

Mennonite MIRROR

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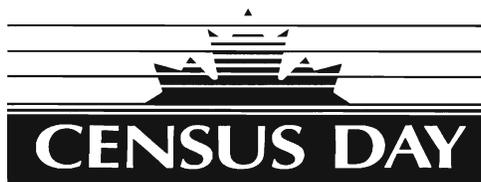
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ForeWord

Art. Painting. Esthetic activities undertaken for their own sake tend to be misunderstood especially by people who have a "practical" orientation. The practical people do not see artistic expression as worthwhile because it does not fit their definition of "work." And so, we find examples of people who manage to hide their artistic talent and their art. Mary Klassen Unrau is an example of a lady who over several decades painted exquisite works that few saw. But true talent cannot remain hidden forever. The opening article in this edition describes the life and work of a hitherto unknown, but gifted, painter.

From paintings to maps. William Schroeder's interest in maps is well known and well developed. His service to the Mennonite community is invaluable in that he has provided a tangible record of our "sense of place" in this world. Dora Dueck writes two articles in this issue; one describes the development of a specific map while the other focuses on the mapmaker himself.

Religion. Faith. These two concepts are important to Mennonites. But as Roy Vogt points out in the third part of his "looking back" series, the two concepts are not at all synonymous. And, he also says the way we define, and give expression to, either concept may not be so flattering.

Books. Writing a book is probably the easy part of the publishing business. Finding the money to print an initial run and then finding ways to encourage people to put their money on the table to actually buy the copies is quite another. Publishing in Canada is one where the fertile imaginations and creativity of the authors is matched by the rocky economics. In this milieu, Windflower Communications is moving forth with a new venture. Sarah Klassen writes about this venture and describes and undertaking that has the potential of succeeding.

Many people remember Jasch Siemens, the hero of Armin Wiebe's famous book. You either love Wiebe's descriptions of Mennonite life or you hate them. In a piece in this issue, Wiebe's Jasch turns 40, and an endless stream of questions flash past his eyes. Not his life, but endless questions.

Also in this edition are some reviews -- a concert, a drama night, and a book.

The cover: Is a 1937 painting by Mary Klassen Unrau called *Hope: Spring '27*.



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Mennonite Mirror

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Mennonite Mirror

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Finally her paintings will be seen: The story of Mary Klassen, artist

by Roy Vogt

Some time next month readers of this magazine, and others, will have their first opportunity to see, and appreciate, the paintings of Mary Klassen.

Most will agree, I think, that the wait has been too long. Mary Klassen happens to be a very talented, well-trained artist who, since her teenage years in the 1930s, has produced a large number of paintings -- about 150 in all. She has shared many of these paintings with friends, but they have never, till now, been accessible to others. A few years ago her oldest son, John Unrau, who teaches English at York University in Toronto and has published several books on the art of John Ruskin, allowed a few of us to see reproductions of some of his mother's landscape paintings. We agreed unanimously that these paintings deserved a much wider audience.

John responded to our interest by photographing a number of the paintings, and by writing a fascinating account of their creation at the hands of his mother.

More than 30 of Mary Klassen's paintings, together with her son's essay, will appear in June in a book entitled *The Balancings of the Clouds, Paintings of Mary Klassen*, published by Windflower Communications in association with the Mennonite Literary Society. The official launching will take place this fall, in connection with exhibits of the original works in several Canadian cities, including Winnipeg and Edmonton. It is anticipated that Mary Klassen will be present at these exhibits.

Canadians have been amazed in the last few years at the emergence of many different types of artists from within the Mennonite community. They had come to praise Mennonites for some stolid virtues, like earnest hard

work and well-ordered community life, but there was little to suggest that out of this austere and practical people a rich life of the imagination might burst forth. But burst forth it has, in such varied fields as music, writing, and painting. Most of the best work is being done by younger singers, composers, conductors, poets, writers, and painters, creating the impression of a sudden cultural miracle. Mennonite art born *ex nihilo!* The range and quality of the new work is indeed astonishing, and deserves celebration, (even when it condemns the community from which it sprang. If artists do not point out our faults, who will?) However, precisely at such a time it is important to "rediscover" creative work begun much earlier, when the Mennonite soil was even less favorable to imaginative expression.



Mary Klassen Unrau, Edmonton, 1965

Mary Klassen has been painting for more than 50 years. Born in Osterwick, Russia, in 1918, she grew up on a farm

near Mayfair Saskatchewan. In her teen years she expressed an unusual desire: to study painting in Saskatoon, under the noted artist and teacher, Ernest Lindner. At age 18 she and her brother Isaac, who enrolled in engineering at the University of Saskatchewan, managed the move to Saskatoon together. Mary was able to study for three years, experimenting with numerous techniques and forms. Her main interest eventually lay in trying to capture the spirit of the Western Canadian landscape. Like William Kurelek, and others, including Lindner himself, she responded spiritually to that landscape. Her work is infused with conflicting images of the serenity, the brooding darkness and the threatening power that the prairie landscape especially inspires. As her son's text makes clear, her work also reflects her own journey of illumination and despair.

Though Mary Klassen's artistic ambitions were indeed unusual, her overall goal in life seemed more fashionable. "God has allowed me to do what I most wanted in life," she observed recently. "To draw, and to be a wife and mother." In 1940 she married John Unrau, a promising student of genetics. She accompanied him to graduate school in the United States, and in 1949 they settled in Edmonton, where John quickly became a highly regarded scholar at the University of Alberta, while Mary gave most of her attention to raising four children. Her chances to paint were few, but she did not give it up. After the sudden death of her husband in 1961 she returned to painting with greater vigor, and taught many young people in her home.

It was during this time that I made her acquaintance, in the course of a series of sermons that the First Mennonite Church in Edmonton asked

me to preach in the Lenten season. She made an immediate impression on me, though I knew nothing about her. She approached me after a sermon, and instead of offering a few polite cliches commented thoughtfully on a number of things I had said, and reflected on my use of poetry and the German language. Her sensitivity and dignified bearing impressed me immensely. Later that day I learned from others that she was indeed a very gifted person, greatly respected in the Mennonite community and outside.

Her oldest son, John, was at that time a Rhodes scholar at Oxford University. It was he, 25 years later, who finally shared with us the artistic gifts that his mother possesses.

Mary Klassen now lives in Ottawa. She married a friend of her late husband in 1970 and moved with him first to Victoria and then to Ottawa, where he passed away in 1989. Her life has been far from serene -- and this too is reflected in her paintings -- but to those who know her well the overwhelming impression they receive is of a deeply caring and adventurous person, with profound spiritual sensitivity. For many years now she has been worshipping in the Anglican Church, but she also appreciates the services of more informal congregations, and remains strongly appreciative of her Mennonite roots. Her children worry about her from time to time, because she has a habit of sheltering people who are down and out. They admit that they often didn't know what she was doing when they were growing up (how, for example, she was painting on the sly), and perhaps it is best that they don't always know what she is doing now. She continues to paint, and hopefully some of her most recent work will also be on exhibit this fall.

Do not miss the chance to see her work. It took us a long time to discover it; now let's truly enjoy it.

Note: the cover painting -- unfortunately reproduced here in black and white -- was done from memory and reflects what she considered one of the happiest times of her life: the early years of farming when her father finally had

horses and could cultivate his own land. As her son says in his commentary: "Much is left unstated in this quiet picture. A screen of trees separates the viewer slightly from the ploughman and his team, yet the eye is invited to move beyond, and join the gaze of the workers down the furrows and into the distance to the right." mm



Mary Klassen drawing on the farm, Mayfair, Saskatchewan, about 1936.

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THIS WORD FROM THE COUNTRY

by Tim Wiebe



May: To everything a season

I suppose I had expected an instantaneous rush of inspiration. The birth of a son. Elation. Pen, put to paper, recording the wonder, the joy, the miracle, of a new life's arrival. Myself, driven to creative frenzy by the Muse, scrabbling for anything -- the back of an envelope, the flyleaf of an old book, a used brown paper bag -- to scrawl impressions, like sacred hieroglyphics, into eternal stone for subsequent translation, interpretation, communication.

The Greeks have a word for such presumption. Hubris. Pride. O'erweening self-promotion. Which isn't to say that one can't be struck by the creative spirit at high points in life. It happens. And, for a writer, it's beautiful when it does. But I may have learned a lesson this time 'round. The creative spirit needs the discipline, yes, of a mind and heart willing and waiting to record the beautiful, the miraculous, the sublime. But to everything, a season. A time for expression. And in the next few paragraphs, perhaps, a time for explanation.

Sunny arrival

Our second child, Steven Timothy, was born on a cold, clear, sunny late April day. I was fortunate enough to be there -- the hospital staff might have had a different perspective on the matter, but I suppose they're accustomed to nervous fathers-to-be -- during Marlene's brief-but-intense five hour labor. All went well. I learned that a woman in labor is sufficiently strong, especially during the most excruciating contractions, to grab her husband by the sweater and quite literally manhandle him. And I learned that whatever en-

couragement I offered did make a difference ... did help ease Marlene's struggle. Finally, I learned, as I held our new baby boy minutes after his birth, that there is nothing more precious on God's earth than the loved ones whom Grace has granted us as companions in his life. Sometimes, together, at moments like these, we do glimpse the Promised Land where all is love, all is peace. Deep River indeed.

However, it wasn't until 10 days later that I felt even mildly compelled to write about the event. Not that I didn't try. There were moments when I sat at my cluttered basement desk, and began a poem, a reflection, a story. Nothing. Just crossed-out words, frustration, the sound of Steven crying or Emily begging to hold him again (it's always her turn, you see -- never mine), and, crowding all my creative exits, the clamorous demands of the morrow. I began to wonder whether I'd ever write about this miracle. Perhaps being a father was becoming routine. Having kids -- the assembly line approach.

White fury

Matters weren't improved by a sudden shift in the weather -- one which saw a snowstorm descend upon us with surprising fury. Five full days of thick, heavy, wet snow. A time warp of sorts developed. The feelings and experiences of late November (the time during which such weather is expected) dropped in for a visit. I felt confused, out of sorts, strangely irrelevant and small. The times, indeed, seemed out of joint; and I was not about to try, as emotions bottomed out and eyes grew more bloodshot, to set things right.

Then, a slow change. Snow turned to rain. The clouds began to break up. The rain eased into a quiet, baptismal drizzle. (How can you tell I'm a General Conference Mennonite?!) The birds blended their voices into a symphony of sound -- rain dripping from leaves a soft, steady counterpoint to their spontaneous music. And I began to feel the stirring of creativity again. Nothing fiery. Nothing passionate. Just a quiet, steady nudging -- becoming gently more urgent as I pounded out miles on a Saturday afternoon run -- hinting to heart, soul, and mind that now was the acceptable time to record my feelings of joy, wonder, and thanksgiving.

Giving thanks

So thank-you, Lord. For Steven...our quiet, precious little boy. For Emily, our free-spirited little fairie daughter ... dancing, like a Shakespearean sprite, the intricate joy of her response to a baby brother's arrival. And thank-you for the life's partner with whom I can share and help care for these two gifts of Your grace and love. I know that there will be sleepless nights, frustrations, little rivalries and jealousies as all of us try to find a new rhythm and routine -- one in which four, not just three, can happily function. But I also know that the same rain which is now seeping deep into the soil is a symbol of Your love -- a love in which all of us can root ourselves, live, grow, and draw deeply from the wells of Your Creative Spirit. mm

What Mennonites Believe

reviewed by Harry Loewen

Here is a newly-revised booklet (originally published in 1977) that will help the general reader, both Mennonite and non-Mennonite, understand the Mennonites better. John C. Wenger, the author, is a well-known (Old) Mennonite theologian, teacher, and minister living in Goshen, Indiana.

Wenger has a most gentle way of showing how Mennonites resemble theologically other Christians and how they differ from them. With Catholics and Protestant believers Mennonites share major theological beliefs -- such as the Trinity, salvation through Christ, and resurrection from the dead.

Yet unlike mainline churches, Mennonites practice believer's baptism upon a confession of faith, believe historically in separation of church and state, and emphasize peacemaking and following Christ in all areas of life.

The differences between Mennonites and other Christians are discussed and illustrated without leaving the impression that Mennonites are better than or superior to other denominations. Wenger simply shows that Mennonites with their beliefs and practices contribute another important dimension to Christians' understanding of the gospel.

Wenger writes popularly and simply and his illustrations are drawn from real-life experiences, as, for example, Yakob refusing to take the man who wrecks his car to court (p.67).

The booklet is an excellent study guide for baptismal classes, Bible groups, and young people's discussions. Some 20 relevant titles of books at the end will help the reader to pursue individual topics and issues in greater depth.

J.C. Wenger, *What Mennonites Believe* (Scottsdale, PA/Waterloo, Ont.: Herald Press, 1991). Paperback, 94 pp. \$3.95 US, \$4.95 Can.

The Story of One Map: Halbstadt in 1913

by Dora Dueck

The need for it: A woman on a tour of Russia which William Schroeder is hosting in the late 1970s sets off alone in a taxi for a private return to Halbstadt, the town she left at age 19. When the group joins her there several hours later, they discover that she has searched fruitlessly for the location of her childhood home. In the intervening years the trees have grown, many buildings are gone or changed, and she has no way to orientate herself through these alterations back to the familiar place of her memories. If only she had a map!

The outline: From an 1865 map of the Molotschna area produced by Russia's Imperial Army, now stored in the U.S. Library of Congress' collection of Russian maps, Mr. Schroeder traces and enlarges (to about 11 x 17 inches) the town of Halbstadt. He works on a homemade light-table. The essentials of the map such as scale and direction are determined, and the coordinates and geographical constants added. Appropriate symbols are chosen.

Researching the content: During research for his history of the Bergthal Colony, Mr. Schroeder came upon a collection of short histories of all the Mennonite villages established in Russia up to 1848. These histories, part of cartographer Karl Stumpp's collection, contain important information such as the exact number of farms in each village. Other written sources such as the Mennonite Encyclopedia provide information on the factories, schools and other institutions which were eventually built in Halbstadt.

Filling in the parts: Sixteen personal interviews are required to fill in the details of the Halbstadt map. Although many people cannot accurately describe the location of places when asked about them, they are often able to point to them when seeing no outline of the town.

(One of the 16, the elderly but still-very-keen Maria Loewen, not only remembers many of the places in Halbstadt but proves an excellent "scout" for Mr. Schroeder's future research on other villages. "I'm doing such-and-such-a-place," he might tell her and within a few days she calls with the names of people in her seniors' residence who originated in that particular village.)

Last steps: Like the completion of a puzzle, the inside of the map is finally full. The names of the **Wirte** are there; the bicycle shop, the credit union, the drug store, the sausage hutch, the Podwod monument and many, many other features have been put in their 1913 places. Bernhard Harder's tomb, pictured in P.M. Friesen's history, is marked.

Mr. Schroeder draws the final map, using pen and black ink and a typewriter for the text.

The map is re-drawn for publication by a professional cartographer (somewhat in the way an author's manuscript is typeset for publication). "Halbstadt in 1913" by William Schroeder appears in the *Mennonite Historical Atlas*, 1990.

A Mennonite mapmaker: William Schroeder

by Dora Dueck

Maps are something most of us take for granted.

We take them for granted, that is, until we are badly lost because of an inadequate one, or completely bewildered for the lack of one. Or we find ourselves frustrated, when reading about a journey or some bit of history full of place-names, that there is no map to help us visualize the text.

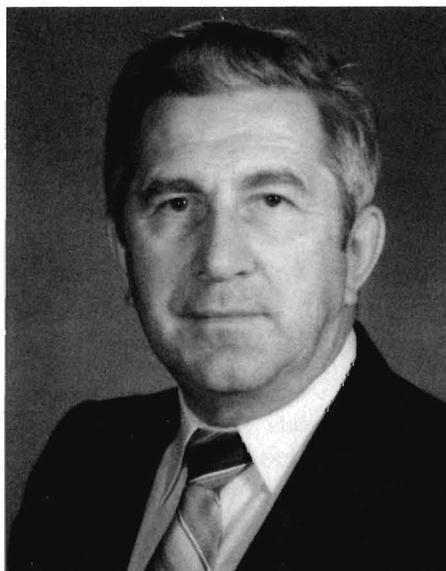
William Schroeder of Winnipeg, a recently retired elementary school teacher, has spent 25 years drawing maps to ease such situations. The focus of his map-making is Mennonites; places they live and have lived, their movements and migrations.

It is his hobby, he says, "a labor of love," with the result, so far, of over 100 maps. These have been published in many places, and used to great benefit by scholars, readers and tourists. Recently over 80 of Schroeder's maps, as well as some produced by Helmut Huebert for *Hierschau: An Example of Russian Mennonite Life*, were gathered in the *Mennonite Historical Atlas*, the first atlas of its kind.

William Schroeder grew up on a farm near Horndean, Manitoba. As a boy he once visited his older brother at Winkler Bible School. "The students were given the assignment to plot Paul's missionary journeys on a map," he recalls. "Then the Bible must be very real, I thought, if it can be mapped. I was impressed!"

Map interest grows

This latent interest in maps was fanned into rigorous work during the 1960s when Mr. Schroeder undertook a personal genealogy project. All of his great-grandparents had emigrated to Manitoba's West Reserve in the 1874 colony-wide migration of the Bergthal Colony from Russia.



William Schroeder

"But nobody knew where Bergthal was," he says. "Not the descendants of the immigrants or Mennonite historians. I couldn't find it on any maps. It was as if Bergthal had never existed."

Since his search of local libraries and archives produced nothing, Mr. Schroeder began to write letters to cartography centres around the world, sometimes as many as three letters a weekend.

The last letter he wrote, to the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., brought an exciting response.

"Is this what you are looking for?" the reply read. A photocopy of a detailed 1865 map of Southern Russia, having a scale of 1:126,000 (about one inch to two miles), was enclosed.

It was exactly what Mr. Schroeder was looking for! There was the colony of Bergthal, carefully set on record by the excellent cartographers of the Imperial Army over a century earlier.

Schroeder's 1973 book, *The Bergthal Colony*, included 14 original maps, detailing not only the colony in Russia, but the Mennonite delegates' inspection

tour to Manitoba, the subsequent migration, and settlements in Manitoba.

These maps and text are still the most satisfying he has done, Mr. Schroeder says. After his experience of finding nothing in research sources, he is gratified to know that he "put Bergthal in the Library Index."

That project also laid a double foundation for the map-making to follow. "First of all, I had discovered where the source maps were. Secondly, I had learned some of the skills of cartography."

Mr. Schroeder likens the discovery of the Library of Congress collection of Russian maps -- maps which had been captured from Russia by Germany and then in turn taken to the United States as "captured German documents" -- to a knitter's finding a store which stocks every kind of wool possibly required for knitting. He confesses he had been sceptical that American libraries could help him in his quest for source maps, for he had noticed the strong bias of American-produced atlases. The otherwise-superb National Geographic World Atlas, for example, has some 30 maps of the United States compared to two of the U.S.S.R., a country of twice the land mass. What help could they possibly provide on Russia?

Painstaking and patient

Making historical maps requires the instincts and patience of a sleuth, an intense love for history, and a great deal of diligent work. All of these William Schroeder seems to possess in good measure.

"He works for accuracy, and is very meticulous," comments fellow history-enthusiast Helmut Huebert, the atlas' publisher and author of its text.

No map, of course, can describe all the relationships, human or topographi-

cal, of its subject area. It has a selected focus. This is given in the title of the map.

Other essentials of a good map are scale, direction (the North Axis), the coordinates, and a legend if symbols are used.

Further factors upon which a map can be judged include the geographical constants such as rivers and escarpments, the quality of the sources, the appropriateness of scale and projection, a single perspective (that is, one should not need to turn the map to read it), the size and type of print, and the quality of the orthography. Mr. Schroeder follows professional cartographical standards. Nevertheless, he says, map-makers do have individual, recognizable styles.

In conversation with William Schroeder, one learns that the making of each map also has a story. (See sidebar article, "The Story of One Map.") "Tiegenhagen in 1916," for example, was Mr. Schroeder's "easiest map". Two individuals were able between them to remember who had lived on every Hof.

At the far northwestern edge of the Tiegenhagen map is marked the dwelling of Ivan Kasian, the cowherd. His position relative to the village says a great deal about the village class system.

But at least his name is there. That's says something too, doesn't it? "Oh, they remembered the cowherd well," Schroeder chuckles, "for he was the one who supplied the young fellows in the village with 'smokes.'"

Help of those who were there

The help of elderly Mennonites ("the older the better, for me") is invaluable to Mr. Schroeder for the large scale maps of villages. Schroeder recalls one bright woman who not only remembered who had lived where but could as it were, re-walk the village streets, with steady commentary on the scary black dog at this yard or the foibles of the family at that one.

Two maps in the atlas trace the journey of Claas Epp and his followers, as bizarre a story as any that Mennonite history has produced. Of all the

Mennonite migrations, no route has been as severe as this one, or loss of life as large.

"I included that one because I wanted to preach a little," Mr. Schroeder says, smiling. "When Mennonites lose complete interest in the Kingdom of God and the future, they decay. But when they become excited about the next world to the exclusion of everything else, they also err."

It is impossible to work long on a map without some emotional involvement in the subject matter. In the case of the Claas Epp maps, although the entire episode was "rather silly" and ultimately a tragedy, Schroeder found himself moved by the trek. He was especially impressed by the endurance of the women who attended to their families under extremely trying circumstances.

Mapmaker travels

Mr. Schroeder has travelled to Europe and eight times to Russia. Visiting places which one has learned to know intimately through map-making provides its own interesting stories. On his first trip to the site of the former Bergthal Colony in southern Russia he inquired of his Soviet hosts if they had maps of the area. "Oh no," they replied, "we were told **you** had maps."

It was then, understandably, a relief to find his Bergthal maps thoroughly verified by the reality of the place. There was, in fact, only one surprise. The **Schoenfeldische Burg** (mountain) of historical lore was not the strenuous slope he had anticipated, but a rather wide, not very steep escarpment. Otherwise, Schroeder felt completely at home, as if he had been in Bergthal before.

Mr. Schroeder retired last year after 34 years of teaching, eight years in the Morris area and since 1963 in Winnipeg. He enjoyed teaching, he says, and always made sure his students learned to read an atlas.

His wife Augusta is a nurse. They are parents of four grown children, one daughter and three sons. The Schroeders are active members of the Elmwood Mennonite Brethren Church.

His retirement allows time to con-

tinue his historical "hobby." One day a week, Mr. Schroeder volunteers his time at the Mennonite Brethren archival centre. He is currently working on maps of Russian Mennonite settlements in the Crimea, Siberia, as well as the Barnaul/Slavgorod colony.

In the meantime, his deceptively-simple and very readable maps become the indispensable companions of growing numbers of travellers: those who fly and drive to the "Mennonite places," and those who travel cheaply in their armchairs, via books. **mm**

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Looking back on 30 years in the Mennonite community: Part Three

Reflections on Mennonite religion and life

by Roy Vogt

After eight years -- for reasons mentioned later -- I left the full-time Mennonite ministry and returned to study and teaching at the University of Manitoba. However, I continued to serve as a lay minister in the First Mennonite Church of Winnipeg, and my interest in the Mennonite community remained strong.

After some years a few of us got together to found a literary society, to produce this magazine and to publish books dealing with Mennonite life and history. A deepened understanding of Mennonite religion and life was also furthered by participation in several Mennonite business organizations and educational institutions. These reflections are based on such experiences.

Separating Religion from Faith

Early in my attempts to live a Christian life and to work in the Mennonite community I found it was helpful to distinguish between religion and faith. In the lives of some people these two things overlap, but often they don't -- a fact which continues to fascinate me. Both, in my opinion, are important. "Religion," briefly stated, is what we teach and profess to believe about God and his relationship to this world.

The teachings of religion are important because they deal with basic human needs, and are taken seriously by many. Some religious ideas are better than others, because they are more supportive of useful, compassionate human behavior. Therefore it is important **what** we teach and believe. For many years now I have been attracted to Christian religious teachings, because in the main, I believe, they best support the deepest aspirations of human beings. Unfortunately there is sometimes a poor correspondence between beliefs and behavior. I often meet people who I

think are **better** than their religion. They may, for example, defend a God who plans not only to burn his enemies but those who have never heard of him and yet they themselves would never consider -- let alone justify -- placing even the finger of someone they hate on a hot plate. Such people are better than the religious beliefs they profess. They possess greater virtue than their God. On the other hand, there are likely more people who are **worse** than their beliefs. Despite frequent avowals of love and fidelity they hate and betray. All in all, however, I think that what people believe is important, and that some religious ideas are better than others.

Religion consists of beliefs **about** God. Religious people hope that by practising and affirming their religion they will come to have **faith** in God. However, belief and faith, or religion and faith, are not the same thing, and beliefs, no matter how frequently and sincerely expressed, do not necessarily produce faith. In my ministry I often wished they did, both for myself and others, and perhaps because it was so desirable I thought for a while that the route from religious beliefs to faith was fairly straightforward and dependable.

Life taught me otherwise. I discovered, for example, that when a similar crisis hit two persons with similar beliefs they often reacted very differently. The "faith" of one remained strong, while that of the other collapsed. I concluded that it wasn't fair to praise the one and condemn the other. True faith was obviously a considerable mystery. It is not of our doing, and therefore we can't take credit for it, nor condemn ourselves when it is lacking. I consider faith in God to be the most precious gift that any human being can have -- but it is indeed a gift, which

comes to us in mystery, surprising us with joy and strength when least expected, and eluding us just when we thought we had grasped it. Perhaps it is too dangerous a gift to be entrusted to our grasp. If we could produce it at will we would undoubtedly use it for boastful, destructive purposes. God knows what stuff we are made of, and with how much we can be trusted.

I remember reading years ago of a daring high-wire artist who walked across the Niagara gorge several times on a rope. Crowds gathered and were tremendously impressed. Once he even stopped halfway across and cooked himself a meal. When he got to the other side he asked the crowd, "Do you believe that I could carry one of you across with me?" "Yes," many of them shouted. "We believe." He then pointed at one of the "believers" and said, "Good, get on my back and come with." The one to whom he pointed disappeared quickly into the crowd. He truly believed, but he had no faith. It is often in dramatic moments like that -- when confronted with a crisis -- that we discover the difference between believing and having faith.

I decided years ago it wasn't appropriate to praise people with faith, since it is a gift, nor to judge people for not having it. With the first, one rejoices, and with the second one sympathises. Therefore, in reflecting on the **religion** of Mennonites I deliberately refrain from commenting on their **faith**. I have no idea how much faith there is in the Mennonite community, or whether Mennonites have more faith than others. God alone knows -- though some of us are inclined to pretend that we know as well.

The Religion of the Mennonites

It is not easy to summarize what many

people in a particular religious community believe. Nevertheless, based on my own experience with a broad section of Mennonites here is what many Mennonites today seem to believe. With many other Christians they believe in the God described (infallibly) in the Bible and revealed definitively in Jesus of Nazareth: a God who is filled both with love and wrath and will come to earth again to reward and punish believers and non-believers. Christians are the only true believers. The prime reason for believing is to gain entry to heaven, and the main purpose of the church is to instill belief in others so that they too will enter heaven. Righteous living on earth should also be the result of Christian belief, and its absence may invalidate the beliefs one professes and close the gates to heaven. Love, including the love of enemies, and the fear of God's judgment are twin spurs to right actions.

Thus far the summary.

Many Mennonites would describe their beliefs in more words, and in different ways, but I believe the core of Mennonite religion is accurately portrayed here. It is what almost every Mennonite child learned in Sunday School -- and keeps for life.

When I review this summary of beliefs I find it difficult to decide whether I should laugh or cry. The same problem exists when I reflect on what such beliefs have done to the Mennonite community. To be sure, there are some noble thoughts here, and they are undoubtedly responsible for some of the virtues found among many Mennonites. There is a humbling recognition -- in my opinion a very necessary one -- that we are responsible to a higher Being, and to others, and therefore we are not autonomous creatures entitled to act as we choose. Some of the expectations of that higher Being are ennobling: to care for the welfare of others, to act in love. The hopes presented are also important: that God loves us, (though he may also hate us) and because of this love will take care of us even beyond the grave. These are important beliefs, and in my experience there are many Mennonites who have been shaped by them to become un-

usually caring and responsible human beings. I would stake my life on the protection and care of a Mennonite community more than on some others I have known, including the academic community in which I now work.

However, there is also much in this statement of beliefs that makes one want to laugh or cry -- and similar emotions surface when one observes certain aspects of Mennonite life.

First, there is really no joy in it. Joy erupts most easily in the experience of unreserved love. God in our religion is like our loving-angry fathers (who, of course, want to be like God), giving us a penny to spend and then admonishing us to spend it wisely. Behind every hug of endearment there is the threat of a slap. Loving is not an act of joyous gratitude for being loved, but a burdensome necessity to appease a potentially angry God. Faith is not a glorious gift from God but another requirement to gain his favor. Instead of saying, "I have faith that God loves me, unconditionally, and it is my joy to share this love with others," we are taught to believe something that sounds similar, but is utterly and tragically different: "I must believe because otherwise God won't love me, and I must love because that too is one of the conditions of his love." No wonder we have a lot of truly sad people in our midst -- burdened down by their religion.

Second, our religion tends to be unbelievably self-righteous. To believe is to be given a badge of virtue, which others don't possess. There is a studied humility among Mennonites, supported by a strong undercurrent of superiority. Racial and other prejudices grow easily in this kind of soil. Beliefs are tested, to see who is nearest to the kingdom of God. Faith, instead of being the avenue through which God can make us more useful and enjoyable to others, becomes the mark of status which raises us above others and makes us insufferable.

Third, a concentration on individual salvation has made us narrowly individualistic in the expression of our faith, and in the pursuit of our vocations. We use the community to control dissenters, and we also engage in some

positive community projects, but on the whole we don't express our faith very effectively through the community. The church is a gathering place for teaching and worship, not a centre from which community action takes place. We have, for example, individual teachers and social workers who, as part of their jobs, deal with some of the great social problems of our time, but even they seldom perceive the church as a body which should be heavily involved in such problems. The Mennonite business community in Winnipeg could, through greater cohesion, produce an integrated economic environment for purposes of job training, employment, and labor-management relations, but Mennonite business people don't understand their Christian responsibility in such terms. The word "co-operative" has become for most people a negative word, vastly inferior to "individual success."

Fourth, even in urban environments Mennonites tend to be very insular, especially in their religion. And I don't think it has much to do with ethnicity. Our religion itself makes us fearful and suspicious of others. We build churches like fortresses, to serve ourselves, just like we create numbing rules of behavior to keep others at bay. The observance of rigid codes of social behavior often flies in the face of the main teaching book -- the Bible -- and undoubtedly serves more as a device to keep us separated from others than as a thoughtful expression of moral concern (the day after the press reported that a Mennonite in Altona claimed that only the devil attends dances, our minister quite coincidentally read a passage from the Bible reminding us that there are times when we ought to dance. On such occasions it is easy to laugh rather than cry).

I wish these things were not true, but I believe they are. We believe we must succeed, and we do; we believe that we must work hard and fervently declare our beliefs in order to gain God's approval, and we do; we believe that we must love even our enemies, and we try (however, using even this attempt to demonstrate our superiority -- calling ourselves alternately a "peace church"

or a "believer's church" -- the arrogance of which should not escape us). We believe that our purity of faith and behavior is endangered by others, and we successfully create institutions and strategies which keep others away (our missionary zeal and our desire to love take us toward others, and our moral/spiritual superiority and fearfulness take us away).

Despite what I consider the failures of such success, I no longer find myself terribly dismayed. The good ship humanity is a frail ship; those on board have only a vague idea of where they are going, and that includes those who, like writers and professors, stand at the railings to observe what is going on. It is a grand adventure, with lots of accidents and tragedies, and occasional, wonderful joys. Somewhere, in it all, I believe, God watches for us all, not to condemn us or add to our misery but to get us to relax in his love, to celebrate the goodness we experience and to use his gift of faith to increase the joy of others. Let us "dance" more, mingle with others, work together rather than apart -- and drop our stuffy self-righteousness and superiority. Faith may come and go, but let us at least articulate our religion, over which we have more control, in such a way that we can rejoice in it!

I left the full-time ministry because I needed time and distance to examine again what it was that I really believed. My belief in the essential desire of human beings to enjoy life and to bring happiness to others was frequently confirmed in my work in the church, but my faith in the ability of the church to encourage and support such desires -- to the benefit of others -- had seriously diminished. The criticisms voiced here may help to explain this. The church -- the body that calls us together for worship and teaching -- remains much more peripheral to my life than it once was. Persons within the Mennonite community continue to form the core of many of our most meaningful friendships. The figure of Jesus of Nazareth inspires, haunts, and puzzles me like no other. The needs which Christianity addresses, and the answers that I find in

it (not the answers given in the earlier summary) are unsurpassed by any other philosophy or religion that I know. This, of course, is nothing to crow about, but something to remain open to.

Therefore next month the last column will be entitled: **Concluding Reflections on the Shape of Mennonite Theology.**

REVIEW

A welcome departure from tradition

Reviewed by Wally Dirks.

The origin of drama among Mennonites dates back to the times when "Jugendverein" was in vogue and when the featured event would be a "Gespräch," based on a religious theme, or some subject of common interest among Mennonites. *Natural Causes*, performed by the Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre in late April at the Prairie Theatre Exchange, was a departure from the original concept -- not that Mennonite theatre has always abided by tradition, but it has always been conservative in its play selection, and has enjoyed good audiences.

Natural Causes, was not only a departure, but a courageous and refreshing production with a Hitchcock theme, including glamour, infidelity, mild violence, all to the strains of Peer Gynt, on the bassoon.

Basically, a housewife, Allison Sinclair, becomes unfaithful to her husband Arthur, in favor of two other men, Gil Weston and George Brubacher, and plots to do away with him. She wants to marry Brubacher, but will use Weston for the dirty work. Arthur, the husband, is a mentalist, and sees through the plot. The curtain comes down in the final scene as he holds a gun to his wife's head.

To the regular theatre goer, it was evident that the acting was more professional than heretofore. Each member had some great moments. The attractive Monica Reis, as Allison Sinclair,

Arthur's wife, drew much attention in the opening scenes, where one might even have considered her for a Mennonite Academy Award. George Steinborn, as Arthur, the mentalist, was convincing in the heart attack scene, but recovered before we were all led to believe that this was the real thing. Kurt Krahn, as Gil Weston, a young actor, appeared natural and masculine in his underwear, and we would like to see him in a more sophisticated role some day. Carl Krahn, as George Brubacher, impressed by not overplaying his role, and he too serves a greater challenge. We have nothing but praise for the cast with minor parts: Veralyn Warkentin, as Maria, the daffy maid; Selma Enns, as Mrs. Carrington, a concert promoter; Abe Friesen as Eddy Oakman, the sleuth with a suspicious past; and Susan Bohn, as Jessica Prescott, an aloof but friendly book editor. A bouquet must go to the set design staff for its excellence. The comfortable surroundings of the Prairie Theatre Exchange made listening a pleasure and Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre, and its director Luis Reis, should be commended for an evening of great entertainment.

What troubles one is not the departure from the traditional per se, but the fact that Mennonite Theatre is not attracting the audiences it deserves. In tough economic times the arts are the first to suffer, and if it ever comes down to a crunch, then you must go with what has worked best in the past. Mennonite Theatre has a strong Mennonite following when it has portrayed the nostalgic. The risk of deviating from this policy may not be worth it, unless Mennonite Theatre is prepared to make a much bigger effort in promoting its cause. mm

Windflower tries to bloom in the rocky soils of the publishing business

by Sarah Klassen

The publishing business is in trouble, we are told. In the east, Lester and Orpen Dennys (who published Sandra Birdsell's prize-winning *The Missing Child*, has ceased production. Here in Winnipeg, there is both caution and optimism. Peguis Publishers owes its health to its focus on children's books and educational materials; Turnstone Press, a literary press, is relying on continued arts council grants; Hyperion Press is expanding.

This might not be deemed the best time for a fledgling publishing house to unfold its wings, or shall we say, petals. And yet Windflower Communications is, bravely, doing just that.

When the Mennonite Brethren Conference restructured and drastically cut back the production of its publishing arm, Kindred Press, the editor, Gilbert Brandt, was understandably disappointed. Maybe this was the time to move on. He recalled a conversation with Elsa Redekop, local author of children's books, who had advised him to get in touch with Peter Letkemann and talk publishing with him. Brandt decided the time had come to act on that advice.

Beginnings

The result of subsequent collaboration between Brandt and Letkemann was the founding, in July, 1990, of Windflower Communications, which has set itself the task of becoming a viable business enterprise whose product is good quality reading material. This, in a time of economic depression and frequent business failures, is a formidable undertaking whose success or failure may be determined as much by the vision, expertise and energy of the two partners as by economics.

Both come to the enterprise with an array of qualifications and strong Mennonite connections. Brandt is a

graduate of the Mennonite Brethren Bible Institute in Clearbrook. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Tabor College, Kansas, and an master's in christian Education from the MB seminary in Fresno, California. He joined Kindred Press in 1982, becoming its only fulltime editor in 1984.

His office walls display a variety of framed prints of jacket covers of books he produced for Kindred Press.

Prior to that he taught at Bethany Bible Institute, in Hepburn, Saskatchewan, where he also produced promotional materials for the school and its alumni. He gained experience in production, promotion and marketing with Word Records in Vancouver in the early 1970s. Following recent studies at the University of Manitoba, he earned the certificate of the Canadian Institute of Management.

Peter Letkemann is known to the Mennonite community through his academic and musical interests and contributions. He studied organ at the University of Manitoba and holds an doctoral degree in music history from York University. He has taught music history at CMBC and Conrad Grebel College. As choir conductor he served Mennonite churches in Canada, the U.S. and Europe. He is presently the organist at the North Kildonan Mennonite Church. In 1989 he initiated A Summer Festival of Music on the Red, a series of choral and instrumental music held early summer in the historic St. Andrews Church. Under the Canzona label he has produced cassettes of classical music performed by local artists.

Letkemann is also an author, currently working on a biography of Ben Horch, and is preparing for publication his 1985 doctoral dissertation, *The Hymnody and Choral Music of Mennonites in Russia, 1789-1915*. He

has published, independently, several books, including *Lass dir an meiner Gnade genuegen* and an edited reissue of *Gebt der Wahrheit die Ehre*, both by Karl Fast.

Valuable as his cultural and academic qualifications may be, it is his business involvement that defines his role in the partnership. Letkemann is manager of his late father's business interests, LBL Holdings (Letkemann Builders Limited) which provides the necessary investment to launch a new business. He will be responsible for financial management while Brandt, president and managing editor, assumes the main responsibility for the production of books.

Prairie name

The name, Windflower Communications, was carefully selected. "Windflower" is another name for the crocus, that hardy prairie flower that pokes its furry head through the snow, bravely announcing the arrival of spring. This designation connects the company with its prairie setting. "Communications" is a term broad enough, Brandt explains, to embrace possible future ventures into production of audio (music and word) or even video cassettes.

For the present, Windflower hopes to publish a variety of book materials which its guideline for authors defines as "a full range of topics and genre, including inspirational and devotional books, theological titles, biographies, academic and historical works, novels, children's literature, juvenile books, self-help materials and general resources."

The first two titles will appear in spring of 1991. They are: *Bonesetters and Others*, a history of orthopaedics in Manitoba, by Dr. I.I. Mayba and *The Balancing of the Clouds: Paintings of Mary Klassen*, a collection of water

colours with text by John Unrau. The partners hope to put out seven titles the first year, and about six titles per year following that.

Although LBL Holdings plans to underwrite the production of most titles, the first two have been additionally funded by other sources: Bonesetters by the Ukrainian Society and several local medical societies and the Klassen paintings by the Mennonite Literary Society. Future productions will also require additional funding. Brandt sees this as similar to receiving government grants through arts councils, for which Windflower titles will not usually qualify. He believes that with government cutbacks, private business will, in future, be asked to contribute more toward the arts.

Buying titles

Windflower has also bought nine titles from another Winnipeg Publisher, Hyperion. These include *My Harp is Turned to Mourning* by Al Reimer; *Stumbling Heavenward* by Urie Bender; *Agatchen*, by Peter G. Epp, translated by Peter Pauls; and *Mennonite Artist, Insider as Outsider*, with text by Priscilla Reimer.

The actual editing of a manuscript and design of the book will be contracted out on a freelance basis. Materials are prepared using desktop publishing technology and brought, camera ready, to the printers. D.W. Friesen of Altona will print the first two books. Other printers Brandt considers dealing with include Derksen Printers of Steinbach and American firms.

Brandt has in mind two main markets: the general trade and the Christian bookstores. He has contracted independent agents to cover the Canadian market, and, since his vision for Windflower is international, he is negotiating with American distributors as well. The contacts Brandt has established with Christian bookstores, through his work at Kindred Press, will stand him in good stead.

Windflower is not intended to be either a literary publisher or a specifically Mennonite publisher. Manuscripts by or about Mennonites will not necess-

arily be preferred, Brandt insists, but submissions must be "of good moral value." Manuscripts for novels "similar to Janette Oke's work" will be considered, says Brandt, because a demand exists for such books, and because they "are included in my definition of good literature."

Windflower Communications is located at Henderson Highway, in pleasant office space, where Brandt works, looking relaxed and confident. Peter Letkemann oversees LBL Holdings in an adjoining office. The third permanent person working on the premises is Judy Guenther, employed by LBL Holdings and available to Windflower as secretary and for customer service. Her desk is surrounded with shelves displaying the books acquired from Hyperion, with space for the anticipated forthcoming titles.

No end of challenge

Gilbert Brandt looks forward to the challenges of his new enterprise with energy and optimism. His wife, Susan, who is also a graduate of both MBBI and Tabor College, works as editorial assistant with the MB Herald and as secretary for the MB Conference minister. She operates a desk top publishing company out of her home, and is prepared to make her time and technology available to Windflower productions, in case of pressing deadlines. The Brandts have three children: Daryl, with the Winnipeg Police Department; SuAnn, graduating this spring from Tabor College; and Jon, a student at the University of Winnipeg.

Peter Letkemann admits to being excited about the new venture, despite his businessman's vantage point on the current economic climate. His wife, Gini, is involved with Windflower as a member of the editorial committee. The Letkemann's have three school age children: Lisa, Joel and John.

At a time where sheer survival is to be applauded, let us hope that this new shoot in our publishing landscape will not only prevail, but flourish. mm

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Would my son, Doft, buy some? Yasch Siemens turns 40

by Armin Wiebe

Did you ever sit at the kitchen table with Oata in the morning after the kids are gone on the school bus and wonder if she still loves me? What would it be like if I hadn't married her? Would I have found another woman who can drive a combine and count up the little numbers in the cheque book? Would I still be living with Muttachi? Would I have clawed out from there and found a mine job in the north someplace? Would I be out of a job now because the mine was closed down? Would the school board in that mining town be talking about putting condom machines in the washrooms in high school the way our school board is?

If the school board put condom machines into the high school washrooms would my son Doft buy some? Would it be easier for Doft to walk into the washroom where Hingst Heinrich's son and his gang of badels were watching? Would my son Doft, who likes Penzel Panna's daughter but is scared to phone her up, would he walk into that washroom with all those shuzzels standing there and put his loonie into the slot so he could get his pack of balloons? Would that be easier than walking into the drug store and asking the druggist's wife behind the counter? Would he know what to say if she asked, "Lubricated?" And what would Penzel Panna think about this? Would he be happy and say, "Don't do anything I wouldn't do?" Or would it be easier if the government just put a couple of rubbers in the envelope with the family allowance cheque? Would I give them to Doft when he asked me for the keys to the half-ton? Or would I put them in the drawer so that he could sneak them out one at a time?

Do you ever wonder about AIDS or do you wish people would just stop talking about it so it would go away?

Preacher Janzen is against condom machines in the school and he says that God has sent AIDS to punish those that live a carnal life, but if that is true, why doesn't God send a disease that paralyses the trigger fingers of those that shoot other people with rifles and revolvers and machine guns? Why doesn't God send a computer flu that would butter out all the nuclear missiles? Did Preacher Janzen ever think about that? And why is it that Preacher Janzen can preach to the young people about how the Lord spoke to him when he watched *Rocky IV* but he doesn't want the kids in school to read a book by that woman from Neepawa? Why didn't I say something about that at the PTA meeting? And what would I have said? Would Oata have looked me on the with wet eyes and a warm smile?

What does she think?

Does Oata still dream sometimes about Uganda and Idi Amin the way she did a few years ago? Is she all over it now or does she still sometimes taste the hearts and livers of murdered people? Was it just a nightmare that is gone now or is it still there? Has she learned not to scream out in the night so she won't wake up the children? Does she dream instead about Tiannamen Square or maybe Jim Bakker? Should I ask her?

Should I ask her what she thinks? Should Sikhs be allowed to wear turbans and beards and daggers in the RCMP? Does she think about it while she is sitting there across the table from me drinking another cup of coffee? If it is okay for Sikhs to wear turbans and daggers in the RCMP because it is important for their religion does she wonder why Tiedig Wien's boy Melvin was kicked out of RCMP school because his religion wouldn't let him

carry a gun? Could he have been a good police without a gun? Do police carry guns in Newfoundland? Has Oata ever thought about that?

Does Oata's mother in the mental home ever think about such things? Does Mulroney ever think he should ask people in the mental home what they think about free trade? What would they say? Would they say that it's good that you want to sell the country to the States? Would they say, Yes we want a level playing field where the balls roll to the south? Or would they say, Sure, we are strong enough to compete with American business, but just to make sure that the sides are even let the States have Robert Campeau and Jack Gallagher and Conrad Black? Would Michael Wilson want a goods and services tax if he lived in a mental home? Will the tax be collected when mental home patients buy companies so they can make them go bankrupt and put thousands of people out of work? Has Michael Wilson ever thought about it?

Political ambitions

What would Oata have said if I had run for the leadership of the Liberal Party? Would she have dumped a wheelbarrow of manure on me? Would she have taken my blue Sunday suit to the dry cleaners and bought me a new tie at the SelfHelp store? Would she have polished my shoes and trimmed the hair in my nose before I went out to make a speech at the curling rink? Would she have come along to Ottawa if I promised to take her to Niagara Falls on the way? Should I take her to Niagara Falls anyway now that the crop is in? Will the train still be running? Will I be able to get tickets?

Why did it bother me when Doft came home from visiting by Dola

Dyck's place and he had a hole in his left ear with an earring in it? Should I have made him take it off and throw it in the slop pail the way I did, or should I have say Hey, that's neat, am I too old to get one? Why doesn't my son talk to me any more? And how come it bothers me when Frieda who is 13 now is wearing lipstick and has two fingernails on each hand painted purple? How come my daughter said I was really weird because I didn't know that a Sting was a singer? How many Gordon Lightfoot songs does Frieda know the words for? How many words do I remember?

Sing an old song

Does Oata still remember that song where Gordon Lightfoot asks if the home team is still on fire? How come we never listen to those old records any more? How come we never argue about the radio station when the kids are at school? How come it doesn't bother us that the radio is mostly talk? Is Oata really listening to all those words? Am I really listening to all that stuff? If I was, would I believe what I heard? Have you ever wondered if we are being lied to?

Is it really bad to use leaded gas in your car? If it is really so bad, why has it taken almost 20 years before they are finally taking it off the market? And that ozone layer that's supposed to be getting holes in it, if it's true, how come they are still letting companies make stuff out of flouorocarbons or whatever they are? And how come the government is trying to ship this toxic waste stuff all over the world? That town in Alberta has a place to deal with the stuff, so how come all the provinces aren't building their own? Is it because of this deficit that the government can't afford it?

Where did the government borrow all this money from anyways? Did they maybe borrow it from the banks and some big corporations? Have these banks and corporations paid all their taxes? Could these banks and corporations maybe build a toxic waste place instead of another skyscraper full with offices? If I stopped spraying my crops would it really matter? Didn't we get a

bumper crop this summer even after the Meech Lake Accord wasn't passed?

How come when the whole world had a bumper crop this year there will still be people starving? What if all the farmers with bank loans paid them off by augering their wheat into those office towers at Portage and Main? How come it is that the same banks that complain about government interference in the marketplace are so willing to follow this Bank of Canada governor when he raises interest rates? What would happen if one bank said no, we can survive with one per cent less? Would the army be sent in?

Did it really bother us, that business with the army and the Mohawks? Would we want the army on our side if the Indians decided they wanted the West Reserve back? Would we know how to throw stones? Does Oata ever wonder about that?

If I took Oata by the hand right now would she let me lead her to the bedroom? Does she remember the last time we went to bed in the middle of the morning? Is such a thing allowed under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms?

If Jesus came back tomorrow would people be surprised about who was invited to the wedding? Have you ever thought about it? **mm**

**WINNIPEG
MENNONITE
THEATRE**
announces
a play competition
to celebrate
WMT's 20th Anniversary

The board of the Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre would like to produce a play on a Mennonite theme on the occasion of its 20th anniversary in the Fall of 1992. A prize of \$500 is offered if produced.

Deadline for submission is March 31, 1992. For further information, please contact Alfred Wiebe, president, at 338 7263 or 339 2058.

MIRROR MIX-UP

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The Mirror's 20
A record of note
But now we say "30"
That's all she

○○○○○

From the 21 entries to the March puzzle, Terri Fast Herd, of Winnipeg, was selected the winner.

Answers to clean, stain, glade, dairy, resin, and training.

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 June 14.

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

REVIEW

Songs on a spring evening

reviewed by Frank Neufeld.

The evening of songs by Daniel Lichti, baritone, and Arlene Shrut, piano, at the end of April proved to be a rare treat for those attending. There was a marvellous coincidence of an easy flow of fine poetry, of the artistic skill of the composers of the music, and the sensitivity of the performing artists to interpret and to portray all the beauty of words and music flowing together so magnificently.

The rendition of Vaughn Williams songs of travel did in fact take us on a musical journey. And though the artist, Daniel Lichti, convinced us in the very first song that he'd be content to experience "the heaven's above and the road below me," we were taken through the English countryside, we experienced the moor, the heather, as well as the fire-side congeniality with friends subsequent to our wanderings.

Nor were our imaginary wanderings restricted to nature walks. We enjoyed contemplation on beauty, on youth and love, we dreamed, saw shining heavens, and experienced the "Bright Ring of Words"

The artistry of singer and accompanist will not soon be forgotten for both portrayed a mastery of individual skills and these came together so marvellously to blend poetry and music into a magnificently rich and warm color portrait. The music lines moved with vibrancy and warmth throughout the evening, each artist supporting and enhancing the skills of the other. The writer was particularly impressed with the coming together of music and poetry so that a vivid beauty emerged.

The audience experienced melancholy reminiscing, heard hauntingly mystical sounds, was very much aware of the dynamic exuberance required in the interpretation of some songs in stark contrast to those portraying soft and mellow tones and reminding one of spring and hope and flowers following

more dismal times of winter just passed.

And, as the songs of travel concluded, one came away with the feeling of having been on a real-life journey, of having lived and loved, and now reliving many happy moments in reflection.

The Brahms Lieder added another dimension to the travel theme. Our "Wandern" now becomes more focused on concepts such as age milestones, fantasies, feelings of melancholy, and on longing for security of house and home. Concepts like "man wandert eben mit" conjure up a marvellous sense of the fullness of life's experiences. Poetry comes to life through the music's artistic portrayal in "Steig auf geliebter Schatten." As one reflects on the coming together of words and music, singer and accompanist, one realizes, at least in part, the many avenues open to us to see and to feel and to hear beauty coming to life so magnificently through the artists talents so masterfully portrayed on this evening. The pensive quality of the poetry and the music was perhaps best evidenced in the renditions, "Mein Herz ist schwer" and "Kein Haus, keine Heimat."

In the three Shakespeare songs we were treated to precise singing techniques which appeared to happen so effortlessly. The artists combined their talents to offer precision, warmth, as well as a sense of severity and dynamic energies as in "Blow, blow, thou Winter Wind."

Setting aside comments on the poetry of the Hugo Wolf serenades, one cannot neglect to say that the music composed for this poetic flow of emotions, combined with the artistry and skill of singer and accompanist, gave a particular poignancy and interpretive quality to the poet's already intense feelings. A dynamic vibrancy is experienced as time and time again a sense of longing or yearning is portrayed. The yearning felt in this set of songs is perhaps best characterized by the words "Eine bezondernde Schusuch wurde hervorgerufen."

Throughout these serenades, and the Chansons too, the audience was treated to superb artistry. Daniel Lichti's per-

formance was marked by a strong and commanding stage presence, by the offering of rich color, mellow tones, impeccable articulation of poetry and music, so that together each gave the other a greater beauty.

The audience was most appreciative of the fine introduction to the evening of songs by Professor Leonard Isaacs and by Judge John Enns. These gave an added dimension of understanding and artistic appreciation to us all.

Plaudits continue also to go to Prairie Performances for consistently tapping into such a rich and vibrant performing artists pool and bringing us these rich treasures of music. **mm**

YOUR WORD

Dark age predicted

With the demise of MM seen as a reality, I hope that such a publishing effort can be reserrected and continue to be called the *Mennonite Mirror*. It is such a unique magazine that to lose it could throw us all into the Dark Ages of the 20th century.

Ken Braun,
Altona.

Openness appreciated

I hasten to reply to Mary Lou Driedger's very well written article referring to Lydia Epp's life as a political spouse. I congratulate her on the accurate content expressing the real life issues Lydia has experienced being a wife to her great husband Jake.

I compliment both Jake and Lydia for their contribution to Provencher, Manitoba, and Canada as the tremendous example as they've shared their lives so openly.

May you and all your MM staff continue to enjoy much success, good health, peace and happiness.

Edward Loeppky,
Kelowna, BC.

MANITOBA NEWS

Dietrich Bartel has been granted tenure as a music professor at Canadian Mennonite Bible College. **Bernie Neufeld** and **Sig Polle** have been appointed to two-year terms in music and practical theology respectively.

Jo-Ann Martens will join the faculty of Canadian Mennonite Bible College as assistant professor in New Testament. She is currently completing her doctoral work in New Testament at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario. Martens and her husband, John, who is also completing his doctoral studies in New Testament at McMaster, are parents of one son.

The Historical Committee of the Canadian MB Conference Board of Higher Education has appointed **Alfred Redekopp** to a half-time position as archivist at the Centre for MB Studies in Winnipeg. Redekopp will be assisting **Abe Dueck** who was recently appointed as director of the centre. Redekopp also teaches at Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute. He has been a research assistant at the Centre for several years.

Canadian Mennonite Bible College received an operating grant of \$125,300 from the Manitoba government. The money will be used for taxes, scholarships, internship programs and pastoral education.

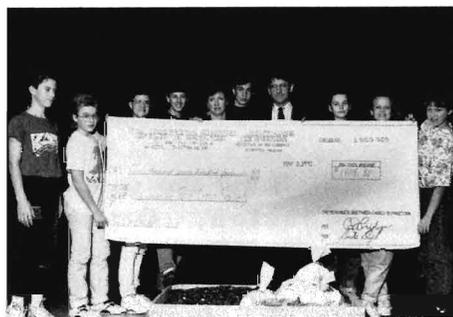
Cornie Friesen of the Grunthal area, a broiler chicken producer, has been named chairman of the Manitoba Chicken Broiler Producers Marketing Board. The board represents 136 producers in Manitoba.

Steinbach area broiler farmer **Waldie Klassen** has been elected chairman of the Canadian Chicken Marketing Agency. The agency represents 2,325 chicken producers across Canada.

Three members from the Soviet Association of Christians in Business

visited Manitoba for six days recently. The visit was sponsored by the association's western counterpart, the Winnipeg-based Soviet Union Network. The visitors toured business firms in Altona, Steinbach and Winnipeg and socialized with Mennonite business leaders. They also had a meeting with Manitoba's industry and trade minister, Eric Stefan-son.

The Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society held a special recognition ceremony on May 5 to thank the volunteers who have worked for many years with the **Mennonite Books** organization. **Susan Froese**, **Karin Dirks** and **Margaret Bergen** were thanked for the many years of service they provided, helping Mennonite Books to become a thriving institution. **Brandt Family Enterprises** has taken over the running of Mennonite Books.



Students and teachers of **Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute** presented the Canadian Red Cross Society with a cheque for \$1,704 to be used for the Kurdish Refugee relief effort. As part of Mathematics Education Month (April) a goal of one million pennies was set to help students gain a sense of large numbers. Although this goal was not reached, students collected 170,480 pennies.

Vic Janzen a long time member of the Winnipeg Commodity Exchange, has been hired to help to introduce a canola options market on the WCE.

Ed Gerbrandt became minister of Christian education and youth at Winkler MB Church on March 1.

The Mennonite Children's Choir will be Canada's representative at the Dekalb International Choral Festival next month in Atlanta, Georgia.

Ron Loeppky has been named new conference fundraiser for Canadian Mennonite Bible College in Winnipeg. He will begin his duties as director of church promotion and fundraising for the school's parent body, the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. He is currently chairperson of his home congregation, Springstein Mennonite Church. He and his wife Connie are parents of three children, ages 14 to 20; Lisa, Carla and Daryl.

When **Pam Rempel** went forward to receive her Bachelor of Church Music degree on April 28, she was not aware that she is the 1000th person to graduate from CMBC. She was joined by 51 fellow students at the schools' 1991 commencement service held at First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg.

Alexander Zaichenko, a leading Soviet economist, has recently accepted the post of President of the Association of Christians in Business in the USSR (ACB). The ACB is the Soviet counterpart to the Winnipeg-based Soviet Union Network (SUN). The ACB was founded in May 1990 at the urging of those involved in SUN, and is committed to addressing the needs of the emerging Christian business community, specifically in issues of business and ethics, and business to business contacts both within the Soviet Union and between the Soviet Union and the West.

Although many people visit Africa to learn about hunger and development, only a few get off the main roads to see people in isolated rural areas. Fourteen participants in the February Mennonite Central Committee Africa Food and Environment Study Tour got off "the beaten track" to learn about life in rural Africa. Twelve of the 14 participants were North American, one was Nigerian and one Bangladeshi. The group included farmers, agriculturists, educators and MCC staff involved in food-related issues. Participants split into four groups, visiting Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Doris Penner, family page editor and food columnist for the Steinbach Carillon, visited Zambia. The tour showed her how difficult it is for poor Zambians to get nutritious food. "Even when there is enough food to eat," she says, "it doesn't supply enough protein. Red meat and chicken are rarely on the menu since they are expensive." A sign of hope, she says, is an MCC program that encourages farmers to grow soybeans, a protein-rich plant that is easy to store and can help ease malnutrition.

Staff and volunteers at MCC Canada in Winnipeg loaded 76 bales of blankets, sheets and baby clothing for Kurdish refugees in Iran on April 18. The bales were sent to the MCC material aid warehouse in Kitchener, Ontario, to await transport to Iran. The blankets, sheets and baby clothes were all donated by Mennonite church women's groups in Manitoba.

Dark side of tourism: *Caught in Modern Slavery: Tourism and Child Prostitution in Asia* is the name of a just-published book from the Ecumenical Council on Third World Tourism in Bangkok, Thailand. One of the book's editors is Chris Wiebe, a student at MBBC. Wiebe served with the coalition last summer in Thailand with the MCC Canada Service Education Program. He is a member of the Lendrum Mennonite Brethren Church in Edmonton.

Paul Leatherman former director of

SelfHelp Crafts of the World, retired in January after 26 years of service with MCC. For 14 years Leatherman directed SelfHelp Crafts, overseeing both international and US operations. During those years SelfHelp Crafts grew from \$424,000 to nearly \$4.8 million in annual sales. SelfHelp Crafts, a program of MCC, creates jobs in more than 35 developing countries. Last year, SelfHelp Crafts created more than 14,000 full-time jobs for impoverished craftspeople overseas.

The grounds at the **Mennonite Heritage Village** in Steinbach opened for the season on Saturday April 27. Hours for April and May are 10 to 5 Monday through Saturday, and noon to 5 on Sundays. Call 1-326-9661 for other information.

The picture of Africa for most Canadians is that of famine, war and need. But Winnipeg artist **Ray Dirks** is out to change that image with a unique exhibition of African art. Dirks, a member of the Valley Gardens Mennonite Brethren Church, journeyed to Africa in February to collect 13 original works of art by artists in Zaire, Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia. The works, which show scenes from the lives of ordinary Africans, were commissioned through grants from Partnership Africa Canada, with assistance from Mennonite Central Committee, Canadian Lutheran World Relief, Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services and the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. The exhibition will begin a cross-Canada tour in July in Charlottetown. It will also go to St. John, Moncton, Ottawa, Kitchener/Waterloo, Winnipeg, Regina, Saskatoon, Medicine Hat, Edmonton and Vancouver. The show will feature descriptions of each work, together with information about the artist. It will also include sounds of African life, recorded by Dirks during his visit.

Charges of causing a disturbance against three members of the Montreal Canadiens hockey team have been dropped following the successful mediation of their case in Winnipeg. The three players -- Brian Skrudland,

Shayne Corson and Mike Keane -- were arrested last December outside a Winnipeg bar after they allegedly tried to intervene in a dispute between two women and two men. Rather than appear in court March 14, the three chose to have their case mediated by the MCC sponsored Mediation Services. During the session the hockey players and the two men reached an agreement; following the recommendation of mediator Yvonne Lesage, charges against the three were dropped by the crown attorney. Terms of the agreement are confidential. According to Lesage, the case is "fairly typical of the kinds of things that get referred to mediation." "Many of the cases, she says, involve some kind of assault, with agreements usually involving restitution for lost wages or damages. Sometimes the accused also agrees to seek counselling for anger management or alcohol abuse. One case involved the accused giving the victim tickets to a Winnipeg Jets game -- "As a way of saying 'sorry,'" Lesage says. The Mediation Services program in Winnipeg is the largest of its kind in North America. Over 1,000 cases were referred to the program last year.

Erwin Strempler will become editor for *Der Bote* beginning September 1, 1991. Strempler, a teacher by profession, is completing 10 years as principal of Westgate Mennonite Collegiate in Winnipeg. He is an ordained minister and has served as assistant pastor at both Douglas Mennonite Church and Springfield Heights Mennonite Church in Winnipeg. Strempler was born in Germany where he received his early education. He earned a teaching certificate in 1956 at Manitoba Teachers College; a Bachelor of Education degree in 1965 and Master of Arts degree in 1973 (majors in German literature and English) at the University of Manitoba. *Der Bote* a German-language newspaper which serves General Conference Mennonites, recently transferred its administrative office from the General Conference in Newton, Kansas, to the Conference of Mennonites in Canada in Winnipeg. The paper has been published in Rost-

hern and Saskatoon, Saskatchewan and, since 1978, in Winnipeg. Strempler sees his work with *Der Bote* as a continuation of his commitment to the Mennonite community. "My years at Westgate and with the church have crystalized this commitment," he says. "I want to listen carefully and respond to the needs of the Conference -- to the spiritual, informational, social and community needs of our church." Strempler replaces **Gerhard Ens** who is retiring after 14 years. Erwin and Magdalena Strempler are members of the Douglas Mennonite Church in Winnipeg and are parents of three grown children.



12th Elementary German Poetry Recital: On February 9, the 12th Annual Elementary German Poetry Recital was held in Winnipeg at River East Collegiate; 142 children from 22 schools and one home school participated. All children took part in the preliminary recital, which took place in the classrooms throughout the school. Two adjudicators in each classroom had the very difficult task of choosing four students from each of the grades 1-6 to progress to the final recital, which was held in the theatre. Here the finalists from each grade once again recited their poem before several new adjudicators. Lorie Bergen, teacher at River East Collegiate, and Harald Ohlendorf, German consultant from Manitoba

Education were responsible for judging finalists from grades one to three. Catherine Froese-Klassen, teacher at John Taylor Collegiate, and Gareth Neufeld, teacher at Chief Peguis Junior High were responsible for judging finalists from grades four to six. This year's recital was the biggest ever. The support of the parents, the teachers, the many volunteers, and the financial support of the many sponsors over the years must be recognized.

The winners were as follow:

Grade One: Ich und Ich, Anne Steinwart 1. Christina McCoy (Niverville Elem.) 2. Leanna Waldner (Baker School) 3. Avalon Wittmeier (Donwood) 4. Ben Bisset (Princess Margaret).

Grade Two: Ich wär so gern ein Schneeman - Bernhard Lins. 1. Benjamin Hofer (Crystal Colony School) 2. Kristine Derksen (Donwood) 3. Monica Tessmann (Donwood) 4. Laurie Maendel (Baker School)

Grade Three: Meine Mutter - Rosemarie Neie 1. Nancy Reuter (Princess Margaret) 2. Megan Bradshaw (Donwood) 3. Laura Fletcher (German St. School) 4. Jeremy Nickerson (Winkler Elem.)

Grade Four: Der ist Reich - Artur Troppmann 1. Ciara Wittmeier (Donwood) 2. Leanna Thiessen (Border Valley) 3. Gloria Kauenhowen (Home-schooled) 4. Candace Dueck (Kleefeld School)

Grade Five: Nieman - Frida Schanz 1. Kristin Sobie (Princess Margaaret) 2. Josiah Maendel (Crystal Springs) 3. Melanie Gerl (Donwood) 4. Diana Friesen (Mitchell Elem.)

Grade Six: Krank -Shel Silverstein 1. Bob Reimer (Kleefeld School) 2. Margaret Rempel (Donwood) 3. Cindy Hildebrand (Border Valley) 4. Joyce Giesbrecht (Woodlawn School)
Overall winner Grades 1-3: Nancy Reuter. Overall winner Grades 4-6: Ciara Wittmeier

Coming Events

June 8 and 9: Mennonite Colegiate Institute's first annual homecoming for all alumni. "Meeting at the Crossroads '91" Call 327-5891.

June 9: Annual "Saengerfest" at MCI. Worship service at 10:30 a.m.; afternoon program at 2:30 p.m.

June 11-12: Workshop on clergy ethics and sexual exploitation, sponsored by eight denominations, at CMBC. Leader: Marie Fortune. Contact: Interfaith Pastoral Institute. 515 Portage Ave., Winnipeg. Phone 787-9251.

June 23: MCI graduation ceremonies at the Winkler Bergthaler Church at 2:30 p.m.

June 18: Winnipeg Relief Sale organizing meeting, 7:30 p.m., Elmwood MB Church. Anyone interested in creating an MCC sale in the city are invited. For information call JOHN Longhurst, MCC, 261 6381.

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Mennonites may not be free of domestic violence, but their churches have a unique opportunity to bring healing

As an employee of the Winnipeg Core Area Initiative I am occasionally called on to participate in interview sessions for training programs for people needing special assistance. During one such interview, a Native woman was asked to list some of the causes of the problems experienced by Native people.

"The church," she replied, "has caused us more problems than any other institution." Pushed to give reasons for her answer, she stated that the Old Testament teaching to "spare the rod and spoil the child," a teaching stressed both in theory and practice by the church in their "mission" work in Native communities, has resulted in an acceptance of family violence that is causing incredible suffering in Native communities today. She also mentioned the part played by the church in conjunction with the government in the policy of removing children from their families and placing them in the schools run by various denominations: schools in which many youngsters experienced abuse of various kinds.

The recent release of a study by Isaac Block has focused attention on this question of domestic violence and abuse in the Mennonite community. The study, sponsored by the Mennonite Central Committee of Canada, revealed the extent to which Mennonite church members in Winnipeg are experiencing domestic abuse. Based on a random sample of 187 adults from Winnipeg Mennonite churches, there were 65 incidents of physical abuse in a 12 month period. The same group recalled 1,295 incidents of abuse against them by their parents or guardians in their childhood. Abuse was defined as throwing things, pushing, slapping, hitting with an object, beating up, kicking or using a knife or gun. In addition to physical abuse, 25 per cent of females reported sexual abuse.

The Mennonite Central Committee must be congratulated for supporting a study which is potentially embarrassing for its own community. It is believed to be the first time that a Canadian denomination has conducted a study of this kind on itself. The irony in one of the "historic peace churches" finding violence within its doors is, or should be, unsettling. Yet this is an issue that must be dealt with firmly. Can we expect governments to settle conflicts without the use of

force, yet continue to condone the use of force on an individual level in our own community?

In his study, Block makes a number of valuable suggestions regarding ways in which the church could be more helpful in dealing with the problem. At present, few victims of domestic abuse turn to the church for help, possibly because "most victims are females victimized by males and all salaried pastors at the time of the interviews were males! Block recommends "avoiding theological formulas and 'pat' answers from the Bible;" he also calls on Mennonites to examine the biblical concept of submission which has been corrupted into a theology of dominance. Since pastors also have tended not to counsel abused wives to leave husbands because of a high view of the marriage agreement, Block questions whether personal safety should rank higher than marriage if the marriage is abusive. He recommends that Mennonite churches should devote more time and personnel to offer services to victims of abuse, and recommends the creation of a "Christian" shelter in Winnipeg. In his view, programs which offer care to abusers should also be created.

It is hoped that these recommendations will be taken seriously by all the groups which are part of the Mennonite community. Victimization of a group or any individual in any community must not be tolerated. Pastors should receive more training in recognizing and dealing with instances of family violence. The fact that women are reluctant to confide in male pastors is one more reason to recommend that churches be open to having women on their pastoral teams. No doubt the fact of the presence of a female pastor might play a role in increasing the respect that all church members have for women as individuals. At a time when domestic violence is seen as a growing problem in society at large, the Mennonite community should strive to be seen as providing solutions rather than being part of the problem itself. **mm**

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*“With a gun
in his hands,
man cannot
till the land.*

*Hoes must be held
between two hands.”*

—Ferdie Tabar, Sudanese bishop

Around the world MCC and its local partners see the relationship between conflict and hunger. Poverty and hunger are causes of conflict. War makes it impossible for people to earn a living and grow food. War is also costly, drawing government funds away from social programs.

MCC works at peacemaking and meeting human need through programs such as agricultural work in Lebanon, peace efforts in the Horn of Africa, and assistance through churches in Nicaragua and Honduras.

“They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; but every one will live quietly in his own home in peace, and no one shall make them afraid, for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken.”

Micah 4



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