud tjen Curling-Rintj. Dotoa mussst wie noa Rosenfeld foaren.

Wann wie curlden en de aundre Sied dann aeren easchten Steen krajt op'm Knopp hansatt, wearet aun Schmedt de Rej. (En Horndean saed wie nich "rocks" oda "button", doa wort dietsch jeraedt.) Schmedt laed sienen Bassem dann op den Steen en donnad met siene depe Stem: "Barscht dissem ent!"

Schmedt haud ene wundaboare Sproak. he haud emma aundre Uetdretje, so aus "Knaul dissem Wichsa!" oda "Tucks dissem!" oda "Riem daud Hues uet!" Etj wurd nich sajen daud wi en stoatjet Team wearen, oba wiels Schmedt ons Skip wea, haud wi daud measchte Fans.

Eamoal sull doa ene Lehrakonferenz en Rosenfeld sennen. Miene Koa wea twei, en Dietrich Friesen haud nich foats Tiet de optofixen. Miss Wiebe, de Lehrasche, wull oba onbedintjt noa de Konferenz. Etj mehnd dann, vielleicht kunn wi met Schmedt metfoaren.

"Na hanfoare woat dochwohl goanen," saed Miss Wiebe. Se kunn en bat twedidich reden. Ae Voda wea ena vone Jrue-

Your word

da von de Bredjement en Winkla, en wann se selwst uck nich so strenj wea, mehnd se doch eanje Lied en Horndean tjitjen toa foaken ene Buddel. Uck Schmedt. Met'm "hanfoaren" mehnd Miss wiebe daut Horndean tjenen Bearparlor haud, en Rosenfeld haud eanen, dann wud hanfoaren safe sennen. Tridj kunn se uck met wem aundren foaren.

Schmedt kaum noa de Lehrwohning, en wi saute en. Donn moakt Miss Wiebe daut Schmedt wol uck ene Supply tues haud. Daut wea uck nich schwoa to sehen. Wie bruckten den gaunsen brenden Wajch tom foaren. Wie wearen krajt aune faulsche Sied vom Wajch aus et op eamoal rummeld. Daut wea dista en Schmedt wea met'm Licht direkt ene Fiebastang von eanem Buggy jefoaren. He foa noch en poa Yards wiede en bramsd. Etj eruet en rannd tridj to sehen waut passaet wea.

Daut Pead stunnt, en de Maun saut op'm Buggy en hilt Enja vone Lien ene Haenj. Aus de Koa so schneidich de Fiebastang jetroffen haud, wearen de Saelestraenj en uck de Lien kort aufjeraeten. Nue saut de Maun op'm Buggy, oba daut Paed wea mehrere Yards auf.

De Maun wea ojemain doll. "Se jie dann aula besoapen?" saed he.

Entschen wea uck Schmedt aujekoamen. He blef gauns ruehig. "So, so," saed he, "wea foat hia bie distre Nacht oane Licht op'm Hoagwajch?"

Aus de Maun Schmedt sach, en Schmedt tjannde de Lied von wiet en bret, wort he stell. Met Schmedt wea nich goat Tjoaschen aeten.

"Etj foa noa Rosenfeld," saed Schmedt, "en etj woa von doa de RCMP en Jretna opfoanen, en am erkklaeren waut hia passaet es. En uck en goadet Woat fe Di enlajen." En doamet jintj he tridj. He dreid sich noch eamoal om en saed, "Wiedahans schrie Lied nich aun 'Se jie besoapen' - daut lat nich schmock."

Wie foaren wiede en kaumen uck goat aun. Tridj foa Miss Wiebe met'm Lehra von Grossweide met. mm

FROM FORT GARRY

Dear Sir:

It is with regret that I write this letter in response to the gentleman who entered the doors of our beloved church at Fort Garry. It grieves me to know that people are entering our doors and are not welcomed properly. This should not happen but unfortunately it does once in a while. I try to make it my responsibility to meet as many people (new people) as possible before 11 a.m. worship. Since this gentleman came in just before that time he could have gone unnoticed thru the crowd that seems to gather in the foyer between 10:45 and 11 a.m.

However he should have been met by an usher to shake his hand and welcomed. I believe if this gentleman would give the Fort Garry MB church a chance I am sure he would find a lot more love and caring than he gives us credit for. In fact I love the brother for bringing it to our attention and hope that if he decides to come again that I will have a first hand chance to greet him and wish him a warm welcome.

Please feel free to use my name.
Peter Giesbrecht,
Waterford Ave.

AGREE WITH MIRROR

Dear Sir:

I have found much interesting reading in your paper, including the Low German articles.

Generally, I have appreciated the points of view expressed in the editor's page. Especially did I appreciate Roy Vogt's presentation regarding our church schools. I agree completely with his point of view.

Thanks for the article and others which seek to relate our Christian faith to everyday life.

Ron Penner,
Landmark.

WHAT A LOVELY REFLECTION

Dear MM

Enclosed please find cheque. I am 72 years old and a pensioner. We like the Mirror.

Mr. & Mrs. Peter Olfert,
Steinbach.

Dear MM

Just a few lines to let you know that I am an old age pensioner and I have been reading your paper for a number of years. I enjoy the low German stories by Victor Peters very much, and we have lots of fun when I read them at the New Horizon Club. So keep them coming. I also like the rest of the paper so keep it coming.

Sincerely,
Elisabeth Sawatzky,
Altona.

Dear MM

Received your gentle reminder and want to confirm that I am 78 years old and a recipient of Canada pension. I thank you for your consideration in this regard. I like your paper and the interesting and educational articles it provides for the reader. The German and the often amusing "plattdeutsch" is fine too.

Sincerely,
Jacob P. Driedger,
Leamington, Ont.

Dear MM

Enclosed please find subscription fee. As I have been a pensioner for the last six years already, I felt it my duty that I should at least pay part of the subscription. I read the paper with interest, sometimes better than at other times but nevertheless, it is good. May I wish you all a Happy New Year and success in the future of printing the Mirror.

Sincerely,
Cornelius C. Hiebert,
Winkler.

Dear Sir:

Thank you for the gentle reminder we received today, and the kind offer to send the MM free to Old Age Pensioners. We have received the paper for a number of years and read a good part of it regularly. I have now reached the ripe old age of three-score-and twelve; my spouse is several years younger. Would we qualify?

An extra thank you for printing the song *Daut es vada vienacht* it has cheered our hearts to read and sing something in our Father's tongue.

Sincerely,
Abe P. Unger
Landmark

Following the huge success of last spring's *Der Zigeunerbaron*, the WINNIPEG MENNONITE THEATRE is sponsoring an evening called THE BRAHMS LIEBESLIEDER AND OTHER SONGS, featuring four excellent singers; John Martens - Henrietta Cornies - Irena Welhasch - Mark Watson. There will be two performances at the Winnipeg Art Gallery Auditorium on Saturday, March 15th at 8:05 p.m. and Sunday, March 16th at 8:05 p.m. Tickets at \$4.00 are available from Board Members or the Box Office Manager, Jacob Peters, ph. 772-8929 (and at the door).

Our word

THE NEWS IS NOT ALWAYS BAD

We don't usually draw attention in this column to articles published elsewhere in the magazine, but we'd like to make an exception with this issue. We hope that all of our readers will look carefully at the three-part report by Mavis Reimer on marriage and divorce among Mennonites of Manitoba, which concludes in this issue. We believe, with our usual modesty, that it is one of the most significant studies undertaken by a publication of this kind.

All of us are aware, in a general kind of way, that the divorce rate among Mennonites has been growing. We know that Mennonites are not immune to common human problems. Among our friends and relatives the pain and tragedy of marriage breakdown have been brought home to us in a personal way—to all of us! We know that these are indeed tragedies—because the people directly involved would themselves affirm that a deep and sustaining relationship with another person is the most wonderful experience that a human being can have.

Because we are so aware of our own weaknesses, and deeply moved by the plight of those who have had their marriage crumble, we are in danger of exaggerating the extent of the problem. Each time we hear of Mennonite friends whose marriage appears to have come to an end we are inclined to throw up our hands and exclaim: "Almost everyone is getting divorced these days. Even among Mennonites marriage doesn't seem to mean much anymore!"

Till now we have not been able to test such assertions, at least not among the Mennonite community of Manitoba. We have therefore allowed a few personal impressions to color our interpretation of the facts. Since, for some strange reason, most of us are somewhat melancholy by nature and more inclined to take note of bad news than good news, we have convinced ourselves that divorce is a problem of major proportion among Mennonites. We thought so too, until Mavis Reimer undertook some solid research and discovered otherwise. We thought that her thorough examination of Mennonite marriage registers over a 30-year period, and her dogged pursuit of information about the current state of those marriages, would result in the kind of dark, dramatic headlines that most readers love (and deplore). It has turned out quite differently. Her research has led, quite unexpectedly, to a rather reassuring conclusion: Mennonite marriages are considerably more stable than other marriages.

To be sure, there are divorces among Mennonites, and the rate has been growing, but even in the last year surveyed (1975-76) the rate of marriage breakdown among the Canadian population as a whole may have been up to 10 times greater than among the Mennonites of Manitoba.

Let us take at least a few minutes to rejoice about these facts. Many Mennonites have tried desperately in the last few decades to become like other Canadians, and we always thought that they were succeeding all too well. It now appears that in some important respects we are still not all that typical. There are, as Mrs. Reimer indicates, many possible reasons for this.

It is possible to argue that there are more unhappy marriages among Mennonites than the divorce figures indicate, but because many Mennonites do not feel as free as the general population to seek a cure for such unhappiness in the divorce courts such marriages remain intact. Is that necessarily, or in most cases, bad? The fear of taking the "final step" toward divorce may put an almost impossible strain on some people who have lost all respect for their partners, but it may also deter even more those who might otherwise never discover how love can grow through the sharing of weakness. Some hesitate to act because of "community pressure." We tend to decry the influence of such pressure on

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the lives of people, but it can merely, and quite justifiably, reflect the genuine concern of those who know that terrible mistakes are made by people in periods of frustration, and that it may in most cases be much wiser to salvage a relationship that is going badly than to break it up.

Mennonites appear, from Mrs. Reimer's study, to have a distinctive community life. Its influence is more noticeable in rural areas, where the divorce rate is considerably lower than in cities, but it also appears to lend support and stability to urban Mennonite families. We still seem to have a fairly close type of family structure, which is felt by some to be too stifling, but which is apparently of great help to a large number of families.

Much is being written these days about the awful scars inflicted on children, and on deserted partners, by those who leave their marriages. The most popular current movie, *Kramer versus Kramer*, explores some of the problems and shows just how much most people are concerned about them. The preservation of healthy, stable marriages is clearly one of the greatest needs in our society.

However, we should not oversentimentalize marriage. There are people who have chosen extremely badly. There is luck as well as wisdom in all of our choices. Some give up too easily, but others find serious attempts to persevere bring no improvements. Marriage is, in the midst of all its potential beauty, a fragile flower. But surely, both those who fail and those who appear to succeed should welcome the news that within the Mennonite community of Manitoba there are still powerful and constructive forces which have made marriage breakdown a much rarer occurrence than is generally assumed. That is all the more reason for us to be active builders in our communities, vigorously supporting the religious, cultural, and educational endeavours that are vital to community life.

What does Mrs. Reimer's study say to those who are contemplating marriage and wish to reduce their risk? One obvious answer is that they should marry a Mennonite, live in rural Manitoba, and belong to one of the more conservative branches of the Mennonite church. Those of us who like to live a little more dangerously can, on the other hand, marry a non-Mennonite, live in the city, and belong to a General Conference church. In either case, Mavis Reimer's thorough study shows that the news is not all that bad. In the overwhelming majority of cases, Mennonite families in Manitoba are managing to create enduring family relationships. For that let us be truly thankful.

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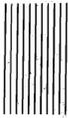
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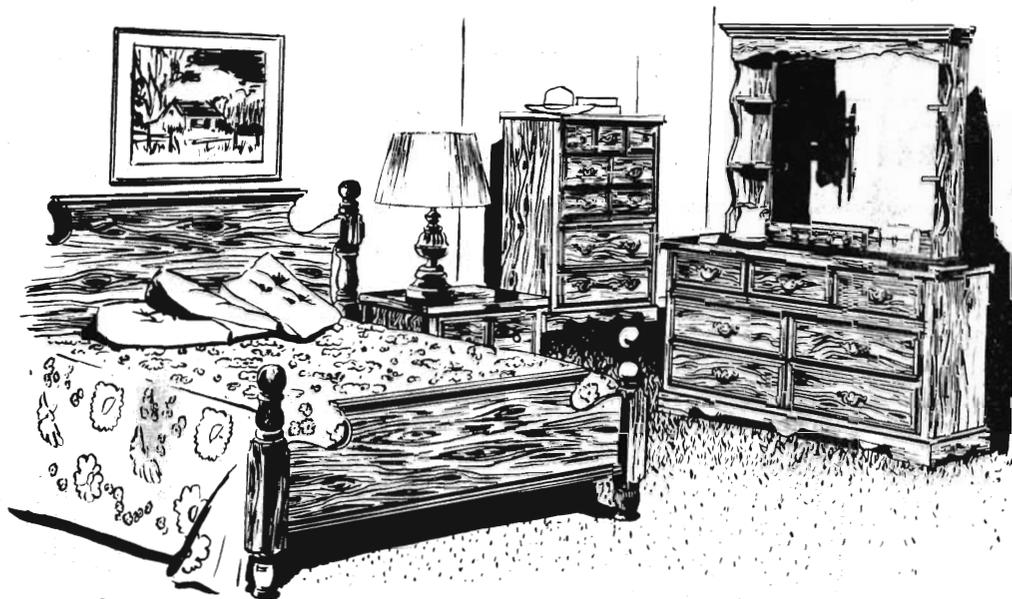
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