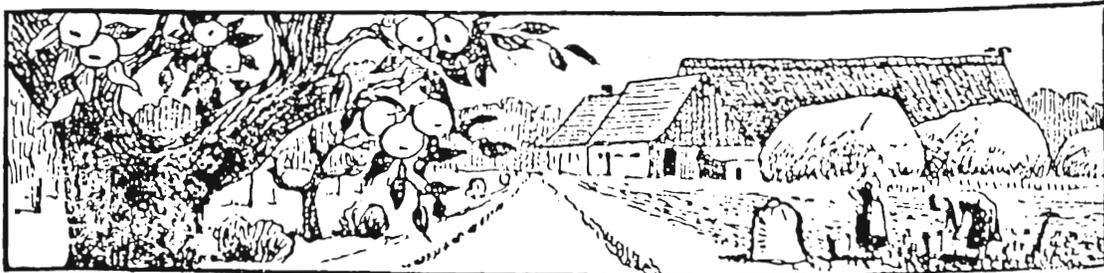
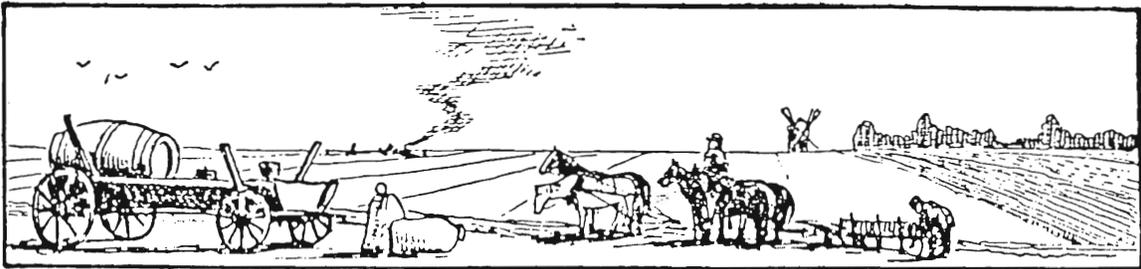


Mennonite MIRROR

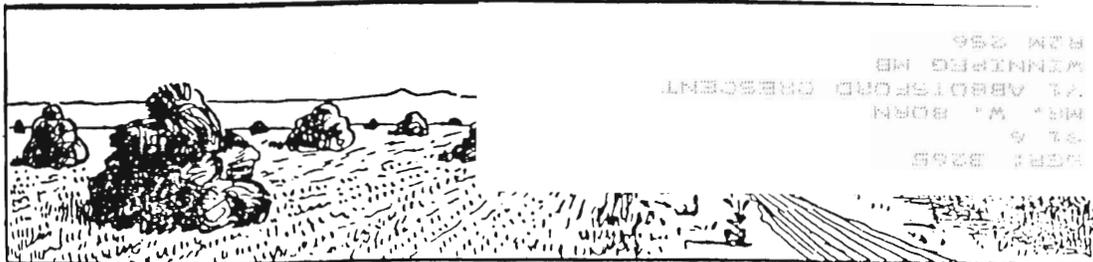
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volume 18 / number 4 / december, 1989



JAMES URRY

NONE BUT SAINTS

The Transformation of Mennonite Life
in Russia 1789-1889



FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES

Joe sat in the Winnipeg's Community Dispute Centre and told me about his painful relationship with the pastor of his church. His voice cracked as he related the events of the past year.

Joe was a deacon. He and his pastor, Tom, did not see eye-to-eye on the role of a deacon. Meetings to discuss the matter only resulted in tension and greater disagreement. The last attempt at resolution started with prayer but ended in a yelling match.

After a year of not speaking to each other, the two were reluctant to meet. Why resurrect all the hard feelings -- why not leave the matter unresolved? But despite their pain, both wanted to resolve the problem. They agreed to meet.

When they arrived my co-mediator and I explained our role was not to decide who was right or wrong, but to help them to better understand what had happened and to help them decide how to resolve the matter.

Joe went first. Then Tom told his story. It was the first time they had spoken in months. Tom could not look directly at Joe. Instead, he stared at the floor. Several times we asked him to direct his comments to Joe. He could for a moment or two, but then he looked down once more.

After an hour and a half of listening to stories, my co-mediator and I exchanged glances that said, "were going to be here for a while."

Then the unexpected happened.

Joe turned to Tom, and with carefully chosen words, said "Tom, I know I have hurt you, but I just want you to acknowledge that you have caused me pain, too. I have done some stupid things. I have said some unkind things. I didn't mean to cause you embarrassment. I am sorry. I have agonized over the events of the past year and feel that in the body of Christ we should be able to work together or at least be able to talk to one another. There are too

many issues for us to resolve here tonight. Some of those issues are things we believe in strongly. In order for us to begin again, I need to hear from you, that you realize that I have been hurt too. The last time we spoke, you refused to do that, and that has hurt more than anything else."

There was a long silence.

Tom stirred uncomfortably.

Then, lifting his head, he looked Joe in the eyes, and said: "I acknowledge that I have caused you pain. I didn't realize how much I hurt you. For that I am sorry."

Both men wept.

It was a beginning. They discussed what they would do from here. Joe

expressed a desire to take communion again, something he had not done for some time because he was not at peace with his brother. They also agreed to exchange greetings, such as "good morning," with sincerity.

As we were getting ready to leave, one of them said that he would like to close with the Lord's Prayer. So, we stood in the centre of the room, and holding hands recited the Lord's Prayer together. The words, "forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us" were filled with new meaning by the events of the evening. -- by Ruth Boehm, of MCC Canada

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ForeWord

This edition opens with a review of *None But Saints*, by James Urry, an examination of the first 100 years of Mennonite history in Russia. It is described as one of the most important such works to be published. Written by a non-Mennonite, but for Mennonites, it presents us with a new perspective. Reviewer, Harry Loewen, observes that the book presents us with a much more complicated view of Mennonite life in Russia than we have hitherto examined.

Most of the other major articles this issue are about people -- a good focus for a Christmas edition. Two articles look at congregational life of several churches in Winnipeg. Cornerstone is forging a bold new Christianity in the core area, and is the subject of one article. The other article examines how some churches are building fellowship into their congregational life. In these churches, you can't say you don't have the opportunity to get to know your neighbor in the pew.

Connie Froese, is a lady who continues on with her life even though it means contending with MS. To be stricken with a debilitating disease during exactly those years when you are supposed to be the most healthy would be enough to bring the darkness to a person's life. In this issue, Ms Froese shows us that it is possible to keep it at bay.

Christmas is directly a theme in two pieces in three languages -- English, German, and Low-German.

Our other regular features are in their usual places. Find them and reflect on them.

THE COVER: Line drawings by Johann Janzen from a 1913 Mennonite calendar and which are reproduced in *None But Saints*.

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december 1989

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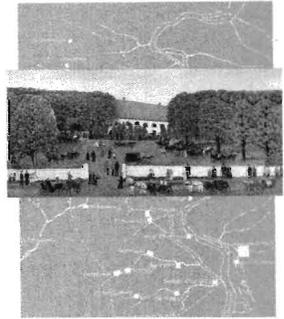
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JAMES URRY

NONE BUT SAINTS
The Transformation of Mennonite Life
in Russia 1789-1889



A much more complicated picture of Mennonites in Russia revealed in new history

reviewed by Harry Loewen

At long last, the book about Russian Mennonites written by a non-Mennonite scholar has come off the press. There is no doubt that both Mennonite and non-Mennonite readers will find this book fascinating. The book offers a new approach to Mennonite history and provides a new image of Russian Mennonitism.

Much of earlier Mennonite history, written primarily by preachers and teachers, consisted of what has been called "triumphalist" history. The Mennonites were seen as a persecuted religious people who in the late 18th century migrated to Russia primarily for religious reasons and where they then established model colonies based on faith, hard work, and community.

In *None But Saints*, James Urry, a cultural anthropologist teaching in New Zealand, shows that the history of the Russian Mennonites is much more complicated than earlier thought. As he writes in the Preface: "This is a book about Mennonite society and culture, about social transformation, the changing nature of religion, and of the material life of a vibrant and fascinating people," (p.18)

"Outsider" view for "insiders"

Urry states that this book is "about Mennonites, for Mennonites." What this "outsider" historian is doing, is focusing his scholarly searchlight upon a people in the Russian steppes who developed and changed within a complex Russian and European society and

world. Whereas earlier Mennonite historians saw the Russian Mennonites as an autonomous and stable faith community, Urry shows how economic, political, social, and religious forces changed the Mennonites from a "closed" society in the first half of the 19th century to a more "open" society toward the end of that century.

Trying to resist change

As a "closed" society Mennonites sought to preserve what they believed to be their traditional faith and ways, emphasizing simplicity, little formal education, and religious conservatism. However, with agricultural and educational reforms, religious renewals and turmoil, social and cultural awareness, and the government's demands that Mennonites and other minority groups become more integrated in Russian society, Mennonites were forced to yield to new ways and become a part of the world around them.

Even traditional Mennonite religiosity had to give way to change. While the Russian Mennonites by the end of the 19th century were still "a people of faith," their religious outlook had become more liberal, progressive, and more tolerant toward other people's faith and ways. They ceased to be the "quiet ones in the land" and began to take their place in the wider world.

Urry tells the Mennonite story "as it is." He portrays the Mennonites as a people who lived in the real world. In this world there were serious disputes

about religious and economic issues, there was oppression of the poor, there was greed among the rich farmers, and there were struggles for power and prestige within the congregations and colonies. The picture which emerges is not one of harmony and good-will, but one of a society which had its share of human and social problems.

Debt of gratitude

James Urry is one of the most knowledgeable historians of the Russian Mennonites today. As Mennonites we owe this young scholar a great deal of gratitude for devoting so much of his time and energy to the history and culture of our people. What is more, with his scholarship he is an inspiration and encouragement to other Mennonite scholars in the various areas of Mennonite Studies to do all they can to uncover their rich and fascinating story.

The book contains many full-color pictures by the artist Henry Pauls, illustrations, photographs, maps, charts, and a comprehensive index and bibliography.

James Urry, *None But Saints. The Transformation of Mennonite Life in Russia 1789-1889*. Winnipeg: Hyperion Press, 1989. Paperback, 322 pages, \$24.95. ISBN: 0-920534-80-5.

The book may be ordered from the Mennonite Mirror, or from Mennonite Books, 207-1317A Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3G 0V3.



Cornerstone forges a bold Christianity in the city centre

by Lyle Penner

In a small commercial building nestled beside a deteriorating Winnipeg inner city hotel lies an unlikely base for a spiritual renewal of Christian faith. The walls are cracked, the parking lot potholed, the traffic is noisy and a stream of visitors frequents the liquor vendor next door.

Yet this out-of-the-way place is the home of the 25-member Cornerstone Christian Fellowship. In its sixth year Cornerstone has proven to be an instrumental community to those, particularly Mennonite young adults, seeking an authentic faith to live by in the '80s.

The Cornerstone story is about people discovering they are caught up in a story larger than themselves -- the transformative drama of the Christian story. Emphases on the need to think Christianly, to enter personal journeys of spiritual formation, to be honestly accountable in community, and to be innovative and flexible in ministry have kept Cornerstone vital and a little on the edge (in more ways than one!)

Of course, many of the problems that plague other churches have discovered Cornerstone as well: apathy, division, financial instability, homogeneity in age and ethnicity, and lack of numerical growth. "If Cornerstone has a fault, it is to rely on our own faith and strengths rather than on God's," says associate pastor Calvin Wiebe, 27. Yet those that have stayed, and many that have come and gone, say they have been truly nurtured in their faith at Cornerstone.

Cornerstone was conceived in 1968 by the Manitoba Mennonite Brethren Board of Missions and Church Extension as an evangelism beachhead in Winnipeg's inner city. However, Cornerstone only took form in 1977 when a passionate, erudite Irishman, Paul Patterson, then 25, began not a conventional MB mission but a counselling centre for people on the street. Paul's empathy, partly derived from his own inner city background, provided a caring atmosphere for many who had no place to call home. After a while,

the gathered group decided to form a church. In November, 1983, 17 original covenanting members embarked on a journey of hope.

Two groups

About the same time this motley crew attracted a group of undergraduate Mennonite youth who had become disillusioned by their experience of faith in the conventional church. Cornerstone to them became a refreshing, informal context in which to integrate contemporary struggles within a revitalized approach to old faith forms. The two groups learned from each other. The streetwise' transparent honesty taught a way of living unfamiliar to the academic, straight-laced Mennonite students. Conversely, the middle class youth modelled back a relatively responsible lifestyle. Eventually, however, the differing needs of the two groups proved too difficult to keep together. By 1986, most of the "streets," as they were known, left.

Cornerstone entered a new stage of

learning what it meant to be Christian in a pluralistic culture. Individual spiritual formation became a priority as members sought to appropriate faith as their own. Psychological insight became a common way to analyze and encourage development. However, a biblical faith aimed towards total service to God was blocked because of an over-reliance on human experience as the authoritative voice for value and decision-making. The individualism and practical atheism learned from culture needed to be dismantled. The church embarked on a search for a theological, biblical yet contemporary model of church.

Ecumenical resources

In a process the community still is on, Cornerstone began to use ecumenical educational resources-especially the "Kerygma" biblical study program founded by the United Church of Canada as an approach to thinking biblically. The result was surprising. Scripture began to be viewed as a dynamic, transforming presence when the community saw its own story as a reflection of the Biblical Story.

To forge an authentic Christian faith true to the Biblical story and meaningful in today's world, Cornerstone has formed itself around an "anabaptist ecumenist" theology. Anabaptism's emphasis on radical discipleship and community have been combined with the strong grace-centred theological convictions of Protestantism in the line of Luther, Calvin, Barth, Bonhoeffer, Moltmann and Fackre. Central is the belief that God-in-Christ is reconciling the world, that God's covenant to humanity is primarily unconditional, and that the church's response is to carry its crosses-defined by the revelation of Scripture, community and personal reflection.

"Cross language comes out of identification with the crucified and suffering Christ. It is not a theology of morbidity or self-castigation but a dignified suffering whose pain is clear and sharp, and based in compassion. At its root is a willingness to suffer without trying to avoid the reality of oppressive

situations," says pastor Paul Patterson, now 37.

As one result, many members have chosen to live in the inner city closer to the pain of the human condition, not as saviours of the poor, but simply as a presence among them. Here they have discovered how powerless they are to change the plight of their neighbours and themselves.

"If we authentically identify with the poor it is because we identify ourselves as poor, says Patterson. "Our poverty is in our bondage to cultural and personal compulsions, all the way from backbiting to shopaholism." Although Cornerstonians admittedly are often far from living the cross-shaped life, their goal is not to fight or flee but to accept reality, take responsibility for their own gifts and foibles, and act accordingly in the way of grace.

Social ministry too

Clearly, Cornerstone has been active, including sponsoring a social ministry office in the former Mennonite Urban Renewal Project (MURP) block on Toronto Street; Meet Your Neighbour parties in nearby Notre Dame Park; floor hockey for neighbourhood youth; workshops on mental health and addiction recovery; and a "Cornerkid" Sunday school for young children. However, social ministry is seen as secondary to the church's primary mis-

sion of being thoroughly formed into a Christ-centred body, strong enough to maintain ministry with integrity.

In fact, Cornerstone has found that covenant needs to be formed first before an accountable, ministering community is possible. Therefore, it has spent considerable time struggling with the issue of integrity of membership and covenant. Biblically speaking, the ideal church model has come to mean a body of servant believers committed to seeing the community as a representation of Christ's body, as the prism through which individuals see their lives. Not career, family or self, but the local church.

Taking cues from the Church of the Saviour in Washington, D.C., among others, Cornerstone this year has adopted an innovative model in which members relate to the church at the level of their readiness. All members confess the same covenant but those who want to be more accountable to each other form the "intentional community." Those who want to participate in a less intense church experience but desire to explore their gifts are invited to do so.

As for leadership -- always a crucial issue in community -- Cornerstone has evolved from a one-man leadership style to an eldership team model, and now to a consensus model among those in the intentional community.



Scene from the liturgical dance presentation.

An invaluable asset to Cornerstone has been that all who wish to contribute have ample opportunity. Therefore, many members are learning to develop their gifts in the areas of preaching, worship and music-leading, liturgical dance, puppet theatre, writing and publishing, teaching and administration. Without a long history of tradition to overcome, innovation and flexibility have been important in developing the most appropriate structures for ministry.

Eclectic worship form

Cornerstone worship, a central element in forming community, is rather eclectic and, at present, semi-formal. Unlike most Mennonite congregations, Cornerstone uses the Common Lectionary to standardize Scripture readings throughout the Church year. Open communion is celebrated weekly as a way of symbolizing the centrality of sacrament. Alongside communion, and similar to other Anabaptist services, the Word is also central in interpreting God's revelation for the community. The goal of worship, Cornerstone style, is actually theatre -- to perform praise to God so that Christ can spiritually empower each participant to serve as intended.

The future of Cornerstone will be determined by how well it learns to see with the eyes of radical discipleship -- to be a prophetic, alternative community without falling into the sins of pride or complacency.

"We are moving in a trajectory from worship to teaching to fellowship to service," says Wiebe, with fellowship concerns being a major immediate priority. Developing worship further and leadership skills are also priorities, as is education in thinking biblically. From the outside, perhaps the most visible development will be a growing involvement in staging non-academic, church-based educational workshops for pastors and lay people alike in the broader church community.

Has Cornerstone succeeded in achieving its goals? Not if numerical growth is the standard, but it has succeeded (or more correctly, the Gospel has flourished) when individuals, and the com-

munity at large, have experienced spiritual renewal. Many have moved from cynicism to hope, from self-doubt to on-going service.

However far from ideal, Cornerstone takes assurance that her growth as a Christ-based community will depend finally on trusting not in herself but in God's covenant: "If we have died with him, we shall also live with him; if we endure, we shall also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us; if we are faithless, he remains faithful-for

he cannot deny himself" (2 Timothy 2:11-13).

Lyle Penner has been a Cornerstone member since 1984 and is a freelance writer and desktop publisher.

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Mugs and other ideas create a climate for congregational fellowship

by Mary Lou Driedger

People who lived in the small Mennonite villages of rural Manitoba a generation ago can tell you that on Sunday afternoons virtually no one in their communities remained at home alone. Everyone either had company or they went visiting. That sort of 'taken for granted' kind of weekly socializing that was prevalent between Mennonite church members in the past is no longer as common today.

Busy with sports, professional, and community commitments church attenders whose homes are often spread out over a large geographical area may only take time to talk with one another on Sunday mornings. In response to these changes many Mennonite congregations, particularly those in larger towns and cities, have initiated innovative ideas to encourage their adherents to "visit" to get to know one another better.

Regular opportunities

One such church is the Fort Garry Fellowship in Winnipeg. Sophie Tiessen, a representative of the congregation's social committee explains that once a month everyone is invited down to the church basement after the Sunday morning service to partake of a luncheon. The meal is hosted by the congregation's members who take turns preparing and serving the food. This provides a regular opportunity for attenders to visit. The social committee has initiated other events to help church members get to know one another.

Two examples are their family gym nights and adult discussion evenings. An annual church retreat brings a goodly number of Fort Garry families toget-

her for two days or more of intensive fellowship. Other regular social occurrences are baby and engagement showers.

Tiessen explains, "It doesn't matter if you are new to Fort Garry or if you've been going to church here for years; if you are about to be married or have an addition to your family, the congregation celebrates." Various church members organize the showers for the prospective bride and groom or new parents and an open invitation is extended to all Fort Garry attenders. Money is collected for a gift. "It's a way to show we care," says Tiessen.

The mugging idea

Perhaps the most interesting venture of the Fort Garry social committee is their "Mugging Project" which they began last year. Twelve mugs were purchased and given in sets of four to congregational families. These families were asked to entertain someone else from the church and serve them a beverage in the mugs. The mug holders were encouraged to extend their invitation to people who had never been to their house before.

After the visit the guests took the special cups home with them and they in turn were to "mug" another family from the congregation and have them over for a time of socializing. In this way the cups are passing from family to family to family and are providing many opportunities for new friendships to develop.

Tiessen says the project has become a way to "fill in the gaps." "Our church is constantly growing and changing; new people move in and others

leave. It's easy to get a bit "cliquish" after a while. We feel the mugging project is giving congregation members a good opportunity to take the first step towards getting to know one another better."

"Mugging" is definitely a twentieth century term, but the idea for the Fort Garry social committee's initiative actually came from an anthropology book about ancient societies called *The Gift*, by Lewis Hyde. Hyde writes that long ago, a gift was only thought to be a gift as long as it kept moving, kept being given away. If gift items like beads or peace pipes stayed in a dwelling and were not passed on they ceased to become gifts and became merely objects instead.

Tiessen says, "We did not want our mugs to become just objects. They were to be a means of passing the gift of friendship between congregation members."

Auction as fellowship

The Grace Mennonite Church in Steinbach has developed its own special way to pass the gift of friendship between its church attenders. Once a year the group holds an auction. The event is unique in that the items up for sale are the talents and time of the congregation's members.

Bidding is hot and heavy for commodities like a romantic dinner for two, a family photo session, pony rides, pet sitting, lawn mowing, window washing, a fishing trip, babysitting, a round of golf and a Chinese supper. People with lakeside cottages donate a weekend of "fun in the sun." A talented family sells tickets for an evening of topnotch

classical music featuring family members and friends. A registered nurse offers backrubs and blood pressure readings, a farmer volunteers himself and his tractor for a day of labor. A gifted gardener promises a truckload of in season fresh produce and there are numerous opportunities to purchase the talents of a first class knitter to make you a sweater, a seamstress to sew you an outfit or a baker to deliver fresh buns to your home once a month.

The first auction was held four years ago at Grace Mennonite as a way to raise funds for the church's annual family retreat at Lakeside Camp in Gimli. Although the financial goals of the sale were easily accomplished, the opportunity for fellowship with other church goers turned out to be by far the greatest benefit of the event. Jim Peters, one of the original organizers says that by now the chance to create new friendships between church members is just as important a reason to stage the annual auction as the desire to raise money.

Fellowship harvested

People really get to know one another as they claim the items they have purchased at the sale. A retired husband and wife enjoy an evening with the young married couple who have sold them a candlelight dinner. Families who have never socialized before get together for fishing trips, go to one another's cottages or spend an afternoon in each other's company on the golf course.

Some church attenders who may never have talked together do so as vegetables, sweaters, buns and pies exchange hands. Quite a number of dinners and speciality meals that reflect the various ethnic backgrounds and cooking talents of the congregation are sold. These provide a great chance for visiting and getting to know new people. Families discover excellent baby-sitters among the church's young people who have donated their child care services to the auction.

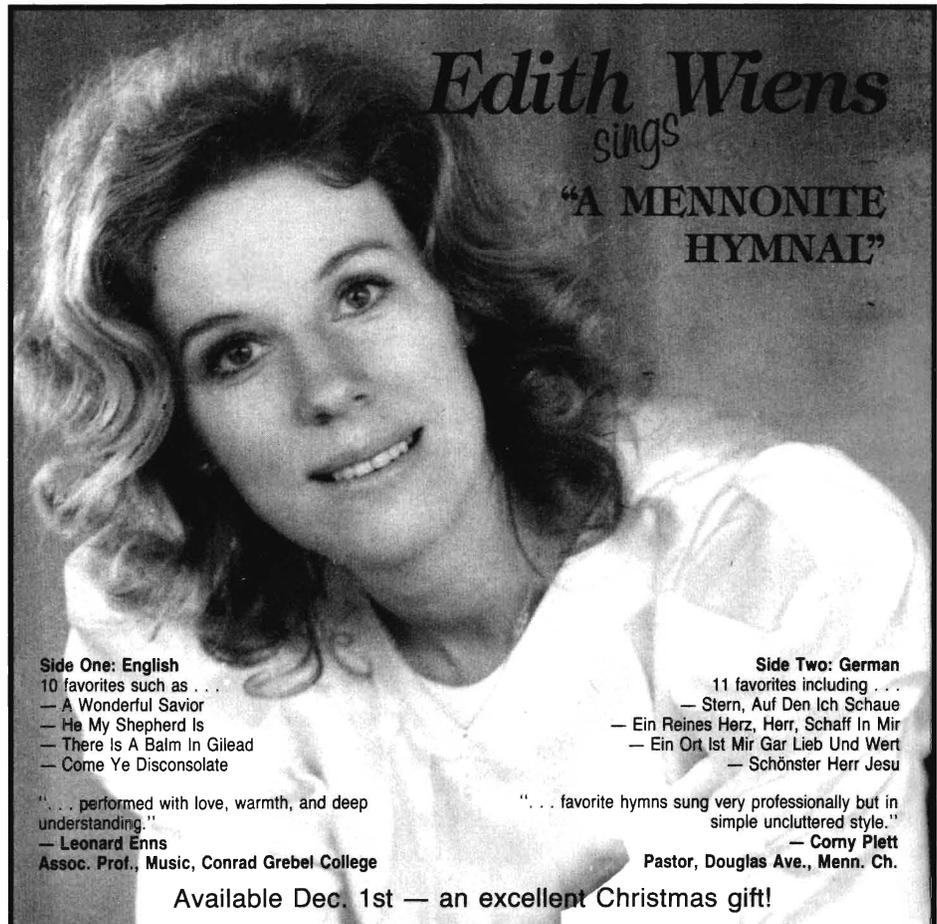
Opportunities for talking and sharing are created as church members go to each other's homes to fulfil the lawn

mowing, building and gardening tasks they have offered up for bid. A young father chuckles as he relates his adventures communicating with, and helping a hard-of-hearing elderly gentleman from the congregation cut down a tree on his property. One family is impressed that the owner of a large window factory takes the time to come to their home to wash their windows. A little boy has a hug on Sunday morning for the white haired woman who has knitted him a sweater. A father and his two sons work together with a carpenter from the congregation who shares his expertise and practical skills to help them build a tree house in their backyard.

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Grandma Grant's Lonely Christmas

by Marie Barton

Grandma Grant awoke Christmas morning feeling abandoned. Her son, daughter-in-law and grandson had called in briefly last night to deliver her presents, then left for the country to spend the day with her daughter-in-law's parents.

The rising sun mocked her. Its slanting rays made scintillating orbs of blue and gold in the field of frosted crystals on her bedroom window panes. Former happy Christmases began to parade on the memory screen of her mind. All reminded her of her present misery.

Was that the telephone ringing? Let it ring. She took her time getting out of bed and putting on her dressing gown. Only one slipper? Where was the other one? The telephone rang insistently. She padded into the living room -- one slipper on, one slipper off.

"Hello. Hello." No answer. The caller must have hung up on that last ring. It both relieved and exasperated her. It couldn't have been the children, for she'd told them she was attending an early dinner in the Mennonite church basement.

Pastor Friesen's sister had said she would come for her. Nice of Tina to offer, even if she (Grandma) wasn't one of them. She wasn't going, but the children needn't know.

To Tina she'd made the excuse: "I'm expecting my very best friend from out of town." Tina had taken her at her word.

A white lie, said a voice. Whose voice? **In fact two white lies**, it accused. One to the children and one to Tina. Why, Megan Grant?

She ignored the accusation and looked about her.

What? No tree? taunted the voice from somewhere. **Not even for your best friend?**

But in a way there was a tree. Outside her living room, the panes clear, she saw the tall white spruce and in it sat a cardinal trying to keep warm, its black cap buried in its bright plumage.

"You're feeling as miserable as I am," she said to the bird, but of course he didn't hear her. Or did he, for he spread his wings and flew away?

The phone rang again. Her sister from Saskatoon. "I thought, Megan, you sounded down in the mouth in that note on the card you sent me. I'm calling to wish you a merry Christmas. I tried earlier to get you. You had me worried. Are you well?"

"Susan, you've made my day. And a merry Christmas to you." Her momentary uplift of mood didn't last. What right had anyone to pry her out of the doldrums?

But your sister took the time and trouble to get in touch with you. Your sister cares, said the voice.

For a long time, Megan Grant had intended to call her friend, Annie Peters, a terminally ill patient in palliative care at the St. Boniface Hospital. Why not do it now, and get it over with?

She dialed. "Is it possible to speak to Annie Peters?"

"Annie Peters? I'm sorry to have to tell you, Miss Peters died last night."

So maybe you should call the living while... the voice reminded her. **Or are you going to put it off till it's too late -- like -- like with Annie?**

Well, maybe she would call her doctor -- a dour man. She'd never seen him smile. With her reading glass, she searched for his private number. She dialed. "Hello, Doctor Hauck. I'm Mrs. Grant. I'm calling to wish you..."

"Sorry, Grandma. I don't take patients' calls on Christmas Day."

"But doctor, I want to wish you -- it's Christmas and..."

"It's critical you say? Then call emergency."

"Nasty old bachelor," she said under her breath.

"What's that, Mrs. Grant? You have a nasty backache? Then take a Tylenol and call me in the morning."

"Doctor, would you put on your hearing aid and listen to me wishing you a merry Christmas. Tomorrow I shall have to wait for another year.

"Forgive me, Mrs. Grant. I wasn't listening properly. You see, I'm off to celebrate with my lady friend. I'm bringing her two roast ducks and some cheer. She's tossing the salad -- but I'll have a prescription sent around to you before the day is over.

He still hadn't heard her correctly, she concluded. Before she could protest, the phone went dead. He must have hung up.

That call didn't ease her conscience for having neglected Annie. He's sending a prescription. Is he? My eye. What will the old goat do next, she pondered. And what shall I do next?

She decided to call others who would be more appreciative of her calls than he. First, Jane McKay, then, Muriel Jonasson, both spinsters who went out together and sometimes invited her along. But lately, it seemed, they had crept into shells.

She dialed Jane's number.

"Hello, Jane...." That's as far as she got when Jane began to tell how, since her aged mother had moved in to live with her, she'd lost her freedom to come and go without having to give her parent a full account of herself -- "just

like I was a schoolgirl..."She ran on and on about her woes.

"Jane," shouted Grandma, finally, to make herself heard, "I'm calling to wish you and your mother a merry Christmas..."

That done, she'd better call Muriel, while she was yet brave enough.

To her surprise, Muriel answered on a cheery note. No, she hadn't heard from Jane for ages. No, she hadn't planned to celebrate Christmas, "not, anyway, until I heard the little Vietnamese boat-woman next door. The Mennonites are sponsoring the family. She was humming 'Away in a Manger,' and our walls aren't soundproof. She was singing to her baby. It reminded me of little Jesus, who was also a boat person -- I mean a refugee in Egypt with his Mother Mary and Father Joseph."

Grandma sat a while to think about the meaning of Christmas. Then she rose, and ended up in her bedroom. Out of habit, she made her bed. Out of habit, she dressed. She heard herself humming Christmas hymns. She re-entered her living room where she passed the decorative mirror.

So how do you feel now? I see you got yourself dressed, said the voice.

"Well, so I have." She noticed she had put on her cardinal red dress, the colour of the bird she'd seen in the white spruce tree earlier on.

So how about opening the gifts your children left for you last evening?

Grandma obeyed the suggestion. Carefully, she untied the ribbons and as carefully folded the fancy gift wraps. She set her presents out. A coffee urn, a pound of blended coffee, an egg poacher, a dozen Japanese oranges, a homemade fruit cake rich in "plums," and a fresh loaf of brown, wheaten bread, such as her daughter-in-law loved to bake. The aromas of the goodies made her hungry. She remembered she hadn't eaten and it was already afternoon.

The phone rang as she was finishing her poached egg on brown toast.

She lifted the receiver, "Hello"

Jane's voice: "I'm sorry I sounded so pathetic. Guess what. Muriel called

me. Haven't talked to her for ages. She was busy making vinerterta from her mother's Icelandic recipe. Says she's having the boat family in for tea later on today. Mother and me are having stewed hen, done in the slow cooker. Nothing special. I've got out of the way of celebrating Christmas -- until Muriel called to remind me of the season, so I'm opening a can of cranberries to add colour. I wish I had planned better, but may I bring our meal over to share with you?

My car needs its carbon blown out of it and Mother delights in rides....When you called -- thanks, Megan, for rocking me out of my rut."

"Do come Jane and bring your mother." Then thinking of the doctor's lady friend, she said, "And I'll toss the salad." She planned to do more. Preparing for their arrival, she sliced the fruity cake her daughter-in-law had left. She put coffee in her new urn to perk. To match the cardinal bird's black cap, she added a black brooch to her red dress. Last of all, she set the table for three.

Set the table for four, said the voice. What about that best friend from out of town you told Tina about? What about him?

It's a her," retorted Grandma. "She is me. I am my best friend."

You weren't this morning. Remember?

"Voice, I am now, even if I wasn't this morning. Fact is I've never felt better about myself. I had such a good day that I love myself and with it I love everybody. Didn't that little Jesus in the manger come to earth to teach us love? He said: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' It means be your own yardstick."

The doorbell rang. A messenger boy delivered a parcel. "Your doctor's prescription," he said, and left.

"Crazy ol' coot, that Doc," she exclaimed, getting angry again.

"Open it." It was the last time she heard the voice.

She opened it. A roast duck and a bottle of cheer. She read the card, did a double take, then read it again, this time out loud: "I said this morning I'd

send you a prescription. So here it is, Grandma Grant. Have a good Christmas. Your doctor, E. Hauck."

"Ho, ho, ho," laughed Grandma Grant, "that old grump has a sense of humour after all -- and," she added, "a heart."

Grandma was on the phone calling her children at her daughter-in-law's parents to give them her love when the doorbell rang again. In walked Jane and her mother carrying their contribution to the Christmas dinner for three. And on Grandma Grant's table waited three plates on a linen tablecloth -- a plate for Jane, a plate for Jane's mother, and a plate for her best friend.

If she had lied this morning to Tina, excusing herself from attending the Mennonite church Christmas dinner because she was expecting her best friend, it was no longer a lie. She was that friend, a friend to herself. Peace and good will descended on her. She considered putting out the roast duck to share with her guests, but thought better of it for fear it would show disrespect for Jane's stewed hen. But she could put out the doctor's bottle of cheer.
mm

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THIS WORD FROM DOWN EAST

by Tim Wiebe



Advent: A place and space for conservation

In Southern Ontario, many of us are proud of our conservation areas. In a crowded and polluted population corridor, they provide us with a series of unique and much needed oases.

They're not quite parks, because you have to pay to get in. And they're not really campsites, because most folks come through just for a morning or an afternoon. Rather, they're chunks of nature set aside, usually on a city's edge, for all who are serious about physical recreation and spiritual conservation. It takes some time to get to one, but any effort to do so is sure to be rewarded.

My favourite CA trail runs a gravelled mile through a lush stand of Ontario cedar before giving way to a variety of less definite paths. One of these meanders to and fro through a small wetland, which is spanned by a graceful wooden footbridge. On a crisp autumn evening, just as the sun is setting, you can almost taste the mist which is rising from the chill waters. Loon cries pierce the stillness, and the few ducks that remain beat their wings with an ostentatious flourish.

A refuge

It feels as though you're in some embryonic, primordial realm. It doesn't matter that the nearest thoroughfare is less than a mile away. This world-in-microcosm embraces, soothes, inspires you...leaves you wishing the moment would last a lifetime. It can't, of cour-

se. Time and responsibility will, as always, conspire to pry loose this place's grip on your soul. And, as always, they'll succeed. Still, you'll turn for home with lots to ponder, and many precious images to conserve. There will always be, at least in memory, a place and space to which you can return.

I wonder if Advent isn't a little like that. A special time is set aside. Those who are serious of mind and heart seek to enter its world. Then, after the mysteries of the season have climaxed in an astounding revelation of God's love, we re-enter our routines -- hoping to conserve something of what we've experienced.

Of course, responding to Advent should involve more than just conserving feelings. It should also encompass our daily rounds of living and loving, providing for family, serving the neighbour, and making our contribution to this world. But in the process of living the message, we can lose a lot of ourselves. Life doesn't wait for us to "feel good" before presenting its next challenge. Nor is there always time, as there was for Robert Frost's famous subject, to stop by the woods on a snowy evening. We've promises to keep, and miles to go before we sleep.

Inner refuge

Maybe, though, there's still a conservation area we can maintain -- one that lies deep within. It is into this precious

space that we can enter during cluttered times, and here that we can calmly await the Advent of God's word for the moment. It is also in this space that we stand as members of a community of faith -- each of us, in our carefully conserved aloneness, awaiting that Advent of Christ which will make us One. That place, deep within our hearts, will always remain...If we keep room for it.

I'm always glad for Advent. I relish the wonderful poetry which promises the Messiah's arrival; exult in the hymns which express longing for Emmanuel; resonate with the message of incarnation in John's "the Word was made flesh."

But most of all, I'm glad, during this season celebrating God's self-giving, that there is one gift with which we can reciprocate the love shown us. It is the gift of space, in which Advent's message can be conserved. It is the gift of place, from which that message can be lived out. It is the gift which the author of "In The Bleak Midwinter" describes so beautifully in the last verse of what has become one of my favourite Advent hymns:

What can I give him, poor as I am?

If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.

If I were a wise man, I would do my part --

Yet what I can I give him -- give him my heart. **mm**

REVIEW

Goethe and Alexander the Great in Tandem

Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre presents "Gedanken und Gedenken: Goethe Dichtung in Wort und Gesang" und "Es Gibt Immer Zwei Moeglichkeiten: Eine fast historische Komoedie," by Anny Tichy, at Kiwanis Centre of the Deaf, Winnipeg, November 16-18, 1989.

reviewed by Al Reimer

Surrounded by other senior citizens, I sat there before the curtain went up idly looking around for someone under 50 and wondering what kind of entertainment the WMT was about to serve up. To combine readings and songs from the poetry of Goethe with a modern German comedy set in ancient Greece seemed a bit like having a mixture of plume moos, rollkuake, and werenetje mett schmaundfat heaped together on one plate, even if it was a handsome German plate. Or, perhaps more aptly, being served Rouladen mit Rotkohl with a big slab of Feta.

Well, the evening did impose some odd transitions in taste and mismatched flavors, but it was all at least palatable and much of it quite tasty indeed. Not to overcook my culinary comparisons, I came away from this rather old-fashioned evening of poetry, song and theatre, and I'm sure the rest of the audience did, with the feeling that I had been well entertained. And that, after all, is what Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre is all about.

Herr Hans Guenther W. Fricke, who had the lofty bearing and demeanour of an international banker, read such Goethe favorites as "Erlkoenig," "An den Mond," and "Gefunden," in a precise, dignified manner that revealed his obvious love for the great German literary master. Herr Fricke recited much of the poetry from memory and achieved the necessary degree of dramatic intensity in a stirring passage from *Faust*, and in "Osterspaziergang." The group of seven singers interspersed the readings with such songs as "Heidenroeslein," and "Es war ein

Koenig in Thule."

Es gibt immer zwei Moeglichkeiten ("There are always two possibilities") is a play that deals with Alexander the Great during a personal moment, so to speak, when he is found after a battle sleeping in the nude in the river reeds by Xenia, a wise-cracking Persian peasant girl who is fazed by nothing, not even war. A strong but sensible feminist who despises war and warriors, she falls in love with Alexander before finding out who he is. Xenia is a delightful character played artlessly by Hilde Strempler in this pleasant little production. She carried this clever modern comedy on her back without the slightest hint of strain. Xenia, never at a loss for a funny one-liner, is also a shrewdly realistic, sharp-eyed observer of a male-dominated world full of macho pretensions, moral hypocrisy and sheer mindless violence. But she never loses the grace of her wit or the tolerance of her wise nature. Ms. Strempler

made Xenia a delight from beginning to end.

None of the male characters was quite up to Ms. Strempler's relaxed, self-assured performance, but Herb Martens as Alexander, Henry Klassen as Hephastion, his friend and retainer, Georg Steinborn as the doctor, Philip Schaible as Nic, Xenia's amiable but somewhat moronic boyfriend, and Peter Enns as the irascible politician and father of Xenia, all had some good moments and overall sustained their roles quite well. Selma Enns, long the first lady of WMT, must have had a lot of fun directing this play and is to be commended for getting her largely inexperienced cast to play it so well. The German accents were without exception good and several were obviously to the manner born. To keep a German theatre tradition alive in these parts is to my mind WMT's most vital function and deserves the support of all lovers of the German language. mm

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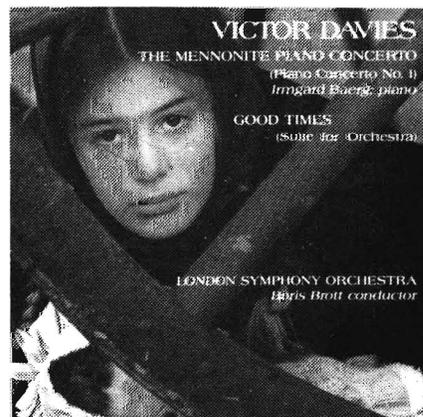
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Connie Froese sees the light even though her MS brings the darkness

by Mary Lou Driedger

Connie Froese's grandmother, Margaret Peters, recalls how when she was a young girl growing up in the Soviet Union, bands of roving gypsies often camped for a time outside the village where she lived. If you gave the gypsies a watermelon they would tell your fortune.

Connie's grandma could never quite decide if she wanted to have her fortune told. Did she really want to know what the future had in store for her? I am sure she is glad now, that when Connie Froese, her oldest and therefore very special, grandchild was born, she could not see into the future; could not see 25 years ahead; could not see the cruel disease that would forever change her granddaughter Connie's life and the lives of all the people who love her.

No cures

Connie Froese is 36 years old and she has multiple sclerosis. It is a crippling condition that affects different people in different ways at different times of their lives. All these differences make it hard to diagnose, difficult to treat and impossible to cure. Connie, now a resident at Beacon Hill Lodge on Fort Street in Winnipeg has been on the multiple sclerosis roller coaster for 11 years. A roller coaster is the first image that comes to mind as Connie describes the spirit-raising ups and hope-crashing downs of her emotional and physical battle with MS.

She first suspected something was wrong in the winter of 1978. Connie was driving to her job as a teacher at a private girls' school in Toronto when quite suddenly her vision blurred and she began to see double images of

everything. This combined with a tingling sensation she had been experiencing in her legs for a time caused her to consult a Toronto neurologist. After a period of extensive testing, he told her she had MS. With the help of her husband Harry and doses of steroids which her doctor prescribed, Connie was able to complete her third year of teaching at Bishop Strachan School and even began to make plans for pursuing a master's degree in history that fall at the University of Toronto.

In the summer, shortly before she was to begin her studies, Connie and Harry travelled to Winnipeg where both of their parents lived. In the midst of visiting family and friends Connie suffered another severe MS attack. This greatly alarmed her husband and her mother and father, Dave and Margaret Froese, but with medication her condition was stabilized and she and Harry



Connie Froese

returned to Toronto. For the next two years Connie's illness prevented her from continuing the history studies she had planned to undertake. She had repeated MS attacks and was hospitalized each time. Every attack left her emotionally drained and less mobile.

Less mobility

By 1981 when her husband, a federal government employee, was transferred to Winnipeg, Connie was using her wheelchair more and more, and finally her doctor recommended she enter the ReHab Hospital at the Health Sciences Centre. Here she could receive daily medical attention and regular physiotherapy. After nine months the ReHab staff said there was nothing more they could do for Connie and transferred her to the King George Hospital.

Connie recalls this hospital as being "the most depressing place I've ever been. It was dilapidated and run down. The other patients were all old and very, very sick. I had no one to talk to."

Connie soon began to lose weight. She became nearly blind and less mobile with each day. Her lengthy illness meant that friends and extended family members no longer continued to see her as often and even her husband Harry's visits became less and less frequent. He was experiencing difficult emotional problems as he tried to cope with all the implications of his wife's rapidly deteriorating physical condition.

Converted garage

At this point Connie's parents, Dave and Margaret Froese decided they could no longer bear to leave their daughter in

what they viewed as a hopeless situation. In a month they had converted the garage of their home into a specially designed room for her and with the assistance of home care staff took on the task of looking after Connie. She changed dramatically in the positive atmosphere of familiar surroundings and with the care of competent aides. Her mobility improved so much in fact that in 1984 she was able to move into her own apartment at Luther Home in West Kildonan.

Here, Connie lived much more independently. This was important to her and relieved her parents of the heavy responsibility for all of her care. Staff members at Luther Home helped her to dress, shower and prepare her own food in her own kitchen. She was able to type letters, watch TV, listen to books on tape and take the Handi Transit to shopping excursions, to movies, to dinner engagements and to regular meetings of the local MS Society of which Connie became an active member.

While at the Luther Home she became a reliable contributor to a column for the institution's monthly bulletin. She also undertook the publication of a regular newsletter which contained information about the plans, whereabouts and activities of the many cousins on her mother's side of the family. As these cousins began to have children Connie created another innovative project, her Baby Bookie business. She accepted wagers from her relatives on the arrival date, birth weight and name of all additions to the family. After announcing the winner of the baby lottery in the family newsletter she used the accumulated funds to buy the new infant a gift.

Marriage ends

Connie's descriptions of these interesting activities give one the impression that her sojourn at Luther Home would have to be one of the spirit raising highs on her MS roller coaster ride. A difficult low during these years was the finalization of her divorce. Connie outwardly expresses no bitterness about this. Statistics do not favour the con-

tinuation of marriages when a debilitating illness strikes the woman in the relationship. Connie says she never doubted that her husband cared for her. "He loved me but he couldn't stand to see what was happening to me. I guess he couldn't accept me. I certainly was no longer the woman he had married. He just wasn't strong enough to cope and in a small way the divorce was a relief. I was having a hard enough time managing my own problems, I couldn't handle his too."

Connie's husband now lives in B.C. and has remarried. She is remarkably forgiving in her attitude towards him and reminds those who criticize that he still sends her a monthly cheque and writes her letters.

In spite of her sorrow over her divorce, life at Luther Home was reasonably good for Connie. She no longer lives there, however. A slow but noticeable downturn in her health necessitated a move this past May to Beacon Hill Lodge.

Other MS sufferers

Of the 175 residents there, only seven are young MS patients. All the rest are elderly people, many of them bedridden and many suffering from Alzheimer's disease or other illnesses which have affected their mental capabilities. On Connie's floor there is a man who sits in the lounge openly sobbing. A woman in the hallway wails loudly in German, "Meine arme Kinder" over and over again. An Oriental man stationed close to the window moves his cup across a table top tracing the same pattern with it endlessly.

Sharon, another young MS patient who has a room on Connie's floor says bitterly, "We shouldn't have to be here with all these crazy people!" "But that Connie Froese," she remarks, "she doesn't let it get to her. She's always as cool as a cucumber. I wish I could be like her."

Connie says she's not always 'cool as a cucumber.' "I get depressed. I get mad. But it doesn't really help in the end."

She tries to appreciate the people at Beacon Hill. Some are interesting and

she knows many of them. She likes Romeo, a funny pipe-smoking Frenchman. "We can carry on a pretty good conversation." There's Bob, an MS patient who enjoys Winnipeg's night life from his wheelchair. Connie points out Barbara, another of the MS group of seven. "She's had a rough time of it. She fell in love with a fellow MS resident and he died."

Connie shares her room with a woman named Mary. "She can't talk", says Connie. "She's had a stroke. No one ever comes to see her. It's very sad."

Connie's days at Beacon Hill are all much the same. She rests in bed for long periods of time, eats her meals in the dining room, watches a little TV, visits the coffee shop and sits in the lounge. When she first moved to Beacon Hill Connie hoped her downtown location would give her the freedom to go out more. A number of independent outings that ended in disaster have dampened those dreams. Her blurring vision caused her to get lost after one shopping trip and it was only with the assistance of a kind meter reader that she found her way back to Beacon Hill. During a solo visit to a restaurant she spilled hot coffee on her leg. On another occasion her wheelchair tipped as she went over a curb and she ended up in the hospital for stitches to a deep gash close to her eye.

Confined now to Beacon Hill for most of her days one wonders what gives Connie the strength to get up in the morning, to keep going. "I don't have a choice," she says. "I have to get up. I try to think of the good things I have to look forward to. I visit my parents' home almost every weekend. I get together with the other members of my MS group. Connie is the chair of the 20-40 year old chapter of the Winnipeg MS Society. They have about 30 members. "We go out for supper and have barbecues together. We plan excursions to events like Folklorama and Oktoberfest."

Can't give up

Connie admits there are times when she feels like just giving up. "But I'm not ready to say yet that I want to die. I'm

convinced they will find a cure for this disease eventually. It probably won't help me but it might make a difference for someone else. I hope to live to see that day."

She credits her parents with giving her the courage to go on. "They've been terrific, so supportive. With them I feel free to voice my anger and my bitterness. They understand how I feel. I know I can always count on them. At the same time I realize how hard this has been on my Mom and Dad, how sad, how depressing and how very frustrating.

"Another thing that helps me is my belief in God. I know there is a life after death, even though I'm not sure exactly what it is. When I first got sick one of the chaplains who visited my hospital room actually told me that this disease was a punishment for something wrong that I had done. I don't believe that for a minute! God didn't make me get MS. I don't blame God and I don't blame myself. It's just something that happened."

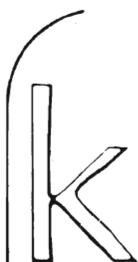
Besides her parents, Connie speaks with particular tenderness about several other people. She mentions her Aunt Nettie who stops in to visit and take Connie on outings when her Mom and Dad are away on trips or holidays. Another very special person is her three-year-old niece, Caryn.

"Caryn has never known me any other way than in a wheelchair. She thinks her Auntie Connie is unique. Caryn loves me in an innocent and natural way. But I guess that could change. Once when Caryn was only two she was going for a walk with my Mom. Suddenly she stopped, looked up and said, "Grandma, what's wrong with Auntie Connie's legs?" My Mom thought for a moment and then she said, "Auntie Connie can't walk. Her legs just don't work properly." Caryn confidently took her grandmother's hand and said simply, "Grandpa will fix them okay?" Caryn is the daughter of Connie's only sister Lynne who lives in Maple Ridge, British Columbia. Connie looks forward to their weekly phone calls and special visits to Manitoba.

Grandmother who cares

Connie also speaks softly and caringly about her grandmother, Margaret Peters. "What's happened to me makes her very sad, but she has told me that she sets some time aside each and every day to pray for me. I know I am frequently on her and my grandfather's minds and that knowledge is very special and comforting to me."

When her first grandchild was born, Margaret Peters had no way to look ahead and see the grief that a disease she had probably never even heard of would bring to her eldest granddaughter's life. If by a gypsy's fortune or some other miracle she could however have caught a glimpse of the future, she would have been proud of the way her granddaughter Connie Froese has courageously faced what to many would seem to be insurmountable difficulties and the most hopeless of circumstances. mm



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This Christmas with the erosion of the Iron Curtain maybe there'll be room for love and



From the 33 entries to the October puzzle, Linie Friesen, of Altona, was selected the winner.

Answers to October, are walk, field, liner, homer, curve, and whirled.

The letters are to be re-arranged and written in the squares to form words. Letters which fall into the squares with circles are to be arranged to complete the answer at the bottom of the puzzle. The drawing 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 January 4, 1990.

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Send entries to: Mix-up Contest, Mennonite Mirror, 207 - 1317A Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3G 0V3.

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A tribute to Bethania from a family

I was a steady visitor to Bethania when my mother came to live there in late December of 1984 until her death on October 23, 1989. Bethania was her Christian home until she closed her eyes forever. She wanted it this way.

The first thing I noticed upon entering the building was the friendliness of the workers there, be it the nursing staff, the administrative office, the cleaning ladies, the social department, the volunteers, in short, everyone associated with this home. They were always glad I came for a visit at any time, be it day or night. I never heard a cross or harsh word spoken, not to the residents, nor to the visitors, nor to fellow staff. What I heard was compassion, genuine concern and optimism. It was reflected in word and deed. This atmosphere was enhanced by the immaculate cleanliness of the home, the pleasant decor and the flowers and plants everywhere. A small, beautifully appointed chapel offers a separate sanctuary for worship and prayer.

The nursing care given to mother was excellent. I observed time and time again how well she was looked after, with love and with patience. It never varied as mother grew weaker and more dependent on personal attention. Our special thanks go to those ladies and gentlemen who attended her. May God bless you. Your gentle ways, your sympathy and love made her last days on earth beautiful.

Mother was not the only one who received this special treatment. I observed it extended to each resident living there. The ladies were often intimately addressed as "Oma," often received a hug, a kiss on the cheek, a touch, or a pillow placed behind a sore back or shoulder. Respect for the person as a unique individual was always evident and for all to see.

We, mother's family, knew that our dear mother was receiving the best care there is. Many, many thanks -- In the name of her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. -- **by Agnes Wall**



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OBSERVED ALONG THE WAY

by Roy Vogt



Drama in politics, on the stage, and good times with friends and family

This past year may go down as the most dramatic year of change since the Second World War. I refer, of course, to the remarkable political, social, and economic upheavals occurring in Eastern Europe. At the beginning of 1989 no one could have guessed that the reform movement initiated earlier by the Soviet leader Gorbachev would create such tremendous ripples, both in the Soviet Union and in the nations surrounding it. The ripples have turned into a tide, whose future course no one can predict. My own guess is that a sharp reversal will occur in the Soviet Union, most of whose citizens may not be willing much longer to sacrifice a rather shabby but stable past for a hopeful but uncertain future. Such a reversal would undoubtedly dampen some of the reforms in the other East European countries, but the push for reforms in Poland, Hungary, and now East Germany, is so widely and strongly supported that it seems unlikely that they will be undone. However, in light of the many surprises of the past few months only a fool would dare paint a detailed picture of what East Europe will look like six months or a year from now.

These thoughts fill my mind as I travel to Chicago in early November to attend the annual meeting of scholars from all over North America and Europe who are interested in Soviet and East European affairs. I am especially interested in the reports of specialists on the Soviet economy.

One of the leading experts on this subject is Gertrude Schroeder of the University of Virginia. She seems to read everything, in Russian, that comes

out of the Soviet Union and gives the most up-to-date information on Soviet reforms. She notes that private (or cooperative) ownership in such activities as restaurants and groceries has been encouraged by Soviet authorities but two major problems have emerged: the owners of such new establishments have a difficult time getting adequate supplies, because many supplies must still come from state enterprises whose prime duty is to fill the demand of other state enterprises, and they are charging very high prices for their products, which angers the population. The result is that limits have been placed on the growth of such enterprises in recent months.

However, an interesting new development is taking place in many state-owned factories. These factories are permitting their workers to establish their own private businesses, to be run in the factory after the normal working hours. These workers can then use the raw materials of the factory, plus the machines and the building (for an appropriate charge) and turn out a large amount of extra production in the extra four or five hours that they work each day. The workers are tired but happy, because they can keep the profit from their private effort, and the factory manager is happy because he can include the extra production in his monthly output report.

As one might expect, there is an amusing aspect to this development: the workers tend to sleep whenever they can during their regular "state" shift, to preserve their energies for the more lucrative private shift. These workers may eventually buy themselves out! In this strange way private ownership may

come to replace state ownership in parts of the Soviet economy.

Chicago remains a fascinating city. Long ago when I belonged to Mennonite committees which met at the downtown YMCA we would take off in groups down State Street to the centre of the city, finding safety in numbers as we took in the sights. Now I stay downtown at the stately Palmer House Hotel, where, so the welcoming signs tell us, Al Capone loved to dine before he was shot down. Each city knows how to capitalize on its most distinguished citizens.

When I register I decide to try something that I was taught when I worked as a desk clerk in a hotel years ago. Each hotel has rooms of very different quality. Desk clerks know which are the really nice rooms and which are inferior. We were instructed, "give the nice rooms to those who request them, and the other rooms to those guests that make no requests." What often happens now, however, is that you must pay more for a better room. Therefore, my wife and I, being spendthrifts (read "cheap") Mennonites, usually end up in a poorer room. However, at conferences, such as the one I'm attending in Chicago, a flat rate is charged each guest, regardless of the quality or size of the room. When I check in I decide to find out whether the old "special request" rule still operates. The clerk is about to hand me my room key, having selected a room for me in advance, when I flash my warmest, most insincere smile, and ask her whether it would be possible to have a really nice room. She gives me a knowing look, reserved for those who are current or

past members of the brotherhood or sisterhood of desk clerks. "Just a minute," she replies sweetly. "I'll see what I can do for you." Sure enough, a minute later she checks me into a different room -- a lovely spacious place with beautiful desks and large comfortable chairs. A colleague from Winnipeg who checked in behind me ends up in much smaller quarters. I could have told him what to do, but then, how would I have known whether the request really made a difference. And besides, secrets of this kind are best kept as secrets. So please don't tell anyone.

Chicago remains both beautiful and menacing. During the day the shopping crowds along State and Michigan make the city seem vibrant and prosperous. Even dirty-looking buildings seem to hold infinite promises. For example, I wander into the Rose Record store one afternoon, which resembles the H.W. Reimer's store in Steinbach when it was past its prime. But what a treasurehouse of music it contains! It seems to have everything, including an interesting array of young and old customers straight out of a Dostoevski novel. I ask the clerk whether they have a compact disk by Edith Wiens. "Yes, I believe we have them all," he replies without hesitation, and shows me a list of the four or five disks that she has produced. I choose her recording of Vaughan Williams' *Dona Nobis Pacem*.

Such are the surprises of a city like Chicago. However, that same evening when I decide to take a stroll through the same area I quickly discover how menacing the strangely empty streets of this city can be. The only persons I meet are beggars, staggering, forlorn looking drunks, or tough young men threatening who knows what. I don't stay around long to find out. This too is America, the America that has lost its way and which needs to admit, humbly, that it cannot preach of virtue and success to the rest of the world until it builds a new, more humane core within itself.

Later in November my wife and I take

advantage of a long weekend to visit our children and grandson in Princeton, New Jersey. We have heard that they will not be able to make it home for Christmas, so we decide to go there for some family togetherness. Princeton is still quite green and warm at this time of year and it doesn't hurt us to leave the snow behind. We enjoy a few lovely walks and drives in the Princeton area. It is a marvellous oasis in an otherwise bleak New Jersey landscape. We also find time for a movie, *Sex, Lies, and Videotape*, a modern tale of alienation which is both disturbing and very moving.

Our children have also purchased tickets to Brecht's *Three Penny Opera* in New York, which we thoroughly enjoy. The well-known rock star, Sting, plays the lead role in this opera very effectively, though his voice is not quite menacing enough for Mac the Knife. I have always loved Brecht's ribald plays, including the core of cynicism that runs through most of them. He lunges at the unfair advantages of the rich, but also manages to laugh at their pretensions. Morality, he reminds us, does not depend on how much money you have, but the ability to moralize does.

A long walk through the heart of Manhattan, followed by a good Chinese dinner with our children and some of their New York friends, round out a very refreshing few days. Our grandson is still too young to remember us, but we now have him firmly fixed in our minds. He is, of course, one of the five most adorable children on God's earth.

Returning to Winnipeg takes us back to pleasures and concerns that are always unique to the place one calls home. We enjoy a wonderful evening of Woodwind playing, in a concert sponsored by Prairie Performances, and a not-so-enjoyable fundraising dinner for a very good nursing home, Bethania. We have attended a number of such dinners this fall, but the highlights always seem to be the visits with friends (as perhaps it should be) and the food, but seldom the guest speaker and the entertainment. It makes for a very long evening.

In trying to raise funds for the non-profit organization which publishes this magazine we continue to rely on subscriptions, ads, and personal donations, and in the past month the response of mail requests has been very gratifying, particularly from our senior citizens. A very sincere thanks to all! Please don't forget us.

In the midst of all this good news one is dismayed in mid-November to hear that the MCI board has permitted a few of its constituents to harass it into cancelling a speaking engagement by Stephen Lewis. A letter to the board by George Friesen of Morden deplores the theme chosen for Lewis and other speakers: the theme being "Peace and Justice." Such a theme is apparently too political. The letter also contains attacks on Mr. Lewis, criticizing his "involvement in left-wing politics" (has this suddenly become a sin?) while simultaneously insinuating that he would "approach the subject of justice from the distorted vantage point of the rich and famous."

Even more reprehensible than this attack is the weak-kneed response of the board. Many of our institutions, including this magazine, receive threats from time to time from people who will withdraw their support unless we give in to their demands. If one was wrong one ought to admit it. But one ought never to give in for the sake of "peace" as the MCI board has done. That is peace without honor, and without justice. Let us hope that our educational institutions will serve us more proudly in the future.

But Christmas with its message of both peace and justice is approaching and we look forward to a new way of celebrating it this year. For the first time we will travel to our children in Edmonton, instead of having them in our home. This is obviously some kind of transition. We may shift back and forth in the future, but it really doesn't matter. As long as we can gather with our loved ones for this joyous festival. Peace and good wishes to all of you, both for Christmas and the New Year. **mm**

REVIEWS

New Books Worth Reading

as noted by Harry Loewen

It is impossible for the *Mennonite Mirror* to review all the books that come across our desk. From time to time, therefore, we publish a list of new books which our readers may find interesting. In our listing of these publications we merely indicate the content briefly and the bibliographical details so that individual readers and possibly church libraries get to know what is available. The following titles our readers might find helpful.

All in a Row is the interesting story of the Klassens of Homewood. The lives of D.D. Klassen and his wife Susan are sketched against the background of their children and life in Southern Manitoba. "The story of this prominent Mennonite minister, some of whose children have become well-known on their own merits, is written with affection, honesty, humour and forthrightness" (from the book's blurb).

Katherine Martens, All in a Row: The Klassens of Homewood (Winnipeg: Mennonite Literary Society, 1988). Paperback, 164 pages, ISBN: 0-88925-883-X.

From Faith to Faith recounts the history of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Manitoba. Beginning in Winkler, Manitoba, in 1888, the MB Church of Canada has now close to 200 churches. Students of Canadian church history will find this book worthwhile reading. It includes photographs of church workers and mission work.

William Neufeld, From Faith to Faith (Winnipeg: Kindred Press, 1989), Paperback, 243 pages, \$19.95, ISBN: 9-919797-92-X.

Gebt der Wahrheit die Ehre is a reissue (although in a new format) of the 1950 publication of the same title. Largely auto-biographical, this book tells the story of the many Mennonites who during and after World War II found themselves within the grip of trying circumstances yet filled with the hope of a better life in a country where there is freedom and peace. This well-written book by the well-known minister and teacher Karl Fast, is highly recommended to all those readers who still know and read German.

Karl Fast, Gebt der Wahrheit die Ehre (Winnipeg: Canzona Publishing, 1989). Paperback, 324 pages, ISBN: 0-929120-00-6.

On Fire for Christ is a collection of retold stories about sixteenth-century Anabaptist martyrs. Among the martyrs included are Dirk Willems, Maeyken Wens, Maria van Beckum, Elizabeth Dirks, Michael Sattler and ten others. The accounts, illustrated with Jan Luyken etchings, are based on the *Martyrs Mirror* which was first published in 1660. Excellent reading for younger people. Church libraries will want to place this book on their shelves.

Dave and Neta Jackson, On Fire for Christ (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1989). Paperback, 184 pages, \$10.95. ISBN: 0-38361-3503-2.

Under the Still Standing Sun is a story of life in Paraguay. Anna, the heroine of this story, comes to Para-

guay as a young girl, finding the place and conditions there most difficult and trying. Even friends become enemies. But Anna finds love as well. "Through all this she is able to maintain the resilience of her exuberant spirit. Finally, near the close of her life, she finds the best surprise of all" (from the book's blurb). The author, who spent two years with her husband in development work in Paraguay, writes with insight, sensitivity and love for her subject.

Dora Dueck, Under the Still Standing Sun (Winnipeg: Kindred Press, 1989). Paperback, 293 pages, \$13.95. ISBN: 0-9197-93-8.

Torches Rekindled is the story of the Eberhard Arnold Bruderhof, established in Germany in 1920 and continued and developed at Woodcrest in New York. It is the story of how a group of Christians seeks to live the Gospel of love and community in the modern world with its materialism and individualism. The book is a challenge to all Christians in the West to question and rethink what it means to be a disciple of Jesus in today's society. This well written book should be in all church libraries.

Merrill Mow, Torches Rekindled. The Bruderhof's Struggle for Renewal (Ulster Park, N.Y.: Plough Publishing House, 1989). Paperback, 309 pages, \$10.50 US (\$12.00 postpaid). ISBN: 0-87486-024-5.

Most of the books listed here can be ordered from Mennonite Books, 208-1317A Portage Ave. Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3G OV3, Telephone (204) 786-2289.

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THE POETS' WORD

SEPTEMBER 11/89

(on this day thousands escaped
from East to West Germany)

In the east wing of this house there is a prison.
In the west wing of this house people live like you and me.
The barrier between the two wings is crumbling.
There is a hole in the wall
and a ripped seam in the curtain of iron.
The prisoners have begun to flee to the western wing
where there are more windows, more doors, and even the
furniture is nicer.
This is good news-except for the warden of the east wing.
He sees ruin and sings of revolt in every cell.
In the Baltic cell, which is further away from the hole,
the prisoners have hung foreign flags, and one day they
all joined hands and sang for the warden to let them out.
He didn't.
In the Poland cell they have replaced the warden's banner
with one of their own making. "Solidarity," it proclaims,
providing hope for all the detainees.
From the German cell prisoners are fleeing by the thousands
to their relatives in the western wing.
This is good, except for the warden,
It is a joyful occasion.
We other inhabitants on this street are cautiously happy.
We have known this warden's family for a long time. We are
scared that if too many more prisoners escape the warden will
become very angry. How many of his unlawfully captured souls
will he allow to crawl through the hole in the wall? How many
children will he let climb through the ripped curtain seam,
before he sews their little bodies into it as a reminder to the
others.
We are nervously watching the escape.
We are cheering as each one squeezes out.
But not too loudly.
We don't want to anger the warden.

-- Lori Klassen

Report

Later, the blinding light
having faded, the angels
returned singing to the sky
and dawn as usual
slow in coming
to the villages near Bethlehem
You'll find the shepherds
hesitating on the unsafe edge

of truth. It's not as you might think
peaceful
not pretty as in Hallmark cards
placed beside lit candles
on a tinselled mantelpiece.

The shepherds know each marketplace
cradles a host of embryonic plots
wanting only the auspicious
moment to be born.

Invariably there's violence they must dodge
in the dark streets, ardent patriots
protesting the census.
In the rugged Galilean hills
terrorists, sleepless
ready with death.

The amazed shepherds, willing enough
to bear witness to the exultation
and the blinding light, remember
life though hard holds brief
sweet moments. They remember too
the hungry sheep
shivering in the dew-damp grass

on a dark unguarded hillside.

-- Sarah Klassen



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MANITOBA NEWS

The **MCC Auction** sale held in **Morris** in September resulted in a net profit of \$101,000. which was to be sent to Bangladesh and the Sudan for relief and development projects.

Stan Dueck, a Steinbach building inspector, has been elected second vice-president of the Manitoba Building Officials Association.

Mennonite Heritage Village Museum in Steinbach received two major donations totalling \$40,000, most of which will help fund the present expansion project. The largest donation, \$25,000 from Petro-Canada, was received in September, while \$15,000 was received from Multiculturalism Canada. This grant is earmarked toward development of a multilingual exhibit and literature promoting the museum to visitors at the World Mennonite Conference in Winnipeg next summer.

Westgate Mennonite Collegiate students receiving awards at the entrance scholarship presentation at the University of Manitoba on October 16, 1989 were: **Debbie Anne Pankratz**, **Aldin Rayner Jansen**, **Selena Rachel Friesen**, and **Denis Penner**.

Tim and LaVerna Reimer of Winnipeg, members of Aberdeen Evangelical Mennonite church, are serving in West Germany with MCC. They report the churches of East Germany are playing a key role in the swelling chorus for reform in that country. The church has challenged the leaders of the country, calling for open discussion of social problems, greater honesty in the official media and a less patronizing attitude toward criticism made by non-party members. The church has also consistently called on its members to remain in the country, insisting that it is the church's task to assist in creating a society in which people live willingly.

Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) is helping to clean up and rebuild residen-

tial areas affected by the October 17 California earthquake. Donations to help fund earthquake clean-up efforts can be sent to MCC, California Earthquake Fund, P.O. Box 500, Akron, Pennsylvania, 17501-0500.



Aggie Zapp, daughter of Ursula and Ingo Zapp of the North Kildonan Mennonite Church, received a number of awards following her graduation from River East Collegiate in June 1989. She won a University of Manitoba Entrance Scholarship, the Alexander Smolek Scholarship from River East Collegiate, a four-year Xerox Scholarship for \$1,500 per year and a four-year Canada Scholarship for \$2,000 per year. She has entered the pre-veterinary program in the Faculty of Agriculture.

Dr. John Neufeld, president of Canadian Mennonite Bible College, and his wife, Anne, will be leaving in January to spend four months in South America. They will be visiting the Mennonite Seminary in Asuncion, and will attend the Mennonite annual conference in Uruguay. They will also be visiting the Mennonite Colonies in Paraguay. **Dr. Helmut Harder** will serve as acting president while Neufeld is away.

Consideration is being given in **Winkler** to the construction of what could be the first public **leisure pool** in the province. Pool committee spokesman Al Loeppky said information meetings will be held this fall to get the public's response to the new concept and decide whether it should be an indoor or outdoor pool. It will replace the existing outdoor pool built in the 1960s. A leisure pool, he

said, has free-form configuration with a deep end. The indoor option would accommodate 380, the outdoor pool 512. A feasibility study suggests the indoor leisure pool feature a whirlpool, sauna, large deck, deck furniture, tropical plants, southside glass, family change area, concession booth and water slides. "It would be a bright sunny place - a resort-type pool giving us a bit of the tropics right here in Winkler," he said. Winkler is not part of a recreation district, Loeppky said, noting costs would be borne mainly by Winkler ratepayers. Costs would be offset by government grants, fundraising and user fees, he said.

The Olive Branch SelfHelp Crafts gift shop in Winnipeg is like dozens of other selfhelp stores across Canada -- in it you'll find the usual array of brass from India, wicker from the Philippines, wheat straw cards from Bangladesh, as well as other crafts from Third World artisans. But the Olive Branch has recently added a new line of products which are displayed and sold with pride -- the store is now an outlet for moccasins and leatherwork earrings produced by craftsmen at the Stony Mountain Penitentiary, a medium security prison located outside of Winnipeg. "They do good work and we've been happy with the products," says Olive Branch manager Bev Hiebert, adding that there's lots of potential for increased sales.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) has sent personnel to the French territory of Guadeloupe and the Virgin Island of St. Croix to assist in clean-up and reconstruction efforts following the destruction of **Hurricane Hugo**. Four or five people travelled to Guadeloupe October 24 and are working through local church leaders. Some of the personnel are French-speaking Mennonites from Quebec; others are MCC Africa alumni who served in French-speaking countries. A Jamaican Mennonite pastor, Keith Allen, has also offered to go

and will likely join them. MCC has also requested personnel from the French Mennonite organization, Caisse de Secours. The team will likely stay through December, says Rich Sider, MCC secretary for Latin America and the Caribbean. "After they are there for a few weeks we'll know more about how many people we can use and what kinds of supplies are needed," he notes.

A conference on **Baptism, Peace and the State in the Reformed and Mennonite Traditions** was held at the University of Calgary in October. The conference was sponsored by the University of Calgary Institute for the Humanities, in co-operation with the University's department of religious studies and chair of Christian thought, with the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Mennonite World Conference as co-partners. It is believed that this is the first occasion in which an institute in a secular university has joined with two Christian world communions in the scholarly discussion of issues which have traditionally divided them. In 1984 a first round of talks was held in which the two traditions introduced themselves to one another, and reaffirmed the 1983 repudiation of the denunciations that had marred their earlier history. The objective of this conference was to analyze in depth the three outstanding topics on which Mennonites and Reformed have traditionally disagreed. It was unanimously resolved to recommend to the executive committees of the two world bodies that Reformed and Mennonites should engage, wherever possible, in united witness and study at all levels—from the local to the international; and that there should be a further joint consultation on the nature of the church, with special reference to baptism in relation to Christian incorporation and nurture, the Lord's Supper, and church discipline. Mennonite participants in the conference were: **Harry Loewen, Howard Loewen, and Marlin Miller**. Reformed participants were: Iain Nicol, Max Stackhouse and Charles West. The joint secretaries were Ross T. Bender, President of the Mennonite World Con-

ference, Alan Sell, Chair of Christian Thought, University of Calgary, and Ron Neufeldt, head of the department of religious studies at the University of Calgary. The text of the papers and responses presented, together with the conference report, will be published in 1990.

This year's **Moscow International Book Fair** brought in smaller crowds than in years past, but saw continued interest in Christian literature. The fair has been held every other September since 1977. New Call to Peacemaking, a cooperative effort of the Church of the Brethren, Friends and Mennonites, sponsored a booth at the fair for Peace Church Publishers of North America; Mennonite Central Committee is a member of New Call to Peacemaking. Ten North Americans operated the booth where several hundred books were displayed including *What about the Russians*, edited by Dale Brown; Russian language copies of *What Mennonites Believe*, by J. C. Wenger; and Russian-language biographies of Menno Simons. Twenty thousand copies of an annotated catalog listing 60 peace-related books were also distributed. "We easily got rid of the catalogues and even had to ration them each day," said Clyde Weaver of Elgin, Illinois, who has attended the fair on behalf of New Call to Peacemaking since 1981. **Lawrence Klippenstein**, historian-archivist at the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg, was there for the third time. "I had the impression that crowds were not as large" as in years past, he says.

Carla Thielmann of Elm Creek is beginning a one-year Mennonite Central Committee assignment in Zaire, Chad and North America, where she will participate in a Youth Discovery Team, an exchange program for young adults. Thielmann recently graduated from Elm Creek High School. She was last employed as a cook at IB's Drive-In at Elm Creek. Thielmann is a member of Elm Creek Mennonite Brethren Church. Her parents are Ernie and Laura Thielmann of Elm Creek.

Kerry Fast of Blumenort is beginning a two-year Mennonite Central Committee assignment in Winnipeg where she will be working as an administrative assistant for the Refugee Assistance/Africa Department. Fast previously served with the Evangelical Mennonite Conference in Steinbach. She received a bachelor's degree in religious studies from the University of Winnipeg and from Mennonite Brethren Bible College in Winnipeg. Fast was last employed at Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach. She is a member of Blumenort Evangelical Mennonite Church. Her mother is Tina Fast of Blumenort.

Hilda Nikkel of Steinbach is beginning a two-year Mennonite Central Committee assignment in Washington D.C. where she will be working as office manager for the MCC U.S. Peace Section Washington Office. Nikkel previously served with MCC in Markham. She received a bachelor's degree in biblical studies from Winnipeg Bible College in Otterburne. She was last employed as an estate clerk at Investors in Winnipeg. Nikkel is a member of Elim Mennonite Church in Grunthal. Her parents are Jake and Katie Nikkel of Steinbach.

Coming events

December 21 and 22: MCI Centennial Concert series, the *Messiah*, by G.F. Handel, part one, with the concert choir and the Winnipeg Youth Orchestra; 7:30 p.m., school auditorium, Gretna.

MENNONITE BOOKS
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Bachelor of Arts Honours: Norman Philip Friesen; Robert Verdun Teigrob.

Bachelor of Arts (4-year): Lori Elizabeth Dueck.

Bachelor of Arts: Martha Abrahams; Daniel John Balzer; David Cornelius Balzer; Melvin Keith Barkman; Lorna Suzanne Derksen; Shannon Elizabeth Elias; Daniel Bruce Friesen; Mary Anne Funk; Terry Catherine Marie Harms; Paul Victor Heidebrecht; Joanne Ruth Klassen; Leonard Jason Martens; Jacqueline Beth Neufeld; Brenda Roxanne Neufeld-Penner; Sandy Parisi-Unger; Deborah Lynn Reimer; Brenda Arlene Sawatzky; Werner Sawatzky; Agatha Sharon Wall; Brenda Lynn Wohlgemuthl.

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Weihnachtsgedanken *von Fritz Senn*

Wie oft beim lesen von Fritz Senns Gedichten, vernehmen wir die wehmütige Nostalgie des Dichters auch in seinen Weihnachtsgedichten. Die Sehnsucht nach einer Zeit die nie wiederkehrt, die Sehnsucht nach einem Ort der nicht mehr existiert, empfinden auch wir, die wir vielleicht nie unsere geographische Heimat verlassen mussten. Manchmal kann die Nostalgie uns irgendwie trösten und beruhigen. Doch dürfte sie nie eine Ausflucht aus der Gegenwart werden. Die Wirklichkeit um uns her aufrichtig zu begegnen kann oft schwieriger sein als sich den lieblichen Erinnerungen an eine heile Welt ganz hinzugeben. Auch daran erinnert uns Senn in seinem Gedicht *November*.

Weihnacht

Wenn alle Sterne aufgegangen
Und alle Fenster helle sind,
Schau ich dem zu mit heißen Wangen
Wie einst als kleines Kind.

Dann schmück ich mich mit Kindheitsträumen
Gedenk der längst entschwundenen Zeit,
Der Feier in vertrauten Räumen —
Wie liegt das alles doch so weit.

Und meine Seele dehnt sich mächtig
In Kindheitssehnsucht, stark und bleich
Und schafft sich stumm und mittenächtigt
Ihr mondbeglänzttes Weihnachtsreich.

November

Jetzt nickt das Leben wieder ein
Wie Hühner unter Hecken;
Die mag kein schrilles Falkenschrein
Aus ihrem Schlummer schrecken.

Der Regen fegt die Fenster blind,
Die Dinge zu verhüllen;
Und eingeschlafen ist der Wind,
Dem alles sonst zu Willen.

Bleib wach, mein Herz, und nick nicht ein,
Wenn auch die Schatten spinnen,
Und suche heiligen Weihnachtsschein
Tief innen, ja tief innen

Ein Dorf liegt in der Weihnachtsnacht
Darüber in wilder Vollmondspracht
Das Meer der Sterne loht und brennt.

Ein Heimatzauber kommt von dir
Und weckt in tiefster Seele mir
Die Sehnsucht, die dein Name nennt.

De Nacht ferr Wienacht

Daut wea de Nacht ferr Wienacht, emm gaunsen Hüs,
Read sitj goanuscht, nijch mol ne Müs.

De Tallasch stunden reed, de Stremp dee hongen,
Aules wacht ope däm Nätkloss sien tiedjet komen.

Dee Kjinjatjes schleepen enn äre Bocht enn Bad,
Enn dreamden vonn Plumemoos enn Schokolad.

Mamme haud sitj hajelajcht too Rü,
Uck etj wea aul meist ejeduselt -- opp eanmol, nanü

Büten opp'm Hof gauf daut en Heilie enn Jeschräch,
Etj sprunk üt'm Bad, enn mett'm Schlop wear't derjch.

No'm Fensta rannd etj schwind aus en Hos,
Enn moak et op en groota Bos.
Daut Montje schiend opp'm freschen Schnee,
Dee lach so deep, dee reatjt bat de Kjnee.

Enn waut sach etj, etj trüd miene uage kaum,
En Schlade mett Hersche enn en kjleenen Maun --

Dee Kutscha, däm sach et soo läwendijch enn ditj,
Etj wist oppe Städ, daut es de St. Nitj.

Schwind aus de Wind joach dee derche Loft,
Etj hoped bloos hee haud uck goot ejekoft.

De Herschtjes roopt hee biem Nomen soo: rann Plästa,
enn Hupsat, enn Donna, enn Blitzen,
Dü Witjsat, enn Utbunt, enn Laushoa, nü kje jie mol
flitsen.

Hee moracht opp de Waund enn äwaret Dack pralld hee
wieda,
Etj haud schiss, enn tsettat aun aul miene Jlieda.

Soo kaum hee aun, aus en Storm, mett Jetees,
Etj mott jestonen, etj wort gauns nervees.
Dee Schläden wea jeloden mett Späldinja enn Poppen,
Etj schmüstat, dittmoal wudd'a ons nijch foppen.

En donn head etj uck aul, daut däwad äware Schien,
Dee Pitsch dee knauld, hee foa mett stiewa Lien.

Etj dreid mie omm enn kjitjt enn'e Stow eromm,
Dee Nätkloss wea aul bennen, dee wea nijch domm.

Hee wea aujetrocken, emm Pelts fomm Kopp bat Foot,
Etj kaun jünt sajen, hee sach gauns goot.

Späldinja haud'a opp'm Ridjen, en gaunsen Sack,
Enn unjar'm Oarm druach'a en enoaret Pack.

Ute Uagen glüpta lostich, siene Näs sach aus 'ne Kjoasch,
Dee Backen wearen root, am sach 'et gauns koasch.

Sien MüL wea breet aus en groota Boagen,
Dee Bopat wea witt aus Schnee, daut ess nijch jeloagen.

Hee haud en rundet Jesejcht, enn en Buck aus 'ne Bül
Oba fefeat haud'a mie, hols am de Grül.

Am sach 'et ditj enn plomp, jie kjene jünt dentjen,
Oba lot am toch, hee kaum ons too beschentjen.

Steil aus en Heista, aujetrocken enn root,
Etj docht bie mie selwst, dam sitt 'et gauns goot.

Hee säd nijch en Woat, jintj aune Oabeit pienijch enn
jnietsch,
Doabie spield'a de Tänen, oba hee wea nijch bietsch.

En aus'a dee Tallasch enn Stremp haud foll,
Hee donn nom Schornsteen, en nü jintj et doll.

Emm Schläden nenn, enn donn heiwd'a auf--
Dee Herschtjes dee sprungen en gauns scheenen Drauf.

Etj head am noch roopen, nijch lüd, ea sacht:
"Lot jünt goot gonen, enn fe fondoag, Good Nacht!"

-- Low German version by Victor Peters.

Wäajen Doll Woare

Fonn Agnes Waul

Dee Teewsche wea stiew soo groot aus Teews, eene koasche Fru mett schmoeke, kruse Hoa onn blanke, kloablaue Uage. See wea kratjt onn beschetjt biem schaufe. See hilt opp nobre onn wisst jeeenlijch waut aula emm Darp fääjintj, oba see plaupad daut nijch aula ut. See jleijcht nijch, waut schljachtet äwa Aundre too saje onn wea goot too liede. Eenje Mensche säde oba see kunn too Tiede sea doll woare. See wea äwent 'ne Hiebatsdochta onn dee Hiebatsfrues -- jo, dee Hiebatsfrues, dee haude Hoa oppe Täne. Etj haud äa aul en haulwet Joa jetjannt oba äa noch niemols doll jeseene. See wea mien gooda Frint.

Teews selfst wea ruija aus siene Jreetje. Hee wea emm schaufe fleijcht uck jemietlijcha oba hee kjreajch jeeenlijch doawäajen doch aules jedone onn wort aus gooda Foarma aunjerätjent. Hee frintled fäl onn haud measchtens eene Tsiegoarespets mett eene Pappaross tweschne Täne. Dee wea äwajens seldom aunjestetjt. Hee jleijcht Jeschijchte too läse, besondasch soone wua een Jung onn een Mäatje sitj goot woare. Wann am dee Jeschijcht besondasch goot jegone haud, fetald hee dee siene Jreetje onn uck siene Frind. Hee wort emma root wann he bott dee Städ enne Jeschijcht kaum, wua dee Jung däm Mäatje eenen Kuss jeef. Aus hee root wort ooda nijch, hee leet ditt Poat fonne Jeschijcht niemols ut. Hee haud äwent eene romauntische Natua wann siene Jreetje dee fleijcht uck nijch soo sea haud. See pausste no miene Meeninj goot toop.

Daut äwadriewe daut wea enn Hosefeld een bätje Mood. Je ella dee Jeschijcht wea, je dolla wea dee ütjeputst onn eena twieweld, woo fäl doa aun soo wea. Oba, eenje Jeschijchte weare sea goot. Etj kreajch fäle doafonn too heare. Aum basten jefoll mie dee Jeschijcht fonn woo

Teewse Kjnals mol no Hiebats Jreetje jefriet haud. Hiebats onn Teewse weare Nobasch onn Jreetje haud däm Kjnals emma jefolle onn schmoeke jeseene. Hee wea oba too schuchta äa daut too saje. Hee jrebbled lang woo hee daut aungone sull. Opp eenst haud hee eene Iede. Hee jintj tseowents aus daut aul diesta wea enn Hiebats äa Tsetjreet nenn. Hee schreef fonn benne enne Däa, doa wua Jreetje daut läse kunn wann see doa saut, "Greta, Greta, wie liebe ich dich!" Hee schreef daut opp huagdietsch. Plautdietsch wea am eene too proste Sproak omm äwa Leew too schriewe. Soo funk daut mol mett dee Beid aun. Weens soo fetalde dee Lied.

Aus etj an kjanne lead weare see aul lang befriet. Mie jefoll daut emma bie an onn etj kunn daut goanijch jleewe daut Jreetje mol doll woare kunn. Oba een Dach aus etj no äant emm Hus kaum head etj aul emm Hinjatus Jreetje äare Stemm wiels see tsiemlijch lud råde deed. Aus etj nenn kaum, sach etj daut see oppjerääjcht onn root emm Jesejcht enne Kjääjtj opp onn dol jintj. Kjnals saut gaunss stell opp'e Rubentj onn kjitjt jlitj no fäare. Aare twee haulfwaussende Junges weare doa uck onn leete dän Kopp henje. No Jreetje äa Jeräd no naum etj aun daut see haud wult Pankuake too Owenkost bake onn doa wea kjeen Holt emm Holtkauste biem Owe. Aus see sitj waut hole wull, wea doa uck kjeen jespooldet Holt biem Holtklompe. Kjnals onn dee Junges haude sitj omm daut Holt kjemmre sullt onn haude daut feschloffft. Doawäajen loamd see nu dautet mau soo emm Kardonn kracht.

"Onn woo rääten jie saul etj äte moake? Mett dree groote, stoatje Kjeadels emm Hus dee dän Dach äwa soo goo aus nuscht doone, saul etj öpplatst bute stone onn Holt hacke soo daut gaunss Hosefeld mie ütlache kaun? Wuaromm sennt jie soo rungemolsch?

Sent jie too goot toom oabbeide? Meen jie, jie motte emmawäarent rommdriewe? Onn aulahaunt Domms oppschnacke? Meen jie fonn een bät Holt spoole woa jie junt dän Bruch aunjewe? Wuaromm mott etj mie äwahaupt wäajen däm Holt meet junt kautsbaulje? Schäme sull jie junt daut etj junt hia utfilse mott."

See wull an noch wieda dee Gluaje fäläse, oba musst mol tweschenn Odem hole. Dee Manna naume dee Jeläajenheit woa onn schlitjte sitj fetjs rut. Etj feeld mie uck en bät onnmaklijch onn wenscht etj wea aundawäajens aus jrod hia. Daut wea opp eenmol onnhelmlijch stell enne Kjääjtj. Jreetje funkelde dee Uage. Etj docht daut see fleijcht habe wull etj sull irjent waut saje? Soo säd etj, "Du woascht noch krank wann du soo doll blifst. Etj jleew etj go no Hus. Daut doll woare halpt je doch nuscht."

Jreetje säd hiaropp blooss, "Morje kjemmst too Freestijtj."

Dän näjtsten Morje jintj etj no Teewse. Mie jankad daut nijch, oba etj jintj. Aus etj opp'm Hoff kaum sach etj daut aulawäajen emm freschen Schnee feine Stiej jekljunt weare, fonne Hinjadäa botte Wauschlien onn doa felenjst, onn uck no aundre Staäde wua eena too wanke haud. [Jreetje jleijcht daut, wann fe äa enn schmoeke Stijch jekljunt wort.] Kjnals onn dee Junges weare biem Holtklompe onn spoalde pienijch Holt. Daut wea noch tiedijch emm Dach oba dee Klompe wea aul ernoa huach.

Etj jintj derjch'em Staul onn sach daut hia aul aulawäjens besorjcht wea. Soogoa fein ütjefääjcht wea doa. Aus etj enne Kjääjtj nennkaum, sach etj Jreetje aum Fensta stone onn kjitje woo äare Maunslid doa bute schaufte. See dreid sitj no mie onn säd sea frintlijch, "Onn Du dochst daut doll woare halpt nuscht?" mm

OUR WORD

Joy to the World, the Lord has come...

Some years ago I sent a book to a friend of mine who was suffering from depression. The book was entitled *Your God is Too Small* and was written by J.B. Phillips I didn't know it at the time but Phillips himself, a well-known minister in the Church of England, had struggled with depression for many years. He had slowly been helped out of it by coming to a new understanding of God; an understanding which he chose to share with others in this book. The main theme of the book is quite simple, but for many Christians it seems to remain elusive and perhaps even heretical.

Phillips had been a Christian for many years, but it had become more of a burden to him than a source of joy. To be a Christian, it seemed, meant that one had to take life very seriously, at all times. As a wag once put it, a Christian is someone who lies awake at night worrying that someone, somewhere, is really enjoying himself. Or as the poet Dollet Fuguet put it:

He went so blithely on the way
That people call the Road of Life,
That good folks, who had stopped to pray,
Shaking their heads would look and say
It wasn't right to be so gay
Upon this weary road of strife.

When Phillips reread the Christmas story, and studied again the life of Jesus, it began to dawn on him that the Christian God wants us to be joyful. Life may present us with many difficult moments, which must obviously be taken seriously, but the ultimate purpose of life is a joyful one: it is to rejoice in all things that God has placed in the world for us, including His own healing presence. A heart that rejoices in God's world, that drinks deeply of the many pleasures that life affords, is a heart that is tuned to God. On the other hand, a heart that is constantly tuned to heaviness, that finds purpose in joylessness, is tuned away from God. Phillips discovered that the God he had believed in was much too small. The "Christian" God that he had worshipped was not the God of the universe, who wants us to enjoy all things created for us, but a petty, mean spirited God, taking delight in our misery.

There are things in this world that make us tremble, and we all know days of dark despair. However, in the midst of whatever darkness threatens to overcome us, let us not for a moment think that such darkness is God's purpose for us. Let

us not confuse true Christian religiosity with a heavy, dark spirit. We are meant to enjoy this world, and to help others to enjoy it.

Phillips asks us in his book to discover what he did: a much larger, magnanimous God who delights in giving us joy. Somehow, however, we are so perverse, so strangely determined to use religion in a negative way, that we mistrust such a positive discovery. The friend to whom I sent the book wrote back: "Yes, Phillips is right. My God is too small. I never get things right. I am doomed to languish in misery." Such determined misery made me think of the words of W.H. Auden, which I have taken the liberty of altering a little:

In the deserts of the heart
Let the healing fountain start,
In the prison of our days
May God teach us how to praise.

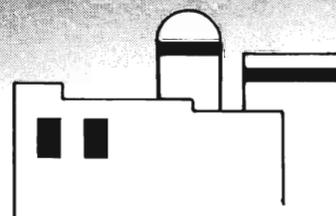
To have a spirit of joy is not the same thing at all as saying over and over again, "Don't worry, be happy." Such words may be repeated without residing deeply in our hearts. What God surely wishes for all of us, at Christmas and throughout our lives, is a deep, abiding faith that we have not been put by accident into a world without purpose, but rather that we have been granted a life in which each day may be a source of new understanding, discovery, and yes, pleasure. Even in the darkest days God wants us to discover this. As Edwin Markham writes:

At the heart of the cyclone tearing the sky
And flinging the clouds and the towers by,
Is a place of central calm;
So here in the roar of mortal things,
I have a place where my spirit sings,
In the hollow of God's palm.

In all the business of this season may we find a place of calm, and then, out of that serenity, may we sing once more with the angels: "Joy to the world, the Lord has come."

-- Roy Vogt

The Spirit Of Peace...



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