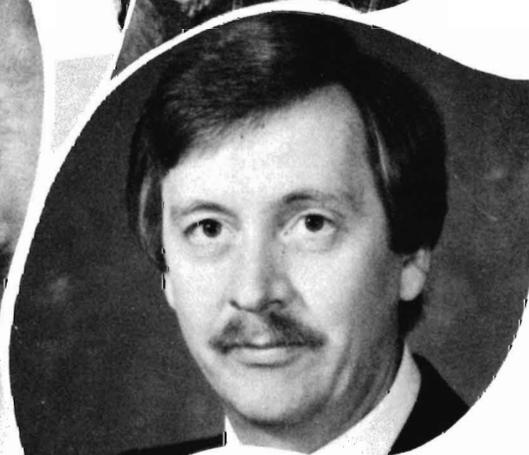


mennonite mirror

volume 12 / number 8
april, 1983



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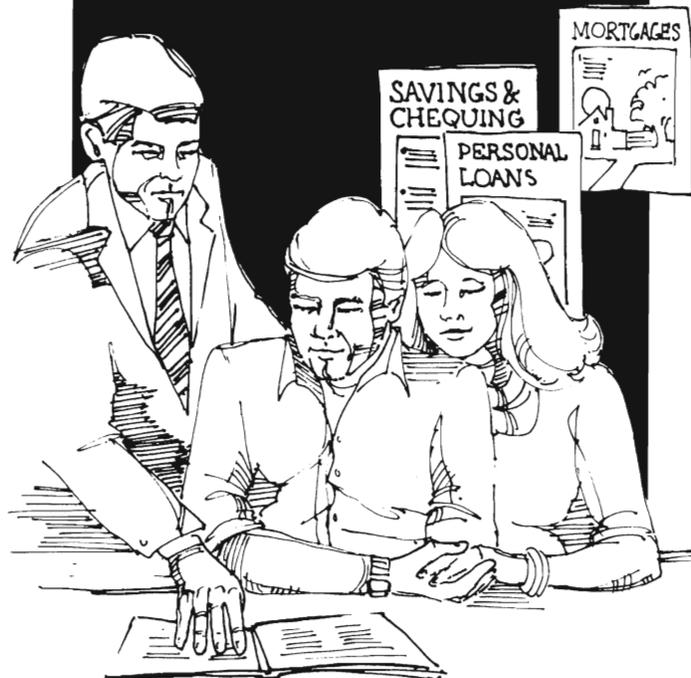
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It was a Saturday morning in May. The trees were filled with chattering birds and the sunshine held the promise of a warm day. My best friend Lena and I sat by the side of my house, talking. Soon we would have to go to German school, boring, serious German school.

"My mother hated her German teacher and so did my father," said Lena. "And I hate my German teacher even more than they hated theirs. I think you're supposed to hate your German teacher. God always makes them grouches."

"Maybe they're grouches because they have to teach German school," I suggested.

"I would rather be the chicken man or pig man or even bee man than German teacher," continued Lena. "I'd rather be stung twenty times each day than be German teacher."

"Well, if I were German teacher I wouldn't make the kids do all those things we hate to do," I said.

"Me neither," Lena agreed.

"Do you know the stanzas of the hymn we were supposed to memorize for this morning?" I asked.

"I think so," Lena said. "See if I'm saying it right." She recited two stanzas each six lines long. She knew all but the last line. She tried again; this time she got it all right.

"Now you," she said. I recited. I knew it all. I felt greatly relieved. We had German school every day except Sunday; and the daily memorizing made me nervous, kept me on edge. I was good at it so I always left it till the last minute. But then I was never really sure until I actually recited for the German teacher whether I knew it or not.

"I hope he's late today," I said. If the teacher would not be at the school exactly at nine o'clock we would all decide that he wasn't going to come that day, and would race out the door, down the hill and home. Sometimes we met him halfway down the hill — then we had to turn around and go right back up. Sometimes we ran along the paths in the woods so as not to meet him. But he knew our ways and would call to us. If you pretended not to hear and kept running you would be punished.

Lena suddenly jumped up. "I think it's time to go," she said. "Come on." And away we ran.

The teacher is already there when we come into the one-room school. He sits at his desk, scowling at us. He always seems to be scowling, even when he smiles. He looks serious, to set the nec-

by Hannah Friesen

A Bible Story

essary serious mood. We quietly walk to our desks and sit down. We do not talk or fidget. Lena sits in the desk in front of me. We belong to the older group. We know very well how to behave here.

We turn to look at the clock. It's nine. The teacher stands up. We all stand. He begins the morning hymn and we all join in. Then he leads us in prayer, the German "Our father":

Unser Vater in dem Himmel
Dein Name werde geheiligt
Dein Reich komme
Dein Wille geschehe . . .

After the prayer we all sit down. With a nod of the teacher's head the oldest child gets up and recites what he learned from memory. One after the other we do this. Those who do not know theirs are made to stand and wait till all the others are finished before trying to recite again. If they still don't know their verse then, they'll probably be spanked, depending on the teacher's mood. If he's in a bad mood he spanks you right away. Sometimes he lets you get away without a punishment even if you don't know your memorizing — you never know for sure.

On this morning we all manage to get through the verses. Then we take out our readers and scribblers. We read the day's story quietly, then copy it into our scribblers in German script, for writing practise. Everything is hushed.

Gradually I become aware of someone talking. I look up; Lena is glancing back at me as if to say, "Imagine this kid's nerve!"

I look around and see Mary, a younger girl, turned around and talking rather loudly to Dora in the seat behind her. Mary giggles — a secret! Dora has her head down on her desk trying to hold in a laugh. Her body shakes with the laughter she is holding in. Mary has for the moment forgotten her surroundings, she is obviously enjoying herself.

The teacher looks up from his book and glares at Mary. She can't see him; she doesn't stop. The glare turns into

fury. All pencils stop moving now, papers stop rustling. The room takes on a deadly silence. Dora sits up, notices the silence and the scowl on the teacher's face, and nods her head to signal Mary to be quiet. Dora's face is white, her eyes huge. Mary suddenly catches on, stops talking and turns to the front. At that very moment the teacher has had enough; he seizes a book from the desk and throws it. We recognize at once that it is the Bible. Mary turns just in time to be able to dodge it. It hits her desk and falls to the floor.

I hear Lena gasp. Amazement is on all our faces, which turn slowly from Mary to the teacher. He is now the guilty one. For in our community one does not do such an unholy thing as throw the Bible.

The teacher does not discipline Mary. He acts strangely calm. He just tells us to go back to work and leaves it at that. Except we children know something important has happened.

The teacher left the school before we did. The older girls were supposed to straighten up the desks and sweep the floors after school. We gathered at the teacher's desk and talked and marvelled at what had happened. We took the Bible from the desk and examined it. Its back was broken. Some pages were loose. It was floppy. We carefully put it back in its place. We knew God disapproved of what had happened this morning. We knew the teacher felt guilty. Knowing this made us feel strong.

Lena and I walked home together. "I was right," she said. "German teachers are always awful."

"Yeah," I agreed.

"Let's tell our moms and dads," Lena said.

"OK." The idea excited me.

We went home and told our parents: "The teacher threw the Bible in German school, and it was just for talking out loud." They were shocked but tried not to show it. But we knew. We knew. **mm**



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The Family That Plays Together . . .

by Mary M. Enns

Not all musicians have a burning desire or aspiration for the concert stage. Neither do they feel the need to specialize strictly in one area of music. When the decision to branch out and diversify turns out well for the musician he considers himself fulfilled. And when his decision coincides with the decisions of the other three members of his totally music-oriented family — that's unique.

The result, in the case of the four Klassens — John and Bertha and their children Karen 21 and Andrew 18 — has been harmony, musically and otherwise. In view of their busy schedule, it is quite conceivable that this harmony can be shaken at times. "But", says Bertha, "it's a wonderful family involvement. Very often all four of us are in the car together on our way to rehearsal. It's also easier for us to understand each other's problems of schedules or tensions".

What provided the original momentum and acceleration for these careers was a family background and environment that fostered early interest and growth in music and related fields.

Johnnie was born in Winnipeg 48 years ago. "His father, Cornelius Klassen," says Ben Horch, long-time friend of the family and keen observer of the progress in Johnnie and Bertha's careers — and now in Karen and Andy's — "came to Canada in the mid 20s from Russia. He opted to move with the radical change, a change for whatever he felt was positive in the new environment. Within a few years his interest led to private music study in voice, conducting, theory and composition. He served for a time as choir leader in the church and had a keen interest in MB hymnology. For many years he played in the Mennonite Symphony Orchestra with as many as five of his children. Since his retirement his most important contribution to our people has been the computer programming of over 1,100 *Kernlieder* and traditional MB song literature for MB Communications. His family of sons and daughter reveal an



The Klassens: John, Bertha, Andy, and Karen.

equal sense of our MB musical history. Their direction and music has as its goal the interest of the church and its people."

Johnnie started violin study at age 11 with Emmanuel Horch. Very early he became a member of the Mennonite orchestra and church choirs. During his high school years he played in many concerts but still had no intention of making music a career. He was fascinated with maths, physics, mechanical things. He had grown up next door to his father's metal factory in North Kild-

onan and spent a lot of time in the machine shop. His friend "Tech" was into radios and crystal sets and allowed Johnnie to make things along with him.

It seemed natural that when he entered university it should be in engineering. After two years he did a stint of eight years with the federal government as a lab technician, first with grain research, then at Deer Lodge Hospital. At 17 he began to sing in the Gospel Light Radio Choir, a commitment that he has continued until today, though now the recording sessions are done once or

twice a year because the members are spread all over Canada. His violin had taken second place to the viola by this time and Johnnie played for the Winnipeg Symphony for 15 years.

By that time he realized he wanted to improve himself and that music needed to be a larger part of his life. He decided on teachers college and a career in the school system with music and maths as his subjects. "Today," he says, "I'm teaching music, maths and computer at J. B. Mitchell Junior High and I'm very happy with that. I see music in the school not as developing a whole lot of musicians, but as being a form of self-discipline. It trains you to concentrate. But some of those kids are now playing in the symphony and are moving on."

Andy Klassen agrees with his father. "My Dad has taught music in school for a long time." He ponders: "You wonder, because out of about 800 students he's taught, maybe five will end up making their living in music. But his philosophy of music study as a discipline is a good one. It's the sort of discipline that spills over into other things such as school work. Most musicians do well academically too. They're usually very busy, involved people."

Bertha (Pauls) Klassen, 48, is a pianist whose first love is accompanying — whether singers, choirs or instrumentalists. She teaches piano and is proficient on the recorder and oboe. She was born the middle child of nine in Goethe, Saskatchewan. "We couldn't all have a chance at music lessons", she explains, "but we all learned to play the piano by the hit and miss method and the adult beginner's piano book. My brother would say 'You can read. Do what it says!' And I did. We did a lot of singing in the church and in school. One of the greatest influences in my life, musically, was Martin Schroeder, the father of Alice (Schroeder) Enns. He had me accompanying the junior high glee club and at age 14 got me started as a church pianist. Though he didn't play the piano himself, he taught me how the songs should sound. Today I enjoy working in the church so much because my early experiences were positive ones."

Bertha's teachers, when she moved to Winnipeg at 17, were Marvin Johnson, then Wanda Dick, Alma Brock-Smith and finally John Melnick. "Eventually I got several degrees, but before that I found I needed to support myself so I went to teachers' college and taught piano in the evenings. You could get a \$300 loan, interest free, for your tuition and living expenses. At school I taught regular classes and singing in the core area at King Edward School.

"Johnnie and I were married in 1958. My classroom teaching ended four and a half years later when Karen was born. Most importantly for me I had branched out musically during this time. I had thought I would specialize and become the world's greatest pianist. I soon realized this doesn't happen to everyone, so I concentrated on teaching piano and really enjoyed that. When we got a recorder and oboe into our home, this opened up a whole new world for me."

Immersed in music as they both are, do husband and wife work well together? "Yes we do", assures Bertha. "But long ago, I did have a bad moment,

a real low point. Johnnie did a program on CBC one day. He was a union member and I was not and therefore was not allowed to accompany him. Just when I turned on the radio he was singing, with Joyce Redekopp Penner accompanying him. My baby Andrew needed my instant and undivided attention then. I felt hard done by."

An embarrassing experience for the husband-wife team once came when they were given a chance to do a concert on CFAM. They were recording a Mozart piano and violin sonata. Suddenly they hit a trouble spot in mid-stream! By the third try, Bertha was thor-

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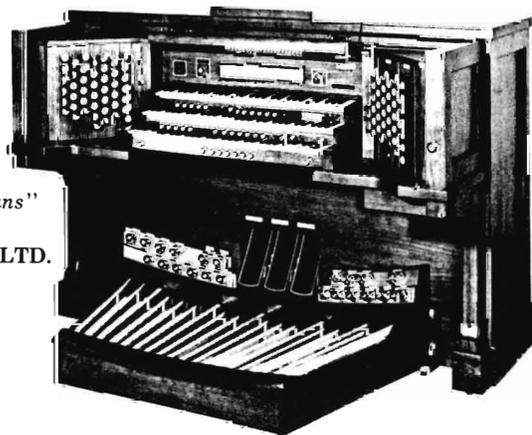
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oughly impatient. "Look, honey," she said, "this is where you're going wrong," and pointed out his error, not hers. The session over, she said to her brother, who was the recording engineer, "Be sure you edit this tape". He promised and promptly forgot it. The result, when they tuned in to their concert at a later date, was less than enthralling. "Imagine, if you can," Johnnie laughs ruefully "a classical concert with that sort of an argument between the two participants."

Eighteen years ago, during a particular period of intense enjoyment in making Renaissance music together, Johnnie, during a easy unchallenging year at teachers' college, decided that he would like to build a harpsichord for Bertha. It took him about four months. It was to be used in its premier performance at an MBBC concert with Victor Martens conducting the *Messiah* — the original baroque version with just strings, harpsichord and choirs. "I had an insane desire to be the first one to play that harpsichord in public though I was highly pregnant," recalls Bertha. "The concert date was drawing closer and the harpsichord was not quite finished, nor had my baby made his appearance. Now Johnnie and I were both rushing to see who would complete their job first. We both produced on schedule, and I was able to perform on the harpsichord."

Did the children enjoy music automatically in their earliest years? Karen feels that though their parents never coerced them into music study there was always music in their home. "We were surrounded by it," she recalls. "It was always there as a part of our normal life. We had different instruments around. From the start our music was a way of praising God. Andy says that his first impression of music was that it was a directly spiritual activity. That's how we feel as a family. My parents are the people I most admire as musicians in excellence and dedication — and as parents."

"Practically speaking," adds Andy, "the environment I grew up in is directly responsible for whatever I've learned."

Karen began violin study with her father when she was eight and continued with Emmanuel Horch. While she was a part-time student at MBBC she studied with Arthur Polson. Now her violin teacher is Francis Chaplin at Brandon University, where she is in the final year of a Bachelor of Education program. Piano studies with her mother, then Karen Marks, and finally Margaret Hamilton Bach led to a degree.

Karen and Andy are both interested in maths — their father's influence, they say. Karen had chosen maths as her major but shifted to music in her final year. Andy is intrigued with the connection and similarity between maths and music. His father tends to think logically in music and feels there is a direct correlation between harmony in music and mathematics. So challenged was he in this area that when his sabbatical came up he went into the study of computer science. This has given him two strong teachable majors in the school system. He looks at the computer as "an extension and stimulation of my mind, an aid to creating things and puzzling out challenging problems."

The two younger Klassens' goal for the future is to teach music. Karen began to instruct piano in their home at 14. "It influenced my decision to teach in the classrooms setting, preferably in a Christian school." Her music program at university centralizes on music methods in the classroom, conducting and string techniques. "But it's important to me to make music with other people and sing in the church choir."

Andy is in his first year of a four-year program at the School of Music, University of Manitoba, and will probably go into Music Education. "There are two

types of musicians, each valid," he says, "one is performance-oriented: they want to communicate to an audience and see teaching in the classroom as a dead-end. While I enjoy performing in an orchestra, I see myself in the other camp, a person who wants to teach. You see improvement happening. You see people benefitting from what you give to them and then passing that on." A violin major, he is studying with Mark Friedman. Earliest violin study was at age eight in the Suzuki program, then graduating to studies with Emmanuel Horch. Andy is also highly proficient in piano, which he began to study at four. Both young people believe that the more instruments you play the easier it is to pick up another one. Karen has a workable knowledge of recorder and guitar and can play the viola, cello and bass and is planning on tackling woodwinds and brass in preparation for orchestra conducting.

The four Klassens are, however, not just steeped in classical music. Johnnie says: "Our music making is in many different areas which we keep thoroughly separate. The University Orchestra is very serious music as is the Mennonite Orchestra, but with a little bit of pops music sometimes. At MB Communications we have a much

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Bertha adds: "There is good in every field; it's important to choose the best. Gordon and Larry Michels "Oasis" and "Another Day of Grace" are an excellent balance for Vivaldi's "Gloria" or Stainer's "Crucifixion".

Karen offers: "There are very few types of music that I don't enjoy. I've been exposed to a lot more music in the last few years. I've broadened my tastes a little."

Andy, too, considers himself versatile. "Besides the serious music, I'm intrigued with jazz. I try to consider myself as "electric" as possible, studying various instruments for pure enjoyment. I learned to enjoy saxophone at school in grade 8. Basically I learned saxophone for teaching others informally. I wanted to learn it in order to have some sort of inroad into jazz. I love to improvise in music".

Are there any sacrifices for a totally music-oriented family? Johnnie says, "It's pretty hard to answer that because we don't really know what it's like without it." Bertha feels that "money isn't quite that important to us. We live simply and our pleasures are simple. The things we like to do we do. I don't reflect much on sacrifices. When Christmas comes we escape to Fargo or Minneapolis for four days. We take in the symphony and other events. We browse in shops, chiefly book stores and computer shops." Johnnie buys puzzle books to add to his collection at home. (He has a two-foot long shelf of them in his home and relaxes by solving the problems posed in them.) "My personal sacrifice," he says, "is that although I have a very retiring personality, I can be alone very seldom. We are not as private individually as I would like us to be. I would sometimes prefer a more sedate life rather than all these schedules." Which makes one wonder why, in spite of four very busy schedules, you never see the Klassens ruffled or in a flap. Karen and Andy have had to give up a lot of sports activities, including Karen's gymnastics. This was a sacrifice.

Is it expensive for a family to concentrate on a life in music? Yes, says the

head of the family. "There was a time when our kids were taking lessons from two teachers and two different instruments at the same time and Bertha and I were taking lessons too. That was ten years ago and worked out to \$200 a month for lessons. That \$200 didn't buy other things."

Any time for hobbies? Bertha considers hobbies a marvelous preparation for old age. She wants to make sure she has at least as many hobbies and interests as her husband. Especially fond of outdoor activities, she golfs, swims, cycles and plays baseball. "Athletics," she says, "are great ways of getting rid of built-up tensions and aggressions of performing and teaching. Sports and music complement one another. I very much enjoy being a *Hausfrau*, to a point, because while you're doing your work you can upgrade yourself, broaden your musical horizons through recordings and radio programs. I'm still filling in holes in my education. Right now I'm in French study at University of Winnipeg and hope, someday, to study Russian."

Johnnie's hobbies, besides solving complex puzzle problems, include his long time love affair with chess. He used to play it by mail, having as many as six games going at once. "Chess", he insists, "is simply a specialized kind of problem-solving." On numerous occasions he has had his name in the paper with the solution of a posed chess problem. "I enjoy myself too much doing various things and keeping life interesting," he smiles. "Long ago I decided that specializing in any one area just isn't my thing. I advise my children to keep their options open for the time when things get rough. It's a philosophy that works for me."

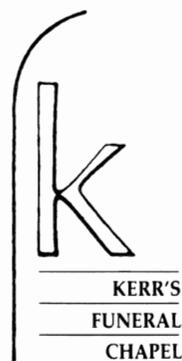
Ben Horch sums up the achievements and contributions of this gifted family. "John has made a fine contribution as a music educator, orchestral clinician par excellence, conductor in the Manitoba School system and arranger and composer of choral and orchestral music. His "Suite for Male Chorus and Orchestra" was commissioned by us and performed several years ago. A member of Winnipeg Singers, he has sung for many years in church choirs and is at present assistant to the conductor of the Elmwood MB Church choir. John is also the music director and computer programmer for MB Communications, in which he and Bertha have been very much involved over the years. For 15 years he conducted the Winnipeg Junior Orchestra. He plays for the University orchestra, the Mennonite orchestra, the CBC and the chamber orchestras, as well as the Winnipeg

Symphony on occasion.

"Bertha is an excellent pianist and oboeist and teaches piano and recorder. She is at the heart of a growing movement to encourage the development of orchestras in the MB church. Her contribution as a conductor of the Elmwood church orchestra is worthy of mention. Formerly the librarian of the Mennonite Orchestra, she was recently elected its president. Three years ago she became involved in W.A.S.O. (Work and Social Opportunities) conducting a choir of mentally handicapped adults. She and her husband have inspired two highly gifted children to study music seriously. Both Karen and Andrew are award winners in their field. Andrew is a violinist in the Chamber Orchestra, University of Manitoba and the Winnipeg Youth Orchestra. He plays the saxophone for the University Concert band and in a saxophone quartet. He already displays a marked degree of creativity as a gifted young composer."

The Klassen family sum up their own philosophy: "Very definitely we consider our music involvement the area where we can make our finest contribution in the church, the community and beyond that." mm

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observed along the way



by Roy Vogt

February-March

● It is the third week in February and I am asked to speak about the history and purpose of labour unions to an evening class at our Bible college. The topic itself is quite provocative and I don't try to pull any punches in my presentation but there is surprisingly little discussion. Are the students too unfamiliar with the material? Are they afraid of "exposing" themselves in open debate? I have observed in my classes at the university that in comparison to my Jewish students, for example, Mennonite students tend to be very shy. They seldom raise questions or challenge the professor. I once asked a group of Jewish students why they felt so free to debate ideas in class. One of them observed, "From the time we have our Bar Mizpah, at the age of 13 or 14, we are treated as adults in our families. We are encouraged to discuss questions freely with our parents; we are taken seriously as persons." I thought back on my own experience as a child. One of the highlights of each year was to travel with my father to Winnipeg to visit the Jewish wholesalers from whom he bought groceries. It was an exciting event for a young boy because in almost every wholesale the owner would greet us effusively, and invariably he would single me out for special attention. He would lift me up and place me on the counter and ask questions of me, all the while telling my father what a lucky man he was to have such a good son. Seldom would a youngster get such attention in a Mennonite community. In our own family we were encouraged to take individual stands but the general attitude in the community seemed to be that children were meant to be seen and not heard. The consequence of that may now be seen in our classrooms.

● On the last Sunday evening in February we have a discussion in church on the abortion issue. The debate is vigorous but rational, and no personal accusations are made. However, when I return home I am greeted by a tele-

phone caller with the question, "When are you going to repent and ask God to forgive you for your views?" If only such people knew how pathetic they sound when they do that!

● In early March something terribly embarrassing happens to me. About a month before I received a call from the Economic Council of Canada asking me to attend a meeting of the council in Calgary on either March 3 or 10. A few days later I was told that the March 3 date had been confirmed and I should purchase the air ticket immediately. I was also told that the agenda and a few supporting documents for the meeting would be forwarded by courier a day or two prior to the meeting. The ticket was purchased, the documents arrived on March 2, and at 7 a.m. on March 3 I board the flight to Calgary. Somewhere over Brandon I open the courier package, knowing that I have plenty of time to go over the agenda and the few pages of background information that accompany it. The first thing my eyes fall on is a small memo attached to the agenda which reads: "Please note, the meeting in Calgary has been postponed to March 10." For about five minutes I feel physically sick. I think of an acquaintance who a few years ago boarded a flight in Winnipeg to attend his mother's funeral in Vancouver, and ended up going to Amsterdam instead. Unfortunately you cannot turn a modern jet airliner around. There is nothing to do but to accept the situation. Upon landing in Calgary I call the local representative of the council, an oil executive, to ask whether the meeting has indeed been postponed. "Yes," he replies, "I had to change the plans at the last minute. Where are you calling from?" Now it is his turn to take a deep gulp. He apologizes profusely. They had tried to call me, and then ended up hoping that I would open the package before departure. When I suggest that I will take the noon flight back to Winnipeg, instead of the scheduled evening flight, he counters with an interesting invitation. "I

happen to be having lunch today at the Petroleum Club with a few oil people and some federal politicians. I'd love to have you join us. We are discussing proposals for the upcoming federal budget." The day is rescued. As is my custom, I sit silent through most of the meal, observing the oil executives at home in their little Mecca trying to influence politicians into shaping things for their benefit and "for the good of the country." Once in a while they ask me whether a certain proposal will "wash with the people." As a representative of the people I usually find myself saying "no." They are, of course, undaunted by this. On March 10, I return to Calgary for the actual meeting.

● Around this time we attend one of the ten NHL hockey games for which we have purchased tickets. I am very upset because the Jets have just traded one of my favorite hockey players, Willy Lindstrom, for a player whom I have never respected. We will go to this game because we have tickets — but next year, never! Naturally the game completely surprises us. The new Jet player is better than I had expected, and the Jets whip Buffalo 6 to 0. I am never bored by a lopsided score favoring our team. The evening is also enhanced by free spaghetti dinner vouchers, the cheerleading of Crazy George, and the sight of a young man shooting a puck through a tiny opening for \$58,000. We know, of course, that we could have done the same thing, but we feel happy for him nevertheless.

● An evening in March is spent on preparation for a fund-raising drive on behalf of Westgate Mennonite Collegiate. This is not a good time to solicit financial support from others but commitments have been made, debts have been incurred — all in the name of a good cause — and those who can will be asked to do *what* they can. It never discourages me when people tell me honestly that they cannot afford to give this time around — when their lifestyle confirms that they are having a hard

time. Some excuses, however, are less palatable, like "others began, let them finish," or "my children are through the school, let others carry on" — as though the school was built only for their children. There is always a great need for more community builders.

• In mid-March a group of university professors organizes an international Marxist conference at the University of Manitoba. Some colleagues from our department are involved. When I announce the conference to my students a number of them respond with laughter. Why take Marxists seriously? This annoys me. Regardless of what we think about Marx and his influence on the world, the fact is that his ideas arose

from a genuine concern about our modern social order and they have given shape to some of the most profound changes of our time. Each year a few of my best students are committed to the vision of Marx, and they are best not because their minds are necessarily better than others but because they take ideas seriously, work hard, and are consumed by a cause. They seldom confuse education with the getting of marks. They are an important and interesting subculture within our society. The conference confirms this. Ideas are debated till late at night, by women and men, young and old, tinged palpably by a strange mixture of idealism and discontent.

• A weekend in March is spent with friends at their cottage north of Grand Beach. There is still snow in the woods, and I am surprised by the beauty of the hills in Grand Beach Provincial Park as we cross-country ski one afternoon. We return home tired but thoroughly relaxed. One can truly relax with friends when it is possible, without embarrassment to anyone, to alternate hours of discussion with reading, solitary walks (and walks together), and afternoon naps. True friends also enjoy the silences between them. It was that kind of weekend.

With you we look forward to Easter and the arrival of Spring.

mm



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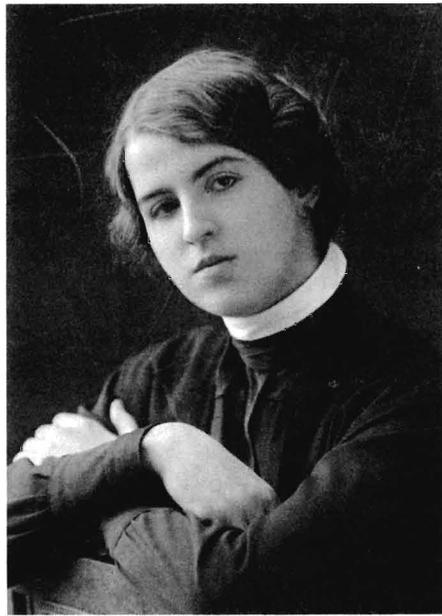
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A Full Life: The Story of Olga Lepp

by Victor Kliewer

"I would like to study French and music," thought 19-year-old Olga Janzen who had just returned home from her high school graduation in Ekaterinoslav, South Russia. Olga's father, the wealthy mill owner Heinrich Janzen of Orechow, did not approve of her dreams, even though he was otherwise appreciative of higher education.

In any case, the plans that Olga might have had were rudely cut short in 1916: first her father passed way, and shortly after, World War I began to be noticed in Orechow, a small city of some 10,000 people. Initially, the only effects were that a fairly pleasant Serbian regiment moved into town, then dancing was prohibited, and worst, when Father died, his funeral could not be conducted in German. Otherwise life continued much as before, until the Serbs were transferred out and the bands of marauders were free to move in. One evening, Olga remembers, a notorious gang leader called Maruska came to the elegant Janzen home in search of tsarist officers. Olga, with her mother and younger siblings, was terrified, but nothing was destroyed: the time of senseless destruction was yet to come. However, the chaos of the later war years also did not spare those of the Janzen family who still clung together. "Mother and we girls were very much afraid," says Olga, "especially because



all the men had gone into hiding in the villages."

One person who stands out in Olga's memory from this time is Nicolai Koba. "Koba had been a worker in our mill, but after the collapse of the tsarist order he became a commissar in our city soviet. We disagreed in politics, but he never betrayed our earlier friendship." With Koba's help Olga's brothers managed to escape imprisonment. Koba was just one example of the goodness

and friendship that Olga experienced even in the midst of the persecution.

For a few months relief came in 1918 with the arrival of the German forces. When they retreated, the Janzens fled to relatives in the Crimea. As so many others, they experienced the conflict between the red and white armies, the explosive violence of the Makhno-bandits, the efforts at self-defense by the Mennonite *Selbstschutz*, and the constant fear and lack of security. "Still, Orechow remained our home," says Olga, "and we returned as soon as possible."

Not long after their return home, in the fall of 1921, the Soviets occupied Orechow; however, controls were not very strict at first, and the worst problem was hunger. The old family mill still being intact, the Janzens got permission to take over its operation. Gradually the production improved, and several relatively prosperous and happy years followed. In 1925 Olga was able to take an extended trip to western Europe, in part to investigate the possibility of emigration. "But the times were also very rough in Germany," she recalls, "and I could see no possibility of an easier life there." Disappointed, she returned to Orechow.

It was at this time that Olga married Hermann Lepp. "Our wedding day on January 10, 1926, stands out in my mind

Victor Kliewer is a minister in the First Mennonite Church. He has formerly taught at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate and was principal of Elim Bible School.

as one of the last happy experiences in Orechow," remembers Olga. From relatives they received money for a honeymoon trip and were able to spend five beautiful days in Yalta before returning to "everyday life."

The young couple rented a small house in Saporozhye, where Hermann, an engineer, found work in a factory and then also as a university lecturer. They remained very poor, and always there was the fear of being arrested for "subversive activities." Hardship and fear were intermingled with happiness for them: Hermann was in a profession which he thoroughly enjoyed, and they had their first child. "It wasn't easy to

have children in those years," Olga comments quietly; their little daughter died soon after birth.

In 1929 Hermann received an invitation to Moscow, to become the technical director of the "Viskom" Institute (the "All-Russian Institute of Agricultural Machinery"). "This was the highest position to which he could have aspired," reflects Olga. "He was most satisfied to have been able to reach it!" Yet even while this appointment came, former colleagues were beginning to be arrested, and in November of 1929, just a few months after taking up his new position, Hermann also was imprisoned.

Olga had accompanied her husband to Moscow, was again expecting, and now experienced a new wave of hardships. Inquiring about her husband's whereabouts, she discovered that he was being transferred to Kharkhov. She followed, staying with relatives until March, 1930, having lost her second child, a boy, in January. "The circumstances were simply too difficult," she says in retrospect. Then came the telegram from Saporozhye: "Hermann safely arrived." Incredulously, Olga rushed to her old home city. Hermann, very ill and emaciated, had indeed been transferred again; with considerable effort Olga was able to convey some bread to him. And then, inexplicably, Hermann was released, albeit with the proviso that he register with the police in Tomsk within 14 days. It was mid-August when Hermann and Olga began the five day train trip to Tomsk; en route their destination was changed to Novosibirsk.

Several less anxious years followed in Novosibirsk: Hermann again worked as an engineer, Olga took a stenography course, they began making plans to settle down. In late 1936, however, with the commencement of early wartime productions, Hermann once again found himself laid off. After some searching he found a position in a tool production plant in Rostov; the couple moved again, this time with Olga's mother and her young nephew, Heinz. Hermann worked hard, but was not promoted. "He was not effusive enough in his praise of Stalin as the 'greatest of all mechanics,' and this was an unforgivable error in those years!" smiles Olga. In October, 1937, Hermann was again arrested; once more Olga was able to locate him and send him cigarettes and some money. And then Olga herself was arrested ("all such arrests were made at night!"). From June to November of 1938 she remained incarcerated with some 200 other women; they came from all kinds of backgrounds and were in prison for various reasons. Being the only German person, Olga experienced some animosity from the other detainees; however, the conditions were not as chaotic and horrible as she might have expected. A daily routine was established; food rations were small, but Olga had some money and was able to purchase extra supplies. During the day there was much free time: the women told stories, sang, and Olga even found a group who were interested in learning conversational German. At night came the frequent and unannounced *obesks* (spot checks) of the entire group, as well as the individual interrogations. Some

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of the women had harrowing experiences, but Olga herself was examined only one night.

Following her release, Olga moved to Chortitza with her mother and Heinz. Soon she obtained work as a "quinine carrier": the malaria problem being as acute as it was, her task was to treat the workers of several factories. The job was not very demanding, but Olga was happy to be employed and to be free; she continued this work until August, 1941. Then came the tensions and horrors of the Second World War: everyone distrusted everyone else, Olga lived in constant fear. With the arrival of the German armies temporary relief came to the residents of Chortitza; Olga was even reunited with her brothers for Christmas that year and discovered that the family mill in Orechow had been

reopened again. In the following year Olga and her mother returned to Orechow where they were able to live in the house of Olga's grandparents, the house in which she had been born: a few happy months followed.

In February of 1943 the German retreat began, and in September Olga and her mother joined the refugees leaving Orechow. Their arduous trek led them over Zagradovka, then Roumania and Poland, until they finally arrived in Leipzig. During the strenuous trip Olga faithfully kept notes in her diary, only to burn everything when the Russian takeover was imminent. "Any scrap of information could have been used as evidence against us," she says, "and I was too terrified to risk keeping anything."

The next months were lived in one refugee camp after another: near

Leipzig, Dresden, Litzmannstadt, and then in rural Silesia where life was much easier, almost "normal" under those circumstances. "We thought we might spend that winter there," reminisces Olga. "I remember how grateful I was to get one single cup as a Christmas gift for Mother; at the other places this would have been unthinkable!" It turned out to be a short interlude, however, and then the flight westward continued again: first to Berlin, but then "just anywhere else." — "It seemed to us that the bombs were falling just everywhere in Berlin!" Olga shudders. Nevertheless, Olga remembers, in the midst of the Berlin devastation she met a wonderful Russian refugee: "We were coming from the train station with some heavy luggage, when this stranger offered to help me. Before I could really refuse, he grasped the heaviest bag which contained all of our silverware and other valuables. We got separated in the crowd, and I was certain that he was gone, when we heard him shouting. He spotted us, pushed his way through, and brought the bag to our destination. We have never seen him again, but I will never forget his integrity!"

Olga experienced the breakthrough of the American forces in Thuringia,

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then their withdrawal, then the advance of the Russian occupational force. Again terror set in for the refugees from the East. Olga's brother, Johann, who lived in the American sector of Berlin at this time, managed to take Olga and their mother to his house, where they stayed until 1948. At first food was scarce, and life was harsh, but even during this time Olga met many friendly and helpful people. Here, too, the family came into contact with the relief efforts of the Mennonite Central Committee. After the difficult year of 1945 food gradually became more plentiful, and life became easier. "Of course, we learned to make creative use of whatever we had!" laughs Olga.

Then came the emigration to Canada. On May 1, 1948, Olga arrived in Winnipeg. If life in Germany had been easier than in Russia, Canada seemed like heaven. For several years Olga lived and worked in the Bethania Home near Winnipeg, then found employment in several other firms. In time she and her mother were reunited with a number of relatives and their families. Through all the years Olga and her mother managed to stay together, until Mrs. Janzen died in 1960 at the age of 88 years, almost

blind but otherwise healthy to her old age. Since 1972 Olga has lived in Arlington House in Winnipeg; she has retained an active interest in the life of her congregation, the First Mennonite Church, her family, and the people around her. Her age and failing vision have forced her to slow her pace, yet the photographs in her apartment and her stories and insights speak of a rich, if not easy, life.

What are some of Olga Lepp's conclusions about life, as she looks back upon the 85 years she has lived? "Several stand out," she muses. She remembers the open doors of her childhood home with great satisfaction: "Many visitors and relatives came, and they were always welcome!" Then there were the long years of persecution and perpetual fear. "The dreadful experiences in Russia always stand between God and me!" she reflects. "I know that nothing should separate us from God. But those memories are so terrible, they are etched so deeply into my being, that I cannot forget them!" Yet Olga Lepp has learned to be content: having come from a wealthy background and lost all of her possessions, she is not bitter or envious of others, but rather apprecia-

tive of the opportunities that have been hers. And she will never forget the countless good people whom she encountered in the midst of the terrible experiences. "There were selfish and spiteful people among the Russians but also among the Germans," she notes, "but equally I met loving and caring people everywhere, often in the most unexpected times!"

Did she ever think of "giving up" in the worst times of persecution and warfare, did the thought of suicide ever occur to her? "No!!" she replies emphatically. "I cannot recall one single case of suicide in all those horrible years. Today we hear so much about the cheap value of life, about people who have no purpose for living; but in those years we clung to life with every last bit of strength that we had! Probably it was because we saw so much death and senseless destruction around us that we fought so hard to preserve the life we had!"

In January of 1983 Olga Lepp was honored for her many years of unselfish work in the life of her congregation in Winnipeg. Given the opportunity to share some thoughts out of her life's experiences, she paused and then said, "I would like to challenge you, not to forget the lives of your ancestors and especially the exiles and brutal executions of your fathers and grandfathers. They are a part of your history and who you are today!" The life experiences of Olga Lepp herself form a part of this history and this challenge to us!

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manitoba news

Ben Eidse, former missionary to Zaire, has been appointed president of Steinbach Bible College. He will assume his duties on July 1. Eidse is a graduate of the college, of Goshen College (B.A.) and Wheaton College (M.A.) **Archie Penner** has also been appointed to the faculty. He has been professor of New Testament and Theology at Malone College, Ohio, since 1966.

D. S. Schellenberg is the new general manager of the Pembina Valley Development Corporation, now entering its 20th year of operation. A native of southern Manitoba, Schellenberg is a graduate of the University of Manitoba, spent nine years in the federal government's foreign service, and the past seven years in private enterprise.

A second national youth conference, **Great Trek 2** is being planned by a committee for the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. 500 young people attended the rally in 1981 in Thunder Bay. Plans are for a similar conference at Lakehead University, August 22-25, 1984.

MCC's **Selfhelp Crafts** program is looking for people to work as selfhelp crafts sales representatives. This program provides markets in North America for producers in developing countries who do not have sufficient local markets for their handicrafts.

The **Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba** met in February, with representatives from 47 churches present. Three new churches were received into the conference: the Covenant Church in Winkler, the Portage Mennonite Fellowship, and the Wingham Mennonite Fellowship near Elm Creek. Delegates voted to construct a 32 student dormitory at Elim Bible College in 1983. Recommendations for the disposal of Moose Lake Camp were tabled and a special delegate session to discuss that issue will be called at a later date.

The **Canadian Mennonite Health Assembly** will hold a conference at the Columbia Bible Institute, Clearbrook, B.C. April 26-29, 1983. Concerns relating to the care of the elderly and disabled will be discussed. The CMHA welcomes donations from interested supporters.

Andreas Schroeder, an exciting young Canadian writer of Mennonite background, will give a reading entitled *A Series of Modern Parables*, at the University of Winnipeg on April 7th, at 12:40 p.m., Room 217, Lockhart Hall. Admission free. Come and hear this interesting author, playwright and critic.

Victor Engbrecht brought the 65th annual Winnipeg Music Competition Festival to a rich closing March 18 when he won the Rose bowl trophy. Adjudicator Devina Bailey, herself a previous Rose bowl winner said Mr. Engbrecht produced the finest blending of beauty of sound, a truthful, penetrating projection of the words, and the most complete realization of the composer's intentions.

David Unruh, rookie coach of the University of Winnipeg Men's Wesmen Volleyball team, was selected as Coach of the Year by the Canadian College Volleyball Association. His team, in a "building" year, was ranked 4th in Canada at the end of the 1982-83 season.

Ruth Klassen, who plays on the Wesmen women's volleyball team, was selected for the all-star team in the Canadian Championships, in which her team took first place.



Carol and Cornelius Froese of Winkler, are beginning three years of service with Mennonite Central Committee in Bolivia where he will work in agricultural technology and she will provide support service. They previously served with MCC in Botswana. Carol has a teaching certificate from the University of Manitoba. Cornelius also received a diploma from the University of Manitoba and was farming before accepting this placement. Froeses are members of Grace Mennonite Church in Winkler. They have four children, Kerry, Erica, David and Reginald.



Ruby Harkness of Canton, Pa., will be serving two years with Mennonite Central Committee in Winnipeg, where she will work in child care. She has previously served with Mennonite Board of Missions in youth work at Philadelphia, Miss. Prior to accepting this position she worked as a secretary at West Shore Baptist Church in Harrisburg, Pa. Ruby has a bachelor's degree in social work from Eastern College in St. Davids, Pa. She is a member of East Canton United Methodist Church.

Bernhard and Justina Bergen of Altona, are serving three and a half months with Mennonite Central Committee in Akron, Pa. He will be working at Selfhelp, driving and doing maintenance work and she will work at Selfhelp. The Bergens are members of Evangelical Mennonite Mission Church in Altona. They have five children, Alvin, Bernie, Leona, Art and Marvin. Their parents are the late Cornelius and Mary (Penner) Bergen and the late Cornelius and Justina (Rempel) Voth.

COMING EVENTS

- April 15th:** Symposium: *Images and Identities: Artists of Mennonite Heritage*. Keynote speaker: Prof. Robert Regier, Bethel College, Newton, Kansas. Chairman: Roy Vogt. Participants: Recognized artists from across Canada. Exhibition: 7:00 pm Heritage Centre. Forum, CMBC chapel: 8:00 pm.
- April 17:** Mennonite Festival of Art and Music, Polo Park Mall.
- April 18:** Mennonite Community Orchestra, C.M.B.C.
- April 21-22:** Pastor's Retreat at Camp Arnes. Theme: Pastor as Counselor, Speaker: Dr. F. C. Peters.
- April 28:** Westgate annual meeting.
- April 29-30:** Molière's "The Imaginary Invalid" presented by the Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre at the Playhouse Theatre.
- May 7:** Manitoba Women in Mission conference. First Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.
- May 7:** Westgate Cyclathon.
- May 11-13:** Westgate Operetta.
- May 18:** Westgate Banquet



Walter Kampen

MOLIERE'S WIT MAKES A SERIOUS POINT

Walter Kampen, remembered by friends of the Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre for his droll antics as the *Servant of Two Masters* will be featured in the title role in Moliere's *"The Imaginary Invalid"*, to be staged at the Playhouse Theatre by Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre at its next major production on April 29 and 30.

This production, in a new English version, is under the capable direction of, Alfred Wiebe, who directed the earlier comedy as well, and who, more recently, stage-managed last year's highly successful production of Mozart's opera, *The Magic Flute*.

The Imaginary Invalid is one of Moliere's masterpieces and this production promises to be truly entertaining. Tickets are available from all A.T.O. outlets as well as at telephone 783-5323, moderately priced at \$4, \$6 and \$8.

Moliere, pen name of Jean Baptiste Poquelin (1622-73), French dramatist was born in Paris.

No dramatist, except perhaps William Shakespeare, ever joined so much wit to so much seriousness as did Moliere. A pathetic, even a sad background, often accompanies his scenes, but a healthy humor always dominates. His satire is directed not so much against the excesses of nature as against those social faults or conventions that disguise or suppress nature, such as the affectations of the literary salons, and common human failings; hypocrisy, gullibility, avarice and hypochondria.

The Steinbach Bible College was the scene of the second bi-annual **Christian Writers' Conference** on the 25th and 26th of February, 1983. Sponsored by the EMC board of education and pub-

lication, the conference attracted an estimated one hundred church correspondants and other writers primarily from the major EMC centres in Manitoba at Steinbach and Rosenort.

Headed by D. K. Schellenberg, editor of *The Messenger*, the organization committee obtained the well-known Mennonite Brethren writer from Hillsboro, Kansas, Katie Funk Wiebe, as keynote speaker. Besides Mrs. Wiebe, an impressive slate of qualified people conducted a number of workshops, including Alma Barkman, Allan Siebert, Barbara C. Smucker and Dr. Bernie Wiebe.



Corinne Friesen of Kleefeld, is beginning two years of service with Mennonite Central Committee in Akron, Pa., where she will work as a secretary. She was last employed as a medical secretary at the Health Sciences Center in Winnipeg. Corinne received a diploma in Bible from Steinbach (Man.) Bible College and trained as a health records technician at Red River Community College in Winnipeg. She is a member of Kleefeld (Man.) Evangelical Mennonite Church and her parents are Albert K. and Elizabeth Friesen of Kleefeld.

URBAN HOUSING MOTIVATES MURP

A few years ago a number of people shared a vision — to provide shelter for disadvantaged people. They organized, purchased an apartment, renovated it, rented the suites, and appointed a caretaker. The tenants were mainly Native people.

Today, the directors and members of this organization which is known as Mennonite Urban Renewal Programs, envision expansion. New MURP developments are in progress.

MURP originated in 1981 as an inter-



Shirley Peters of Winnipeg, will be serving two years with Mennonite Central Committee in Waterloo, where she will work at the Independent Living Centre for the physically handicapped. She was last employed at a group home for mentally retarded adults. Shirley has a certificate in architectural drawing from Red River Community College in Winnipeg. She is a member of North Kildonan Mennonite Church in Winnipeg and is a daughter of Henry and Marianne Peters of Winnipeg.

Y.O.U.

An assistant director is required at Y.O.U. (Youth Orientation Units) which is an MCC Albert project. Y.O.U. is a residential farm work program designed to meet the needs of young adult offenders between the ages of 16 to 20 years. The farm is located 80 km south-west of Edmonton. The successful candidate will report to the director of the program and will be required to assist in the following duties:

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- practises for up to 12 residents of the program

Experience in supervision and the trades is required and the ability of relating to delinquent youth is essential. An appropriate university degree would be an asset, though not an absolute necessity. Please apply in writing to: George Friesen, 257 Rhatigan Rd. W., Edmonton, Alberta, T6R 1B2, Telephone (403) 438-6110.

Westgate Mennonite Collegiate invites applications for one teaching position in the areas of Music (choral) and English (Language Arts). The position combines a program in Junior and Senior High; emphasis on the lower grades. An interest in and a background of theological training is of benefit. Apply to E. Strempler, Principal, 86 Westgate, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 2E1.

XXXXXX
SPRING BREAK

Mennonite, non-profit organization. A 21-suite apartment at 277 Atlantic was MURP's first project. This apartment was purchased and renovated without public financing. The success of this project has encouraged this organization to expand.

In the latter part of January, 1983, MURP appointed **Gerald Brown**, a Steinbach resident, as manager. Gerald's financial support comes from MCC Man. and from the Manitoba Employment Action Program.

In the summer of 82, **Vera Isaak** researched the need for housing and related social services for low income people in Winnipeg. This research project, financed by M.C.C. (Can.), MCC (Man.), MEDA, and MURP, provided the basis for MURP's intent to expand.

Plans are underway to build an apartment complex which provides integrated housing. This housing complex may include suites for larger families, single parent families, the physically disabled, and the elderly.

Negotiations for property with the city planners and for mortgage financing with CMHC appear promising at this time.

MURP is indeed happy for the support it has received from MCC and individuals whose contributions make this program possible. However, this organization would like to expand its membership in numbers as well as in representation from the various Mennonite churches. Anyone interested in further information about this organization is invited to call: Jake Unrau (786-4553, 453-1513), or Leroy Unrau (474-9518, 269-8543), or Peter Thiessen (338-5193, 334-1942).

GRADUATION '83

Fifty-four persons are expected to receive their bachelor's degree in either theology or church music as Canadian Mennonite Bible College prepares to send forth the largest graduating class in the history of the college. The commencement exercises will highlight an exciting and eventful weekend at CMBC, April 29 - May 1, 1983.

The festivities will begin on Friday, April 29, as the undergraduates plan and host a student-faculty banquet in honor of the graduates. The alumni organization is then planning a variety of activities for Saturday, April 30.

The commencement exercises will take place on Sunday, May 1 at 2:30 p.m. in the Home Street Mennonite Church. They will be preceded by a 10 a.m. Baccalaureate Service at the college, where President George K. Epp will deliver the meditation.

SYMPOSIUM IN VISUAL ARTS TO COMPLEMENT FESTIVAL

The Festival of Art and Music, sponsored by the ladies auxiliary of Westgate collegiate, and held every year at Polo Park, has become an important event on the calendar of the Mennonites in Manitoba. The upcoming Festival, to be held on Sunday, April 17, will be the twelfth such event featuring local artists, musicians and writers.

This year, an important new dimension has been added. Thanks to the sponsorship of the multi-cultural program of the Federal Department of Secretary of State, a visual arts symposium featuring accomplished artists of Mennonite background both from Winnipeg and across Canada, will be held during the weekend of the festival. The public is invited to attend a public forum on Friday evening, April 15 at the Canadian Mennonite Bible College Chapel. An exhibition of the artists' work will be shown at the Mennonite Heritage Center Gallery. The exhibition will open at 7 p.m. and the forum will begin at 8 p.m.

Keynote speaker for the forum will be **Robert Regier**, artist and professor of art at Bethel College, Newton, Kansas. Robert Regier has a wealth of experience and training as an artist and art educator. He studied at the Art Institute of Chicago, and received a Master's Degree of Studio Art at the University of Illinois. For six years he served as graphic designer for the General Conference of Mennonites, and he has taught full-time at Bethel College, since 1965.

The artists participating in the symposium have all made their mark in the artistic community in Canada. **Susan Shantz** from Waterloo, Ontario, creates mixed media works and has participated in several exhibitions. **David Hunsberger**, also from Waterloo, is a print-maker who specializes in serigraphs. **Corne Martens** is a sculptor from Coaldale, Alberta, whose specialty is bronze sculpting. **Bill Epp**, also a sculptor, has been working with a variety of materials — wood, clay and iron — but for the past six years he has been creating works in bronze. He is presently a professor of art at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon.

Local artists participating in the symposium will be **Wanda Koop**, painter, whose works have been widely exhibited across Canada; **Ken Loewen**, from Altona, and **Ernie Kroeger** of Winnipeg, both photographers, will also be showing their work. **Aganetha Dyck** of Winnipeg will display her "environmental" works. She has exhibited in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. **Gerald**

mm mirror mix-up

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I THINK WE'RE ALL
READY FOR A
SPRING BREAK

From among the 51 entries to the March Mix-Up, Ted Zuchowski, of Winnipeg, was selected the winner. A cash prize is on its way.

Answers to the March contest were atone, risen, peace, amend, grace, and parade.

Now turn your attention to this month's puzzle.

The letters are to be re-arranged and written in the squares to form words. Letters which fall into the squares with circles are to be arranged to complete the answer at the bottom of the puzzle; the drawing to the right provides a clue.

A winner will be drawn from among the contest entries and the prize awarded.

Entries must be sent to the Mirror office by April 21, 1983.

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Send Entries to:
Mix-Up Contest
Mennonite Mirror
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Winnipeg, Manitoba R3G 0N4

Loewen of Winnipeg will exhibit some of his sculptures.

The public forum on Friday evening, Images and Identities: Artists of Mennonite Heritage, presents a rare opportunity for the Mennonite Community in Manitoba to meet a number of distinguished artists and to hear them explain the importance of the creative impulse in their lives.

Chairman of the evening will be Roy Vogt, publisher of the *Mennonite Mirror* and professor of economics at the University of Manitoba.

Following the forum, an informal reception will be held at the Heritage Centre. There will be no admission charge for the event.



Frank Klassen



Maureen Epp

In keeping with its policy of encouraging young musicians, the Mennonite Community Orchestra will present a youthful conductor and a young pianist at its next concert. **Frank Klassen** will conduct the MCO, April 28, at CMBC. The concert will feature **Maureen Epp**, playing *Capriccio Brillant* by Felix Mendelssohn, for piano and orchestra.

The concert will include as well: Water Music, Handel; Finlandia, Sibelius; Canon, Pachelbel; Sigfried's Idyll, Wagner; Unfinished Symphony, Schubert; and Overture to the Barber of Seville, Rossini.

Frank Klassen is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Franz Klassen of Vancouver. He is a graduate of CMBC and U of M with a Bachelor of Church Music. He will be graduating from the U of W in spring with a BA. He has also studied in Bienenberg, Switzerland and has conducted choirs in Vancouver, Canada; Bienenberg, Switzerland and Haute-feuille, France. In 1980, he was the conductor of the TOURING CHOIR to the churches of North Germany. Presently he is the conductor of the Douglas Avenue Mennonite Church and orchestra instructor at CMBC.

Maureen Epp, ARCT, studies piano with Jean Broadfoot. She is the daughter of missionary parents to Taiwan.

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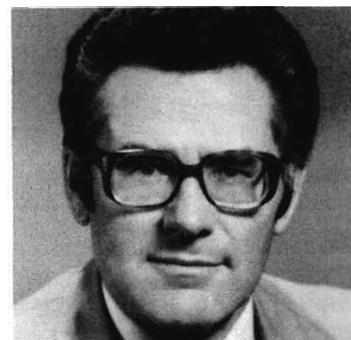
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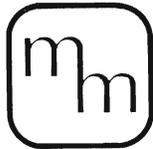
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FRIESEN SERIES GETS LOW GRADE

Rinehart Friesen's reminiscences provide some interesting insights into customs, folklore and thought of Manitoba Mennonites. The patronizing tone towards the early church leadership may be partly justified, as it represents the more "progressive" view of the dissident. Friesen has "Eltesta Doerksen" say, ". . . it is so hard to say what is important; one little thing leads to another . . ." (MM, February 1983).

This narrow view had a positive aspect and was one of the reasons Mennonites left Russia for Canada, and Canada for Mexico and other Latin American countries. The conservative Mennonite view was rooted in a belief of a (Mennonite) brotherhood which also implied equality. The "progressive" outlook, substituting individualism for conformity, was in essence capitalistic in accepting economic inequalities.

An example could be provided by the town of Gretna and its neighboring village of Blumenort, both of which have

changed, some people would say deteriorated, from the time dealt with in the Friesen article. The farm homes of Blumenort, like those of all other Mennonite villages, despite their architectural diversity, represented Mennonite egalitarianism and conformity. Gretna, like all Mennonite or non-Mennonite towns, reflected the whole spectrum of taste, from good to bad, but especially it reflected the economic inequality of its inhabitants. There were residences of the type shown on the MM February cover, but there were also homes that were little better than woodsheds.

Thus "Eltesta Doerksen" in his admonition no doubt was trying to bridle a life-style of "keeping up with the Joneses", which was contrary to his Mennonite ideal.

While Friesen's reminiscences on early Mennonite life in Manitoba provide useful raw data, Friesen is less successful in his incursions into more remote and unfamiliar territory. This applies to his article in the January 1983 issue of MM.

That a Mennonite couple from Russia, visiting relatives in Manitoba, brought along Russian servants, seems unusual, to put it mildly. Even Mennonite owners of estates did not have personal male valets, at home or when travelling. In the article muzhiks (Webster: peasants, farmers) become hired help ("workers"), their homes are a "hole in the ground", Mennonites leave the "heavy dirty work" to Russians, etc. etc. (Most Mennonites in Russia did their own "heavy dirty work" — as they do today in Mexico — because even if native labor was cheap, they could not afford it. Moreover, the Mennonite work ethic, in Russia as in Mexico, impelled the Mennonite to work harder than his non-Mennonite neighbor. He achieved greater economic prosperity, but at the price of a more austere and less cheerful lifestyle).

Pathetically Friesen has his visitor say, "What else is there to do in Russia except to acquire more land and build more estates?" True, the Mennonite ideal of economic equality was eroding and conformity replaced by greater individuality, in Russia as in Manitoba. But has Friesen never heard of the mutual projects such as the building of secondary schools, homes for the deaf and dumb, the impressive home for the mentally disturbed, the Mennonite forestry service?

The article may be an attempt at creative fiction, but for this a better knowledge of Mennonite and Russian history would be a prerequisite.

Victor Peters
Winnipeg

"FAIRY TALE" PROVOKES SPIRITED COMMENT

After reading this fairy tale I cannot sit back and be quiet. I believe there is enough dissension among the Mennonite people, without printing such blatant untruths as this fabricated fairy tale by Rhinehart Friesen. In the beginning he writes:

1. "I wanted a different preacher to marry us in the first place. Why didn't they get a different preacher. After all, wasn't Aron Friesen's father a preacher?"

2. "It would have been a perfect wedding without those boots." Well then it must have been a perfect wedding, because the preachers of that time wore short leather boots and Bishop Doerksen was quite meticulous in the way he dressed, according to his son, David D. Doerksen, age 90, who is living in Altona and in good health. After doing some research on Bishop Doerksen and his family and church I found that Bishop Doerksen was a mild-mannered yet forceful speaker and understanding broadminded man, who certainly would not object to jelly roll and cookies at a wedding, or think that a young married woman's only need was a maternity dress. Nor would he care how the people would have been invited to a wedding. Bishop Doerksen was the Bishop of the Sommerfelder church which Mr. Rhinehart Friesen conveniently forgot to mention.

3. He accepted his call humbly and served his church well. He preached salvation as it is taught in the Bible and his messages came through loud and clear. Bishop Doerksen passed away some 55 years ago and I find it very disturbing to read this type of degrading character assassination in a Mennonite paper, of a Bishop of a large Mennonite

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church, who was well liked and respected in the community he lived in. I myself am not a member of this church but that is not important, Mr. Editor. What is important is that your paper is being used to print such fantasies.

Towards the end of his damaging story Mr. Friesen makes light of the fact that there will be liquor and dancing, and in his final paragraph, he completely destroys his own credibility and I quote: "In their eagerness to reach the large unfinished new house they almost ran the short distance from her old home redolent with its air of *burrsteewel* and dark dresses and beribboned bonnets that women wore only after marriage." Is he telling us that the Friesen women were wearing *burrsteewel* at that wedding?

As a Mennonite I strongly believe that Mr. Rhinehart Friesen owes the Doerksen family and the Sommerfelder church a public apology through the *Mennonite Mirror*.

J. Klassen,
Gretna.

FRIESEN ANSWERS

I was greatly saddened to read your letter about my story in the *Mennonite Mirror*. I certainly had no intention of hurting anyone's feelings. When I started to put these stories on paper they were not intended for publication but for my own children and grandchildren. I had two objectives in view. One was simply to preserve some of the family memories including the inaccuracies and exaggerations that had inevitably grown up about them as they passed down several generations by word of mouth. The other was to maintain some of the Mennonite heritage which I am proud of and which is slowly being lost. Specifically I wanted to deal with some of the aspects that the younger generation are apt to misunderstand and ridicule. In particular I wanted to deal as sensitively as I could with our forebears' attempts to keep themselves apart from others and to maintain the life-style they had followed for centuries in Europe. They believed sincerely that only in this way could they assure that their children and their children's children would carry on the religion of their ancestors. Unless our children accept this basic premise they will not understand, and poke fun at, such things as the well documented opposition to learning English and higher education in general, wearing distinctive clothing, reluctance to accept automobiles and even farm tractors, etc. If you have the time I would ask you to reread all the previous stories to see

whether you can't detect underneath the "stories" that this is what I was trying to do.

The source of my material for The Felt Boots is my mother. Many times she turned the joke against herself as she told of the trouble they had in getting married. First, the May wedding had to be postponed because the groom came down with measles. When at the last minute her favorite Preacher was unable to attend (due to illness?) and Bishop Doerksen kindly stepped into the breach. But she considered him "old fashioned" especially because of the felt boots he wore. You say he wore leather boots; perhaps you are right —

after years of retelling stories tend to change. To today's generation it would make little difference whether I wrote felt or leather; to them either would represent his way of setting himself apart as a clergyman in the same way many ministers do with their clerical collar. I suggest you explain the boots to your children in this way and not only allow them to read the story but encourage them to do so as they can be proud of their ancestor who definitely knew what he stood for and proclaimed it openly.

I meant the real theme of this story to be that the "generation gap" that we hear so much about nowadays also existed at that time. In this regard you



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strike home with one of your sentences when you say I should feel badly writing some things about my parents. With some reluctance I portrayed my mother as a high spirited young rebel, but I am sure if she were alive she would understand that to establish the generation gap it was desirable to accentuate the difference.

In one regard you accuse me unjustly. When I used the term "Oom Abraham" I did not mean it to imply disrespect. I was sure in my home "Oom" was used as a title of esteem for an older relative or clergyman. After I got your letter I felt badly enough to consult my dictionary, which has the item, "Oom — Uncle, Reverend, a term of respect".

I did not know your grandfather and there is no reason why I should bear him malice. He was important enough that I have come across his name in several history books. Although before writing this letter I have not made the effort to try to find those passages again, the impressions that remains from my earlier reading is that he was a sincere and dedicated leader of his people. I hope this letter succeeds in convincing you that I had no intention of debasing his character or hurting the feelings of any members of his family. If it does not do so, all I can do is apologize and say I'm sorry.

Sincerely,
Rhinehart Friesen

straightforward, unsentimental style and, as is so often the case in an artlessly recounted life-story, is innocently free of artistic techniques and devices or deliberate literary effects. A story so baldly told can become mundane and monotonous even if it deals with unusual or momentous events. This story, however, is told with such convincing sincerity of tone, such an unquenchable desire to record exactly how it was and to assert self-identity in the face of almost insuperable odds, that one is carried along by the sheer vitality of the telling.

We see young Allert gradually maturing from naive country boy who understands little about the complex forces of violence and oppression around him, into the shrewd veteran soldier who knows how to take care of himself and to roll with the punches in a world where people like him invariably turn out losers. The German army and Germany itself for the first time provide him with a sense of dignity and worth, with a pride of race and culture that was earlier denied him in Soviet Russia.

But even life in Germany cannot revive Allert's moribund Mennonite identity. He marries a Catholic girl in Germany and, as he puts it, finally "returns to the Church my forefathers had left some four centuries ago." In his closing lines he confesses, "I am a stranger, a wanderer and in my heart I long for what I remember from my childhood—but the way back is impossible for me." A sad confession and one which perhaps expresses the ultimate victimization suffered by the Mennonites of Russia at the hand of their Soviet masters.

Gerhard Lohrenz is to be commended for giving us this vivid story, along with the other sketches that recount the lives of Russian Mennonites who belonged to this lost generation. In "Anna", the other major story in the collection, we get another bleak account of oppression, denial, cruelty and innocent suffering, but also a determined, at times heroic, effort to survive and live a normal, dignified life. This time the story is told from the perspective of one of

reviews

A Lost Mennonite Generation Remembered

Gerhard Lohrenz, *The Lost Generation and Other Stories* (Steinbach: Derksen Printers, 1982), 175 pp. \$9.

A review by Al Reimer

There is no Mennonite author who has been as prolific in the past 10 years as Gerhard Lohrenz, unless it be Johannes Harder in Germany. This is Lohrenz's twelfth book and he shows no signs of slowing down, although writers half his age might envy his industry. He began as a straight historian of the Russian-Mennonite scene, but in his more recent books he has ventured into a form of writing that he has made his own: namely, a kind of semi-fictionalized social history focussing on both individuals and groups of Mennonites who have undergone dramatic, usually traumatic and tragic experiences in Russia.

The Lost Generation consists of the title story, a novella in length, plus four other stories and sketches, two of which were previously published by the au-

thor in German. All but one of the stories are set in the Soviet period between the Revolution and World War II, thus forming a general chronological sequel to his earlier *The Fateful Years: 1913-1923*, which dealt mainly with Mennonite events in World War I and its aftermath.

"The Lost Generation", the main story in this collection, is a moving personal account of the true-life experiences of Jacob Allert (not his real name), a young man who comes to manhood in the harsh years of enforced collectivization in the 30s and then, when the Nazis invade Russia, is drafted into the German SS. Later he is captured by the Russians and managing to conceal his Russian-Mennonite identity from them he becomes a prisoner of war who is finally released in 1949 and settles down in post-war Germany.

The narrative is written in a spare,

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those thousands of Mennonite women who lost their men to Stalin's purges and had to carry on alone or with other women. And although Anna scarcely mentions God or any specific religious faith, the reader feels her to be a woman of calm courage and great inner strength, with a depth of spiritual resources.

In all these stories, but particularly in the Allert narrative, one senses that the author has added many effective touches to the personal, real-life accounts he has gathered from various sources. One's overall impression is that there is a wise, compassionate sensibility at work in all of them but not an accusing or judgmental sensibility. The result is one of the strongest books we have had from Lohrenz to date.

Dr. Lohrenz sees his role as a Mennonite writer in clear and realistic terms as that of a preserver who is trying to keep alive in our collective minds and imaginations that Mennonite experience which might otherwise be lost. He believes in the importance and integrity of the historical record but, as his recent books illustrate, he also believes that some imaginative shaping and fictional coloring of the historical facts will make readers more inclined to receive them and to allow them to work on their minds and hearts. He also hopes that his books, rough-hewed though they be at times, will fire the imaginations of future Mennonite writers and supply them with useful social and cultural sketch maps as they re-explore more closely the Russian-Mennonite ground he is covering. As he himself puts it in his Introduction: "The story is to be a photographic reproduction of that time, and therein, may I suggest, lies its true value." He is giving us the black-and-white candid photos; the more ambitious and artistic paintings will come later.

For that Gerhard Lohrenz deserves our respect and admiration, as well as our gratitude. mm



The Enns Clan in Song

Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre Presents "The Enns Family" in this Golden Land, in the Auditorium of the Kiwanis Centre of the Deaf, March 14th and 15th, 1983.

A review by Al Reimer

"The Enns Family" they bill themselves. They're being too modest. It was nothing less than a public gathering of the whole Enns Clan. And most of the time you couldn't tell whether it was a Mennonite clan with hayseed dripping from ears and flat feet planted, or a Scottish clan swirling their kilts and stomping down heather.

There were over 30 of these strange hybrids on stage — brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, cousins, nephews, nieces and a few "married intos" (trying to look as if they belonged) in all shapes and sizes and ages and complexions, but all, of course, showing natural stage presence and a gleam of ham in their eyes. And all of them sang, and many of them played instruments and a few of them even danced — as Scots, naturally, not as Mennonites, Menno Simons forbid!

If there's a more amazing family of amateur entertainers in these parts — whether Mennonite, Ukrainian, Greek or whatever — I don't want to know

about them. Let them go and do a revival of *The Sound of Music*. I'm content to stick with the Ennses and their musical "happenings" any day.

Seriously, folks, this evening of vocal and instrumental performances of German and Scottish songs and poems was as comfortable and intimate as an old-fashioned Mennonite family gathering, and as exciting and blood-warming as one of those wildly rhetorical Scottish wedding toasts we have all heard.

The warmth and geniality generated by this remarkable family represents

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amateurism at its best! Tied together by a loosely woven narrative scenario, the program consisted of an opening half of familiar German folk songs followed by a second half of equally popular Scottish vocal classics. The theme of cultural differences resolved through contact and understanding between the two groups — Mennonites and Scots — gave tension and significance to the singing and staging and was unobtrusively but effectively worked out. The cleverly done closing medley of German and Scottish songs was delightful and symbolized the reconciliation brought about between the Mennonite farm family and the Scottish city family.

The older generation of Ennses predominated, of course. Clan leader Ernest introduced the program with witty asides in several languages. Brother Harry sang "Tief im Boemerwald" and showed that his resonant bass still functions beautifully even after the wear and tear of thousands of political speeches and harangues in the Legislature. Brother Sig played the dignified Mennonite farmer and eloquently sang the special

theme song "This Golden Land" composed by local composer Neil Harris. Sister Selma, ably backed by sister Marlies, quick-silvered her way through "Was bekam des Soldatenweib". Brother John, the judge, not only sang non-stop but played the cello, no less. Brother Henri, the professional in the family, song and recited and directed the others and kept the whole thing moving with easy authority. Brother-in-law Horst Friesen as usual strutted about and recited his lines as though he owned the stage, although I noticed he didn't sing any solos — could it be that he is the one member of the Enns clan who can't sing?

The younger generation, to be sure, were not about to be outdone. Cathy Enns and Paul Enns, the young Scottish and Mennonite lovers respectively, did an amusing rendition of "My Heart's in the Highlands" simultaneously in German and English. Eleanor Isaac did a spirited rendition of "Comin' Thro' the Rye" and four of the younger Ennses lilted their way through "An Eriskay Love Lilt." Even Sig's daughter Cathy was on

stage in her wheelchair, and in one of the most touching moments in a memorable evening, had two of her poems read by young Nancy Enns. Martin Enns did a creditably brogueish and manly recitation of "A Man's a Man for a' That" and his cousin Chris sang a haunting "Annie Laurie". Oh yes, there was also a lone young piper. His name, strangely, was Iain Black.

In fact, just for the record I tabulated the names. There were 19 Ennses, 4 Isaacs, 3 Friesens, 2 Rempels, 1 Loewen, 1 Gafic and 1 Black. But they all looked and sounded like Ennses to me — that is they all looked and sounded good on stage, and gave the packed opening night audience so much affectionate and infectious entertainment that we all left the theatre with happy reluctance and the hope that these Ennses will see fit to hold their public gathering of the clan again next year and for many more years to come.

Mind you, if the clan gets any larger they'll have to move to the Centennial Concert Hall. And they'll probably fill both the stage and the seats there too.

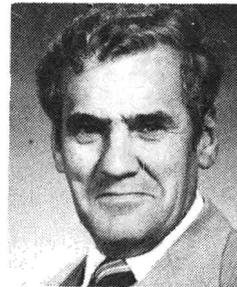
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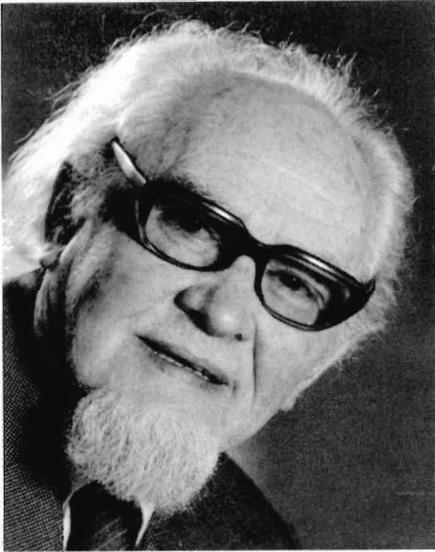
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Ein moderner Johannes der Täufer

Ein Brief an Professor Johannes Harder zu seinem 80. Geburtstag (28. Jan. 1983)

Lieber Johannes!

Dass ein fast dreissig Jahre jüngerer Freund Dich mit "Johannes" anspricht, ist eigentlich Deine Schuld. Vor etwa vier Jahren, als ich Dir zum ersten Mal begegnete, kamst Du auf mich zugegangen, umarmtest mich und sagtest mit fester Stimme und kurzen Worten: "Sei mir herzlich willkommen! So, du bist Harry und ich bin Johannes. Unter den Mennoniten gibt es kein Sie, sondern nur Du. Wir sind Brüder und so soll es bleiben!"

Das war in Frankfurt, wo Du an jenem Sonntag in der kleinen Mennonitengemeinde predigen solltest. Da ich etwas zu früh zum Gottesdienst gekommen war, konnte ich Dich von der Seite etwas beobachten. Du begrüsstest Jung und Alt, wechseltest einige freundliche Worte mit älteren Frauen und Kindern, und als die Gemeinde zum Anfang des Gottesdienstes sang, sangst Du herzlich mit. Schon Deine Moses—artige Erscheinung sagte mir, dass Deine Predigt mir zum Gotteswort werden würde.

An diesem Sonntag predigtest Du über die christliche Freiheit. Die Freiheit von der Du sprachst, war nicht nur die innere Freiheit im lutherischen

Sinne, sondern eine Freiheit, die dem Einzelnen und der Gemeinde gilt und die in der heutigen Zeit Anwendung finden muss. Anhand von Beispielen und Belegen aus der Literatur, Politik, Philosophie und dem praktischen Leben, machtest Du uns das Wort Gottes deutlich. Nicht nur vernahm ich das Wort Gottes in Deiner Predigt, sondern ich staunte und wusste nicht wie mir geschah. "Gibt es so etwas unter den deutschen Mennoniten?" fragte ich mich. "So einen Prediger muss man entweder lieben oder hassen," sagte ich mir. Ich konnte nicht anders als Dich lieben.

Ich muss gestehen, dass ich mich damals bei Dir nicht angemeldet hatte, um Dich predigen zu hören. Hier in Kanada warst Du nicht als Prediger sondern als Schriftsteller bekannt. Mein Freund und Kollege Al Reimer hatte kurz vorher Dein Erstlingswerk **In Wogodas weissen Wäldern** (1934) in **No Strangers in Exile** übersetzt. Als ich dann wieder plante nach Deutschland zu reisen, meinte Reimer, ich müsste unbedingt Dich besuchen und kennen lernen, obwohl er selbst den Roman-Autor persönlich nicht kenne. Ich zähle mich heute noch zu den Glücklichen, dass ich Dich damals aufsuchte. Bei meinen Besuchen in Deinem Hause erzähltest Du mir nicht nur über rus-

sische Literatur, die Bekennende Kirche, die beiden Blumhardts und die mennonitischen Bauern, die nun angefangen haben zu dichten, sondern Du teiltest mir Dein reiches Leben mit — und hast mich somit geistig angeregt und geistlich bereichert.

Das war der Anfang der Winnipeg-Schlüchtern-Verbindung. Seit dem haben wir zur Genüge erfahren, dass uns die Hälfte nicht gesagt worden war von dem Propheten und Heiligen unter den deutschen Mennoniten: Ein **Prophet**, der den frühen Täufern gleich, die Misstände in den Gemeinden und in der Gesellschaft anspricht und bekämpft, und ein **Heiliger**, der von Gott begnadet und gesalbt ist, das Leben Jesu Mennoniten und andern Gläubigen zu veranschaulichen. Als Du uns später in Winnipeg besuchtest und mit Vorträgen und Predigten dientest, haben wir durch dich den Mann von Nazareth — Deine Lieblingsbezeichnung — besser kennen und lieben gelernt.

Ich weiss, dass Du drüben und auch hier manchmal missverstanden wirst und dass Deine Art aufzutreten, zu schreiben und zu predigen bei manchen zum Anstoss wird. Für einige bist Du zu direkt, für andere zu kritisch, und für die Frommen zu weltlich und nicht pietistisch genug. Was liegt daran? Du bist denen zum Anstoss, die in ihrem Wandel zum Fall gebracht werden müssten. Du musst es Dir schon gefallen lassen, dass Du zum Ärgernis für solche wirst, die sich vom Zeitgeist hinreissen lassen und nicht an ihren Ursprung und höhere Werte erinnert werden wollen. Gott weiss, dass wir in unserer Zeit Bussprediger (Vermahner) so notwendig brauchen!

Achzig Jahre? Von Deinen Anfängen an der Wolga und ersten Romanen und Schriften bis heute ist eine lange Zeit. Zwischen Deinem Anfang und der Gegenwart liegt nicht nur ein langes Leben, sondern auch eine lange Mennonitengeschichte. Dass dieses Leben für viele ein Segen im wahren Sinne des Worts war und ist, bist Du natürlich zu bescheiden zuzugeben. Doch wir, die wir von Deinem Leben und Schaffen berührt worden sind, danken Gott, dass es einen einmaligen Johannes Harder gibt. Nicht nur "Deine Botschaft ist jung und frisch" und "hat noch Zukunft," wie Hans-Jürgen Goertz von Dir schreibt, sondern Du selbst bist noch jünger und frischer als manche von uns, die an Jahren viel jünger als Du sind.

Mit herzlichen Grüssen und Wohlwünschen,

Dein Harry Loewen

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Arnold Dycks letzte Ruhestätte: Darlaten

von Hedi Knoop

Eine Ausgabe der Werke Arnold Dycks wird zur Zeit vom Mennonitischen Geschichtsverein Manitobas vorbereitet. Gesucht werden ungedruckte Texte und Briefe, sowie Originalgemälde und Zeichnungen des Dichters und Künstlers. Obwohl die meisten Werke Dycks in Manitoba entstanden sind, ist der Dichter doch zuletzt nach Deutschland gezogen, wo er bei dem Ort Darlaten lebte und starb. Von der Tochter des Dichters bringen wir etwas über diesen Ort.

Darlaten ist eine Streusiedlung im Grossen Moor bei Uchte in Niedersachsen mit etwa sechzig Häusern, die verstreut inmitten grüner Viehweiden und gelben Roggenfeldern oder am Rande kleiner Mischwäldchen liegen. In der Mitte des Dorfes befindet sich weiter nichts als ein Gasthaus mit einem kleinen Lebensmittelladen und einer rundlichen, lachenden Gastwirtin. Die Schule, die es in der Mitte des Dorfes einmal gegeben hat, ist längst schon in das sieben Kilometer entfernte Uchte verlegt worden. Allerdings gibt es, dem Gasthaus gegenüber, auch noch einen Schiessstand, also eine gut abgesicherte Übungsanlage für die Sportschützen des Dorfes. Diese sind im Schützenverein zu einer teils sportlichen, grösstenteils jedoch geselligen Gemeinschaft zusammengeschlossen. In jedem Sommer feiert man das aufwendige Schützenfest, wo es mit Tschinderassassa in festlichem Zug durchs Dorf geht, voran im geschmückten Wagen der neu ermittelte Schützenkönig, der nun ein ganzes Jahr regieren wird. Er trägt eine imponierende Kette auf der Brust, lang

und schwer wegen der vielen angebrachten Schildchen, auf denen die Namen verflüssener Könige eingraviert sind. Deren gibt es über fünfzig, so alt ist der Verein. Und das Dorf selbst ist nicht sehr viel älter; denn es ist kein jahrhundertalter Ort, wie sie in der Umgebung üblich sind, mit behäbigen Fachwerkhäusern aus roten Ziegelsteinen und mit gekreuzten Pferdeköpfen am Giebel, nein, es ist eine nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg entstandene schlichte Morsiedlung, deren gründer noch teilweise am Leben sind und persönlich berichten können, wie hier einst der harte Kampf mit dem sumpfigen Boden aufgenommen wurde. Sie können schildern, wie Entwässerungsgräben ausgehoben und Dämme errichtet werden mussten, um festen Boden unter den Füßen zu gewinnen; und sie können erzählen, in welcher Armut die ersten Siedler in ihren billigen Häuschen aus Schlackensteinen lebten, ehe Weiden für das Vieh auf dem trockengelegten Sumpf entstanden. Bis dahin musste das dürre Heidekraut, das den unwirtlichen Boden bedeckte, als Viehfutter erhalten. Es hielt die Tiere am Leben, aber nicht viel mehr.

Wie für die Mennoniten, so galt auch in Darlaten das Sprichwort: Der erste hat den Tod, der Zweite hat die Not, der dritte erst das Brot. Heute ist es die dritte Generation, die den Boden bestellt, und obschon er ein karger Boden ist und immer sein wird, so gedeiht aber jetzt das Milchvieh auf den Weiden, und die Schweine im Stall bekommen auch ihr Recht. Und die Kinder, die jeden Morgen in den Schulbus steigen, sind genauso rotwangig und munter wie die

der Nachbardörfer und, wie das heute so Mode ist, auch genauso frech und selbstbewußt.

Darlaten — der Dichter Fritz Senn hat in seinem Buch "Das Dorf im Abendgrauen" diesem Ort zwei Gedichte gewidmet; denn hier lebte in seinen letzten Jahren und hier verstarb der Schriftsteller Arnold Dyck, und Fritz Senn hat seine Grabstätte besucht. Er schreibt:

Dee met de Sans jeit tweschen de Kote

Enn sajt to meand: "Aules doa lote!"

Senn deutet den Namen Darlaten als "doa loten" (zurücklassen) und befindet sich damit semantisch im Einklang mit einer wunderlichen Sage, die dieses Wort jedoch in einen ganz anderen Zusammenhang stellt. Jawohl, der Name Darlaten hat eine Ent-

stehungssage, eine etwas gruselige zwar, dafür aber durchaus kennzeichnend für die Verhältnisse, die im vorigen Jahrhundert nicht nur in dieser Gegend, sondern in Europa allgemein herrschten und die in so vielen Fällen zur Auswanderung nach Amerika führten.

Diese Sage, in Verse gekleidet, füge ich für die *Mirror*-Leser bei:

Darlaten

Eine etwas düstere Geschichte/In Verse gekleidet von Hedi Knoop, Uchte-Darlaten

Ein Gletscher kam vom hohen Norden,
vertrieb Neandertaler-Horden
und liess sich hier behaglich nieder
für viele Jahr', dann ging er wieder.
Was hat er uns zurückgelassen?
Zunächst einmal den Torf, den nassen,
dann ein paar Inselchen aus Sand
und Findlinge im ganzen Land;
dazu, zum Abschluss dieser Szene,
die Börde, eine Endmoräne.

Nach seinem Rückzug konnt' genesen
allhier so manches Lebewesen.
Das Wollgras hob aus braunem Moor
sein schneeweiss Schöpfchen bald hervor;
der Sonnentau, die Schachbrettblume
versuchten's auch auf karger Krume;
in Birken und im Heidekraut
ward manch ein Vogelnest gebaut.
So brütete mit stillem Eifer
im Stauch versteckt der Regenpfeifer;
die Schnepfe kam, die Himmelsziege,
viel Mücken und manch blinde Fliege.
Das schwarze Reh fand eine Fährte,
die Frösche gaben Froschkonzerte,
und Fuchs und Has', wie man so sagt,
die boten sich hier gute Nacht.

Doch eines Sommertages dann,
da hielt das Moor den Atem an;
denn siehe, in der Mittagssonne
erschien 'ne schweigsame Kolonne,
die schleppte durch den Sumpf, den weichen,
den grossen, schweren Sarg aus Eichen:
Sechs Knechte, wortlos, grau und hager
und einer wie der andere mager.

Im Sarg ihr Herr war hart gewesen,
er kehrte mit dem Eisenbesen,
es gab viel Schelte, wenig Brot . . .
Nun ja, dafür war er nun tot.
Noch gestern auf dem Sterbebette
sprach er: Tragt mich zur Ruhestätte
ins grosse Holz im Uchter Moor,
und tragt mich gut, seht euch ja vor!

Der Herr war schwer, die Knechte keuchten,
sie rutschten auf dem Grund, dem feuchten,
und stolperten von Bült' zu Bülte,
bis sich der letzte Holzschuh füllte.
Sie rasteten und sah'n sich an:
Wie weit war's jetzt noch bis zum Tann?
„To to“, mahnt Voss, „wie hebbt keen Tied,
und bett na'n Holte is noch wiet.“
So haben sie sich abgeschunden
bis in die ersten Abendstunden.

Doch dann — nicht weit von ihrem Ziel —
da stolperte Hein Voss und fiel
und rutschte samt dem Totenschrein
gar tief in den Morast hinein . . .
Die Kumpels zogen mit viel Müh
den Alten aus der braunen Brüh.
Herrje, der Sarg wollt' auch versinken!
Darf denn ihr Herr im Moor ertrinken?
Befahl er doch die Ruhestätte
im Holz und nicht im schlamm'gen Bette.

Hein Voss zerrunzelt seine Stirn,
so manches geht ihm durchs Gehirn.
Die Hose klebt ihm an den Beinen,
der Holzschuh hat er nur noch einen . . .

Nein, der da hat genug befohlen,
nun soll ihn hier der Teufel holen.
„Doa lat'n liggen“, spricht Hein Vossen,
„Oje, wat sind wie doch fe Ossen!
Wütt wie den Kierl na'n Holte drägen?
Hett he uss jetzt noch wat to seggen?“

„Doa lat'n liggen“, rufen alle,
und frei sind sie mit einem Male. . .

So haben sie den harten Sassen
im Uchter Moor versinken lassen
und sind dann ohne Angst und Bangen
und recht vergnügt nach Haus gegangen.

Doa lat'n — war ihr Freiheitswort,
Darlaten heisst noch heut der Ort.

(Findlinge — grosse Steine)

An Easter Meditation

Do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children (Luke 23:28).

We have just celebrated Easter, and through our worship services and special music programs we have been helped once again to reflect on the awful event of Good Friday and the wondrous resurrection of Easter. There is a sense in which we cannot reflect on those events often enough. Something happened on that hill outside Jerusalem which both satisfies and transcends our deepest feelings and thoughts. God met us on Calvary in a way which no human being had ever anticipated — by joining His suffering with ours.

*Nowhere but beside the awful Cross,
and where the olives grow along the hill,
Can we accept the unexplained, the loss,
The crushing agony, and hold us still.*

(Amy Carmichael)

Something occurred in the empty tomb which, in the midst of all its mystery, has given new hope to men and women everywhere. We can say with Tennyson,

*Thine are these orbs of light and shade;
Thou madest Life in man and brute;
Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.*

The death and the resurrection of Jesus will always have the power to move and to change us. They deserve from us a frequent and single-minded gaze.

There is a sense, however, in which we are also meant to turn our eyes away from the Cross, so that we can see the thousands of contemporary crosses which that Cross represents. Jesus himself tells us, "Do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children." God's suffering did not end on the Cross of Calvary. He continues to suffer wherever the bigotry and the awful hostility of man inflicts cruelty on His children. We have looked upon the cross of Jesus in vain if we have not been moved to respond to the world's persistent agony. We can do worse than begin with the sensitive observations of the American poet, Walt Whitman:

*I sit and look out upon all the sorrows of the world,
and upon all oppression and shame;
I hear secret convulsive sobs from young men,
at anquish with themselves, remorseful after deeds done;
I see, in low life, the mother misused by her children,
dying, neglected, gaunt, desperate;
I see the wife misused by her husband —
I see the treacherous seducer of young women . . .
I observe the slights and degradations
cast by arrogant persons upon laborers, the poor,
and upon negroes, and the like;
All these — all the meanness and agony without end,
I sitting, look out upon,
See, hear, and am silent.*

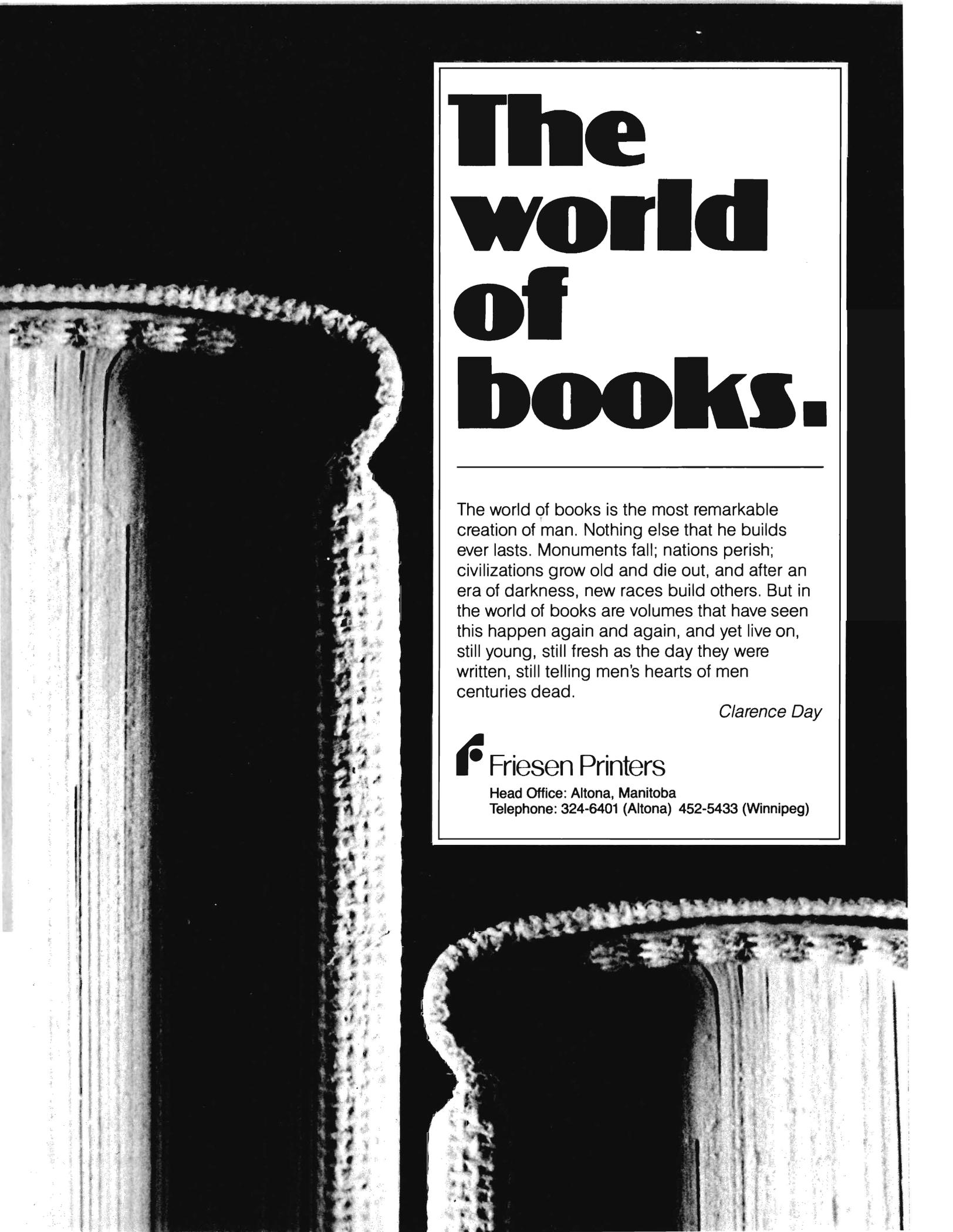
An honest gaze at these things will often make us silent. That silence, of course, should ultimately be transformed into concern and action, just as it was in Whitman, who became a caring doctor to others.

Some time before Easter I received a call from a reader expressing the hope that I did not believe in the "social gospel." I am not entirely sure what she meant but I gather that she did not agree with those Christians who seek to perfect this world. She is surely right in believing that we will never perfect this world. I hope, however, that she wasn't trying to say that we shouldn't be deeply concerned about the alleviation of all forms of suffering in the world. I'm sure that is not what she was implying, for there is probably no religion in the world that takes *this* world and its agony as seriously as the Christian religion does. And far from focusing our gaze on its founder, or on our own welfare, it encourages us to demonstrate our love of God by loving our fellow man. Dietrich Bonhoeffer used to say that all men — both Christians and others — go to God when they are in trouble, and God is concerned about the troubles of all men, both Christians and others. What *should* distinguish Christians from others is not that they have managed to obtain a ticket to heaven but that they have chosen to suffer with God in His attempt to love and heal this world. There is something selfish and anti Christian about our search for special rewards. It is God's gracious wish to give us the Kingdom. It is our duty to help Him in the establishment of that Kingdom. Hopefully the Cross and the Resurrection managed to move us once more this past Easter. The evidence for that will lie not in what we say about our experience, or in the feelings that we have had, but in our new efforts to respond to the thousands of crosses that continue to dot our sad landscape.

Along with the other poems cited above I have been moved this season by the words of Elizabeth Chenery:

*Whenever there is silence around me
By day or by night —
I am startled by a cry.
It came down from the cross —
The first time I heard it.
I went out and searched —
And found a man in the throes of crucifixion,
And I said, "I will take you down."
And I tried to take the nails out of his feet.
But he said, "Let them be
For I cannot be taken down
Until every man, every woman, and every child
Come together to take me down."
And I said, "But I cannot hear you cry.
What can I do?"
And he said, "Go about the world —
Tell everyone that you meet —
There is a man on the cross."*

— Roy Vogt



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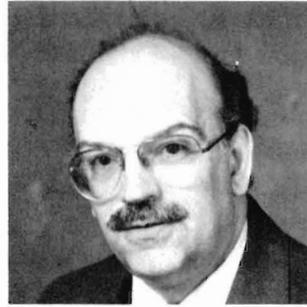
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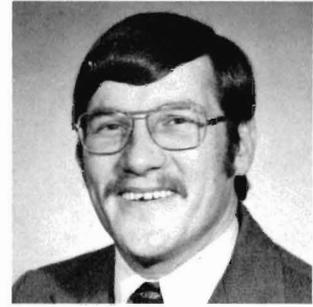
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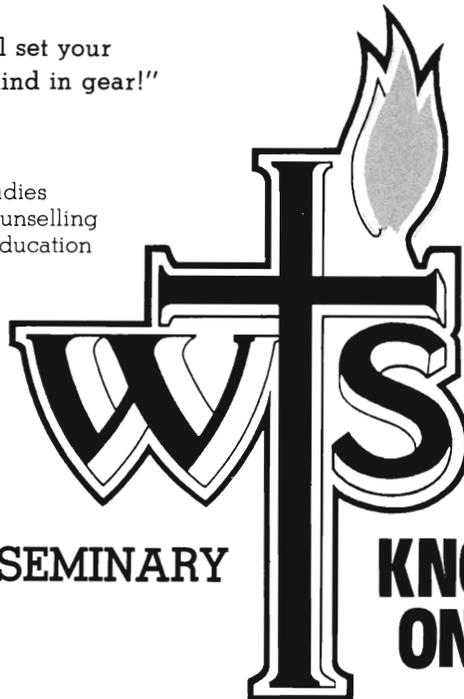
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