

For Easter

Oh, there are things done in the world today
Would root up faith, but for Gethsemane.
For Calvary interprets human life;
No path of pain but here we meet our Lord;
And all the strain, the terror and the strife
Die down like waves before His peaceful word.
And nowhere but beside the awful Cross,
And where the olives grow along the hill,
Can we accept the unexplained, the loss,
The crushing agony, and hold us still.

*From, Yet Listen Now,
by Amy Carmichael*

...FOR HE
IS RISEN,
AS HE SAID.
ST. MATTHEW 28:6

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Fore Word

"Christ is risen!" Tolstoy has described in one of his works how the Russian peasants used to greet each other at Easter time with these words. It was as though the resurrection had just occurred. Throughout Christian history Easter has been, and is, the occasion for thanksgiving and rejoicing. The words of Psalm 95 say it so well: "O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation." The gentler temperatures, the melting snows, herald spring and promise new growth in nature. With this change of season comes Easter with its promise of a spiritual rebirth for all who seek it. The Risen Christ is the image of Fallen Man redeemed; of our ultimate and only enduring liberation; of the elusive freedom we seek so ardently, but which we find only when we find him. "Christ is risen!"

One of the most difficult things a person can do is to establish a career in an out-of-the-way place and among a people that are misunderstood more often than not. Typically, one might see these as missionaries, and this label not only explains why they are there but also indicates a temporary career. Every once in a while, however, there is the example of a person who contradicts the label and who is there forever because he loves it. Blaine Klippenstein began with an MCC assignment that took him to remote Poplar River. After falling in love with the place he fell in love with the people as well as with an individual. Today he is committed to teaching Indian children in the best way he knows how and to building a bridge of understanding between alien cultures.

In the next article, Lyle Longclaws describes his contact with Mennonites in general and going to school at MBCI in particular. There are surprising points of similarity. He found that both Indians and white people are afraid of each other, and observed that in his own experience it was only when he ate with Mennonites that he had a changed view.

Helmut and Lotte Penner's love for music and culture is truly an example of a talent that fell on "good ground" and that then grew. After reading the article in this issue, they stand as an example of the exception — we tend in this age of "professionalism" to expect excellence only from those who make it their career; and we expect "culture" to be advanced by them as well. The Penners show us what can be achieved through a love for a subject and the willingness to pursue its excellence.

The reviews in this issue cover the presentation of *Die Winterreise*, the most recent book of Sandra Birdsell, *Ladies of the House*, and Jack Thiessen's satirical approach to preaching in *Predicht Fier Haite*.

Sarah Klassen wrote four poems which comprise this month's Poet's word.

The road from February to March is observed in this month's Observed Along the Way by Roy Vogt.

Not to be missed is the German section, with items in both the Low and the High versions of the language.

The foregoing, along with other items, constitute our words to you this month. If there is something you like or don't like in this issue, don't forget that you are welcome to send your words to us.

YOUR SUBSCRIPTION MAY BE DUE

The Mennonite Mirror depends on paid-up subscriptions for support. At the same time, it has decided because of rising postal charges to not send notices of subscriptions due. This will be your reminder.

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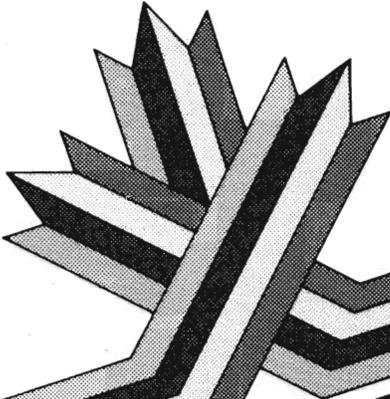
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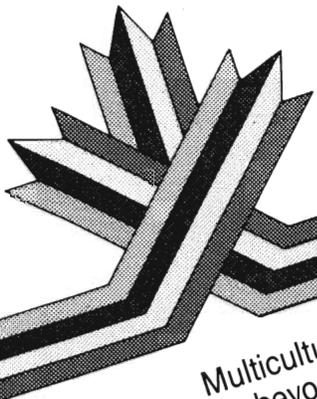
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A love-affair with an obscure place that endures with a love for a people

It was in 1979 that the affair began. A friend at university showed him some photographs; stunning, he recalls, and Blaine Klippenstein was hopelessly smitten. The initial meeting was arranged through an intermediary, MCC, and the following summer Blaine was off to Poplar River, a remote Indian village on the east shore of Lake Winnipeg. He admits now that his initial infatuation was based on a somewhat romantic notion of a carefree, adventure-filled life on the northern frontier. Nevertheless, the relationship, instead of faltering under the weight of reality, only matured; his devotion becoming more complete and complex.

"You don't ever have to be bored in Poplar River," he claims, "if you have a sense of adventure and don't mind being cold. You can hunt, trap and fish when and where you want, you can walk for five minutes and be alone in the bush. I'd never be happy if I couldn't do that."

One only has to observe Blaine for a short while to realize that he is indeed someone who is never bored. It is extremely rare to meet a white person of such an unassuming and relaxed demeanor (laid-back is perhaps the most appropriate term) who is nevertheless tirelessly industrious. A father, husband and teacher, Blaine is also, in his spare

by Walter Nikkel

time, an educational reformer and an avid trapper and fisherman, depending on the season. In the midst of all this activity, he finds time to dream and to figure, resulting in the intriguing combination of visionary and handyman.

It is difficult to reconcile Blaine's idyllic description of his home with the Siberia which Poplar River, viewed on a frigid December day, brings to mind. An icy west wind blows full gale across the barren delta where trees no longer stand, having long since been converted to fuel-wood, feeding the fires which heat the houses which cower naked in the wind, left unprotected by the absent forest. The houses, standard reserve-style low-cost bungalows, are scattered capriciously about the clearing, as if dropped into snowbanks from a passing plane. Here and there, rusting machinery and discarded vehicles peek out through holes in the white blanket of snow, indestructible monuments to the ingenuity of man. The whine of snowmobiles fills the air as they dart among the houses or race purposefully across the ice and the noise is accompanied by the barking of a pack of lean dogs, no

less purposefully chasing a bitch in heat.

An Indian reserve approximately 200 miles north of Winnipeg, Poplar River is a world in the throes of social upheaval, learning to deal with the increasingly pervasive influence of modern society. Home to 600 Indian and Metis people, it is a place where the savage and the civilized, change and tradition coexist in a tenuous and often painful harmony. It is a world which contradicts our own, where wood-burning stoves and snowmobiles are necessities while running water and jobs are available only to the few. Unemployment is high, about 90 percent, and hunting, fishing and above-all, government assistance are the mainstays of the local economy.

Poplar River is also a place of refuge for teachers, social workers and merchants, who, unable to find employment in the south, choose to live in exile in order to work. The local school, comprising kindergarten to grade eight, employs an almost entirely white teaching staff. The teachers have come to Poplar River by default, in hopes of paying their dues, gaining experience so as to become more marketable in the future. They live a life of relative ease, a privileged existence in furnished houses with interior plumbing and electric heat. In addition to their salaries, they

receive a generous allowance for the inconvenience of living in Poplar River, and generally depart as soon as their contracts allow.

Blaine Klippenstein is an anomaly among the local teachers. Having spent the summer of 1979 on an MCC gardening project in Poplar Point, he returned in fall and stayed the winter, taken in by families with available space and accompanying the men of their traplines. Finding the lifestyle to his liking and feeling at home in the community, he returned the following summer to fish commercially, borrowing money to offset the losses he incurred. He found the people most hospitable and speaks nostalgically of enchanting evenings spent listening to tales of the old days, of winters and storms and traplines.

By the time he had completed his arts degree several years later, Blaine had already adopted Poplar River as his home and had also, over the course of his visits, fallen in love again, this time with Rose Bittern, the daughter of a trapper and former chief of Poplar River. Wanting to return to the reserve to live, Blaine needed to find a career which would enable him to work in his adopted home. It was thus that he came to the teaching profession, certifying at Brandon University, already assured of

a position. A year later, Blaine moved to Poplar River, married Rose and began to teach.

He attributes his affinity for wilderness living to his childhood, spent in Thompson. Having been a child in the north, having grown up in the freedom and challenge of a frontier environment and also having been exposed to the ever-present problems of alcoholism and violence, Blaine seems particularly well suited to his present job.

As he walks into the classroom, wearing faded cords and a loose-fitting plaid shirt, which only partially hides the roundness of his belly, he looks more like a caretaker than a teacher. A black cap holds his wispy shoulder-length hair in place, effectively concealing the makings of a bald spot, while accenting the sparkling eyes of a mischievous child which peek out from under the brim. The black-haired children pause only momentarily to greet his arrival, and then resume their noisy violent activities. Picking up a yardstick, Blaine calls the class to order. Nobody hears him, or at least they don't let on, and it's only after several absurdly sinister threats, delivered in graphic detail, that the pupils sit, quietly giggling in their chairs. The afternoon lesson commences.

As the children work diligently at their desks, Blaine tells me with disgust, that he simply cannot teach the prescribed reading curriculum in class. "It eats them up," he states, "The stories are abstract and foreign, about people and situations they neither know nor understand. They don't have houses with running water or fathers who work in offices." To remedy the situation, Blaine has developed his own reading material, writing short stories about trappers and fishermen and mythological characters and claims to have noticed a substantial improvement in the reading level of his class. Contrary to the opinions of some other teachers, Blaine maintains that "the kids are bright and love to learn, they simply need to have teachers who understand and appreciate their culture and community, and who are willing to challenge them and to work hard with them."

The following evening we sit in Blaine's living room, tapping our feet to the rhythm of reggae music. Holding his six-month-old daughter in his lap, he talks about life in Poplar River, while Greg, his seven-year-old step-son noisily builds a castle out of a cardboard box. As he speaks, in short phrases, simple words, the barebones of thought, I realize that Blaine doesn't sound much like a white man.

He finds that education in Poplar River, as elsewhere in the north, is often counter-productive, serving to prolong dependency on white society. "The majority of the teachers come from the south or from eastern Canada." White products of the white education system, they have had little previous contact with native people.

"They see a kid who speaks strangely, saying perhaps, 'my pants is broken.' The teacher thinks that the kids are stupid because they don't speak right. Consequently the teacher expects them to be stupid, treats them that way and, in effect, that's what they become."

Blaine's dissatisfaction with the education system is not limited to armchair criticisms, where the short-comings are belaboured and then later administered, for want of alternatives. On Friday afternoons, the Poplar River grade five class leaves the schoolroom for the bush, where they are building a log cabin. Blaine notes, with obvious delight, that the most troublesome pupils in the bush. In addition to his innovations in the classroom, Blaine is lobbying for the acceptance of a curriculum proposal which would see him given charge of eight of the most disruptive students in

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the school; children who, due to various factors, are the future discards of a rigid educational machine. He proposes to spend every third week in the classroom, developing basic language and mathematical skills while the remaining time would be devoted to various personal and social development projects such as the construction and maintenance of a community ice-rink.

Why this altruistic devotion to the marginal, I wonder. What possesses a Mennonite boy to flee to the wilderness, to espouse and defend a way of life which is all but extinct, a culture which the majority of young native people have rejected? Is this one man's attempt to atone for the sins of white society, or perhaps, a case of a missionary gone native?

It is much simpler, claims Blaine. He first came to Poplar River because he liked the freedom and adventure of northern living. Over time, as he acquired friends and family, he also acquired a share in the problems which ravage northern communities. Alcoholism and violence, frustration and boredom, incredible waste of human potential, these became issues affecting the well-being of people he has come to love. Thus some strong feelings and opinions have taken root, but Blaine

insists that, in essence, he simply likes to live in Poplar River, wants to continue living there and wants it to be a healthy place for his children. Hence the reason for the "trench work" as he calls it.

As Blaine continues talking, I realize that the "trench work" includes also the sensitization of others. He speaks willingly and sympathetically about native rights and about the impersonal systemic causes of the present turmoil in native communities. He speaks much less willingly of the frustrations which he personally experiences, the frustrations of an outsider, a reformer, a visionary.

It's true, he confesses, the alcoholism and wife-abuse, rampant on the reserve, are repugnant and discouraging. Nevertheless, the complexity of the problem precludes any easy solution. The are symptoms of a traditional society thrown under the wheels of a carelessly driven, fast-moving machine of western civilization. Symptoms which are not peculiar to North America, which are found throughout the developing world.

The impetus for change, he insists, must come from Indians themselves. Well-meaning, sympathetic paternalism is simply paternalism coloured less harsh. For example, the Poplar River school committee, which was formed last year when Indian Affairs granted the community effective control over education, was looking for a way to combat the atrociously high truancy rate. Consulting the Indian Act they discovered that welfare payments could be withheld for every day that a child skipped school. They decided to enforce this policy, holding the parents directly responsible for their children's school attendance, which has, consequently, improved.

Blaine suggests that the granting of local autonomy could be disastrous for native communities where a chronic dependency on white society has developed. Nevertheless, he adds, many communities are perfectly capable of governing themselves, and others

mm mirror mix-up

FROHE OSTERN

NO ATE



GRUPE



SCORS



MEDERE



TRIPIS



EASTER BONNET, EASTER BUNNY, EASTER EGGS - BUT REALLY EASTER SIGNIFIES



This edition we announce the winner of the contest published in the February edition: from the 56 entries, Darcy Loewen of Crystal City, was selected the winner. A cash prize has been sent.

In the next edition (May) we will announce the winner for the March contest. We are giving extra time so that more of you can enter and not have to be concerned if the mail delays your edition of the *Mirror*.

The answers to February were chill, frost, bleak, enjoy, active, and cabin fever.

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 May 1, 1985.

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would at least profit from their own mistakes.

Blaine lauds the work of MCC's native concerns office, saying that it is responsible for the good name Mennonites have in Poplar River. "Being Mennonite in Poplar River means you're a good person" he claims, insisting that he's perfectly serious. "MCC's work in the north is not patronizing nor pushy, and not overly evangelistic. Mennonites understand and respect the importance of culture and their work is often met with incredulity and respect."

"No other religious organization sends young people and even individual women to live with native families on reserves where they work for nothing. People here find that amazing. The gardens are sometimes a total disaster but the result is positive, nevertheless. In fact, in Poplar River, if you're Mennonite and you apply for a teaching job, your chances of being hired are increased."

Two days later, I accompany Blaine and Ron Banman, another displaced Mennonite, on a weekly run to check his snares. It is a gorgeous day, the sun sparkling in the snow as we ride our snowmobiles along a curving trail through a thick green forest. Periodically we stop to examine fresh

moose tracks and Ron and Blaine talk, like excited boys at Christmas time, about the prospect of moose-meat for supper. We don't see the moose and the snares are all empty, but the adventure is heightened when Blaine breaks through the ice while walking near a beaver-dam. Undaunted, he insists that we continue on. Later we sit around a fire, roasting farmer sausage and drinking tea as Blaine huddles by the flames in his underwear, warming up and drying off.

I sip my tea and listen, enchanted by tales of winter and traplines, by stories both funny and sad of men and women living in a world where Mother Nature is respected and revered. And I recall my first impressions of Poplar River: cold, strange, uncivilized. Siberia, perhaps, I think to myself, but if one has a sense of adventure and doesn't mind being cold, it's also pretty close to paradise.

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Eating Borscht and getting over the fear

by David Bergen

When he talks, Lyle Longclaws reveals his varied past with the use of terms like, "MB," "GC," "young people's leader," "sweatlodge," "born again," and "prayer meeting." There are times when it appears he will certainly break into Low German. He doesn't. He says he speaks English, Ojibway — "not well enough" — and he can conjugate French verbs. He laughs. His laugh is infectious, genuine, not rolling from his generous paunch but developing higher up, a lung-laugh — light and airy, the kind of laugh one notices just after the fact . . . it makes you smile.

In his office on Sherbrook, where he works as a business consultant for Don Ayre and Associates Inc. (he presents tenders for development work on Manitoba reserves), he reties his black ponytail and begins to talk about anything and everything. He speaks of his childhood: "When I was young the government experimented with an integration program. I was taken out of my parents' home and placed in a Calvinist home. They aren't that much different than Mennonites. Maybe I should watch what I say, I could get into trouble saying that to an MB or an Amish."

"Anyway, this little Indian always found the Calvinists interesting. I was president of the young people's society in the Christian Reformed Church. I was always interested in being involved. I attended the Calvinist Christian School up to Grade eight. It was really academ-

ic; I learned Latin, learned how to write and read and there was a good physical education program."

"The morals of the family I lived with were no different than my grandparents'. Preserve yourself till marriage, thank God for your health and so on. The Maidewin (Ojibway) was very much the same as the Calvinist.

"In the summers I worked on a dairy farm in northern Ontario. The fellow I worked with, Peter Van Huys, taught me a lot. He was a strong man, morally upright. Being an immigrant, he wasn't aware of the native situation in Canada and he accepted Indians very easily.

"I became friends with the Amish people living near the farm, this was near the town of Emo, and because of my experiences with them I decided to go to a Mennonite school. When I got back to Winnipeg I had to go to a Christian high school. I chose MBCI."

Longclaws pours himself a third cup of coffee and begins, with little prodding, to speak of his high school days.

"I attended MBCI for grades ten and eleven. By that time I had moved to a new home. Another Calvinist family. I was good friends with Dave Unruh, he's doing well as a coach at the U of W right now, and Bruce Enns was a big part of my academic and athletic development. In grade twelve I quit on principle. Rusty, a teacher at MBCI, was asked to leave . . . something about him not being Mennonite, so I left.

"It was damn lonely through my school years though. There are times

that I wish the Mennonite religion was open enough to questions. Look out if you questioned. There were 13 other Indians in the school at that time. As an Indian you feel bad. You're going to be either the quiet solid Tonto-type, or you're going to speak out. So I asked, 'Why are all the Inuit going to hell? Why would God create 50,000 Manitobans to have them slide into hell?' Just because the Indian is quiet doesn't mean he's agreeing."

Longclaws pauses and when he begins again his past comes out in bits and pieces, peeking from beneath anecdotes and chuckles. He says that when he quit high school he was befriended by several Indians involved in the American Indian Movement (AIM). He himself joined AIM and found that "sitting in a sweatlodge was like sitting in a prayer meeting." He adds, "I should know, I sat through both." Today, back home on the reserve, he still partakes in the rites of the sweatlodge.

According to Longclaws AIM was a fairly vocal group and for him the experience was educational. At the age of 17 he was rubbing shoulders with Indian leaders: educated, well-spoken, and candid people. This may be one of the reasons Lyle Longclaws was the youngest man ever to hold office in a Manitoba Indian organization when he was elected grand chief of the First Nations Confederacy in 1980. He was a different kind of leader, an outspoken leader. He initiated sit-ins and demonstrations and wouldn't sit quietly waiting for justice to

happen. He feels today that perhaps he was ahead of his people.

"During that time," he says, "I was vocal, which scared both the Indians and the whites." His own people were not used to a public display of emotion and displeasure.

He plays with a Styrofoam cup and rests his boots on the seat of an empty chair. His physical appearance seems the perfect reflection of his cultural balancing act between the old and the new, between the reserve and the office on Sherbrook Street. He wears cowboy boots, rugby pants, and a flannel shirt. He doesn't wear a watch. Yet he handles this mixture of white and Indian so well. Even when he speaks of the past, present and future of the Manitoba Indian he maintains his equilibrium.

He says: "Our family [his own personal family] began breaking down when the government and church came in under the guise of protecting the Indian culture. They destroyed what they were trying to save." But, five minutes later, he asks, "How do we make Indian citizens productive and independent? You can only blame others for so long. Nobody feels good about the Indian situation. I don't; \$1.8 billion spent last year and not a dent. We had 68 cases of TB on my reserve last year."

He shrugs his shoulders, asking a silent rhetorical question, and then dives back in. His ideas are based on economic development and job creation; this is why he is farming during the summers on the Lizard Point Indian Reserve near Rosburn. He feels his people should aim for 15-20 percent unemployment and try for independence two to three generations down the road.

"Back home," he says, "My people are into survival. That's all. Three years ago when I built my home on the reserve, my own family was scared of it. Everyone thought I had turned white. It's the way they thought. We only got running water three years ago. People on the reserve thought: running water is white, driving a new car is white, a new house is white."

Longclaws says that fear is at the base of much misunderstanding. "We fear whites as much as you fear Indians," he says. "You know, the Indian on Main. Getting over that fear is necessary. We all have certain misconceptions of other people, other races, other religions. Hmmm." He stops and then, finding something, laughs that infectious laugh. He says, "For example, I thought Mennonites were going to hell until I sat down and ate borscht with them."

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- 5:30 p.m. - CMBC Alumni Annual Meeting - reflections from the 10, 20 & 30 year classes.
- induction of the '85 graduates.
- 8:00 p.m. - Spring Concert in the CMBC Gym featuring the CMBC Singers and Ensemble.

Sunday, April 28

- 10:00 a.m. - Baccalaureate Service - CMBC Gym.
- 2:30 p.m. - Graduation Service - Home Street Mennonite Church
- Speaker: Rev. Jake F. Pauls, Minister of the Bethel Mennonite Church in Winnipeg.

Tuesday, April 30

- CMBC Ensemble leaves for Alberta Tour.
- CMBC Singers leave for B.C. Tour.

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A life-long love of art and music that's shared with friends

by Mary M. Enns

This interview was conducted in German and some of the terminology is best kept in the original.

Anyone fortunate enough to have been invited to Helmut and Lotte Penner's *Haus-Musik Abende* will agree they are unique and delightful evenings. These receptions, highlighted with chamber music and poetry readings, end with a coffee buffet. They are attended by a large number of guests who willingly crowd into every available settee or chair or bench filling the dining room, the sun room and finally framing the small group of chosen musicians in the living room. A careful labour of love has gone into the preparation of an evening such as this, as evidenced by the program notes that come with the invitation.

The Penner's life is a partnership, a harmonious interplay of their diverse interests and pursuits. "Good books, music, singing, poetry," Lotte muses, "these were the counterbalance in those early years of very little money, hard work and over-crowded living conditions." Today their life-style is considerably changed. But their deep love for *die Kunst und die Musik* has never changed except to expand and develop to the point where they are making a distinct contribution to their church and to their many friends and acquaintances with the talents God entrusted to them and which they have cultivated with an astonishing dedication.

When Helmut finally reached the point where he could allow himself to do something about the music study he had longed for, he was already 42 years old. "This new situation where I needed to use a lot of my spare time in practice created a bit of tension because Lotte felt excluded. We had always done everything together." But he began serious study on his *Blockfloete* (recorder) anyway. And Lotte's love for poetry, far from being pushed into the background, blossomed as she passed on this pleasure to their children, as well as making contributions in the church when the opportunity arose. She began to study English poetry and, discovering a new delight in this, she bought books at the Polo Park Book Market.

In the early years in Canada when they lived in their first little garret on the top of Smith's "Little Gallery" they listened every Sunday night to the radio program of music and poetry produced by Lowe's Music Shop, directly across the street from them. Cliff Gardner read the poetry masterfully. They were so impressed with the combination of music and poetry that they wondered if this could not be made to work for the two of them. It was a good decision with far-reaching results. The greatest satisfaction and happiness accruing from their music-poetry evenings, however, has been their own, they emphasize. "We felt we had a duty, a task to fulfill in gratitude. This was to be our contribution, the reason for the *Haus-Musik Abende*. We felt we would like to give pleasure to others, something to relieve the every-day routine, the pressures of materialism," Helmut says. "After the

hardships we had experienced in the old country we were so grateful to come to this free country of Canada to live."

The Penner's were both born in Danzig, the largest Mennonite colony in Germany — Lotte in Tiegenhagen in 1917 and Helmut three kilometres away in Tiegenhof in 1920. The two villages were connected, not only by a road but by the River Tiede. The Mennonite Church was situated on its shore. When Helmut was courting Lotte he would get into his boat, pick up his young lady and together they would paddle away in the quiet evening hours. Lotte lived with her parents and paternal grandparents on an estate. When her father was mobilized in the First World War her mother moved in with her own parents. Lotte's school days were finished at 14, since her parents, having lost all their money, could not afford to send her to a school of higher learning. She had to leave home instead to take over the care of an old couple in Altfelde. Her three years in this service were trying ones for the young girl pining for the comfort and love of a large family circle. Then began a five-year period of study in dress-making and tailoring from which she graduated at 22 as the youngest *Meisterin* in Danzig. She now sewed in the houses of relatives, friends and acquaintances.

Helmut's father owned a General Store in Tiegenhof. Planning to add an ironmongery to his business, he placed his 15-year-old son in a three-year apprenticeship in Elbing, East Prussia. When his father died, the 18-year-old Helmut returned to his home to take over the family business. With the outbreak of the Second World War, he was

drawn into the German army.

Helmut Penner and Lotte Loepp were married in 1942 while the bridegroom was on a 9-day leave. He was to see his wife only twice during the next three years, when she visited him in Berlin. He first saw his daughter when she was three years old. Soon after his return to the army, the Africa Corps was defeated and Helmut and his comrades became prisoners of war for three years. This was 1943, and all these prisoners of war were transported from Africa to the U.S. Because of the high incidence of malaria among the men, the Red Cross soon made arrangements to get them moved from Louisiana to Oregon and then to California where they were put to work on farms.

Meanwhile, in 1945 Lotte, her little daughter Gisela, and her mother joined a group of refugees. They encountered many difficulties on a trek which lasted to reach the Lueneburger Heide in North Germany where Lotte's brother lived. This is where Helmut came after his release in 1946. Lotte, knowing he had studied the English language during his imprisonment, had found Helmut a job as interpreter with the British Occupation Unit. Food was difficult to get and they were allowed only 12 ounces of meat each per month and four ounces of fat. But Lotte sewed in the various farm homes and earned a little food. "But we made the very most of everything," she says proudly. "And every year when our wedding day came round we would read again our wedding text from Revelations 2:10: 'Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life.'"

In 1949 the little family emigrated to Canada and lived briefly in Landmark with their sponsors, the Penner family (not relatives). Helmut was unable to find work in Winnipeg but Lotte found a job with the Smith family and they moved to the little rooms on the third floor of the "Little Gallery" on Kennedy Street. Lotte was paid \$35 a month to take care of the Smiths' seven-month-old infant as well as cooking, washing and ironing for nine adults. In time, her husband got a job in the picture-framing factory at 60¢ an hour. Now they lived fairly well and even managed to pay installments on their \$800 *Reiseschuld*.

Then Lotte's health gave out and both she and Helmut found themselves without a job. They were also without a home. Helmut turned to shovelling coal in the yards of Thomas Jackson and Sons — hard, dirty work, but it was a job.

Once again they moved into a little third-floor garret on Arlington.

In 1951 they bought their present home on Dominion with the help of several mortgages and the Penners of Landmark vouching for them. In order to pay for the house they rented six of the rooms and kept only two as their own living quarters. When their son Reinhard was an infant the kitchen table was his bedroom. But their love for good books, poetry and music helped to add beauty to what might otherwise have been a cheerless life. They used to borrow books from the church library. Then they bought a piano and started their children on piano lessons. The parents and children read and sang and the children were taught the glory of *Kunst and Musik*, as well as the importance of tolerance toward others, regardless of colour or creed.

Lotte's eyes soften as she speaks of their sincere and warm reception in First Mennonite Church, their church home for all these years. "During the Hitler regime," she says, "we had lived under totally different influences, though I remember we fought inwardly against these. But we were refugees and we were troubled. Through barter we had managed to get an old radio. Then we heard our first short church service on this radio; it was based on I Corinthians 3:11: 'For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.' And there we had our answer, and our hearts were satisfied." At First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg it was Aeltester Johann Enns," she explains, "who took us Danzig refugees by the hand and led us gently, gradually, wisely and lovingly back over the long road from whence we had come. He did not expect a miraculous overnight change within us. We studied the Bible in his classes for a long time and gradually the questions in our minds were answered."

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Lotte, at this time was using every opportunity to help augment the family coffers. She sewed wherever she could, even at dry cleaners'. She took on housecleaning jobs and then started to care for a number of old, bedridden ladies in the neighbourhood — difficult work with meagre pay. "Then I discovered I needed to think of a more cheerful line of work than always facing old age and death." So she applied to and was hired by Sears in their ladies' fitting rooms. For eight years she enjoyed her work and the people who shared it. During the Christmas rush with its hustle and bustle, its nervous activity and frayed tempers, the little seamstress in the fitting rooms discovered sadly that the true significance of Christmas was of no importance in this setting. She pondered and wondered whether there might be something she could do to improve the atmosphere. That's when the Penner home was opened to Lotte's co-workers at Sears for an evening of Advent — of singing and music and poetry — in English. She likes to think of this as a gentle, loving antidote to the money-madness and materialistic trends of the day.

Similar evenings were subsequently planned for friends, family and neigh-

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bours to provide the true Christmas spirit amidst the rush and stress. Helmut adds with pride and gratitude: "We never had any problem getting professional musicians to come and perform at our home for these gatherings, though there was no money involved. They seemed to love to come for the enjoyment of it in an informal atmosphere. We have had people like cellists Peter Wiebe and Clara Belkin, singers John Martens, Hilda Driedger and Henriette Schellenberg. Conrad Grimes at the harpsichord and pianist Jean Broadfoot play and sing for us. My instrument was the recorder, which is so well suited to chamber music. And my wife read poetry."

The true charm of the recorder was brought home to us by Helmut Penner when my husband and I attended a local wedding reception a year ago. The tone of the celebration was joyous, uninhibited and smart. In a quiet moment Helmut rose to play the recorder especially for the bride and groom. In the hush of that great hall the gentle, plaintive sounds of the *Blockfloete* created a "magical moment" as our friend, a music critic, remarked.

A musical highlight for Helmut was playing a double concerto for recorder and cello accompanied by the Mennonite Community Orchestra. "The recorder," says Helmut, "is not a popular instrument. I have truly appreciated the arrangements for recorder Esther Wiebe has done for me to be played with other groups." For the past 23 years Penner has played in various classes at the Manitoba Music Festival and won many of them. This year he will be playing in a piece by Telemann for recorder, French horn, piano and bassoon. It was after one of the festival's final concerts that Dr. Ferdinand Eckhardt and his wife Sonya Eckhardt-Gramatte came backstage to congratulate Helmut. Dr. Eckhardt is still a guest at the Penners.

Helmut and Lotte will be featured on the program at a German teachers' conference with some 300 teachers from Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta at the University of Manitoba in early May.

Anyone using our highly efficient bus service to travel about in Winnipeg may have noticed Helmut Penner at the wheel of one of them. This is what he has been doing for the past 32 years. And he still enjoys it.

Lotte has spent 26 years teaching German language, currently at Gordon Bell High on Saturday mornings. Some 200 students are taught German Grades 1-12

there following a curriculum from Germany. For the same period she has served her church as its reporter to *Der Bote*. She has also given generously of her time as a scrutineer for the Conservative Party during elections. She was always impressed with the sight of the Holy Bible on the ballot box. Lotte also speaks fondly of her roles in the Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre productions. She has in the past played the mother of Emily in *Unsere Kleine Stadt*, the nurse in *Die Physiker*, Rebecca in *Prozess Jesu*, and will play Mrs. Penner in Walter Schlichting's forthcoming award-winning play *Die Immigranten*.

Relaxation? They love to share their cottage at Bel Air on Lake Winnipeg with the people dearest to them — their children and grandchildren. Their daughter Gisela, a graduate of University of Winnipeg, now teaches German classes at Dalhousie University and is married to Joe O'Brien. Joe has a masters degree in Parks Planning. Their children are John, Kyna and Timmy. Son Reinhard is married to Christine (Dueck), a medical lab technician now working part-time in microbiology at Health Sciences Centre. They live in Winnipeg with their children, Heidi, Victor and Kevin. They all enjoy the cottage and swim from May to October. In winter they go cross-country skiing and skate.

Every Christmas Helmut and Lotte head East to celebrate the festive season with the O'Briens. When this family lived in Ottawa they would all go skating on the Rideau Canal. Now that they live in Halifax they want to discover the artists' paradise at Peggy's Cove.

Have the Penners any unresolved problems? There is one thing that might become a touchy sort of issue, although it hasn't so far. Lotte is very frank when

she states: "I'm simply not in agreement with a woman always keeping quiet. Gisela's girl friend used to laugh and say, 'Mrs. Penner is the first women's libber I know.' I firmly believe a woman should have her rights."

Helmut has just celebrated his 65th birthday. Special friends sent a card saying: "*Freund, so du etwas bist, so bleib doch ja nicht stehen. Man muss aus einem Licht fort in das andere gehen.*" (Angelus Silesius). That is a fitting picture of Helmut and Lotte Penner: never standing still, but always moving from one light on to the next. mm

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 **review**

A recital to cherish

A review by Al Reimer

Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre presents Schubert's *Die Winterreise* performed by Arthur Janzen, tenor, and Irmgard Baerg, pianist, at the Winnipeg Art Gallery Auditorium, Tuesday, February 19th, and Thursday, February 21st, 1985.

Rarely do Winnipeg recital audiences get the opportunity to hear one of the great nineteenth-century song cycles. What a treat, then, to welcome tenor Arthur Janzen back to our fair city to sing *Die Winterreise*, arguably the greatest of all song cycles. Mr. Janzen, who now makes his home and career in Europe, periodically returns to give us a sumptuous slice of his rich vocal artistry. Four years ago he presented "An Evening with Schubert," accompanied by our own peerless Irmgard Baerg, and I said in my review on that occasion that these two wonderful artists "gave us a recital that will long be cherished by those fortunate enough to be there." The full auditorium at the Art Gallery for this new recital was a good indication that local concert-goers had remembered the earlier recital and wanted more of the same.

And this was indeed another recital to cherish, with even more bountiful blessings flowing from these two superb performers. Arthur Janzen, always a fine, intelligent singer, is now at the peak of his career and an outstanding lieder singer. With the years his lyric tenor is darkening a bit (a perfectly natural process) and sounds almost baritone in the lower range, but his tone is as pure and unforced as ever and his vocal control even surer than before. He and Mrs. Baerg are as sensitively attuned to each other as only artists on the same creative wavelength can be. Except for

minor problems in the overall format — to be noted later — this recital came as near to perfection as anyone could wish for in the midst of a cruel Manitoba winter.

With its 24 beautifully integrated and subtly patterned songs, *Die Winterreise* makes no excessive vocal demands on a singer, but demands a mental concentration and tonal control and above all a depth of insight such as few singers can command with complete consistency all the way through. Mr. Janzen, however, did all these things and did them with such deceptive ease that one could only marvel at what this singer has accomplished since his old Winnipeg days. He not only sang from memory but he sang as though this whole demanding cycle was second nature to him.

Die Winterreise was one of Schubert's last and greatest vocal achievements. It is dark and sombre and heartbreaking in its profound sense of alienation and Romantic despair. While the first half of the cycle does present glimpses of Schubert's warm, sunny earlier lyricism, most of these songs, including most of the songs in the second half, range from the gentle melancholy and elegiac moods of "Gefrorene Traenen," "Wasserflut," and the well-known "Der Lindenbaum," to the stark and ominous moods of "Im Dorfe," "Der Stuermische Morgen," and the ineffable sadness and dejected surrender of "Die Nebensonnen" and "Der Leiermann." Schubert himself referred to *Die Winterreise* as "a cycle of terrifying songs," and confessed to a friend: "They have cost me more effort than any other songs I ever did."

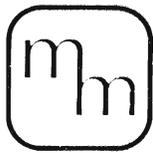
One can well believe that. Not having heard this cycle for some time, I was struck by the progressively deeper and

darker moods projected in the songs as the cycle develops. The 12 songs of the second half, composed half a year after the first half, show a much greater emotional bite and psychological depth than the first twelve. Arthur Janzen and Irmgard Baerg were fully aware of that emotional progression and made the later songs an especially poignant and moving experience for us. Some lieder singers take a much too dramatic approach to Schubert's song cycles. Mrs. Baerg and Mr. Janzen know better. They know that the basic approach to these songs must be lyrical rather than dramatic, a lyricism that is natural and unforced but capable of intensified climaxes where needed. This restrained technique is especially important in a song like "Fruelingstraum," where the stanzas alternate between tender, dreamy lyricism and a harsh, self-mocking dramatic realism.

And that brings me to the other elements of this recital. I enjoyed Professor Leonard Isaacs' unpretentious but lucid and witty introductory remarks. I was less taken by the accompanying slide projections and song descriptions designed to elucidate and enrich the performance. The paintings were done expressly for Mr. Janzen's performances of *Die Winterreise* in Europe recently. They are skilfully done and projected a powerful expression of the darker, bleaker aspects of the cycle: eerie images in white, gray-blue and black winter colors with frozen human fingers and doomed eyes feebly clinging to life under huge slabs of ice and snow, and naked trees tortured by icy storm blasts. But surely this wintry horror represents only one side of the cycle. If *Die Winterreise* depicts "an ecstasy of dejection," in Prof. Isaacs' fine phrase, the ultimate Romantic vision of human spiritual isolation, it also retains within its very essence the sweet lyric dream that creates the Romantic paradox in the first place: the never-to-be-resolved contrast between the agonizing sensuousness of the spring dream, and the wintry blight of reality.

Arthur Janzen and Irmgard Baerg, I am pleased to say, never neglected this crucial tension that makes the Romantic vision so important to us still. I, for one, could have done without the slide presentation, but I can't say enough about the vitality, intelligence and polish of this performance.

Once again the Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre is to be commended for warming our own *Winterreise* by bringing Arthur Janzen home again to charm and move us with his superior artistry. **mm**



the poet's word

— by Sarah Klassen

KING'S GAME

They make you king
for a day
dress you in purple
provide you with a sort of crown
Any number can play
scribe, soldier, old men
children throw dice on pavement
You choose of course to play
to the end, it was planned
long ago
You know the game is over
and you've won
when the rooster crows

MISSING

Between pillars of this gray bridge
we look for a torn sleeve, brown duffle bag
stuck to ice, part of a leg.
We are not desperate though we cry as we run
the length and breadth of empty streets.
The dog's muzzle is white, his breath gels
against lead skies. We are lost
in December's grim silence, God knows where
we'll find the scent.
Wind blows snow over the trail.
Our bones and hearts ache, our shadows dance
in the mad thrust of headlights.
We are left with fragments: a handful of hair
found in a dead book, a smile frozen in memory.
We lay them out in a warm place
and with the fierce glue of our agony
piece together a whole person, a girl
thirteen and laughing.
She comes when we call her name.
Our tears fall warm and strong
enough to put a face, a voice
to the vision that startles us
night after night
from glittering lights of the star-
crowned Christmas tree.

GOOD FRIDAY

This year in Jerusalem we choose to forego
the Via Dolorosa. We know the way
to God is not by works
we are Protestant. In any case
we've had it with one-legged begging
Arabs, flies
stench of the old city.

Blazing sun sears the pavement
this is no day to kneel. Wise-eyed
children in rags
push painted beads into our hands.

The garden tomb is cool
benches placed in the shade.
We hold communion with our kind, here
there's a grand view of Golgotha
and quaint cups of olive wood for wine.
Our Jewish tour guide chooses to remain
with the bus. After prayers and a hymn
we return via Kidron
and Gethsemane
to the Hilton Shalom with its new swimming pool
and air-conditioned rooms.

PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER

I pull you crying from reeds
raise you in the shade
of palm-fringed pyramids
amidst chanting priests
and alabaster
Who would have dreamed
you'd choose to champion a pack
of churlish brickmakers
You abandon the sacred
river, trail a lonely god
who gives you burning
bushes, endless wasteland
You tear my heart
I gave you gold
enough, and slaves
enduring promises of Egypt

 **review**

A not so cosy world, viewed with compassion

a review by Andre Oberle

Birdsell, Sandra. Ladies of the House. Winnipeg: Turnstone Press, 1984. 169 pp., Paperback.

Readers who discovered Sandra Birdsell in her first collection of short stories *Night Travellers* will enthusiastically welcome her new volume of short stories *Ladies of the House*. The literary promise Birdsell showed in her first collection has here been once again equalled and surpassed. Birdsell's world presented in her new book is already familiar to us. Once again we find ourselves in the Agassiz area but we also move to the not so fashionable side streets of Winnipeg. Her characters are also familiar to us. We enter once more the world of Mika Lafreniere and the Lafreniere sisters. We meet those sisters as teenagers, as wives and mothers.

The first story "The Bride Doll" introduces us to Lureen and Virginia, two teenagers, who fantasize about weddings reported in the local paper, only to be confronted in the end with the not so glorious real wedding of the poor girl Lena and the simple-minded David. Birdsell is to be commended for her skill in making us part of the world of these teenagers.

The second story "Falling in Love" is anything but a conventional love story. Lureen and Larry have been living together for awhile. We join their story

when Larry has decided to run off and Lureen returns home to her parents. During her trek home she goes through her relationship with Larry with a fine comb and comes to know her true feelings towards her lover.

"Niagara Falls" is the sad story of Elizabeth Pankratz whose husband has just suffered a stroke and eventually dies in the hospital after months of illness. Birdsell investigates this lonely woman's fight to cope with her new situation, her secret erotic thoughts about a neighbour who is a widower and her final coming to terms with her situation. "Moonlight Sonata" returns us once more to the world of teenagers as they commit thoughtless pranks that really hurt other people, attend wild drunken parties and drift without orientation in their attempts to fit into the mainstream of life.

"Ladies of the House" shows us Lureen as housewife and mother trying to get through yet another day. Her husband Larry is at work and she is trying to do everything at once when a telephone call from her former boyfriend Max turns her thoughts back to the time when she almost became his lover, almost ran away from home to be with him in Vancouver, only to abandon all such thoughts at the last moment when her boyfriend's father "Big Max" propositions her. Birdsell skilfully intertwines

the insinuating remarks of Max on the telephone with Lureen's reminiscences.

"Dreaming of Jeannie" introduces us to Bobbie, the cocktail waitress, who wishes she looked like Barbara Eden and longs for a more exciting life than her humdrum marriage to Wayne. Alas, sixty dollars worth of make-up and the "Twiggy look" do not bring about any changes and life just goes on.

"Spring Cleaning" shows us Lureen, Marlene and Bobbie, later interrupted by the unpopular Bernice, as they try to make it through yet another boring day with the aid of an afternoon bottle of rum which ends with a party at which no one has fun. "Toronto Street" reveals the loneliness and fears of Truda as she searches for a new life by separating from her husband and moving into a ramshackle house on Toronto Street where she can only find human contact by eavesdropping on her neighbours.

The story "Bird Dance" investigates the pain and anguish suffered by children and parents in a marriage on the rocks. The story is presented in the form of letters between various family members and presents a most interesting multifaceted projection of the situation. The final story "Keepsakes" brings us back to Mika and her daughters and daughter-in-law during a family get-together. The girls are reminiscing about the early years of the kids. Naturally everyone remembers things differently. Mika is all alone in the crowd finding herself drawn to her daughter-in-law and her least favorite granddaughter.

Birdsell's stories are wonderful gems. Her characters stand out strong and haunt the memory of the reader. She manages to recreate the atmosphere of the Fifties and Sixties in a most compelling way but is equally at home in today's world. The characters are simple people but there is nothing commonplace about them. Their conflicts are our conflicts. Their world is our world but it is shown with a twist to focus our attention on the seedier aspects of our society. Birdsell's language is earthy and full of life, her characters often vulgar in their expressions. There is nothing cozy about this world. While she depicts a harsh reality in her stories Birdsell does so with commendable compassion and understanding.

Ladies of the House is an exceedingly well-written fascinating and powerful collection of short stories. This work will win the author many new friends.

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



observed along the way

February to March

• In the middle of February the university takes a week's break, to give both students and teachers a chance to catch up on their research. It is officially called a "study break." The campus, however, is strangely empty. I see about three students in the library and about the same number of professors in their offices. Maybe they are all at home working hard, or could it be that they have taken their books to such ideal study sites as Banff, Jasper, and Hawaii? Many come back the next week with wonderful tans. I can't be too self-righteous. This year I am able to catch up on a lot of work, but about 10 years ago a delightful surprise came my way just in time for the annual February break. A friend called to say that he had a free airline and hotel ticket for a week to Hawaii, but couldn't take advantage of it. Would I want to use it? Would I? I did, and on an extra \$100 for food and entertainment I had a wonderful study week in Hawaii. We had promised our students that during that week they could contact us by telephone if they had any questions. I gave them the number of the Ilikei Hotel in Honolulu, and asked them not to call collect. I suppose they had no problems, because I received no calls. Since then I have tried to be more responsible, largely, I suppose, because there have been no more such pleasant surprises.

• During the study week I spend an interesting morning in a shoe manufacturing factory in the Inkster Industrial Park. What is unique about this company is not so much the western shoes that it manufactures as the way in which it is run. About seven years ago the Greb Shoe Manufacturing Company decided to close down its Winnipeg operation. However, one of the Winnipeg-based vice-presidents, Bill Moorby, persuaded a number of the workers in the Winnipeg plant to purchase the

operation from Greb. Moorby is now the president of a company in which about 140 workers own the plant and run it together. An efficiency study has shown that this plant is considerably more efficient than any other plant its size in Canada, and worker income is quite a bit higher than the average. Moorby is an entrepreneur and can spout the virtues of free enterprise with the best of them, but a lot of his creative talent has gone into reorganizing the work place in such a way that it is not only a money-making machine but a living breathing organism in which people decide their fates together.

• A Wednesday evening in February takes us to the annual fund-raising dinner of Westgate Mennonite Collegiate. I have always liked the freedom such schools give to parents to choose the kind of education they want for their children. The guest speaker for the evening, Catholic Archbishop Adam Exner, very eloquently defends the idea that it is parents and not the state that have ultimate responsibility for their children, including their education. The state is there to support the intentions of parents, not to determine or control them. Most people in our society would resent it very much if the state told them what kind of groceries they could buy, but they are not bothered by the fact that the state tells them what kind of education they can choose for their children. It must be acknowledged, however, that many parents like the public school system and I feel this evening that Archbishop Exner is much too hard on the values taught in many such schools. In my opinion he also gives too little support to the role of teachers in our private schools. Surely we as parents should expect them not only to reflect our values but to challenge them. When the First Mennonite Church of Winnipeg asked me to be a minister more than 20

years ago I knew that they wanted me to preach the Christian Gospel to them. In agreeing to preach I agreed to those terms, and they had every reason to expect me to speak to them about the Christian faith and not about some other faith or about no faith at all. But ultimately it was *my* understanding of the Christian faith that I shared with the congregation over the years, and where that came into conflict with the understanding of some of the members I felt it was not only my right but my duty to challenge them with my views, while trying simultaneously to understand theirs. Archbishop Exner comes dangerously close this evening to saying that teachers in Christian schools must not only defend Christian values but they must specifically, and at all times, defend the values of the parents. That would be to rob the teachers of their integrity and the parents of an opportunity to grow by being challenged. In all such instances freedom is possible only if a certain tension between the interests of different groups is maintained. If one group is insensitive to the desires of the other, confrontation becomes inevitable and occasionally disciplinary action may be necessary, but for the sake of freedom and integrity a tension based on mutual tolerance is always preferable. As usual, the women's supporting group provides a delicious meal, and the Westgate choir adds to the evening with a very enjoyable medley of old and modern songs. At the end of the meal a host of delicious cakes slide by us, and even as I sample two or three of them my eye falls longingly on a cake at the other end of the table that happens to be my favorite: Napoleon Torte. Slowly it moves closer to us and my mouth begins salivating, but woe of woes, the last piece glides down the hatch of another torte lover half-way down the table. Next year I

will move to the end of the table where the Napoleon Torte sits!

- Speaking of food, several luncheon meetings and dinners this past month, including a birthday dinner for my mother, take us to a number of restaurants in Winnipeg. I especially like to sample the soups. A completely unscientific sample leads me to recommend the following: Russian borscht and Summa borscht at the 8 Shtove, green pea soup at Salisbury House, cream of chicken at Fingers, and chicken noodle at Grandma Lees. They all cost little and are practically a meal in themselves. Nothing, of course, beats Rouladen at the home of friends.

- An evening in March is spent in our home with students of one of my classes. They come from many different countries and we have an enjoyable time showing slides of China, Yugoslavia, Russia, and East Germany. Such experiences are always refreshing. On another evening I show some of my Russian slides to survivors of the Russian Revolution at Bethania. Most of them observe silently, but tears stream down a number of their faces.

- Several days at the university are spent in promotion hearings. When a professor asks to be promoted from one rank to another that person must make a strong case for the promotion. A few of us, as colleagues, sit as a promotion's committee and read all the work of the professor, including evaluations made by students. Many recommendations are negative. Professors as well as students are constantly being evaluated and judged at the university.

- Two movies that we enjoy very much this month are *Witness*, which contrasts Amish society with a modern American city, and *Passage to India*, which illustrates the incredible gulf between British and Indian society by way of a young, sensuous but repressed English woman. The movie on the Amish, which treats that group sensitively, causes me to ponder once again why, though their life is so much more sane than life in most modern cities, it nevertheless fails to attract us enough to have us join them.

- A noon luncheon of MEDA at the Fort Garry Hotel enables us to hear Gary Ginter, a young Mennonite commodity trader from Chicago. I am intrigued by the philosophy and experience of this Bible school graduate who now buys and sells commodities around the world, occupying a strange little world virtually unknown to most of us. At the same time he is involved very

creatively in community-building projects both in Chicago and in Africa. People like this have the ability to expand our own horizons a little.

- A Thursday morning in March takes me to Westgate Mennonite Collegiate where I have been asked to speak to high school students about the Christian faith. In preparing this talk it was rather fun to think back upon my own high school experiences with religion. At one point a friend and I made an earnest decision to become Christians, but a few weeks later the movie *Lassie Come Home* came to the local theatre and we knew that we had to decide between our faith and that movie. The movie won. How fragile that first budding of faith must have been to be destroyed by an innocent collie named Lassie. However, as one evangelist tried to say to us, "Today it's *Lassie Come Home*, tomorrow it's a cowboy movie, then a gangster film, and finally you yourself will be killing people." The fact is that we did end up playing cops and robbers, but most of those friends are now pacifists.

- Pat Friesen visits the University of Manitoba campus on a Friday afternoon to read some of his most recent poetry. This young native of Steinbach is highly regarded by Canadian writers and there is a good crowd on hand to hear him. I find personally that it is a tremendous pleasure to listen to him.

- A Saturday in March is spent at a lodge in the Delta Marsh, on the southern tip of Lake Manitoba. Faculty and graduate students in our economics department spend the day evaluating the courses that we are teaching. It is a useful exercise. I manage to get my car thoroughly stuck in the half-frozen marsh, and it is interesting to see that when a dozen economists push a car they all manage to push in the same direction.

- The following day takes us, with friends, to a cottage north of Grand Beach, where we spend a wonderful afternoon cross-country skiing and eating. It is easy in winter to reach high ridges from which there is a panoramic view of Lake Winnipeg. We return to Winnipeg in time to hear a forum at St. Paul's College on the Christian response to war. Harry Loewen of the Chair of Mennonite Studies explores this problem with a Jesuit priest (who defends the idea of a limited war) and a Catholic graduate student. Mainstream Christians, including Catholics, have traditionally argued that under certain conditions, when an enemy threatens

innocent people with grave injustice, when that enemy can be clearly identified, and when attempts to stop that enemy can be carried out without destroying a lot of innocent bystanders, a war waged against such an enemy may be justified. The Anabaptists of the 16th century rejected such a position; but most modern Mennonites agree with it implicitly because they condone the use of police violence precisely under such conditions. However, as Harry Loewen points out this evening, it is inconceivable that a nuclear war could meet such conditions.

- That same Sunday evening we are informed that the Soviet Union has a new leader. This time it is a man from a new generation and I think it is quite possible that in the next decade, certainly not immediately, significant changes may occur in the Soviet Union. When Mao Tse Tung died in China in 1974 no one could have predicted that China would begin to change as much as it has, but with his death a whole generation, in a sense, was displaced (at least a whole generation of a certain kind of thought), and China has changed profoundly.

- The last few weeks have witnessed a debate in Canada about the usefulness of the Canadian Senate. It is always difficult to take that body seriously. As a wag has noted, a position in the Senate is usually a *taskless thanks*.

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NOTE

Paul Redekop wrote the article last issue on mediation as a way to solve conflict. His name was omitted unintentionally.

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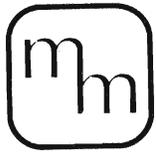
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review

Pricking the balloon of Sermonizing

Review by Andreas Schroeder

PREDICHT FIER HAITE, by Jack Thiessen, Helmut Buske Verlag, Hamburg, Germany.

French essayist and philosopher Michel de Montaigne may not have said it first, but he said it best: "No culture can lay claim to full maturity until it can hold up a mirror to itself and chuckle." (Of Societies and Cultures, 1587) He went on, typically, to illustrate his point with a scholar's lead-footed slog through the works of Aristophanes, Gaius Lucilius, Erasmus and William Langland, but it's obviously not necessary to attempt cultural chuckledom (to paraphrase Allen) with an arsenal of such calibres alone. Whoever concocted *Till Eulenspiegel* for the Braunschweiger Teutons managed just fine with little more than a rogue, a horse and a generous helping of coarse humor; the Polynesians have always been soundly served by the conch-blowing, wife-stealing, bano-drinking and utterly irresponsible *Mata*, who deflated both medicine-men and chieftains like a swordfish having its idle way with a school of over-dignified balloon-fins. Closer to home, Henry Morgan's renowned Jean-Luc McGillicutty, the accordion-playing one-legged singer who appeared nightly at the Montreal coffee-house *Le Crash* throughout the 40's and 50's, (the Quixote Series), milked and carved up the sacred cows of Quebec's papalbound society (not to mention the blatant dictatorship of Maurice Duplessis) so effectively that Morgan was arrested no less than three times on trumped-up morals charges.

The Mennonites, on the other hand (to steady this review on its course), the folkwise and hilarious successes of the gentle Arnold Dyck notwithstanding, cannot in all honesty be said to have either fostered or tolerated their fair

share of such satirists and self-satire. Our literary cupboard, in this respect, is virtually bare, and as for our drama, those kitchen-sink plays I used to see (and enjoy) throughout my teens in the basement of the First United Mennonite Church in Vancouver, were far too clichéd and "safe" in both their humour and their commentary to cause anyone to take a serious second look at any of our smugnesses or pomposities. No, it's been a part of Mennonite culture that has definitely constituted stony ground. And I'm bound to say that it's no great credit to us now, now that the greater opportunities for assimilation into the larger Canadian community has loosened the Church's earlier tight social grip on its artists, radicals, doubters and black sheep, that Mennonite writers are suddenly appearing out of every nook and cranny, unleashing a veritable flood of books and plays of a level of excellence and sophistication unprecedented in the 400-odd years of our history. We should have permitted and encouraged this centuries ago, of our own volition. And this is especially true of Mennonite social satire, which, as a tradition, seems to have barely begun to show its face from behind the barn and the back porch, where it has been waiting for generations, living its own illicit Saturday evening and Sunday afternoon life. According to Montaigne's yardstick, at any rate, our level of cultural maturity would appear to leave a good deal of room for improvement.

This is why a book like Jack Thiessen's *Predicht Fier Haite* is an important contribution to the body of Mennonite literature. Entirely aside from its considerable entertainment value, it performs yeoman duty in breaking up cultural soil that has become far too compacted over the years. Not inappropriately, it starts the ball rolling with a take-off on the most obvious balloon to be pricked — the Sunday sermon, that most central ritual whose very sacrosanctity has en-

ticed any number of ministers and preachers to become prima donnas in the opera houses of their own egos. Everyone who can afford to be honest about this will admit to having witnessed it, plenty of times. In Vancouver we were subjected to such extravagant examples on occasion that it became a standard Sundayschooler's parlor game (and hardly our invention) to keep one's fellow scoundrels in stitches by taking anything written — usually a want-ad in the newspapers or a radio advertisement — and preaching a gushing and lurid impromptu sermon about it, complete with long and extravagant turns of religious jargon and plenty of boilerplate exhortative rhetoric. The more foolish and meaningless you could make it, the greater the shrieks of laughter. And for anyone with the inclination to appreciate social subtext, that could mean only one thing: the institution of this Sunday sermon had become too protected; it was losing touch with the people it was intended to address; the informal feedback mechanism that told a minister he had become airborne and had left his flock back on the ground looking up at the soles of his shoes was disintegrating. The institution of the ministry was becoming a house of mirrors, in which too many ministers were spending too much time posing and posturing. Had a tradition of social satire been functioning properly, such a message would have gotten back to such ministers quite promptly. As it was, it rarely seemed to do so. Which is a shame, because despite what certain fundamentalists might think, social satire is not intended to destroy the institutions it mocks — it functions rather to keep them honest. Whether the satirist happens to be a true believer or not.

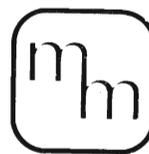
Predicht Fier Haite, then, satirizes the foibles and self-indulgences of (in this case) a country minister, in a series of his sermons addressing the main events in any Mennonite community's life — Sunday mornings, weddings, funerals, revival meetings and the changes of the seasons. They're all in Low German — at least they give the *impression* of being in Low German, Thiessen having "flattened" the High German and mixed in Low German vocabulary just enough to carry it off in both languages — thus ensuring not only a Mennonite audience but also an appreciative readership in Germany. It's vastly amusing, not always completely consistent but devastatingly accurate in its voice — complete, with all its prejudices and biases intact. So schraibt denn der jute Thiessen vie folcht: "Njuta und ich ta-

ten uns noch ein wenich verbaissen und dann sachte sie mit ainmal, 'Die Jeschichte von die Erzehlung vom raichen Mann und vom armen Lazarus, die jinj mir schon immer sehr schen. Kannst Du mal wieder darieber predjen?' Oh, Ihr Lieben, man muss doch dankbar sein fier die Waiber, sie sind manchmal ain kostbarer Schatz und so auch maine Gattin Njuta. Und siehe, ich wusste auf der Stelle, das ist Dain Text. Und so wars denn auch." So wait.

There are 21 sermons, on subjects that include everything from *Das Jlaichnis vom Saeman* to the text: *Wenn der Herr des Hauses sich bekehren wird, so wird es die Kuh im Stall merken*. Members of the congregation rarely leave the church unscathed, and one can't help noticing that one particular thorn in the good Reverend's side, a sinner who serves rather often as a model of all that is reprobate and dissolute, bears a suspicious resemblance to author Thiessen himself. In and around the minister's homespun exegeses, often laced with nostalgic references to "wies em aulten Russland war", occasional glimpses of the congregation itself become possible — a community slowly being infiltrated by North America's secular dreams, the easy accessibility of liquor and drugs, even faint tremors of feminism that reach right up to the level of the wily Njuta herself. If I have any complaints about the book it's that it doesn't go far enough in this direction, to add an archival function to its social commentary. There is an element of this in an unusual sermon that recounts the good Reverend's trip to visit Mennonite communities in Mexico, but the talk is very short. A series of "Jugendabende" or somesuch formality might have provided an excellent venue for a more elaborate version of this report.

Given its oral nature, it's not surprising to find this book available on cassette ("De scheensten Jeschichten hat der Verfasser auf Tonband jesprochen, es leift eene Stunde . . .") as well; an eminently sensible idea. Both book and cassette are published by the Helmut Buske Verlag, Hamburg, Germany. Go ahead and treat yourself to a cultural chuckle. For those who don't want to be seen coming out of a bookstore with it under their arms, the ISBN number (for mail orders) is 3-87118-598-1.

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manitoba news

The 6th annual Elementary **German Poetry Recital** was held at the River East Collegiate on February 8. The grade 1-6 students represented public schools as well as German Saturday Schools. **Dorothea Kampen** headed the recital organizing committee. There were 95 entrants in the competition.

The final placings were:

Grade 1: Keith Weiner (Princess Margaret School); Nadine Tonn (Princess Margaret School); and Charlene Kasdorf (Donwood School).

Grade 2: Kristi Potschka (Princess Margaret School); Jo-Anne Ens (Border Valley School); and Stanford Unrau (Princess Margaret School).

Grade 3: Larissa Bergen (Princess Margaret School); Hilda Letkeman (Winkler Elementary School); and Evelyn Schulz (Princess Margaret School).

Overall winner grades 1-3: Larissa Bergen (Princess Margaret School).

Grade 4: Tina Schmidt (Woodlawn School); Monika Schulz (Princess Margaret School); Valerie Dueck (Kleefeld School); and Matthew Reimer (Winkler Elementary School).

Grade 5: Elana Martens (Gordon Bell Saturday School); Sandra Letkeman (Winkler Elementary School); Philip Martens (Maple Leaf School); and Bonnie Heinrichs (Niverville School).

Grade 6: Ramona Wiebe (Winkler Elementary School); Lisa Schellenberg (Elmdale School); Karl Rempel (Kleefeld School); and Marlene Klippenstein (Woodlawn School).

Overall winner grades 4-6: Tina Schmidt (Woodlawn School).

The Elementary German Poetry Recital is sponsored by Garden Valley, Hanover, and River East School Divisions, the Mennonite German Society, the United German Saturday School, and the German Church of God Saturday School. The organizing committee consisted of Elizabeth Arnold, Wallie Bennett, Werner Epp, Dorothea Kampen (chairperson), Walter Kampen, Laura Potschka, Charlotte Rempel Kroeker, and Henriette Schellenberg.

The 11th annual **Manitoba German Language Contest** took place on Saturday, February 9, at the University of Winnipeg. The contest, co-ordinated by Will Barmeier of Westgate Collegiate, had 1,200 participants. The finalists met at the University for the final round of competition. In the senior categories,

A, B, and C, the winners received all-expense-paid study trips to Germany. Winners were as follows:

Senior A: Susanne Wenger, Saturday German School; Birgit Dotslaw, River East Collegiate; and Monica Thiessen, MBCI.

Senior B: Sonia Strauss, Saturday German School; Heidi Loewen, Westgate; and Barbara Plett, Landmark Collegiate.

Senior C: Ramadip Singh, Westgate; Janice Braun, Westgate; and Christian Kovacs, MBCI.

Junior A: Andrea Kraemer, Westgate; Katherine Erbach, Saturday School; and Stefanie Martens, MBCI.

Junior B: Richard Featherstone, Westgate; Annie Schroeder, Green Valley Collegiate; and Helen Bergen, Winkler Elementary School.

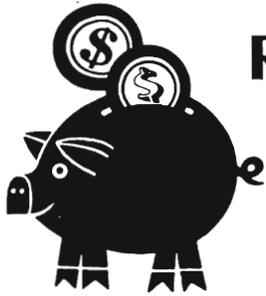
Junior C: Kim Kroeker, Westgate; Janna Larsen, Westgate; and Vicki Renald, MBCI.

Hanover School Division trustees voted down a request to implement a bilingual German program in Steinbach. A group of parents had requested the course for their children; the program entails instruction in German for half of each school day. The bilingual program is now in effect in a school in Grunthal, and in the River East School division in Winnipeg.

The Prairie Theatre Exchange of Winnipeg presented a satirical review about the French language question entitled *Section 23. The French Language Revue*, from February 28 to March 17. The play was sponsored by Comchek Services Ltd., a Winnipeg payroll company. Chairman and chief executive officer of the company, **Bill Loewen**, said that he hoped his company's sponsorship would help to repair some damage that negative publicity about French language rights has created for Manitoba.

Volleyball players cited in the Great Plains Athletic Conference awards roster included **Ruth Klassen** of the University of Winnipeg Wesmen, who was chosen as most valuable player. Teammate **Sharon Derksen** was named to the all-star team. **Hans Hildebrandt** and **Hans Regier** of Winnipeg were named to the men's second all-star teams.

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Elfriede Schroeder has been named the new president of the Mennonite Community Orchestra, succeeding **Bertha Klassen**. Schroeder, a nurse, has been active in numerous community activities and is a member of First Mennonite Church, where she is coordinator of the junior youth program. Until 1984 she served as administrator of the Suzuki Music Institute in Winnipeg. She is married to **Lothar Schroeder** and is the mother of four children. The Mennonite Community Orchestra involves a large number of local amateur Mennonite musicians and presents two major concerts each season.

Major works by Bach, Poulenc and Schubert will be on the program at the Spring Concert of the Mennonite Community Orchestra. The orchestra will perform on Saturday, May 11 (8 p.m.) at the Portage Avenue Mennonite Brethren Church in Winnipeg and on Sunday, May 12 (4 p.m.) at the Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church. **John C. Klassen** will conduct the MCO in the two performances. Violinists Christine Longhurst and Marianne Enns will be featured in Bach's Double Concerto in D Minor for Two Violins; organist Chris Huebner will perform in Poulenc's Concerto for Organ, Strings and Tympani; soprano Heidi Geddert and the Winkler Mass Choir will join the orchestra for the final work, Miriam's Song of Triumph by Schubert. The MCO was founded in Winkler in the 1940's under the baton of Benjamin Horch. After a period of inactivity, the orchestra was reorganized in Winnipeg in 1978 and now presents two concerts each season. At the spring concerts an offering will be taken to defray expenses. For further information, call Elfriede Schroeder, president of the orchestra, at 667-5275.

Michael Young was recently ordained as pastor of the South Park MB Church in Altona. He is the first pastor of this church, which was founded in 1981.

People committed to ongoing dialogue about Peace Theology are invited to bring papers or responses to papers with them to the **Colloquium on Peace Theology**, June 20-23 at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries in Elkhart, Ind. The colloquium, sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee (U.S. and Canada) and the Institute of Mennonite Studies, will feature "starter" papers on four general topics. Other participants are invited to prepare responses to these papers or prepare a paper of their own which address the general topics. Topics are "The Problem of Power and Justice in Peace Theology," "Rethinking the Christian Witness to Society and the State," "Peace Theology and the Biblical Concept of God" and "How do we do Peace Theology?" The starter papers will be mailed to all registered participants in early May. Individuals interested in contributing a paper or response should contact MCC Canada Peace and Social Concerns Committee, 201-1483 Pembina Highway, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3T 2C8. Some travel subsidies are available for those who have to travel long distances.

After completing five years with the Mennonite Brethren Board of Mission and Service as secretary for Communications, **Hugo Jantz** will be moving on to other areas of service.

Esther Epp-Thiessen was the third medal winner of the **Margaret McWilliams Awards for 1984**, for her book, *Altona, the Story of a Prairie Town*. Receiving honorable mention was Royden Loewen for his book *Blumenort, a Mennonite Community in Transition*.



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Announcing the **Missing Mennonite Cabaret**; two evenings of readings, books and music by Mennonite artists. To be held at 8 p.m., on Friday and Saturday, April 19 and 20. Location: the Act II Restaurant, 177 McDermot East. On Friday evening the writers are **Jack Thiessen, Sandra Birdsell** and **Victor Jerrett-Enns**. **Clinton Toews** will be the musical guest. On Saturday evening the writers are **Patrick Friesen, Di Brandt** and **Rudy Wiebe**. Music to be supplied by the group **Just Plumb Hollow**. A limited number of tickets for each night are available for \$3 at Mary Scorer Bookstore, 389 Graham Avenue. These two evenings of readings are possible through the help of The National Book Festival.

The **Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) Unit** sponsored by Bethel Mennonite Church officially opened in mid-January with the arrival of its first two volunteers. **Catherine Adams**, a social worker from San Antonio, Texas, is working with refugees at the Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council. Doris Mehl, from Portland, Oregon, is working at Carter Day Care Centre, which was originally established by the Bethel congregation some years ago. Catherine and Doris, who make up the Bethel MVS unit, live in an apartment at 8-890 McMillan Avenue. The unit will hope to expand in the next few months, and will be looking for a house when more volunteers arrive. The unit is still seeking volunteers for two more positions: a peace worker with the Inter-Church Disarmament Project and a community worker with Family Centre for September 1985.

The **Native Ministries Board** of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada has opened a new office to minister to urban native peoples. This office, located at 1-641 Westminster, will be the home base for three Native Ministries staff persons, **Neil Unrau, Willi Guenther**, and **Elijah MacKay**. All three will be relating to the community in the Broadway area of the city, although their assignments differ. Neil Unrau will be working in public education, and in monitoring regional and larger issues that relate to the native urban population. Willi Guenther will counsel and do advocacy for the building's residents. The building the office is located in is a project of **Mennonite Urban Renewal Project (MURP)**.

Cellist **Thomas Wiebe** won the Aikens Memorial Trophy for the best overall senior instrumental performance at the 67th annual Winnipeg Music Competition Festival recently. The consensus among adjudicators, according to the *Free Press*, was that "at the very least the young cellist was assured of a professional musical career in orchestral playing. Wiebe's own dream of a solo career may also be possible with the right effort, dedication, promotion, and luck said Howard Leyton-Brown, an adjudicator for string instrumental performances at the festival, 'because being an excellent musician is not enough.'" Wiebe is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Menno Wiebe of Winnipeg. It was noted that Wiebe is desperately in need of a better cello, which might cost as much as \$15,000.

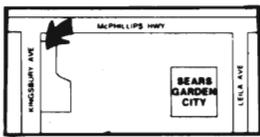


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George Kasdorf



Dr. John K. Friesen will be awarded an honorary degree of doctor of laws by Simon Fraser University at convocation ceremonies in June. A tribute to Dr. Friesen stated: "John Friesen's career is a composite of many accomplishments — in education, the arts, and in international development. What links these accomplishments is his passionate belief in the power of learning to improve communities for mankind." Friesen, the son of D. W. Friesen, was born in Manitoba in 1912; and received his B.A. from the University of Manitoba. He received his MA and PhD from Columbia University in 1947 and 1948 respectively.

The Canadian Mennonite Health Assembly will be held at the Fort Garry MB Church April 24-26. Keynote speaker will be Abe Neufeld, long term missionary to Europe and presently pastor of the Portage Ave. MB church.

Canadian Mennonite settlement began in Vineland, Ontario, in 1786. Plans are underway to celebrate the **Bi-centennial**. They include the preparation of two books; the biography of Jacob Shantz, and a portrait of individual Mennonites in Ontario. Another project, sponsored by MCC, is **Mennonovan Canada**, featuring Reg and Kathryn Good, a voluntary-service husband-wife team travelling in a mobile home and telling the Mennonite story in a variety of contexts. **Mennonovan** expects to enter Manitoba shortly after Easter, 1985. The van will visit every community where Mennonites and Brethren in Christ are known, as far west as Vancouver Island, and as far north as Fort Vermillion in Alberta.

A **Christian Singles Conference**, sponsored by Winnipeg churches, will be held April 19-21, 1985. Contacts: Carol — 943-4212 or Mae — 475-1955 (registrar). Volunteers are needed before and during the conference.

The 1985 Council of Boards session of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada was held January 31-February 2 at CMBC. Council approved a motion to appoint **Henry Gerbrandt**, long-time church worker and former General Secretary, as General Secretary Emeritus.

On February 3, officials of the Mennonite Brethren Conference and the Mennonite Brethren Bible College opened a new dining hall and office complex. The new structure will allow the consolidation of Canadian and North American MB offices on one site.

The MCC office building at 1483 Pembina Hwy. has been sold. Land for a new building has been purchased, just off Pembina Hwy. about 1½ km south of the present office, on a 2.9-acre site across from a major shopping mall.

The Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship dedicated its new church building on January 27. The congregation has been meeting for eighteen years in rented facilities.

After eight years, **Edgar Stoesz**, has left his position as associate executive secretary of MCC. For the next six months he will be doing a major evaluation of the Self-Help Crafts program. In September he will begin a two-year assignment as MCC Europe director, before returning to administrative duties in Akron, Pa.

John Wieler, previously overseas services co-ordinator for MCC Canada, has been appointed director of African Emergency Aid.

Ernie Bergen will be leaving the pastorate of Lakeview MB Church in Killarney, Aug. 1, after serving the congregation for nine years.

Harold Krahn is leaving the pastorate of Richmond Park MB Church in Brandon, July 15, after a ministry of three years.

At the annual Mennonite Disaster Service All-Unit meeting held in Archbold, Ohio on Feb. 8 and 9, **Waldo Neufeld** of Winnipeg was elected to a two-year term as secretary, and **Syd Reimer**, of Rosenort, continues as chairman.

COMING EVENTS

April 20: Mennonite Children's Choir and Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary School. Grant Memorial Baptist Church.

April 19-21: Christian Singles Conference Contact: Mae: 475-1955 (registrar).

April 19 and 20: "Missing Mennonite Cabaret." Evenings of readings, books and music by Mennonite artists. 8:00 p.m., Act II Restaurant, 177 McDermot East.

April 24-26: Canadian Mennonite Health Assembly, Fort Garry MB Church.

May 11: 8 p.m., Mennonite Community Orchestra Spring Concert, Portage Ave. MB church.

May 12: 4 p.m., Mennonite Community Orchestra Spring Concert, Winkler Bergthaler Church.

Gerald Hildebrand was recently commissioned as associate minister in the Portage Avenue MB church.

Neil Block will become pastor of the Brooklands Community Church (MB) in Winnipeg in June, 1985.

Westwood Community Church recently held a commissioning service for **Walter and Edith Wiens**.

Glen and Angela Thiessen of Winkler, are beginning two-year Mennonite Central Committee assignments in Warburg, Alta. Glen will be working as a counselor and Angela as a cook at the Youth Orientation Unit there. Glen was last employed as a farmer in Winkler. Angela last worked as a homemaker in Winkler. The Thiessens are members of the Sommerfelder Mennonite Church in Reinland, Man. Their children are Travis and Clarissa. Glen's parents are Cornie and Tina Thiessen of Winkler. Angela's parents are Jake and Nettie Klassen of Winkler.

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**One good,
one not so good**

This man, Mr. Huebert has not lived at this address for some years. Even when he did live here and your paper came to him, he was not in the least interested in it.

However, I enjoy the *Mirror* a lot and have ever since the first issue. So please change the subscription to my name.

W. Ruth Wood,
Winnipeg.

Twice we have informed you to stop sending us your magazine and we do not want it, but you are still sending it. Perhaps if you stopped with the useless Low German garbage we may consider receiving it again and will pay for the sub.

Peter Martens,
Winnipeg.

KIND WORD

I have been receiving the Mennonite *Mirror* for a number of years — probably about ten! There is a good sized Mennonite Brethren church in Linden, a Church of God in Christ; Mennonite church one and a half miles east of Linden. The population is mostly Low German people. I am alarmed over the fact that the upcoming generation are becoming strangers to the Low German language. Mennonite young men and women are raising families with the children unable to speak a word of Low German. I confess that I am married to an English-speaking woman but I have not lost my mother tongue. I enjoy communicating in the Low German with those who are familiar with it.

Please keep up the Low German pieces you have been publishing in *Mennonite Mirror*. Yours a Senior born in Manitoba.

Ike Brown,
Linden, Alberta

P.S. I thank you for sending the magazine to old people free of charge.

TIPPED HAT

. . . At this time I would like to take the opportunity to tip my hat to the dedicated volunteer staff for a job well done in putting out a magazine of this calibre. Thank you.

W. Jansen
Thompson, Mb.

Weetst Du Noch?

fonn Helen Reimer Bergmann

Oom Panna wea auleen jebläwe. Siene Fru wea endlich no langem Liede heimjogoane. Emm Somma kaum hee no Ontario siene Dajchta to beseatje. Oba see wulle unbedingt en' bestje bie Boatjmauns nenntjitje. Jo, de Ellre weare aul lang enne Ewijchtjeit, oba he wull jiern de "Kjinga" nochmoal trafe. Aus dann aule jemietlijch enne groote Stow saute, fetald hee eene Jeschijcht. Dee Jeschijcht wea:

Woo Panna en Boatjmaun Sijch
Kjanne Leade

Daut Joa wea onjefää 1936. Onkel Panna fonn Bellcourt Ferry wea een Peat wajcherant. Een Kunta mett eenem witten Bless aune Stearn. Panna naum een aundret Peat too ried um daut felorne Peat too seatje. Äwaraul wua Mensche weare froag hee: Ha' jie nijch een junget Kunta jeseene mett eenem witeñ Bless aune Stearn?

Schliesslijch klock eent kaum hee opp een Foarmahoff. Bie de Kjätj stund die Dää ope. Dee Frü stund en wosch daut Meddachsjescherr. De oama Foarma saut en muak Säle trajcht. Doabie sung he lud:

Mein Vater ist reich, hat Haeuser und
Land,

Die Schaetze der Welten erschuf
seine Hand;

An Silber und Gold und Edelgestein
Was die Erde nur birgt, — es ist alles
ja sein.

Eines Koeniges Kind, eines Koeniges
Kind,

Bin Jesu Miterbe, eines Koeniges
Kind!

Aus daut Leed too einj wea reep Panna: "Goon Dach!" "Mutta," reep de Fauma freidijch oppjeräjcht, "hia ess een Dietscha!" he jing rut en stald sijch fää. "Etj sie Jehaun Boatjmaun. Wää send see?"

"Isaak Panna fonn Bellcourt Ferry. Etj ha' mien Peat felore — een junge Kunta mett eenem witten Bless aune Stearn."

"Na," säd Boatjmaun, "dee wea fonndoag fermeddach en miene Fence. Wiels daut oba nijch mien Peat wea, leet etj am rane!"

Panna bedankt sijch en muak sijch oppen Wag wieda tooseatje. Aus hee meist bat St. Ambrose kaum, wea doa een "Haulf-Brit" Foarma. Hee fua oppen Hoff noppa en fruag wada no sien Peat. Nä, säd de Foarma, hee wisst nuscht doavon. Panna kijitj nom Staul. Dee unjaschte Halft fonne Dää wea too, oba dee bowaschte Halft stund ope. So räd he sea lud, nom Staul hanjedreit. Mett eenmol wiehad em Staul een Peat! Aha! Daut wea sien Peat! He jintj sijch sien Eajentum utem Staul hole, bunk den mettjebrochten Strank um den Kunta sien Hauls. Froo drebbelde see nohus.

Panna wea sea dankboa daut hee sien Peat jefunge haud. Oba he wea uck dankboa fe siene niee Frind. Dee Frindschoft tweschen Pannasch en Boatjmauns blift faust bat den fondogschen Dach!

mm

**EASTERN
SALE**

A sheik returned to the desert after a trip to North America. A friend asked him what impressed him most in the Western world.

"The salesman," the sheik replied, unwrapping an outboard motor.

Old Colony Mennonites Resolve Their Tensions

by William Janzen

Tensions in the Ontario Old Colony Mennonite Church, which for over a year seemed insurmountable, were resolved in a peaceful separation in fall, last year.

The Old Colony Mennonites, who came to Ontario from Mexico, are descendants of the German-speaking Mennonites who moved to Mexico from Saskatchewan and Manitoba in the 1920s. They began returning to Canada in the 1950s, but it was not until the 1960s that they, with help from Old Colony leaders in the western provinces, organized themselves into a church.

In the years that followed, the church grew significantly, reaching a membership of over 1,000. It had six unsalaried ministers, including one bishop, and meeting places near Leamington, Aylmer, Walsingham and Kitchener.

Life in Ontario, however, was not easy. Unlike Mexico, they could not live in villages by themselves. They had to learn a new language. Children quickly adopted Canadian lifestyles, much to the bewilderment of their parents. And, as a church, they had little by way of a Canadian tradition to guide them.

Church life was, as a result, strained. One early minister left the church. Small groups immigrated to Paraguay and to Seminole, Texas, in the 1970s. A few moved back and forth between Canada and Mexico, as if they belonged nowhere.

From this perspective, the resulting

tension is not surprising. Exact reasons for the problems are, however, harder to pin-point — some people say they are due to personalities, others say it results from the desire to use more English and have programs for youth. Whatever the exact reasons, by early summer, 1983, tensions were out in the open. Some people were physically prevented from entering a church building. Some held a separate communion service. A number of meetings failed to resolve the tension — the five ministers were on one side and the bishop was on the other. Many people, including local police officers, encouraged mediation, but restored unity seemed impossible.

The best that could be hoped for was a peaceful separation. The Old Colony leaders, in a major expression of trust, approached a local Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) worker and ministers from nearby EMMC and EMC churches. They also sought help from Old Colony Mennonite leaders.

The most contentious issues involved ownership of the church buildings and the church name. Some from the larger group, led by the five ministers, said that they best represented the Old Colony tradition and that the others were “departing” and, therefore, not entitled to the buildings. Representatives of the smaller group, led by the bishop, argued that they too represented a significant group, that they had contributed a lot of money to the buildings and that they had not departed from any essential teaching. They were, they said, entitled to their fair share.

After extensive discussions in summer, 1984, aided by Old Colony leaders from Manitoba, it was agreed that two of the four buildings would be given to the bishop's group, but that the group would have to change its name. They chose to call themselves the “New Reinland Mennonite Church of Ontario.”

The name is related to their official, historic name, *Reinlaender Mennoniten Gemeinde* (Reinland Mennonite Church). It was only after a large portion of the church membership left for Mexico in the 1920s that those who stayed in Canada adopted the commonly used term, “Old Colony Mennonite Church.”

The New Reinland Mennonite Church, which meets in Aylmer and near Leamington, has been registered by the Ontario government. It sold one building back to the other group, at a reduced price, and purchased another building at another location. It has also elected two new ministers to work alongside its bishop, Rev. Cornelius Quiring. The other group, which meets in Wheatley, Walsingham and near Kitchener, is also using New Reinland's Alymer building on Sunday afternoons. It has elected Rev. William Fehr, one of the five ministers, as its new bishop.

The Old Colony Mennonite group will retain close connections with the Manitoba group of the same name, but the affiliations of the New Reinland church are not certain. Their name may suggest connections with a Manitoba group which carries the *Reinlaender* name, although the groups are different. The Manitoba *Reinlaender* group broke off from the *Sommerfelder* Mennonite Church there two decades ago.

The New Reinland Church has had some contact with the Manitoba Zion Church, a group which broke away from the Old Colony Church there about four years ago. Firm connections have not, however, been established.

Even though everything is not settled yet, there is a substantial feeling of gratitude to God. Feelings of hostility and anger have, to an amazing extent, given way. For some, the experience has produced a renewed faith. A number of leaders, including those from other churches who served as mediators, have experienced strengthened trust and understanding.

The two groups now desire to get on with their tasks as churches in mutual respect and love. **mm**

Gewalt ist ein Zeichen von Schwäche

Zum Tod des Polnischen Priesters, Jerzy Popieluszko

von Victor Doerksen

Wir Mennoniten sind stolz auf unsere Märtyrer, ob aus den Verfolgungen des 16. oder des 20. Jahrhunderts; sie stehen bei uns in unsern kanonischen Büchern und ihnen soll nun auch ein Ehrendenkmal gesetzt werden, das, hoffen wir, den anderen Ehrendenkmälern nicht zu ähnlich aussehen wird.

Ob wir auch willig sind, Märtyrer aus anderen Kirchen und Konfessionen, aus anderen Ländern und Völkern, unsere Dankbarkeit und Anerkennung zukom-

men zu lassen, das können wir in der heutigen Zeit allzuoft beweisen. Ein gutes Beispiel ist der traurige Fall des polnischen Priesters Popieluszko, der nicht nur Mut und Ehrlichkeit zeigte, sondern auch ein christliches Zeugnis, das auch für uns vorbildlich sein sollte.

Im deutschen Nachrichtenmagazin, Der Spiegel, wurden aus den Predigten des gemordeten Priesters einige Predigt-auszüge veröffentlicht, von denen ein paar hier weitergegeben werden:

Kämpfe nicht gegen die Gewalt. Gewalt ist ein Zeichen von Schwäche, nicht von Kraft. Eine Idee, die Waffen braucht, um am Leben zu bleiben, stirbt rasch ab. Eine Idee, die nur durch Anwendung von Gewalt aufrechterhalten bleibt, ist entstellt. Einer Idee, die lebensfähig ist, folgen spontan Millionen Menschen. . . .

Damit Frieden und Ruhe im Vaterland herrschen, muss alles beseitigt werden, was vom Volk als gesellschaftliches Unrecht empfunden wird. Gerechtigkeit auszuüben und nach Gerechtigkeit zu rufen, dazu sind alle, ohne Ausnahme, verpflichtet. Oft ist es unsere moralische Passivität, die das Unrecht ermuntert. . . .

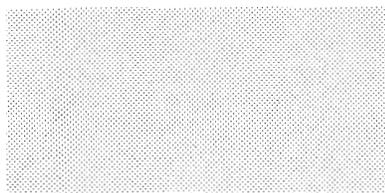
Du wirst deine Menschenwürde nicht voll bewahren können, wenn du in einer Tasche den Rosenkranz und in der anderen ein Büchlein der gegnerischen Ideologie mit dir herumträgst. Du kannst nicht gleichzeitig dem Herrgott und dem Mammon dienen. Du kannst nicht gleichzeitig zweien Herren dienen. Du musst deine Wahl treffen. . . .

Die „Solidarność“ hat deshalb die Menschheit binnen einer so kurzen Zeit in Staunen versetzt, weil sie nicht mit Gewalt, sondern auf den Knien, mit dem Rosenkranz in der Hand gekämpft hat; weil sie an den Feldaltären nach der Würde der Menschenarbeit gerufen hat, lauter als um das tägliche Brot. Beten wir dafür, dass wir frei sind von Angst, von Einschüchterung, vor allem aber von Rachegefühlen und von Gewalt.

Diese letzte Zitat entstammt einer Predigt, die am Tag seiner Entführung von diesem mutigen Mann Gottes gepredigt wurde. Sein Mord ist vor aller Welt am Fernsehschirm im Detail beschrieben worden. Mag sein Zeugnis hier wie dort auch zur Geltung kommen!

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TAUNTE AUNA LAST EENEN BREEF

fonn Jack Thiessen

"Na endlich habe se jeschräwe!" säd Taunte Auna maunjchmol, "enn tseowents woa etj den Breef fääläse."

Wie freide ons aula, wiels wann Taunte Auna eenen Breef fäalaus, wea daut een besondret Erläfnis; jo, daut wea meist soo feierlijch aus no Kjoatj gone enn tweemol soo excaiting. Oba eascht must wie den Dach äwa besondasch pienich senne, enn uck fesprätje sea schmock too senne.

Nom Owenkost sad wie ons aulatoop aum Desch han, enn nu kunn'et loosgone. Mutta saumeld noch schwind aule Kommtjes toop-wie haude jrods noch Ditje-Maltj jeläpelt- enn nu wearet soowiet.

Taunte Auna haud äa sindoagschett Kijleed aunjetrocke; een dunkel bleiwet mett witte Tippeltjes enn een witten Kroage, enn nu sad see sijch de Brell enn eene aundre Stemm opp, muak sijch daut dijcht bie de Laump maklijch enn säd, "komt mau nijch too dijcht bie, Kjinja," enn fong aun too läse.

"'Werte Jeschwister, ein Gruss der Liebe zuvor aus der alten Heimat, die keine mehr ist.' Na jo, dissen Breef ha' se ut Sibierjen rutjeschmuggelt, wiels sest wudd de GPU enn de NKWD den niemols nijch rutjelote habe."

"Etj woa daut wiedre äwasate," säd Taunte Auna. 'Etj sett hia emm Loaga enn mott soo schratjlich schwoa oabeide, daut etj measchtens foats nom äte — oba waut heet hia äte? Wie kjiriee eene dreaje Kjarscht too gnoage mett een bätje Supp.' Wada Taunte Auna: "Heenasupp nanne se dee dochwoll, oba etj mucht weete, woo se dee jekoakt habe. Woomäjlijch habe de Roode eene Han photographead —

daut heet, wann se äwahaupt eene Han enn eene Kamera enn Russlaund habe — enn donn daut Negatief mett koakendjet Wota begote enn daut must dann uck fe fejtijch Lieta Supp reatje. Soone denne Supp habe se doa enn Sibierjen, enn daut Bultje ess uck hoada' aus Stalin seene Seel, enn sest jefet nuscht nijch too äte. Oba, woo schratjlijch, schratjlijch ess et doa doch enn Sibierjen!

"Jo, enn Hauns schrift wieda: 'Wann etj mie nijch soo sea no aul junt bange deed, haud etj aul lang tridj de Hopninj oppjewart, enn wea hia aul lenjst unjre Kjlieta. Daut ess maunjchmol soo schwoa, daut etj nijch jleew, daut etj noch eenmol de Sonn oppgone seene woa. Oba eena mott je wieda stankere, wiels oppjäre jelt nijch."

Taunte Auna äre Stemm kijlontjt nu enn bätje ut, enn Foda saut doa enn kjitjt wiet, wiet auf, enn een bät fewillat, enn hee haud eenen Oarm äwre Brost jelajcht, enn mett de aundre Haund stett hee siene Kjenn, wiels dee flautad am, enn hee wull je ferr ons Kjinja doch Kjeadel aufjäre — jo, hee saut doa, enn hee haud sienen easchten ditjen Finja bett aum Ooa jestratjcht, enn donn klackad hee lieseltjes mett sien Jebiss, enn säd soo aundajchtijch aus hee kunn: "Woo ess daut bloos mäjlijch? Wäa haud daut jedocht? Enn dauts mien Brooda Hauns, dem etj emma soo goot wea!"

Enn donn kijlontjt uck siene Stemm ut, enn donn woat daut soo stell, enn wie Kjinja grule ons meist doot . . . toom Jletj sajcht Mutta, "Jo, enn wieda?" Enn donn dreit Taunte Auna äa Schnep-peldoak omme Finjasch dral enn last wieda: "Jo, jo, daut wudd hia uck bie

disse schratjlich schwoare Oabeit enn prachaje Kost enn grulje Kold leijchta senne aules uttoohoole, wann eena han enn wada mol een Läwensteatje fonn junt ut Kanada kjiriee wudd!" Peeta, hast Du Hauns onlenjs jeschräwe?", froag Taunte Auna. "Aulnoch earemol," säd Foda.

"Oba measchtens enne Jedanke, Peeta! Peeta, oba Peeta, woa jeit daut bloos aulatoop han?" froag Taunte Auna, enn donn word ons daut Läwe noch diestra enn uck noch fäl schwanda.

Fonn Tiena haud etj toojoa emm Hoawst eenen Breef ut Saskatchewan," säd Taunte Auna dan, "enn see schreef mie, see haude Schwien jeschlacht, enn Worscht jemoakt, enn Rebbspäa, enn Schintjes jereatjat enn Silltjes ennelajcht. Oba waut haft mie dann dach enn nacht daut emm Buck jerummelt. Jie weete doch noch, Peeta enn Leena, woo scheen Hauns emma Silltjes mett jebroadne Eadschocke schmatjte, jo?"

"Jo, jo," säd Foda, "Woa ess doch bloos de Tiet jebälwe?", enn hee hoojond doabie nich mol, soo earnst wea am daut aulatoop jeworde.

"Aulso wieda," säd Taunte Auna. "Hia steit jeschräwe: 'Foaken woat mie daut meist too schwoa, oba too schwoa. Woaromm jrods etj? Woaromm mott etj hia soo jaumalijch schmachte? Waneea woat etj erleest? Waut haft de leewe Gott noch aules mett mie fäa?"

"Wäa weet, wäa weet?" froag Foda, "woa too daut aules goot senne saul?"

"Enn toom Schluss schrift Hauns," fua Taunte Auna wieda: 'De Tiet ess nijch mea wiet, woa wie ons wada-seene woare: entwäda hia opp Eade

ooda bowe. Jreest aule, dee no mie froage. Sajcht an aula, etj sie an sea goot. Amen.'

"Amen," sajcht Mutta.

"Enn nu frajcht Onkel Hauns uck noch gauns unje enne Atj, 'Jo, enn sent uck aul de Thiesses Kjinja schmock enn jehorsam enn jleebijch?'"

Wie saute noch lang gauns stelltjes toop. Kjeena wull sijch aus easchta reare.

Enn donn läd Taunte Auna den Breef schmock toop enn läd den enn ähre Biebel nenn. Gauns feierlijch deed see daut, enn doabie leet see ären kijlansten Finja emma selfstendijch nohejcht wintjele. Enn dann jinj wie schlope enn weare aulatoop soo aundajchtig, oba soo jehorsam, meist soo's ferr Wiehnachte.

No eene Wätj leet daut mettem schmock senne een bätje no. Enn shur enoff, donn kaum uck aul de nächsta Breef aun. Enn woa dee Breew aula häakaume weet bloos etj, wiels eemol, aus Taunte Auna mett de Johaun Ditsche Koffe drunk enn Bruschtje mett Schlagsane aut, kijtjt etj enn äre Biebel nenn, enn doa lach uck wertjlich een Breef. Oba woa dee häakaum, woa etj junt noch nijch fetale, wiels Taunte Auna läfd noch een bätje. **mm**



Predicht fier Haite

von Fritz Wieden

Jack Thiessen, *Predicht fier haite*. Helmut Buska Verlag, Hamburg, 1984, 120 S., einschliesslich Nachwort und Glossar.

Professor Jack Thiessens neueste Veröffentlichung *Predicht fier haite* verdient die Aufmerksamkeit der Leser in mehrfacher Hinsicht. Zunächst sind die einundzwanzig „Predichten“, die der Winnipegger Germanist in diesem Bändchen zusammengefasst hat, eine höchst willkommene Bereicherung der kanadischen und deutschkanadischen Literatur, die nicht gerade an einem Überfluss an gutem komischen Schrifttum leidet. Hand aufs Herz: Man muss schon auf Stephen Leacock und Paul Hiebert in englischer Sprache, oder auf die Joe Klotzkopp Briefe in deutscher Sprache zurückgreifen, um etwas Ähnliches an heiterer Literatur in Kanada zu finden. Vielleicht wollte die komische Literatur im puritanisch-spröden Kanada nie so recht gedeihen; vielleicht schien sie unseriös. Das ändert jedoch wenig an der Tatsache, dass man eine Literatur ohne Komik kaum als vollwertig ansehen kann. Schon deshalb haben wir die „Predichten“ in Kanada dringendst nötig.

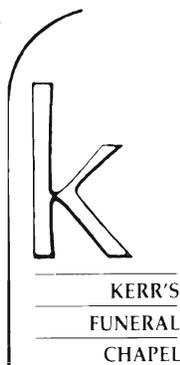
Der *Predicht fier haite*-Band ist jedoch weit mehr als eine blosse Anekdotensammlung. Die einzelnen „Predichten“ haben ihren festen Sitz im mennonitischen Leben Manitobas und stellen somit einen wertvollen Beitrag zur kanadischen Kulturgeschichte dar. Die ehrlichen Bemühungen des Predigers, dem seine Gattin Njuta hie und da aushelfen muss, werden zu einer charmanten Einführung in den mennonitischen Alltag, der in einer Art von religiösem und sozialen Belagerungszustand vor sich geht. Man erwehrt sich, so gut es geht, den verderblichen Einflüssen der modernen ethnisch-pluralistischen Gesellschaft in erfin-

derischer, pfiifiger und sogar erfreulich unlogischer Weise. Gelegentlich werden diese Predigten doch ein bisschen hintergründig: Die erheiternde Steinbacher Predigt „Zurück in die Heimat“ lässt mehrere Interpretationen zu; ob sich hinter „Thiessens ihr Hans“, der mit seinen Freunden „mit die katholischen Franzosen Bier jesoffen“ hat, ein Stück des Verfassers verbirgt, kann allerdings nur angenommen werden.

Die Zeichnungen von Andreas Brylka illustrieren das Thema des Buches auf passende Weise. Dass der Verfasser das mennonitische Plautdietsch ein wenig zugunsten des Hochdeutschen eingeebnet und am Schluss des Buches ein kleines Glossar hinzugefügt hat, wird allen Lesern, die ihr Deutsch südlich der Benrather Linie gelernt haben oder nie Kanada besucht haben, eine willkommene Hilfe bedeuten. Es soll aber auch betont werden, dass die Predigten eine Haupttendenz der neuesten deutschen Literatur, nämlich den Hang zur Mundart, fortsetzen. Wer die *Predicht fier haite* liest, hört sofort den Tonfall eines mennonitischen Bekannten heraus und es ist ein grosser Vorzug des Buches, dass sein Verfasser dem Rat Luthers folgte, der Mutter im Hause, den Kindern auf der Gassen und dem gemeinen Mann auf dem Markt auf das Maul gesehen hat, wie sie reden. So werden die Predigten auch zu einem Trost in unseren Zeiten von „Kabelai“ und „Trubbel“ und man darf das Buch mit den Worten des Verfassers empfehlen, der da schreibt: „Wenn Ihr mal oder wieder ungeduldig werden wollt, dann denkt nur an maine Predicht . . . und dann wird Aich die ganze Jeschicht zum jrossen Sejen jedaihen lassen. — Amen!“

Fritz Wieden is on staff at the University of Windsor.

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Onkel Wedel

Kürzlich starb Jacob Wedel, langjähriger Leiter der Sonntagschule in der Nordend Mennoniten Brüdergemeinde.

Ich möchte gerne wissen, wie viele Menschen durch Onkel Wedels Schule gegangen sind, wie viele von uns sind durch all die Jahre hindurch irgendwann in der Sonntagschule der Nordend Brüdergemeinde auf College Avenue auf kurz oder lange Zeit mit diesem begnadeten Sonntagsschulleiter in Verbindung gekommen?

In meiner Erinnerung ist und bleibt er unvergesslich, ein ausgeglichener Mensch, wie man heute sagt, mit einem freundlichen, aber nicht aufdringlichen Lächeln. Wie haben wir dort gesungen, im Keller der alten Kirche, und wie haben wir ihn alle als gegeben vorausgesetzt. Er war immer da.

Heute plagen wir uns mit dem Thema 'leadership' herum; Jacob Wedel zeigte uns, was Dienen bedeutet. Er war nicht ein Mundwerk, sondern ein Rückgrat; man konnte sich den Betrieb gar nicht ohne ihn vorstellen.

Als Kinder haben wir nicht gemerkt, dass er sicher auch Schwächen und Fehler hatte. Sicher ist das Leben auch für ihn nicht immer sonnig gewesen — so wie sein strahlendes Lächeln sonntag früh — aber es ist ebenso sicher, dass er ein reiches Leben geführt hat, indem, dass er uns vielen so viel gegeben hat.

Ach, sie haben einen guten Mann begeben,

Und mir war er mehr. . . . VGD

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When the Law should not be used to defend the faith

The decision of a local supporter of creation science to explore the possibility of obtaining an injunction to prevent the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) from broadcasting on television parts of the current David Suzuki series, *A Planet for the Taking*, is an example of the wrong way to promote, or protect, a Christian viewpoint.

In summary, the creation science spokesman argues that both the "theory of evolution" and "creation science" are ultimately matters of faith in that adherents to either view accept basic premises on the basis of "faith" not "fact." He further noted that Dr. Suzuki promotes the evolutionary view and at the same time belittles creation science and fundamentalist Christianity. Accordingly, an injunction is being explored because the CBC is using public tax funds to promote religion and to ridicule a Christian minority.

At the outset one must ask whether the court is an appropriate forum to resolve disputes over ideas, or disputes over religious faith. The answer is that the courts are not the forum in which to resolve such disputes. In this case the arguments to support the injunction are spurious because they can so easily be refuted.

To complain that the Suzuki program ought to be curtailed because it allegedly maligns a Christian viewpoint, in this case creation science, is not tenable. Christians ought to be careful of using this argument because of our own dismal record in the way we have treated minorities; Christians in history have been notorious for their intolerance of minorities and non-Christian viewpoints. (In particular, the stream of fundamentalist Christianity that tends to support creation science has among the most dreadful record of tolerance, and still does.) So, why should we expect secular observers to be tolerant of our views? While it should not prevent us from addressing issues, as Christians we must also recognize that "being misunderstood" comes with our decision to advance a Christian viewpoint.

The argument that public tax money is being used to advance a particular religious viewpoint is equally untenable. Every level of government supports religion through various taxation policies which give religion a "break." So the same system that allows Suzuki to advance his views is the same system that allows us to practice our Christianity.

If the legal process is in fact used to resolve conflicts over ideology or "faith," what can the court reasonably be expected to do? It cannot decree that one idea or "faith" position is "right" and the other "wrong," because that is not what the courts were established to do and such a decision would also destroy the principle of tolerance, which as a society we must value of itself. The court can impose a measure of fair play by, for example, insisting that equal time be given to opposing views. But what does this achieve? Skilled arguers can easily score debating points on a one-for-one in an equal time setting, so that the emergence of "truth" as a conclusion is not

assured. The imposition of an "equal time" rule is rather like staging a boxing match and then limiting each combatant to an equal number of blows. The equal time arrangement, carried to an absurd length, would see a program exploring "honesty" being compelled to give equal time to its logical opposite "dishonesty."

Ultimately a conflict over ideas or faith, between evolution and creation science, is one that must be decided on the basis of the quality of the concepts involved.

In the case of creation science and evolution it is not a contest between "good" and "evil," as some would have us believe, but a contest between two conflicting explanations of how the world and living things came to be, and how such systems change over time. Creation scientists and their supporters implicitly want you to believe that evolution is a system concocted to destroy Christian faith. This is simply not true. While it is true that a "creator" is not an explicit part of the evolution system, it is true to say that the "theory of evolution" was postulated to make sense of life science. It must also be pointed out that the current theory of evolution is much refined from what it was when first described and even its proponents are aware of its limitations. But it is a theory that works, and because it works it is not going to go away. Scientists, regardless of their religious convictions, in disciplines from agriculture to medicine to zoology use aspects of it everyday.

Creation science is a false doctrine because it does not provide the scientist with any theoretical or applied information that may be used in the laboratory. Creation science will only become a "science" when it postulates a system that describes the world and living things with the same degree of comprehensiveness as evolution, and with the same relevance to theoretical and applied science. To date the energies of creation science are directed at finding faults with evolution; creation science has yet to make a contribution that is persuasive enough to replace any currently held scientific concept.

Creation scientists are right on one point when they say that both creation science and evolution are matters of faith when it comes to questions of "first origins" and why humans are different from animals. No one living today can explain with certainty "how it all started," so one concept is as good as another. Accordingly, responsible Christians should insist creation scientists limit their arguments for a divine creator to those things which cannot be explained any other way. The 17th century religious leaders who opposed Gallileo's concept of the solar system, based on evidence made possible by the invention of a good celestial telescope, refused to believe him because he contradicted the scriptures. Today their stubbornness looks silly; creation scientists run the real risk of looking just as silly because modern technology may soon confirm the facts they are now so ardently denying.

— Ed Unrau

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