

mennonite mirror

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A Christmas Scripture

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon . . . and it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And inspired by the Spirit he came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus . . . he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said:

*"Lord, now lettest thy servant depart in peace,
according to thy word;*

*for mine eyes have seen thy salvation
which thou hast prepared in the presence of all people,
a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and for glory to thyself.*

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ForeWord

This edition opens with an article on Frank Sawatzky who built his own aircraft and other transportation devices in the 1930s. His mechanical skills as described in the article are a tribute to the will to build and to the inventive spirit.

There are two articles on people with musical abilities, but their musical inclinations are so far apart that one hesitates to even mention them in one sentence. One article is about William Reimer, who has chosen to make "serious" music his career in Germany, and the other is about Ma Henning, who has made a name for herself in Manitoba among those who enjoy country music.

Christmas is a theme of the cover, of three articles, a Knock on the Door, Jugful of Love, and Ein Weihnachtsmärchen, and the Our Word item by Roy Vogt.

It should be mentioned at this point that Observed Along the Way is not a part of this issue. Roy promises to be observant in time to conceive a column for delivery to our readers in the January edition.

There are a lot of reviews in this issue: on a book examining the history of western Canada, on a historic book, the Low German dictionary, one review is even on books about peacemaking, and on the Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre production of *Blythe Spirit*.

Last edition the ForeWord published on this page was unfair to author John Friesen by commenting explicitly on the viewpoint he expressed in his last instalment on peacemaking and civil disobedience. Although the *Mirror* believes that it may comment on the ideas of its authors, it also believes that its readers should have "first chance" to form their own views without having their opinions shaped in advance by opinionated comment in ForeWord. Accordingly, ForeWord will limit its commentary to observations about the content of the current issue and will not comment on the concepts expressed. Having said this, readers are encouraged, indeed implored, to write letters expressing their opinions on what they read in the *Mirror*.

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mirror

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Mennonite Mirror

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Frank Sawatzky with snowplane, 1937.

“By Guess and By Gosh”: Steinbach’s Incredible Flying Machine

In January of 1932, the village of Steinbach buzzed with excitement. Behind the closed doors of Klaas Reimer’s machine shop on Main Street, it was rumoured, two young men were assembling an airplane. The believer and the incredulous alike took his turn blowing little peep holes in the frost encrusting the windows to peer at the exotic machine taking shape inside the old shed. Over the four months until spring, this gallery of the curious watched as the skeletal frame took flesh as an incredible flying machine.

“I think the locked doors were the beginning of the legend,” says Frank Sawatzky recalling that spring. He and his brother-in-law, Bill Wiebe, had never intended that their building project should be mysterious or secret, but the sheer number of onlookers who arrived whenever the lights went on in the shop made it impossible to work efficiently. They closed the doors and immediately found that their project had assumed an almost magical status.

In fact, the transformations ordinary materials underwent in Frank and Bill’s hands was a kind of alchemy. The airplane they were building was modelled on a monoplane designed by Ben Pietenpol of Minnesota. The two did not,

by Mavis Reimer

however, have blueprints for the aircraft. What they did have was an issue of *Popular Mechanics* in which the Pietenpol had been described and illustrated. From these sketches, Frank and Bill drew up a list of materials as well as a set of basic dimensions such as the length of fuselage and wing. The figures printed in the magazine were so small and poorly reproduced that a magnifying glass was needed to read them.



Bill Wiebe and Frank Sawatzky.

All the metal fittings for the plane were made by the two men in their shop, including wing ribs and bracing. A coil spring was used to fashion the airspeed indicator, calibrated, as Frank Sawatzky recalls, mostly “by guess and by gosh.” An automobile speedometer was redesigned to see duty as a tachometer. The plane’s wheels were borrowed from a motorcycle and the engine from a used pick-up truck. This Model A Ford engine was modified to step up its power and reduce its weight: an aluminum high compression head was installed, the cast-iron manifold was rebuilt of a lighter metal, and the battery was replaced with a magneto ignition.

There were items which Frank and Bill could neither scrounge nor build, among them the Irish linen to stretch over the body and wings of the plane, the acetate paint to make the linen taut, and the propeller. The propeller was ordered directly from Ben Pietenpol who had designed the Air Camper, the other items purchased from Winnipeg supply houses. Total cost of these materials was just \$375, a cost assumed by the two men’s father-in-law, Steinbach Ford dealer J. R. Friesen.

At the time that Frank Sawatzky was

building the Pietenpol, he had twice had a ride in an airplane, but had never himself flown one. His fascination with flying and aircraft, however, began in his adolescence.

In 1920, when Frank was 16 and living in Altona with his parents, he saw his first flying machine. A Winnipeg pilot passed over town on his way to Gretna. Here the pilot landed his "Jenny" — an aircraft used to train pilots in World War I — in the cow pasture behind the Mennonite Collegiate Institute and spent the next few days flying paying passengers over their village. On one landing, the tail of the Jenny caught the top of a car parked at the end of the pasture and broke a skid and the propeller. The pilot and aircraft were grounded in Gretna for several days until replacement parts arrived from Winnipeg.

To Frank, it seemed too good an opportunity to miss. When he heard on a Saturday afternoon that the parts shipment had arrived in Gretna, he planted himself firmly at the pasture on Sunday to watch the pilot repair his plane. From that day, he collected all the magazines on aircraft and flying he could afford.

Four months after they had begun work, by May of 1932, the Pietenpol was finished. After some minor modifications, it was given the stamp of approval by a structural inspector from the Department of National Defense. It remained only to see whether the craft was airworthy.

The maiden flight of the Pietenpol was scheduled for the second of May, and by mid-morning on that day, the pasture behind the school on Second Street was glutted with people. Schools recessed, as teachers realized that no pupils were likely to be in attendance. Municipal offices and businesses closed their doors.

At 10 a.m., Frank began some ground tests of the motor and steering mechanisms. Everything seemed in order. At 2 p.m., Frank Brown — the WW I pilot from Winnipeg who had agreed to do the test flight — arrived at the makeshift airstrip where the crowd of people still waited. Brown repeated the ground tests. After several runs up and down the field, he announced that he would be taking off on his next taxi, although he privately expressed some concern to Frank and Bill about the telephone wires at the end of the runway. But there was no cause for concern. By the time the little Pietenpol was halfway down the field, it had lifted off. It cleared the wires by 20 feet. In three circuits around Steinbach that afternoon, the

open cockpit plane reached altitudes of 500 feet and airspeeds of 75 mph. The excitement and pride of the town was uncontained. In his report on the day's events, Arnold Dyck, then editor of the *Steinbach Post*, simply cheered: "*Ja, wir in Steinbach fliegen!*"

Having successfully created an airplane, Frank Sawatzky decided it was time to learn to fly one. He paid for a two-hour session in a Gypsy Moth with an instructor from Northwest Aeromarine in Winnipeg. Although 12 hours was usually considered a minimum requirement for a maiden solo flight, Frank was convinced after just two hours that he would be able to manage his Pietenpol. The plane was hauled out to Kroeker's pasture south of Steinbach on the back of a Ford pick-up truck. The tail skid of the plane was mounted on the gate of the pick-up and, while Frank sat braced in the box holding onto the plane, Bill Wiebe drove the truck.

Once again, it seemed that most of Steinbach was out to watch the Pietenpol perform. Poised on the end of the runway of Kroeker's pasture, Frank pushed the throttle forward and rolled with a thud into the cowpath. A small town boy but not a farm boy, Frank had never been told that cows follow the same rut homeward each night. The wings of the airplane slapped the ground and the Pietenpol stopped, rather inelegantly, on its nose.

The maiden flight of the plane had been a glorious vindication of Frank and Bill's audacity and tenacity. This, as Frank recalls, was "quite a disgrace." The propeller specially ordered from Ben Pietenpol was broken. Fortunately the two men had heard from other airmen that propellers had a notoriously short lifespan and had taken the precaution of drawing a profile of the prop when it first arrived from Minnesota. A new propeller built and his chagrin set aside, Frank headed back to Winnipeg

for more instruction. In 1933, he became the first licensed pilot in Steinbach.

Flying in those early days of private light aircraft required a full measure of mechanical wizardry, a large dollop of derring-do, and more than a pinch of good luck. Frank Sawatzky probably embodied the ideal combination of the three ingredients. A flight he made between Altona and Steinbach in near hurricane conditions quickly became a local legend. But many of the flights of the Pietenpol were beset by emergencies that required quick thinking and inventive solutions.

A particularly memorable flight was a Sunday trip to Kenora in late spring. Flying at an altitude of 3,000 feet, the entire aircraft suddenly began to shake. Consulting Bill Wiebe on the speaking tube that connected the two men in the open cockpit, Frank decided they would have to land. The most probable landing site was a haying meadow they spotted among the trees of the White-shell. They landed and found themselves hip-deep in snow. The problem, they quickly discovered, was that two of three screws on the propeller cap had worked themselves loose. With only one screw left, the plane was thrown out of balance. The mechanical problem was simply solved by removing the remaining screw. Getting out of the tight field was more problematic. Frank made a rather rudimentary airstrip by taxiing the plane back and forth to pack down the snow. Then the two men took off straight toward the bush, clearing the trees at the edge of the stand by a scant foot.

At Kenora, Frank landed the Pietenpol on the ice of Lake of the Woods, parallel to the shore. Just at the spot where they landed, a local sawmill discharged its hot water waste into the lake. One hundred and fifty feet offshore was open water. As luck would



Snowplane service, 1938.

have it, during the few hours Bill and Frank spent in Kenora, the wind shifted direction. By the time they were ready to leave, they had a difficult decision to make. They could either attempt a crosswind take-off or take off from shore toward the open water. After pacing the distance, Frank decided to try the second option. To avail himself of all possible ground, Frank had the plane dragged up on the lakeshore. Two men were recruited to hold down the tail of the plane until Frank had the engine at full throttle. At his signal, they let go their hold and the Pietenpol ran down the bank and across the ice, lifting off fifty feet before the open lake.

Within a few years after 1932, Bill Wiebe and Frank Sawatzky built two other planes — a Corben Junior Ace in 1934 and a second Pietenpol Air Camper in 1935 — as well as designing and selling several complete kits for home-built planes.

In the latter part of the thirties, Bill and Frank turned their attention to snowplanes. Having heard that airplane engines and propellers were being used by builders in the U.S.A. to drive these new winter vehicles, they were determined to try it themselves. J. R. Friesen, approached for financing by his two sons-in-law, was openly sceptical of this latest scheme. Pointing to a scrap heap behind his body shop, he told them, "If you can build a snowplane out of that, go ahead." They did.

The basic frame of the first snowplane they built was constructed of bed irons. The seats were salvaged from an old car, as was the engine. Canvas was stretched over the frame and treated with the acetate they had used on their airplanes.

The snowplane service established by Bill and Frank was immediately successful. Roads were not routinely kept open in winter, so that such a sure mode of transportation was invaluable. The service was most frequently used by local medical doctors and the RCMP, although meeting and delivering passengers to the train depot in Giroux was also a steady business. Often the two snowplanes in the service ran continuously for 24 hours on end.

The snowplanes were a practical and accessible means of transportation for residents of Steinbach. But the legend of Bill Wiebe and Frank Sawatzky will always be bound to the memory of May 2, 1932. For the people who were there on that day, the flight of the Pietenpol was not so much the success of ingenious mechanics as a victory of imagination. "Ja, wir in Steinbach fliegen!"

mm



*Peace and Goodwill
to all ...*

from the Director, Management and Staff



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40 Years of Service to the Mennonite People of Manitoba

A Knock on the Door

By Marie Barton

Pastor Samuel Mulhembacher Hauch, who lived with his wife Elizabeth and their ten young children in a modest two-storey parsonage in an Ontario town in 1910, believed in prayer. His dedicated life was a prayer. "Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be accepted in Thy sight, O Lord . . ." Meditations of my heart? Wordless prayer? Still, it always amazed him how many prayers sent up by him received recognition. He called each time a miracle.

Christmas approached, that time of year marked to remember the birth of the Baby Jesus in a manger on a pallet of straw, a story to be retold each year to his eager children. Also, eagerly, each looked forward to a small gift on Christmas morning — usually to be found under the pillow. But this year there would be no gifts and all because a man, not of his congregation, had knocked on the door — a man hunted by the law. He had told his sad story.

He had been laid off by his company employer because he was trying to organize a union among the workers to prove that a man "is worthy of his hire." Unfortunately, the law militated against unions. "But in Manitoba I would be free of pursuit and could seek employment there without harassment. But I have no money for travel."

The good pastor, moved by the man's plight, took out his worn purse, emptied it of its contents and gave them to the refugee, then cautioned: "Stay here, my Friend, till my wife gives us the signal that it's safe to leave. The train goes within the hour, and she is posted up-

stairs where she can see the police patrolling and will know when they have turned the corner of the block."

On Elizabeth's signal, the man left. If all went well, he would arrive at the railway station, purchase a ticket, and board the train. Should he be fortunate enough to find work in another province, he would in the course of events send for his family. Thank you, God, said the minister in his thoughts, for allowing me to be your helper in this man's need.

Hauch could hear his wife, who had known better days until disinherited by her family for marrying into poverty, upstairs putting their brood to bed. Christmas Eve had come and she was taking extra time to tell the Christmas story to her eager little listeners, who would be eagerly looking under their pillows on Christmas morning for presents. Then he heard Elizabeth telling them that this year there would be no presents.

He took out his purse as he sat in his study, for he had not had the courage to join his family upstairs. He counted his wealth, which amounted to exactly one quarter, one dime, and seven pennies. Should he slip out to buy a paper bagful of multicolored gumdrops for his little innocents, who prized but did not price their gifts? A knock on the door interrupted his ruminations.

Could it be someone else in worse need than he and his? After all, thanks to the Jersey cow and few hens he kept to subsidize his meager stipend, he was not without food in the house. With some hesitation, he went to the door.

A thin woman with a shawl draped over her shoulders stood there. She had a warm smile and greeted the pastor most heartily. "A merry Christmas to you, your wife and children. My husband sent me this to give to you, but I

must hurry back. In an hour my children and I will be on the train to join him in Winnipeg. He has found work."

The Reverend Samuel Mulhembacher Hauch stood looking after her retreating form, still holding the letter in his hand. Finally, he tore open the envelope and out dropped a crisp five-dollar bill with a thank you note. "For your Christmas, my Christian friend. I am repaying my debt as soon as possible because I realize you gave me the shirt off your back as a gift. Christmas greetings to you." It was signed "H.G." Why hadn't he asked the man his name?

Then he took the new green bill and flew up the stairs waving it high. "Elizabeth, Elizabeth, we're going Christmas shopping for our children. God just came to the door and gave us this . . ."

"We can't leave the children."

"Julie and Esther," he said to the two oldest, still awake, "I'm turning down the flame on the oil lamp. Don't touch it until Mother and Dad return. We're going shopping for all of you."

"Is it one of those unasked for answers to your silent prayers, Daddy, one of those miracles?" asked Julie, the eldest, with her twelve-year-old wisdom.

Christmas morning ten eager children woke up and looked under their pillows to find, under each, a large, juicy orange and a shiny new dime.

Today, Esther Hauch, the second oldest of Samuel and Elizabeth's children, lives in Central Lodge Care Home. She is past four score years, but she still tells about the family's most memorable Christmas back in 1910, when God — in the form of a thin woman — knocked on their door with a letter in her hand. "My father's good deed had come back home to bless our house," she says with quiet satisfaction.

mm



William Reimer: a career in song firmly established

How good it is, tea in the cozy warmth of Bill and Lydia Reimer's living room in Hanover after coming out of the harsh, icy rain coming off the North Sea of Germany. The sunken living room has windows — a whole wall of them, ceiling to floor, looking onto their terrace, a tall, walled fence enclosing it, designed to bring the natural beauty of the outdoors right into the home. Small, bricked walks between shrubs and rosebushes also surround a fish pond. The entire suggests serenity and invites leisure on the patio. To feel the enchantment of the view of fields and trees you need to go upstairs to the balcony of the guest room we occupy and look into the distance.

"*Erquiktes Herz, sei voller Freude, denn Jesus wohnt in deiner Brust. . .*" (Teleman) ". . . *Ich sehe schon den Himmel offen und sing im Geist Hallelujah.*" William Reimer's bass-baritone fills the room, the voice rich and full

and with a new depth. Is it the excellent orchestration backing the singer (for he, wisely, I thought, did not sit down at the piano and sing at our request, but put on a cassette of a past performance) or has this voice developed so remarkably that we feel the fine timbre of it and question the singer on it. He smiles: "I haven't felt better vocally or artistically than now at 53. Neither can I imagine, after all this while, a more rewarding profession than mine of singing and teaching. I love teaching voice." Fortunate for his students and for the milieu of music, since he has spent the past 18 years doing just that at the *Staatliche Hochschule für Musik und Theater* in Hanover.

It all began for Bill Reimer in 1931 in Yarrow, B.C. He was born one of six children to George and Lena Reimer.

George's fine voice and love for music resulted in a solid contribution in church choir and music in those early, lean years. When George and his family (as every other family in town) picked hops and raspberries it was to keep the wolf from the door and the music alive and growing. It flourished into second generation contribution of significance.

Early education for Bill included violin studies in high school years. This was continued during the two years of music study, now concentrating chiefly on voice and conducting, at MBBC in Winnipeg. Here he had opportunity for solo work and it became clear that music and singing needed to be at the core of his life's work. A Canada Council grant enabled him to study at the *NWD Musikademie* in Detmold, Germany, time he and Lydia, his wife, enjoyed very much. The year 1957 was important in Bill Reimer's life; the couple returned to Canada to spend the following

by Mary M. Enns

three years in Vancouver and the Fraser Valley, when Bill taught voice and violin. It marked his first appearance with CBC Radio, where his acquaintance with Hugh McLean became important to his studies and singing career because it introduced him to Nicholas Goldsmidt of the Vancouver International Festival. Here he was engaged in two productions with good reviews.

A few months of voice study convinced him that he was not a "finished" singer and that he wanted, above all, to go back to further his studies in Detmold. This was financed in 1961-64 by the Koerner Foundation of UBC and the Canada Council. During this period he spent considerable time concertizing in Europe. Then came two years when he went into full-time concert work, singing 25-30 concerts a year. Fees for this in Germany were good and Lydia was teaching in Kindergarten helping to finance those two years.

Today Reimer feels his appointment in 1966 as voice instructor at the university of Hanover was fortunate for him. He would probably have enjoyed teaching in North America but "I'm very glad I made the choice to teach in Germany. A person must make the most of a working situation and not look to greener fields. The German school system is as good a working condition as I could wish for." Both Bill and Lydia are teaching full-time, Bill in music and Lydia at a German High School, teaching English language to grades 7-12. Both enjoy living there and are "paying our taxes and speeding tickets like everyone else." But, of course, there are times when they would like to have more of their family around but are compensated by the fine professional and church friends they have cultivated over the years. They worship at the Free Evangelical Church in Hanover where Bill sings.

Prof. Reimer's status at the school is solid and he intends to stay where he is until retirement, probably some 10 years hence, though he has life tenure or *unkuendbar*. The greatest sacrifice in a full teaching career, is, however, that he has no longer had as much time as a singer needs to "work on himself." On the other hand, the responsible challenge of working with voices — seeing the development of some serious singers from the beginning stages into polished, world-famous performers — has been rewarding beyond measure. "A teacher can't make a singer," says Reimer, "he can only help to point out where the individual can do better. The singer must have the talent and the desire to put in the effort. The frustration

part is when a student doesn't respond." (A number of Reimer's students have gone to Bayreuth, Vienna, London, and LaScala. And Edith Wiens, formerly Vancouver, has studied with Reimer for four years in Hanover and is a good example of fine singing talent.)

And after retirement? Without hesitation Reimer's answer: "Well, then I would like to set up a private studio in Canada or Germany and continue to teach voice, because that's my life's blood. But then we would also like to fulfill some dreams of travel." Reimer said he has great love for opera and might have done well in that field, but feels he is emotionally not geared for an operatic career. "Sacred music and oratorio is my first love in music performance. I enjoy singing the *St. Matthews* and *St. Johns Passions*, *Brahms*, the *Mozart Requiem*; these are works that still reach the depth of my spiritual susceptibility. As a Christian, singing sacred music is my contribution to my fellow man." In Canada Reimer has sung with the Toronto Mendelsohn Choir, the National Arts Orchestra of Ottawa and the Toronto Symphony.

Lydia is her husband's finest supporter and her keen understanding makes this meaningful. She is the second daughter of Mrs. Anna Bartsch and the late Rev. H. G. Bartsch, who in 1931-38 served as one of the earliest missionaries to the Belgian Congo. When the crucial decision needed to be made of the family's return to their mission station in 1939 the Bartsches decided that the mother would remain in Canada to establish a family life for their four children in a natural environment and see to their education. Mr. Bartsch returned to the Congo alone for 3½ years. Now 87, Mrs. Bartsch has just recently published the story of this missionary family.

Because Bill and Lydia have become thoroughly European in their thinking,

an eventual move back to Canada could be quite a culture shock, they feel. Bill explains: "You have to 'sell' music in Canada. In Germany there is more governmental financial support. To promote someone in Canada, it is done with more splash, here with much greater finesse."

It shouldn't take too much splash to sell out the Concert Hall in Winnipeg for January, 1985, when William Reimer will be presented in concert with the Robert Shaw chorale. Incidentally, this fulfills his "dream of singing in first rate concert with choice people like Robert Shaw." mm



Marvin Derksen

David J. Epp, President of Kona Enterprises Ltd. and Kona Properties Ltd. is pleased to announce the appointment of Marvin R. Derksen as an affiliated Real Estate Investment Consultant with the Kona Group.

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Today it is snowing. Every time I look out, the world is whiter. The naked branches of elms and poplars are being decorated with narrow trails of white, and the robin's nest is filled with snow. It is a typical Canadian scene and brings back fragrant memories of the Christmas when my Grandmother came to live with us.

I was a teen-ager then. No one called me that, of course. I was tall, taller than most of my friends, which I didn't like, and I was a young lady — so my dad said — which I did like. There were times when I held my head high and talked and acted like a young lady should. At other times I forgot all about this new status. But my grandmother never treated me like a child. When I was with her, I was always a young lady. In fact, Grandma had given me this title a year before, when she knit me a pair of leaf-green finger-mitts for a Christmas present.

My grandmother was a knitter. She knit in season and out of season. She knitted when she had visitors, and she knitted when she was just staring into space. Her knitting needles went click, click, clicking and the yarn over and under with never a dropped stitch anywhere. For Christmas, all of her sixty-odd grandchildren received either a scarf, mitts, socks or stockings. I never looked down on these gifts, for I had only one grandma, dear and good, and it took me a long while to believe that other youngsters could have as many as two or even three, with grandpas to match.

It didn't matter — my one sufficed. She was little and round, wore dark billowy skirts with tucked bodices, a half apron and silky fringes on her head shawl.

I can see her still — her lean, lined, friendly face and brave hazel-brown eyes. She had a habit of looking over the top of her glasses while chatting, or more often listening to whoever was visiting her.

The big house we lived in had been my grandmother's before she had a new small one built. My youngest aunt (not so young any more) was its keeper till her marriage. That was when Grandmother decided to live with us.

She came to our house in mid-

November. The sky was hung with pale blue mists, the ploughed fields glossy with frost, and little crumbles of snow clung to the dead grasses on the side of the roads.

My parents' bedroom had been prepared for her. It was a nice room, big enough to arrange a bed, table, dresser, sofa, rocking chair, and wood heater in. On a wall shelf her own tall clock ticked away as if it had never been moved.

I welcomed her coming a little differently. It was nice to visit her, but to have her around always? To walk softly when I wanted to run, go to bed too early every night, never grumble about dish-washing, not even quietly (Grandma had ears like a cat's); and no moving around of furniture in my bedroom, which was right above hers. But no, I forgot! I had no bedroom anymore! None! My parents moved into mine. I was stuck at the end of the upstairs hall near the little dormer window with only a sheet for a wall.

But Grandmother continued to live with us. Soon her room became central in our home. Visitors came almost every day. We all liked to listen to Grandmother's rare stories. She never criticized nor ordered us around. I soon found that her values in life were the same as those my parents had.

By December, snow covered fields and gardens and lay in peaked drifts around our buildings. Palms of frost decorated the windows. Inside we were snug and warm, the rooms full of Christmas magic. For with Grandmother there, the clan gathering would be at our house. It would have to be extremely stormy before any one of her large family would stay away. Blankets, rugs and sturdy farm horses could usually make it through whatever snow there was. Our home became a busy place, cooking, baking and cleaning. Then one day Grandma asked me to help her sort and label gifts for the uncles and aunts.

From under her bed I got out boxes of dishes. They were to be the gifts that year. We spread them out over the table and sofa. There was a quaint butter dish with a hen sitting on it for a lid, a neat china bun bowl woven like a basket and a squat-bottomed cream jug that never tipped and held enough cream to go

A Jugful of Love

by Helena Dueck

around a table once. As we unpacked, Grandma told me fascinating bits of history — where the dishes came from and what they meant to her. They had been used and re-used, washed many times and had served for weddings and funerals alike over the span of her long life. I labelled as she chose, for each individual something that was lacking in that household. We were finished, I thought, when Grandma handed the squat cream jug that held enough cream to go around the table once to me. "This is for you, Helena. You are very dear to me." For awhile I had nothing to say, but a mixture of strange and lovely thoughts went through my mind.

Grandmother had never known the ease of superfluity.

She was not afraid to grow old.

She believed in Him whose birthday we were about to celebrate and invited me, by the very way she lived, to believe in Him, too.

The day was nearly over. Grandma had stopped talking and was quiet for so long that I looked at her. She was looking out of the window, her knitting idle on her lap. What was she seeing? There were the wide snowy fields crisscrossed by spidery trails of grey fences and my father's haystacks kneeling in the distance. But I knew she saw none of this.

She had forgotten me, fallen back into her own inner being that I had no part in. So I slipped away and ran out into the peace of our farmyard. Twilight was creeping out of the woods, but it was still light enough to pick up some fir branches that Dad had cut for me. I looked back at our old house, basking in the late sunlight, smiling at me with its many twinkling windows. In a little while it would be Christmas. Our yard would be full of sleighs and cutters and in and among them the young fry would be playing tag and hide-and-go-seek. I would be inside, taking coats and wraps, finding seats for the guests, setting tables, keeping the fire going, and yes, washing endless dishes. I wouldn't even be able to sneak upstairs to read a bit. Neither could I listen to the women talking about their needs, difficulties and opportunities; for I had become a young lady, and the years waiting for me were very fair.

I have it still — the little cream jug that holds just enough cream to go around the table once. It symbolizes the end of one woman's life and the beginning of another's. I will give it to my granddaughter some day. Today she is just a little lass. But in another dozen years she will be the right age — a grown-up young lady. mm



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Gordon Kaufman's Radical Theology

by Victor Doerksen

On November 1st and 2nd Prof. Gordon D. Kaufman of Harvard Divinity School delivered four lectures at the University of Winnipeg on the topic: "Theology for a Nuclear Age." The lectures were well attended and elicited strong responses from those who heard them.

The first presentation, on "The Nuclear Crisis and Christian Theology" introduced what Kaufman called the radically new situation in the world today, in which the end of life (and with it the human future) lies in the hands of mankind and is a real possibility. Since so much of human experience and thinking is bound up with the notion of a future, this situation should cause us to rethink radically the premises of our religious thought, as well as of the other aspects of life.

The second lecture presented Kaufman's ideas about "Theology as Imaginative Construction." Here he examined the images in terms of which the Christian tradition has related to God and Christ. We have thought of God as a father and as a king, but these images have led in western history to a misuse of religion for male domination and national imperialism, as well as other problems.

The last two lectures were directed toward reconstructing our imagination of God and of Jesus Christ and salvation. More time was likely spent on the necessary deconstruction or criticism of the traditional images than on the new construction which Kaufman proposed as a new theological agenda.

Speaking of God, Kaufman suggested that a more adequate imagery concerning that ultimate reality in terms of which all else is might be derived from that creation which is God's work. The whole long process of evolution, the beginning and development of human

life and of human history; these should be the stuff, the materials from which the images should naturally arise — as for example is suggested in the expression: "in whom we live and move and have our being."

In his last address Kaufman appeared most clearly Anabaptist, when he proposed a radical reformation of our image of Jesus Christ. The two aspects that have always stood in tension throughout Christian history, of Jesus the suffering and dying servant on the one hand, and the triumphant risen Lord sitting at the right hand of power on the other, these, Kaufman suggested, had been resolved by the tradition in favor of the latter, triumphalism being the result. This in turn had supported the imperial imagery of God, leaving the Jesus of the Gospels very much in the background.

The rediscovery of the Jesus who was a loser in human terms, who gave himself away in love and service even to the point of death on the cross, this might be the most crucial contribution of theology to the crisis in which the world presently finds itself, according to Kaufman. That this would represent a radical shift in Christian thinking is evident from the way in which the so-called evangelical right in America has taken up the idea of a God-intended nuclear Armageddon and wrapped itself in the American flag. On this matter Kaufman's thinking is quite similar to the message of Ron Sider, who is passionately pleading for the interposition of Christians between the various forces and powers as an active expression of the powerlessness of followers of Jesus. Kaufman did not himself make suggestions about practical applications in the world, confining himself to his discipline: thinking about God and man and their relationship. But he referred several times to the need for action which

will counter the harm that much current Christianity is causing in terms of human suffering.

One could sense in the questions that were asked of Kaufman, and those that were not, that the audience felt it had heard a revolutionary statement about Christianity, and that it would take some time for these ideas to be absorbed and thought through to the point where conclusions about its consequences could be drawn. It is not easy to disconnect what we are talking about from the language we use in doing so, and yet Gordon Kaufman was arguing that that is precisely how the traditional use — and ultimately the misuse — of religious ideas developed. At some point one must ask: what is the ultimate reality, if we are not capable of formulating it in words, images or concepts?

Gordon Kaufman did not advocate getting rid of all the traditional language, for example, the name God (and even the expression, the Kingdom of God). In fact, in the case of the 'symbol' Jesus Christ, he suggested that the story of the man Jesus was the proper stuff for theologizing, just as the 'creation' of God is the material from which our thinking about God should proceed.

For those who know the work of Kaufman from his books these lectures were a further development of his fundamental revision of theological method and practice. For those to whom these books were not familiar the talks may have come as a radical shock. Reactions were very mixed. Some said: that is what the United Church has always said, while others confessed that they had experienced a strong sense of liberation at hearing Gordon Kaufman.

mm

Quiet in the Land

A review by Andrew Oberle

Chislett, Anne. *Quiet in the Land*. Toronto: Coach House Press, 1983. 120 pp., Paperback, \$7.00.

This well-made play by the Canadian author Anne Chislett was first produced at the Blyth Summer Festival in 1981. It was so successful there that it was revived the following year for a longer run and has since been performed in many Canadian centres. In 1982 it won the Chalmers Award for the best play presented in Toronto. Later this Fall *Quiet in the Land* will be staged by the Manitoba Theatre Centre.

The play explores the problems of a small Amish community in Southwestern Ontario during the years 1917-18. Chislett shows us how the conscription issue stirs up the hostility of the outside world and, at the same time, brings to a head the problems already smoldering within the Amish community itself. The older members of the community cling desperately to the established customs and beliefs, whereas the younger people wish to see enlightened change, real attempts to answer their many troubling questions and an honest discussion of common problems.

As the play opens a baptism is taking place in which the eighteen-year-old Menno and Katie are admitted to full membership in the church. Yock (Jacob) Bauman, who is the same age or a little older, is seen outside the home where the ceremony takes place in conversation with a non-Amish friend. Yock has been refusing to seek baptism despite intense pressure from his orthodox father Christy (Christian) because of deeply-felt doubts. While his friend Menno manages to be received by the church and to receive permission from visiting bishop Elie Fry to start a Sunday School for the young people of the community where they can discuss among themselves some of the issues that really

concern them, Yock remains an outsider, torn with himself and in daily conflict with his father. This conflict becomes further aggravated when his father is elected bishop and urges Yock to act like a bishop's son. Yock becomes more discouraged and defiant by the day. The father-son conflict leads to a scene in which Yock defiantly exclaims in the presence of a group of fellow members that he for one never asked Christ to die for him in the first place and is thereupon physically chastized by his outraged father. Although Yock has come to love Katie, who returns his love, and had previously made plans to marry her and settle down in the community, he now despairs and runs away to join the army as a soldier. After not having heard anything from Yock for a long time, Katie submits to community pressure and marries Menno. Yock's father who has been driven to alcohol by the problems he cannot handle submits his flock to a tyrannical fanaticism which alienates even his best friends. When Yock returns from the war he has become a "Hun-killing" hero to the outside world, yet nothing but a common murderer to his own people. However, he has learned his lesson over the dead body of a German soldier he killed and is now a pacifist by conviction. When he remorsefully approaches his father to ask for forgiveness he is rejected self-righteously and is not permitted to return to the fold. As the play ends Yock is driven to leave once again and we see a lonely and worn-out Christy who has turned away his only son as well as his community and whose only triumph now can be the fact that his son Yock finally admitted that his father had been right all along.

Chislett's staging is very straightforward and proves most effective. The homes of the Brubachers and the Baumans and their yards, where all the action takes place, are visible side by side. The actions take place simultaneously in both homes and outside and throw light on one another. This technique also serves to underline the community aspect of the story. The language of the characters is simple and leans heavily on the Bible. Yet this same language can turn quite poetic as well, particularly in such scenes as the love encounter between Yock and Katie and Yock's return home. The characters come across as real and keep us closely involved in their problems. The audience is drawn right into the small community portrayed.

While the play ably recreates the atmosphere of the small community, its

most impressive aspect is that it manages to go beyond the immediate problems of this particular Amish group whose spiritual fences threaten to collapse. The questions raised by the soul-searching of the characters are of great concern to us as well, the interpersonal conflicts shown are those of any tightly-knit group with a common goal. We too are made to see, along with the characters, that material and technological progress so often sought with the plea for personal freedom can indeed become destructive playthings.

Although the book is a paperback, it is beautifully executed. It sports a most attractive cover and is printed on high quality paper. Fine photographs showing us the characters as they were portrayed in the 1981 Blyth production stimulate the reader's imagination. An introduction and explanatory notes by the author give the reader the necessary tools to a full understanding of the play.

The play can be highly recommended to anyone who enjoys good Canadian drama. It is sure to generate a lot of discussion and makes worthwhile reading.

Andre Oberle is associate professor of German at the University of Winnipeg.



Harold Paetkau

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KONA

by David Bergen

A small piece of Nashville with a touch of Mennonite

I recall an evening spent at the Downs Motor Inn, loud, smoky, and unpretentious. A friend had taken me there to hear a country western band (the band's name escapes me) and I remember feeling, as I entered the bar, that the setting could have been that of a beer commercial. The kind in a small-town bar in the Midwest (U.S.), where some weather-beaten fellow in a worn Stetson lifts a can of Bud to the ceiling and growls, "This one's for you."

That night there were a lot of fellows wearing Stetsons. Almost everyone wore tight Levis and cowboy boots. Many tapped a pointed toe to the music and then bent to their drinks before them, their eyes shining briefly as a match flared or a stage light strobed. The atmosphere was comfortable, predictable. There were trainers and handlers from Assiniboia Downs. For the most part the women were loud and drank light beer. The men were lean with slight paunches and wore snap-button shirts and belts with large steel buckles that said "Jim" or "Peterbilt." Perhaps it sounds like a stereotype. It is. But then it is no worse or better a stereotype than the writer who sports wire-rimmed glasses and drinks Espresso, or the "hardrock" who listens to "Twisted Sister" and drinks "50". What's interesting about the Downs is that it is so real, it makes no claims; it's just a small piece of Nashville on the outskirts of Winnipeg. And run by a Mennonite.

Ma Henning owns and operates the Downs Motor Inn. Formerly Elizabeth Loewen, she is married and is better known as "Ma" Henning. Besides running the hotel Henning operates Downs Records out of the same building. "I always loved music," she says, explaining the reason for forming a record company. "And too, I like to help people achieve their goals."

Downs Records started small years ago when Henning helped finance a 45 rpm cut by some Winnipeg country musicians. After that experience she decided other Canadian musicians could use a Canadian company. Distribution became a problem so she went to Nash-

ville, found a partner, and they formed Downs International, of which Downs Records is a part.

To date "Downs" has six singers or bands signed to their label, including Rhonda Hart and Len Henry. Henning talked about Len Henry. "We've got a song in the can (ready to be distributed) by Len Henry called 'The Devil Offered More.' It's a song with a good hookline but we have to be careful of the Bible Belt in the states. You have to watch the lyrics."

Henning is a businesswoman ("businessman, woman, or person, it doesn't matter to me," she says). She is not only in the recording business to help people achieve their goals. "This is a business of supply and demand. It's a competitive business." She is the boss. She displays her dislike for being interrupted by someone else during the interview and she orders coffee from the waitress with a certain matter-of-factness, not superiority. She is curt and to the point, never saying more than she has to, and when she does say too much, she is certain to add, "don't print that." If Downs Records succeeds, and it appears it will, it will be one of the few independent record companies in North America. Thus, the need for Henning to be a no-nonsense kind of person.

She and her husband are semi-retired and two of their three children help them run the businesses. Henning takes about four trips per year to Nashville. She has had experiences with various organizations. She was on the board of directors at Westgate Collegiate, and for four years was on the board of directors of the Canadian Country Music Association. Right now she is in the process of organizing the '86 Country Music Festival Awards which will be held in Winnipeg. Henning allows herself a smile as she speaks of the upcoming project. "Semi-retirement?" her smile seems to ask. She spoons her coffee. "The music business isn't my whole life," she qualifies. "My family is important to me . . . and I like fishing."

mm

A DIARY OF ADJUSTMENT

A preview screening of the documentary film *The Freedom Diary of Lan Tran* took place in mid November at the CBC studios. Hosted by Marvin Terhoch, Director of Television, Manitoba CBC, this half hour film briefly depicts the story of two of the thousands of Vietnamese refugees known as the "Boat People" who came to Manitoba in 1979 hoping to find peace and freedom, and their struggle to adapt in a strange land.

This story was first presented in a 2½ hour play to audiences in Montreal and Winnipeg. It has since then been adapted and filmed in CBC's Winnipeg studios as a French/English co-production at a cost of \$50,000 (a minimal sum when compared to the \$600,000 required to film one sequence of *Dallas*, it was pointed out to us). It was written by Gordon McCall, translated by Maryse Lairot and directed by producer Leo Foucault with a most appropriate, to the sensitive, dramatic theme, musical sound track by Victor Davies. The struggles in the various areas of their adjustment in a strange country are well portrayed in the relentless courage of

the young wife, Lan Tran, when her husband Tuan finds it impossible to adapt to this new life and thinks only of "home" in Vietnam. Finally and tragically, in his mind, he returns there. It also depicts, in an exaggerated but entirely realistic form the attitudes and behaviour patterns of the host people and their friends, the people who had sponsored the two Vietnamese, and now were overly anxious to please and to help them in every detail, and the small tensions resulting.

This is the sort of film that is intended not only to provide information but to engender compassion and understanding among those of us who have not been directly involved in situations of this nature. In some of our minds it was considered incomplete because of what was left out, determined here by time factor. *The Freedom Diary of Lan Tran* was presented to TV viewers on CBC Channel 6/cable 2 on November 26 at 7 p.m.

by Mary M. Enns

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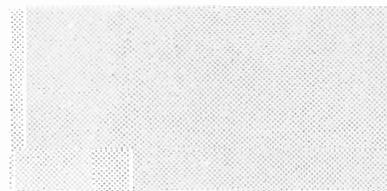
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Low German dictionary defines the words as much as the language

A review by Erica Ens

Kjenn Jie noch Plautdietsch? Many of us here in Southern Manitoba will exclaim "Jo!" and chuckle with that peculiar smugness that says: and boy are you ever missing a lot if you don't! However, for many other Mennonites in North and South America, this question is answered differently. It is not a luxury for them to speak *Plautdietsch*; it is the only language they speak. Herman Rempel's new dictionary is an excellent source of information for English-speaking Mennonites who enjoy reading and writing *Plautdietsch*. It is also useful for Low German Mennonites who can now see their only language in print in dictionary form, and who may be in the process of learning English. The dictionary contains approximately 12,000 *Plautdietsch* words with careful and concise English equivalents or definitions. The second half consists of relatively the same number of English words with Low German definitions.

It is obvious that a lot of care has gone into this work. The definitions are comprehensive, accommodating the plurality of uses of individual words. For example, the word *ütlote* is given three accurate definitions: "to omit, delete; to let out or widen (clothing); to bud (plant)" (p. 129). The different meanings are carefully separated by semi-colons. Although the dictionary does not include word derivations, it does include explanations for words that have specific significance in the Mennonite tradition, as the word *Koagel* — "a piece of land behind the home as part of the yard in a Mennonite village, usually about 10

acres, used as pasture and garden" (p. 67). One word, however, whose meaning could have been fleshed out more is the term *reinmoake* which is simply defined as "to cleanse, purify, chastise, expurgate" (p. 97), whereas to every traditional Mennonite housewife this term also can mean days of thorough housecleaning every Christmas and Easter. The dictionary also includes extended meanings of words, as in the word *de* — *jäwe*, to jilt (a fellow" (p. 63). Another delightful aspect of the dictionary is that it freely defines Low German colloquialisms that one might not expect in a dictionary but are such an integral part of the language like *Heltabless* and *Nautschät*. Some of us may not have known that parts of the human anatomy can quite adequately be named in Low German like *Hoatkomkje* (ventricle), *Jlädwota* (water on the joints), *Haulsloftrua* (trachea) and *Haulstaupe* (uvula). Relatively modern words have also received Low German terms like *Jülbassem* (vacuum cleaner) and *Rutschknoop* (zipper).

In the English-Low German section, the same care in accommodating many different meanings of a single word has been practised. If there is no single equivalent in Low German, the concept is explained as comprehensively as possible. For example the simple word *box* is defined as *en Kauste*, *en Backs*, *ne Kjist*, *ne Lod*; *en Plints ferre Uare*; *ne aufjesondade Sett em Teeauta*; -ing day, *de tweede Wienachtsheljedach*; -ing, *ne Backsinj* (p. 152). The explanations in this section are particularly appealing

because they are direct and unpretentious. For instance the word *manicure* with its fine-mannered overtones, is described simply as *de Finjanääjel besorge* (p. 220). Vacuum is explained to be *en ladja Rüm*, *wua nuscht benne ess*, *nijch emol Loft* (p. 287). Frequently examples that are familiar to Mennonites are used to define a word, like prodigal — *äwadriewent mildjäwrijch*; *en Femäje ruchloos febrinje*, *soo aus de feloarna Sän* (p. 243) or schism — *ne Spoolinj*, *soo aus enne Kjoakj ooda emm Gloowe* (p. 257). The word baptist is given special attention: *en Mensch dee dän Gloowe haft daut Mensche sulle opp äa Gloowe jedeept woare*, *onn wan see eascht oolt jenüach senn sijk daut selft too äwalaje* (p. 147). Sometimes one is surprised that there does exist a Low German equivalent for a fairly sophisticated English word, as in centrifugal — *schliesaoatijch* (p. 156).

The dictionary is a valuable reference book for all Low German speaking Mennonites. Aside from serving as a source of information regarding definitions and word use, it also reveals certain characteristics of the Low German language. While there is a dearth of abstract nouns, there often exists a plurality of synonymous verbs or adjectives. *Oabeide*, *wirkje*, *schaufe*, *rackre*, *wurache*, *kjlate* all mean to work or to toil. Babbling or chatting is called *schwautse*, *schwietre*, *plaupre*, *plüdre*; spilling a liquid awkwardly is *kjwidre*, *kjlietre*, *plenjre*. The adjective quick is defined as *feks*, *haustijch*, *schwind*,

pienijch, rausch, schneidijch, jnietsch, stauntepee. Sometimes it is pleasurable simply to peruse the dictionary at leisure. The series of words beginning with *Je* reads almost like an alliterative rhyme: *Jeschnauta, Jeschnees, Jeschnerr, Jeschnoakj, Jeschnodda, Jeschnuck, Jeschnurkjs.*

Herman Rempel follows the new guidelines for the standardized Low German orthography quite closely. It is evident that his "brand" of *Plautdietsch* is *Ooltkolniasch*, and so he uses *kj* instead of *tj* in words like *Kjoakj*, and *ü* instead of *u* in words like *büte*, but this is no serious problem for those who prefer a different spelling. He also consistently accommodates variations in pronunciation by indicating that certain consonants can be omitted in words like *o(nn)jeleat, (t)sipple, au(n)jefriet, oa(r)m*, etc. The dictionary includes a key to the orthography used. One major flaw in this key is the misleading description of the diphthong *ea*. It is described as "a diphthong with two syllables pronouncing "ä" and "a" closely together. Examples are: *Bea* (beer), *fea* (four): (p.x). However, the diphthong is used at times to indicate an *ia* sound as in *Lea* (teaching) or *reare* (stir). The diphthong *ia* used in words like *Fia* (fire) and *Bia* (coverlet) is omitted entirely in the key. Granted, much controversy surrounds the *ea* sound among orthographers, because words like *mea* and *ea* are pronounced in various ways. However, the difference in pronunciation between *fea* (four) and *reare* (stir) is substantial enough to warrant some differentiation.

The dictionary also contains stress marks, plural noun forms and gender classifications which are very helpful.

Herman Rempel is not a professional philologist or lexicographer. Yet he has dedicated his retirement years to pursue his interest in the Low German language by producing this fine, well-structured and informative dictionary. The Low German Mennonite world can only be deeply appreciative of this excellent edition. This appreciation is also extended to the copy editor Anne Reimer and to the consulting editor, Dr. Al Reimer, who spent tremendous energy and generous amounts of his time to proofread the text painstakingly, edit it and suggest editorial changes.

Kjenn Jie noch Plautdietsch? is an excellent reference book. It is the most extensive and comprehensive Mennonite Low German dictionary printed so far, and invaluable to anyone interested in this language.

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A new definition of western history

A review by George Schultz

Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History* (Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 1984); 524 pages; Hardcover; \$24.95.

Somebody has finally got it right. The region we know as the prairie provinces was not a vast vacant land waiting for the coming of the Ontario British, Mennonites, Ukrainians and all of the other ethnic groups. These prairies had been occupied for centuries by a wide variety of Native people, who interacted with each other, developed trade systems, and formed alliances. They were not savages desperately in need of missionaries. Their cultures often reflected deep religious insight, artistic sensitivity, and what we today might call learning. After white contact and the development of the fur trade, they remained firmly in control but used the trade to enrich their lives.

Fully one third of Gerald Friesen's book deals with the early inhabitants of the prairies. He politely excuses his predecessors, such as W. L. Morton, for largely ignoring Native people in their histories of Western Canada, because research had not yet established the richness and variety of native societies. He lets them off too lightly. George Stanley in his *The Birth of Western Canada* published in 1936 but revised and republished since then still refers to the Indians as savages. Friesen relies on a new generation of historians such as Sylvia Van Kirk and Arthur J. Ray, whose monographs portray the Indians as more than innocent victims of white man's greed. They were equal partners in the fur trade and they demanded that it be conducted with traditional pomp and ceremony. The classic myth that their land was bartered for liquor and beads is finally laid to rest.

Much of this changed with the coming of white settlers. These were rough and hard times. Contrary to yet another myth, settlement of the West was not a peaceful affair. Great violence was directed toward the Indians, and unfor-

tunately they tended to turn inward and redirected the violence against each other. Although the Canadian experience is usually held up favorably when compared with the American experience, I think there is little to choose. But Friesen would insist that the establishment of the North-West Mounted Police made a significant difference. Unlike the gun-crazed lawmen of the United States the Canadian force was recruited from the best of society. While American westerners put great store on individualism and egalitarianism, the Canadian Westerners were class conscious. Only gentlemen need apply to become policemen. In this context Friesen expands the romantic theme of the Mounted in Canadian literature and consciousness. He believes at least half of it.

The book is topically arranged, but it avoids the episodic and the sensational. Prairie history is after all more than Red Light districts and the Winnipeg General Strike. It is clear that Friesen has his own specialties, labor history for one, and prairie radicalism for another, but he moves convincingly through all areas. He will be criticized for his choice of topics, and what may well be seen as a lack of balance. He devotes two rather brief chapters to the prairies since 1930. It is just as well that he did not live through the Depression. For one who has it seems impossible to capture the depth of despair and suffering in 35 pages. Yet paradoxically these same people tend to look back on those days as the best of times when basic values were cherished and the highest virtues practised, a great example for our day. More criticism will surely come for Friesen's treatment of immigrant groups. What can be said about Mennonites in two pages?

Friesen's strong discursive talents are demonstrated in his description of the Prairies moving toward an industrial capitalistic economy under the pressure of a rapidly growing population and technological change. He inte-

grates this closely with political movements in the context of class and ethnic tensions. But there is more at work than labor and farm protests. There are flesh and blood people out there, men but also women, visible and invisible minorities, city and farm slum dwellers, conspicuous consumers, Jews, Catholics, and Klansmen.

Friesen was born and raised on the Prairies. His deep feeling and empathy shows. He deals with historical process, but he does not avoid the particular. He works in poignant portrayals of real characters such as James Minifie, and duller ones such as Peter Lougheed. He livens the prose with insights and quotes from Prairie novelists and poets, but alas none from Sarah Binks.

Inevitably, comparisons will be made with Pierre Berton's recently released *Promised Land*. Those looking for detailed accounts of Prairie bootlegging establishments, or the antics of the Doukhobors, had best stick with Berton. Friesen is a professional. Professional historians do their work differently than popular historians. They question historical sources and do not accept uncritically diaries, memoirs, and partisan biographies. But Friesen is not a historian who writes only for other historians. He writes engagingly, with enough anecdotes to maintain interest without becoming anecdotal. And the book is full of information about a great variety of things peculiar to the Prairies that cannot conveniently be found elsewhere.

The *Canadian Prairies* is a major synthesis, by a major historian and will be the definitive work for the foreseeable future. The name Friesen should not fool anyone. This is mainline history, in which the original people, and ethnic groups are given their due, but of necessity, it is still the story of "Charter Canadians" for they held all the best cards.

George Schultz is a professor of history of St. Paul's College, University of Manitoba.

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Books on Peacemaking

Reviewed by Harry Loewen

When War is Unjust: Being Honest in Just-War Thinking. John Howard Yoder. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984; Pb., 95 pp.

Faith in a Nuclear Age: A Christian Response to War. Duane Beachey. Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1983; Pb., 136 pp.

Nuclear Holocaust and Christian Hope: A Book for Christian Peacemakers. Ronald J. Sider and Richard K. Taylor. InterVarsity Press, 1982. Pb., 368 pp., \$6.95 U.S.

Perhaps no other Mennonite thinker has dialogued as seriously with Christians of different traditions and lectured and written as extensively on war and peace issues as John Howard Yoder. In his latest well-argued booklet *When War is Unjust*, Yoder examines the just-war tradition and calls those Christians who cling to it to integrity within the framework of their claims. As the Lutheran Charles P. Lutz puts it in the Introduction: "He asks us, for the sake of the world, to demonstrate the credibility of our ethic, to put it to the test, to be honest about where it leads us" (p. 15).

Beachey's *Faith in a Nuclear Age* is a popular statement on the necessity to take Christ's message of peace more seriously to heart. While the author does not advance any new approaches to the subject, he underlines the urgency of peacemaking in a nuclear age. He is confident that "God will have the victory; our only responsibility is to be obedient to his way" (p. 110).

Sider's and Taylor's *Nuclear Holocaust and Christian Hope* is an informative, stimulating and at the same time somewhat disappointing book. It sketches graphically the horrible possibility of a nuclear war, suggests a Christian response to the nuclear reality, and outlines a new approach with regard to non-military defense in the event of an invasion.

The authors are most effective in describing the unthinkable consequences of a nuclear war. With Hiroshima and Nagasaki as a historical backdrop, the reader can visualize how much more destructive a future war would be. Reading about the bone-chilling details of an atomic holocaust is like having a nightmare of the most frightening kind.

The book, moreover, is most convincing in its refutation of the just-war

arguments and of the view that Christians ought to participate in defending their country. The authors show that for the first 300 years of its existence, the church did not participate in the military because it was inconsistent with the Christian message of love and peace. Whatever the arguments of the proponents of the just-war theory from Saint Augustine to the present time, in a nuclear age their logic loses its validity. In a nuclear holocaust there can be no winners, only losers.

The book is visionary in its last part in which the authors suggest an alternative to military defense. Advocating a "civil-based defense," the authors call upon Americans to lay down their arms and instead engage in passive resistance in the event of a Soviet invasion. It is argued that while such non-violent action and non-cooperation with the enemies would demand great sacrifices on the part of Americans, such strategy would be preferable to an all-out nuclear war. In not retaliating militarily but showing love to the Soviets, Americans might convince the invaders either to withdraw their forces or to accept American democracy and freedom.

This is no doubt a radical, certainly novel, approach to peacemaking — and the logical conclusion of consistent pacifism. It seems to me, however, that while the authors are sincere in their search for new options to violence, they are overly optimistic in their thinking. What makes them think that Americans could be persuaded to elect a president and a senate who would legislate such peaceful measures and that a majority of Americans would rather suffer humiliation and defeat than risk a nuclear confrontation?

There are additional flaws in their model for non-violent defense. Why do the authors assume that the Soviets are the ones bent on destruction and seem to suggest that Americans are Christians who might be persuaded to love their enemies? America is no more Christian than the Soviet Union, the Christian rhetoric of Americans notwithstanding. Moreover, American evangelical Christians might be the first to advocate military action against the Communists. The authors might have shown more fully how Christians could build bridges between the superpowers and their people in an attempt to prevent war

(See, for example, the useful book *What About the Russians: A Christian Approach to US-Soviet Conflict*, edited by Dale W. Brown, The Brethren Press, 1984).

Civil-based defense would be the ultimate step in peacemaking, but how about doing all we can now to stop America's war machine? Surely Christians can do more than is suggested in this book. Why not encourage strikes, demonstrations and civil disobedience against war preparations, nuclear build-ups, and hawkish legislators in our own countries today? The authors agree that withholding war taxes might be an acceptable method of registering our disapproval of our country's war efforts, but they shy away from advocating other, more radical, preventive measures against the American government.

Despite the above questions, this book is one of the most exhaustive treatments of the subject — and the authors deserve our admiration and thanks for their effort and courage. With its extensive lists of books, peace organizations and audio-visual materials, the book is thought-provoking and a most useful tool for those Christians who dare to think the peace position to the end.

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“Kjenn Jie noch Plautdietsch?”

Koop enn Bua beräde en nieet Weadbüak

fonn Jack Thiessen

Bua sajcht too Koop: “Du, Isaak, fondaag kaust Du mie mol een Fiewa enn een poa Ireenasch jaewe.”

Koop: “Soon’e Fuppjelusasch aus Du kaun eena jieden Dach een poa mol trafe. De gaunse Welt bloat no Jeld. Enn nu fangst uck Du doamett aun. Waut toom Schinda wesst Du, Jasch?”

Bua: “Mau langsomm, Isaak, mau langsomm. Soo’s mott etj noch Diene growe Raed en baet betrimme. Kjitj bloos mol hää, waut Du enn etj dem Russlenda Wiens too Wiehnachte schentje welle. Een plautdietschet Weadbüak enn sogoa fonn eenem Kenädja jeschraewe. Kjitj die daut doch bloos mol aun!”

Koop: “Jasch, schäm Die. Dit Weadbüak haft aul Eselsuare, wää haft doabenne rommjebädät? Opplatst Du mett Diene ditje Dumes?”

Bua: “Jo, jo, etj. Jistre tseowents lied dee Fru mie äre Brell, enn etj kunn, enn kunn nich oppheare doabenne romm too blädre enn too läse. Etj fung doa Weada, äwa Weada, woont etj aul lenjst fejtäte haud. Soo’s “Schintjeschwoaga,” enn “Schmaundjoop,” enn “Kjieskaulf,” enn “strulle,” ennsowieda. Enn dentj die bloos mol nenn, een Kenädja haft daut jeschräwe, wann uck mau een Oschuldja, wiels hee kjemmt fonn Jantsied. Oba daut Fäawuat haft een Dissiedscha jeschräwe — Reimasch Elmer. Du weetst je doch noch, daut ons de Dretja Dertjsche fonn däm fetald aus wie ons eemol bie Peeta Vogt enn Steinbach oppwoamde. Daut wea aune achtefeatig.”

Bua fangt aun too lache: “Weetst uck waut, Isaak, daut jefft soo fäl fon dee Reimasch-Sort, daut mie daut goanich wundre wudd, wann de bieblischa Obraum uck Reima jeheet haud. Jo, oba nui kjitj doch bloos mol hää, waut hia aules benne steit. “Jebett” — dauts fe Pead enn wille Benjels; dann “Jebied” — daut kaun ne Kot senne oode soogoa ne groote Kjoatj; “Jebirj” —

dauts een groota Mesthupe; “Jebiss” — daut hast Du, Isaak, enn “Jebott” — dauts eene Partie, soo’s wie emma bie Bezowys haude, eea wie ons befriede.

Enn kjitj hia, Isaak, hia haft dee Kenädje Rampel uck noch “Tsekjreet,” oba soont haude Bezowys nich; enn “Tseri,” enn daut ess eene selfstendje Owesied, wann Arnold Dyck uck meent eene “Owesied” ess uck drugeljet Settfeesch. Jo, enn hia steit uck “tsiepaüagijch” — soo aus Oomtje Buhla. Enn weetst uck woo een Sultje uck noch heet? Hia kjitj — een Krota. Uck “Feebastang” steit hia. Weetst

noch aus wie mol mett jun Kotta ommstelpete, enn dee Feebastang tweibroak, enn dien Foda ons daut sette twee Doag lang aufwand? Jo, Isaak, aules steit hiabenne. Waut meest? Well, well’we Wiens soon Weadbüak too Wiehnachte schentje, enn ahm wiese, waut wie Kenädja kjenne?”

Koop: “Na, mient wäjen, oba dann aul weens een nieet. Hia hast Diene Fiewasch — enn brinj mie uck foats eent mett.”

Bua: “Oba eascht well’we noch Koffe drintje.” mm



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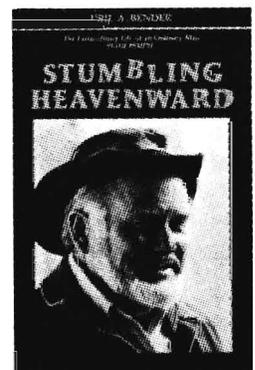
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NEW

Audience Warms to Noel Coward's Spirit

by Mary M. Enns

Contrary to precedent, Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre presented an English play, Noel Coward's *Blithe Spirit*, to enthusiastic audiences on November 22nd, 23rd, and 24th at the Kiwanis Centre for the Deaf. If opening night was a slow start, Friday and Saturday nights were sell-outs. Because the play was in English, a much larger than usual percentage of the audience were young people. By and large, the audience was quick to catch any witticisms and smaller nuances and responded with spirit. (No pun intended.)

Producer Michael Woelcke and director Gerhard Wiebe had a fresh young new cast to work with. (Though we always enjoyed the old, not elderly, German guard.) Judging from the sidelines, it would appear that the strength of Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre lies in its excellent team work. This has always been evident from its planning stages to rehearsal, in its set construction, then the support staff and finally its actors — a troupe striving for one goal — excellence, in order to give pleasure to its chiefly Mennonite audiences. Remarkable is the fact that they all seemed to enjoy enormously their particular responsibility. This enthusiasm does carry over into a theatre audience, in this case, by now, their loyal yet willing supporters.

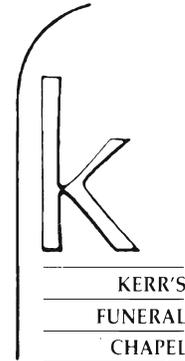
Blithe Spirit is an enjoyable play to watch and I would guess a good one to perform. We had seen it a year ago and found the brisk pace easy to follow. It was therefore with considerable surprise, that we discovered this valiant group of Mennonite actors sailing into a three-hour play speaking in an Oxford English. Is this really what the playwright would have asked for? It seemed to me that the actors were so anxious to be consistent in their English accent that a small resulting tenseness affected at

least some of us and we worried whether they could carry it through. And though there was hardly a consistency there, we did eventually sit back in our chairs and decide to let the accents fall where they may. Probably Madame Arcati (Kathy Krueger) and Charles (Eric Loepp) both with large and crucial parts to play, had the least difficulty here. And seemed to be able to give themselves to their part with a greater ease and natural spontaneity making their characters entirely believable. Elvira the ghost (Irene Neustaedter) stole about on various sections of the stage with brisk, not quite supernatural movements. Could her ghost-like character have been enhanced or strengthened into a more wraith-like appearance if her pale grey head veil had been extended covering her from head to foot, back and front, thereby adding a hint of mystery? Her finest moment was at the side of the fireplace when her silent sarcasm was displayed with a well-lifted eyebrow and toss of the head. Ruth, (Heike Doerksen) portrayed the dignified second wife and protagonist well and if she lapsed into a Canadian English in mid-sentence, it was no more than did most of the cast. Her ghostly makeup must have been more difficult to achieve and left something to be desired. The little maid Edith (Tamara Steinborn) was delightfully in character for what was demanded of her part. Dr. and Mrs. Bradman (Ernest Wiebe and Lorilee Wall) gave us a good portrayal of a country doctor and his fussy little *English* wife.

Though this is a long play, the audience enjoyed it enormously by remarks overheard. For the sake of a lot of the younger crowd, it is to be hoped that we might see more of this sort of delightful entertainment from Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre.

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John Schroeder



manitoba news

In recent school board elections of the Hanover School Division in Steinbach, **Florence Pankratz** was elected as a school trustee, the first woman ever elected in that district to such a position.

Jake Epp, Minister of Health and Welfare and Provencher MP, was the guest speaker at the annual fund-raising dinner held on November 17 for the Mennonite Village Museum in Steinbach. The 350 people who attended the dinner enjoyed the entertainment by Clint Toews and son Donovan, and Ed and Millie Hildebrandt. The evening was chaired by Gerhard Ens, editor of *Der Bote* and chairman of the board of the museum.

Prairie Theatre Exchange, 160 Princess St., Winnipeg, is producing a play, *The Fighting Days*, set in World War I. The play, sponsored by the Manitoba Government Employees Association and other groups, will travel throughout Manitoba in November and December, and will re-open at the Theatre January 24 to February 9. The play deals with the issues of peace and the role of women in society.

The Schwartz Heritage House Inc. has been awarded a \$28,400 grant from the Manitoba Community Assets program. Project chairman, Al Friesen, said that this would allow completion of the first two floors of the 82-year-old structure in Altona.



The Canadian Bible Society is currently preparing a translation of the New Testament into the Low German language. **Rev. John J. Neufeld** has been working on translations since 1959 for his radio program, *Licht von Evangelium*. He is being assisted in the present project by *Viola Reimer* of Steinbach, and *Peter Fast* of Calgary. Several advance booklets will be published for general distribution, in anticipation of the complete New Testament projected for late 1986.



Len Sawatsky has been appointed to the position of public relations officer for the Eden Mental Health Centre in Winkler. Sawatsky, who until recently served as personnel manager of Triple E Canada, has worked previously for Sherritt Gordon Mines at Lynn Lake.

Mennonite Central Committee, on behalf of Mennonites and Brethren in Christ in Canada, apologized to the National Association of Japanese Canadians at a news conference in Winnipeg on October 10. The apology was delivered by Frank H. Epp, who stated that "a great injustice was done" to the Japanese, who were re-located and lost their property during the Second World War.

On October 21, **Richard Kauenhofen** was installed as assistant pastor in the North Kildonan Mennonite Church for a two-year term. Richard and his wife Valerie will be working with the youth, young adults and Sunday School.

Ray Hamm, director of MCC Canada Peace and Social Concerns since 1980, has resigned so that he and his wife, Marilyn, can become pastor couple at the Altona General Conference Mennonite Church in Spring, 1985.

Choice Resources Inc., a not for profit, interchurch book distributing company, has announced its entry into the field of Christian Video Rentals. Choice Books will stock 50 titles in its Winnipeg office.

A **Resource Listing of Mennonite Women** will be revised in 1985. The committee on Women's Concerns of Mennonite Central Committee is soliciting names and information for the update. The resource listing contains names and summaries of resumés of Mennonite women who are available to serve on boards and committees, as seminar leaders, retreat speakers and in a variety of other capacities.

Colleen Braun of Bethel Mennonite Church has moved to Swift Current to join the music faculty of Swift Current Bible Institute.

MENNONITE THEATRE PLANS SEASON

The Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre will present tenor Arthur Janzen in a recital of Schubert's *Winterreise*. Mr. Janzen, who has previously sung to packed houses in Winnipeg, will again be accompanied by the Winnipeg pianist, Irmgard Baerg. The producer is John Enns; at the Art Gallery on either February 19 or 21.

Next, we are happy to announce the winner of our playwriting contest, namely Walter Schlichting, for his play *Die Emigranten*. Mr. Schlichting is familiar to many as an actor, a director, and as a friend of the Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre. Adjudicators of the competition were Prof. Al Reimer, Prof. Harry Loewen, and Mr. Harry Pauls. The play itself, dealing with the story of the Mennonite emigration from Russia to Canada, will be presented in March, 1985 under the direction of Alfred Wiebe. Location and exact dates will be announced.

John Reimer of Gretna is beginning a two-year MCC assignment in Moncton, N.S., where he will be working as a peer counselor.

Once more, MCC is seeking sponsors for many of the 82 trainees from 29 countries, who have job experience in agriculture, business, child care, church work, and other fields. If interested, please write or call MCC Canada in Winnipeg.

Planners of the 1990 Mennonite World Conference, to be held in the Winnipeg Convention Centre, are concerned that the centre, with a capacity of 7,500 in the main meeting area, might be too small for the expected 10,000 delegates. Convention centre official Ken Gowanchuk said the Mennonite assembly will be one of the largest conventions ever held in Winnipeg.

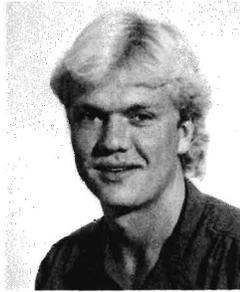
Don Harder of Winnipeg and Paul Lehmen of Florida were the first agricultural scholars to visit China under the auspices of the China Educational Exchange. They spent five weeks in China during the month of September.

On September 16, River East Mennonite Brethren Church commissioned **Keith and Heidi Poysti** as associate pastor couple for youth and outreach.

The Institute of Mennonite Studies in Elkhart, Indiana, has decided to proceed with the publication of a fifth volume of the Mennonite Encyclopedia. This decision has ended discussion about a complete revision of the encyclopedia, an option which had been promoted by Canadian scholars. Volume 5 will extend and correct parts of the existing four-volume encyclopedia.

Wally Kroeker will join the staff of Mennonite Economic Development Associates next summer as editor of MEDA's journal *The Marketplace*. Kroeker has edited *The Christian Leader* for the past 10 years.

On September 1 **Gordon Houser** became assistant editor of *The Mennonite*, the bi-weekly magazine of the General Conference Mennonite church.



Brian Olfert of Winkler is beginning a two-year MCC assignment in Warburg, Alberta, where he will be working with delinquent youth at Youth Orientation Units.



Martha Janzen of Winnipeg is beginning a three-year MCC assignment in Kathmandu, Nepal. She had previously worked at MCC Canada headquarters in Winnipeg, beginning in 1978.



Hilda Kasdorf of Niverville is beginning a three-year MCC assignment in Haiti. She will be working in health education.



Lynette Driedger, daughter of Arthur and Kathleen Driedger of Winnipeg is beginning a two-year MCC assignment in Belle Glade, Fla. She will be working as a nutritionist in a community health clinic.

Former Herold Church Unveils Cairn

The Herold Church was a Mennonite church established by a small group of Mennonites who came from Oklahoma, in 1920. The site is located four miles north of Morden on 1st Street and ½ a mile east. The church building is no longer there. (A more detailed account of the origin and history of the Herold Church can be found in the 'Mennonite Historian' of June 1983.)

October 7, 1984 saw approximately 150 friends and former members of this church gathered at this site for the unveiling and dedication of a commemorative cairn in recognition of the church's 25 years of service to the community. Karl Klaassen, son of the founder Elder Michael Klaassen, chaired the event and his son Rev. Randy Klaassen, assistant pastor of the Altona Berghaler church made the opening remarks, John Dalke, who attended the Herold church as a child, shared some reminiscences with those present.

The site consists of three acres of land and a cemetery is located in the southeast corner of the property. Rev. J. F. Pauls, pastor of the Bethel Mennonite church in Winnipeg officiated at the unveiling and dedication ceremony. Following the ceremony everyone was invited to the Park Hill school for coffee and pastries where reminiscences continued and relationships were renewed.

The project was launched with the guiding sponsorship of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society.

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Art and Helen Fast and Epp and Norilynn Epp. They are beginning two-year teaching assignments in Shenyang, China, teaching English as a second language.



The Epps most recently worked as teachers and both hold bachelors of education degrees from the University of Winnipeg. They are members of Bethel Mennonite Church in Winnipeg.



Arthur Fast was last employed as a counselor and Helen as an office worker. Arthur received a bachelor's degree from the University of Manitoba. The Fasts are members of Sargent Mennonite Church in Winnipeg.

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Ann Ediger of Winnipeg, is beginning a three-year Mennonite Central Committee assignment as a public health nurse in Yalve Sanga, Paraguay. Ediger most recently worked as a home-care nurse in Winnipeg. Ediger previously served as a nurse with ASCIM, a Mennonite social service association, in Paraguay.



Lorna Hiebert, most recently of Lethbridge, Alta., and originally from Morden is beginning a three-year Mennonite Central Committee assignment. Hiebert will be teaching special education courses in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. Hiebert most recently worked as a teacher of dependent handicapped students in Lethbridge. She also served an MCC term in Lethbridge, from September 1978 to June 1980.

Waldo Neufeld, MCC Canada's coordinator of personnel and administrative services, has been appointed to the CBC's religious advisory committee for a three-year term. The committee, which serves CBC's English-language religious services, plans and evaluates religious programming for CBC radio and television. Before coming to MCC Canada six years ago Neufeld worked as a news reporter for radio station CFAM in Altona, Man. and CFRW in Winnipeg, as news director at TV station CKX in Brandon, with the Mennonite General Conference Faith and Life Communications and with Mennonite Brethren Communications, both located in Winnipeg.

Henry and Grace Rempel and their daughters **Gwen** and **Ruth**, all of Winnipeg, also participated in Mennonite Central Committee's orientation at MCC headquarters. The family is going to Nairobi, Kenya, where Henry will work for the Canadian International Development Agency while he is on a one-year teaching sabbatical.

mirror mix-up

GLITH
□ ○ □ □ □

CAPEE
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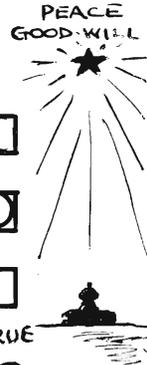
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LET'S PUT THE TRUE
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

BACK IN CHRISTMAS!



Since September it has been impossible for a variety of reasons to pick a deadline date for the Mix-up contest entries that makes it possible for our loyal entrants to complete the puzzle and send it in on time.

The November issue was the last straw, because so many got the magazine just two days after the deadline.

Accordingly, we accepted November entries past the deadline, and will announce a winner in the January edition.

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

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

Entries must be sent to the Mirror office by January 7, 1985.

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**Send Entries to:
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Fresch Mot Näme

by Herman Rempel

Onse Rejerung haft daut nü aul ne Tietlank drock jehaut met onsen Motstock omtөөndre. Dee oole Mood too dee wie ons aul lang jewant habe wea ons sest goot jenüach oba doa senn emma soone dee welle aules ommendredre. Bott nü wea daut goot wan wie met ne Galoon maut, ooda en Kwoat. En Punt, en Tsoll, en Schoo, jo dee Mot wea ons bekaunt onn wie feelde ons doa gauns tüssich met. Wie funge ons emma doamet trajcht.

Nü sell wie oba met eemol haustijch aufange aundasch too denkje. Nü heet daut Meeta, Kijilomeeta, Lieta, Tsentemeeta onn waut nijch aula. Jlefft dee Rejerung fleijcht opp dise Manea dän "deficit" too äwastone? Ons Mennoniete sull daut fleijcht nijch gauns framd fäakome. Onse Fäafodasch haude doamet aul enn Ruslaunt too doone oba see weare stekjsennijch jenüach, soo aus goode Mennoniete daut tookjemmt, onn neeme dee Mot uck nijch enn Ruslaunt aun. See jrebhelde sitj äa äjnet Motsisteem üt.

Wan Grootmuraetje fräje fe Grootforatje Betjse neid wist see gauns krakjt woo wiet dee romme Lint muste senne. Dee Betjselint wea jeneiw twee mol soo lank aus de Lenjd fonn äa Alboage bottem Enj lange Finja. Äa fäld doa kjeen Motstock.

Mien Oom Jehaun wull en Bümeista senne. Wan hee en Brat aufsoagd wort daut no "Üagemot". Hee jleewd hee kunn daut uck one Motstock foadijchbrinje.

Wan wie de Somma muste Hei stoake meend ons Foda wie durwe je uck nijch aule "Näslank" Wota drinkje gone. He müak ons oba niemols dietlijch no wäms Näs hee Mot naum. Doa wort uck too Tiede no "Näs onn Mül" jemäte oba daut wort meistens bie de Nobasch jebruckt. Eensjemol wea doa uck kjeene Mot needijch. Dee Nobasch haude en Kjnajcht on dee, säde se, kun "one Mot" äte.

Dis Noba siene Frü haud sitj toom Kjleet jekofft oba daut Tseijch haud nijch gauns toojeräkjt. See jinkj trigj nom Stua onn meend doa fäld noch "Hauntbreet". Daut wea goanijch neiw auf daut ne breede ooda ne schmaule Haunt wea; dee Mot stemmd. Dee kjartste oode de kjanste Mot fonn dee etj mie besenne kaun ess en "Heptjeshoa". Opp eene Schwienskjast wea doa ne Frü aunjestalt Schmolt em Miagrope ommtooreare. Runt omm dän Miagrope wea daut sea glaut wua daut Schmolt haud äwajekoakt. See jlept en bät on wea enn "Heptjeshoa" em Niagrope enennejeheift.

Etj wea too dee Tiet noch too junk, ooda etj hab daut doch woll met aundre onnette Sache too doone jehaut onn doaderjch hab etj dise Mot niemols jescheit brucke jeleat. On nü saul etj mie leare dit niee Motsisteem too brucke, waut see mau nane det "Metric System". Etj jleew wie sulle biem oolen bliewe. Wie sulle daut nijch aule "Näslank" ommendredre.

mm

Ein Weihnachtsmärchen

Der Tod ruft dich ganz leise

von Hedwig Knoop

In einem Häuschen am Stadtrand lebte ganz allein ein alter, vereinsamter Mann. Seine Frau war längst tot, und sein einziger Sohn wohnte mitten in der Stadt und war ein sehr beschäftigter Kaufmann. Sein kleiner Enkel Hannes aber musste in der Schule so fleissig lernen, dass er kaum Zeit hatte, seinen Grossvater zu besuchen, obgleich der ihm sehr schöne Geschichten erzählen konnte.

Einmal sass der alte Mann an einem windigen Herbsttag auf einer Bank im nahen Wald und liess die dünnen Blätter über seine ausgestreckten Beine stieben. Es war kalt, und er wollte gerade seinen Mantelkragen hochschlagen, als plötzlich neben ihm auf der Bank ein kleines Mädchen sass. Es hatte nichts weiter an als ein weisses Hemdchen und sass da und schlenkerte vergnügt mit den nackten Beinen. Der alte Mann fuhr sich mit der Hand über die Augen, aber das Kind sass tatsächlich da.

„Gelt, du denkst, ich friere,“ sagte es, „aber ich friere nicht. Und weisst du, warum nicht? Weil die Himmelskönigin mich verzaubert hat, so dass ich nicht frieren muss. Und weisst du, warum sie das getan hat?“

Aber dem alten Mann hatte es die Sprache verschlagen, und er starrte das Kind nur an.

„Ich will's dir sagen: weil ich nun bei jedem Wetter auf die Erde hinunter kann, es mag regnen oder schneien, ich brauch mich nicht warm anzuziehen.“

Wie sollte der alte Mann auch sogleich begreifen, dass ein Himmelskind neben ihm sass. Es ist ja fast unmöglich, so etwas zu begreifen.

„So so“, sagte er schliesslich mit vorsichtiger Stimme, „du frierst also nicht.“

„Nein,“ fiel es sofort ein, aber ich kann etwas ganz Besonderes tun.“

Das Kind sah sich um, ob auch niemand zuhöre: „Ich kann mich an einem Seidenfaden von dort oben herunterlassen,“ sagte es und wies mit dem Fingerchen gen Himmel.

„Was tust du denn da oben?“ fragte der alte Mann.

„Da wohne ich,“ sagte das Kind.

„Und du hast dich an einem Seidenfaden herabgelassen? Wie eine Spinne?“

„Nein, nicht wie eine Spinne. Ich halte mich mit den Händen am Faden fest und gleite hinunter.“

„Und wie kommst du wieder hinauf?“

„Die Himmelskönigin zieht mich hoch.“

„Aha, so geht das vor sich.“

„Ja, du sollst gleich sehen, wie es geht. Ich muss jetzt sowieso fort, ich darf niemals lange hier unten bleiben, weisst du.“

Und was tat das Kind? Es sprang auf, sagte schnell Auf Wiedersehen und war sogleich spurlos verschwunden.

Es sollte gar nicht lange dauern, bis der alte Mann das Kind wiedersah. Es besuchte ihn in seinem Häuschen. Es klopfte an, als er gerade seine Abendsuppe gekocht hatte, und stand da auf seiner Schwelle, als er die Tür öffnete. Es lachte freundlich und hüpfte verspielt auf einem nackten Füsschen in seine warme Küche und sah sich neugierig um.

„Darf ich ein wenig Suppe bei dir essen?“ fragte es.

Der alte Mann legte zwei Löffel auf den Tisch, holte zwei Teller aus dem Schrank, füllte jeden bis an den Rand und bat das Kind zu Tisch.

„Brauchst du einen Latz?“ fragte er.

„I wo,“ sagte es, „du wirst sehen, dass ich ganz manierlich essen kann.“ Und sie setzten sich einander gegenüber und löffelten die Suppe aus. Danach verabschiedete sich das Kind wieder flüchtig und verschwand.

Es blieb niemals lang, aber es begann häufig zu kommen, fast täglich, an einigen Tagen sogar zweimal. Es konnte plötzlich seine Hand nehmen, wenn er im Wald spazierenging. Es konnte ihm vor dem Zubettgehen aufsuchen, wenn die Lampe brannte und der alte Mann in einem Buch las.

Eines Tages, als das Kind auf einem Fussbänkchen neben des Mannes Schaukelstuhl Platz genommen hatte und plauderte, klopfte jemand an die

Tür und trat ein, ohne auf einen Hereinruf zu warten. Es war des Mannes Enkel Hannes aus der Stadt. Er reichte dem Grossvater die Hand und wollte auch das Mädchen begrüssen. Doch das schlug die Augen nieder und sagte kein Wort, und ehe überhaupt jemand noch ein Wort sprechen konnte, war es verschwunden.

„Wo ist sie geblieben, Grossvater?“ fragte Hannes. Aber der Grossvater murmelte nur etwas in seinen Bart.

Hannes überreichte nun dem Grossvater ein Paket und eine Weihnachtskarte mit einem Gruss der Familie. Bald danach musste er gehen.

Da sass nun der alte Mann mit seinem Paket und einer Weihnachtskarte. Draussen wurde es dunkel, und es war die Heilige Nacht. Auf den Dächern lag ein wenig Schnee, und nach und nach traten die Sterne hervor und funkelten.

Plötzlich hörte der alte Mann ein leises Geräusch an der Haustür. Er stand auf, um nachzusehen. Es war das Kind, jetzt mit einem Krönlein auf dem Kopf und einem geschmückten Bäumchen in der Hand. Aber anstatt fröhliche Weihnachten zu wünschen, begann es ein Liedchen zu singen mit einer Stimme so rein und klar wie die eines Chorknaben. Als das Lied zu Ende war, reichte es dem alten Mann das Bäumchen hin, wandte sich um und ging fort in die Nacht. Der alte Mann rief ihm nach: „Wo bist du? Komm doch herein.“ Aber das Kind war nicht mehr zu sehen und zu hören, und nur ein paar Schneeflocken fielen ihm ins Gesicht.

Das Bäumchen trug er nun hinein in seine warme Stube, die Kerzen brannten und flackerten lustig, und am untersten Zweiglein hing ein feingeschnürtes Päckchen.

„Es wird alles verschwinden, so wie das Kind verschwunden ist,“ dachte der alte Mann. Daher öffnete er das Päckchen nicht, aber er blies die Kerzen aus, ehe sie ganz abgebrannt waren.

Am zweiten Weihnachtstag kam sein Enkel Hannes, um ihn zu besuchen. Der Grossvater zündete die Kerzen an, so dass sie wieder lustig flackerten; er schenkte seinem Enkel einen Baukasten und ein grosses Buch mit bunten Bildern, und er las ihm eine spannende Geschichte daraus vor.

„Was ist in dem Päckchen am Tanenbaum, Grossvater?“ fragte Hannes.

„Ich weiss nicht,“ sagte der Grossvater.

„Mach es doch auf und guck rein,“ sagte Hannes.

„Wenn du das nächstmal kommst, öffnen wir es. Einverstanden?“

Die Weihnachtszeit ging vorbei, das

Bäumchen fing an zu nadeln, und nun musste der alte Mann es zersägen und im Ofen verbrennen. Zuvor löste er vorsichtig das Päckchen ab und legte es auf die Kommode. Tag für Tag wartete er, dass ihn sein Enkel besuche, aber der musste in die Schule gehen und hatte keine Zeit.

Allmählich wurde es draussen wärmer, der Frühling wollte kommen. Der alte Mann sass zum ersten Mal wieder auf der Bank im Wald. Es war mäuschenstill unter den alten Bäumen, und er konnte die Blattknospen mit einem leisen Knall aufspringen hören. Er schloss die Augen und lauschte.

Hätte er sie geöffnet, er hätte das Kind gesehen. Am Seidenfaden kam es zur Erde geglitten und schwupp! sass es neben ihm auf der Bank.

„Heute durfte ich endlich wieder zu dir,“ sagte es.

„Wo warst du so lange? Was hast du die ganze Zeit gemacht?“ fragte der alte Mann.

„Wir haben auf dich gewartet,“ sagte das Kind.

„Wer hat auf mich gewartet?“

„Wir alle,“ sagte das Kind, „aber ich am meisten.“

„So so,“ sagte der alte Mann, „und wie sollte ich wohl zu euch kommen? Wo wohnt ihr?“

„Das weisst du doch, das habe ich dir doch schon gesagt. Dort oben wohne ich, und die Himmelskönigin hat ge-

sagt, du darfst jetzt zu uns kommen.“

„Aber dazu fehlt mir ein Seidenfaden,“ lachte der alte Mann.

„Aber du hast doch einen Seidenfaden,“ sagte das Kind fast empört.

„Und wo hätte ich ihn?“ fragte der alte Mann.

Doch ehe das Kind antworten konnte, war seine Zeit abgelaufen, und es verschwand vor seinen Augen.

Ostern kam und ging, und der grosse Osterhase aus Schokolade, den der Grossvater für seinen Enkel gekauft hatte, stand auf der Kommode und wartete. Aber der Enkel war mit seinen Eltern verreiselt und konnte nicht kommen, um ihn abzuholen.

Die Bäume bekamen schon einen zarten grünen Schimmer, und der Huf-lattich blühte schüchtern an den Weg-rändern. Der alte Mann, müde vom langen Warten, setzte sich auf die Bank neben der Hautür und liess sich von der Mittagssonne bescheinen. Fast wäre er vor Müdigkeit eingeeckelt, da vernahm er ein Geräusch und schrak empor. Es war die Türklinke. Die Tür seines Hauses öffnete sich, und jemand trat heraus aus seinem Haus. Es war das Kind. Auf Zehenspitzen kam es auf ihn zu und stellte sich dicht an seine Knie. Es sagte kein einziges Wort, es hüpfte nicht und lachte nicht, aber es hielt ihm auf der Händfläche ein kleines Päckchen hin — das Päckchen von Weih-nachten, das ungeöffnet auf seiner

Kommode gelegen hatte.

„Willst du es wiederhaben?“ fragte der alte Mann.

Das Kind schüttelte den Kopf. Mit seinen zarten Fingern zog es an der Schnur. Die löste sich, und sogleich öffnete sich die Verpackung, und darin lag, kaum sichtbar, ein Seidenfaden.

„Nimm ihn fest in die Hand,“ flüsterte das Kind und reichte ihm das Ende des Fadens.

Der alte Mann glaubte zu träumen. Es war ihm plötzlich, als sei er selber ein Kind und als sei er leicht wie eine Feder und durchsichtig wie eine Glasmurmelt.

„Halt dich schön fest, genau wie ich,“ sagte das Kind, „du siehst, es geht ganz leicht.“

„Nun schweben ich in den Himmel,“ dachte der alte Mann, und er hätte gern seinem Enkel Hannes lebewohl gesagt, aber dazu war keine Zeit.

„Gleich sind wir da,“ sagte nun das Kind, „alle warten auf uns, und die Himmelskönigin hat schon den Tisch gedeckt.“

Niemand hat sie in den Himmel schweben sehen, den alten Mann und das Kind. Als aber Hannes nach der Reise zu Besuch kam, war des Grossvaters Häuschen leer, und nur der Osterhase auf der Kommode erwartete ihn.

„Wo ist mein Grossvater?“ fragte Hannes.

Aber das weiss jeder: schokoladene Osterhasen sind stumm. **mm**

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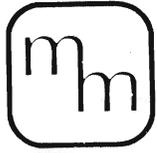


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our word

The Christmas Message

*But when he came to himself he said,
". . . I will arise and go to my father
and I will say to him, 'Father, I
have sinned against heaven and before you.'
. . . And he arose and came to his father.
But while he was yet at a distance,
his father saw him and had compassion,
and ran and embraced him and kissed him.*

(Luke 15:17, 18 and 20)

The Christmas message is meant to bring to an end all of our anxious striving for success, our endless fear of failure, our daily worry over whether what we have done is quite good enough to gain the approval of God and man. We are given something on Christmas Day, and our sole duty is to accept it. We are given our release.

The message is, for young people: discover today how foolish it is to worry so much about whether your friends admire you. It is never a wise thing to place your happiness into the fickle hands of others. God is our only sure judge, and we are reminded at Christmas that He is a judge with infinite compassion and understanding. In the midst of the deepest feelings of inadequacy He is never far from us. All of our life we are told that God expects a lot from us. And that is true. At least He *hopes* for a lot. But that should never blind us to the central message of Christmas: nothing in this world can separate us from His love. In the end it is not our achievements He wants; He wants only us!

The message is for parents: you have been anxious long enough about whether all your work is perfect. The fact is that it isn't, and it never will be. Continue to strive tomorrow. But today, reflect on this: you are accepted. It is enough! Is God impressed by all your anxious moments? Have all of those moments together added one ounce of beauty or strength to your character? Arise now, go to your Father, precisely as you are, and you will be amazed to discover that far from disdaining you, He is rushing toward you, ready to embrace you and kiss you. He doesn't want to embrace the perfect father or mother. He wants to embrace *you* exactly as you are. Tomorrow is another day. But this is Christmas, your day of release!

The message is for all adults, and those nearing death: there is a darkness in our life which sometimes threatens to engulf us completely. It is called loneliness, unrequited love,

disappointment, betrayal, separation, or death. Can no light penetrate that darkness? There is such a light. He called himself Jesus. He said, "I have shared your sorrow, your betrayal, your unrequited love, and the spectre of death. I have not come to preach to you about it. I want simply to hold you, and to assure you that my arms are the arms of a loving father in whom all darkness is ultimately turned to light. Don't impress me with your learning, money, or popularity. Just come to me as you are. It is enough."

Finally, we are all told: as God accepts your own foolishness, so learn to accept others with theirs. All of your pretences do not elevate you in the eyes of God. Neither do you elevate yourself by demeaning others. May God's acceptance of you flow through you to others. This, I believe, is what the poet Coventry Patmore was trying to say in his poem, *The Toys*: (slightly paraphrased):

My little son,
Who moved and spoke in childish ways,
Having broken my command the seventh time,
I struck, and dismissed,
And sent him straight to bed,
With hard words, unknissed.

Then, fearing that his grief
would break his sleep,
I visited his bed,
And found his eyelids
closed and wet.

And I, kissing away his tears,
left others of my own.
For on a table
standing by his bed,
He had put within his reach
his toys from Christmas,
and a piece of glass abraded by the beach.
To comfort his sad heart.

So when that night I prayed
To God, I wept and said:
"Why am I vexed each day,
by my child's childishness?

Knowing that when my own
last day is done,
You will look with love on me
and say, "Come my son,
Your childishness is forgiven."

Roy Vogt

Merry Christmas

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