

mennonite mirror

volume 13 / number 8

april 1984

AN EASTER SONG

A song of sunshine through the rain,
Of Spring across the snow;
A balm to heal the hurts of pain,
A peace surpassing woe.
Lift up your heads, you sorrowing ones,
And be you glad of heart,
For Calvary and Easter Day,
Earth's saddest day and gladdest day,
Were just three days apart!

Susan Coolidge

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ing of Music" on Wednesday, April 18,
ation, will be in attendance to address the



ForeWord

It is Easter time again, and our Anabaptist tradition calls us to proclaim Christ as both Lord and Savior. Any appreciation of the scriptures leads us to the conclusion that Jesus was both divine and human — the Word that became flesh and dwelt among us. It is through Jesus' coming that we get an idea of what God is like. And what is He like? On Jesus' last trip out of Jerusalem was to a hill, Calvary. He was dragged, he was scourged, he was mocked, spit upon and nailed him to a cross, where they pierced him in the side. In the midst of this unjust punishment of all time, Jesus prayed for those who were killing him: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Christians believe that God is like that.

From this short Easter thought, consider the offerings of the current issue. It has been a long time since our last story on Paul Hiebert, the chemistry professor who made his literary mark initially by writing satire and who went on from there to write philosophy. Rhinehart Friesen is back this issue; having retired as a physician he is now in active retirement pursuing history and in the process writing intriguing insights into what it might have been like in the not too distant past.

Art Defehr, the Winnipeg businessman who accepted a Canadian government/UN assignment to administer aid to refugees in Somalia, writes about his experience; even in the midst of desperate need, political niceties are still a priority.

Ed Unrau's review of *And When They Shall Ask* continues to draw comments from the specialists, this time Victor Peters, currently at Moorehead State University, who sets out to set the reviewer right.

Roy Vogt's *Observed Along the Way* is also part of this issue as usual, and while he may be writing observations about his travels on a path none of us share, Peter Peters sends another Air Mail Word from China about his travels even further from the beaten path.

Two book reviews exploring aspects of Christian ethics are also part of this issue. The last part of the magazine is the usual German section with items by Jack Thiessen.

And, finally the issue closes with *Our Word* by Harry Loewen, who wonders about the quality of our commitment to peace.

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mennonite mirror

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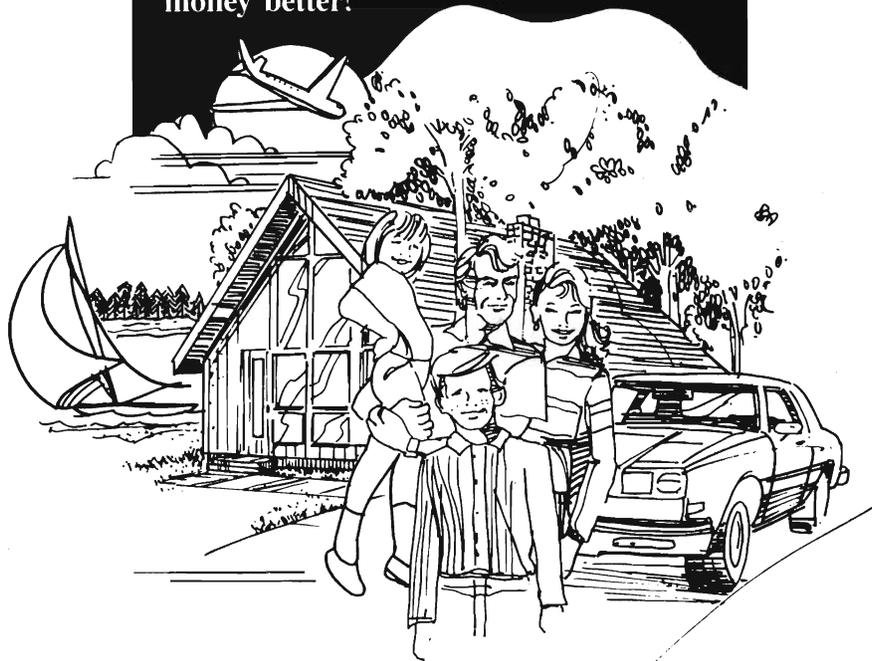
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Serving the Mennonite People of Manitoba



Paul Hiebert looks back on a satisfying life and a contented retirement

by Mary M. Enns

We never knew Paul Hiebert until we "met" Sarah Binks, "the sweet songstress of Saskatchewan," in the living room of our friends, Ernie and Irene. We listened with delight to Ernie's reading of this incredibly funny irreverent poetry. It's true Sarah Binks is "not at her best in a translation" being "too literal" but with confidence feeling always that she has "improved on the original". Heine's *Du Bist wie Eine Blume*, a poem in probably the most exquisite German ever written, suddenly emerged from Sarah's tongue: "You are like one flower, So swell, so good and clean, I look you on and longing, slinks me the heart between." And the sweetly sorrowful, internationally loved *Lorelei* which our mother sang to us of an evening when we sat at her knee on a little "Fuss-Baenkchen" became, as with a sorcerer's wand, "The Laurel's Egg". "The shipper in very small shiplet, Be-grabs it with very wild cry, He looks not the rock and the ripler, He looks but up top on the high."

Since that evening I have wanted to meet the man who induced the fictitious Sarah Binks to speak that way. I had to wait 20 years for it to happen. The photographer of the family had driven us to Carman. The little brown house "The Burrs" at the very end of Third Street sits behind a white picket fence. The sign on the fence reads "Paul

Hiebert." In the background a wooded area, trees now winter-bare but with promise of lush green when the season for green is there. Beyond that the Boyne River. Built in the 1930s as a summer retreat from city life, the house was long ago converted into a permanent residence when Paul and Dorothea retired to Carman. Now it is, every foot of it, warm and cozy though winds outdoors may be shaking the rafters. The fireplace in the longish living room burns lustily at stray logs of birch or pine or wood scraps. Above it hangs a reproduction by the French landscape painter Jean Baptiste Corot. Farther down a quite different painting by Paul's brother Ernest. Every picture in the house has a story attached to it.

As sometimes happens when people grow quite old, especially if they have led an interest-rich life, they surround themselves with memorabilia. The Hieberts' every cornice and shelf and antique cabinet are laden with collectables from their travels in Europe and elsewhere. The latest addition is a tiny Anne Hathaway cottage, a Christmas gift from England. Dorothea can tell you the origin of each precious piece. "But," smiles her husband, "as the sands begin to run out we realize that all material possessions and the successes of our life-time — you can't take anything with you."

Books and more books line the walls, Hiebert's own not prominently displayed. He points with pride to the per-

sonally autographed ones. In Peter Gzowski's *This Country in the Morning*, the author begins his introduction with "When I grow up I want to be Paul Hiebert. How much we enjoyed the deliberately bad poetry Professor Hiebert had written years before because as a young academic he'd found he didn't have the right kind of small talk for faculty parties. So he created Sarah and eventually put together a "critical" book about her and her works . . . and Oxford University Press brought out this small Canadian masterpiece . . . And on my way to becoming Paul Hiebert I'd like to be W. O. Mitchell." Mitchell was a student in Professor Hiebert's chemistry class at University of Manitoba.

It was *Sarah Binks*, now a Canadian classic, that won Dr. Hiebert the Stephen Leacock award for humor in 1947. Over the years it has provided pleasure and mirth for a great many people. It was used in a one man/woman stage production starring Eric Donkin as the fictional Miss Rosalind Drool, journalist and author of *Great Lives and Loves* from *Sarah Binks*.

With a dry wit and humor of that calibre, as further exemplified in *Willows Revisited* (1968), why would an author do a complete turnabout and write religious philosophy? His first, *Tower of Siloam* (1966), was a response, he says, to the scientific presumptuousness he had encountered in his years of teaching science. The second, *Doubting Castle* (1976), discusses his spiritual

struggles and "finding belief in a God of Love." Now, at 92, Paul Hiebert is awaiting the publication of yet another book. His *Not as the Scribes* is a series of writings and will not necessarily be a popular book, Hiebert feels, with some Mennonites. "Its thesis is fundamentally that as a civilization we are lost in materialism and intellectualism. In doing so we have neglected not only God but the true nature of God, which is His lovingness."

Why not be content to be remembered as a humorist? Hiebert answers this with quiet assurance: "It was a good thing for me to have gone into somewhat overtly serious writing because in it I was trying to escape from the fears instilled in me in my childhood, the harsh, stern fundamentalism in which I was brought up, something against which my happy nature continuously rebels. I was trying to find a way out in my writings. That's why I studied philosophy at university and then decided that was not the answer."

Dr. Hiebert, who taught chemistry at University of Manitoba for 29 years, says he was initially never attracted to the study of science. He spent a period of time in a tiny hamlet in Saskatchewan, the one from whence Sarah Binks speaks. Were there then models for the delightful characters of Sarah and Mathilda Schwantzhacker, who was the "least cross-eyed" of all the 13 daughters of her parents, and for Ole, the hired man? "No, no," insists their creator, "but of course all these people have counterparts in our experience; people with the qualities of Mathilda or a square-headed Swede like Ole. But I do love Sarah, a typical farm girl."

Hiebert also delved into literature, law, education and journalism. For a time he was a police reporter for the *Free Press*. He was the gold medalist in arts at University of Manitoba in 1916. Since acquiring a doctorate in science from McGill in 1924, he has been awarded two honorary doctorates as well as the Order of Canada. Yet this man, with a number of books to his credit, still insists: "I'm not an author, a writer, and never did set out to be one. I simply like to share laughter or my philosophy with other people."

Born in Pilot Mound to parents of Mennonite descent, he was brought up as a dyed in the wool Methodist because there were no other Mennonites around. Later the family did live in the Mennonite community of Altona. "And the Mennonites," says Hiebert, "are very like the Methodists — literalists." His father, John Hiebert, would be re-

membered as the Manitoba merchant who was drawn to the Klondike as a "gold-chaser" on the trail of '98. But the gold eluded him, as it did thousands like him. Paul Hiebert was an imaginative kid. And a clever one, with a better memory than most and the capacity for a little more application so that he won the scholarships. Both Paul and his brother Ernest always had a sense of humor. "My father did too, but he was something of a self-righteous, rigid man. My mother had a poetic nature, a woman very ambitious for herself and her children." The two young fellows did a lot of reading, books by Mark Twain and Charles Dickens. Since there were no telephones or television to distract them, they, among others, projected themselves to distant places through the imagination. They found satisfaction in writing deliberately bad poetry, doubling up with laughter at the result. Many years later at university, Tommy Tweed, who was to become one of Canada's finest actors, and Hiebert spent many happy hours discussing Sarah, this developing figment of Hiebert's imagination. Tweed, intrigued with Sarah, urged his professor to write a book about her. It was he who suggested the Roman occupation and the Horse Thermometer.

Talking quietly to Paul Hiebert, a diminutive man in a large armchair, and wearing a brown velvet smoking jacket, one is allowed a few rare glimpses into his personal life. It is gratifying that at 92 this amazing man has retained such a goodly dollop of humor and sharp intellect. He's not concerned about all the things and all the success you have to leave behind, but much more with the lovingness of God toward mortals. He spends his days quietly, taking inordinate pleasure in cooking and even baking. "Any scientist can be a good cook," he insists, and proceeds to relate how he won a prize for what he calls his "contribution to Canada," his Carman Soup, the recipe for which was duly published in the *Free Press*.

When he married Dorothea Cunningham, a red-haired beauty from Carman 58 years ago this February 27, he got what he wanted probably more than anything else. They had been engaged for five years while he pursued his studies and Dorothea taught school. They never did have any children "and though sometimes I've regretted this, I'm just as pleased now looking out at humanity being so perverse today that they will in the end destroy themselves," Hiebert says a little sadly. "As for myself, I don't like old age, but I'd

sure hate to go back to my youth. I look back on my long life and I have to say it's been a most wonderful life. I've done what I wanted to do and seen the places I wanted to see, some of the places I had read about: Custer's battlefield, Wounded Knee, Civil War Gettysburg and Waterloo. Now if only I could go back to England once more, that most wonderful country in the world. I wanted an education. Well, the greatest satisfaction is not in having the degrees but in the acquiring of them. If you had asked me when I was six what I wanted most I would probably have said, to eat all the bananas I wished for. At 16 it would have been to be admired by all the girls, conceited brat that I was. At age 45 I would have asked for a larger understanding. Then at 75 and 85 I'd have said I desire a perfect faith. Today I would say the same."

Asked if there is a parallel between himself and England's Malcolm Muggeridge, Hiebert ventures that it might be that both "believe in Christ as the actual expression of God."

A suitable ending for our look at Paul Hiebert is the sonnet with which he begins his masterpiece *Sarah Binks*.

When I have turned life's last
descriptive page,
And written finis to a somewhat
unplanned tale,
With here its moments of poetic rage,
And there long prose of dubious avail,
My friends will come and say, "He
was a sage,
Lo, count the leaves, in truth, 'tis
noble, look!
All this accomplished in his single
age!" —
And sigh, and reverently close the
book.
But from the multitude will come a
few,
Sweet sprightly souls who come not to
enlarge
Each chapter to heroic tome, nor view
The title page as bright emblazoned
targe —
But lovingly, to thumb each page
anew,
And chuckle at the doodles on the
marge.

mm

A full-time pastor needed at **Home Street Mennonite Church**, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. Starting time: Prefer September 1, 1984, but will discuss. For more details write to: Abe Friesen, 346 Nightingale Rd., Winnipeg, Mb. Can., R3J 3G5

Police

A Pioneer Episode, 1874

by Rhinehart Friesen

"All right, you can all have your gold back again. I'll be glad not to be responsible for it any longer. Tell all the men to meet in the big hall in the Immigration Building."

Before the Mennonite emigrants left Russia Erdman Penner had advised them not to take their money to Canada in the form of gold coins. He explained to them how conveniently the assets of the *Waisenamt* (literally 'Orphans' Bureau', established to take care of the inheritances of widows and minors, but which over the years had taken on most of the functions of a present day bank or trust company) could be transferred from one country to another by means of a few pieces of paper. But when it came to the individuals' proceeds from the sale of their personal property he ran into stubborn opposition. Each person insisted on keeping what was his in his own control. The obvious difficulties of everybody carrying his own gold coins and safeguarding them from pickpockets and thieves led to an acceptable compromise. Strong cases were built, the money packed into them, and assigned to six sturdy men who were to guard them at all times. By the time they reached Canada more and more men asked for some of their money in order to buy whatever they thought they would need to make a fresh start in Manitoba. It was in Collingwood, Ontario, while they waited to transfer from the railway to a Great Lakes Steamer that Erdman agreed to redistribute the money.

"Spread some sheets on the floor. Now, you gold carriers, get ready to empty your cases. I'll come around to

each pile and count it with you to make sure it's all there." The men did as he instructed while the rest of the crowd arranged themselves around the periphery of the large room.

"The count in every pile is correct," Erdman announced presently. "Now I want you all to come by singly with your receipts to collect what belongs to you. No pushing or shoving, please."

The distribution had hardly begun, however, when there was an interruption. A Canadian employee of the Immigration Halls opened the unbolted door without knocking, presumably to bring a message or announcement. What his business was, was never established. When he saw more gold on the floor than he had ever dreamed of, his eyes opened wide, his mouth dropped open, and without saying a word he turned and half ran out of the door, closing it firmly behind him.

"I wonder what he wanted?" one of the men asked.

"I don't know," said another, "but I'd feel a lot safer about taking my money if he hadn't seen this."

"I agree that it would have been better if we had bolted the door," said Erdman. "But I think we should go ahead with the distribution. What this means is that every one of us must be very careful, at least until we leave Collingwood."

The division of the money continued. As each man got what belonged to him he countersigned the receipt he had received in Russia, and returned it to Erdman. Finally it was finished.

With a sigh of relief Erdman said, "There, it looks as if it's all come out even. Is everybody satisfied?"

There were general expressions of agreement. Peter, stolid though he was, considered himself somewhat of a wit so he said, "If you have any left over or if anybody has more than they want, I could be persuaded to take a little more."

As the first man to leave reached the door he opened it but then hurriedly closed it again. "Police!" he exclaimed. "There are policemen out there."

An uneasy quiet fell over the crowd. In their almost self-governing villages in Russia they seldom had dealings with the Czar's security forces and when they did the experience was usually unpleasant.

"We haven't done anything wrong, have we?" asked Jacob Friesen. "Is it wrong to have money in Canada, Erdman? Or to get it out and count it?"

"No," answered Erdman, "I'm sure that Canadians have money and look at it and count it from time to time just as we do. I think the servant acted so strangely because he was surprised to see so much gold in one place."

Because it was generally acknowledged that Erdman had more financial sense than any of the others, some of the questions from the crowd were directed to him. Others were addressed to nobody in particular.

"Maybe he didn't realize that it belonged to all of us and that it is all we have. If he thought it all belonged to one of us then he would naturally think it had been stolen."

"How can we prove it's not stolen? Erdman, you have our receipts. Show the police our receipts to prove that we each own only a little bit."

"If they know none of us is rich they may take pity on us."

"For sure we'll have to bribe them to let us go on. If we don't, they'll think of some reason to keep us here for weeks."

"Maybe we should give it back to you, Erdman. It would be easier to hide a few packages than all our separate money bags."

Erdman tried to keep some semblance of order in the milling crowd. "I'm sure we have broken no law. Stay here for a few more minutes. I'll go out and talk to them and find out what they want of us."

So he went out alone to speak to the guards. But first he took out a few coins and hid them in one hand where they would be readily available. In Russia there had been similar occasions when he dealt with representatives of higher authorities and he knew they sometimes made an opportunity for him to slip them something discreetly. Fortunately one of the guards knew a little German.

"Good day, honoured sirs." Erdman addressed them as humbly and respectfully as he knew how. "To what do we owe the pleasure of this visit?"

The policeman had never been in a situation remotely resembling this one before so, if anything, he was even more uncertain about how to handle it than Erdman was. "We wondered whether we could be of help to you," he said lamely.

"Thank you, but we wish only to be allowed to proceed in peace to our destination in Manitoba."

"But all that gold," he was emboldened to ask. "What are you doing with it?"

"It is ours," Erdman assured him. "Obtained through honest work and not through theft or unlawful means. And although it may appear to be a great deal, it is pitifully little when you consider how many owners claim it. For many it will be much less than is needed to establish a working homestead." Erdman was quite willing to offer a sizable bribe but he didn't want the Canadians to get any unreasonable expectations so he wanted to make sure they realized that they were dealing with a group of very poor immigrants.

"But all that gold!" the guard exclaimed again. "Why did you have it lying on the floor? And without even locking the door."

"We brought it across the ocean in a safe way. Now that everybody needs it for his own uses we were distributing it to the individuals to whom it belonged," Erdman explained quite sim-

ply and truthfully. "As to the open door, I agree that was careless. But we thought we were among ourselves; among friends."

"Lucky for you, you are among friends." Then, as he turned to indicate the meeting was finished he added, more to his companions than to Erdman, "Anybody that does things like that sure needs friends."

Erdman returned the handful of coins to his pocket and went back into the hall. Had the signal for a bribe been given so subtly that he had missed it? But he didn't have time to ponder that question because he was met by a barrage of demands from the anxious crowd.

"Can we keep our money?"

"Will they let us go?"

"How much blood money did you have to give him?"

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is accepting applications for a teaching position for the 1984-85 school year. Music and/or French an asset. Please send complete resume and references to: Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary School, 26 Columbus Crescent, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3K 0C6. Ph. 885-1032.

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"What excuse did he give you for making trouble for us?"

"Quiet, quiet," said Erdman soothingly. "I am still just as much in the dark as you are. He accused us of nothing. He didn't give me a cue for a bribe, or if he did I missed it. He even suggested they were our friends."

"Did you ever hear of a policeman being a friend to anybody?" Peter was trying to be funny again. "To his own wife, maybe."

"What do we do now?" Jacob was more practical. "They know we have it so there's no use trying to hide it. Would it be possible to put it all back into the cases again and send a few men secretly by another way to Manitoba?"

"What other way is there to Manitoba?" countered Erdman. "Is there anybody among us who can find his way to Manitoba?"

There were no volunteers. So far their journey had been through settled parts of the world. But they all knew they were presently waiting for a ship to take them to the United States because the alternate Canadian route was through a wilderness that presented great difficulties. Certainly they would need a guide. And how could they find a guide and still maintain secrecy? After a considerable pause Erdman continued. "I suggest we carry on as if nothing had happened. Stay in or near the Immigration Buildings. Certainly don't wander into town alone. Sleep on your money bags until we get away from here."

Just as the gathering was breaking up, news arrived that the ship was ready for boarding. In the bustle of rounding up children and belongings and making sure that nobody or nothing was left behind there was little opportunity for more discussion about the occurrence in the Immigration Hall. Erdman returned to the subject as he and Jacob stood in the crowd at the rail watching the sailors prepare to cast off. "I'm relieved that we've got this far without any further interference. I'll be even more relieved when we leave this Canadian ship at Duluth and get on an American train, because then we'll be beyond the power of the Canadian police."

Erdman interrupted him. "Look, Jacob," he said excitedly as he pointed to a hurrying figure clambering onto the gangplank just as the sailors were about to raise it. "Isn't that one of the police?"

"It sure is. I wonder what made him decide at the last moment that he wanted to come with this ship."

"I'm afraid it has to do with us and our money. I would feel much better if he wasn't coming with us."

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Nothing untoward happened on the journey to Duluth. Although the immigrants were fully aware of the policeman's presence on the ship he made no attempt to mingle with them until they disembarked.

"There he is again," said Jacob as they waited on the dock between the ship and the train. "He's been watching us closely all the time we were on the ship."

"Yes," answered Erdman. "But I don't think he's tried to talk to any of us more than just to greet us in passing. If he plans to cause us any trouble I think he would have done it before now."

"He's not wearing his uniform. Can he arrest us when he's not in uniform?"

"I think he's not in uniform because we're no longer in Canada. I don't think a Canadian policeman has any authority in the States."

"Erdman, he's coming towards us. He's going to talk to us. What should we do now?"

"And by the time we get back into Canada in Manitoba we'll be hundreds of miles from here, and there the police will know nothing about our gold," Jacob continued the train of thought. "You and I could afford to give up a few coins by way of a bribe. But some of our brethren — a few coins is all some of them have. How will they ever acquire what is necessary to start a farm?"

"Let me remind you that when the decision was made to leave Russia we agreed to go as an entire Colony except for the few who wanted to stay behind. This meant that nobody would have to stay behind for lack of means. In one way or another those who can do so will pay the expenses of those in need. When we get to the land reserved for us we must make sure that when we group ourselves into new villages each one will include a fair share of poor families, widows and orphans."

"Sometimes, Erdman, I worry that all of us together don't have enough money to establish a colony."

"If we work hard enough the land will provide our food. If there is no clay for bricks we will have to build wooden houses out of whatever trees we can find. And if there are not enough trees to provide wood for fuel we'll burn straw or manure. It will be hard at first; but only fools said it would be other-wise."

"I also believe that what the preachers say is true; that we are doing what God wants us to do, and that if we just trust in Him, He will take care of us."

"The train is nearly ready to leave. I wish everybody else would hurry and

get on. Then at least there would be only the two of us that he could threaten. We may still have to buy ourselves out, but he can't expect as much from two as from the whole group."

"Good day, gentlemen," said the policeman in his best German. "I hope you had a good boat trip."

"Very good. We had pleasant summer weather." Erdman wished he could get at his money bag. Now, if ever, was the time to make a hand-shake that was more than just an empty hand-shake. But he had deliberately put it in an inaccessible place inside his pant leg.

"I can't take care of you any longer as this is as far as I can go. All I can do now is to wish you a safe journey from here on." With that, the policeman turned and walked away.

"He said he couldn't take care of us any longer," said Erdman scratching his head as they turned to board the train. "I just can't understand it. I guess in a strange country we have to expect to experience some things different from what we're used to. But, Jacob, do you really think that he came with us to take care of us?"

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Somalia: where giving aid is fraught with contradictions

by Art Defehr

Somalia is a country of desert and mountains, a little larger than Manitoba, population 4,000,000, situated along the Indian ocean on what is referred to as the Horn of Africa.

Somalia is the biblical Land of Punt, the home of one-third of all the world's camels, the source in biblical times and today of Frankincense and Myrrh. It is the home of nomadic clans who would be indistinguishable from Job and Abraham if they hid their transistor radios. It is an oral society which did not have a written language until 1972. Most of us cannot speak without notes, but a Somali orator can recite famous poems and stories without error for hours.

The Somali's identity is determined by his relationships. Each person receives his own name, then adds the given name of father and grandfather. Most Somalis can recite their genealogy for up to 40 generations if you care to ask. These relationships form the basis of the family clan which wanders with its animals — the larger tribe — all the way to confederacies of tribes. When an act of violence is committed by someone from a tribe, the elders sit down and work out a settlement, usually payment in camels, to prevent vengeance by the aggrieved tribe.

I am not speaking about history — but about 1983. This is a living culture which has survived virtually unchanged for millenia. A desert culture is not taught to build or accumulate — but to survive! There is no value to permanent structures if you have to follow your herds. The desert places a limit on how many animals can be supported and the need for mobility is a strong deterrent to materialism.

The Horn of Africa has never been

idyllic or even peaceful — but it has had a formula for survival. A century ago this balance between man and a harsh environment was disturbed by the entry of all kinds of Europeans with various motives. The British "protected" the north, the Italians occupied the south, the French claimed a piece of land as close to hell on earth as you can find it, and the Russian Czars helped the nearby Christian Amharics expand their territory just a little. The result is a group of tough nomads wandering according to the dictates of nature and tradition, and with little regard to the finer points of customs and immigration across the territory of four nations.

The arrival of independence in Africa during the 50's and 60's led the nomads to the not entirely illogical conclusion that independence was for people. That was a rather unfortunate conclusion, since independence in Africa has very little to do with people. Independence means the sovereignty of artificial boundaries drawn by colonial powers with virtually no regard to who lived within or without these boundaries.

After the Somalis under British and Italian rule gained their independence, they decided that the turmoil in Ethiopia after the fall of Haile Selassie was a great moment to unite the kith and kin of Greater Somalia. With their Russian equipment they almost succeeded, until Russia switched sides, sent in the Cubans and drove the Somalis, together with their nomadic cousins, out of the Ethiopian part of their historic grazing lands.

Presto, you have 400,000 or 700,000 or 1.4 million refugees depending on who is counting and for what reasons. The international community, after thor-

ough consideration while the caseload reduced itself by natural means, responds with its usual vigor. By that I mean that you send in all of your inexperienced people first, so that they have the opportunity to reinvent everything. A useful rule of thumb is to spend twice as much as required since that should adequately cover all of the mistakes. After some time the donors, each of whom arrives with his own motives, discover the shocking truth and demand better administration. By this time vested interests have become very effective at utilizing that extra assistance and come to the reasonable conclusion that a reduction of the program may be counter to their interests.

The Canadian Government was requested to nominate a candidate for the post of Representative of the UNHCR in early 1982 and in due course I was recommended, accepted, and in August 1982 arrived in Somalia. By this date the emergency phase was over — nobody was starving and medical and other services were adequate. The challenge was to move toward a resolution of the problem and to administer the program more effectively. I quickly discovered that a program which spends more per refugee per annum than the per capita GNP of Somalia does not create the right incentives for people to return to the harsh desert environment. But to reduce the program steps on the toes of the vested interests and also disturbs the sensibilities of very many well-meaning humanitarians who believe that we should give people what we can afford rather than what is consistent with their usual lifestyle and what is consistent with the restoration of self-sufficiency and dignity.

The program administered by our office was vast. It covered 35 camps containing officially 700,000 refugees scattered over 1000 miles of very inhospitable terrain. There is a well established tradition that refugee camps are located in totally inaccessible locations since somebody would already be on the place if you could get to it. The UNHCR works with the Government of Somalia, other International organizations and 35 Voluntary organizations to provide services to these scattered settlements. This includes food, drinking water, medical care, education, agriculture, etc. In order to accomplish this task the UNHCR built and financed hundreds of miles of road construction, bridges, operated a fleet of 250 large trucks and 800 smaller vehicles, built warehouses, clinics and schools, imported and distributed food, fuel and drugs, planted trees, trained teachers and medical personnel, provided irrigation, and on and on. Considering just the water sector, we worked with well-drilling, water purification plants, diesel pumps, solar pumps, windmills, hand pumps, dam construction and pipelines.

The program involves a great many people. The UNHCR office had a staff of 60. Other agencies employed another 400 expatriates and 5000 Somalis or refugees. Some agencies have their own resources, but many require funding through the UNHCR. These funds come from special donations from a variety of countries. It is interesting to note that Communist countries contribute nothing to the care of refugees. Someone has commented that their contribution is the refugees themselves.

A serious problem for a person in my position was to determine whose interest I should represent.

- The UNHCR is invited by the host government to assist with the care of refugees. But when the host government has political and economic motives which may run counter to the interest of refugees, how does one respond?

- The donors — As is usually the case, he who pays also calls the shots. Financial stewardship is a worthy objective, but I soon discovered that the donors were seriously concerned about financial integrity only when it served their political objectives.

- The refugees — Since they didn't invite us, don't vote in the General Assembly and don't make the contributions, they are also ignored.

I felt my background with refugees, development and management had prepared me for the task. But I was not

prepared for the sober reality that the refugee becomes very incidental to the whole situation. Given the choice, I opted for the refugee. The UN Convention on refugees protects the refugee against forcible recruitment into the military service of the host government — and I tried to provide that protection. When money was spent on food, we felt it reasonable that more people actually eat as a result. When the UNHCR provided secondary school scholarships — we believed that there should be real students at the other end of the program, and when refugees were willing to risk the return home they should not be forcibly prevented from doing so. Unfortunately, these assumptions were not universally shared. Governments in Africa have become accustomed to an aid process fed by guilt on the one hand or cynical donors on the other who do not question their policies or implementation. It comes as a surprise when they are suddenly expected to match rhetoric and performance.

Nevertheless, there are many Africans who are painfully aware of this disparity between words and action and seek a new path. I received a great deal of support from Government officials in Somalia who were embarrassed by the

performance of the Ministry in charge of refugees.

Although I was under pressure from this ministry, others in government and the donor community tried to persuade me to stay and chart a new course. But is that really the role of an outsider? I felt that my mandate was to work for the refugees — but not to fight government officials whose integrity could be questioned. This was a major factor in my decision not to renew my contract for a second term.

Despite a very difficult and challenging assignment, I am pleased to report that the year in Somalia was an outstanding experience for the family. We enjoyed an excellent climate, good school, comfortable home, occasional running water and electricity, good friends, tennis and access to one of the finest coastlines in the world. One Western embassy rates posting in Somalia as a 12 on a scale of difficulty from 1 to 12. After working in the world's poorest country, second poorest country, and the eighth poorest we have long since realized that external material indicators have little to do with a satisfactory living experience. Our two girls actually wept when we announced our departure.

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My experience in Africa is focused on Somalia with modest exposure to other countries. Nevertheless, it seems that my experiences are typical of much of a continent which is in deep trouble. Peaceful changes of leadership are rarer than whooping cranes. Whereas most countries were food exporters a few decades ago, only a handful still feed themselves. After the euphoria of independence, African leaders have become confused and embittered as the rainbow of progress recedes and disappears.

Following the catastrophes of World War I and II, the world placed great hope in the promise of the international institutions which would rise above national self-interest and petty politics. The United Nations and its specialized organs may be familiar to most of us, but they represent something far more important to the struggling nations of the third world. The UN represents technological advancement, humanitarian aid, financial assistance and, most important, a voice in world affairs. The chasm between the hope and the reality was very disillusioning to me as it has already been to many others. The UN is playing and will continue to play an important role, but its internal handicaps are of such a magnitude that its promise of translating the dreams of the world's poor and disadvantaged into reality is itself a dream.

The problem of dealing effectively with world poverty should not be laid solely at the feet of the UN. There is too little recognition that the benefits of technology and social organization which we by and large enjoy in the developed West are the product of centuries of interaction between religious and social attitudes, geography and an emerging technology. The interaction of tribal societies with an international bureaucracy often composed of 100 diverse nationalities is colorful and stimulating but does not reproduce the progressive development of ideas, attitudes and technology which is our

foundation. Each agency or expert or volunteer parachutes another great idea onto a foreign landscape, nurtures it a while and upon completion of his term it either absorbs great energy on the part of the local population to sustain it or it more likely withers and dies.

My greatest concern about the aid process is that money attracts politicians and expertise as honey attracts bees. Foreign aid determines the agenda for a country on the basis of projects which are externally acceptable rather than an agenda based on what is emerging from within. A foreign-educated local elite is able to communicate with the international donor elite, and together they establish priorities which tend to reflect their urban settings, biases towards large-scale technology and faith in Government and international institutions.

Africa is not being allowed to develop from within, to take some of our technologies and graft them onto their social institutions, to nurture local ideas and leadership. Africa is trying to catapult itself, with strong encouragement from others, directly into the 20th century with catastrophic results. Africa is a gigantic continent and it is unfair to generalize about a continent as I have done. There are countries, groups of people and agencies which do not fit the generalized assessment. But on a larger perspective this assessment is correct. Most donor countries such as Canada require that the UN declares a drought or other catastrophe in a country to qualify it for food assistance. So many African nations have such structural food imbalances by now that the FAO could already print a list of countries which will need a drought in 1984 or 1985.

Africa is on the verge of ridding itself of colonial occupation only to fall victim to a new dependency. This dependency is foreign loans, foreign ideologies, international experts and international charity. The New International Economic Order which is trumpeted so loudly represents the continuing stimuli, failing to recognize that Africa will have to make fundamental changes from within before the downward spiral can be reversed. Africa may need help to solve its problems, but we also need to recognize that our guilt and our money will not be sufficient. Africa has stood in front of the same threshold to progress for two decades, and the threshold keeps getting higher. Nothing will happen until everyone realizes that crossing that threshold will depend fundamentally on the Africans themselves.

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Some thoughts on Russia, and the Mennonites

by Victor Peters

Ed Unrau's review of the film *And When They Shall Ask* was deservedly generous. However, in the introduction to the review Unrau makes a number of statements which are at variance with history. This is not to suggest intent but rather an unfamiliarity with a period remote in place and time. The substance of the statements would have been valid and useful as questions; as conclusions they are untenable.

Unrau writes: "Mennonites spoke German, they maintained 'foreign' customs and religion, and were seen to collaborate with the invading German army."

Response. Russia was not a one-nation state (nor is the Soviet Union). Like the Austro-Hungarian empire it permitted various nationalities to retain their language, religion and customs. Russian was the national language and Orthodoxy the national church, but nationals such as the Poles, Finns, and others, and religious bodies such as Lutherans, Catholics, Mennonites, Moslems, and many others were free to worship in their faith, use their language and preserve their heritage. This also applied to Jews, with some restrictions in location.

The Mennonites, even had they been much more numerous than they were, were never "an inherently subversive threat to any Russian regime," as Unrau states. The loyalty of the Mennonites to the state was demonstrated during the Russo-Japanese war when many of them volunteered for medical service on the Siberian front. When World War I threatened to break out between Russia and Germany Mennonite students who were studying in Germany took the first train back to Russia.

Moreover, in 1918 the Germans did not come to Ukraine as a hostile army. Ukraine declared its independence in January 1918 and on February 9 signed a separate peace treaty with Germany. Ukraine at this time had its own "rada" (elected parliament), and its government felt threatened by the new Bolshevik regime in Moscow. Kiev, the Ukrainian capital, had been occupied by Russian Soviet forces and 5000 Ukrainians had been summarily shot (I. Nahayevsky: *History of Ukraine*). Under these conditions the Ukrainian gov-

ernment asked the German government for "military assistance in clearing up the Bolshevik bands from its territories" (Nahayevsky, p. 220). A legally constituted government, not the Mennonites, invited the German army into Ukraine. It is true that the Germans and Mennonites in Ukraine were pleased to have the German army assist in restoring order, but Ukrainian villagers also extended a cordial welcome to it. The ones who opposed it were the Bolsheviks and the followers of Makhno, but they were a small minority.

Referring to the period after the German army left, Unrau writes: ". . . in some (Mennonite) villages the consensus was so completely in favor of 'fighting back' that any person who advanced anything close to traditional pacifism did so at the risk of his life." This is literary hyperbole. No doubt harsh words were exchanged in some instances, but no Mennonite remotely "risked" his life if he did not join the *Selbstschutz* (home defence).

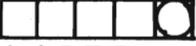
One of the colonies that suffered very severely from the Makhno terror was Nikolaipol, where I was born. Many Mennonites joined the "home defence," including my father, who was 32. His younger brother did not join. It was an entirely free personal decision in both cases, and no recriminations ensued. I could multiply this example. (Both men ended their lives tragically. My father was put to death by the Makhno bands, as were his father, age 55, and his grandfather, age 76. The latter two were not in the "*Selbstschutz*." My father's brother died ten years later in one of Stalin's Ural gulags.)

Most Ukrainians were as opposed to the terror as were the Mennonites, and formed their own "home defence" units. In my mother's home village of Nieder-Chortitza (Old Colony) few men joined the "*Selbstschutz*," and the Ukrainians in the neighboring village of Razumovka were disappointed. The "home defence" of the two villages at times collaborated. The Mennonite "home defence" was not fighting against the Ukrainian people, its activities were directed solely against the Makhno terrorists. Perhaps Prof. David Rempel (California), a senior historian and a native of Nieder-Chortitza, could

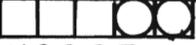
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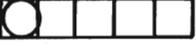
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provide additional information on this eventful period.

Unrau writes: "What was the difference, except in degree, between the lifestyle of the nobility and that of wealthy Mennonites?" This rhetorical question implies that the difference was small. In fact, a comparison cannot be made. The Russian nobility owned estates that compared in size and appearance to those of the aristocracy in England. In comparison to them even the wealthy Mennonite landowners were no more than large-scale farmers. In almost all cases they personally supervised all farm operations. Beyond that most of them actively participated especially in Mennonite but also in other undertakings in the interest of the general public. A few of them may have behaved irresponsibly, but they were the exception.

G. Lohrenz in *Heritage Remembered* (p. 125) in pictures and captions briefly indicates the history of one wealthy landowner family, Peters of Petersdorf. Franz Peters (1843-1919), like almost all Mennonite landowners, belonged to the first generation born in Russia. He was engaged in various activities, in most of them up to World War I. He was president of the Mennonite forestry (alternative) service (P. M. Friesen, p. 513). The Mennonite executive of this service assessed a general and a progressive "wealth" tax (*Vermögenssteuer*) for the maintenance of the forestry service. Many members of the executive (listed in P. M. Friesen, p. 521) were wealthy landowners. This was in 1910. To us today that seems only fair, but it appeared almost revolutionary at that time and stirred a heated debate.

(For comparison, it was at this time that Lloyd George introduced a new budget in England. "For centuries," writes Goldwin Smith in his *History of England*, "the lords had been England's greatest landholders; their ranks included the wealthiest men in the country. Under the budget they were liable for heaviest taxes. Most of them believed in the old order. This budget, they said, was socialistic revolution. Both their pockets and their pride were challenged. Heedless of consequences, they rejected the Liberal budget by a vote of 300 to 75.")

The Mennonite landowners in Russia were not revolutionaries, but they did not behave like the nobility in Russia, or anywhere else.

The same Daniel Peters also served on the board of Bethania, the Mennonite home for the mentally ill (patients not restricted to Mennonites). P.

M. Friesen lists the board members (p. 661). Again there are many wealthy Mennonites among them, and indeed they provided most of the financial support for the institution. For a time Daniel Peters also functioned as *Oberschulze* (reeve) for the Nikolaipol district, a position to which no member of the nobility would have aspired. Daniel Peters was brutally murdered by Makhno terrorists in 1919. The whole course of his life was rather typical of many Mennonite landowners in Russia.

The Mennonite community in Russia had many blemishes, but if it is examined in context with the times, in Russia or elsewhere, its record is impressive.

Editor's Note

The *Mirror* appreciates Prof. Peters' spirited defence of the Mennonite commonwealth in Russia in the context of the film *And When They Shall Ask* and our review of it. While we agree with most of what Prof. Peters writes, there are one or two points which we would like to clarify.

1) While it is true that "the Ukrainian government" asked for German help in 1918, that government was an emigré government and was very far from representing all the Ukrainian people, or even a majority of them. The Skoropadsky government which the German army of occupation set up was in fact a puppet government without any real connection with the Ukrainian people. Secondly, it is a recorded fact that the Mennonites of Halbstadt met the German occupation troops with an enthusiastic rendering at the station of the German national anthem, a performance that did not go unnoticed by the local Russian peasantry and that must have reinforced their impressions of the Mennonites as Russian citizens with strong German sympathies.

2) Regarding the *Selbstschutz*. When our reviewer stated that "any person who advanced anything close to traditional pacifism did so at the risk of his life," he was not simply engaging in "literary hyperbole." The Russian-Mennonite historian John B. Toews, in a very carefully documented article in *Mennonite Quarterly Review* in 1972, cites several examples of young Mennonite men who were harassed and threatened because they refused to join the *Selbstschutz*, including the case of a young man from the Molochnaya village of Wernersdorf who died of a heart attack while undergoing a mock execu-

tion designed to scare him into joining. (See John B. Toews, "The Origins and Activities of the Mennonite Selbstschutz in the Ukraine, 1918-19," *MQR*, Vol. XLVI, 1972, pp. 20-21).

Having said that, we wish to thank Dr. Peters for his comments and agree wholeheartedly with him that Mennonite land owners just before the Revolution were compiling an outstanding record for public service and philanthropical undertakings, including those of his own distinguished Peters family of Petersdorf.

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observed along the way



by Roy Vogt

March

• Sometimes life's important moments occur in a most embarrassing way. It is the last night of our annual stay at the Hecla Island resort. We have enjoyed the ski trails and the pool and over our last dinner together one of our friends informs us that the resort now receives its TV signals via satellite, and a blue movie will be shown at 1:30 a.m. We inform him that we don't intend to stay up for it, but he winks mischievously and says that he will give us a wake-up call. Sure enough, at 1:30 the phone rings. I struggle awake, grab the phone, and snarl into it, "Don't tell me that you just woke us up for a blue movie!" There is silence. Then I am surprised to hear the voice of our oldest daughter, calling long distance. "Dad, we are calling you and mom to announce our engagement. What is all this about a blue movie?" Well, I feel like crawling right through the mattress. But we recover and offer our warm congratulations to the happy couple. A June wedding, followed by a permanent move to Edmonton. He too is on the phone, telling us that from now on we have to cheer for the Oilers. That won't come easily. Just before we hang up I add hurriedly, "Oh yes, you have our permission."

• A Thursday evening takes me to my hometown of Steinbach, for a board meeting of the Mennonite Village Museum. My late uncle, J. J. Reimer, was one of the prime founders of this museum and shortly before his death I promised that I would try to carry on at least a small part of his work. Most of the work is done by a group of dedicated supporters in Steinbach, particularly Eugene Derksen and the manager, Peter Goertzen. The museum is preparing for another busy year. It attracts a tremendous number of visitors and is one of the most significant ways in which outsiders become acquainted with the Mennonite community. Make a point of visiting the museum this summer and give it your support.

• On the first Thursday in March Carl Ridd, probably the best basketball play-

er that Canada has ever had, speaks to a group of about 60 Mennonite business and professional people at a MEDA luncheon. Ridd is now a theologian at the University of Winnipeg. A few years ago he was deeply moved by the personal story of a young exile from Latin America, and since then he has devoted much of his time to the study of the tragic situation in that part of the world, and to the awakening of a greater consciousness on the part of others. At this luncheon he examines the plight of the average citizen in a country like El Salvador and leaves us with some disturbing questions about the possibility of peaceful solutions.

• A Monday early in March takes me on a one-day trip to Calgary, to participate in a sub-committee of the Economic Council of Canada which is studying the growth prospects of Western Canada. Downtown Calgary reminds me of some of the bombed-out sections of East Berlin. Half-finished buildings everywhere. Parts of the oil industry are recovering, but it will obviously take some time for the city as a whole to recapture its past glory. The road to and from the airport is constructed like a maze; it must have been built along the zig-zag course of former buffalo herds. After a hectic day I arrive back in Winnipeg to catch the last two periods of the Jet-Oiler game. The Jets start strong, then falter badly, and try to rally again at the end. Unfortunately a flu that I felt coming on during the day is taking a similar course. The news that Dale Hawerchuck has tied the score with just five seconds left in the game is conveyed to me by the thunderous roar of the fans, the roar filtering through to me in one of the men's wash rooms high above the stands. The flu is no respecter of important occasions. I recover just in time to see the Jets lose in overtime. The next day is spend in bed, forgetting.

• It is now mid-March and the winter is starting to drag badly. Fortunately, we have a good excuse to get away from it for a few days. My three-year term with the Economic Council of Canada is up, and the last meetings are scheduled for Victoria, B.C., precisely during the time

of the Brier championships (you can be assured that the planning economists in Ottawa had no idea that the curling finals were being held; they don't even know what curling is). We leave a few days early and are able to enjoy some wonderful sunshine and visits with close relatives in Vancouver. How refreshing it is to leave the winter clothes in the closet, and to take long walks along the ocean wall with a charming niece! Other nephews and nieces are now grown up and it is fascinating to visit with a number of them one evening and to catch up on their careers and ideas. My brother and sister-in-law decided to retreat to Australia for a few months when they heard we were coming. I must say we lost our heart in Vancouver. Even now I can smell the sea breeze along the walkway in Stanley Park and taste the delicious salmon cooked by my other sister-in-law. Running into long-lost friends on three separate occasions in downtown Vancouver reminded us that others have managed to escape from Manitoba. How long will we hold out, and why?

• Vancouver is followed by my first visit to Victoria. The Empress Hotel is filled with curlers, and we proudly announce whenever we can that we are from the winning province of Manitoba. Now there at least is one reason for being from this province; we know what to do with ice. We watch the closing Brier game on the TV in our hotel room — you get a better view of it than in the arena, and besides we heard enough noise from the curling crowd during the previous night.

• How British Victoria is, and how comically vulnerable to the excesses of youth. On Sunday afternoon we join a large group of well-dressed older ladies and gentlemen to partake (that archaic word says it exactly) of afternoon tea in the sedate foreroom of the Empress Hotel. We are munching our feeble tomato and cucumber sandwiches, and lifting our tea cups delicately to our lips, when suddenly a dozen students burst into the room and deposit a large, writhing canvass bag right in our midst. With shouts of "have a happy birthday

Jack", they depart as quickly as they came, leaving us to gawk at the bag that is struggling with something inside it. Slowly a head emerges sheepishly from one end of the bag, and a young, obviously naked male looks balefully at us, stunned to emerge in the middle of this august company in the Empress Hotel." Good afternoon," he says, "can anyone lend me the price of a telephone call? I would like to get out of here as fast as possible." The money is quickly proffered; gingerly he rises to his feet, holding onto the bag so as not to expose too much of himself below the shoulders, and away he hops to the lobby phone. We all return to our linen-covered tables and our quickly-cooling tea. Hearts beat quietly in unison once more, but we will always remember Jack's birthday.

- Saturday March 10 is the annual dinner of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, which is well attended. An evening program follows the dinner, featuring the ever popular Low German group the Heischratje and several readings in Low German by Al Reimer. Everyone thoroughly enjoys this creative demonstration of our Low German dialect.

- In mid-March I take my wife to the airport so she can attend a conference in Toronto. It is a pleasant change for me to drive her to the airport for such an event and for me to stay at home. My mother never told me there would be times like that.

- It is now the end of March and I am looking forward to a father-son banquet at the Douglas Mennonite church. It is my impression that an increasing number of men are taking their family responsibility seriously and it is a pleasure to participate in such an activity with them.



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Arnold Dyck Seminar

Für diesen Herbst wird ein Seminar über Arnold Dyck und seine Zeit geplant, und zwar als Gemeinschaftsprojekt des Mennonitischen Lehrstuhls an der Universität Winnipeg und der Deutschen Abteilung der Universität Manitoba.

Die Herausgeber der angekündigten Werkausgabe Arnold Dycks werden den Kern der Arbeitsgruppe bilden. Beiträge sollen aber auch von anderen Kollegen, von Studenten und von Gasthörern willkommen sein. Für eingeschriebene Studenten wird es möglich sein, Kredite von der jeweiligen Universität zu erhalten.

Ausser der Hauptwerke Dycks, die eingehend behandelt werden sollen, wird auch der geschichtliche Hintergrund (in Russland und in Canada) besprochen werden, wie auch andere Schriftsteller, etwa J. H. Janzen, Gerhard Loewen, Peter J. Klassen, Fritz Senn uam. Auch sprachliche und künstlerische Probleme der Zeit (und heute)

sollen erörtert werden.

Interessenten sollten sich an Professor Harry Loewen (786-7811) oder Professor Victor Doerksen (474-9591) richten, um weitere Informationen zu erhalten.

Ein deutscher Hamlet

Das Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre präsentiert am 26. und 27. April im Playhouse Theatre Shakespeares Meisterwerk, *Hamlet*, in der deutschen Übertragung von August Wilhelm Schlegel.

Unter der Regie von Dr. David Riesen spielen Henry Schroeder als Hamlet, Gerhard Wiebe als Claudius, Horst Friesen als Polonius, Sabine Schneider als Ophelia, Catherine Enns als Gertrude und John Martens als Horatio.

Nach den erfolgreichen, musikalischen Vorstellungen, *Der Zigeunerbaron* von Johann Strauss und Mozarts *Zauberflöte*, hat sich das Mennonitische Theater wieder ein hohes Ziel gesetzt. Irgendwann muss diese Gruppe wieder deutsches Theater spielen, aber bis dahin wünschen wir dem deutschen Shakespeare viel Erfolg!



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Off the beaten path in China

From Peter and Greti Peters who are on a teaching assignment in Chongqing Medical College, People's Republic of China.

Let us tell you something about our travels Jan. 20 to Feb. 10 during Spring Festival: Our mood became quite elated when we got above the clouds and saw the brilliant sunshine for the first time in months. We sometimes see the sun, but always in a haze at best. Two hours later we landed in Kunming. The sky was clear and the sunset reminded us of the Canadian prairie sunsets. We knew that our holiday had begun because our environment had changed completely. It is hard to describe how good we felt about this change in weather. During the week we were in Kunming our faces actually got sun and wind burnt.

Kunming is in southwestern China in Yunnan Province. It is on a plateau and thus has year-round pleasant weather — hence "Spring City." "Yunnan" means "south of the clouds." (Sichuan province has a reputation for being foggy and cloudy in winter.) Today Kunming is a city of two million people, but at one time people were sent here for banishment. There are a number of beautiful homes on the southern end of the city, that at one time were the homes of French engineers responsible for the India-China Railway prior to the 1920's. The Burma Road of the Second World War came here and is still open.

We strolled through city streets, markets and business sections. Like Chengdu and Beijing, the city is on a plain, and so there is much bicycle traffic in the streets, as well as horses, donkeys, hand-tractors and pedicabs. We ate at local restaurants at a much cheaper rate, and if you get over your reserva-

tions about unknown food and different sanitation standards it's even enjoyable!

We enjoyed several bus rides to interesting spots in the countryside. We saw several Buddhist Temples, and we took a walk one afternoon through a pine forest. The smells reminded us of Northern Ontario. It felt good. One day we took a boat ride on Lake Kunming the sixth biggest fresh water lake in China. The whole area looked somewhat like the Okanagan Valley in B.C. At the retreat center we basically lay in the sun and thought of you people in wintery Manitoba. Some of the magnolia and plum trees were on the verge of blossoming already at end of January.

One day we took a four-hour bus ride southeast to a geological wonder — the Stone Forest. On the way there we passed through two mountain passes (cold) and were impressed with the varied agricultural practices of the peasants. At one place we saw a number of peasants in paddy fields up to their knees in mud and water. Our bus rattled, groaned, and shook as we drove up and down the rough roads. The windows always shook down and so it was cold and drafty. The Stone Forest was really a marvel to behold — formed more than 250 million years ago. We noted a number of minority people quite conspicuous by the unique, intricately embroidered clothing they wear. We also saw a number of older women with bound feet. They usually need a cane or help to walk or move. This is still a tragic reminder of a bygone practise.

After seven days we were ready to go

north to Leshan. We were very lucky to get a ticket because Spring Festival is the height of holiday travel. Foreigners, however, get special treatment. You should have seen the press of the crowd at the railway station! Thousands of people got on that train — and how they managed in the 3rd class (seat only) and 4th class (standing only) I'll never know because I did not go up to look.

Our trip to Leshan took 20 hours. We went there because we wanted to see the Great Buddha (71 metres) and temples in the area. The Buddha was built more than 1,000 years ago on the side of a mountain at a river gorge that was particularly dangerous. Really remarkable! Leshan's hotel was unheated, but the food was good.

We drove by bus from Leshan to Chengdu for almost five hours. Chickens, cats, and fish in plastic bags were fellow passengers. We just inched our way through the crowds of the villages (always thousands of people) but in the open countryside we would reach the incredible speed of 60 kmh. The driver drove like a maniac with one hand on the horn as he weaved in and out of the slower moving road traffic. We drove through the famous fertile old Chengdu countryside. The fields were emerald green in different shades. The hillsides were covered with tea trees. The mist and fog gave the trees and hills a somewhat mysterious look. The irrigation waters shone like dull silver in the valleys — green and silver steps descending to the river.

We are glad to finally arrive in Chengdu and warm up in a heated hotel room. Warm showers and baths never felt better! We spent the actual Spring Festival in Chengdu and from the top floor watched the vast fireworks display over the city. For two or three days the children light firecrackers all day and evening. The Chinese invented gunpowder long ago, but they are obviously still intrigued with it all.

We took the train from Chengdu to Xian. Much of the distance from Kunming to Xian was through mountains, and we were really impressed with the literally hundreds of tunnels we passed through. I must say that the laboring people have done an impressive amount of work. Much of this railway work was done during the times of the so-called Cultural Revolution, 1966-1976.

Xian is a "must" city to see for anyone who wants to learn something about China's ancient past. In the city itself are the Big and Small Goose Pagodas that

date back to the 7th Century A.D. when Buddhism was first introduced to China from India. There is also a large Moslem Mosque (still in use) dating back to the 8th Century. The eastern end of the famed Silk Road started here, and the museum showed artifacts of trade that came from Russia, Greece, and even Rome. Marco Polo was here in the 13th century. He also visited Kunming. The museum in the city also had a number of buildings that housed large and small stone tablets (stiles) with ancient Chinese calligraphy. We even saw one memorial stile that records the arrival in 781 of a Nestorian priest and his founding of a Christian chapel there. There is a cross on top.

The most awe-inspiring things we saw were out in the country. West and east of Xian were the Tombs of Qin Shi Huang and the Museum of Army Vaults. The army vaults were discovered in 1974. There are over 6,000 life-sized soldiers and many horses. Many are not yet uncovered. The whole area is covered by a huge dome measuring some 70 x 240 m. We gazed in awe as we looked at this army of terracotta soldiers below us. Each of them stood there silently with his own peculiar expression. There was also an exhibition of the bronze chariots and horses unearthed at Emperor Qui Shi Huang's mausoleum. Some 1.5 km west of the vault of soldiers is the 47 m high mound of the tombs of the emperor himself. The outside perimeter of the mound is some six km and the tomb itself have not yet been unearthed. All of this was put together by hundreds of thousands of slaves. The only credit the present Chinese give him is that in 221 B.C. he ruled a unified China. He was a very ruthless ruler who also banned the teachings of Confucius. On another day we drove out some 90 km to look at some Han dynasty tombs. The 1½-mile long royal way is flanked by statues on both sides. I climbed one of the peaks (1,000 ft.) and looked down in all directions and tried to imagine what life must have been like 2,000 and 3,000 years ago. To the north stretched the fertile plains both east and west, while to the south was rugged mountain terrain. In the distance in the south I could see a valley with a frozen river. There were Chinese villages with homes built of brown mud adobe. One was right beside the "royal way" of the tomb. This would have been unheard of during the emperor's time.

. . . now we are back to Chongqing, preparing for our second term of teaching English to medical students and doctors.

mm

review

The Christian ethic of reacting to a threat

John Howard Yoder, What Would You Do?, Scottdale: Herald Press, 1983

A review by Victor G. Doerksen

In a little over a hundred pages the author, whose works in theology and ethics are well known, gives several treatments of the question posed by his title: "If a violent person threatened to harm a loved one. . . . WHAT WOULD YOU DO? His first response, "taking the question seriously" is to give a detailed and carefully reasoned argument against the simple resort to arms in a crisis situation. In a second section he then allows others to offer "other ways to respond," including Tolstoy, Joan Baez and others. Finally, a third part puts the question: "But does it really work?" and offers ideas from yet another group of authors.

As one might guess, the parts of this booklet are not very homogenous. The opening argument is a cool, logical exercise, almost too mathematical in its precision. By contrast some of the latter parts are popular and passionate in tone. But this does not diminish the value of the book, because it does deal with a problem which has various sides and which may be validly considered in a variety of ways.

Where one may argue with the first part, I think, is that it claims to be a systematic treatment of social ill but it appears to lack any perception of the historical roots of this problem, roots which are very visible in the appeals that are made on behalf of armed 'defence'. These roots are to be found to a considerable extent in the so-called

'honor' codes and conventions that have come down through history, all the way from the ancient cave to the modern den, without being displaced by more 'moral' (Christianity) or 'just' (the legal systems) forms of order. It is relatively easy to reduce the 'honor' code to logical nonsense, but that did not reduce its actual force over the past centuries and likely will not now either. Still, if it will not stop 'macho' man from arming himself in the name of defending 'what is his,' then at least the knowledge that what he is doing is unreasonable will not hurt him. It is the confusion between 'honor' and 'dignity' which must be cleared up, and not just logically, before such argumentation can have any real effect.

The second and third parts of the book make varied and interesting reading. A number of real and hypothetical crisis situations are described and this series of such dramatizations can be a valuable tool if the reader is prepared to consider different scenarios and options with an open mind. It seems probably though that this section too will make good sense chiefly to the converted, while those who feel that the protection of their loved ones is a matter of honor will not be budged.

Yoder is to be commended nonetheless for bringing his argument out onto the 'street.' One might wish that it had been published by some less type-cast house than Herald Press. Those who know where to find this book should not really need it!



A fascinating novel for pacifists and non-pacifists

A review by Harry Loewen

Proteus, a novel by Morris West, will be of interest to all those who wrestle with the question of how one should respond to violence in today's world. This is a most fascinating book. I know that readers will find it difficult to put the story down until they have finished reading it. Readers will also like the price of this hard-cover book. I bought my copy at Coles Bookstore for a mere \$2.99 — reduced from the original list price of \$9.95.

"Proteus" is the name for an international organization which has as its aim to "build bridges of benevolence" between persons and nations. Yet as John Spada the president and guiding light of the organization soon realizes, there is injustice and violence everywhere and the question is how to counter and combat the evil which surrounds all of us. The blurb on the dust-cover of the book puts it as follows:

"It is a fact that none of us is immune to the threat [of violence]. As we board an aircraft for our vacation, our baggage and our bodies are searched for concealed weapons. A bomb placed in a public thoroughfare can claim our children as its victims. Even in civilized lands a loved one can be picked up in a security raid or kidnapped for ransom. What will we do when the terror touches us?"

The question is put to a German professor who has written a book on violence and our response to it. The professor replies that he has no answer: "Whichever way I turn I am in a dilemma. I can choose, as a Christian, a passive resistance. Am I entitled to stand by

while another is brutalized? I have written not an answer but a riddle. 'If I act, I become one of them. If I act not, I become their slave.'"

For John Spada the question of violence becomes a horrible reality. His wife, daughter and son-in-law are brutalized and eventually murdered by organized state violence and terror. To track down and bring to justice the perpetrators of this crime, John Spada and his Proteus people become involved in intrigues, underhandedness, terror and killing. Various international networks are mobilized to fight national and international injustice and terror. In the end John Spada takes his case to the General Assembly of the United Nations, threatening the international body to poison many people with a deadly toxin, which the Proteus organization has produced, if political prisoners and prisoners of conscience are not released. Will the UN yield to blackmail and terror and compel countries like Argentina, the Soviet Union and others to release their prisoners and establish justice?

The protracted negotiations that follow, the political realities, and the realization that the release of the poison would destroy countless innocent human beings, dissuade John Spada and his Proteus people from carrying out their threat. John Spada acknowledges defeat, and in order not to betray members of his organization he takes his own life — a final act of violence. Both human and devilish means to eliminate violence and bring about justice have apparently failed.

The novel raises serious questions with regard to the methods used in re-

sisting evil. There are those characters in the novel — John Spada's son-in-law and the German professor — who believe that they must do all they can to expose the violence for what it is but not resort to brutal force in fighting it. John Spada agrees that this is the preferable way but does not believe that this way will achieve the desired end. But in the end, it is recognized, the violent means also fail to bring about justice and peace throughout the world.

Could it be that the Leo Tolstoy's, the Mahatma Gandhis, the John Howard Yoders, the historic peace churches, and above all the Sermon on the Mount have provided at least a partial answer to the question of how we should respond to all manner of violence and evil around us? If only individuals, churches, and governments would take that answer more seriously and at least put it to the test! To be a slave at building bridges of benevolence is no doubt to be preferred to becoming "one of them" and thus perpetuate the vicious circle of violence.

Morris West, Proteus. A novel (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1979). Hard-cover; 324 pages; reduced price: \$2.99.

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Board meeting highlights at MCC Canada

A resolution calling for two board meetings a year, the creation of a constituency relations position and a decision to build a new office facility were among the highlights of the annual **Mennonite Central Committee Canada (MCCC)** Board meeting, held January 19-21 in Tofield, Alberta. Board members also gave MCC Canada the green light to join MCC Manitoba in construction of new accessible office facilities. A joint MCC Manitoba/MCC Canada committee will study the proposed construction and final decisions will be made following the committee's presentation. Other highlights of the annual meeting:

1) The board agreed to continue a pro-life position, specifically in the areas of abortion, capital punishment, war and alcohol and drug abuse.

2) The board affirmed the work of **Bill Janzen** and **Freda Enns** at the MCC Canada Ottawa office. Board members asked the executive committee to give special attention to issues related to the operation of the Ottawa office.

3) Information Services was given permission to produce a special made-for-TV about water and MCC water projects around the world.

4) Personnel Services indicated that it will pay special attention to recruitment in Spanish-speaking constituent churches, in order to fill needs for workers in Latin and South America. The department also announced that Neil Reimer will replace Ron Lofthouse as service programs coordinator for MCC Ontario and that **Joan Barkman** will replace **Menno Plett** as MCC Manitoba voluntary services director. Lofthouse is taking a Brethren in Christ pastorate and Plett is returning to farming.

5) Board members learned that the experimental alternative sources of funding project, directed by **Frank Isaak**, brought \$194,000 to MCC Canada and MCC overseas projects during the last eight months. The funds were donated by foundations and individual donors.

6) Board members also heard that MCC Canada wants to explore service opportunities in job creation and employment, that victims offender minis-

tries wants to explore the creation of a justice for the victims fund and that voluntary services wants to limit program expansion in Ontario and Manitoba. **Henry Enns** was invited to continue as director of handicap concerns for two more years and the board changed the MCC Canada fiscal year to November 1 to October 31. The board approved a budget of \$15,256,822, a figure which will require a seven percent increase in constituency contributions in 1984. Elected to the executive committee were Abraham Wiebe, Margot Fieguth, Rudy Bartel and Merle Hartzler. Ross Nigh was re-elected chairman of the MCC Canada board and Joe Neufeld was re-elected vice-chairman. **Frank Epp** and **Paul Peters** continue as secretary and treasurer, respectively. The next MCC Canada annual meeting will take place in Ontario in January, 1985.

EDEN ACCREDITED

Eden Mental Health Centre in Winkler received notice that the centre has been granted a three-year accreditation by the Canadian Council on Hospital Accreditation. The three-year term is the maximum term possible and not normally given with a first survey.

The accreditation is a significant indicator to the governing board, the staff and the community that a high level of patient care is provided by the centre and its programs. The survey report issued with the notice cites virtually every department as deserving commendation. The survey was conducted during November.

Dr. Vincent the surveyor, a psychiatrist from Guelph, Ontario, concluded this report: "This is an excellent, small facility. It is well organized at board, administration, clinical and support levels. Quality of care high; staff morale is excellent. In addition to inpatient services, it provides considerable outpatient service, a transitional residence and an industrial training and work facility which is in a developmental phase. Its community support and integration and outreach activities are particularly commendable. In this era of restraint, it is noteworthy that this hospital provides an extremely cost-effective service."

On February 19 the first regular service of **Valley Gardens Community Church**, affiliated with the Manitoba Mennonite Brethren conference, took place in the Valley Gardens Junior High School at 220 Antrim Road. The leader of the ministries team for the new group is **Gilbert Brandt**.

On January 15, the North Kildonan Mennonite Brethren church held a commissioning service for **Martha Reimer**, who was preparing to return to Indonesia for a second term with Wycliffe Bible Translators.

Editor of the *Mennonite Brethren Herald* **Harold Jantz** will be stepping down from his position in 1985, after nearly 21 years of association with the publication. A search committee has been established to find a replacement for him. Associate editor, **Gordon Nickel**, will be leaving this fall to begin Seminary studies. He will be replaced by **James Coggins** of Waterloo, Ontario, a member of the Waterloo Mennonite Brethren congregation.

Syd Reimer was recently re-elected to a third two-year term as president of the **Mennonite Disaster Service** at the annual meeting of the MDS Section Board of the MCC at Upland, Calif. Reimer, a Winnipeg businessman who lives in Rosenort, is the first Canadian to serve as president of this far-flung Mennonite service organization. His experience with MDS goes back many years, with his first important assignment coming as project director for the flood disaster clean-up at Rapid City, S.D., in 1972. He has also been nominated for the chairmanship of the Canadian section of MDS. Syd Reimer is president of G. K. Braun Insurance Services in Winnipeg.

COMING EVENTS

April 14: MBCI Garage sale, 173 Talbot Ave., 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

April 15: Festival of Art and Music: Polo Park, noon to 6 p.m.

April 15: Mennonite Community Orchestra, Young United Church, 7:30 p.m.

April 26 and 27: Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre performance of *Hamlet* in the German language. Playhouse Theatre, 8:05 p.m.

April 29: Graduation at Elim Bible Institute, Altona.

May 5: Manitoba Women in Missions, Morden.

May 12: Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary School Open House and Tea. 26 Columbus Crescent.

MUSEUM LOOKING FOR FOLK ART

The Mennonite Village Museum is currently looking for examples of *Frakturmalen* and *Schoenschreiben*, as formerly practiced by the Mennonites of Dutch-Germanic descent both in Europe and North America.

This type of Mennonite folk art is often found in the form of hand written New Year's wishes, names and dates in books and old school scribblers. A fair number of such items were brought to North America by Mennonites entering Canada and the United States, while others are drawn or painted by students in the early private schools located on this continent.

The Mennonite Village Museum has a small collection of fraktur and is also participating in plans for a multicultural art display with several other ethnocultural groups in Manitoba. This exhibit will be on display in Winnipeg during the latter part of 1984.

For those who want to reply or request further information, contact Peter Goertzen, Mennonite Village Museum (Can) Inc., P.O. Box 1136, Steinbach, Manitoba, R0A 2A0.

An authority in the field of psychiatry, formerly of Steinbach, was recently appointed director of psychiatric services for the provincial health department. **Dr. John Allan Toews** began serving in a dual capacity Monday as director of psychiatric services and chief provincial psychiatrist. Dr. Toews also retains a staff appointment with the department of psychiatry at the University of Manitoba. Dr. Toews will serve as a link between mental health field services and the academic community.

Toews is one of three children of Abe Toews of Steinbach. He is a graduate of the faculty of medicine from the University of Manitoba and received certification in psychiatry from the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons in 1974. Dr. Toews has been an associate professor at the university since 1974 and 1983 was appointed as director of undergraduate education.



Roberta Janzen



John Klassen



Dwight Siemens

APRIL DAY BRINGS MCO CONCERT

The Mennonite Community Orchestra's first performance in 1984 is scheduled for April 15. It promises to be an exciting concert.

Roberta Janzen, age 14, will perform the first movement of the Saint-Saens cello concerto number one, opus 33. Roberta began cello studies at age six. She has been an active member of the Winnipeg Youth Orchestra and Junior Musical Club, and has studied at the Banff Centre of Fine Arts the past two summers.

The program will also feature 23-year-old **Dwight Siemens** of Lethbridge, Alberta. Dwight, presently a student at the Mennonite Brethren Bible College, will perform the Chopin Piano Concerto in E minor, opus 11. He is a graduate of the Columbia Bible Institute in Clearbrook, B.C. and has spent a year in field education at the school and at the Bakerview Mennonite Brethren Church.

In addition, pianist **Judy Kehler-Siebert** and the choir of the First Mennonite Church (director Rudy Schellenberg) will join the orchestra in Beethoven's exciting Choral Fantasy.

The entire concert will be under the direction of **John C. Klassen**, who is continuing his two-year appointment as conductor and musical director of the Mennonite Community Orchestra.

The concert, which starts at 7:30 p.m. will be held at the Young United Church in Winnipeg. Tickets are available from orchestra members, CMBC, MBBC, and JH McLean's, 263 Edmonton at Graham.

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**MAJORITY RULED
BY MINORITY RIGHTS?**

In response to Ruth Vogt's editorial in the October, '83 issue, and others in the Mennonite publications who have been advocating the same position in the Manitoba French language rights question, I would like to offer a few thoughts from an observer in another province, who may not be viewed as unbiased, but who would appear not to have the direct conflict of interest positions some of the parties we are hearing from otherwise, might have.

As a preamble I would say there has been a growing tendency among our Mennonites in the last several decades in too indiscriminate a way, to champion the "underdog" as perceived, or the causes represented by such. While this can be noble under certain circum-

stances, there is a real danger that it is now too frequently becoming simply "trendy". Identification with majorities and their views could appear to be only "running with the pack" and unnewsworthy, and we do sometimes desperately want to have headline billing don't we? If this then tends almost to be in perverse opposition to some mainline thinking, that might be a justifiable means to an end. As an example in other subject areas, we all know with what zeal some of our avant-garde thinkers in the recent past have relished the substantial grist for their mill provided by the Western world's political positions and their wholesale negative reaction to it. Yet, to my knowledge we have still to see any ink used by these authors in coming to grips with many world happenings such as the recent Korean Airlines incident. Somehow it doesn't seem to quite fit their script as it would only be a "me too" response in our environment.

Now to the specifics. The desirability of multi-lingualism and in our arena, namely Canada, that this should very sharply focus on French and English, should be an indisputable goal to be fostered and achieved by every logical, feasible but uncoercive means. Regrettably, it is usually after agreement on

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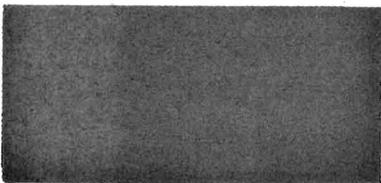


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this broad point, that the issue has died through inaction on the one hand, or died and will die through coercive leveraging on the other. I fear in the Manitoba context it will be latter.

I would plead in legalese language "nolo contendere" (no contest) to the charges pertaining to the unconstitutionality of the 1890 legislation which abridged French language rights in Manitoba. This pleading pertains to the situation as it existed almost 100 years ago. Let us keep several things in mind though, the Manitoba Act of 1870 was not promulgated from Sinai but from a lesser hill in Ottawa and the amendment in 1890 emanated from voices from an even lower hill — could it have been Stony Mountain? As frequently in later years, likewise the Manitoba representations of that day, were ahead of their times, and the contexts of pre 1870 versus 1983 were quite different and although the 1890 amendment appears to be technically in error, later circumstances and facts would seem to have justified it in a de-facto manner and all that should be needed is some form of ratification rather than the attempts to roll back 100 years of history and begin at square one. The Romans also unconstitutionally crossed the Alps and saturated Europe with their influence. Can we roll that back? The relative numerical strength of Francophones in Manitoba at pre 1870 levels versus 1983 provides the most logical of reasons why a decision prior thereto may have been right and now may very well be wrong in terms of feasibility warranting it.

This brings us to the issue's significance to other Provinces. Obviously for several hundreds of years now the French presence in Quebec was largely persuaded by their leaders, Church and otherwise, that a "close to the vest" game in staying near grandpere's habitant farm and Church was the best way of preserving language, culture and religion, rather than "Launching out into the deep" in large numbers and permeating the fabric in other parts of this land through resettlement in substantial strength. The relatively few who went that route have now not been sufficiently able to assert themselves to provide the impact on the mosaic overall needed, and we are now all being asked to not only stop the "Merry-go-round" while they get on, but here in Manitoba, turn it backward. A game of chess can, by willing players be reconstituted and then replayed if one of the players made a wrong tactical move early in the game —. My contention is

that history in that sense after such a period of time, is not a chess match and we must go on and improve on what is already long since a fait accompli.

The statement that this new proposal "does not impose any obligations on the vast majority of Manitobans who do not speak French" is patently not correct. Do those other than Francophones in Manitoba not pay taxes as one but not the only measure of "obligation"?

In Ontario now, without as yet similar compelling legislation, we have a situation where a very small numerical group of Francophone students in one school area is demanding, that in addition to all other subjects already taught in French, technical shop subject for an even much smaller number of students, also must be taught in French. Is there no obligation to the population at large? In jest it has been said that the next step there would be that music students in this school will demand that clefs, notes and key signatures will need to be in French.

The oversimplification and rather fuzzy analogy made of basic religious freedoms with the official language issue, is not an illustration of the best logic that the promoters are capable of. In German we would say, "*Das ist an den Haaren herbei geschleppt,*" (unnaturally brought in as evidence). The freedom of autonomous education originally for Mennonites in Manitoba, is a more valid comparison. So let us look at that in more depth. When we now read and hear to what heights or depths, the Mexican Mennonite emigré education there under such a system has come, one could perhaps make a very good case for such abrogation —.

Then lastly I will come to some possibilities for motivation on the part of Mennonites taking the stand of these editorials on this issue. First of all, when some blatantly state expectations to garner by osmosis, the benefits which would thereby be bestowed upon the Francophones in Manitoba, I would not in their place, wish to hold my breath waiting for such. Secondly though, I think it less than ethical even to attempt to harness such superficially Samaritan a ploy for such narrow ulterior purpose even if desirable. Furthermore, it is admitted that there are more than overtones politically in this entire matter and it is not begging the question, that partisanship rather than objectivity and logic, could be exerting some dominant role in the orchestration of this version of a "Mennonite Jig".
John B. Giesbrecht
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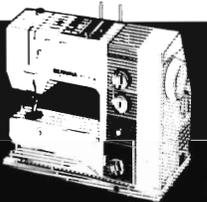
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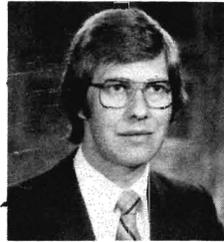


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von Jack Thiessen

“Kischo,” schreijch de Oole Henrichtjsche, “Kischo, enn wann etj ‘Kischo Heehna’ saj, dann meen etj uck die, Du dreekolleaje Schinda fonn eenem Hohn! Rut ut mienem Goade! Kischo!”

Toom dredden Mol Fondoag haud de Oole Henrichtjsche dee Noabasch Heena enn ähren steilen Hohn ut’em Goade jejoagt. Ditt latste Mol mett dem Bassem. Enn nu wea see seea fuchtijch. “Enn wann Jie Niefeldsche Onjetseffa noch eemol bie mie emm Goade nennkome enn hiea rommschiene, dann woat dee steila Donna fonn eenem Hohn bie mie woomäjlich diretjt enne Brodpaun emm owe febiestre. Daut kjenn jie junt ruhijch hinjre Oahre schriewe. Nu’s jenoag!”

Niefelds weare Tus, enn heade aules, säde oba nuscht, wiels see wisste, woo morschijch doll Taunte Henrichtjsche woare kunn. Jo, see haud je sogoa mol Niefelds ähren Hund eent mett dem Owepoaka äwret Kjriets jerest enn eemol haud see uck Niefelds äa Obraumtje daut Hinjarenj fesolt aus’a bie ar emm Goade jespält haud. Niefelds säde nijch fäl, weare oba festemmt enn sogoa een bätje feojat. Eemol haud Niefeld jesajcht, “Wann etj mie mau nijch eenes scheenen Doages aun dee roodkoppje Tsuck fefoate woal!” Oba aus hee “Tsuck” affens jesajcht haud, säde de Niefeldsche, “Oba Peeta, mottst Du sowaut saje enn dann noch ferre Kjinja?” Enn donn wea Peeta Niefeld stell. Weens no bute.

Oba tridj no dee Henrichtjsche. See haud aul fäle Joare auleen jeläwt; see wea Wätfu. Jo, roode Hoa haud see, enn dee worde nu biem Ellre emma fossja. Ähre Henj weare fedreajcht enn äre Finjasch knubblich aus’ne fewossne Rediestje, enn ähre Been sach’et soo’s fedreajde, kjoanje Eatje-Stobbes mett fewäsdet Lada äwatrocke enn ääh Je-

sejcht? Eene kjliene Näs, noch kjlandre Oage, dee emm Wota schwomme enn soo jäljreen weare aus Hoftje-Oage. Eene Brell haud see oppe Näs, enn dee schoof see sich emma mett dee Hinjahaund — doa dicht biem Haundjelentj — tridj oppe Näs. Oba dee Brell word kjeene nijch enn, doafäa dee Oage omm soo dolla. Jo, enn donn haud de Henrichtjsche noch “meeha Sommamohle emma Jesejcht aus Stearntjes aum Firmament,” säde de Oole Obraum Ditj emma. Jo, enn dann noch dee Oare: dee weare denn enn lang aus fedreajde Kommstblaäda enn “denn aus Tsiegoa-Popiea,” säde de selwja Obraum Ditj. Na jo, “Ohmtje Oole Obraum Ditj haft goot räde, dee wohnt aum aundren Enj fomm Darp,” säde Niefeld emma, “een bätje noda, enn dee Henrichtjsche haud ahm soone Räd haustig aufjewannt.” Oh jo, enn de Henrichtjsche wescht sich uck foaken de Näs enn emma mett äa Schaldoak.

Jo, jo, soo wea daut emm Darp Jnohdefeld, dijcht bie de Nippaenja, woa dee Mensche maunchmol een bät groff haundelde, noch growa räde enn noch fäl growa dochte.

Jo, enn nu tridj noh dee Henrichtjsche, no Niefelds enn uck tridj noh dee roode Hohns. Niefelds muake nu äre Heena enn ähren Hohn enn, hilde dee kjliene Heenajemeend schmock emm ‘lock enn nu head dee Tsankarie opp. Oba weet etj wäa daut mucht jewast senne, eenes scheenen Doages wäa dee Puat emm Hockje wada op enn dee Hohn weifeld uck aul mett dee Flijchte, moak eenen krommen Hauls, ratjcht sich, kjreid enn wajch wear’a tiedijch tsemorjess no dee Henrichtjsche enn äre Goade optoo. Doah aunjekome jintjet drock.

Enn daut died je dann uck nijch lang bett de Henrichtjsche rutkaum enn een

gauntset Schaldoak foll Äwabliessel fonne Kjeatj doabenne haud. Eascht streid se daut Äwabliessel enne rund, enn Hohn enn Heena fraute pienijch aules opp. Dee Hohn kluckad, enn kurrd enn muak eenen ditjen Kohda enn donn leet hee mett eene Flijcht eene runde Foah derjchet Saund tratje, enn donn kaum hee mett siene Tieppeehtjes uck aul noda enn wada streid de Henrichtjsche Fräte ut. Enn dit mol noch nohda dijcht ferre Feet. “Tiep, tiep, tiep,” roopt see lieseltjes enn donn platslich UJ! UJ! Dee Hohn wea mett eenst bie de Henrichtjsche enne Grauje; mett Dollkleiwe enn mett roode enn roddelje Fadre toop enn mett sienem steilen Kaum enn mett sienem Tsoagel-Fada-Struss . . . “Nu hab etj die, du driesta, fefrätna Schinda!” Foots haud see ahm uck aul dee Flijchte toopjedreit, enn nohschwinda wea hee aum Rejchtastool aunjekome, enn noch schwinda heiwd de Henrichtjsche aum Sinnowent tsemorjess dem Hohn den Tsoagel bett hinjre Oahre oppem Heiwklot auf . . . Dee Heena fluage enn rannde enn koakelde no Hus opptoo enn fetalde uck foats aules Tus bie Niefelds.

No Fieawent sad sich dee Niefeldsche daut Schaldoak trajcht aus’se sach, daut äa trauma Tuntjenitj fäld enn fleicht uck nijch meea oppem Hoff Baus späle wudd. “Good Nowent, Mumtje Henrichtjsche, waut jefftet morje bie Junt too Meddach?” froach dee Niefeldsche.

“Du bliffst doah oppem Scheffott stone. Enn wautet bie mie too Meddach jefft, jeit Noba Niefelds weinijch waut aun, Du best bie mie noch lang nijch kjeen Toppjetitja. Oba wann die daut intereseat, daut jefft bie ons een grootet Kjitjel mett Tsucka bestreit. Miene Kjinja kome uck Sinddach too Meddach. Enn uck een poa Nippaenja, enn dee kjree dee Schintjess enn den Bobbat. Jo, enn dee Junges habe bediedend meea Wind enne Meiwie aus Noba Niefeld enn siene Missasch. Aulso woat fe Niefelds woll nijch fäl meea äwabliewe. Aude!”

“Oba, oba, oba! Waut nu, waut nu!” docht Taunte Niefeldsche aus’e sach woo dee Loag wea enn no Hus jintj enn doobie meist aunfong too sinje, “Muss ich gehn mit leeren Händen, enn soo ferr mienem Peeta stäen?” Jo, jo, enn Nippaenja haft see uck noch enjelode? Mei, mei!

Dee Niefeldsche kaum aulso mett ladje Henj Tus aun enn Peeta wea seea festemmt, daut kjenn jie junt woll dentje. Schliesslijch enn endlijch wea daut een Niefeldscha Hohn enn kjeen Hen-

richtjscha, wona aum Sinndach bie de Noabasch enne Brodpaun bruzhle enn brozhauje wudd!

Niefeld docht enn docht enn dreemol sad hee sitj uck aul dee Schlubb opp enn wull no dee Henrichtjsche wanke oba dreemol säd siene Fru, "Peeta, Peeta, wacht bett morje." Enn Niefeld kjwiold ut, schobbd sich den Kopp enn bleef Tus. "Etj woä dee Tsuck noch lijchte!" säd'a enn jintj lidje.

Dee Doag kaume enn dee Doag jinje, enn boold stund dee Hoafst oppem Kelenda. Enn doamett fung uck daut Schwien- enn Hocklintj Schlachte aun. Weens soo wea daut jeplohnt.

Aum tienden Novamba sull dee Schwienstjast bie Niefelds loogone. De jekroagde Jast, Peetasch, Wellem Brune, Jasch Kloosses enn Doaft Rampels sulle aul Klock säwen toom Free-stitj bie Niefelds senne enn dann kunnet loogone.

Jo, oba wä meen Jie stund Klock sas biem Maltje bie Niefelds emm Staul? Doah stund platslijch de Henrichtjsche enn dree Nippaenja. "Enn dee haude," säd de Henrichtjsche, "nijch Schwäwelhelta enne Henj."

"Jun Bussel haft de measchte Tiet bie mie emm Goade jegroast. Kirie etj dee Halft fonn dem Fleesch — ooda aules?" froach de Henrichtjsche.

"Rut enn wajch fonn mienem Hoff!" schreajch Niefeld nu. "WUPP," Niefeld kjreajch eent mett dem Bassemstäl äwajeresst enn donn säd de Henrichtjsche sea lud, "Enn wann daut nijch tooreatjt dann lote uck noch enn poa Eatjetjnepels sea jreese!"

Fief Minute lota wea daut fatte Hocklintj uck aul bie de Henrichtjsche enne Schien. Feftien Minute lota wea daut aufjeladat enn utjenome. . . .

Dee Schult, dee Awaschult, dee Darpschriewa enn fief Manna — uck Noba Peeta Niefeld — weare aum Sinnowent bie de Henrichtjsche aunjekohme. Enn see kaume nijch omm too räde, see kaume omm too befäle: Dee Henrichtjsche sull fonn morje aun jieda Wäatj bie Niefelds eenmol utmeste enn emm Farjoa mett dem Feehoad toop den gauntsen Somma daut Fee oppe Weid joage enn tseowens tridjhole. Butadem sull see een Kaulf feede enn maste enn bie Niefelds emm Hoafst aufleewre. Enn donn sull see sitj noch morje tsemorjes ferr Tien bie Niefelds biem Utmeste entschulje. . . .

Aum nächsten Morje Klock fief brennd dee Henrichtjsche ähre Koht bett oppem Fundament auf. Fonne Henrichtjsche wea oba kjeene Spua too-finje. . . .

mm

Immer kreisen die Geier

Rezensiert von Jack Thiessen

Als die Pionierzeit, grausam, hart und unerbittlich, vorbei war, machte sich der jeweils Bedächtige unter den Siedlern daran, das Geschehene festzuhalten. So auch die Mennoniten. Ihre literarischen Erzeugnisse sind bislang erstaunlich karg. Man vertagte das Schreiben. Und eines Tages, als es dann so weit sein sollte, stockten die Finger, oder die Tinte war trocken geworden, oder die Sprache versagte. Oder das Publikum erwartete Zweckforschung, Zweckergebnisse, Knittelverse oder Geschichtchen mit „Die Moral von der Geschicht“-Endung. Und da machte der Künstler in ihren Reihen einfach nicht mit.

So erging es uns Mennoniten im Weichseldelta, in Russland, in Amerika, in Mexiko und in Südamerika.

Und was man schrieb musste gefällig und wohlgefällig sein, denn die Gesellschaft, die Gemeinde vertrug keine Kritik und eigenständiges Denken. Bibel und Brot: das war die Parole.

Aber in Paraguay gibt es Ausnahmen. Der Führende unter diesen ist der versierte Kopf, Peter P. Klassen, eine homo universalis, aus Filadelfia. Er tritt durch fundiertes Wissen, Einfühlungsvermögen und Beobachtungsgabe aus den Reihen der Unbedarften hervor und schreibt und schildert. Seine Sprache,

das Deutsche, beherrscht er glänzend, sein Auge richtet sich auf Wesentliches und seine Vielseitigkeit berührt alle Lebensbereiche. Das Resultat? Sein bisher gelungenstes Werk, „Immer kreisen die Geier.“

Bücher dieser Art sind selten, d.h. selten geworden in einer durch die Technik geprägten Welt. Das Werk erinnert an Betrachtungen deutscher Dorfschullehrer vorigen Jahrhunderts, welche das ganze Geschehen ihrer jeweiligen, stets heilen Welt noch vermochten einzufangen und festzuhalten. So auch Klassen.

Geschichte, Ethnologie (Indianerkunde, aber diesmal gelungen), Anthropologie, Geologie, Erdkunde und Erzählungen — alles findet in diesem Band Platz. Eine beachtliche Leistung, fürwahr. (Übrigens, es werden Episoden aus der Machno Zeit und des Selbstschutzes der ansonsten und für gewöhnlich „wehrlosen“ Mennoniten in Russland so erzählt, wie der Leser weiss, sie sich zugetragen haben. Überzeugend, also mit künstlerischer Würde.)

Als besonders gelungen gilt die Atmosphäre, die Klassen mit dem Wort schafft, denn beim Lesen ist der Leser plötzlich dabei, vernimmt die Gewalt der Natur dort weitab in der Grünen Hölle und wie sie den Menschen prägt.

Man vermisst ein wenig das was nun einmal Mark im mennonitischen Lebensknochen weltweit ausmacht, nämlich eine engere Beschäftigung mit dem ‚Plautdietsch.‘ Davon abgesehen, ist das Buch für alle Altersschichten geeignet. Es sollte neben der Bibel und dem Gesangbuch gleich rechts in greifbarer Nähe im Bücherregal eines jeden Deutschen und besonders eines jeden Mennoniten in der Welt stehen. Herr Klassen: Hut ab!

Zu erstehen ist das Buch bei: Christian Book Store Winnipeg; A. Olfert & Sons, Clearbrook, B.C.; und John Klippenstein, 57 Jefferson Dr., St. Catharines, Ont., L2N 3V3.

Peter P. Klassen, *Immer kreisen die Geier* (Imprenta ASCIM — Filadelfia, 1983), 160 Seiten, Paperback.

PLAY WRITING COMPETITION

Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre announces a play-writing contest with a prize of \$500 for an acceptable original play on a Mennonite theme in either German or English, preferably written by a Mennonite. Deadline for submission: June 1, 1984.

The successful play will be produced by WMT in its 1985 season.

For further information contact: Dr. David H. Riesen, 422 Kingston Crescent, telephone 247-6268 or Mr. Alfred Wiebe, 73 Smithfield Avenue, telephone 338-7263.

Deutscher Sprachwettbewerb

von Margerit Roger

Am 18. Februar jährte sich zum zehnten Mal mit einem Bankett und Festprogramm der Deutsche Sprachwettbewerb für Schüler der Junior und Senior High Schools in Manitoba. Der Abend war feierlich gestaltet: in der Pembina Hall der University of Manitoba waren viele der am Wettbewerb teilnehmenden Deutschlehrer Manitobas, sowie das Preisgericht, Gastsprecher, leitende Persönlichkeiten des Departments of Education, des Goethe Instituts (Toronto) und des Deutschen Konsulats, und Repräsentanten der unterstützenden Organisationen und Institutionen versammelt, um die 65 Finalisten und ihre Familien zu begrüßen und ja, die Namen der diesjährigen Gewinner bekannt zu geben.

In diesen Stunden schien für die Teilnehmer der Anfang des Wettbewerbs bestimmt weit zurück zu liegen. Im Oktober 1983 war aber der erste Sprachtest von 1300 Junior und Senior High School Schüler geschrieben worden. Nachdem die Arbeiten den verschiedenen deutsch-sprachigen Herkünften entsprechend eingestuft waren, suchten Preisrichter aus den diversen Regionen Manitobas 270 Arbeiten für die nächste Wettbewerbsphase aus. Aus ihnen gingen die 65 Schüler hervor, die am 18. Februar an der letzten Phase des Wettbewerbs teilnehmen durften.

Das ganztägige Schlussprogramm war aber nicht nur mit entscheidenden Prüfungen ausgefüllt. Während eine Gruppe Teilnehmer weitere Arbeiten schrieb, um Verständnis und Wiedergabe der deutschen Sprache nachzuweisen, oder in einem persönlichen Interview über ihre näheren und

weiteren Ziele berichtete, konnten Familien und andere Wettbewerbsteilnehmer ein Nachmittagsprogramm besuchen, das von der University of Manitoba organisiert worden war und sogar Filme im Planetarium mit einbezog.

Das Abendbankett wurde zur Krönung des Tages. Nach der Einführung von Dean Finlay, University of Manitoba, dem Tischgebet von Erwin Strempler und einem liebevoll vorbereiteten Festessen an geschmückten Tischen, wurden von Will Barmer die leitenden Persönlichkeiten, und von Ilse Hansch Pflug die finanziell unterstützenden Organisationen und Privatpersonen vorgestellt. Zur grossen Freude aller anwesenden Gäste, sagten dann die Gewinner des „Elementary German Poetry Recital“ Gedichte auf, und Mary-Ann Kröker, Gewinnerin eines Reisestipendiums im vorgangenen Jahr, berichtete von ihren Erlebnissen in Deutschland.

Als Gastsprecher des Abends betonte Dr. V. G. Doerksen, Head des Department of German der University of Manitoba, in seiner Ansprache die Wichtigkeit des persönlichen Strebens und Leistens, ohne dem Ehrgeiz des rücksichtslosen Wettkampfes zu verfallen. Vielmehr unterstrich Dr. Doerksen den Wert des Lernens als Persönlichkeitsbereicherung, wobei auch dieser Wettbewerb seinen Anteil habe.

Nun war der grosse Augenblick gekommen: Dr. R. J. Glenndinning übernahm das Mikrophon und die Namen der diesjährigen Gewinner des Wettbewerbs wurden Bekanntgegeben. Neben vielen wertvollen Buchpreisen, Folklorama- Passports, Abendessen- und Theaterkarten, wurden 3 Stipen-

dien in den Concordia Language Village (Minnesota) und 4 Reise- und Studienstipendien nach Deutschland verteilt. Ausserdem bekamen alle Schüler eine schriftliche Anerkennung ihrer Teilnahme und Leistung.

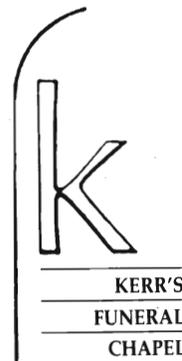
Dass dieser Abend ein Abschluss der langen Vorarbeit **aller** Beteiligten war, darf nicht vergessen werden. Ob Gewinner eines der Preise, oder Teilnehmer an den früheren Stufen des Wettbewerbs, verdienen die Schüler Lob für die Mühe die mit dem Lernen oder Erhalten einer Sprache verbunden ist. Auch verdienen **die** vielen unterstützenden Familien, Gemeinden und Lehrer Anerkennung und Lob, die die deutsche Sprache nicht nur an kommende Generationen weitergeben, sondern ihnen im deutschen Sprachraum Anforderungen und Ziele verschaffen und dadurch Deutsch in Manitoba als lebendige Sprache erhalten.

Gewinner der Hauptpreise:

Reisen nach Deutschland gewannen Kerstin Roger (MBCI), Hilde Strempler (MBCI), David Vanderhooft (MBCI) und Donna Kroeker (Garden Valley Collegiate, Winkler). Der Mennonite Mirror gratuliert allen, die an diesem grossartigen Unternehmen teil haben.

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**Where have all the peacemakers gone,
just when they are needed?**

After the Second World War world-renowned scientists established a new magazine entitled *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*. This magazine has on its title page a symbolic clock which indicates "the threat of nuclear doomsday hovering over mankind." In 1972 when the Soviet Union and the United States decided to limit their atomic weapons and agreed that nuclear war should not be an option for either side, the symbolic clock registered 12 minutes to midnight. Since then, however, the hands of this clock have moved forward only. Throughout 1983 the clock stood at four minutes to midnight, but with the beginning of 1984 the hands of the atomic clock have moved to three minutes to midnight. Bernard Feld, the editor-in-chief of the *Bulletin* writes that the reason for advancing the clock to this point is "the inclination of the leaders of the nuclear powers to talk and act as though they were prepared to use [nuclear] weapons under a variety of circumstances."

There are Mennonites who are not all that concerned about national and international tensions and the possibility of world destruction. The more pious among them say that God will not permit this to happen; that Christians will not have to go through the "great tribulation" which will come; and that the Lord will come for his own before the world burns up. Some people are even fatalistic about a possible atomic war. They feel that whatever has to happen will happen — the main thing is that Christians are ready to meet their Lord.

Some Mennonites display a most un-Anabaptist attitude with regard to armaments buildup, cruise missiles, and nuclear war. They tend to agree with many Canadian evangelicals that the West in general and Canada in particular have to be well prepared militarily against a possible attack. They believe with the so-called "Heritage Forum," a coalition of prominent evangelicals of Canada, "that even death is better than submission to the bondage . . . of a totalitarian regime," and that the free world must maintain its strike forces for "the safeguarding of our freedom and rights."

Responding to this kind of attitude, the editor of the *Mennonite Brethren Herald* last year suggested that Mennonite Brethren rethink their relationship with the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and other evangelical groups which support militarism. As the editorial put it: ". . . if we are linked to the justification of militarism which is now sweeping through evangelical circles, we may need to ask whether we shouldn't withdraw. The cause of Christ around the world is being hurt by the arguments for force, by the dependence upon the power of the state, which evangelicals in America are now displaying."

The subject of peace is not a popular one in many of our Mennonite churches. Ironically, the people who have a tradition of peacemaking, would rather not talk about peace issues, much less have the subject raised from their pulpits. As soon as nonresistance or pacifism are mentioned, some people react negatively and resist the idea of peace. They believe that the peace question is merely a political issue; that pacifists are subversive elements in our society; and that war resisters advocate unilateral disarmament and thus undermine the defenses of the West.

Whatever the rational arguments for or against non-violence and pacifism, Mennonite Christians must take Christ's message of love, forgiveness, reconciliation and peace most seriously. The Great Commission of our Lord to go into all the world to proclaim the gospel, includes the message of peace between God and men and between individuals and nations. In fact, love, redemption and peace are the heart of the good news. For God so loved the world, we read, and "God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him."

The good news of love and peace does not apply to the soul or to the inward person only. According to Luke 4 the gospel extends to the whole person and to society at large. This is how the first Christians understood the gospel and this is how our sixteenth-century forebears sought to advocate and live the good news of salvation. Both the first Christians and the Anabaptist-Mennonites rejected war and soldiering. And today more than ever before there is the crying need for Mennonites to speak clearly and loudly to the issues of the arms race and nuclear war.

It is high time that Mennonites begin to realize that the issue of war and peace is not a mere political matter, not even a mere human question, but a deeply moral, existential and religious concern. Modern weapons and nuclear warfare with the possibility of global annihilation are not only matters of life and death but they are indecent, immoral and demonic. This means that we as Christians and human beings do have something to say about the evil which threatens all of us. The nuclear arms race which threatens the destruction of the world cannot be left in the hands of politicians and world leaders only. Especially those who have heard the life-giving message of Christ and have experienced the power of God's love and goodness, should have something to say about the sin and evil of global destruction.

What can we do at three minutes to midnight? We can exemplify love and peace in our lives, families and society and thus contribute to peace-making in our communities. We can pray for and support those leaders who are working toward lessening of international tensions. The rhetoric, the accusations, the threats, and the infantile behaviour of both East and West are danger signals which cannot be ignored. We can tell our governments that violence and counter-violence are not the ways of peace but of escalation of violence. Our modern weapons will not defend our freedom; they have brought us close to the final solution — death!

Above all, will Mennonites re-appropriate their historic peace message and demonstrate to other Christians and their society that Christianity and war cannot be reconciled? As Harry Emerson Fosdick said some years ago: "War is the most colossal and ruinous social sin that afflicts mankind; it is utterly . . . unchristian; in its total method and effect it means everything that Jesus did not mean and it means nothing that he did mean; it is a more blatant denial of every Christian doctrine about God and man than all the theoretical atheists on earth ever could devise."

— Harry Loewen



*See, from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?*

*Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.*

Edward Miller 1790

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