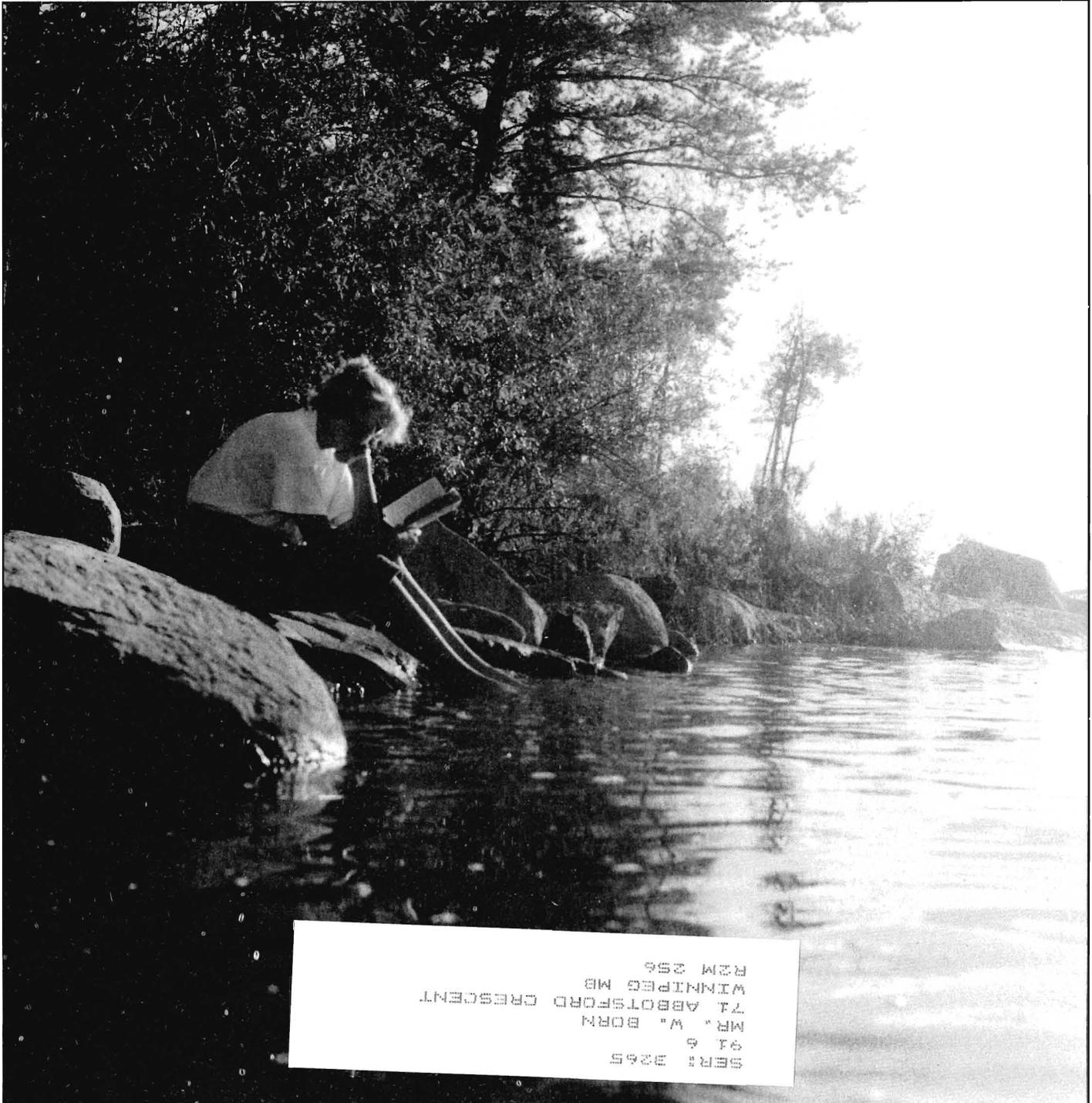


Mennonite MIRROR

volume 20 / number 2 / october, 1990



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ForeWord

Summer has faded away to autumn and here is our second edition for this 20th publishing year.

Thrift Shops have been a pillar of MCC's program of the past few years. At a time when "re-cycling" is in vogue, the Thrift Shop has been ahead of its time, a place where one person's cast-off becomes another person's bargain. This issue opens with Agnes Wall describing a day in a Winnipeg shop.

People who live in B.C. tend to "look down" on people living on the Prairies because the scenery is, well, so dull. In this edition our columnist H.W. Friesen explores this view, describes a trip to the prairies, and speaks of relatives who are treasured because they are also friends.

A group of visiting scholars wonder what we do in winter and treasure a taste of Manitoba hospitality during a dinner visit to a home. Roy Vogt describes the visit in this month's Observed Along the Way.

There are several book reviews in this edition. One explores justice, another is on Margaret Laurence's autobiography, a third looks at a new book by Sandra Birdsell, still another at the way we treat children, and the last looks at two children's books.

Skydiving is something that takes nerve more than courage. One has to stare down fear. And then there follows a thrilling ride to earth. Dana Mohr describes her jump.

Now that school is back in session, parents are beginning to encounter parent-teacher nights. A poem by Lynette Dueck nicely captures the feelings and thoughts of one such visit.

The news, the letters and the editorial round out this edition.

The editorial makes the point that the Mennonite World Conference is also important for what was not discussed as well as for what it did.

Until next month.

Mennonite Mirror

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Canada

A day at the thrift shop: where "old" things acquire a new life

by Agnes Wall

Ten a.m. The doors to the shop open to admit about a dozen waiting customers.

First in is a woman of about 50, dressed like a teenager, her long, permed hair tied back in a ponytail, an orange T-shirt hugging her breasts and the rolls across her middle. She strides along every aisle, her eager eyes evaluating the merchandise. "They haven't put out much other stuff from the back. Most of these things were here yesterday already," she remarks to her friend in a loud voice.

A small, skinny man in a wrinkled grey jacket goes to the white elephant table, picks up an item, looks at the price, puts it down, picks up another, puts it down too and so on. After a while he wanders to the back of the store where some volunteers are testing small, donated appliances to see if they still work.

We all know this man because he comes into the shop almost every day -- it's more a social occasion than a shopping trip for him.

Two young women, chattering in Low German, are accumulating clothes. Clothes for babies, clothes for men, clothes for women and clothes for children. Jeans, shirts, dresses, shoes, underwear. They lay their selections on the counter, the pile getting higher and higher.

Coming right over

The telephone rings, "We're putting on a play. I'm in charge of the costumes. Have you some fancy dresses and big hats? How about some dark men's suits or jackets? You think there might be something I can use? I'll be right over to see for myself."

A group of Hutterite women accompanied by only one man come in. They speak a form of German so strange to me that I can't make out what is said. Before they look around, they take out

small change purses and count their coins. One of the teenage girls loosens her kerchief and lets the ends hang free. Masses of brown curls tumble to her shoulders. A spirited young woman with fire in her eyes, she wears her Hutterite garb with style and sparkle. The lone man comes and leans on my counter and begins to tell me the history of his people.

A gentle young man is looking at shirts (long sleeved, \$1, short sleeved, 75 cents). Now he is looking at dresses. Dresses?? Oh, he's probably shopping for his wife.

I see a Mennonite lady whom I know. She is of the old school, a person who never throws anything away. Everything is good for something. Everything can be repaired. It's a sin to let things, go to waste. "I need some wide elastic to mend my friend's corset. Is there some in the shop?"

Several giggles

The phone rings again, "I'll pick up the bundles for charity if you have them ready," I hear a man saying.

"One moment and I call Mr. Braun in the back." Mr. Braun knows about such things as does Mr. Ewert, of course.

A young couple, arm in arm, look through the men's suits. Every once in a while they giggle.

A young woman, baby on one hip, a plastic dishpan filled with buttons, zippers, lace, patterns, and an assortment of remnants on the other, approaches the checkout spot where I am. She puts the container and the baby on the counter. The baby is fat with big, black eyes that look right past me as he takes a long pull on his bottle of juice. "Buttons, a penny each, zippers a dime, patterns, 15 cents," I chant as I add up her bill. "It comes to \$4.07," I tell her.

A family comes in, each member carrying a large cardboard box, donations for the store. They've been here before because they take the goods right to the back to the ladies who price each item before it's put on sale.

The Hutterite ladies have made their selections -- a pair of children's socks, a coffee mug, a cracked vase. The girl who caught my attention earlier asks to see the beads in the glass case. I get them out for her and she chooses the bright red ones. Laughing and joking, the little group leaves the shop.

Sending it abroad

A pale, ill-appearing gentleman holding a pair of trousers is next. I've watched him for the past hour selecting a pair of pants, then discarding them for different ones. The pants he finally chooses look like new. There isn't a flaw on them. He pays the cost, \$1.50, and I carefully put his purchase in a used Safeway grocery bag.

The women who speak Low German have amassed an enormous heap of clothes. "We'll pay now," says the pregnant one in English.

"All this stuff goes to Paraguay," the other one informs me. "We use some of the clothes for packing the breakable items we send. This is practical too since the clothes are useful. Many people are poor there and they have no second hand stores either. If they can't use what we send, they give it to the Indians, who are also very poor. So nothing is thrown away."

I add up and I pack. Just as I'm wondering where my next used plastic bag for wrapping is going to come from, a young man, his face sunburned to a bright red, wearing only a pair of shorts and sandals and carrying a bag stuffed with more bags, walks into the store. "Can you use some bags?" he asks.

"God must have sent you," I say.

The Mennonite lady comes forward. "I found no wide elastic, but I found this used girdle here and it has just the piece of elastic in it to fix my friend's corset. Here's 35 cents; that's what the tag says it costs."

The girl who's looking for costumes is holding a white, lacey bridal gown. "Just what we need for the play", she says. "And it only costs \$6.50. Too bad someone beat me to the tuxedo."

Cashing out

The orange T-shirt is ready to buy. "I'll have the mirror standing behind you," she says. "Here's the \$3."

"Do you know that it's cracked?" I ask.

"Sure, I can see that. I plan to stick it together there with some stuff I have. Then I paint the mended part black and people will think I have a stained glass window. Neat, eh?"

"You have a terrific imagination," I tell her.

The little, smiling man in the crumpled grey clothes leaves right behind her. Today he has bought nothing. At last not so far. He can, however, always come back.

The young man by the dresses has selected a dress with a wide bordered skirt. As I pack he confides, "I'll cut the skirt off and use it to sew a curtain for the back window of my van." Just as he walked out, he turns, smiled and says, "May the Lord bless you."

The giggling couple is ready to purchase also. The boy holds out a large, expensive-looking tuxedo, elegantly tailored. All in black. The price on the ticket pinned to the sleeve is \$1. I look at the tall young man. "You'll look great in it," I say.

"It's not for me, it's for her," he answers, indicating the petite size five girl at his side.

"It will need some alterations, then," I say.

"No, it won't. I'll wear it as is," she remarks.

"And why not?" I think to myself.

And so it goes. They come, they talk, they visit. The lonely ones, the forgotten ones, the wise ones.

It's four o'clock and the doors close.

We count the cash. \$408.12. Not bad, better than some days, not as good as others.

"How was your day?" asks my husband that evening.

"It was an ordinary Thrift Shop Day," I say.

"Will you go again?"

"I hope so. I certainly hope so." mm

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WORDS FROM THE WESTERN MOUNTAINS

by H.W. Friesen

Scenery: Only the mountains count, the Prairies are, well, the plains, and relatives who are also friends are to be treasured

Even with no relatives to visit near Fort Macleod, Alberta, the Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump historical site is one of many side trips available when travelling the prairies.

Prairie cousins are quite willing to visit B.C., but the reverse is not always true. Many BCers do not look forward to travelling across the prairies; they seem almost bewildered by the very prospect of such a journey, and readily provide excuses for not making the trip. Travel to the plains is much like a visit to the dentist: avoid or postpone if possible, go if absolutely essential but not more than once a year, and give thanks when it is safely over. Yet it must be done; teeth require attention and prairie cousins must be visited.

It becomes a pilgrimage, this annual uniting of vacation and visiting, of prairie and mountain, of plain and sky, of mosquito and west coast blood. It is truly a wandering between desert and mountain, a digging into the rich prairie soil of history, a searching for reunion with roots. It is a going home.

The B.C. view

Despite an interest in prairie relatives and roots, BCers are preoccupied with what they define as scenery. It is a limited understanding by prairie standards: only mountains are scenic. B.C. people are smug about their mountains as they conclude that there is no scenery east of Canmore. BC'ers have been seen standing near Moose Jaw gazing at the endless horizon, demanding mountains. But there are

mosquitoes, thunderstorms, an absence of trees, and wind -- all attractions which transplanted BCers have tried to forget.

If cousins are to be visited the prairies must be traversed either by air or land. A car can travel the distance in about 24 hours according to brave souls who stop only for essentials. Sleep is not an essential if speed is important. People in a hurry on this journey will miss the Head-Smashed-In Buffalo jump historical site, amongst others.

Highway variations

Highway 1 is the fastest route, frustrating because of its heavy summer traffic and the dangerous confusion of some sections having divided lanes and some sections having only one lane each way. This mixture of highway styles keeps drivers alert to oncoming traffic.

Highway 3 from Lethbridge to Hope provides a scenic variation -- a slower winding road through a number of small towns. The Yellowhead from Portage la Prairie to Kamloops through Saskatoon and Edmonton has more trees than the southern routes; the absence of steep mountain passes makes it ideal for anemic engines or recreational vehicles. West of Jasper, the Yellowhead provides a spectacular view of Mt. Robson, the highest peak in the Canadian Rockies. That is, if it's not raining.

The recently opened Coquihalla highway joining Kamloops and Hope is shorter than the traditional and still

available Highway 1 through the Fraser canyon. The Coquihalla is fast, scenic, and goes over the hills rather than between them. The \$10 toll per car allows prairie visitors to help BCers pay for this route.

U.S. routes attract some travellers because of cheaper gas and an excellent interstate highway system, the I-94 at Fargo west joining I-90 provides a superbly designed divided highway with only one traffic light before reaching Seattle. That traffic light in Wallace, Idaho, will be gone with the completion of the elevated route now under construction. This U.S. route adds about five hours to the trip. It also passes within 60 miles of Yellowstone Park. The U.S. 2, just south of the border, is not a divided highway. It cuts through the southern part of Glacier National Park and provides the option of travelling the Highway to the Sun. This narrow mountainous road has virtually no shoulders, few guard rails, and a steep drop of thousands of feet. It has become famous for its effect on the stomachs of some plains people. The Highway to the Sun is open only during the warmer months.

Traps and passes

Mountains are inviting and should be enjoyed more than from a car window. On Highway 3 the town of Frank near the B.C.-Alberta border still shows the results of a massive mountain slide early in the century. This route takes one through B.C.'s southern interior Doukhobour country.

Highway 1 has tourist traps designed for the masses, but some side trips are worth the time. One such excursion costs only time and gas: follow the sign just east of Revelstoke pointing to Mt. Revelstoke National Park. Twenty five kilometres of climbing switchback roads end on top of Mt. Revelstoke, with trails to alpine meadows and a spectacular view of mountains on all sides. Late July through August is the best time to visit Mt. Revelstoke; at other times there will be snow in quantities which prairie folk would recognize and appreciate. Whether travelling in Canada or the U.S., the vacant plains must be crossed; there is little to choose between plain scenery on either side of the border. A supply of coffee and sunflower seeds helps keep the driver alert.

Visiting family, etc.

With all due respect to prairie people, a high speed bullet train to move car and passengers from Winnipeg to Calgary would be ideal. It would also avoid the radar at Moosomin. Visiting small prairie towns is predictable and reassuring; they change slowly if at all. The bank, barber shop, and the slow moving vehicles are symbols of stability and sanity to city dwellers. Farmers still find time for coffee, analyzing issues from weather to government and feeling equally powerless to affect either. While waiting for rain they complain about government spending on welfare, lament the inadequacy of government drought payments and are quite oblivious to the inconsistencies of those attitudes.

Prairie visits rarely provide enough time to see all the relatives and invariably some are offended at not receiving that which they believe is their due. Elderly parents deserve and get priority, then other relatives, and if fortunate there may be time to see friends. Family reunions have the advantage of spending a few minutes with everyone, conversing in depth with very few, but still keeping in touch with that extended mass of relatives. If some of the relatives are also friends, a double blessing is ours and they end up on the priority list. Prairie cousins

planning a trip west want to know if they can borrow the extra bedroom for a few days.

The vacation is over and the mountains beckon. We meet only once a year and wonder if we'll see our elderly parents again. We head west, determined to avoid RCMP radar at Moosomin and to understand the legend behind the name Head-Smashed-in Buffalo Jump. mm

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OBSERVED ALONG THE WAY

by Roy Vogt



German visitors enrich and leave enriched; summer fades into autumn

"What do you do when winter comes?" a visiting German scholar asks me as we drive through the southern Manitoba countryside in late fall. "Life becomes quieter," I reply. "We retreat indoors, to read, listen to music, and to enjoy each other's company again."

I am surprised how easily this romantic description of winter in Manitoba crosses my lips. I want, of course, to impress the visitor. He is looking at a rather bleak landscape, somewhere between Landmark and Steinbach, and I am sure that he is wondering how life here can be bearable, let alone enjoyable, in the cold winter months. My reply is meant to assure him, and myself, that we are not stupid for staying here. We have our good reasons.

To some extent this is romantic nonsense -- which I am sure the visitor recognizes -- but mostly it is a sincere expression of the good things that a Manitoba winter makes possible. Changes in the rhythm of life, which accompany changes in seasons, do enhance life. There is something unusually cosy and refreshing about an evening spent listening to Mozart in a warm living room, with a snow-covered yard glistening outside. This is what I look forward to. What I choose to forget is the walk home from the university in -40 degree temperatures and the shovelling that is required after a heavy snow fall. There is no need to bother visitors with such minor details, or to spoil my own anticipation of winter. Therefore, with a warm felt hat, a face mask, and a thick parka I trudge cheerfully into the coming season.

The Germans are everywhere these days. Their new unity is celebrated on television screens and their amazing economic achievements are duly recorded in the press. We welcome a delegation of nine German scholars from Trier University to our campus in Fall for a week's exchange of ideas and friendship. I am impressed with their knowledge of Canada and their good command of English.

I am ashamed that my German isn't better. I still haven't learned how to construct a sentence of at least nine or ten lines with a dozen subordinate clauses. I genuinely love the grace and intricacy of German when it is spoken by a master. However, I am sometimes reminded of the German professor who raced home from his office one day because his house was on fire. What made him frantic was the knowledge that the only copy of his new nine-volume treatise on "The Domestication of the Camel: New Evidence From the Dead Sea Scrolls" was in the house. He was greeted at the door of his burning house by a fireman who shouted happily, "You are lucky Herr Professor. We were able to rescue the first eight volumes of your nine-volume work. Only the ninth volume burned." "But that is terrible", wailed the professor. "Why?" asked the startled fireman. "Because," the professor cried, "the ninth volume contained the verb."

The nine visitors from Trier are a congenial lot, even though they come from the birthplace of Karl Marx. One can even exchange pleasant insults with

them. I tell them, for example, that the Swedes think of hell as a place where there is a British cook, a French mechanic, a German policeman, and an American lover. To which one of the Germans replies: "It must also be a place where a Canadian makes the coffee." This same person insists that our coffee is so weak that he could drink 40 cups in the evening and still fall asleep quickly.

Several of us take the delegation on a day's bus trip through southern Manitoba (mentioned above). The route takes us from Winnipeg to Steinbach to Grunthal to Altona, and from there, in the company of Henry Ens, to the quaint village of Reinland. Here we observe a farm auction sale in progress, which the Germans find very intriguing. "I can't understand the auctioneer" one of the Germans says to me. "Neither can I," I reply. "It is a unique language understood only by buyers and sellers." After a fascinating look at some of the newest Triple E Motor Homes in Winkler we go on through Morden, ending with a lovely trip through the Pembina Hills and a brief stop at an old General Store in Roseisle. The Germans can't get over the lack of traffic. "There is a car," they shout, and then, after another 10 miles, "there is a second car!"

We stop at John and Marie Schroeder's home just outside of Roseisle for dinner, in time to watch the sun set beautifully behind the hills. The Germans seem genuinely thrilled by the hospitality and the scenery. They write to us later that despite the many good

intellectual sessions that they experienced during the week at the university, the highlight of their stay in Manitoba was that Saturday excursion. As one of them writes, "We are truly fascinated by the way you live."

More mundane matters also intrude upon our life. I seem to have no luck with cars. In one week our Taurus has a flat tire, then a broken fuel pump (the second in two years), and finally a broken transmission. The latter occurs as we are heading out of the city for a final weekend at the lake. I call the Manitoba Motor League and have the car hauled to Tara Ford. On Monday morning I call Tara and inform them: "Our car is on your lot. You can have it (luckily we leased it). I don't want to see it again." And we don't. The irony is that in that same week I am required to take our second car, an old, cheap, Hyundai Pony, for a government inspection, and it passes with flying colors. You don't always get what you pay for!

The city of Toronto beckons in late September for a weekend. Along with other past recipients of German scholarships I am invited by the German government for several days of discussions on German unity, etc. at the University of Toronto. The lectures, dinners, and company are excellent and there is time in between to walk through the campus where I studied more than 30 years ago (the old political economy school on Bloor Street where I had classes was once McMaster University and is now the Royal Conservatory of Music). A pleasant hour is spent with John Dirks, now the dean of medicine at the University of Toronto, and another with John Unrau, professor of English at York University. These prairie boys are doing well in the wicked city of Toronto, but my duty is to remind them of the virtues of the simple West. Unfortunately time does not permit more such missionary work with friends living in Toronto.

Back in Manitoba a shorter Sunday outing takes me to the Altona Mennonite Church, where an interesting

discussion on modern communism is followed by a sermon on economic justice, which in turn is followed by lighter and even more delicious fare at the lovely old home of the Ray Hamm's in Neubergthal. The meal and the visit are exceptional, but the pumpkin pie is out of this world. I am told it is made from a Swiss recipe. I'm not sure that's the only source. As Special Agent Dale Cooper in *Twin Peaks* frequently observes when eating his favorite mulberry pie, "Now I know where pies go when they go to heaven."

But that is enough travelling for one month. While this is being printed I hope to be in Germany observing at first hand the first few days of German unity. More on that in the next issue.

mm

REVIEW

Looking for ways to bring restoration to justice

reviewed by Paul Redekop

What is wrong with the justice system in our society? This is a question asked often and by different people in our communities, for different reasons. Unfortunately, the tendency is to drag out the same tired answers based on a model of punishment, incarceration and isolation.

A movement has however been emerging in the last two decades which provides a genuinely different response to crime. This response is one which is grounded in Biblical teachings, while also drawing on traditional community-based responses to crime. Howard Zehr, director of the MCC U.S. Office of Criminal Justice and a writer and consultant on criminal justice issues, has been one of the leaders in the emergence of this movement. In this book he provides a basic description of the model of restorative justice, contrasting it with the existing system, based on the principle of retributive justice.

Zehr, who is also an accomplished photographer, employs the imagery of changing lenses to describe and compare the major themes of each of these paradigms. For instance, the retributive model of justice sees crime as law-breaking. The task of the legal process is to establish guilt, so that just deserts may be meted out by inflicting an appropriate amount of pain. In contrast, the restorative model sees crime as harm done to people, so that obligations are created to make things right. Justice involves the victim, the offender and the community in a search for solutions which promote repair, reconciliation and reassurance.

These comparisons are developed in a way which combines complex theoretical distinctions with personal anecdotes and interesting bits of historical and factual information which should provide a good read for someone new to these issues as well as a valuable resource for practitioners.

Zehr, Howard, *Changing Lenses: A New Focus for Crime and Justice*, Herald Press, Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: 1990.

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*Gift of Grace: Margaret Laurence's
look at her own life as a writer*

reviewed by Tim Wiebe

Like each of her novels, Margaret Laurence's memoir is a gift. A gift from God to a writer who, at the relatively young age of 58, must have thought it strange to be recounting her life for posterity. (Two years later, Margaret Laurence would be dead of cancer). A gift to readers who, after the publication of *The Diviners* in 1973, would wait faithfully for 13 years -- and then be rewarded for their patience with another masterpiece. And a gift, finally, to subsequent generations of readers who might discover in Laurence's earthy, compassionate writing the depth of concern needed to help set this world aright.

Dance on the Earth is many things. It is a recollection of memories from Laurence's childhood years in Neepawa (immortalized in her novels as the gritty prairie town of Manawaka). It is the story of the several "mothers" who graced her life and encouraged her talent. It is the account of lives lived in her many homes -- in Somaliland, London, Buckinghamshire, and Lakefield, Ontario. And it is the confession, at times painful, of a woman writer who, in an age when women weren't expected to extend themselves beyond domestic confines, felt the need to choose between following her husband and pursuing her vocation. Rightly or wrongly, she would choose the latter option.

Most of all, though *Dance on the Earth* is the story of a woman trying to find her place in the world as wife, mother, artist and concerned citizen. We hear relatively little from Laurence about her novels. Granted, it's tantalizing to learn that *The Stone Angel* virtually demanded to be written. It's equally intriguing to discover that she knew that her last novel would be called *The Diviners* long before the story was firmly outlined in her mind. And it's deeply moving to contemplate the scene of Laurence, with her dying step-mother, Vera, (a former teacher), poring over the manuscript of what would become her first novel, *This Side Jordan*. But there are only snippets of information -- almost grudgingly shared -- about the body of work for which Laurence is most famous. The reader is left wishing to hear more of how these great works of fiction came into being.

But such revelation is clearly not part of Laurence's intention in this memoir. She deliberately places her career as a writer in the larger context of life itself. Then, she proceeds to celebrate its ebb and flow in a kind of literary dance. She shares the challenge of being a single mother. She rejoices in the rich blessings of deeply formed and rooted

friendships. She agonizes over the pain of misunderstanding (talking briefly of the controversy that dogged *The Diviners*). And she reveals her desire for a more peaceful, equitable world. Throughout, Laurence recognizes the potential of the human spirit to bear responsibility in love, and celebrates the presence of the Holy Spirit which, in her view, makes genuine creativity possible.

Especially illuminating as aspects of this celebration are the poems and articles, some never before published, which comprise the last 75 pages of the book. Here, we encounter Laurence as loving mother, staunch feminist, and ardent peace activist. Here, too, we come closest to touching the soul of one of our greatest writers.

In the poem which shares her memoir's title, we encounter something of Laurence's spirit, and sense something of the legacy she's left us:

I see young women dancing
dancing through the fire
proclaiming, praising, hoping,
speaking life's desire

may all the children
who are not yet born
come into a home place
not the terror-torn

I see old women dancing
dancing through all lands
foremothers with them joining
all of their hands

dance on, old women,
dance amidst the strife,
sing out, old women,
sing for life

I am one among them,
dancing on the earth,
mourning, grieving, raging,
yet jubilating birth.

Thank you, Margaret Laurence. And may your dance of compassion and love inspire all of us to freer, more responsible, more graceful living. mm

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Skydiving: To jump or not to jump is a question of overcoming fear

by Dana Mohr

WE must have rehearsed it 30 or 40 times. The first words that were supposed to come out of my mouth were, "Arch thousand, two thousand, three thousand, four thousand, five thousand, check thousand." Seemed simple enough. So why is it that instead of this elementary counting sequence -- and I've been counting successfully for 27 years -- all I could manage was an exquisitely earpiercing scream?

A scream, of course, is how any rational person should react when jumping out of a Cessna 182 at 3,000 feet. The question then must be asked, how rational was I? I had just willingly agreed to pay \$175 to plummet to my possible untimely death. The release forms I so blindly signed repeatedly mentioned the words, "death," "serious bodily harm," and "no responsibility." Had my wits been about me, I could have achieved similar sensations of absolute terror and fear completely free of charge, (O.K., maybe the bus fare to get there), by simply stepping out of a top floor window of the Richardson Building.

But no, I chose to jump under the qualified supervision of seasoned instructors at Skyscape, operating out of the Morden airport. In the long run this turned out to be a wise decision.

Jump therapy

Why I wanted to jump was beyond me. Truth be known, I didn't actually want to jump. I **had** to jump. Something about conquering deep-rooted fears. Fears of heights, fears of planes, fears of death. Yes, this was going to be a therapeutic occasion.

The day started at 9 a.m. when I, along with a group of equally idiotic

friends, arrived at Skyscape for our first jump instruction program. Our instructor, (regrettably I've forgotten her name -- I was only vaguely aware of my own at the time), calmly and methodically took us through everything we would need to know to successfully complete this suicide dive.

First we learned all the various parts of the "rig" and their corresponding functions. If nothing else I've mastered the vocabulary of the sport.

We then proceeded to a mock-up of the plane to learn and to perfect the very, very crucial exit manoeuvre; the same manoeuvre I so gracefully performed as I screamed my way towards earth.

Worrying of what might not

Satisfied we would all deplane like pros, our instructor ever so casually segued into the "minor problems you might, but probably won't encounter" speech. What to do, for example, if you find yourself twisting and twirling away when you've been specifically told this is a parachuting faux pas. Panic -- what else? After the pre-requisite panic, however, corrective measure must be taken. Simple enough, really, assuming you remember which solutions apply to which problems.

Suddenly it was lunch break. Even more suddenly it was over. It was now time for the final portion of our preparatory course. The "really serious problems that could arise, which never have yet, but if uncorrected could cause death" speech. The solution to all of these problems, which we'd never have to deal with, involved cutting away the main chute and deploying the reserve. I was visibly disturbed. I faintly recall

someone asking if I would like to step outside for some fresh air.

Next we were presented with a test of 44 questions to remind us of just how little the human mind is capable of retaining while under unnatural stress. Remarkably, I scored 43. Pleased as I was I knew that in my case theory might not necessarily translate well into practise.

Before I knew it we were drawing cards to determine jumping order. My threesome wisely drew second last. That allowed me ample time alternately to panic, mentally rehearse the jump and reflect on my current state of mind. I was amazingly calm. Too calm. What was wrong? Was it because I had made peace with myself and could willingly accept death? Or was the calm simply a prelude to what was to be one of the more incredible experiences of my life. I was hoping this was it.

Blue omen

As I was being suited up I remember being thrilled the jumpsuit was a lovely shade of blue. Trivial? Yes. Unimportant? You bet. But, it was my favourite colour. I took it as a positive sign.

My next recollection is of actually being up in the plane. Crouched on the floor. At 2,000 feet we took an observation pass to get our bearings so that when the ground instructor radioed "turn south," we'd in fact know where south was. At 3,000 feet we were ready to go. Well, the pilot and the jump master, at least, were ready to have us go. Jumper number one exited quite eagerly. Jumper number two exited somewhat hesitantly.

Jumper number three turned towards the open door, gasped for breath and looked down. Not bad. Not bad at all. My stomach remained intact. I grasped the door frames, placed my left foot on the foot support, moved my left hand outside the plane, my right foot propped in the door. I had assumed the ready position. With one foot out, one foot in, I recalled our instructor's words of wisdom -- "you are not jumping, you are merely stepping out into the wind." I signalled my readiness, knowing I had passed the point of no return. The jump master yelled, "Go"...and I did!

I stepped towards the imaginary red dot, chose to scream instead of counting, and before I knew it my chute had opened. Suspended in mid-air I thought, "Thank you, God. I owe you one. Now I'll just take a little peek above and see if everything is in order." The situation checked out just fine. All that remained before I was free to glide and enjoy the view was to release the brakes and grab onto the steering handles.

Will do it again

Up I reached, but horrors, my fingers fell about six inches short of the green strap. "Don't panic," I implored of myself, "I'll just steer with my mind." Yes, I admit it, for a moment I took full leave of my senses, but I quickly realized that in this particular case mind over matter was not going to work. I reached and I pulled, I twisted and I swore. At last, success. Now I was in control, turning north, east, south and west in response to the whims of the ground instructor. Twelve feet about ground I assumed landing position -- hands up, knees bent, legs together, muscles tensed. I flared on command and landed on my feet. And then on my back. But that was just a minor detail. I was on the ground, alive, jubilant, somewhat nauseous, but clearly proud of myself.

Again I was struck with an overwhelming calm. I had confronted my fears and I had overcome them. I had enjoyed confronting these fears! I plan to confront them again with jump number two. **mm**

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Facing the Apocalypse

reviewed by Tim Wiebe

You may find it hard to recognize Sandra Birdsell's mythical town of Agassiz. Ostensibly, it is Birdsell's version of Morris, Manitoba -- her place of birth to a French father and Mennonite mother. In reality (or surreality; the novel moves freely between the two), Agassiz is a microcosm of the jealousies, rigid lifestyles, and petty concerns which, in Birdsell's view, comprise the make-up of any human community. Agassiz, with its heterogeneous blend of Mennonites, Hutterites, Metis, Indians, Scots and British, is a mixture of almost the entire valley of which it is the epicentre.

But Agassiz is not just a typical western town. It is a village on the verge of apocalypse. The ancient glacier is melting, the river is rising, and most of the town's eccentric characters are too concerned with their own petty grievances to notice. Among these are J.P. Campbell, the local Justice of the Peace, concerned mainly with heading off native land claims; Albert Pullman, who spends much of his time writing to his dead aunt in England; Jacob Friesen, the kindly-yet-judgmental Mennonite pastor who is too ineffectual to keep his church together; and young Sandra Adams, who meets a murderous end when she naively tries to expose some minor league corruption at the local Macleods store where she works. Even as the novel closes -- with water at ankle level in the streets, churches ablaze, and native people blocking the highway on either side of the town to back their land claim demands -- life goes on as usual for these frustratingly dense Agassizians.

Fortunately, there are a prophetic few. Unfortunately, they are a strange lot. Take "Spinny" Minny Pullman, for example. Together with the crochety

Annie Schmoon, who sells frogs-legs for a living, she knows that something is about to happen. She is not quite sure what, but she does find herself slipping more and more from her rigid daily routine into worlds past and future. When she finally takes to the streets with a sign warning of the village's imminent end, however, she is ignored. Also shunted aside is Hendrick Schultz, a 12-year-old boy who knows the Bible by heart. The local Mennonite church treats him with a patronizing respect at first; then turns on him and his mother by accusing them of sexual impropriety. Not surprisingly, it is only Minnie -- and perhaps Hendrick -- who survive the flood, during which "the grey cornea of water curves up and up, bending the blue black of the sky until its stretched skin splits and the blue and grey melt into one and Minnie floats free." The rest of the town, it seems, just isn't willing to take the plunge into a different understanding of reality.

Birdsell's first novel is as strange and unpredictable as its main character, Minnie Pullman. At times, the reader is struck by the lyrical brilliance of her writing. At other times, one is frustrated by the incomplete nature of the plot. With so many story threads introduced, it becomes almost impossible for the author to weave a complete narrative tapestry. It's almost as if the speed with which the town disintegrates -- a seven day period of destruction paralleling the biblical seven days of creation -- makes an orderly plot structure impossible. If it is Birdsell's intent to leave the reader unsettled, hanging between the real and the mythical, she has achieved her goal. However, our great novelists, among them Robertson Davies, Rudy Wiebe and Margaret Atwood, have shown it is possible to create a compelling story while incorporating significant elements of religion and myth. Perhaps Birdsell will find a similar balance in subsequent work. Certainly, she is to be commended for taking the risk of carrying her apocalyptic vision through to its unnerving conclusion.

Now that Birdsell has obliterated

Agassiz from the face of the map, however, the reader is left with some disturbing questions. Are the other inhabitants of the town, just and unjust alike, simply left to die? Why should Minnie Pullman, who neglects her children and husband by living in another world, be the only one to survive the deluge? Why the rather blanket portrayal of the Mennonites as a narrow, selfish people concerned mainly with each others' sins and their own piety? (It is the Mennonite church which, in the end, burns to the ground). Why, too, the seeming obliteration of the native people whose striving for self-realization should, seemingly, earn them a better fate? And why, finally, the rather negative portrayal of human sexuality? Is it not possible for any character to think of sex as something other than illicitly unattainable or threateningly binding? Is even a single happy marriage relationship an impossibility in Birdsell's Agassiz? Birdsell's apocalyptic framework, it seems, collapses in on itself too quickly to allow much chance of redemption -- save for the Annie Schmoons and Minnie Pullmans who believe from the start and do little to warn the people of the coming watery armageddon.

Perhaps, though, this is precisely the author's point. Unless we are sensitive to each other and our environment -- unless we can begin construing reality from a different perspective -- we all stand in danger of being swept away. We either listen to the prophets and seers and live, or we ignore them and perish. We either learn to be genuinely open, human and compassionate, or we stick to our rigid routines and face destruction. The author presents these choices clearly as apocalypse overflows into Agassiz. It remains a tragedy, however, that she has left her characters and, by implication, all of us represented by the microcosm of humanity which is Agassiz, so very little time and opportunity for repentance.

Sandra Birdsell, *The Missing Child*. A novel (Toronto: Lester and Orpen Dennys, 1989). 319 pages, Hardcover, \$24.95. *mm*

THE POET'S WORD

Parent-Teacher Interview

the teacher calls you in
to the class
rooms so filled with chalk dust and
memories
pictures roughly sketched and colored with
bold, handsome, determined strokes of
primary crayola colours
"action" stills of bunny rabbits hopping, ears
unnaturally pink
and fishes swimming, fins stiff, mouths agape
the chalkboard is green now, not black boards
as they used to be
desks more formally aligned now than during the
experimental sixties
they parade row upon row with inside-sneakers perched
atop each desk
you see your child's shoes
atumble
one sneaker toe hovers over the edge of the desktop,
one hangs by a shoelace off the corner
and you think, "that is where he sits in this order."
The disarray pokes out curiously from the innards;
you know that is where he sits
and try to control that motherliness inside you which
urges you to clean up that mess, you contemplate
then decide against it
the child is ten now and he has to live with it, not you,
and sit on your hands, figuratively speaking.

Teacher introduces herself, stretches out her hand,
formally, inviting you to shake it but
you recoil slightly from such familiarity
you are wary, cautious of contact,
she is, after all, a teacher, a "grown-up" whose
hands are extended to instill
the fear of god, of the principal and of school rules,
to hold chalk,
snap rulers,
make you stand in the hall and
sit in Detention
after school
when you have disobeyed and have not been attentive.

"He does well in his schoolwork, spelling is excellent,
math skills are good,
he is progressing as he should." and tells you some sweet
story to indicate that she and your child are friends,
really, more than teacher-student,

your child is truly special
but you wait, anticipate the worst.
Where is the familiar, "easily distracted,"
"not living up to potential," "needs more discipline,"
the things they always said about you
when you were a child. What she does say is,
"he should be more involved in gym."

how can this be?
Where are the discipline/behavioral problems,
where is the rebel whom you call son?
Could this possibly be his worst crime?
Sweet mystery of life...

You don your most sincerely grown-up
expression
tastefully horrified
comprehension dawning
that your ten year old does not like particularly,
to scurry to the bathroom
change into cold wrinkled shorts (in mid-prairie winter)
with fifteen other boys
and dash to a gymnasium stinking of
old banana peels and sweaty socks and stale rubber,
memories of a trillion assemblies,
of Christmas shows, Remembrance days
to run around like mad after some brown
ball
kicked in the shins (and other places) and
bruised beyond the limit of endurance.

you say, "oh dear," in your most proprietous maternal manner

while your insides sing with joy at this, the
worst crime of your off-spring, it could have been...

and wonder when you will begin to feel
less of an imposter wearing her mother's dress,
smiling her Mom's tightly nervous smile
more like a parent with a right to be there
where you have been transported back
to youth,
anticipation of being made to stand in the hallway

which smells of a hundred lunches

commanded to stay in at recess
while the others
chatter and clatter by your condemned self
wild with the rush to Get Out!

"I never liked gym much myself,"
memories of vaulting boxes, gym mats, terror of those
baseballs whizzing by (I was the one who ducked).

"He needs to participate more."

You are **thinking**
how you will take him for ice cream at the
Dairy Queen
as reward
for braving the daily trauma of
being here in this place called school.

Shaking hands again,
you are "Mrs." Someone's Mother, you are
Someone who Pays Taxes,
you are Someone who Attends
Parent-Teacher Interviews.
Profuse thanks
for looking after
this fruit of your womb
the other eight hours of the day.

Down the corridor to the foyer,
teeny tiny water fountains,
short toilets and towel dispensers
Peeking into the library where
the Real Parents are having coffee
with sweets,
you are tempted to dash in, Oliver Twist-like,
grab hands full of ginger snaps
and run like hell.

Control yourself,
you are the Parent now,
walking with dignity to the nearest exit.

Outside
Freedom
Shake your head briskly
Light a smoke
Walk away.

You are yourself again
There are different sorts of Detentions
in the Real World.

--Lynnette Dueck

An Afternoon in St. Jacobs *(Antiques and Honey)*

There is nothing finer
on a cool autumn day
than strolling leaf-laden lanes
and turning into a local shop that smells
of wood and weather
farm and harvest
life and goodness
antiques and honey.

The proprietor is relaxed and warm
letting me browse
through shelves heaped
with interest

jars of jam
baskets of fruit
pictures and crockery
antiques and honey.

I spend an afternoon
making my choice
changing my mind
with delicious indecision
apples and wicker
fresh bread and cider
postcards and pickles
antiques and honey.

And there is nothing finer
on a crisp fall evening
than walking home
with the sweet spoils
of a day well spent
peace and contentment
thought and reflection
history and future
antiques and honey.

Tim Wiebe

A Song for the End of the World

Music bleeds
from a simple wooden instrument
sombre light shed
in memory of holocaust:
piercing insight shared
in hope of redemption
and apocalypse.

I imagine its debut
inside the barbed wire
evoking suffering the pain
of witnessed genocide
cauterizing wounds deeper
than souls now fragile
with the possibility
of new life.

— **Tim Wiebe**, *January 12/1988, Written during a performance of a portion of a Messiaen cello concerto which the French musician composed and first performed in a Nazi concentration camp.*

REVIEW

How we treat our children reveals ourselves

by Katherine Martens

For Your Own Good: Hidden cruelty in child rearing and the roots of violence by Alice Miller, 282 pages, 1980. First published in Germany as *Am Anfang war Erziehung* (translated from German) Canadian Publisher: Collins Publishers, Toronto. \$13.45 paperback.

We talk about childhood in sentimental tones, but anyone who looks closely at child-rearing practices, or remembers their own childhood with any sensitivity, quickly realizes that our sentimentality hides our profound failure to treat our youngest members with respect and dignity. Alice Miller believes it is not necessarily the trauma itself that results in illness or neurosis but the fact that the child is not allowed to express the hurt, rage, helplessness, despair etc. In many homes the motto could have read "Don't feel."

Generation after generation of parents take out on their children the hurts they received from their own upbringing. The name of this book immediately recalled for me the same words used to justify the spankings, beatings and other cruel punishments meted out to children. The first chapters are under the general heading of "Poisonous Pedagogy." As I read some of the lengthy quotes from child-rearing guidebooks for teachers and parents of the past two centuries, some written by German authors, I kept thinking where I had heard this before? Yes, the sermons I heard as a child on the church pew echoed many of the edicts described here.

All face some abuse

Some of the ideas that make up "poisonous pedagogy" are that the child's will must be broken early while it is

still in a formative stage, or that a child will only respect you if you answer force with force, and that obedience to a higher authority is one of the highest values we can teach a child. The roots of violence come from having been treated violently by someone in authority over us.

Miller believes most of us were subjected to some form of physical and emotional abuse as children, and many of us make light of it, saying that since it didn't hurt us it is harmless. Though we are survivors of that pedagogy "it would be just as false to deduce from this fact of survival that our upbringing caused us no harm as it would be to maintain that a limited nuclear war would be harmless because part of humanity would still be alive when it was over."

In the main part of the book Miller applies her theory of the effects of extreme parental cruelty on the upbringing of three people. First is the story of Christiane F. which she calls "The Search for Self and Self-Destruction through Drugs," then "Adolf Hitler's Childhood: From Hidden to Manifest Horror," and finally the story of a child murderer, Juergen Bartsch. These are all extreme cases of the psyche gone wrong, but these people were not monsters when they were born and the same processes that went on in their lives go on to some degree in all of us.

In spite of our traditional non-resistance stance Mennonites have not spared the rod and have used emotional and physical violence on their children. The hidden and not so hidden evidence of the cruelty of our child-rearing practices comes to light in neuroses and health problems even years after the deed and carries on to the next generation. The strong stance many evangelicals take with regard to the authority and power that a husband is to wield over wife and children is an example of poisonous pedagogy. Then we are told to forgive those who trespass against us. Miller asks, "Can we speak of forgiveness if we hardly know what was actually done to us and why? ...we could not grasp why we were being humiliated, brushed aside, intimidated, laughed at, treated like an object,

played with like a doll or brutally beaten."

In the chapter, "Steps to the path of reconciliation," in some of the most beautiful passages in the book she sums up what real forgiveness is. Genuine forgiveness does not deny anger but faces it head-on. It was my impression that the emphasis was on forgiving and forgetting in the sermons I heard. The process of remembering is painful and involves acknowledgement of a wrong done by a person or persons who purported to love us.

We would prefer to forget the past, whether it was sexual abuse or the fact that parental discipline was strongly influenced by Nazi ideas. When we open Pandora's box we risk our own anger and that of others who may also be implicated. James Urry's description of our attempts to record our story as "triumphant history" applies to individual as well as group preferences. "Let's remember the good times" is the rallying cry against opening up the painful areas.

A second book

A second book by Miller, *Thou shalt not be Aware: Society's Betrayal of the Child* (American edition, Penguin Books, 1984), is equally spell binding. Though the psychoanalytic parts of the book are slow reading, the main idea is easy to follow. Her thesis "The child is always innocent" is the idea which has helped to bring child abuse out of the closet. The name of the book is the unspoken commandment that abused children follow; instead of pointing the finger at the abusers, children internalize the bad feelings and split their emotions from their intellect. Society has been only too happy to blame the victims. The effects are neuroses, psychosomatic illness, madness and/or crime.

Have you ever wondered why there is such a difference in the way adults and children approach the world? There is delight and wonder in the eyes of a child, while the degree of successful maturation in our society is often measured by our sense of reality which is harshly defined. Where does the child's sense of wonder, the core of vitality go? Does it disappear because

REVIEW

the child is betrayed by the adult world? The old adage that those who do not know their history must repeat it bears thinking about. It is only by reliving and acknowledging and mourning the past that we are set free. The quick fix of forgiveness does not set us free unless we understand what was done to us and by whom. Until that time we are forced to repeat destructive patterns in order to understand our past.

A third book

Miller's third book, *The Drama of the Gifted Child: The Search for the True Self*, (1981, Basic Books) begins with the sentence: "We live in a culture that encourages us not to take our own suffering seriously, but rather to make light of it or even to laugh about it." Thus lack of sensitivity toward our own fate is seen to be a virtue. Miller illustrates the effect this has on individuals. Again, she takes issue with the belief that abusive treatment of children builds character, and she describes the devastating effects of the repression of early childhood events. Where an incident is buried it is much more than only the conscious memory that is buried; with it are buried the feelings and the sensory aspects resulting in a loss of vitality and joy of life.

These books written by the Swiss psychoanalyst underline the uncivilized manner in which the civilized world treats its children. They are not too technical but emotionally they are not easy reading. Yet I recommend them to Mennonites, and of course, others, who wish to understand what influenced our lives. Miller points out how the process of returning to the events of childhood can heal the past not by invoking guilt but by beginning a process of mourning. "Mourning is the opposite of feeling guilt; it is an expression of pain that things happened as they did and that there is no way to change the past." The truth can set us free by releasing the numbness that set in when those who loved us mistreated us and we denied that truth. mm

A look at two books for children

reviewed by Rita Urry

Silly Tillie by Jeanine Wine is based on the theme of the Good Samaritan. Homeless Tillie, who dresses in cast-off clothes and wheels her shopping trolley full of treasures around urban areas, is spurned by society. A local businessman who supplies free coffee to his customers refuses to give any to Tillie. But when he is the victim of an alley-way mugging on a winter's night it is Tillie who rushes him to hospital on her trolley after others, many of them his customers, pass him by.

The book has good illustrations using crayon and ink. The text is clear and can easily be read aloud. This is an enjoyable book which can be used in schools or churches for younger children (ages 4-8) to illustrate toleration and raise issues concerned with social justice.

It's Summertime, (for ages 3-6) has bold illustrations which although artistically catching may not appeal to young children who like clearer lines or more detail in their pictures. The theme of the book is obscure. It merely introduces summer activities but in a rather romantic manner, especially for urban children. The text on each page ends with the same phrase: "There's no time like summertime!" which becomes repetitive and breaks up the story-line.

Jeanine Wine, author and illustrator, *Silly Tillie*. (1989, Good Books, Intercourse, Pennsylvania. 17534, US \$12.95).

Elaine W. Good, with illustrations by Susie Shenk Wenger, *It's Summertime*, (1989, Good Books, Intercourse, Pennsylvania, 17534, US \$12.95)

Rita Urry teaches elementary school in New Zealand, and was visiting Canada with her husband, James.

MIRROR MIX-UP

PHACE



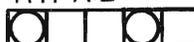
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Words in 2 Cor. 9:7

C H A R E F U L

G I V E R

The winner of the September contest will be announced next edition.

In the meantime, enter this month's contest.

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 November 9.

name

address

city/town

postal code

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

The Little Swan of Emden

by Harry Loewen

Brother and Sister Rutgers of Emden in northern Germany were members of the Mennonite congregation in which Leenard Bouwens was elder. Bouwens was a zealous Mennonite preacher and evangelist and most successful in his ministry. In the 30 years of his ministry he had preached many sermons and baptized well over 10,000 persons. He was thus the most successful minister as far as numbers of converts and baptisms were concerned. But there was one person in his congregation, a woman, who opposed this powerful elder and contributed to a significant controversy and division at that time. This woman was Swaen Rutgers, or Zwaatje as she was affectionately called.

The early Anabaptist-Mennonite church was very much concerned about the moral purity of individual members. All early leaders, including Menno Simons, Dirk Philips, and of course Leenard Bouwens, were most strict about the faith and life of their members, although Menno was at first quite lenient toward erring members. It is not known what Brother Rutgers's sin was, but he was for some reason excommunicated and subsequently banned by Bouwens. Rutgers was now to be avoided by members of his congregation in the hope that he would repent of his sin and eventually come back to the church. Not only was he to be shunned by his brothers and sisters, but his wife too was ordered to deny her husband "table and bed." This marital avoidance, as it was called, was the ultimate punishment that a transgressor in the congregation could be given.

The question now was what Swaen would do. Would she comply with this harsh rule in the church and thus reject her husband, or would she disobey and thus bring the displeasure of Bouwens upon herself? Swaen decided to defy Bouwens and the church rule and side

with her husband. In her distress she turned to her many friends in the Emden church and in other places and even appealed to Menno Simons himself to help settle the matter in her favour. Other members of the Emden church also wrote Menno in support of Swaen.

Menno Simons now had to referee between the two factions in the dispute. On the one hand his heart went out to Swaen and her husband. On the other hand he agreed with his fellow elders that sin had to be dealt with in the church and that members who refused to repent had to be disciplined. However, he could not agree with his fellow elders that marital avoidance did any good or that it could be supported with scriptures.

In November, 1556, Menno wrote a letter to the church in Emden concerning marital avoidance. He began by stating: "With great sadness of heart I inform my dear brethren that I receive one complaining letter after another, touching the relation of husband and wife in regard to the ban; so that I notice great sadness with many -- a matter that does not surprise me at all; for from the beginning of my service, yes, more than twenty years, I have been distressed with great fear concerning this matter to this very hour, and cannot bring myself to agree with the extremism which is in evidence in the Netherlands just now."

Menno agreed that adulterers, thieves, and those who left the faith had to be disciplined. But if a church member was a believer and had not committed any great sin and then decided not to avoid his or her mate, such a person should not be banned. Husband and wife, according to Menno, are one flesh and separating the two "is fraught with much danger." "In view of this," Menno adds, "my heart was filled with much sorrow on hearing that a certain length of time was given Swaantje Rutgers in which to leave her husband, or that in case of her failure to leave him, she was to be delivered up to Satan and excommunicated." Menno concluded his letter by stating: "Excommunication is instituted for reformation and not for destruction. Oh, that all were of one

mind with me in this matter!"

Sadly, not all were of one mind with Menno Simons and the Swaen Rutgers case did not end happily. As a result of the harsh application of the ban there were several divisions within the Anabaptist community. The Swiss Anabaptist and those from southern Germany separated themselves from the Dutch and North German churches. Menno Simons himself was threatened with excommunication by the Leenard Bouwens' party. Bouwens, unyielding to the end, banned Swaen Rutgers, and a year later, in 1557, at a meeting called to discuss marital avoidance, Menno Simons was won over to the strict practice of Leenard Bouwens and Dirk Philips.

But the story does not end there. Leenard Bouwens, the strict and zealous elder, experienced hardships as well. After Menno Simons' death he was accused by the church of domineering ambition, accepting money for spiritual services, and wine drinking. As a result he was put aside for several years and in 1565 Dirk Philips deposed him from his position as elder. There are no records to tell us what happened further to Swaen Rutgers and her husband. But the issue of marital avoidance has plagued Mennonites until the present time. mm



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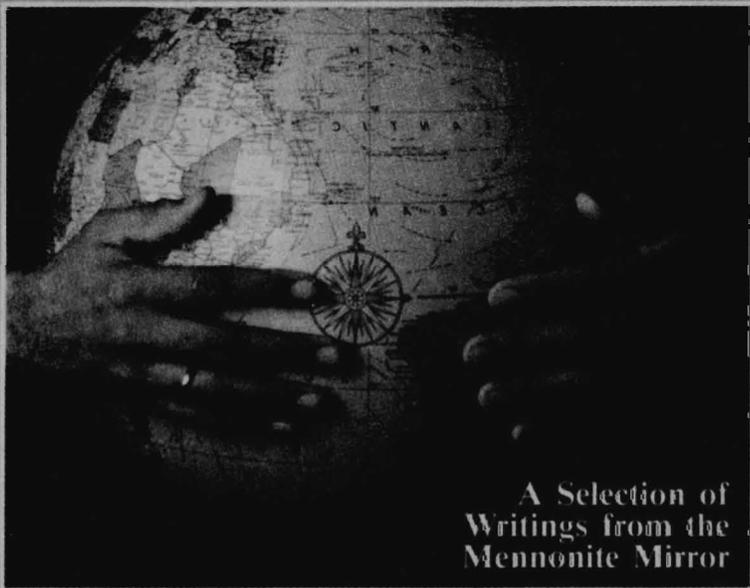
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MANITOBA NEWS

Caroline Martens is on a one-year Mennonite Central Committee assignment in Winnipeg serving as an assistant chaplain at the Community Ministries for Ex-Offenders. She is a member of the Morrow Gospel Church in Winnipeg.

Eva Martens, is on a two-year Mennonite Central Committee assignment in Winnipeg serving as a mail clerk and receptionist at the MCC Canada head office. Martens, who began her assignment in August, is a member of the Crystal City Mennonite Church.

Elaine Friesen is on a two year MCC assignment in Hazard, Kentucky serving as a nurse for the Hazard-Perry County Community Hospice. She is a member of the Schoenfeld Mennonite Church in Pigeon Lake.

Connie Wiebe, is on a one-year MCC assignment in Clearbrook as a caregiver of mentally handicapped adults with the MCC B.C. operated supportive care services. She is a member of the Springstein Mennonite Church.

Dave Pankratz is on a two-year MCC assignment in Winnipeg serving as an accountant at the MCC Canada head office. He is a member of Winnipeg's Cornerstone Christian Fellowship.

Yvonne Lesage is on a one-year MCC assignment in Winnipeg as a caseworker coordinator with the MCC Manitoba operated Mediation Services. She is an associate member of the Steinbach Evangelical Free Church.

Ken Derksen attended orientation in the middle of his two-year MCC assignment in Winnipeg serving as manager of computer services at MCC Canada's head office. He is a member of Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church.

Mary Remple is on a four-month MCC assignment in Akron, Pennsylvania, serving with SelfHelp Crafts. She is a member of the Morris Fellowship Gospel Chapel.

Doug and Sandra Deline is on a two-year MCC assignment in Akron serving in maintenance at MCCs International head office and she will serve as a budget and housing counsellor at Tabor Housing in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. The Delines have two children, and are members of Winnipeg's Trinity Baptist Church.

Nanette Beauchamp is beginning a one-year SALT assignment with MCC in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, where she will work as a child care worker for Stansbury's Children's Home. She was last employed at Wild Strawberry Children's Centre in Winnipeg. She is a member of Fort Gary Mennonite Brethren church. Her parents are Barbara and Murray Beauchamp of Winnipeg.

Nineteen mental health care professionals from the Soviet Union will visit Canada and the U.S. October 12-20 as part of a **Mennonite Health Services/Mennonite Central Committee** exchange program. The visit follows a 1989 tours of 21 Canadian and American mental health professionals to the Soviet Union. While in North America the Soviets will travel in four groups visiting southern Manitoba/Regina, southern Ontario, eastern U.S. and the U.S. mid-west. The groups will visit mental health hospitals and programs to learn more about how churches provide care for people with mental illnesses. The Winnipeg/Regina group will participate in grand rounds at Winnipeg's Health Sciences Centre, where Vladimir Ivanevich Kasharov, a leading Soviet psychiatric researcher, will give a lecture to doctors and medical students.

Albert and Esther Durksen were

installed as pastoral couple at the North Kildonan Mennonite Church in September. The Durksens were previously at the Springstein Mennonite Church.

The annual **MCC Auction** at Morris raised \$105,000 this year, about \$3,000 more than last year. The blustery weather did not totally dampen the spirits of the approximately 7,000 who attended.

In July, the **Red River Valley Echo** was purchased by the **Golden West Group** from D.W.Friesen and Sons Ltd. of Altona.

On August 2, 1990, the late **A.A. Kroeker**, founder of Kroeker farms, was inducted into the Manitoba Agricultural Hall of Fame. He was recognized for his special contributions to agriculture and to the "rural way of life."

Triple E Canada of Winkler has received a federal Western Diversification Loan, to assist the company in expanding export markets.

Bruce Enns, former coach of the Winnipeg Wesmen basketball team, and presently coach of the University of British Columbia Thunderbirds, is spending three months in Syria working with the Syrian national basketball team.

A new **pharmaceutical plant** will be built in Steinbach with the help of an \$8 million investment from a consortium from Taiwan and the Philippines. The 75,000 square foot plant should be approved for operation in late 1992. The company will specialize in sustained-release formulas for already-existing drugs.

Harold Redekopp has been appointed as vice-president of regional broadcasting operations of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. A native of Win-

nipeg, he has been with the CBC for the past 17 years. He began as a music producer for CBC Radio in 1970, and in 1981 became head of radio music.

Lorne Friesen, formerly pastor of First Church, Mountain Lake, Minnesota, has become chaplain at Eden Mennonite Mental Health Centre in Winkler.

Gordon Zerbe has succeeded **Dr. David Schroeder** as instructor of New Testament at the Canadian Mennonite Bible College.

Reg Toews, former executive secretary of MCC, has been appointed treasurer of the Mennonite World Conference, replacing **Abe Schlichting**. Toews is currently assistant deputy minister of the mental health division for the Manitoba government.

Eugene and Helen Derksen of Steinbach celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary recently at the Steinbach Mennonite Church. For many years Eugene was editor of **The Carillon** and president of **Derksen Printers**.

Christopher L. Arney, formerly of Winkler is the new conference minister for the Conference of Mennonites in British Columbia.

Gordon Epp Fransen of St. Catharines is the new treasurer for the Conference of Mennonites in Canada.

Bernie Neufeld is teaching music at Canadian Mennonite Bible College for one year.

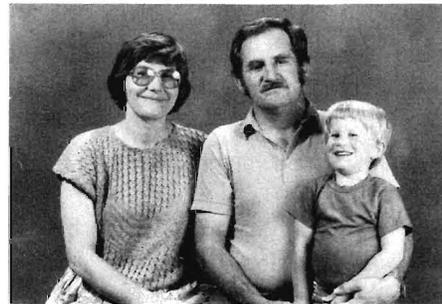
Peter Penner will be teaching mathematics at Canadian Mennonite Bible College this year.

Jim Suderman has completed his work as archivist at the Heritage Centre in Winnipeg.

Ed Unrau, University of Manitoba government relations officer and managing editor of the **Mennonite Mirror**, received the best achievement in crisis management award in the 1990 Excel-

lence Award Program of the Canadian Council for the Advancement of Education, for his submission on Animal Care and Medical Research. He also received the award for Best Achievement in Overall Institutional Advancement for a program he developed -- Building Political "Goodwill."

Helen Pankratz, long term volunteer at Concordia Hospital, was awarded the Canada Volunteer Award of Merit from the office of Perrin Beatty, Minister of National Health and Welfare, Ottawa. She is a member of First Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.



Diedrich and Mary Anne Plett of Winkler, most recently of Waterloo, Ontario, are beginning five-year MCC assignments in Mexico where they will be working as MCC country representatives. Pletts previously served with MCC in Bolivia. Diedrich received a diploma in Bible from Steinbach Bible College and a diploma in agriculture from University of Manitoba. Mary Anne received a diploma in psychiatric nursing from Selkirk Mental Health Centre and a certificate in the volunteer management program at Conestoga College in Waterloo. They have been studying the past two years at the University of Waterloo and Wilfred Laurier University in Waterloo. Pletts are members of Fort Garry Evangelical Mennonite Church and are associated with First Mennonite Church in Kitchener. Their children are Samuel, Timothy, Jonathan and Benjamin.

Esther Wiens of Winnipeg is beginning a one-year MCC assignment in Chengdu, China, where she will teach English. Wiens is serving in China under the auspices of the inter-Mennonite China Educational Exchange

Program, but will be sponsored by MCC, one of five sponsoring agencies for inter-Mennonite work and service in China. Wiens is a member of Portage Avenue Mennonite Brethren Church in Winnipeg.

Correction: The item in the September edition should have read that **Jake and Martha Bergman** were ordained in May in the Altona Berthaler church.

School Enrolment: Canadian Mennonite Bible College, 165 undergraduates; 7 graduates. Mennonite Brethren Bible College, 176 undergraduates; 26 graduate. Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute: enrolment, 503. Mennonite Collegiate Institute, 150. Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, 283.



Gerhard and Hilda Pries of Landmark have begun three-year MCC assignments in Happy Valley and Goose Bay, Labrador. They are working as MCC program coordinators. Gerhard previously served with MCC Canada in Winnipeg as an accountant. Prieses are members of Prairie Rose Evangelical Mennonite Church in Landmark. They have a son, Adam.

A three-year grant of \$9,900,900 was awarded to MCC by the **Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)**. The grant is the third three-year grant awarded to the agency by CIDA, the international relief and development arm of the Canadian government. The funds will be used by MCC for education, health, agriculture and community development programs in 15 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The first **International Mennonite Retreat On Disability** started Friday July 20, at the Canadian Mennonite

Bible College just before the Mennonite World Conference. The FIMROD Retreat, as it was called, involved about 200 people from all over the world. People from 15 countries were represented, including those from Africa, Central and South America, Europe, the Soviet Union. Not only was it a retreat on disability, it was a time for people involved with various disabilities to share, discover each person's giftedness, and to find out how others experienced disability in another culture. There were 20 workshops including those dealing with specific disabilities: deafness, blindness, mobility-handicapped, and those with invisible disabilities. Other workshops discussed gender roles and related issues, inclusiveness and access in the church, employment, and advocacy. It was a time to learn, to share, and to discuss.

Mennonite mediator on scene at Oka

The low-key MCC mediator is clearly more comfortable working behind the scenes in the tense Mohawk crisis than talking to a reporter.

But **John Paul Lederach**, who has advised the Mohawks at Kahnawake during this summer's conflict, agreed to speak publicly after watching Mohawk efforts at negotiations misrepresented by the federal and provincial governments.

Lederach, coordinator of MCC's international conciliation program, says both governments have taken advantage of internal Mohawk divisions and used them repeatedly to hamper negotiations with "divide and conquer" tactics. He says he now questions whether government negotiators were ever given a mandate to reach a negotiated settlement.

"Their strategy (governments') all along has been to separate out the 'good' Indians from the 'bad' Indians," says Lederach. "That has been debilitating to the other side (Mohawks) and has

undermined negotiations."

Lederach -- who has successfully mediated a wide variety of conflicts, including a dispute between the Sandanista government and Miskito Indians in Nicaragua -- first became involved in the Mohawk crisis when natives at Kahnawake asked him to visit. He arrived about a week after Mohawks blockaded the Mercier Bridge to Montreal on July 11 to protest the Quebec provincial police's storming of Mohawk barricades at Kahnatesake, near Oka. When his initial visit did not lead to a direct mediation role, he was asked by the Khanawake Mohawks to help the Mohawks present their concerns in a manner that would foster constructive negotiations.

Over the summer he has made two more visits to Kahnawake and been in daily telephone contact the rest of the time from his home in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

But despite extensive efforts to move towards productive negotiations, he says, it gradually became apparent that Ottawa and Quebec increasingly pursued solving the dispute through military might. "It has continually moved into a spiral of who has the biggest guns. Until we move away from might is right, we won't be able to solve this conflict."

Instead, he warns that the governments' tactics have sown the seeds for more confrontations with natives across the country. "I am disappointed that the focus has been on the immediate issue of the barricades and not on positive long-term relationships," he says. By skirting the key issues of sovereignty and land claims and focusing on criminality and weapons, the governments have perpetuated the cycle of anger and mistrust which sparked the crisis, he says.

"Oka is just the tip of the iceberg. They might be able to use the military against these two small bands. But what are they going to do in a dispute with the 10,000 Cree in northern Quebec?"

It should not have taken weeks to agree to the Mohawks' preconditions for negotiations, he says, a period of time which raised tensions and made the ensuing negotiations more difficult.

These included access to food, medical attention and spiritual advisers behind the barricades and the presence of international observers. Then the governments kept everyone on edge by turning the negotiations on and off "like a faucet," rather than agreeing to a basic process for settling the dispute.

"A basic rule of thumb of any negotiations is that before you discuss specific issues you agree to basics like a meeting place, schedule and how the agenda will be formulated," he states.

According to Lederach, a very serious question was raised about the government sincerity when Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa broke off talks and accused the Mohawks of negotiating in "bad faith."

"I was at a total loss to understand that accusation", he says. "Bad faith doesn't fit what was going on at that point. What I know was on the table was a very concrete proposal which would have addressed everyone's concerns."

In fact, Lederach had been intimately involved in helping the Mohawks put together the four-point proposal which Quebec rejected. That proposal was a significant attempt to move beyond "either-or" demands from both sides which had plagued earlier negotiations. The government had been demanding that the barricades come down before they'd discuss key issues like sovereignty while the Mohawks refused to give up their only leverage.

"This proposal was an effort to put forward 'both-and' thinking that would have looked at the immediate concerns of the governments and the Mohawks' long-term issues. Then, boom, it was called 'bad faith.' It left the impression that the government had not intended to reach a negotiated settlement."

Although the Mohawks' August 22 proposal included an offer for a phased-in removal of the barricades and opening of traffic across the Mercier bridge, government negotiators objected to their request for a cooling-off period during which talks about a comprehensive negotiating framework would continue but no arrests would be made. But instead of offering a counter-proposal (which would have been standard nego-

tiating procedure), government representatives walked away from the table and Quebec and Ottawa ordered the military to take down the barricades.

What got lost in the midst of the ensuing images of tanks and soldiers confronting armed Warriors, Lederach says, were the Mohawks' deeper reasons for protesting the town of Oka's plans to expand a golf course into an Indian burial ground -- their long-standing demand that Ottawa and Quebec recognize their status as a sovereign nation.

According to MCC Canadian Programs Coordinator Ed Barkman, the agency doesn't regret its decision to spend thousands of dollars to support Lederach's role as an adviser to the Mohawks, even though a negotiated settlement did not occur. "He went there to push for a non-violent, just solution," Barkman says, adding that "this experience shows just how hard trying to be a peacemaker can be."

Meanwhile, at Oka, members of the Montreal Mennonite Fellowship have been spending time observing police activity near the community. "We were just there to let the police know that they were being watched," says Fellowship pastor Laura Loewen.

One of the main fears of the Mohawks is what will happen to them if they should be arrested by the Quebec Provincial Police, known as the Surete du Quebec, or SQ.

Additionally, the Eglise Evangelique de Saint-Eustache (Mennonite Brethren) is located very close to Oka. Two families from that congregation were evacuated from their Oka homes.

From a report by Ruth Teichroeb (MCC).

Hanover Doors, a Steinbach manufacturer, has been listed among Canada's 50 fastest growing companies by **Small Business** magazine. The company ranked 34th in a nation-wide survey of small businesses according to percentage sales over five years. The company was started by Norman "Chuck" Toews in 1977. In 1980 his son Mitch joined the company, eventually buying it in 1988 along with his uncle, Earle Toews. The company manufactures,

installs, services and distributes overhead doors, specializing in car wash doors.

Michelle Sawatzky of Steinbach was selected as all-star setter in the volleyball tournament at the Western Canada Summer Games held in Winnipeg. She led Manitoba to the gold medal with a three-game sweep over British Columbia in the final game. She was a member of three gold medal winning teams this year--the Manitoba Junior team and the Lady Bison team of the University of Manitoba which won the CIAU championship. She was named most valuable player at the CIAU championships. She has been playing with Canada's National "B" team and has been selected to represent Canada at the World Student Games in England next year. An accomplished musician, she will graduate with a degree in music in three years.

Henry Kasdorf and **Steve Pasiciel** of Steinbach were members of Manitoba's men's volleyball team that won the gold medal in the Western Canada Summer games.

David Bergmann of Glenlea participated in the final of the Canadian Apprentice Cook of the Year competition held in Winnipeg in June. He is an apprentice cook at the University of Manitoba Faculty Club.

John A. Lapp, MCC executive secretary, recently visited MCC workers in Soviet Armenia. He participated in opening ceremonies in May for the first of seven village clinics which are part of a joint earthquake rebuilding program of MCC and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency. Currently seven MCCers are working in Armenia, including **Henry Gerbrandt**, a member of Gospel Mennonite Church in Winnipeg.

COMING EVENTS

Mennonite Community Orchestra: Henry Engbrecht conducting a program of music by Kabalevsky, Debussy, Bach, and Rogers and Hammerstein; with Kristina Martens, piano, and the First Mennonite Church male choir; 3 p.m., at Jubilee Place, Roverton Avenue, Sunday, October 28.

Eden Health Care Services: fund-raising banquets, October 25, 26, 27 in Winnipeg, Steinbach, and Winkler respectively. For information call Eden in Winkler.

Third Annual Bethania Fund Raising Dinner, Wednesday, November 7, 1990. Fort Garry Place. Speaker, Al Reimer. Tickets \$ 60 pp. For further information call 667-0795.

Camps with Meaning Fundraising Banquet, Sunday, November 4, 5:30 p.m. at the Big M Entertainment Centre in Morris. Speaker Don Posterski. For information on tickets call 896-1616.

Mennonite Authors: Meno Simons College is sponsoring two days of readings on Friday, November 9, at 7 p.m. for English books with readings by Sandra Birdsell, Sara Klassen, Peter Pauls, and Al Reimer; on Saturday, November 10, at 9:30 a.m. for German books with readings by Vic Doerksen, George Epp, Karl Fast, and Elisabeth Peters.

CEMETERY RESEARCH

Descendants of the pioneers who homesteaded near Altona, Manitoba, around 1880 are restoring their family cemetery, located at Eigengrund. The cemetery dates back to 1884 when three of Jacob and Katharine (Schwartz) Braun's daughters died of the plague. Anyone who can assist in providing names of people buried in the cemetery is asked to contact: W.R. Braun, 46 Deloraine Drive, Winnipeg R2Y 1J5; telephone 837-4675.

YOUR WORD

Some of the letters below are a response to our April editorial on building a German pavilion at The Forks in Winnipeg. The main point of the editorial was that The Forks was more suitable for a native centre or a multicultural centre. Another point of the editorial was that while Mennonites have quite justifiably co-operated with the German community in many projects and should continue to do so in the future, the German Congress, in developing its plans for the centre at The Forks, assumed it had the support of the Mennonites without consulting with them. The editorial also argued that although the Mennonites started off with a Dutch culture, they had assumed the German culture in the last several hundred years and therefore, there was a considerable affinity between the Mennonites and the German community. However there were some differences which should be respected.

WHAT UNITY?

Whenever a judge reviews evidence prior to passing sentence, he carefully examines previous precedents relating to the case in hand. This represents proven and prudent jurisprudence. A similar review of precedents would have been advisable prior to the outcry and lament marking tone and content of the editorial by Roy Vogt. To wit: Roy comes from a community with one of the most pronounced, if not the most pronounced, disparity of records in the Lord's garden on earth; there are a score and more churches in Steinbach. Each is evidence of yet another ultimate claim to God's ways. A collective community of fellowship? Fat chance. And Roy knows their/his record in the claims and endeavours relating to God's ways to men, and vice versa, full well. And now Roy wants his readers to believe that common mortals of the multi-cultural stripe should and could get together and live out the rest of their lives in happy unison and in family accord under one mortal tent at The

Forks Centre? What audacity to believe that humans will succeed where the precedent of God's handiwork has failed. What gall to even recommend such foolhardiness.

In essence, where God will fail, Mennonites prevail.

German and Mennonites ... In the broader context, I find it disquieting that the vast majority of Mennonites who are presently leaving the Soviet Union are not opting for their fellow-believers in North America, but are setting up domicile in the Federal Republic of Germany.

One finds such action disquieting but not surprising, for as one Mennonite Umsiedler told me in Espelkamp on condition of anonymity in March: "*Die Mennoniten Kanadas haben uns bis jetzt nur das Wort Gottes gebracht, die Deutschen geben us das Wort und die Mark des Lebens.*"

To follow Roy's well-meant advice would invite wholesale disarray and related deficits and general disaster, i.e. inquiries, empty promises, injunctions, fools' freedom, bickering and muddling, and above all, **DEFICITS** et al, now known internationally as 'Made in Canada.'

To the Deutschkanadier, I say, GO FOR IT, and please accept us Mennonites for what we are. If you won't have us, who will?
Sincerely,
Jack Thiessen,
Gimli.

MANY GERMAN CONNECTIONS

Roy Vogt's editorial "How 'German' are Mennonites," stating outright that the German Canadian Congress had no right to speak on behalf of the Mennonites disturbed me. The Mennonites were included as one of the groups the Congress listed in the item that appeared in the Free Press. Perhaps the news story should have specified "German Mennonites" but historically speaking it would be unnecessary. Here are some tangible facts:

1) Of the thousands of Mennonites who currently leave the Soviet Union all are recognized by the Soviet and German governments as German Aus-

siedler. As far as I know not a single one of them claimed he was Dutch.

2) All the Danziger Mennonites who came to Canada after 1945 claim to be German. Ethnically they are the same people as those who came or whose ancestors came via Russia.

3) When the Mennonites fled to Moscow in 1929 they appealed to the German embassy and on the intervention of President Hindenberg several thousand of them were permitted by the Soviet government to leave the U.S.S.R.

4) When the Canadian Mennonites arrived in Mexico in the 1920s they soon approached the German consul in Chihuahua, Walter Schmiedehaus, to assist them in dealing with Mexican authorities. The Canadian and Russian Mennonites of Paraguay asked for and received cultural assistance (books, teaching aids, etc) from the German embassy in Asuncion.

5) When the Mennonites came to Canada in the 1870s an important intermediary between them and the Canadian and Manitoba governments was the German consul William Hespeler. If I remember correctly, the Mennonites at a later date elected him to the provincial legislature.

6) In 1874 when the Mennonites had a public reception for the Canadian Governor General, Lord Dufferin, they displayed side by side the British and German flags.

7) The current (Spring 1990) newsletter of the "Manitoba Parents for German Education," which is published with the assistance of the Government of Canada and Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Recreation, assisted by such organizations as the German Canadian Congress, Mennonite German Society, and others (all listed), has about half of its advertising by Mennonite firms. The newsletter also carries all the winners in the "Manitoba German Language Contest" which has nine sections and of the 27 winners 18 are Mennonites; in the "German Poetry Recital" with six classes with four winners in each class, 14 of the 24 are Mennonites. I could cite many more examples of Mennonite identification with their German heritage.

As for requiring the Germans to
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dedicate their centre to include others, it is like asking the family which buys a tombstone for its parents to list on the stone not only their parents but also the parents of those whose children neglected to dedicate a stone to them. It is quite in order for some of our people to call themselves Dutch, but I can tell them that if our Hollanders ever decide to establish their own cultural centre, those Mennonites would have difficulty being accepted by them. The linguistic and cultural gap is too great.

Victor Peters,
Moorhead, Minnesota

FRUITLESS DEBATE

Again the debate is on: 'Are we Mennonites German or Dutch' or even (Belgian to which country my husband has just traced his roots) or maybe non-national. We are a faith community that has had to resettle time and again due to its unpopular pacifist stance in time of war. I grant that therefore we are a mixed race, yet predominantly in our schools and homes, German culture prevailed before we became Canadians. I personally have been greatly enriched by this and am so glad that in our home, Uhland, Goethe, Freiligrath, Storm, Schiller took their place beside Byron, Shelley, Keats, Shakespeare, and Tennyson. I still am uplifted and comforted by the German songs my parents sang.

Aside from this, today I am haunted by the lines of the poem that go something like this: "Blow blow ... thou bitter Wind ... Thou art not so unkind as Man's ingratitude."

I keenly feel that all of us of Mennonite extraction who come from Russia since 1920 owe a tremendous debt to Germany. Even as early as that, Germany assuming we were Germans, spoke for us with the Russian Government, granting many of us permission to emigrate. When Canada refused family members' entrance due to illness or disease, Germany was the haven of rest till these people were treated and could follow. Then after the Second World War, many, many Mennonites, again under the assumption that they were Germans, were allowed to flee

with the German retreating armies out of Russia. Umsiedler told us that often these soldiers gave their starving children their last rations of food. They were very grateful. Many many Mennonites owe their lives to the fact that they were taken along with the army.

Today Germany has resettled over 20,000 Mennonites (their German people) in compassionate, caring ways that baffles the mind of those of us who served there for a year or more. Ed and I too were privileged to witness this amazing happening. I too have many scribblers full of stories told me by these folks; stories of suffering, genocide, torture and death camps, too difficult to believe. They asked me not to publish these since at that time they feared U.S.S.R. retribution, or risk to those who stayed behind.

Are we opportunists who are German when we are in distress and then join the voices of protest when Germans want to build a culture centre? It is a rich culture. Should we protest when after fifty years they too want to set up a small monument to the tremendous suffering they experienced since the Second World War. The chunk of Berlin wall tells only a small segment of that story of being fenced in with freedoms lost. In time of War all participants suffer. Let us share our grief. Now is the time for hatreds to end ... for forgiveness to take its place.

Here I need to quote a very gentle dear pastor friend we met in Germany. Some of you know him from his writings to *Der Bote*. He spent many years in the Gulag often near death due to starvation, torture and beatings. We asked him point blank...what would you like to happen to those who did this to you? His answer stayed with both of us. It is the answer to war and peace. He said: "You must remember...neither one of us was free. Not he who tortured and starved me...he had his orders or he joined me here in my cell; not he who betrayed me and got me here. Starvation makes people that way...they will do anything for a slice of bread for their children...**We must forgive.** I however thank God daily that I was privileged to suffer; that I was

spared being that other one."

Elizabeth Enns,
Winnipeg

ARTICLE ENJOYED

At this time I would like to congratulate you on a very excellent publication. We enjoy your many varied articles. We like to look into it as soon as it arrives, and then read the rest at a leisurely pace later one.

One article comes to mind, particularly -- "Good Friday Love" by Roy Vogt, which I enjoyed very much. All the best.

Anne Dyck,
Winnipeg

MANITOBA CONNECTION

During the year 1989 we received the MM through a gift subscription. My wife and I both lived in Manitoba in our younger years and have a real bond with many Manitoba people and therefore always read with great interest the articles in the paper.

T.N. Harder,
St. Catharines

APPRECIATIVE READER

I really do appreciate my Mirror. Thank you so much for continuing my subscription.

I am embarrassed to admit my lack of perception. I fail to understand the meaning of Mennonites embracing the world in reverse (front cover of June/July issue). I very much appreciate the model's not-quite-clean fingernails -- because MCC and its supporters are indeed getting their fingernails soiled -- for good reasons.

With good good wishes.

Bill Driedger,
Edmonton

FUTURE VIEW

The article by James Urry (vol. 19/number 8), regarding our people is most interesting. And I would like to underline the fact that compulsory education, news media reports every hour on the hour, and sports are major con-

tributors to our changed attitude and life style. These influences I believe are not altogether positive in the end. For instance, I sometimes find it difficult to understand the waste of time and energy on nonproductive occupation. For example, having a half dozen or more strong fellows chasing after a hard piece of rubber called puck. I think it spoils our image as adults. And threatens our economy; take ancient Rome for example.

I also would like to add that I like the Low German stories. I hope that Victor Peters will get another enlightening dream about Russia. After all Gorbachev might have changed his emigration plans. They need him over there.

Looking to the future; in another 15 years or so, our once cherished Low German, few people will be able to read it correctly. Je pense, we will trade our heritage for the slow winning popularity of the French language -- Quel dommage!

Yours truly,
Anton Schellenberg
Winnipeg

among others, is forbidden to the Christian. Some of the spirit-begotten brethren of the early Christian church were, in fact, repentant homosexuals (I Cor. 6:9-11).

Yet a common standard must be observed, but not the standard of the lowest common denominator; otherwise Christianity becomes simply a Dr. Feelgood religion in which repentance becomes conditional and selective, if not arbitrary and ultimately meaningless. Such a faith has no more value than a trip to the supermarket.

Perhaps there is a compromise here of sorts. Although baptism and the ministry are closed to the unrepentant, it ought to be clear that homosexuals should be allowed to attend church services. How else will they learn about Christian love unless they see it in action?

We must not sit in judgment of others regardless of their weaknesses. Homosexuals who are being called by God need Christian friends, male and female, who are not afraid of them.

While not approving the sin, Christians owe such people, as far as is humanly possible, the same unconditional love shown by Christ himself.

Sincerely,
John E. Wall,
Altona

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AN ISSUE TO DEFINE

The Mennonite World Conference recently held in Winnipeg is now history and the feelings and dialogue shared will no doubt be pondered upon for months if not years to come.

Not surprisingly, one issue arising out of this world gathering which caught the attention of the media was the question of homosexuality in the church. Will Mennonites follow other religious groups such as Anglicans, United Church, Reform rabbis, and allow homosexual to be members or even ministers? Merely to ask the question indicates the signs of the times.

The problem is not so much one of tolerating homosexuals, but of deciding whose definition of sin to accept, of self-perception vs. other-perception, and of making assumptions about righteousness and sin which may not be valid.

A Christian has no superiority over a sinner because he does not engage in a particular sin; nor is homosexuality the greatest of sins because its practice,

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Jeschijchte

fonn Agnes Wall

Aus etj moch kjeen wea jintj mie daut aul goot wann doa waa Jeschijchte fetald. Etj wist uck wann etj gaunss müsstell enne Atj saut fegaute dee Groote daut etj äwahaupt doa wea onn råde fonn soont waut etj fleijcht nijch heare sull. Lied, jintj mie daut scheen, soowaut oppschnacke. Onn aul mien Frintschoft hilt sea opp nobre, soo wea doa aulahaunt too leare.

Doa wea Groospapa fonn Mama äare Sied. Hee haud eenen witten Koseboat onn jintj emma mett'm Gonstock oba nijch wiels hee lom wea. Mett däm Bääjel aum Hauntenj jreep hee dee Grootjinja wann dee goastrijch weare. Hee kunn oba, wann hee enn goode Laun wea, fonn tiedijch bott lot Reibapistle fetale. Oom Hendritj wist emma waut drolljet too saje. Onn Taunte Marie! Jo, daut jeef Jeschijchte dee wist kjeene aundre aus Taunte Marie. Oba dee ildabaste onn dee measchte wist onse Mama. Eenje Jeschijchte weet etj bott fonndoag dän Dach onn woa dee hia oppschriewe.

Mea aus eenmol fetald onse Mama ons dise Jeschijcht fonn'e Fülheit. Enne goode, oole Tiet haud een Bua eenen Kjnajcht. Een aunstendja Mensch oba emm Grunt jenome butajeweenlijch ruijch onn jemäsijch; onn nijch blooss auf onn too, nä, meist emma. Hee haud mol een Sprejchwuat jeheat onn daut wea soo, "Waa nuscht deit, moakt uck kjeen Fäla." Wann mäajlijch, hilt hee sitj aun dise Weisheit. Hee haud uck blooss twee Jeschwindijchtjeite, langsomm onn äwaroasch. Jieda Dach must hee ütteste. Dee Mestkoa haud hee aul lang nijch jeschmät, soo daut dee piepad onn stäänd. Dee knoad soo lud daut'et wiet onn breet too heare wea wann dee Maun soo haulf emm Droom mett dee Koa nom Mesthupe fua. Däm Kjnajcht wea daut emma soo aus wann se am toopiepad, "Daut haft noch Tiet....Daut haft noch Tiet....Daut haft noch Tiet...."

Aus sien Baus, dee Bua, sitj ditt soo betjijt onn sach woo langsomm sien Kjnajcht dee haulf folle Koa schoof, oajad am daut. Hee schlitjt sitj fonn hinje aun am naun onn (too dee Tiet jintj soont noch) gauf am goot eent aum Ua. Dee Maun feead sitj soo daut dee Koa opp eenmol fäl schwinda fua. Meist emm Drebhel wea daut. Nu säd dee Mestkoa gauns dietlijch, "Daut docht etj nijch! Daut docht etj nijch! Daut docht etj nijch!"

Nu kjeemt Oom Hendritj aune Reaj. Hee wea fonn junk opp emma sea kratjt. Am leetet jieden Dach soo aus wann hee stracks no Kjust gone wull. Hee sad sitj niemols opp'm Stool buta hee haud dän eascht mett däm Schneppeuduak een poa mol auffjwescht. Wann hee Tseitung laus bunk hee sitj een Schalduak omm soo daut dee schwoaate Buakstowe opp'm Papia am nijch wudde siene lijchte Betjse ennschwiene. Hee wea soo kratjt daut dee Dratj bie am äwahaupt nijch aansate wull. Hee fetald mie mol fonn eenem Maun, een jewessa Peetasch. Dee wea goanijch genau wääjen dän Dratj. Etj jleew Oom Hendritj haft daut mett am äwadrawe, oba hee säd daut wea wertlijch soo.

Bereinje deed hee sitj aum leewsten nijch. Hee wosch sitj nijch mol ooda betrimmd dee Hoa enne Näs onn Uare. Hee wea nijch fonn dee fetjse Sort onn saut tiedelang stell onn read sitj nijch. Soo kjreajch hee dann uck Mode enne Näs. Daut wea am nijch maklijch. Hee jintj no Oom Hendritj sien Brooda Doft. Oom Doft wea sea hendijch onn kunn aulahaunt Jereetschoft toopschmäde ooda ütidentje. Peetasch wull nu habe daut Oom Doft am sull eene besondere Beajtang ütfinje, soone waut hee brucke kunn toom sitj de Mode ute Näs rüthäwe. Onn Oom Doft muak soone. Weens soo säd Oom Hendritj.

Etj fetald Robert dise Jeschijcht onn

säd, "Irent waut stemmt hia nijch. Mode wudde soont nijch doone."

"Aus etj enn Russlaund enn Peschanow wond," säd Robert, "haude doa de Lied waut mett Schop too doone. Dee Schop haude foaken Mode. See haude dee aulewääjes wua bie an een Loch wea. Wann daut bie Schop ess, wuaromm nijch bie Mensche?"

Bott nu too haud etj nuscht soowaut fonn Schop jeheat. Etj kaun daut meist nijch jleewe daut Robert aul dise Joare waut wie nu aul befriet sennt jeschlaut haft ea hee mie ditt säd. Daut jeef diretjt Modetange fe Schop, säd hee.

Enn Russlaund haude Jasch Waule enne goode, oole Tiet eene scheene Wirtschoft. Dee Jebieda weare soo nom oolen mennischen Stiel jebut, Wonjebied onn Staul toop. Emm Hinjatus wea dee Owe toom daut Hus behette. Diss Owe haud een groota, breeda Schorsteen. Doa benne weare Sprote jenoagelt onn doa reatjade see äare Worscht onn Schintjes.

Eene Winta saut doa de Nacht 'ne Ül opp'm Schorsteen onn säd emmawäarent "Uu, uu, uu," soo daut Waul nijch schlope kunn. Aus'et de näatjste Nacht daut selwe Leet wea, säd Waul too siene Fru, "Etj go mol rut opp'm Hoff onn unjasto mie dee Sach mett dee Ül."

Hee wudd dää wiese! Hee naum sitj aul fuats dee Schrootflint mett. Bute wea Follmond onn hee kunn dee Ül schmock seene. See saut opp'm Schorsteen, haud dän Kopp en bätje too Sied jedreit, kjitjt mett eenem Uag dän Schorsteen rauf onn roopt, "Uu, uu, uu." Waul tsiel mette Flint no ar oba dee Raunt fomm Schorsteen wea emm Stijch onn hee docht nijch daut hee soo dän Foagel traffe kunn. Na, wann hee dän nijch fonn bute kjreajch, dann fleijcht fonn benne? Jesajcht, jedone. Hee jeit nenn onn kjitjt dän Schorsteen enne Hejcht onn jewess, hee kunn fonn hia dee Ül fein seene. Dee haud sitj

nijch jereat onn wea noch emma doabie "Uu, uu, uu," too roope.

Daut Fia wea ütjegone onn doa honk uck nuscht toom reatjre emm Schortsteen. Schrootflint enne Haunt kroop Waul emm Schorsteen en bätje nopp, stiepad sitj, läd daut Flintlauf aune Back, tsiel felenjst onn schoot enne Hejcht no dee Ül opptoo, soo daut'et mau soo knauld onn däwad. Dann kaum een Puff aus wann doa waut sprenjd onn Waul späad daut doa waut opp am rauffoll. Dee Knaul haud dän Room loosjescheddad.

Dee Fru kaum ute Schlopstow jerannt. "Waut hast du hia dann fäa?" fruach see onn aus see am sach, funk see aun lud too lache. Äa Jasch wea petjshwoat. Fonn bowe bott unje wea hee foll Room.

Onn dee Ül? Dee saut wada opp'm Schorsteen onn roopt, "Uu, uu, uu."

Dee Jeschijcht fonne Ül fetald mie Taunte Marie. Fe Taunte Marie haude dee haulfwausende Junges emma en bät schnett. Wann dee äa oajade jreep see dee onn fedrascht dän. Wann dee sitj too sea wäare wulle, stoppt see daut fäaschte Enj tweschne Trappe onn soo haud see dann mett däm unjaschten Enj äare Welle. Mama fetald mie dise Jeschijcht fonn Taunte Marie.

Dee oole Ooma Hiebat wea de Winta jstorwe. See wea äwa näajentijch onn krank. Too latst wuach see mau blooss tachtentijch Punt. Too dee Tiet jeef daut nijch Doodehiesa onn daut Frintschoft besorjd dän Kjarpa. Fereascht haude see Ooma enne kolde Stow jelajcht. Aus dee Mummtjes ütem Darp toopkaume onn äa toom Bejrafniss ütstraume wulle, hold Taunte Marie äa enne woame Stow nenn. See stald äa stiew onn steil biem Owe han onn säd, "Soo, Ooma, woame see sitj noch eenmol goot opp ea see enne kolde Ead kome."

Jeatse wond opp'm Enj hinjrem Darpsborm. Hee haud en Problem mett'em Darscht onn dee Darscht jintj nijch biem Darpsborm too stelle. Dee jintj nijch mol emm gaunssen Darp too stelle. Hee must doatoo no de Staut, no Dzhonkoj foare. Dän näatjsten Morje haud hee dann foaken eenen ditjen

Kopp.

Enmol wea hee soogoa diretjt enne Staut äwa Nacht jebläwe onn Tsmorjes wea am oba lang nijch maklijch. Noch niemols haud am soo de Kopp jeräte; noch niemols wea am soo schljacht jewast. Bowendropp schämd hee sitj gaunss schratlijch. Woo wea hee blooss soo domm jewast, fruach hee sitj.

Oom Hendritj (hee wea noch Jung) wea aul tiedijch mett sienem Paupi no Dzhonkoj jekome. Aus Jeatse am sach roopt hee, "Jung, hast Du 'ne Flint? Etj well mie doot scheete."

"Nä," säd Öom Hendritj, "'ne Flint ha' etj nijch. Oba hia ess en scheena, ditja Kjneppel. See kunne sitj doamett doot **schlone**."

Oom Hendritj wea fonn junk aun omm aundre Mensche besorjcht onn proowd an emma soo goot aus määjlijch üttoohalpe. **mm**

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World Conference also notable for the issues it didn't discuss

The great Mennonite family gathering is now a pleasant memory for most of the 13,000 participants. Assembly 12 has been discussed, commented upon, written about, commended, criticized. All agree that the organization was superb, and that credit must be given to John Dyck, Jake Bergmann, Peter Rempel and thousands of volunteers for this splendid achievement.

Attending the conference was a little like being present at a magnificent smorgasbord. One found oneself wanting to put everything on one's plate, but being forced to be selective; one simply could not digest all that was offered. With all the variety offered—workshops, worship services, concerts, poetry readings, bus tours—there was enough "food" to keep everyone occupied, and supposedly happy.

But there has been criticism. For some, the daily talks by the guest speakers were too "academic" and not sufficiently "inspirational." For others, the conference was not sufficiently "evangelical."

Churlish as it might seem to criticize a family feast which organizers have worked so hard to prepare, this writer must confess to a feeling of deep disappointment, even anger, which welled up during the conference.

Since the theme was "witnessing to Christ in today's world," it was assumed that an attempt would be made to address some of the outstanding issues to be faced in today's world. The role of the church is to bring the light of the gospel to bear on such problems as oppression, suffering, discrimination and prejudice.

Unfortunately, the church has been a leader in one type of discrimination throughout the centuries, and that is in the area of discrimination against women. The secular world, at least in North America, has gradually accepted that this discrimination has existed, and has taken steps to eliminate it. Canada, belatedly, in 1929 acknowledged that women were "persons" allowing them to vote and sit in the Senate. The church appears to be having difficulty with this concept. At most, women are still considered as "half-persons," capable, perhaps, of providing support and nourishment to the real persons, males, but not really accepted on an equal footing with them. The majority of Mennonite churches still refuse

to accept the idea that women's spirituality is on a par with that of men, and that women could serve as pastors of a congregation. In a very profound way this serves notice to the world that discrimination against women is acceptable.

This writer became angry, on scrutinizing the program of the conference, that there were no workshops that even raised the question of the role of women in the church. It appears that this question was just too controversial to be touched. True, three of the nine guest speakers were female. This was pointed out when the issue was raised with some conference organizers -- but why was this number so low? Why could there not have been six women and three men? When these women did speak at the large gatherings, little was said about this issue. One of the speakers, Leonor de Mendez, spoke passionately on this topic at the Thursday afternoon worship session for women, but failed to do so in the Friday evening general session. Gayle Gerber Koontz included one example of the oppression of women in her Thursday morning address, and this example was the only part of her speech that was not included in the printed text available in the programs.

The failure to use inclusive language in the worship services was another indication of the lack of sensitivity to the issue of women's role in the church.

It seems that the Mennonite community is content with the traditional, patriarchal view of roles; content to carry that view to the two-thirds world where women are even more oppressed than on this continent; content to continue to raise sons and daughters believing that half of the human race is inferior to the other half. It is ironic that we live in a country which has a Bill of Rights ensuring equality under the law, but that we belong to a church community which negates such a view. It is sad that we appear unwilling even to discuss this issue when many have been calling for change.

Women are not attempting to supplant men, but some would be willing to work with them, side by side, as equal partners.

-- Ruth Vogt

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