

# *Mennonite* **MIRROR**

volume 18 / number 2 / october, 1988



- A store that hasn't deserted its community •
- MB Manitoba beginnings • World Conference insight •



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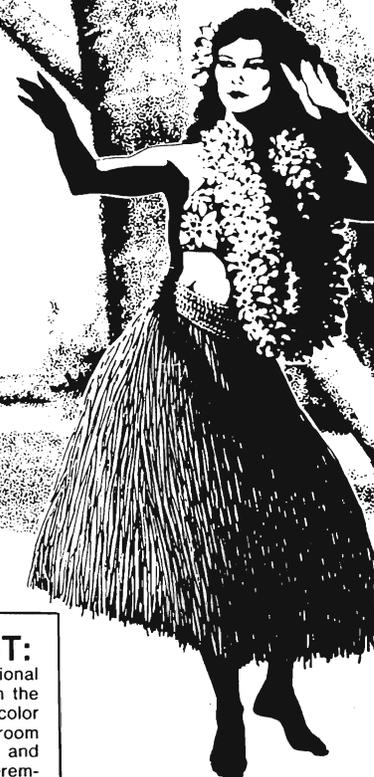
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# Mennonite MIRROR

volume 18 / number 2  
october, 1988

## ForeWord

If the founders of the Mennonite Brethren church in Canada could have been present at the centennial celebrations in Winkler this past summer, one hopes they would be pleasantly impressed with the "fruit of their labor." From its beginnings in Winkler, the MB church in 100 years has grown to a membership of many thousands in seven Canadian provinces, outgrowing its original German language orientation. Sarah Klassen in our opening article briefly examines the beginnings and growth of the MB church.

In an age of mega stores battling for every penny of your grocery dollar, the "community" store is something of an anomaly in that it is no longer "economic" or "fashionable" to maintain the personal touch on the grocery floor. There are, however, rare exceptions. One of these is Riediger's of Winnipeg. For around four decades this family has sold its goods at the same location. While its commitment to the surrounding community (as well as to a devoted following of commuter shoppers) has continued, the family owners have seen the social fabric of the neighborhood change over time. Bob Hummelt takes us into the store to meet the family that runs it.

As noted in our last issue, one of the *Mirror's* most prolific writers died in late August. In a variety of ways she touched the lives of many people, and the articles she wrote communicated some of that affection. Roy Vogt includes excerpts from the tribute he gave at her funeral.

Tim Wiebe has moved east for graduate studies at Conrad Grebel College in Waterloo, Ontario. While there we have asked him to give us a westerner's view of the east. His first piece appears in this issue with a new look at the contrast between "old" and "new" in Waterloo county.

Roy Vogt returned to the classroom in September to find some students as inquisitive as ever, and also writes about the lives of other people who have made his life "interesting."

Going to d'8 shtove is no longer a place of exclusive to Mennonites. Scores of non-Mennonites go to the place at the drop of a hat. Indeed, the move to the new location has made this eating place more popular than ever. What is the attraction? Good food, good value, and good surroundings. J. Braun takes a lighthearted look at the new eating place.

The movie, *The Last Temptation of Christ* generated a lot of angry protests from a wide range of Christians who thought their Christ was being maligned. Our reviewer went to the show, and came back with a mixed report.

The Mennonite World Conference is coming to Winnipeg in 1990. And planning is already well underway. Tim Wiebe interviews one of the organizers to give us a view of why the event will easily be the biggest ever.

The remaining articles in this issue include another look at Russian events with G.K. Epp; a fanciful interview with Menno Simons as an academic writer; and how a box of books helped someone see the mind of a great aunt.

Two German pieces, one high, one low, round out this issue before concluding with Our Word, giving us the last word. Until next month, reflect on your Mennonite heritage.

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**The Cover: One of the points of continuity in central Winnipeg is Reidiger's Supermarket. For four decades it has stayed in the same location, even as the neighborhood around it changed.**

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# From its beginnings in Winkler 100 years ago the MB church is now in seven provinces

It was a warm June day in Hoffnungsfeld, a village in the West Reserve in southern Manitoba. The year was 1884. Johann Warkentin, the village school-teacher, opened a window to allow fresh air into the classroom. As he did so, he saw a wagon making its way along the village street from the south. He did not recognize the two men sitting in the back, wearing white, long-sleeved shirts. In the village, white shirts were considered worldly.

Warkentin's curiosity was piqued that June day. He could not know that these visitors, whose arrival distracted him briefly from his duties, would stir up the villages to controversy and change, and that their activity would result in the establishing of a new church in Manitoba,

a church in which Warkentin himself would play a significant role.

The two men were David Dyck from Kansas and Heinrich Voth from Mountain Lake, Minnesota. They had come because of a decision of the Mennonite Brethren Conference, meeting in Nebraska in 1883, to send these two on a scouting mission to Manitoba to ascertain whether their "extended presence and ministry could be justified."

The decision followed years of deliberation and was based on several reasons. American MBs were aware of the Mennonites who settled in Manitoba in the

1870s and many of them, including David Dyck, had relatives there for whose spiritual welfare they harbored concern. MBs had settled in America in the 1870's, not so long after the founding of their denomination. They brought with them a strong emphasis on personal faith and a not-yet-faded zeal to witness to that faith beyond their own fellowship. They were ready to open a mission field. Because English was still an awkward language for them, they were reluctant to work in their own neighborhoods. Mennonite villages in Manitoba, about whose spiritual needs they must have read about in the *Rundschau*, must have presented an attractive mission field.

The General Conference of Mennonites, too, Frank Epp tells us in *Men-*

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by Sarah Klassen

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Some of the early brethren in the Winkler community, with H. Voth in fore ground, between the two children.

nonites in Canada, were sending visiting missionaries to Manitoba in the 1880s.

The village churches, especially the Old Colony (*Fuerstenlaender*) church, were extremely conservative. They eschewed public schools and elections and looked with suspicion on railroads, English neighbors and, generally, things modern. Their leaders, deeply concerned to keep their little flocks unified and separate from the world, put rather more stress on church membership and obedience to rules than on the need for a vital faith and personal spiritual growth.

When Dyck and Voth arrived in southern Manitoba, they found indications of disenchantment with the church. Some individual families were leaving the village system to farm independently of the community; missionaries from the outside such as John Holdemann from Ohio, the Mormons, and various other American movements were finding an audience; here and there, spontaneous Bible study groups had developed outside the church and were attracting those who felt a need to explore the scriptures. These groups provided a point of contact for Dyck and Voth.

On their initial visit, about which information is sketchy, they visited, besides Hoffnungsfeld, the villages of Reinland, Burwalde and Blumstein. They met with persons active in Bible studies and conducted services in homes, wherever an invitation was extended. In Burwalde, for instance, they were welcomed by the Johann Nickel family; in Hoffnungsfeld Jacob Wiens offered his home for a Sunday afternoon meeting. There was sufficient interest for them to conclude this visit with a sense of success.

Upon returning to the U.S. they reported to the conference that Manitoba was indeed a field ripe for harvest. David Dyck, in the meantime, had agreed to assume leadership of a Kansas church (Lehigh) and was unable to return. Heinrich Voth, encouraged by Dyck and strongly endorsed by the conference, accepted the commission to return to Manitoba.

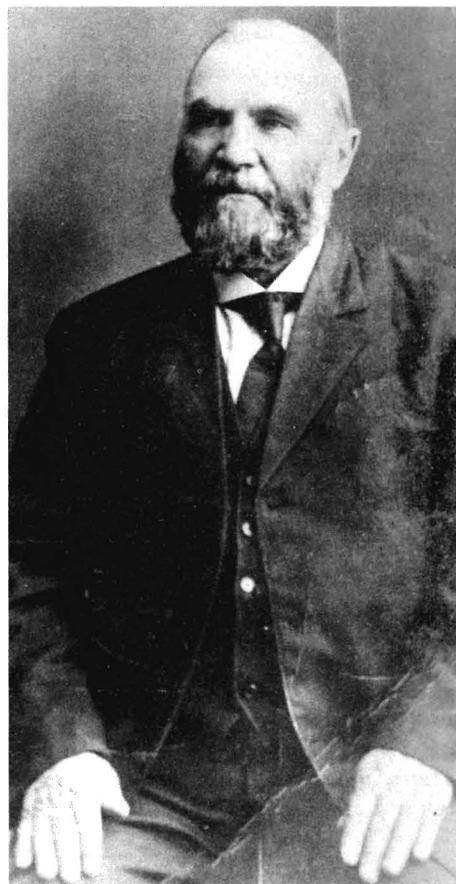
Between 1883 and 1888 he made repeated visits to Manitoba, often twice a year, to carry out the conference mandate. The story of the formation of the MB church in Manitoba is very much the story of Heinrich Voth. His letters to Dyck, with whom he remained fast friends, provide most of the facts and anecdotes about his work during these years.

Returning to the villages, Voth contacted believers and sympathizers from his initial visit: Johann Warkentin, teacher in Hoffnungsfeld; Abraham Kroeker, also

of Hoffnungsfeld; Wilhelm Rempel, teacher in Reinland, who was to become the first teacher in the new school at Gretna; Jacob Banman of Burwalde, who had long been dissatisfied with the lifeless singing and dearth of spiritual vitality in the Old Colony Church. Warkentin, Kroeker and Banman would eventually become part of the MB Church and take leadership roles in it. Rempel represented a larger group, who, while sympathetic to Voth's teaching, chose to align themselves with other renewal movements.

Voth never attempted to initiate change through the local churches or any existing structures. His method was to seek out for encouragement and teaching those who expressed a spiritual need or who showed a willingness to listen to his message. His strong gift was, evidently, an ability to relate warmly and with genuine concern to individuals and small groups.

In spite of significant support, Voth's work was essentially solitary. Often he walked alone from village to village with his message. It isn't difficult to imagine what thoughts occupied his mind. Beside the burden for the work of evangelizing, which he now carried alone, the responsibilities he had left behind in Minnesota must have weighed on him. He was



*Elder Heinrich Voth*



*Jacob and Anna Banman*

leader of the Mountain Lake MB Church and in 1885 he was ordained elder of the Minnesota churches. In addition he had to leave his farm, which he had pioneered since 1876, and his wife and family of nine children. His letters to Dyck contain evidence of his struggles and doubts about his mission, but they also reflect an underlying faith and a firm conviction that he was doing God's work. The conference in 1885 voted to grant him \$400 so he could spend most of the year in Manitoba. He returned \$100 stating he had not needed the entire sum.

Right from the start there were positive results. Individuals were experiencing renewal and committing themselves to serious study of the scriptures. Upon return visits Voth found more and more families meeting privately for fellowship and worship, with fresh interest in prayer.

But there was also hostility. Once walking from one village to the next, he was overtaken by a young man on horseback who lashed him with his riding whip. There were many who were equally ready to whip him or at least give him

rude escort to the border. On one occasion he arrived late in a village in winter. Although the temperature had fallen to -30F, home after home refused him entrance. They had heard about his teaching and wanted none of it. When finally he found an open door, it led to the modest home of the village herdsman, who played Good Samaritan to him. Voth, in turn, was able to explain to his host the good news of God, which the latter accepted.

In 1886 Voth wrote that Manitoba farmers would reap a slim harvest because of drought. On the spiritual side, however, the news was better. In this year he performed the first baptism. Jacob Banman and his wife, Burwalde, and Johann Nickel and his wife, Zion, were baptized on their faith at Burwalde in the Dead Horse Creek. Later that same summer four more converts were baptized.

These and subsequent baptisms attracted many spectators, not all of whom came to celebrate. Rebaptism inevitably created division in family and church. One couple returned home after

receiving baptism to find that the grandparents had taken away their children. The children were eventually returned, but the couple was disinherited. Church leaders who had agonized to keep their churches unified had the bitter experience of seeing their members turn to an outsider for spiritual guidance, and to accept rebaptism, a practice that was contrary to their teaching. In the face of such objections, believers were understandably reluctant to decide for rebaptism. Johann Warkentin, one of Voth's staunch supporters, delayed his decision until 1890.

Voth, having already spent many weeks in Manitoba in 1886, returned in December. On December 23 he arranged a meeting which may have been an important step toward eventual organization of a church. Many of the baptized converts attended. Voth writes that they discussed many important matters and concluded with observance of the Lord's Supper and footwashing.

Slowly a core group was gathered of those who shared recent spiritual renewal and who desired more Bible

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study. Voth now recognized that he must devote himself not just to evangelizing the villages, but also to nurturing this group. He became increasingly concerned, too, that other evangelists were attempting to draw his converts into their movements. It was high time for a resident, not merely an itinerant, leader for the group. Voth wrote repeatedly to Dyck, begging him to become that leader, and spoke positively about farming opportunities in Manitoba. Voth himself was anxious to return to Minnesota to his church and family responsibilities there. He was also interested in pursuing mission possibilities in Dakota.

By 1887 David Dyck was ready to commit himself to the work in Manitoba and inquired about buying a farm there. Meanwhile, Voth had heard that Gerhard Wiebe, a Mennonite Brethren minister in Russia, along with a small group of MB members, was planning to emigrate and settle in Manitoba. Voth personally wrote Wiebe, encouraging him to come, although he hoped Dyck would also come and be the leader of his group. However, Dyck delayed his coming to Manitoba, and it was Gerhard Wiebe who became the first leader of the new church.

In 1888, at Burwalde, a group of 16 persons, comprising the Manitoba converts and Wiebe's Russian group, were organized into the first MB church in Manitoba and, indeed, of Canada. Heinrich Voth continued to visit and encourage this church from time to time, and presided over a number of key membership meetings. However, the leadership was Wiebe's.

The home of Abraham Kroeker was the first meeting place of the newly organized group, until 1889, when a chapel was built at Burwalde on land donated by Jacob Banman. The fledgling church was joyful and active. When they gathered for worship they sang in four-part harmony, with enthusiasm. They studied the scriptures individually and as a body. Their teaching that it was possible to know that one is saved attracted many newcomers. While the village preachers taught the need for salvation, they generally believed that it was presumptuous to claim assurance of salvation.

The MB church was further distinguished from the village churches by its mode of baptism, which was by immersion, and its emphasis on church discipline, which in some cases may have served to exclude those who most needed help.

In 1895 David Dyck finally came to live in Manitoba, arriving with his family by

prairie schooner after a two months' journey. Wiebe, who had found himself overburdened with evangelizing the villages in addition to church leadership and farming responsibilities, was ready to hand the reins over to Dyck, who remained the leader until Johann Warkentin replaced him in 1906.

As early as 1889, the church sent delegates to the annual conference in the U.S. In 1897, Dyck, Warkentin and Wiebe were among the six delegates sent to the Minnesota meeting. In 1898, this conference was to be hosted, for the first time, in Manitoba. For this important event, a larger building was necessary. Land had already been acquired in the town of Winkler and the Burwalde chapel was to be moved there. The more traditional members, however, insisted the church belonged in a rural setting, not in a town, which to them was synonymous with the world. The chapel was moved to within a mile of Winkler and left there until a compromise could be reached. Evidently the differences were resolved and the chapel was moved onto the Winkler site, where it became an auxiliary facility to the new church which was erected in time for the conference.

The Winkler MB church was mission minded and helped start new churches at Grossweide and Krongart. In 1908 a group of German believers in Winnipeg asked to be taken under the wing of

the Winkler church, and this became a major project which eventually resulted in the formation of the North End MB church.

Dyck, Wiebe, Warkentin and others had already extended their itinerant ministries into Saskatchewan and Dakota. In 1919 Helen Warkentin, the daughter of Johann Warkentin, was ordained as the first foreign missionary of the Manitoba MB church. She served as a missionary teacher in India until 1957.

The Winkler church was enlarged in 1930 and a new building constructed in 1947. In 1988, for the 100th birthday of the MB church of Canada, the congregation invited the Canadian conference, now representing about 26,000 members spread over seven provinces, to meet in its newest sanctuary, constructed in time for this occasion. It was a happy homecoming, a time for remembering modest beginnings, for reviewing both failure and growth, and for celebrating a century of God's grace.

## 1988-89 DEPARTURES

- **SOUTH AMERICA**  
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- **MID TERM BREAK**  
**BUDAPEST AND VIENNA**  
**MARCH 25 - APRIL 4**  
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- **CHINA - JAPAN - HONG KONG**  
**MAY 6-26**  
Host: Henry Visch
- **U.S.S.R.**  
**May 2-29**  
Host: Dr. Peter Letkemann
- **SOUTH AMERICA**  
**JULY 1-21**  
Host: Ms. Lee Mansell
- **CHINA - JAPAN - HONG KONG**  
**JULY 15 - AUGUST 4**
- **U.S.S.R.**  
**JULY 10 - AUGUST 1**  
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- **U.S.S.R.**  
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# Four decades later, Riediger's store maintains a commitment to its community

by Bob Hummelt

With the corner store virtually gone from Winnipeg's urban landscape, only a few small independent grocers are left to provide shoppers with an alternative to the chain convenience stores and supermarkets. Riediger's food store has offered its customers more than just groceries over the past 50 years, and the family-run business knows that by maintaining quality and giving special care to their patrons, the store will thrive despite fierce competition.

The store's founder, Henry Riediger, had some storekeeping experience in Russia before he emigrated to Canada in 1924. After several years on the farm and a couple of years working for another grocer in Winnipeg, he was able to stock a store using credit from local wholesalers. By 1946 he was able to build the store currently in operation. Situated in the midst of a sizable Mennonite and German speaking population, the Isabel Street store flourished. Even though competition was low, customer confidence was high and a loyal clientele was established,

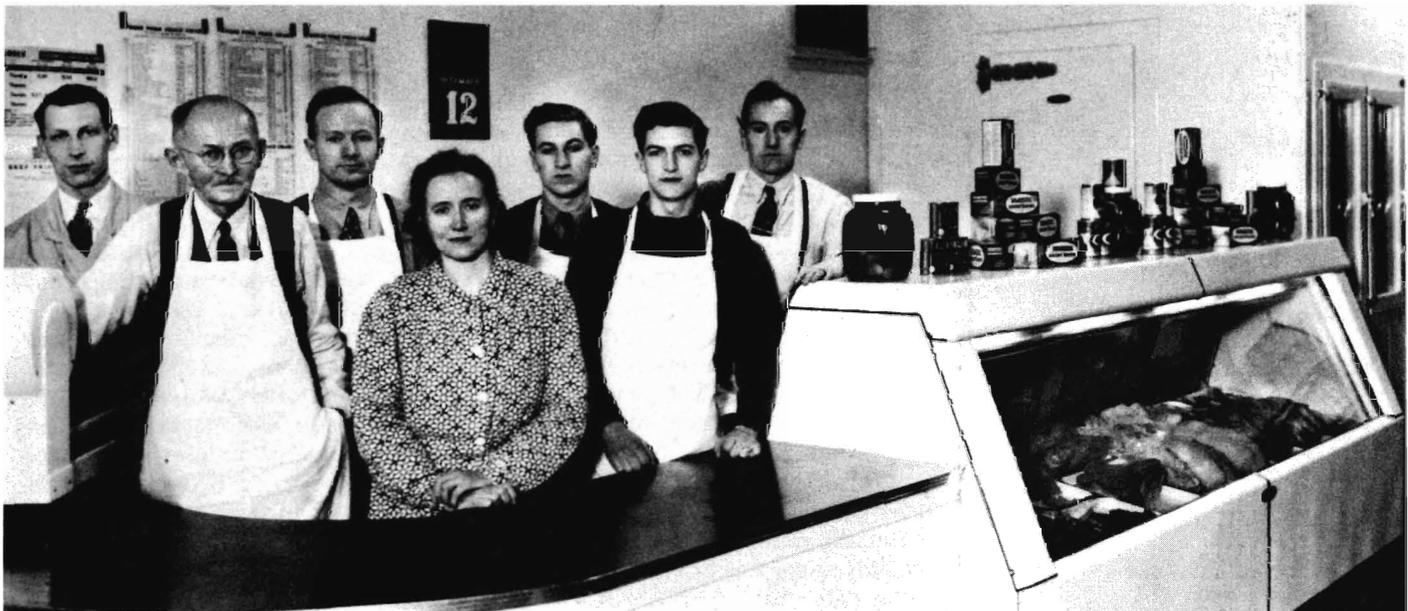
especially of people who preferred food similar to that of the "old country."

With the influx of many German-speaking immigrants after the war, Riediger's became a popular and comfortable meeting place for anyone trying to adjust to a new country. Shoppers were always running into friends, and who knows how many romances were kindled while people waited to be served at the meat counter. As well, the proprietors will always be remembered by some for their benevolence towards these newcomers. For instance, it was possible to get an essential major appliance carried by the store in those days with very flexible terms. Considering the low wages in the 1950's a refrigerator would normally be unobtainable for many years by a young family just starting out in Canada.

The demography of Winnipeg has changed dramatically over the decades, and these shifts in population have been readily apparent to longtime staff at the store. Many of their original customers moved to more suburban areas, and were

replaced initially by immigrants from Portugal and Italy, and later from the Philippines and other Asian countries. As well, the native population in the area has continued to grow. Riediger's has evolved to accommodate these varied customs and tastes. Their central location permits their loyal customers to shop there regularly, ensuring that the meat counter still has a variety of European specialties available. Also, foods considered more exotic to those with continental tastes have appeared. Pigs' ears and tails are now featured alongside the rouladen and wurst. Seafood is now regularly stocked, whereas it was not available in the early years of the store.

The realities of today's retail food business have necessitated an adherence to specific marketing practices. In the early days, more profit was made using a larger staff. Now, mark-up and overhead costs have been cut in order to stay competitive. Although their meat counter is almost legendary and the fruit and vegetable department is outstanding in its



*The Riediger Family in the store in 1946.*

variety and quality, current owner Nick Riediger stresses that "extra service" provides the alternative to the supermarkets. This may entail filling phone orders and delivering to elderly customers, or offering a nibble of the different kinds of liverwurst at the counter. More apparent, though, is the attitude among the staff which communicates to the customers that they are important. Repeat and local customers are greeted with a nod by one of Nick's sons as he whisks by in search of a box of corn starch. Conversations beyond the small talk level can be heard at the checkout counter.

In addition, the store is very active in the community it serves. Local residents are often hired as staff. The parking lot is available for various community activities such as bicycle rodeos, and the store regularly donates food to several community picnics and functions. A nearby centre for local youths, Rossbrook House, also benefits from the store's concerns for the area.

The family element is a key dimension to the store's history and success. Older readers might remember the four sons who ran the business after their father's passing. The oldest son, Henry, died in 1981, and John and Vern have since retired. Nick is now in partnership with his sons Ken, Barry, and Nick. Vern's daughters, Caroline and Marlene, are employed there as well.

Many feel that it is remarkable that the store continues to operate in an era of supermarket wars and in an area so transient in nature. However, the family sees a future in the enterprise. There are hopes of expansion in the next few years, and if so, it would most certainly occur in the present location.

## World Notes

**African Mennonites:** About one in every eight Mennonites calls Zaire home, and soon this African nation will surpass Canada as the second-largest in the world in terms of Mennonite membership. Zairians struggle for economic and church survival, but it is also a place of rapid, sometimes, explosive church growth. There are three large Mennonite conferences in Zaire with a total membership of 101,000 people.

**German vision:** *Christliche Dienst*, or Christian Service, was established in 1986 by German Mennonites to organize charity, peace, relief, and mission work. Papers at the 1984 Mennonite World Conference in Strasbourg inspired a number of people who wanted to do more than give money and who believed there were others in Mennonite congregations who would join a service program if there was an opportunity. Christian Service motivates people in congregations, provides opportunities for service; and helps those who want to work as volunteers. Partners include the Mennonite Central Committee, the European Mennonite Evangelism Committee, Christian Service Paraguay, and AMAS in Brazil.

**Fraternal visiting:** A five-member Mennonite World Conference delegation is travelling to the Soviet Union in October at the invitation of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists. Jake Pauls of Winnipeg is one of the five. Another MCC delegation in October will see that delegation be part of the ceremonies celebrating the 1,000th anniversary of the coming of Christianity to Russia. In another fraternal move, Harry Loewen, University of Winnipeg, will be part of consultation next year in Calgary between Mennonites and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. Finally, a fourth fraternal initiative is beginning with the Baptist World Alliance, which asked for a bilateral dialogue.

**Tamil baptism:** In a special service in late June, three Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka were baptised in the Mennonite church at Langnau, Switzerland. The three testified they had been called by the love of Jesus Christ through the witness and love of the people who helped them in Switzerland.

**Soviet leader dies:** Bernhard Sawatsky, an elder in the independent Mennonite church at Novosibirsk died in late May at the Age of 70. He is survived by his wife, Anni. Sawatsky has served the congregation for the past 20 years. He was a leader among the Kirchliche Men-

nonites, and was part of the first delegation to ever attend a Mennonite World Conference, in this case Wichita, Kansas, 1978.

**Bruder hosts:** More than 300 people came to the Woodcrest Bruderhof in June for the first of three conferences on the theme, The New Testament Church in the 21st Century: Searching for Answers in a Troubled World. This was the first time the Hutterians have invited fellow believers to a conference, and so many registered that the conference had to meet in two locations, Rifton and Pleasant View, New York. It was a gathering of Hutterites, Mennonites, Presbyterians, Catholics, and Methodists.

**Peace talks:** The Bombay Mennonite Brethren Church was host of a peace education seminar recently. An indication of the commitment to the event was the fact that virtually all of them took time without pay from their jobs to attend.

**Taxing words:** The *Verband Deutscher Mennonite Gemeinde*, sent a formal appeal to all West German political parties to support legislation so taxpayers can designate a portion of their taxes to a peace fund. The Verband request was based on an article of the constitution which provides guarantees for freedom of faith and conscience. The most favorable response came from the opposition Green Party, which assured the Verband that it would sponsor such a bill. One party has not yet responded, another party sent a neutral reply, while the governing party replied with a long letter explaining why it could not support the request.

The second annual **Anabaptist-Mennonite Conference for Australia and New Zealand** was held in early July at Morisset, Australia. About 60 people gathered to reflect on "how God can use the Anabaptist believers' vision in the Australian context."

In the largest project undertaken by the Mennonite World Conference, 115,000 **1988 calendars** are being distributed to Mennonite congregations in North America for distribution to members. The 22-month, full-color covers the period from October, 1988, to July, 1990, and is intended to stimulate a continuing interest in the Winnipeg world conference. The calendar features large color photos related to Mennonites around the world, such as Sunday school children in the Honduras, a seminar in Burkina Faso, a farm couple in Switzerland, and a baptism in Hong Kong.

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# Our Mother Was Quite A Lady: A Tribute to Mary Enns



As noted briefly in our last issue, Mary Enns, one of the mainstays of the *Mennonite Mirror* for more than a dozen years, passed away on August 16, after a long and courageous battle with cancer. The funeral service was held in the Elmwood Mennonite Brethren Church in Winnipeg on Friday, August 19, in the presence of her family and hundreds of friends.

Mary would not have found it irreverent of her son Bruce to begin the reading of her obituary with the words, "Our mother was quite a lady." The fact is she was. Everyone during the service spoke of her unique enthusiasm for life and the impact that she had on the lives of others. At times that impact could be almost overwhelming. As her sister Anne observed, "Even as a child, she could manipulate us to do what she considered was the very best for us." This trait was remembered very fondly, and Anne concluded that "she was not only my sister but my friend."

She became a close friend to very many people, writing little notes of encouragement and welcoming them into her home. With her husband Peter she created a home to which one liked to return again and again.

When she began writing for the *Mennonite Mirror* in 1972, about a two-month visit that she and Peter made to Europe, we little realized that we had found a writer who would become the backbone of our little magazine. We used her talents shamelessly over the next decade and more. She was always willing to tackle new subjects, to listen to the advice of the editors (though she wasn't so foolish as to always take the advice) and — what is so crucial and yet rare in this field — she invariably met her deadlines. In the first 10 years she wrote 65 major articles, including interviews with John Diefenbaker in Saskatchewan, Johannes Harder in Germany, the actor Richard Burton in

Switzerland, and the author Paul Hiebert in Manitoba. Over the years her skills grew to match her seemingly boundless interests and enthusiasms. The *Mirror* staff is extremely grateful to Mary for her invaluable contributions. We are also pleased to know that Mary derived a lot of pleasure from her association with the *Mirror*. She frequently said it gave her a new sense of purpose and accomplishment. We, and our readers, will miss her very much.

Mary's family asked the publisher of the *Mirror* to say a few words at her funeral. By request the main part of this eulogy is printed here.

## A TRIBUTE TO MARY

We have come to this service to give thanks to God for a very special person, who brought joy into our lives over many years. Mary Enns was a unique gift of God to us. I am certain that as we think of her today we are reminded especially of her enthusiasm for life. Is there any better way of worshipping our Creator than to enjoy and delight in the life that He has given us? In this sense Mary's whole life was an act of worship. She loved life. She used her rich imagination to imbue even the most common experiences of life with colour and meaning.

There are poor souls that walk across an open field at dusk and think only of the work that it holds in store for them. There are other equally poor souls who look at such a field and think only of its monetary value. Then there are those who see in that field years of potential growth and renewal, and who pause at dusk to marvel at the beauty of the field, as the setting sun shimmers across the dark earth and the undulating grain. Such people are truly rich because they are in tune with God's Spirit. They permit God to work through their spirit — through the

richness of their imagination — to see the world in new ways each day. They are the ones who are constantly being born anew, reworking the raw materials of God's world into new shapes and thoughts. Through imaginative acts of the Spirit they become co-creators with God in the building of a richer and more exuberant life.

To be in tune with God's Spirit is to become an artist. This, the truest of all Christian vocations, is open to anyone: to the farmer who permits God to use his imagination to understand his environment in new ways, to parents who are able to see beyond the hundred daily irritations, and diapers, to the rich potential of the life that is growing in their midst, to teachers and students who are often so overwhelmed by the burden of assignments that they lose sight completely of what they are meant to do, to social workers and prison guards who are ultimately able to love only if they permit God to renew their imagination for what is possible, so that they can see beyond what is. God can work redemptively through us only if we are reborn each day with such a vision.

I remember very clearly a moment in my third year of university when I walked out of the arts building one day and suddenly realized how privileged I was to spend time at university learning about the world and reshaping my thoughts. It was truly a Eureka experience. I am almost embarrassed to admit it, but I practically jumped for joy. The drudgery of learning was quite suddenly transformed into an exciting adventure. God had given me a whole world to explore, and the time and the means to do it. It is no accident that it was during that time that I decided to become a Christian. A new life was opening up.

Mary Enns allowed God to open up her mind and spirit every day. She became an artist, creating a new world in which new

people became her friends and new thoughts inspired her to write. Somewhere she had caught the wonder of things She instinctively followed Paul's advice:

*...whatever is true,  
whatever is honorable,  
whatever is just  
whatever is pure,  
whatever is lovely,  
whatever is gracious,  
if there is any excellence,  
if there is anything worthy of praise,  
think about these things...  
and the God of peace will be with you."*

(Philippians 4:8-9)

She experienced life to the full, entertaining friends, travelling with her husband Peter — and writing. Permit me to say a few words about the discipline of writing. We are all aware that musicians and other artists must practice their craft endlessly to achieve standards of excellence. For some reason many people, including students, budding poets, and others, don't believe that a similar discipline is required of writers. Editors or teachers who suggest improvements are seen as violators of the truth — as though truth is captured and expressed most profoundly the first time it is put on paper. If only that were true. Alas, good writing like anything else must be learned and practiced constantly. The very good writers are those who revise again and again, and are unhappy when they receive the finished product because they immediately see things that could be improved. Mary learned to love her craft and became good at it because she was humble enough to listen to the advice of others and to look critically at her first attempts. That is the kind of artist that God cannot only use, but use well. Her book *Mia*, is a little gem, because it is based on solid research and was carefully constructed and thoughtfully written. One of the great pleasures of the past dozen years was talking to her on the phone about her writing projects. Both her enthusiasm and her discipline were inspiring.

We, her friends, were the benefactors of her spirit. She was so positive and enthusiastic that I began to wonder at times whether she was aware enough of the darker side of life. As I have tried to suggest, God wants to renew our spirit so that we can catch the beauty and wonder of His world, as children can. However, while we are to be like children in that special sense, in another sense we are meant to grow beyond childhood by incorporating into our vision of the world both its goodness and its evil. Only then are we equipped to not only enjoy the

world but to combat its injustice. In the fight against injustice such emotions as anger and sorrow are not only unavoidable but necessary. I wondered at times whether a rich, imaginative soul like Mary's could transcend its beautiful childlike quality to comprehend life's sorrows. I needn't have worried. Long before her last illness she indicated on several occasions that she was indeed deeply troubled by all those things that go wrong in our lives and others. She agonized over the world, even while she loved it.

In the last years Mary also grieved over her own illness.

A few months before her death she said to me and my wife in the hospital: "We know where it's at. But I will not feel sorry for myself." She knew that the fruit of bitterness is always eaten alone and she wanted to share her life with others, to the very end.

We can be grateful that she kept her faith. Sustained by a caring family, and a wide circle of friends, and by a loving Father in whom she found daily consolation, she could say with the poet:

*"I will not doubt, though all my ships at sea*

*come drifting home with broken masts and sails;*

*I shall believe the Hand which never fails,  
From seeming evil worketh good to me.*

*And though I weep, because the sails are battered,*

*Still will I cry, while my best hope lies shattered,*

*I believe in Thee." (Ella Wilcox)*

We will always cherish her memory, and be inspired by her spirit.

Roy Vogt

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## COMING EVENTS

**October 13 and 14:** Prairie Performances. Music for two pianos. Chester Duncan and Laurie Duncan. Muriel Richardson Auditorium. 8:00 pm.

**October 15:** MCC Manitoba Women's Auxiliary annual meeting. Winkler.

**October 16:** Winnipeg Singers. Concert of A Cappella music. Crescent Fort Rouge United Church. 8:00 pm.

**October 18-19:** J.J. Thiessen Lectures at Canadian Mennonite Bible College. Speaker: Sibley Towner of Union Theological Seminary. Theme: The Bible and our human nature.

**October 22:** Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary School Garage Sale and Auction. 26 Columbus Crescent. Auction at 11 am; Sale 8 to 4 pm.

**October 15:** Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society seminar on Mennonite family history; with Alan Peters, Fresno, California; CMBC chapel; from 9 a.m., all day.

**October 30:** Mennonite Community Orchestra, family concert; Mennonite Brethren Collegiate auditorium; 3 p.m.

## the J.J. THIESSEN LECTURES

*The Bible and  
Our Human Nature*

with

DR. W. SIBLEY TOWNER

Tuesday, October 18

9:30 a.m. - Coffee

10:00 a.m. - Lecture I

*"Our Worldly Nature"*

8:00 p.m. - Lecture II

*"Our Maturing Nature"*

Wednesday, October 19

9:30 a.m. - Coffee

10:00 a.m. - Lecture III

*"Our Impulsive Nature"*

8:00 p.m. - Lecture IV

*"Our Peaceful Nature"*

at

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600 Shaftesbury Blvd.

*Tim Wiebe moved from Manitoba to Ontario for further studies in theology at Conrad Grebel College in Waterloo. Every other month he will be contributing a column to this magazine, reflecting on life in southern Ontario.*

# THIS WORD FROM DOWN EAST

**Ontario time warp:  
walking the Old Order road**

by Tim Wiebe



More than 50 years have passed since novelist H. G. Wells wrote his famous work, *The Time Machine*. Since then, the science fiction industry has spawned thousands of stories based on that most unlikely of premises: travelling in historical reverse before going "back to the future." Most of us have probably watched a show or read a story or imagined a situation involving time travel; experiences which have allowed us in some way to go boldly back to "the way things were" while permitting us the comfort and assurance of knowing that the path to the present is still close at hand.

So, if you're a person with imagination — and if you combine your creativity with a love for walking, or jogging or biking, or just plain sight seeing — you might want to travel with me along a three kilometers stretch of highway which we'll simply call "the old order road." It's not hard to find. Just be prepared to leave the present for a while.

You'll want to wait for today's kind of weather. The prairie breeze has blown in some pristine air and capped the scene with layers of fluffy cumulus. The unbearable heat and humidity of the past few weeks are gone. The gentle wind will be sure to mop your brow for you as you work up a sweat on your journey into history.

And you'll want the equipment suitable to your mode of transport...walking shoes, jogging togs, cycling gear. Stow what you need in the car, and head out with me down Waterloo's Weber avenue. Yes, you'll encounter that sprawling monster, suburbia, and you'll see what it's doing to a countryside which once boasted thousands more acres of rolling hills lush with wheat and corn. But there are still fields and creeks and valleys which have remained untouched. In fact, the spot where we park marks the end of development — at least for now.

You'll be careful to stretch and otherwise warm-up, of course. No point in pulling a muscle somewhere along the back streets of time! You'll start out slowly along the concrete boulevard which winds through the rolling countryside. Then, you'll take a deep breath as you turn right and survey the dirt road which rises and falls for the next two miles through some of the best farmland in the province. And you'll set your mental dial for sometime between the 16th and 18th centuries. Ready? Here we go.

Men in overalls and suspenders, their sons just as uniformly dressed, wield pitchforks as they stook sheaves. A bit unusual, perhaps, but nothing you haven't heard about from parents — or even done yourself. An overalled boy on an ancient bike offers you a shy hello as you reach the crest of the first big hill. Not your up-to-date, rock-t-shirted youth, but still nothing out of the ordinary. Or so you tell yourself.

But then the impressions come thick and fast. You begin to feel yourself in a different age. Iron mailboxes, like sentinels at the end of winding driveways, are replete with such biblical monikers as Moses, Noah, Seth, Ruth, Naomi. Last names such as Martin, Reuben, and Brubaker further help set you in a different time and place. Large stone houses and unpainted gray barns are equally sturdy and plain, with not a power line in sight. A woman garbed in kerchief, print dress and plain black boots passes you conspicuously by on the far side of the road. She fixes a glance on you which she reserves for the new-worlders who must find satisfaction in fancy outfits, gold watches and shiny cars...and then vanishes from sight as she reaches the top of the hill and eases herself toward home and her chickens. She knows where she is going. So do the buggy horses, whose clop-clop-clop you hear for several minutes before you see them trot into view. The vehicle is as

black as the two gorgeous animals pulling it — an orange traffic triangle on its back — the only concession to a more modern era. Inside, an old man guides the beasts, looking almost like a shadow in his black coat as he sits, stooped, within the carriage. He appraises you shrewdly as his horses whisk him past yet another symbol of the world which he so resolutely wishes to avoid.

You ascend one more rise and then, a hundred yards or so ahead, see the other highway with which the dirt road intersects. People along this stretch have iron mailboxes, too, but with signs calling for the local paper. They have old farmsteads, too, but seem to believe in paint and power lines. They dress for work too, but not from the same pattern. You're back in the present. You'll run or walk or cycle the old order road back to your car, but not with the same wide-eyed interest. Rather, you'll maybe do some reflecting. Some thinking about what it means to avoid conformity to this world. Some ruminating on what it means to walk the Jesus road. Some considering of whether the old order road might not be, at least in some respect, an expression of the "narrow way" which Jesus called his disciples to walk.

Back at the car, you'll towel off, pull on a windbreaker against the advancing evening chill, and sit pensively at the wheel before heading back into the city. You won't be in full agreement, perhaps, with the way in which these people express their faith. But you might just long — and by God's grace start to pray — for the simplicity of heart which will help you live faithfully in a complex and troubled world. And if your trip down the old order road has given you that much pause for thought, it will have left you a legacy of faith and hope to cherish for a lifetime.

mm

## LITERARY MEETING

**Mennonite Books**  
This edition of the Mirror includes an insert that lists the books available at Mennonite Books, 1317A Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, R3G 0V3. We are pleased to provide our readers with an opportunity to buy books for themselves and friends in time for Christmas.

The annual meeting of the Mennonite Literary Society, Inc., which among other activities publishes the Mennonite Mirror, will hold its annual meeting on Saturday morning, November 26, at a location to be announced.

Anyone interested in attending may call the office at 786 2289 for information.

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# OBSERVED ALONG THE WAY

by Roy Vogt



## Incisive minds, both young and old, stimulate new thoughts...

For primitive man the Fall season in our northern hemisphere was undoubtedly a foreboding time. The question had to be faced: would there be enough food and adequate shelter for the cold winter months? For modern primitive teenagers, and teachers, the Fall season continues to be foreboding. Will they survive another year in the claustrophobic confines of the classroom? Aren't we doing something terribly unnatural by herding impatient young people and jaded teachers together into a small space called a classroom, with the expectation that something useful like learning will actually emerge from it?

For me, the return to the classroom after a liberating sabbatical year is not as dismaying as I had expected. There are, of course, many freedoms in a sabbatical year which one hates to give up. However, there are also, as I have found, some unusual pressures. During such a year you must live each day with the demands of your own expectations. Unfortunately I am a bit of a dreamer. I had thought that in one year, without the normal teaching load and the many interruptions that go with it, I would be able to research and write a whole book, plus a number of solid articles. Each morning when I woke this dream lay before me. With time it became in some ways even more burdensome than the daily routine of teaching. I researched, and wrote — sometimes in the most exotic places — but the goal remained elusive. I now return to the university a little wiser and sadder, with about half of the writing done. The 190 students in my first-year class, plus the students in my other classes, will impose their own agenda on me.

Actually, I am glad to be a teacher — to react to the daily, often surprising queries of growing minds and to observe young people (and some not so young) forming ideas and relationships for their lives. To have coffee daily with interesting colleagues, and to have time left over for independent reading and writing (the things not done last year are still there to

be done), are the icing on the cake. I envy no one.

The return to school this year is again preceded by both tragic and happy events. In the space of a few weeks we lose two close friends: David Rempel, a pioneer in Canada's more humane treatment of prisoners, and Mary Enns, a deeply loved writing colleague. A special tribute to Mary may be found elsewhere in this issue. Like Mary, David Rempel enriched our lives, and our community, in many ways. As the long-time head of Canada's parole service in this area he displayed a consistently compassionate but realistic attitude towards law breakers (he never condoned the word "criminals" for such persons). He did not minimize the danger posed to society by some types of violent, psychopathic personalities, but he was always mindful of the old adage, "there but for the grace of God go I." He respected society's need for protection, but was critical of its frequent desire for revenge. We were members of the same Christian congregation — First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg — and here too he found it necessary to be both supportive and critical. In a conservative, well-established church he vigorously espoused a radical approach to social questions. This got him into many social, political and religious arguments, in which he could easily hold his own. Despite occasional heated exchanges he never carried personal grudges and forgave even his most conservative friends their obvious weaknesses. For many years he was a member of the official church leadership and I shall never forget the stance he took when the leadership was asked to rule on a particularly thorny question. The question had to do with a church member whose marriage breakdown and subsequent remarriage had, after much agonizing deliberation, been accepted and forgiven by the church. This

person now requested permission to teach Sunday school. When this request became known in the congregation a number of parents threatened to withdraw their children from Sunday school if this person was permitted to teach. The leadership, which included all of the ministers and deacons, plus several members of the church council — about 15 persons in all — met to discuss the problem. Some referred to it as "the problem of Mr. X," implying that the problem lay with the member who wished to teach. David Rempel would have none of this. "The problem," he insisted, "is not the problem of this individual but the problem of our congregation. Are we prepared to act consistently on the basis of our previous forgiveness and acceptance of this person or will we allow a few unforgiving members to undo the good that was done?" I thought he put the issue fairly, but was not surprised to discover that it met with considerable opposition. David Rempel did not back off. "This," he insisted, "goes to the very heart of what we stand for as a Christian congregation. It is important that we take our stand now." Finally a majority voted with David, largely, I think, because of his forceful plea. And remarkably, the congregation remained united, despite the continuing protestations of a few members.

David Rempel's voice has now been stilled, but hopefully his defence of the vulnerable will keep on forcing us to see the church not only as a dispenser of comfort to the afflicted — a role which David thought was significant — but as a champion of justice, afflicting the all-too comfortable.

In one of those strange ironies of life, just at the time that we hear of the death of our friend David Rempel in Winnipeg, another David Rempel from California arrives in Winnipeg on a rare visit. This is Dr. David Rempel, now 88 years old and

regarded by our church historians as the leading expert on Russian Mennonite history. Dr. Rempel left the Soviet Union in the 1920s, studied in the U.S. and eventually taught history in a liberal arts college near Stanford University in California. During Khrushchev's leadership in the U.S.S.R. Dr. Rempel received permission to work in the Russian historical archives in Leningrad and Moscow, and was able to photocopy and bring back with him to the U.S. thousands of valuable documents relating to the Mennonite experience in Russia. On the basis of these he greatly enriched our understanding of that experience.

Many of us have read his works, but few had met him before his brief August visit to Winnipeg. In the private dining room of a local restaurant about a dozen of us are privileged to hear him discourse for four hours on various topics in Russian and Mennonite history. Despite his advanced age and a weak voice he astounds us with his vigorous mind and his incredible memory. I had been told a story previously about his unique memory. It so happens that my father and Dr. Rempel spent a year together in school in Russia in 1913, when they were both 13-year-old boys. They didn't have a chance to see or speak to each other again for 53 years, till, in 1966, my parents made a trip to California. My father called Dr. Rempel from San Francisco and when he heard a voice at the other end of the line he asked, "Is that David Rempel?" "Yes," the voice answered, "and that must be Peter Vogt." I must confess that in all my years of study I have never encountered a person with a better memory. What is equally impressive is the range and depth of his sympathies. At our dinner meeting he laments the fact that many Mennonites have become much too parochial in their thinking, and too uncritical of their own past. At the same time they have allowed the tragic events of the Russian revolution, and its aftermath, to cloud their appreciation of much of Russian history. After all, it was in that good Russian soil that the Mennonite school was nurtured for over a century and a half.

Dr. David Rempel remains a remarkably free and interesting spirit at age 88 and provides us with an evening that none of us will ever forget.

•  
Enjoyment of another kind comes our way late in summer, prompted by a unique invitation to participate in a marriage ceremony in the rolling Amish countryside of southern Pennsylvania. During the past winter I received a letter from a male and female student in Conrad

Grebel College in Waterloo, Ontario. The young man informed me that he was the son of the very first couple at whose marriage I officiated 25 years ago. His parents are Reynold and Francis Siemens of Edmonton and I remembered their wedding very well. The young woman writing to me in the same letter was the daughter of my first cousin, Reg Toews, a director of MCC in Akron, Pennsylvania. The two students planned to be married this summer, in a small, old Amish church near Akron. In view of my association with both of their families they asked whether I would be willing to officiate at their ceremony. Such an invitation was just too beguiling to resist. I believe in family, romance, and some of the other old values, and here were two young people who seemed to be driven by similar ideals.

We meet briefly in the Winnipeg airport on July 1, to go over their wedding plans. Now, in late August, my wife and I are on the way to celebrate the great day with the couple: Raymond Siemens and Lynne Toews, and their families. We catch an early morning flight from Grand Forks (travel from Grand Forks is considerably cheaper than from Winnipeg, thanks to good old U.S. competition). The transfer in Minneapolis to the flight to Philadelphia is remarkably efficient: in the past we have usually been forced to run two miles from one end of the airport terminal to the other to make a connections flight. Reg Toews meets us in the Philadelphia airport and takes us in his car through the beautiful rolling hills of Pennsylvania. After checking into the Akron Motel we drive another 15 miles to the Webber Farm, where the wedding party is waiting outside the old stone Amish church to begin the rehearsal. It is truly a beautiful setting. It is not just the old church that transports one into another century. An absolute hush pervades the surrounding fields and an ancient burial ground across the road makes one feel that time has stood still. The church has simple benches, and no pulpit.

It is a pleasure to go through the ceremony with the wedding party in this setting.

That evening about a dozen of us travel to a large Amish farm, where the energetic lady of the house, and her daughters, have prepared a sumptuous meal. They have opened an informal restaurant right in their dining room. Though the setting is simple, with the kitchen right next to the table, a large new microwave oven attests to the entrepreneurial spirit of the home. After a large meal, which finishes with four des-

serts, we stagger back to the van for further family pre-nuptial celebrations in Akron.

The next day, the wedding day, is warm and sunny, with a fresh breeze cooling the old country church. The church is filled with about 80 guests, most of whom have travelled long distances to be here. The two grandmothers of the bride have come from Manitoba, while others are there from Saskatchewan, Ontario, and Missouri. A warm bond unites us as the couple pledges the ancient marriage vows. The wedding is followed by a luncheon reception in the old Hess-Miller shoe factory in Akron, which now houses the MCC handicraft distribution centre. A courtyard has been created in the centre of this old factory, and with imaginative design and a glass roof has been transformed into an attractive dining area. Here, with poems, songs, and a few short speeches, the couple is given a royal send off. It is one of those events that one will always remember.

A strange coincidence adds to the pleasure of this occasion. Our son and daughter-in-law happen to live just two hours from Akron, in Princeton, New Jersey, and they can also be present for the wedding. On Saturday evening after the receptions we travel with them to their Princeton apartment to spend a few days enjoying this quiet university town with them. It is a unique pleasure to sleep in, in your children's home, while they have to get up and attend to their work. We allow ourselves to be indulged — and they indulge.

•  
By the month of September we have our feet back on the ground and are involved once again in our own work. What is the most enduring image of the past summer? Perhaps it is an evening at the cottage with friends from Germany, watching the sun sink gloriously red into the ocean-like lake in front of us. Just as the rays of the sun streak across the lake a canoe with two people in it glides serenely by. Our German friends gasp in quiet satisfaction: they are witnessing a Canadian sunset on a Canadian lake with an Indian canoe directly in front of them. At that moment the two people in the canoe begin to sing, accompanied by an accordion. They sing old German folk songs, because they are our neighbors, the Penners, who hail originally from the Danzig area. The German friends sitting with us on our steps are now even more astonished: no, incredulous. Is this really Canadian? Yes, we assure them, this is *really* Canadian: a native canoe with new Canadians singing European songs on an old Canadian lake. Now they have truly seen Canada. **mm**

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# REVIEW

## A new place on Pembina Highway where you simply *must* eat!

by J. Braun

Wot, Helen? You mean you haven't been? Oh *dahling!* You simply haven't lived!

Yes, that's where it is. South on Pembina Highway past the Holiday Inn, kitty-corner across from the Fort Garry MB and three doors up from the K-Mart. How handy!

Oh heavens, I don't know what it's supposed to be. Myrtle absolutely insisted it was a church of some kind and Edna said, "No, Myrt" — you know how she is when she gets that way — "No, Myrt, it's a grain elevator. I'm sure of it. A shortened grain elevator like the one we had back home." Well, I declare I didn't know *what* to say, so we parked the car and went into the lobby and, wouldn't you know it, there it was right on the walls, some photographs of the old Mennonite house-barns just like the Friesens from south of Gretna. Oh, that man is so *clever* to come up with that, I said, and Edna didn't say *anything*. She just stood there stunned!

Well, Myrtle went to the desk and announced our reservation and the cashier, who is also the host took us to our table and we sat down and, goodness me, what they've done to the inside! Mercy, it's so airy — the ceiling goes way up, it is perfectly dizzying — for a moment there I thought I was in a cathedral and someone would start playing invocation! And all the exposed beams everywhere you look! And they've done it up in light blue with Mennonite artwork hung here and there. Myrtle insisted it was so Designer and I agreed that the scheme was definitely *Nouveau Rustic*. Edna declared that she had never seen anything like it and she must speak to the decorator about her living room, it was just so absolutely heavenly! We were simply transformed!

And my oh my oh my, all the glitterati were there! Well, I'm sure practically half of East Kildonan, at least! Then the waitress came and wouldn't you know it, what a small world! It was Ms. Thiessen from

Kildonan Drive's granddaughter! No, the one from the other side. Diane. She was such an angel! Myrtle asked her in Plattdietsch, "How are the Thiessens," and she answered, "Just fine," in our own native tongue as if it really didn't matter a single bit! Oh, she was simply delightful! Entirely, entirely competent, that girl!

Well, then we had a good look at our menus and had to make up our minds right quick because everything there was being done so *bruzlich*. And Diane explained that they didn't have the Beef Stroganoff, the Chicken and Shrimp, the *Jebackte Rebspaa*, the *Seet en Sua Raeka Worscht*, and the *Feesch fonn B.C.* So Myrtle ordered the *Houpscher* and Edna took the *Kjielkje* with a *Kommst Borscht* on the side and — goodness me — there were five varieties of *Wrenikje* combination plates and someone simply had to have farmer sausage, so it was agreed that I would order that and we would all sample from each other's. So that was that.

Well, Diane took our orders ever so politely and brought us coffee and then a little while later a refill while we waited. Their coffee is bottomless! We were so impressed! We decided to have free refills to our heart's content. This is entirely appropriate, we said, because, after all, drinking coffee is the first Article of Faith for us Mennonites. Myrtle and I had ours black like we always do, but Edna backslid a bit with the cream. Well really, I will admit the sin was only momentary, I'll give her that much, because when she added the cream from the little pitcher on the table, she exclaimed as discreetly as is possible in circumstances such as these, "This tastes funny!" Well, we simply had to know what it was, so Myrtle and I each had a tiny sip and — mercy me! — the cream wasn't cream at all! It was edible oil! Oh, for shame! We pretty nearly died right then and there!

It took us a few minutes to get over that one, let me assure you! So when Diane arrived with the entrees and asked if we wished another refill, Edna said "No thank you ever so much just the same, may I have some tea."

# d'8 Schtove

Mennonite Food Specialties

Well, Diane placed those plates in front of us and, really, I thought we would be getting the missionary portions but, honestly, our diets have gone back to square one! We all had a taste of Edna's *borscht* and it was perfectly all right. Myrtle said, "It certainly has a tang to it, yes, it certainly does," and I thought maybe it had a teensy wee bit too much dill but was nevertheless robust. Edna finished the bowl all too quickly, which pretty well speaks for itself, I suppose. Edna did say, however, that the *Kjielkje* noodles were much too skinny and told of her mother's hand-cut noodles which were ever so much superior. She did, however, give credit for the sauce which had an ample supply of slivers of onions and was really terribly exquisite. The *Holupsche*, nestled between heaps of mixed vegetables — a little overdone — and deep fried potato balls, were a little on the thin side, but the stew definitely had that homey flavour that put is in mind of those fall church suppers we had back home. Remember home? Oh, I haven't been back there in years, so I was quite eager to dig into our home-town sausage which is, after all, supremely the, absolutely the *kosher* brand for any Mennonite function anywhere. So we each had a slice and guessed. Edna guessed *Blumenort*; Myrtle guessed *Altona*. Well, Myrtle was right and I immediately resolved to speak sometime with the management. Pardon my bias, but I insist I must speak to that man. Really, I simply must.

For dessert I had hoped to have fruit cocktail Jello, but Diane said it wasn't on the menu. Neither available were the *Rice Pudding*, *Strudel*, *Napoleon Torte*, or the *Schatzie*, so we decided to have a round of cheesecake, which was brought promptly. Oh my! Edna exclaimed that Montreal Ben's cheesecake was the absolute best she had ever had. I said, No no Edna. For truly sublime cheesecake, you go to Toronto and step off at the Eglinton subway stop and go to Bregman's on Yonge Street. It certainly is worth the trip. And John Schroeder will give you a deal if you bring some on your flight back!

Diane came with the bill and the mints

and we thanked her ever so awfully much for being so awfully sweet with us. Edna remarked that it had been simply mahvellous, perfectly mahvellous, and Myrtle said it was truly unforgettable, and as we were going out to the car we all agreed that, except for the one culinary faux pas with the coffee, it had been an absolutely thrilling event, especially the entrees themselves, which were really soooo schmeckt!

Oh, dahlings, we must go! Oh sweets, do let's go! Really, Helen, we simply must go!

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## REVIEW

### You may not like what you see, but *Temptation* can't be ignored

*The Last Temptation of Christ*, a movie currently showing in Winnipeg is the subject of considerable controversy in the Christian community.

#### reviewed by Waldemar Ens

Perhaps more words have been spoken and written about Martin Scorsese's *The Last Temptation of Christ* than any other movie in the past decade. And that was before it was released! Since then, more words from all directions and perspectives have hailed the film as a masterpiece of filmmaking or derided it as a tool of the devil. That a movie can engender such passions is perhaps a testament to the power and influence popular art wields in our culture.

What, then, of this provocative, sometimes brilliant, sometimes hoaky, sometimes confusing, often frustrating film which has created the biggest religious controversy since Jimmy Swaggart returned to TV? The film is not based on the gospels, but rather on Nikos Kazantzakis's novel of the same name. This is important to keep in mind, especially if you are familiar with the biblical account of Jesus' life and crucifixion. The movie seeks to explore the struggle between the spirit and the flesh in human experience, and therefore is not really intended as a definitive statement on the true nature of Christ. However, I found it almost impossible to ignore the theological implications of the movie. Therefore I will address it in two ways: theologically and artistically.

The most frustrating and disturbing aspect of the film is the portrait of Jesus, who comes across as a mixed-up wonder-worker who doesn't understand his role or his mission until it is nearly too

*d'8 Schtove, 1842 Pembina Highway; reservations: 275- 2294; breakfasts, lunches, dinners, 8 a.m. - 11 p.m.: cards: Visa, Mastercharge; Trilingual: Hoch/Plattdietsch, English; wines: Canadian, French, German; beers: German and domestic; coffee: free refills; parking: free.*

late. When he first begins preaching he "opens his mouth and love comes out."

The film's version of the beatitudes is beautiful and inspiring. But later, after being tempted in the wilderness, Jesus rejects love, tearing his heart from his chest, and advocates the use of the axe to strike evil down. I found it difficult to accept this kind of a Jesus.

On the other hand, the film portrays a "human" Jesus as does no other account I have ever seen. It is valuable to see the film for that reason alone. Christ has been deified to such an extent that it is difficult to imagine that he could ever be tempted at all. This movie will shatter that image and bring the ordeal that Jesus faces in his life on earth into much sharper focus.

The interpretation of Judas is perhaps the most fascinating aspect of the movie. Long seen as the "villain" in the story of the crucifixion, Judas is portrayed here as a hero who understands that it is his role to "bring about" the death of Christ and the redemption of mankind. He is the strongest character in the movie, stating quite openly that he would willingly die or kill for his cause. He follows Jesus against his better judgment at first and finally comes to accept his role at the end.

Another interesting aspect of the movie is Jesus' treatment of women in such an oppressive society. The movie shows Jesus choosing women as some of his closest friends, always treating them as equals. It was refreshing to see women present and taking part in the Last Supper. Only in the "last temptation," where Jesus fantasizes about marrying and having children, does he treat women as objects to be possessed.

Many Christian leaders say the movie

is dangerous to Christianity. On the contrary, how many other popular movies of our time are so sympathetic to the Christian philosophy and point of view? Perhaps Christians should be using this film instead of banning it.

First and foremost, though, this film is a work of art which should primarily be approached and criticized on that basis.

The film offers a striking depiction of life at Jesus' time. Right from the opening scenes we get a picture of a society which is violent, oppressive, turbulent, and seemingly insensitive to life. The Golgotha of this movie is no "green hill far away" but a mound of agony where crosses and skulls outnumber the vegetation. I will never again watch a Cecil D. DeMille movie in the same light. The violence and cruelty of the movie, however, does not become a museum piece. Our own society is mirrored here even though we manage to hid behind a false front of prosperity.

Writer Paul Schrader and Director Martin Scorsese have fashioned a movie which, like the book it is based upon, explores the relationship between the spirit and the flesh in human nature. It does this using the various problems and situations which confront Jesus during his brief ministry. For example, he must convince Judas that loving your enemies, not killing them, is the way to real freedom. Finally he must resist the temptation to save himself and live as an ordinary man as he faces the prospect of sacrificing himself to redeem humanity. This theme is played out, for the most part, in a fresh and revealing way, using strikingly symbolic images of blood, making the movie a compelling look at human nature.

The central focus of the movie is, of course, the character of Jesus as portrayed by William Defoe whom we last saw "crucified" in *Platoon*. He is given the task of portraying Jesus as he has never before been seen, and at times he does an admirable job of showing the struggles that Jesus goes through. He is especially effective in the Garden of Gethsemane where he asks that the cup be taken from him. However, often he did not allow the viewer to struggle with him. This is partly the fault of the director who jumps from scene to scene without allowing for a sense of continuity.

The two other main actors are excellent. Harvey Keitel cuts through his Brooklyn accent to give Judas a new, believable dimension. Barbara Hershey as Mary Magdalene is magnificent as a woman driven to desperate measures, all the time maintaining her dignity. I felt as though I understood her struggle.

David Bowie gives a good, understated

performance as Pontius Pilate, but Harry Deen Stanton's Saul is merely a caricature. I almost laughed.

The movie is interspersed with miracles and unnatural occurrences. Some of these are excellent, while others are almost hoaky. The raising of Lazarus is a powerful segment in the film, and the pillar of fire, representing Satan unmasked, is spine-tingling. But I had trouble with the use of talking snakes and apple trees appearing in the desert.

Scorsese builds to the Crucifixion very well, and the film is supposed to climax in the "last temptation" where Jesus is tempted to save himself and live like a normal man. This part of the movie, which takes the form of a fantasy, does not work very well because it requires several leaps in logic, and it is just too long. Finally, it does not grip you emotionally. The relief and happiness that Jesus supposedly feels in not being the Messiah is not communicated to the audience. As a result, the film leaves you feeling somewhat cold and uninvolved.

*The Last Temptation of Christ* is an ambitious film; and although it does not live up to its lofty ambitions in various instances, it is still a movie to be reckoned with, both theologically and artistically.

*Waldemar Ens teaches at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate in Winnipeg.*



### MWC Planners see plans moving ahead

All attendance records for a Mennonite gathering will be shattered July 24-29, 1990, when visitors from around the world gather at Winnipeg for Assembly 12 of Mennonite World Conference, according to projections approved by the MWC Executive Committee during meetings this past June.

Executive Secretary Paul Kraybill presented figures anticipating a full-time registration of 15,000 people, plus 3,000 evening and weekend part-time participants. The mass Sunday morning worship service could draw a peak crowd of 28,000.

The program committee gave tentative approval to sub-themes, decided on a daily schedule for meetings, and came to decisions on meeting sites during its sessions.

The overall assembly theme, as decided at last year's general council meeting in Filadelfia, Paraguay, will be "Witnessing to Christ in Today's World."

Suggested daily sub-themes will be linked to both a major morning address and an evening inspirational message. The daily topics, subject to further refinement in wording, are: "Christ, the Light of the World" (Wednesday), "Living Christ in Today's World" (Thursday), "Following Christ in Today's World": (Friday), "Proclaiming Christ in Today's World" (Saturday), and "Empowered by the Holy Spirit" (Sunday morning).

"In choosing the sub-themes the committee was mindful that we must be able to reach not only the theologians and church leaders, but also the young people and lay church members," said Jane Friesen, MWC co-secretary of program development.

Voluntary prayer group meetings will begin each day's activity, followed by the morning plenary session in the Winnipeg Convention Centre. These sessions will

*The MWC executive shown above are, back row from left: Ray Schlichting, treasurer; Paul Kraybill, executive secretary; Ross T. Bender, Jake Pauls; middle row: Victor Adrian, Louise Nussbaumer, Samuel Gerber, Hiroshi Yanada; front row: Helen Kruger, Uis Elier Rodriguez, and Stephen Ndlou.*

include music and the morning message, followed by a forum for those who wish to continue the discussion; others will leave for lunch.

Unlike in previous MWC assemblies, the youth, including junior high, will meet separately from adults in the mornings. This is partly due to seating capacity at the Convention Centre and partly due to the success of youth conventions at other large Mennonite conferences. Activities for children will also be provided.

The program committee is planning plenty of time for meals, since there will be no single eating location, and often many people will need to be transported from one site to another for various activities.

The afternoons will feature tours, displays, music, art, drama, small discussion groups, working groups, and special interest groups.

Evening programs will be held in the Winnipeg Arena. Designed as worship meetings, they will feature music, drama, prayer, choral readings, and inspirational messages. The evening services will be for all ages.

The mass Sunday morning worship service will be held in the Winnipeg Stadium.

"I was overwhelmed with the way the program committee members prepared for the meeting and worked together," said Friesen. "They are a gifted group of people and accomplished much in their two-and-one-half days together."

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# Winnipeg's 1990 World Conference

## a celebration of Mennonite variety

by Tim Wiebe

The Mennonite World Conference is an inspirational gathering of believers representing more than 60 countries. At present, there are close to one million Mennonite and Brethren in Christ members who have affiliated themselves with the World Conference, the body which organizes the assembly every six years. The last world conference was in Strasbourg, France, in 1984 with about 8,000 participants.

The next conference is slated for Winnipeg. Considering that the city already boasts a sizeable Mennonite contingent, the 1990 event promises to be one of the largest Anabaptist gatherings of all time.

The writer spoke to Helen Kruger, who serves as secretary on the world conference executive, when she was in Winnipeg for planning meetings for the 1990 assembly. In addition to her voluntary work as conference secretary, Helen teaches German, English and Religion at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate in Kitchener, Ontario. She is a member of Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church.

**Q:** What would be a capsule history of the World Conference? What events would be among the highlights of the 11 assemblies held thus far?

**A:** The first world conference assembly was held in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1925. There were 81 people in attendance and five nations represented. Since then, 10 gatherings have been held in such widely varying locations as Danzig, Amsterdam, Goshen-Newton, Basel, Karlsruhe, Curitiba, Wichita, and, most recently, Strasbourg. Conference presidents have included Christian Neff and H. S. Bender — each of whom served through three assemblies — along with Erland Waltner, Million Belete and Charles Christano. Attendance at the assemblies, which are held every sixth year, has increased to an average of 7,500 over the past four gatherings, and the number of nations represented now stands near 60. An interesting highlight

of the first conference, which was held in the year marking the 400th anniversary of the origin of Anabaptism, had to do with the unfortunate plight of the Russian delegates. When they were turned back at the Soviet border, a group of Mennonites from Zurich travelled to meet and fellowship with them, holding, as it were, a conference of their own! The 1936 conference commemorated the 400th anniversary of Menno's conversion to Anabaptism and marked another important Mennonite historical milestone. A major shift in theological emphasis came in 1948, when the World Conference Assembly first adopted a formal theme — "Brotherhood and Reconciliation." Since then, the themes chosen have reflected something of our Anabaptist emphasis on discipleship.

**Q:** As a member of the conference executive, you've met each year in a different country — Taiwan, Paraguay, the U.S. and Canada. So you've certainly been given opportunity to travel! Which experience would you consider the most rewarding in your work as a member of the executive?

**A:** I've been profoundly affected by meeting people from other countries who want to be part of the larger Mennonite body and who want to enjoy Christian fellowship. I feel that the people on the executive are my good friends. You come to know them almost as brothers and sisters. Each has unique ways of looking at Christianity but we all, as Anabaptist Christians, hold important beliefs in common which help unify us in our work.

**Q:** The world Conference is different from regional, national, and triennial gatherings in that it doesn't send delegates to vote on specific business and policy-related agenda. What would you describe, then, as being the purpose of the world Conference?

**A:** We should really distinguish between the world conference, which operates full-time, and the world con-

ference assembly, which occurs every six years. The world conference attempts to promote fellowship on a worldwide basis and makes an effort to bring people together to seek faithfulness to Christ. Further, it emphasizes communication by putting churches in touch with each other; either through regional conferences, committee meetings, or through special visits from world conference staff people. Finally, the world conference works toward facilitation of common action peace, discipleship, and communication. The promotion of these goals — fellowship, communication and facilitation — takes place on a full-time basis.

The assemblies are "people" conferences which emphasize inspiration, sharing, and discussion of issues. However, they can be intensely practical events as well. Ron Sider's address on Christian peacemakers teams, which was given at the 1984 assembly in Strasbourg, is now being discussed and implemented in Mennonite churches around the world. So the assembly is an event which attempts, by bringing people together, to symbolize a family of God which crosses all barriers of race and culture.

To sum up, it's important to stress that the world conference — both in its full time and assembly-oriented work — doesn't want to become a superstructure which makes churches dependent. Rather, it wishes to be a body which helps facilitate theological discussion, understanding, and a sense of equality between churches.

**Q:** What are some specific ways in which the world conference carries out its mandate?

**A:** A number of organizational features promote the unity which is, of course, among the main goals of the world conference. The assembly is held every six years. As well, the general council of members from the 60-countries now holding membership in the

conference takes place every three years. The last such meeting was held in Paraguay in 1987. The 11-member executive, which includes representatives from each continent, meets annually. Moving beyond the structural level, the world conference sponsors consultations on missions and peace and publishes a regular newsletter, the *Courier*. A recent addition to the world conference has been the International Mennonite Peace Committee (IMPC) which emphasizes peace awareness, promotes the publication of peace literature and encourages establishment of creative peace-teaching programs. Finally, regular fraternal visits by the conference executive secretary to Mennonite churches around the world further helps the conference fulfill its goal of promoting fellowship, communication and facilitation of unity.

**Q:** What is the theme of the 1990 Winnipeg conference? What are some of the highlights that you anticipate?

**A:** The broad theme is "Witnessing to Christ in Today's World." Important aspects of the theme will include discussion of who Christ is, and a focussing in on the meaning of following and proclaiming Christ in today's world. In other words, attention will be given to defining the shape that an Anabaptist-Mennonite witness to the world should take. As for highlights, we are approaching what will be the most heavily-attended world conference ever; not to mention the largest such event ever held in Winnipeg! Music from choirs around the world will certainly add to the spiritual and cultural richness of the event, and a study booklet to be distributed world wide in fall will provide a basis for theological discussion at the conference. I find it especially interesting to note that many Mennonites in Winnipeg are already preparing their homes for the guests they hope to host in two years!

**Q:** Do you foresee the conference assembly being held more often, in future years, in Third World countries?

**A:** We look forward to occasional conferences in these countries when we are able to find a combination of appropriate facilities, a Mennonite community, favorable political conditions, and openness to all participants on the part of host governments.

**Q:** To what factors would you attribute the tremendous growth being experienced in the Mennonite church in such countries as Zaire? What, by contrast, would be the reasons behind the seeming decline in membership in the Mennonite church in Europe?

**A:** In Zaire, and other Third World countries, many people have been

uprooted from traditional patterns of life. The church serves as a place in which they can again feel a sense of belonging. Thus, the last few years have been a favorable time for evangelism. As well, trouble and suffering in the church caused by external hostilities seems to cause growth and dynamism. In Zimbabwe, for example, the church's protests and call to national prayer helped lessen the bloodshed and fighting in that country. Just as important, the second generation of indigenous Christians in these countries is assuming more and more responsibility for the growth of the church in its native land.

As for Europe, the decline in membership can in part be explained by recent efforts of churches to clear non-active members from their rolls. Beyond that, people are perhaps too content and complacent. Small and active groups do exist, and some 10,000 Mennonites from the Soviet Union have swelled the Mennonite ranks considerably. However, it does seem that in terms of internally generated growth, the Mennonite church in Europe is barely holding its own.

**Q:** In what way would you like to see the role of the world conference in the ministry of the Mennonite church expanded?

**A:** We would like to see marginal groups — Hutterites, Amish, Conservative and Old Order Mennonites — become full-fledged members of the current discussion.

**Q:** What would you consider to be some of the major issues facing the Mennonite church as it prepares to enter a new millennium?

**A:** From my perspective as a world conference executive member, I would consider increasing unity and equality among Mennonite churches around the world to be a major challenge facing our denomination. The world conference can help foster increased unity and understanding by increasing international awareness through church to church contact; by encouraging leadership exchange and by facilitating resource sharing and cross-cultural understanding. World conference helps to facilitate international idea exchange between churches. The IMPC is one such example. In a nutshell, we want to help churches, in an increasingly interdependent world, take the global community *seriously*.

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# POET'S WORD

## Stranger's Prayer

For now,  
I'm a pilgrim  
alien to this land  
Anxiously doing  
those routine chores  
which I hope  
will help me feel more rooted.

Starting over  
with weaving  
that delicate network  
of belonging,  
I pray for the grace  
with which to create  
something beautiful  
from the resources  
my new home has to offer.

by Tim Wiebe

## Anomaly

Kerchiefed women  
with children conspicuous  
in their plain clothes  
seem incongruent  
in this bustling city  
which impinges daily  
on their cherished  
old order.

But they persist  
with their way of life  
even as mama  
In pennsylvania Dutch laced  
with advertising English  
admonishes her brood  
while comparing prices  
(ever on the lookout  
for a good deal).

They leave the store  
with the few supplies  
needed to sustain  
their existence...  
And I look at my own,  
more cluttered life,  
and ask myself  
where the incongruity  
really lies.

by Tim Wiebe

# Perestroika Panorama and the Church

by G. K. Epp

After four summit meetings between Gorbachov and Reagan, some people still questioned the real impact of Perestroika on Soviet life. The Moscow Communist Party Congress of June 1988 should put that kind of questioning to rest. Hardly anybody could have predicted the kind of demonstration of "democratization" that we all witnessed with astonishment. The question is no longer: Is Perestroika a serious phenomenon, or merely a maneuver to fool the West? (as some "informed" sources continued to claim against all facts) but rather: What is its impact on the ordinary Soviet citizen, and on the whole Soviet sphere of influence?

Before the Reagan visit, the Soviet press focused on nothing more than on that visit. The April 26, issue of *Izvestia* carried a long article on the significance of the meeting of the two leaders under the title "What baggage did Mr. Schultz bring along to his meeting": (with Shevernadse). Even a year ago Soviet newsprint would have refused to soak up the ink of the positive commentary on the American politicians. Obviously Mr. Gorbachov wanted a healthy climate for the event and the party papers were quite willing to oblige with the most positive reporting.

The very friendly tone did not change significantly even after the American president demonstrated a lack of respect for the hosting nation and sometimes an embarrassing tactlessness against his host (and we do not have to comment on the behavior of the First Lady, who left an image behind which Russians will classify as *nie cul'turno* — lacking the polish of culture). But in spite of these painful blunders, Gorbachov was determined to save the event, and he demonstrated to the whole world that he was the diplomat with charm. And then came the totally unexpected first "democratic" party conference in the history of the Soviet Union.

Meanwhile other issues competed for attention but they were hardly noticed. One by one Soviet officers and former top party men, who perished during the Stalin terror years as "enemies of the people," or as "fascist spies," were rehabilitated as good Soviet citizens and even heroes of the Soviet Union (*Pravda*, April 29, 1988). Troops were coming

home from a long and cruel war in Afghanistan — for the Soviets the war is coming to an end (if the process is not suddenly reversed by some political accident). The *Ekonomicheskaja Gazeta* continued to challenge Soviet citizens to improve the quality of production in Soviet factories, "because only eight percent of our present products qualify for export." This was the most important issue of Perestroika, and a large segment of the Communist Party would have liked to limit Glasnost' and Perestroika to these matters of economics, but the lid was lifted and much more came out of that for 70 years tightly shut container than most members of the privileged "Nomenklatura" had bargained for. Soviet citizens no longer wait for the signal to bark in unison, they take the initiative in an unexpected aggressive way. Writers like Yevtuschenko and Gerassimov came out in support of minority groups in Soviet society. Yevtushenko signed a letter demanding the rehabilitation of the Crimean Tatars, who had been deported to Siberia and Central Asia for "collaboration with the fascists." Questions are raised as to why that happened? Gerassimov published a story, "*Stuk v dver'*" (Knock on the Door), dealing with the deportation, arrests, and cruel treatment of minorities (*Osteuropa*, p. 271). Not only are the minorities restless, as the situation in the Caucasian region (Azerbaijan/Armenia) demonstrates, but they are finding support among Russian intellectuals. In *Radianska Ukraine* (April 27, 88), a teacher demands a quick solution to the shortage of Ukrainian papers. And we note that these complaints and protests are not suppressed.

The minority issue has become the most difficult problem for Gorbachov and those supporting his Perestroika, because the minorities are making demands which could have serious consequences for the whole concept of a happy Soviet family of 100 plus nations. The problem, as has been pointed out before, is compounded by a rapid demographic shift in favour of the Central Asian and Caucasian minorities who have never shown much love for the Russian Empire and even less inclination to support the atheistic Soviet

system. The demographic shift is assuming alarming proportions. While the birth rate in the north-western provinces of the Soviet Union has barely held its own between 1959 and 1979 (three per cent population growth), during the same 20-year period the Moslem population of Soviet Central Asia expanded by 90 per cent (*Osteuropa*, p. 274). The Russians are becoming a minority in what they still consider to be "their country." Many of these Moslems cannot be drafted into the army because they refuse to learn Russian, and yet, the time is not far away when more than half of the Soviet Army will be made up of not entirely reliable minority troops. The Soviets must remember what happened during the Second World War, when the often abused minorities at times refused to fight.

At this point even the German minority in the Soviet Union is beginning to demand just treatment — that voice was heard the last time 70 years ago, when among Lenin's elected Bolsheviks (a total of 59) there were 14 Russian Germans. They all disappeared mysteriously after Lenin disbanded the only freely elected Russian National Assembly. The rest of Lenin's faithful can easily be traced, but historians have failed to find any clues as to the fate of the 14 German delegates. The German minority now is demanding an autonomous region as the only way to save its heritage. It is interesting to note that among the eight delegates who met with Mikoyan after the so-called "rehabilitation" of the German minority during the Khrushchov era, to talk about a new "autonomous region for the Germans," were the well-known Soviet literary critic, Warkentin, and Hertel, a Mennonite from Ak Metchet. The group had been invited by Mikoyan, but when the representatives of the Volga Germans insisted on returning to their homeland on the Volga, the meeting ended abruptly.

However, now the question has been raised again, and even the international community is beginning to take an interest in the fate of the Soviet Germans. At a recent "International Symposium" in Bonn, well-known Sovietologists ad-

dressed the question. Luigi Vittorio Graf Ferraris, an Italian Sovietologist, ambassador of Italy in Bonn, who has also served as ambassador in Moscow, said, "The international community cannot ignore the plight of these minorities; it is not one country's problem; it is our problem." Prof. Hugo Jedig, from the University of Novosibirsk (for medical reasons in Germany since 1986) suggested that if the Soviet government is interested in keeping the German minority in the Soviet Union, then they must correct old injustices and offer the Germans their homeland on the Volga or on the Dniepr: "To be able to retain their heritage, they need a compact German region." The strongest statement in support of the German minority in the U.S.S.R. came from the well-known Soviet writer, Prof. Lev Kopelev (a dissident who was exiled to the West shortly after Solzhenitsyn, but who identifies with his native "Russia," although he is of Jewish background). Prof. Kopelev, speaking in flawless German, said: "*Das erste große Verbrechen des Zweiten Weltkrieges — das Verbrechen an den Deutschen in der Sowjetunion — ist bisher noch gar nicht angesprochen worden*" (The first great crime of the Second World War—the crime against the Germans in the Soviet Union—to this day has not even been discussed). This injustice has to be corrected and the Germans should get their autonomous region. To the question, "But will that not create a new injustice against those who live in those former German homelands?" Kopelev responded: "Settle the Germans in East Prussia." (This discussion took place in the presence of Soviet Embassy personnel in Bonn, who attended the Symposium, although Soviet historians were prevented from participation.)

We may not take these proposals very seriously, and will not be discussing the implications of such "dreams." If I were a

Soviet German today, I would not risk moving into an autonomous German homeland within the Soviet Union, because I would not trust the future. However, the point is, these matters are being discussed in the Soviet Union, and this aspect of Perestroika touches the Mennonite community in that country.

The other area in which Perestroika has had an immediate and significant impact, is religion. There are fewer arrests of preachers (very few), a number of the prisoners, young men and women, whom we may remember from an earlier article on the Church in the Soviet Union (*Mirror*, September 1987) have been released. The churches in the Soviet Union have become more outspoken in their demands. Even Mennonite leaders have become bolder in their defense of the church, which is quite apparent from more recent letters. In Moscow for the first time since 1917, a new cathedral is being built to celebrate 1,000 years of Christianity in Russia. In his dedication prayer we heard a Russian priest praying, "Lord, we pray for those who are attempting to change this country through Perestroika." And, Soviet papers now publish articles recognizing a role for the church in Soviet society, even if it is only for the fact that there are so many "ignorant" believers in the U.S.S.R. (who continue to grow in numbers!).

Significantly, not only in the Soviet Union is the church claiming its rightful place. Encouraged by the change of climate in the Soviet Union, and by the ever bolder testimony of believers in that country, the churches in East Germany, Poland, Hungary, Rumania, and now also in Czechoslovakia are demanding that governments show more respect for the church. Perestroika has become the most exportable Soviet product, as far as Soviet satellite countries are concerned. The Polish church has never given in to the pressures of the state to the same extent

as churches in other communist countries, and the East German situation was never quite as bad as the Soviet Union, but in Czechoslovakia the post-Dubček era (after 1968) seemed to legislate the church into oblivion, and the church lacked the strength to fight back. But that has changed in a dramatic way. It would almost seem that all that was needed was one event that electrified the country — the celebration of the 1,100th anniversary of St. Methodius (apostle of the Slavs) at Velehrad, in July, 1985. In a magnificent celebration, to which Czech and Slovak Christians responded in an unprecedented show of solidarity, the church demonstrated that it is alive. This really seems to be a turning point which two years ago could not have been foreseen even by the most optimistic church supporters. Erika Kadlecová, minister for church affairs during the Dubček Spring, commented on the event at Velehrad with an ironic remark against the present rulers of Czechoslovakia: "As we now can see, we have done more than enough for the greater honour of God . . ." (*Digest des Ostens*, #4, 1988). What Kadlecová is rubbing in is the fact that the hard line of the government has failed to curb religious aspirations of the people, and the influence of the church.

Among the number of impressive documents produced by the Christians in Czechoslovakia, *demanding* a change in state-church relations, I find most impressive the letters of lay people addressing not only the government but also the church: "We turn to our Bishops . . . and we see that you are not united in one spirit. We see your tensions and we suffer. We know that your divisiveness plays into the hands of the enemies of the church, and that saddens the people of God . . ." (*Digest des Ostens*, #4, 1988). This speaks well for the growing lay movement within the Catholic church of Czechoslovakia, which is committed to restore the church of Christ to its Biblical role. An amazing piece of Perestroika.

mm

## YOUR WORD

### ZOOLOGICAL DIVERSION

I would like to receive a sample recent copy of *Mennonite Mirror*. My interest is to learn more about the Mennonites both as a society within America and as a religious group. I recently saw several families at a zoo, and there is one family that attends our Presbyterian church.

Thank you very much.

**Pauls S. Beebe**  
Birmingham, MI



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# MANITOBA NEWS

**Mary Lou Driedger** of Steinbach is one of seven writers working on new materials for church children's club for children in grades 3-8. The project is sponsored by the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Publishing House of the Mennonite Church.

The establishment of a German-Canadian Cultural Centre/Senior Housing Complex is being planned for Winnipeg. A Requirement Study is being undertaken by the German-Canadian Congress (MB) Inc. through the assistance of the Department of Secretary of State, the Department of Culture, Heritage and Recreation and the Manitoba Intercultural Council (Government of Manitoba) and the Government of Canada (Challenge '88).

**Cliff Derksen** is the new director of **Camps with Meaning**, the camping program of the Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba. He has served for five years as promotions and summer camp director for Camp Arnes.

**Loewen Windows** of Steinbach has received a federal grant of just over \$1 million to assist in a major modernizing project. It is anticipated that 50 new jobs will be created when the new equipment is installed.

**The Mennonite Heritage Village** in Steinbach will receive \$550,000 under the Rural Attractions Program of the Canada-Manitoba Tourism Development agreement, towards an expansion project expected to cost \$2.6 million. A major fund-raising drive headed by **John Schroeder** and **Ernest Enns** of Winnipeg is presently underway.

**Jenny von Guten** of Riverton, Man., will begin a two-year Mennonite Central Committee assignment in London, Ont., in August. She is serving as counselor and life skills worker at the Teen Girls' Home, a residence for teenage girls experiencing emotional stresses and difficulties.

Before joining MCC she was a student majoring in social work at Goshen College. She is a member of the Bethel Mennonite Church in Winnipeg.

**Sydney Reimer** of Rosenort was appointed chairman of the Manitoba Disaster Assistance Board. A former board vice-chairman, he is the present Canadian chairman of the Binational Mennonite Disaster Services Board and a qualified disaster assessment officer.

**Wilma Derksen**, associate editor of *The Mennonite Reporter*, is one of three new officers of the Council of Church and Media, a forum of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches.

**Rudy Dyck** of Winnipeg began a two-year assignment with Mennonite Voluntary Service as recreation worker in Fresno, California. He is a member of Sargent Avenue Church.

**Aiden and Karen (Schlichting) Enns** began a one-year assignment as store managers at Pauingassi Trading Post.

**Frank and Susan Isaac** of Winnipeg began work with the Umsiedler ministry in Friedland, West Germany.



**Rachel Klassen** of Altona began a one-year MCC assignment in Hualien, Taiwan, where she will be working at the Mennonite Christian Hospital. She is a member of Bergthaler Mennonite Church in Altona. Her parents are Margaret and Melvin Klassen of Altona.

**Dr. William Loewen** of Altona retired after practicing family medicine in the community for 28 years. He and his wife Selma were much involved in community activities. They were leaders in the committee that founded the Altona Mennonite Church. They have also provided voluntary medical services in Paraguay, Belize, India and Bangladesh. Bill has been president of the Manitoba branch of the College of Family Physicians of Canada, and has served as a school trustee. Selma was founder of the first MCC self-help centre in Canada, has served on the board of Eden Mental Health Centre and on the MCI board of governors.

**Gayle Wiebe** of Winnipeg spent the past summer as assistant to the pastor at First Church, Bluffton, Ohio. She is a senior Master of Divinity student at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries in Elkhart, Indiana.



**JoAnne Wiens** of Grunthal began a three-year assignment with MCC in Swaziland where she is working as a primary health care worker. She is a member of Elim Mennonite Church in Grunthal. Her parents are John George and Nettie Wiens of Grunthal.

**Patricia McDonald** of Winnipeg began a one-year MVS assignment working with Project Peacemakers, West Broadway Community Ministries and Agape Table in Winnipeg.

Winnipeg and Brandon are the locations for two new **Mennonite Voluntary Service units**. The units will relate to the First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg and Grace Mennonite Church in Brandon. The new Winnipeg unit needs four volunteers: an advocate for the unemployed, a crisis intervention worker for battered women, a child care worker and a family therapy worker. The Brandon unit needs a volunteer in peace education and one to work in a group home for boys. For more information contact Charlotte Siemens Nofziger, Mennonite Voluntary Service, 600 Shaftesbury Boulevard, Winnipeg, R3P 0M4.

An evening to honor retiring president **David Ewert** of the Mennonite Brethren Bible College was held July 6. He retired after 44 years of conference ministry and 25 years at MB Bible College. The new president is **James Pankratz**. New faculty at the college are **Henry Petkau**, who is campus administrator; **Wendy Kroeker Zerbe**, in charge of a new recreation program; and **Gerry Ediger**, who will teach church history.

**Karl and Margarete Fast** completed an assignment with MCC, working with Umsiedler families in West Germany.

**Gayle Zacharias** of Winnipeg began a two-year MCC assignment in China, where she will be teaching English. She is a member of the Fort Garry Fellowship in Winnipeg. Her parents are Dick and Elizabeth Zacharias.

**Dr. Henry Abram Unruh** of Kamloops, British Columbia, died June 30 after a lengthy battle with cancer. A graduate of Queens University, he practiced medicine for 18 years in Rossland, BC, and for 16 years in Kamloops. He was born in Barwenkova, Russia, in 1917, the youngest son of Dr. and Mrs. A.H. Unruh. The family emigrated to Canada in 1925. He is survived by his wife Esther, five children and seven grandchildren.

**John H. Neufeld** accepted a second five-year appointment as president of Canadian Mennonite Bible College. **John Kampen** will replace **David Schroeder** as professor of New Testament in 1989.

**Westgate Mennonite Collegiate** began the 1988/89 school year with an enrollment of 255 students. New staff members are Helen Janzen, Marla Hildebrand and Evelyn Peterson.

**Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute**, with an additional grade 7 classroom, has an increase in enrollment, which now stands at 465 students. Taking over as principal is David Teigrob; new vice-principals are Ted Fransen and Art Huebert. New staff members are Geoffrey Champion, Irma Epp (returning after a one-year leave), Darlene (Epp) Loewen, Willa Reddig and Mary Friesen.

**Mennonite Collegiate Institute** in Gretna has an enrollment of 118 students. New teachers are **Dorothy Dyck**, English, John Dyck, Library, Cornelius Goertzen, physical education and biology; and Glenn Klassen, music director.

**Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary School** now has an enrollment of 265 students. Eight buses are used to transport the students from all parts of the city. A giant fund-raising garage sale for the school will be held on the premises at 26 Columbus Crescent on October 22, from 8 am to 4 pm.

**The University of Winnipeg and Menno Simons College** recently signed an agreement of affiliation to establish two joint academic programs: conflict resolution studies, and social and economic development studies. The college is supposed to open on or adjacent to the

UW campus in 1989 to offer degrees in these two areas as well as Mennonite studies. The college is intended to evolve from the Mennonite Studies Centre, which was established three years ago.

#### LATE GRADUATES

**James Michael Zacharias**, who graduated with his Bachelor of Science from the University of Winnipeg this past June was not included in our list of graduates last month.

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# REVIEW

## Gulag Experiences Without Bitterness

Peter Epp, *Ob Tausen Fallen ... Mein Leben im Archipel Gulag*, (My Life in the Gulag); Munich, MEMRA, 1988; paperback 204 pages.

a review by G.K. Epp

A German reviewer wrote about this book: "Peter Epp in a very open way conveys his emotional and spiritual struggles. But in the end there is no bitterness or hatred — only the yearning for peace and reconciliation. Thus Peter Epp's narrative becomes a challenge to readers to examine their attitudes toward those who may demonstrate animosity against them."

This book is one of the more objective narratives on the experience of our Mennonite coreligionists in the Soviet Union. The author relates in simple language his experience from childhood through collectivization — Stalin terror, poverty, famine, war, Gulag, and the first day of freedom. It is an amazingly honest account. The author actually had no intention of writing a book — it just happened. There is no desire to be recognized as a writer, because Epp knows quite well his limitations which had been imposed on him by those who would not let him study beyond a fairly elementary level.

However, the author is a good story teller, and the reader will find his simple unassuming style even refreshing. But the major contribution of Peter Epp is his story, told without bitterness and with the real desire to challenge others to make peace. In his story commissars are not all evil and Christians are not all good. That may disturb some readers, but that is the way the author experienced mankind — and he is attempting to relate his experience with integrity.

Those who still have a reading knowledge of German, and who are genuinely interested in the story of a generation of victims who through suffering were led to become reconcilers and peacemakers, should read this book. However, Epp has no easy answer for the peace position — he only knows that it makes sense.

The MEMRA Verlag will certainly see to it that the book is distributed widely because they are planning a third and fourth printing by 1990.

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## A Case of Excess

by J. Braun

**Question:** Menno, I'd like you to take a look at this magazine article entitled "Sturm und Drang: A Century of Thought Among the Mennonite Intellectuals" and tell me if you wrote it.

**Answer:** Indeed, to the affirmative.

**Q:** What about this one? "The Greenback Papers: A Guide to the MEDA Mafia." Is this the second article for which you received a Mennonite literary grant?

**A:** Indeed, to the negative. That was my fourth after "The Pulpit Documents: Thirty-one Impeachments I Have Witnessed" and "Ten Percent Off! Mennonite Salesmen Reveal Their Secrets."

**Q:** What happened, Menno. Why didn't you quit then? You knew it was wrong.

**A:** Indeed, but look at it my way. First of all, Mennonite scholarship is a gold mine. I feel I have made a significant contrib.

**Q:** "Rubric Stew: Mennonite Sectarian Nomenclatorial Controversies," "Tom, Dick, Harry or Mary: Mennonite Brethren Perform Onomastic Gymnastics," "Wot Denkt, Denck?: Hans and the Boys Battle Their Wits," "Give Me That Cosmic Debris: The Theosophical Ruminations of David Epp," "The Lorelei Motif in **Danny Orlis and the Case of the Locker Room Romance**," "The Story of Flo, a Famous Missionary From Ecuador," "Mennonomania: Depression as Intellectual Chic." all this stuff yours?

**A:** Indeed, to the affirmative. And proud of it. Like I was saying, I had just bought an East Kildonan estate, I was married, we had two children, a cabin at Clearwater Bay, a membership at the squash club, investments in the mutuals and megashares in TemSys LeBow. Then the stock market went bust. The kids needed a college education, the wife wanted to redecorate, the folks were going into a nursing home and the church was soliciting funds to rebuild. What could I do? I was strapped for cash. The grants came in handy. Besides, my tenure was up for review. It was either publish or perish.

**Q:** Yes, Menno, that is quite evident. You went crazy. You were published in 57 different publications, including Journal of Mennonite Studies, Mennonite Quarterly Review, Mennonite Scholar's Yearbook, Mennonite Historian's Monthly Report, Mennonite Theology and Culture, The New Mennonite, Modern Mennonite

Family, Mennonite Collector, Mennonite Home & Backyard, Sunday Morning Mennonite Pew, *Die Mennonitische Echt*, Redekopp's Report, Rieger's Digest, Loewen Behold, and you wrote essays on Mennonite pioneers, baseball players, chip dips, great women named Kathy, quilt patterns, revolving restaurants, trendy cafes that serve great *schmecks*, furniture magnates, constipation remedies, morning radio celebrities, hemlines, crokinole tournaments, authors banned in Winkler, favourite pickle recipes, tupperware collections, and you churned out treatises on "Ten Nouveau Riche East Kildonans Show Off Their Kitchens," "Nine Mennonite Kids Who Make Your Kids Look Sick," "Eight Coupons Every Mennonite Should Have," "Seven Things About Which Mennonites Love to Feel Guilty," "Six ½-Price Specials For Which You Should Drop Whatever You Are Doing Right Now and Go Buy At Eaton's Basement," "Five Mennonites Who Claim They Aren't," "Four Mennonites To Whom No Others Are Related,"

Surely, Menno, there came a time when you thought, This is enough, I can't take it. I just can't do this anymore.

**A:** Indeed, to the affirmative. But I had filled only 66 floppy disks by then and I wanted to fill another six to sort of even it out for the book.

**Q:** So you laboured to fill those and you collected everything in *A Chrestomathy of Mennonite Ideas and Culture* and you reached two on the *Mirror* best-seller list. Then —?

**A:** Indeed, I was exhausted. But then the departmental chairman told me to cough up yet another or he would include me in "Twenty-six Mennonites Who Once Were Hot and Aren't Anymore For One Reason or Another." so I got back to the keyboard and reached a hundred.

**Q:** Have you any idea of the damage you've caused, Menno? You've made your people more stupid. Some of your readers now find it difficult to read anything without the word **Mennonite** in it.

**A:** Indeed, I didn't realize. How many? A lot?

**Q:** Menno, I think we're going to have to take you north up the road a piece and put you in a little room for awhile and allow you to wind down a bit.

**A:** Will I ever write again?

**Q:** No.

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# A box of Books gives a Tiny Clue to the Character of Great Aunt Marie

by Mary Lou Driedger

This past summer I visited my mother's oldest sister who lives in Saskatoon. Beside the bed, in the spare room where I slept, was a box of books. "Those belonged to your Great Aunt Marie," my aunt said. "I was going to give them to the second hand store, but you just look through the box first and take some of the books if you're interested."

There was such a variety there of beautiful covers in greys and wines and sky blues. The pages of the volumes were just beginning to yellow. In the box was a book about Fanny Crosby, the hymn writer, a *Guide to Great Symphonies* and quite a selection of novels. Impulsively, I stuck the whole lot into the trunk of our car.

I never really knew my Great Aunt Marie. She remains a childhood memory of wire frame glasses and grey hair pinned up in a frill at the back of her head. In the picture of her I have in my mind, she is sitting on a straight back chair in front of the large braided rag rug that lay on the hardwood floor of my grandparents' tiny house in Drake, Saskatchewan.

Reading through her book collection the rest of that summer I became very curious about this woman whom I scarcely knew.

One of the books she must have been reading 50 or 60 years ago was the story of a young girl who dares to call herself a feminist and tries desperately to escape the confining role set out for a "lady" in her day. Another, published in the 1930's, was the story of a Quaker family that moves to the American South and tries to ease the tensions caused by the racist activities of the Klu Klux Klan.

Pretty progressive topics for a small town Mennonite girl in the 1920's and 30's to be reading about! I tried to remember that this was long before the time of women's liberation and Martin Luther King.

When I finished reading the books I asked my mother about her Aunt Marie. What had she been like? My mother told me what she knew of her story.

When Great Aunt Marie was a young girl jobs were scarce on the Prairies and so she decided rather impulsively and boldly to take a trip to California. This was quite an adventure for a single woman her age and my great-grandmother saw her off with some anxiety.

In California she found a job with a family named McManuss. She became a combination nanny and housekeeper for them. The job started out as a temporary placement but ended up lasting almost a lifetime. Apparently, every time Aunt Marie wanted to leave, the California couple insisted they couldn't manage without her. She cared for their home, their children and even Mr. and Mrs. McManuss as they grew older.

My mother remembers that as a child she always assumed her Aunt Marie must be incredibly wealthy. All they knew of her then was the huge box that arrived from California every Christmas. In it were beautiful new dresses for my mother and each of her sisters, and exotic dried fruits, candies and nuts. To children living on the dusty Saskatchewan prairie during the Depression, that box was like a miracle from some fairy tale world.

Then one day, not long after my mother and her sisters had married or begun their careers, Aunt Marie came home. Mr. and Mrs. McManuss had both died and there was nowhere for their long-time servant to go but back to her own family in Saskatchewan. So she came to live with her youngest sister, my grandmother, and it was there at my grandparents' house that I must have seen her when we went to visit.

I wish I had known my Great Aunt Marie better. When I questioned my mother about her, she wished too that she had taken more time to talk with her or even asked my now deceased grandmother for more details about this relative who ventured so far from home and spent all those years with an American family.

My Great Aunt Marie had a life very different than that of the other Mennonite girls who grew up with her in the small prairie town of Drake, Saskatchewan. If you can judge a person by the books they read she must indeed have been an interesting lady.

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## MIRROR MIX-UP

DETAR



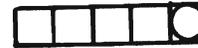
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BACK TO SCHOOL!



OOOO!

The Mirror Mix-Up has no winner to announce this month because the deadline for the September contest was not past when this went for printing, so the announcement for the September winner will wait until next issues.

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

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

**Entries must be sent to the Mirror office by November 8.**

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# Wann Sitj dee Heeflijchtjeit mett dee Betjierung Fetsaubellt

von Jasch Leewe

Aus etj noch en kjliena Butsat wea, naum etj emma aun daut onse Menniste, besondasch onse mennische Missjoonoare, sea beschäpne enn grulijch heeflijche Mensche weare; enn daut emm jājendeel dee schwoaete enn brune Heide opp'e Missjoonsfelda, wann nijch grod schwisch, dann doch enn bätje prost enn onnbeschlāpe weare. Too'm Biespell, wann Missjoonoare opp Urlaub aus Jast bie ons weare, entschuljde dee sitj emma hartsauft wann see no'm Äte mol unfehoft oppsteete muste. Oba no dee Missjoonoare äare Fetal no, relpst daut missjoonsfeldsche Toakel bie'm Äte foaken soo lud, daut'n onnbeleada Utlanda fewillat haustijch no'm Himmel kjitjt, aus wann hee Schnett haud daut doa enn Unwada opp'm Wajch wea.

Nu kaum daut oba soo romm daut etj selbst Missjoonoa wort, enn daut etj opp'm Missjoonsfelt dise Sach easchterhaund nofādme kunn, soo's mien Onkel Kjnals emma sād, "Aum Basten ess dām Kunta selbst enne Frāt t'glotse enn de Täne tale."

Na jo, daut muak sitj soo: Aum Aunfank must wie emm Hiesjendarp wone omm doa dee Hiesjeschproak to leare. (Etj saj "wie" wiels miene Fru uck doa wea, oba wiels see ne aunstendje mennische Mummtje ess, blift see jeweenlijch enn Bätje emm Hinjagrund. See ess uck jeweenlijch opp'e Broodaschauft stell, oba doawājen sell jie nijch jleewe daut see opp't Mul jefolle ess — opp'm Kopp fleijcht, oba niemols opp't Mul). Doaderjch haud wie doa emm Hiesjendarp ne "ringside seat" fonn woa ut wie daut hiesjesche Benāme emm eentselnen beobachte kunne.

Daut dee Hiesje doa unfeschāmt jewaultijch relpste, besondasch wann see Jast weare, es nijch to bestriede; oba onse onnheeflijche Ütlaj, daut daut prost ess, wea dort gaunss faulsch — soo's Onkel Kjnals emma sād: "Dittmol wea jie opp'm Holtwachj no Kole." Daut Relpse haud jie doa ne gaunss aundre Bediendinj aus bie

ons Tus. Bie dee Hiesje bedied daut lude Relpse: "Daut Äte bie junt schmatjt jewaultijch goot!" Dee Mensche doa haude soogoa enn Sprijchwuat doafāa: "Wann die daut Äte aum Schmatja kjitjelt, dann relps." Dee Ütlaj doafonn ess; "Beschlāapne Mensche bewiese äare Heeflijchtjeit enn dām see dām Gaustjäwa lud bewiese daut hee ne goode Moltiet aunjerejcht haft — je bāte daut Äte, je luda dee Relps.

Wiels Missjoonoare nijch mol schmackhauf oppsteete kjenne — too'm äwatseijent relpse sent je onse fromme Missjoonoare follstendijch onnbehāwelt — (bestunde dee hiesje Darpsmensche doaropp daut maun äwahaupt kjeenem Missjoonoa waut jleewe kunn. Fomm Hiesjenstaundpunkt ut luage die Missjoonoare soo schratlijch daut dām oprajchten Hiesjen dee Festaund foaken eenfach stell stund. Oba waut jane Mensche doa aum dolsten feblefft wea daut dee Missjoonoare nijch blooss dee Mensche dee Kodre foll luage dee beluage soogoa dām leewen Gottje.

Aus etj äare Enschtallinj aunfenklijch goanijch bejriepe kunn, ertjlāade see mie daut gaunss feninfijch: "Jiedasmol ferr'm Äte lowe dee Missjoonoare dām leewen Gottje fe daut scheene Äte daut Hee ann jejäft haft; dann nom Äte tratje see dām Gaustjäwa dee Woll äwre Uage enn saje dann fromm woo goot an daut äula jeschmatjt haft. Oba bie'm Äte selbst glupe see blooss jlitj ferr sitj, enn schuwe daut Äte emm Mul nenn, oba nijch emol en kjlienet Relpstje! Wann an dann mol enn Relpstje wajch jleppt, sent see gaunss feblefft, woare Fiaroot, enn feseatje daut toofewesche. Waut saul maun doa nu jleewe? Waut see saje ooda waut see doone?

"Wie fruage an dann schliesslijch, selfstfestendlijch enn Bätje derchje Bloom, woo daut bie ann tus wea. "Waut haft bie junt tus mea jewijcht, waut maun sajcht ooda waut maun deit?" Donn säde ons dee Missjoonoare gauns onnfeblefft —

"Waut maun deit, haft mea Jewijcht. " Doa jrod huckt je dee Luss! Doawājen see wie dee Sach uck aus sea schlemm aun. Easchtens sent je dee Missjoonoare plaut onnheeflijch, oba daut ess je too festone, dee weete eefach nijch bāta. Waut ons fāl dolla piesackt ess daut dee soo schratlijch leaje — dee leaje je daut et mau nāwelt. Nu froag wie ons: Wann dee Missjoonoa selbst soo groff ferr Mensche enn ferr dām leewen Gottje leaje kaun, woo saul sitj dann en eefacha opprachjtja Heid betjere?"

Aus etj ditt head, jintj mie daut Lijcht kjneppelditj opp. Jo, jo, daut jeft je ne reine Mestwirstschauft, wann sitj dee Heeflijchtjeit mett dee Betjierung fetsaubelt.

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## Symposium examines Mennonite transitions

Five speakers will be part of the fall Mennonite studies symposium at the University of Winnipeg, which will examine the theme, Canadian Mennonites in Transition, on November 3 and 4.

The speakers are:

John Friesen, Canadian Mennonite Bible College: on Theological Identity; 11:30 a.m., Thursday, November 3.

Adolf Ens, CMBC; Language and Culture; 7:30 p.m., November 3.

Victor Doerksen, University of Manitoba; Emergence of Literature; also on the November 3, evening program.

Leo Driedger, University of Manitoba; Moving to the Cities; 7:30 p.m., Friday, November 4.

Jacob Peters, University of Winnipeg; Congregational Structures; also Friday evening.

All sessions take place in room 3C01, Centennial Hall, University of Winnipeg.

The five speakers were part of a symposium at Conrad Grebel College this past May, which was the second in a series of two symposia dealing with the influence of the Second World War on Canadian Mennonites, and were intended to help prepare for the writing of the third volume of *Mennonites in Canada*, being completed by Ted Regehr of the University of Saskatchewan, and Marlene Epp of Conrad Grebel.

## Bethel Church marks 50th anniversary

In late June the Bethel Mennonite church in Winnipeg celebrated its 50th anniversary with a weekend of remembering, rejoicing, and renewing.

The weekend started with a review of the congregation's history with a release of the book, *Bethel: Pioneering in Faith*, which was written for the occasion.

Saturday was spent partly preparing the church for the evening banquet and partly in recreation at a city community club. The celebration homecoming concluded Sunday with morning worship and a communion and *fasha* in the afternoon.

Bethel church began in January, 1938, by Rev. Benjamin Ewert, who had carried the vision of a new congregation when he moved his family to the city in 1921. After some initial struggles, the Bethel Mission was established, a move which then resulted in the present congregation. During its 50 years, the Bethel Mennonite Church has itself been the parent for three other churches in Winnipeg.

# Eine unerwartete Entdeckung

von Carla Bullinger

Ich habe mir in den letzten paar Jahren relativ wenige Gedanken über das Mennonitentum gemacht. Ich wurde in eine mennonitische Familie geboren, Borscht, Verenike und Perischki gehörten zur Küche, am Sonntag besuchte man die Sonntagschule, und um die deutsche Sprache zu erhalten, war jeden Samstag die Deutsche Schule Pflicht. Da das Mennonitsein zum alltäglichen Leben gehörte, machte ich mir keine weiteren Gedanken darüber.

Als ich Westgate Mennonite Collegiate besuchte, wurde mir aber klar, daß mehr als nur Borscht und Deutsch zum Mennonitentum gehörte. Am eindrucksvollsten war der Mennonite History Kurs, den man wegen Herrn Bachmeyers dynamischen Vorlesungen schwer vergessen kann. Wer hätte je gedacht, daß die Mennoniten eine so interessante Vergangenheit haben. Jetzt wußte ich natürlich alles was es so über Mennoniten zu wissen gab und machte mir weiter keine Gedanken über deren Geschichte. Es kam dann natürlich wie ein Schock für mich, als ich in diesem Sommer feststellte wie wenig ich eigentlich wußte.

Seit Juni arbeite ich an der Universität Manitoba und beschäftige mich mit der deutschkanadischen Literatur der Mennoniten von 1920–1960. Professor Doerksen hat mich wegen dieser Arbeit angesprochen und ich konnte erst kaum glauben, daß so etwas wie eine mennonitische Literatur existierte. Er hat mich dann doch über die Existenz dieser Literatur überzeugt und ich schätzte, daß ich dieses Projekt innerhalb von zwei Wochen vollenden würde. Soviel Literatur konnte es kaum unter den Mennoniten geben. Und dann kam der zweite Schock. Ich sollte den ganzen Sommer an diesem Projekt arbeiten! Das konnte Prof. Doerksen doch nicht im Ernst meinen! Die Professoren müssen aber sehr langsam arbeiten, wenn sie sich den ganzen Sommer mit so einem Unternehmen beschäftigen können.

Ich packte also mein zweiwöchiges, Doerksens drei monatiges, Projekt mit wachsender Neugier an. Zuerst musste ich mich informieren, denn ich hatte immer noch keine Ahnung worum es eigentlich ging. Wer waren die bedeutenden Autoren? Wo und wann wurden ihre Werke herausgegeben? Waren die Werke überhaupt noch vorhanden? Ich fing an Autobiographien, Biographien,

Briefe, u.a. zu lesen und je mehr ich las, desto erstaunter und begeisterter wurde ich. Plötzlich sah ich die Mennoniten mit ganz anderen Augen.

Ich hatte bis jetzt immer den Eindruck, daß die Rußland-Mennoniten in Dörfern lebten und Bauern waren. Es mochte auch so sein und deswegen kam es auch als riesen Überraschung als ich dann erfuhr wie gebildet meine Vorfahren waren. Viele hatten nicht nur in Rußland sondern auch in Deutschland studiert. Ich war sehr beeindruckt, habe mich aber zur gleichen Zeit geschämt, weil ich die Mennoniten bis jetzt so unterschätzt hatte. Ich gewann neuen Respekt und Stolz für meine Vorfahren. Wer hätte je gedacht, daß mein zweiwöchiges Projekt so interessant werden könnte? Und je mehr ich lernte, desto mehr wollte ich wissen.

Meine Verwandten kamen aus Rußland aber selten hatte ich mich mit ihnen darüber unterhalten. Meine Mutter war noch zu jung als sie Rußland verließ um sich an vieles erinnern zu können, aber meine Großtanten und Onkel können. . . . Auf einmal bekam die Geschichte auch für mich Bedeutung. Zum ersten Mal lernte ich unsere jüngste Geschichte richtig kennen und dadurch konnte ich meine Autoren und deren Werke besser verstehen. Sie hätten ausserhalb des Mennonitenkreises ihren Ruhm finden können aber alles wurde ihrem Volk gewidmet, und das hat mich tief bewegt. Ich konnte nicht genug darüber lesen.

Mein zweiwöchiges Projekt wurde langsam zum zweimonatigen und dann zum dreimonatigen und ich konnte es kaum glauben als der September vor meiner Tür stand. Es gab noch soviel zu tun!

Ich arbeite immer noch an meinem Projekt und weiß im Moment auch nicht wie lange es noch dauern wird. Aber ich weiß, daß ich aus dieser Arbeit viel mehr gewonnen als ich investiert habe. Und ich bin dankbar, daß ich die Gelegenheit hatte nicht nur die Vergangenheit sondern auch die Gegenwart der Mennoniten besser kennenzulernen. Meine Autoren habe ich leider nur durch ihre Werke kennenlernen können, aber am Mennonite Studies Center und am CMBC habe ich vertvolle Leute kennengelernt, die ihrem Volk jetzt alles widmen und ich bin froh, daß mir diese Möglichkeit gegeben wurde, denn unsere Gegenwart ist genauso interessant wie unsere Vergangenheit.

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# OUR WORD

## A question that Christian communities can no longer avoid: homosexuality

It was probably inevitable that homosexuality would become an issue in the Mennonite church. Statistics indicate that one person in ten has a homosexual orientation. We have all known people who appear to be, or who definitely are, homosexual. As long as the question did not have to be faced too directly, there existed a type of tolerance within our communities. Now that the issue is a matter of public debate, and homosexuals are asking that their relationships be accepted, there appears to be more intolerance than there was in the past.

Citing biblical passages such as Leviticus 18:22, the Sodom and Gomorrah story and the David and Jonathon story, some theologians argue that homosexual relationships are sinful; hence, those who practice such relationships are sinners and cannot be accepted as full members of our churches.

Others feel that, given the strong evidence that homosexuality is an orientation acquired at birth, to discriminate against or to condemn homosexuals is unjust, since their orientation is not a matter of choice, but of heredity.

The widely publicized debate in the United Church of Canada during the past summer has focussed attention on the issue. The debate was difficult, agonizing and revealed that this is an issue, like abortion, on which there is sharp polarization. Beliefs and feelings are strong and deep. When a vote was held a majority of the delegates at the conference voted in favour of the resolution that practicing homosexuals be permitted to hold leadership roles and become pastors in the church. They voted not merely for tolerance, but for complete acceptance. Many individuals and congregations threatened to withdraw if the vote were to be positive, yet church unity was risked in favour of offering acceptance.

During the debate, the *Winnipeg Free Press* ran a series of articles containing interviews with members of the gay and lesbian communities, also with parents who have struggled to accept and understand the orientation of their children. Through these articles, many in our community became aware of the existence of a chapter of a Brethren-Mennonite Council for Lesbian and Gay Concerns, an organization to provide support and information, and foster dialogue in the church to move towards accepting homosexual relationships.

So, our community is being challenged to take a stand on this issue. In the triennial meeting of the General Conference Mennonite Church, held in Saskatoon in 1986, consensus on the matter could not be reached. The debate was tense and heated. Finally a resolution was accepted which first contained a confession: "We confess our fear and repent of our rejection of those of us with a

different sexual orientation and of our lack of compassion for their struggle to find a place in society and in the church." However, this was followed by a covenant statement which, at least by implication, calls for the rejection of homosexuals. It states unequivocally that homosexual relationships are sinful.

When we as Christians read the Bible, we must do so in the light of the new covenant that was introduced by Jesus Christ, which makes it necessary to look at the attitude and spirit which He modelled during His lifetime. He constantly challenged those who wanted to live by the letter of the law to consider the human needs of individuals rather than rigid rules. He showed compassion toward those whom society rejected. He was not afraid to associate with outcasts. If we are to be His disciples, as we claim to be, then we must think long and hard about rejecting anyone in our society, or by labelling as sinful acts that are not committed with complete freedom of choice.

Throughout the ages we have seen that religion can be either a source of unity and healing, or a source of divisiveness and hatred. Far too often it is the latter. It is very easy to use religion as a means of condemning others who do not hold similar beliefs to ours, or who are in some way different.

A recent survey of clergy attitudes on homosexuality (cited in *The Mennonite Reporter*, April 11, 1988) showed that Mennonite ministers are less tolerant than Roman Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran and United Church ministers. Very few felt that homosexuals should lead Bible studies, teach children, hold office in the church or serve communion.

The question must again be raised. Given that a homosexual orientation appears frequently to have been acquired at birth, not chosen; given the negative social attitudes towards homosexuals; knowing individuals who have struggled to form heterosexual relationships and found that they could not, in fairness to the partner, do so; given these facts, is it valid for us to condemn these people and set them beyond the pale as far as the church is concerned?

A United Church minister, following the decision of his church to accept homosexuals, said, "The decisions here will help us to be an inclusive church, rather than exclusive and restrictive." (*Macleans*, September 5, 1988) This comment contains the essence of the debate. We as Mennonites have so far chosen to be exclusive. We are being asked by our brothers and sisters to accept them as they are. It would seem to be truer to the Gospel to offer acceptance rather than rejection.

*He drew a circle that shut me out—*

*Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.*

*But love and I had the wit to win:*

*We drew a circle that took him in!*

**Edwin Markham**

—  
**Ruth Vogt**

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