

*Revised
for Direction #1*

THE FREE CHURCH CONCEPT AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

FOR MENNONITE BRETHREN THEOLOGICAL CENTER FOR M. D. STUDIES IN CANADA
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From the days of Abraham, the "Chosen People" have had to resist the temptation of total assimilation with those amongst whom they lived. They have had to stand fire against seductive religions, they have had to struggle with powerful world-systems which sought to control them. Throughout history the community of faith has sought freedom from the forces which prevent a people from performing the will of God.

The Anabaptists of the 16th century provide an excellent case-study of how a group of believers came to understand the concept of freedom. For them, freedom to hear and obey the voice of God meant being free from the political, social, economic and psychological influences which sought to keep them in bondage.¹ The essence of the "Free Church" then is the awareness of the possibility that the mind can be darkened by the most subtle and dangerous temptation of all--that of being unable to see the truth because of total involvement in the temporary order.

The idea of a Free Church did not originate with Anabaptists; the roots of the Free Church tradition were already implicit in the Old Testament teaching on the covenant.² The New Testament, in this perspective, traces the continuing fulfillment of the promise of God in the history of the church. The Anabaptists, therefore, were not attempting to establish something new--they were simply trying to pattern their church after the biblical model.

The Anabaptists are also indebted to some of the medieval "sects" who were seeking to be free from the systems of the world. Tribute must be paid to Donatus who gave the Free Church the slogan, "What does the emperor have to do with the church."³ The Cathari of the eleventh century and the Waldenses of the twelfth were also participants in the struggle for church freedom. In addition to these were large groups of individuals who enunciated ideas and developed practices similar to the sixteenth century Anabaptists--while staying within the magisterial church.⁴

Despite their indebtedness and similarities, there is no lineal continuity between the Anabaptists and these groups. Scholarship has demonstrated that the Anabaptist

movement is to a large extent related to the same historical forces that gave birth to the Protestant Reformation as a whole.⁵ But it is beyond the scope of this study to review the movement in its entirety. Our primary purpose is to set forth the central emphases of moderate Anabaptists in their historical Free Church setting--emphases which guided them in their theological orientation and understanding of mission.

I. THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH

The central theological concern of the Anabaptists was the nature of the church.⁶ Cornelius Krahn defined them as "Ecclesio-centric."⁷ The basic lines of Menno Simons' theology, he writes, can be established in his attempt to make actual "...the apostolic model in the local church. Almost all other questions of Christian life and teaching are determined from here."⁸ Any discussion of Anabaptist theology, ecclesiology or relation to the outside world must properly begin with the Anabaptist understanding of the nature and mission of the church.

A. Church is Visible

The practical concern of the Anabaptists was the actualization of a visible and true body of Christ on earth, based on the New Testament model. They were unwilling to accept the Reformers' distinction between a visible, impure church on earth and a pure, invisible church in heaven. Consequently, the Anabaptists believed that it was their responsibility to establish a pure church on earth.⁹

In looking to the New Testament for guidance, they were saying that current models or patterns--political and religious--were not a reliable guide. By insisting that the church was visible, they were saying that it must take on a specific visible expression distinct from contemporary institutions. The visible church must be an expression of the true nature of the church of Christ, based on the governing principle of fellowship between those who confessed Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.¹⁰

Voluntarism

Central to their understanding of the Believer's Church was the requirement of the Swiss Brethren of membership following confession of faith. This concept stood in sharp contrast to the Reformers for whom the church was a society of "the baptized."

Only after voluntary confession could an individual be baptized and admitted to the congregation. Baptism of infants was rejected because it was both unscriptural and violated their understanding of the church.

The radical reformers also believed there was a distinction between the church and the world.¹¹ They rejected outright the ungodly mixture of political, cultural and religious elements woven into the fabric of sixteenth century Europe. From the perspective of the Swiss Brethren, the church had fallen captive to this fabric and could gain its freedom only by following its Lord in simple obedience.

Voluntary membership and visible evidence of a transformed life would ensure that the Anabaptists would be a minority group within the larger population, free from institutional domination, religious and political. To remain within the establishment constituted unfaithfulness for the Brethren.

B. Brotherhood

The Swiss Brethren, and later, Menno Simons, viewed the Christian life as being lived in the context of believers.¹² For them the church was a brotherhood of love, in which the fullness of Christ was to be expressed. They sought to involve every believer in the life of the church. In contrast, the state supported churches boasted a professional class of clergy, administrators and theologians. The majority had little share in the life, service or government of the church.

The Anabaptists, on the other hand, boasted a fellowship of equals. There was no official clergy, classes or artificial distinctions. They were a family of "brothers" and "sisters" bound together by mutual concern. Robert Friedman attributes the dynamics of Anabaptism to this concept of brotherhood:

...the real dynamite of the age of the reformation, as I see it, was this, that one cannot find salvation without caring for his brother, that this "brother" actually matters in the personal life. This interdependence of men gives life and salvation a new meaning. It is not "faith alone" which matters (for which faith no church would be needed) but it is brotherhood, this intimate caring for each other, as it was commanded to the disciples of Christ as the way to God's kingdom. This was the discovery which made Anabaptism so forceful and outstanding in all of history.¹³

Calvin Redekop, in The Free Church and Seductive Culture, correlates kinship among the Anabaptists with their concept of leadership.¹⁴ The group counted before

the leader, in his opinion. The Reformers, he maintains, seldom referred to individual Anabaptist leaders by name; they were usually referred to as a group and designated Wiedertaeufer, Schwaermer or Rottengeister. The early leaders, moreover, were not men who held important positions in church or government before becoming leaders, but young preachers or individuals pursuing ordinary occupations. To this sociological interpretation of brotherhood origins--the non-establishment roles of early leaders and group nature of the movement--one can add the sense of mission they shared. Every member was assured of his necessity in a common cause as a contributing member in the church.¹⁵

The church as brotherhood has implications for worship, mutual aid, church government and inter-church relations. In worship, the Lord's Supper, like baptism, contributed to a living fellowship. The bread and wine were regarded as symbols of his presence--not in themselves--but in the community. Menno Simons attached a strong ethical significance to communion, requiring members to examine themselves before partaking. "Worthiness" to participate was interpreted largely in ethical terms.¹⁶ At the heart of the observance, however, was a sense of fellowship with the suffering of Christ and a sense of brotherhood.

The concern for community also manifested itself in material areas. In true Christian brotherhood, all the resources of every member would be enlisted for the common good. While only some Anabaptists organized their community around a common purse (Hutterites), all of them adhered in theory and practice to the principle that property of all members was at the disposal of all in need. C. J. Dyck describes their relationship to material possessions as follows:

The attitude of believers to earthly possessions was for them a valid test of faith and one which could be easily identified. They did not consider themselves to have been deprived of their rights by fate and develop their theology to compensate for such loss; they knew they had found the pearl of great price which put all other possessions into true perspective.¹⁷

Willingness to share was a sign of godly love, without which there could be no true faith.

Emphasis upon the corporate life of faith led the Swiss Brethren to differ from Zwingli--who preferred to leave the matter of church government to the civil authorities--and from all those for whom church order was a matter of insignificance.¹⁸ Several principles guided the Anabaptists in relating church organization to brotherhood: (1) Because the church was constituted on the basis of voluntary covenants among persons, the structure of the church must therefore facilitate meaningful fellowship. (2) All share responsibility for church government. (3) If the church was mission oriented, the internal structure must be organized to sustain this enterprise. (4) Church order was necessary to ensure order and discipline in the church.¹⁹

Special attention was also paid to the dimension of power and voluntarism in the context of church government. John Y. Yoder has written extensively on this subject, in one place stating: "Within the community of the covenant there is a renunciation of the use of power and the reduction of persons to things."²⁰ Ross Bender, relating "power" to church organization, observed: "The growth in power, wealth and prestige that comes with establishment affects not only the external relationships of the church to government and society at large, but also the inner life and character of the church itself."²¹

Anabaptist concern for brotherhood influenced their attitude towards the Reformers. They never abandoned their interest in greater Christian unity. They were, in fact, not only supportive of Zwingli in the early days, but part of the inner circle, breaking with him only when he insisted that civil authorities had jurisdiction in the affairs of the church. Though believing that the Reformers lacked moral and spiritual courage,²² they would not accept division between them as Christians. The Reformers were invited to join them in reading the Scriptures, for, as one leader stated, "If you call yourselves Christians you must be willing to discuss with us what it is you hold against us, and to read the Scriptures with us."²³

C. Missionary Character of the Church

Littell considers the sixteenth century Anabaptists as "the forerunners of modern mission."²⁴ Ross Bender maintains that no other characteristic was more outstanding than their missionary zeal.²⁵ They alone among the major Reformers had the will and conviction to take seriously the Great Commission. The Reformers believed that the mandate to evangelize the world had been fulfilled during the time of the apostles, and that Europe had already been Christianized. The Anabaptists, on the other hand, gave the Great Commission highest priority. If church membership depended on voluntary commitment, then the survival of the church depended on evangelism. The concept of a Free Church, not sustained by infant baptism, was a great impetus to missionary activity.

The genius of this missionary vision was that the church was not only missionary in strategy but in character. C. J. Dyck, in an article, "Anabaptism and the Social Order," stated:

Most Anabaptists continued in their vocational occupation after joining the movement, but now it became an opportunity to win others. Tradesmen talked with their fellow-workers and invited them to the meeting in an Anabaptist house that night; servants shared their faith with curious employers. These natural contacts and conversations were often more significant than the sermon to which the inquirers would be invited. The Christian calling became more important than the occupation, not Beruf but Berufung.²⁶

The missionary character was also reinforced by political realities; according to Reformation thought, Europe was already Christian, and the nature of belief in a given territory was determined by the rulers of the area in question.²⁷ From the Reformers' point of view, therefore, missionary activity was unnecessary and undesirable. Rejection of this "territorial principle" made it necessary for Anabaptists to be aggressive in missions.

Strategy was not overlooked: On August 20, 1527, a missionary convention--known as the Martyr Synod--was held in Augsburg, and plans were made to evangelize South Germany, Switzerland and Moravia.²⁸ Missionaries were commissioned and sent out in twos to specific areas of responsibility. But evangelism was not limited to the

formally commissioned; it was expected that all members be active witnesses, as in New Testament times. The success of the movement was probably due as much to the efforts of these unofficial missionaries as to those who have left records of their activities.

One final aspect of the missionary vision of the Brethren was the ability to transcend the boundaries defined as the "territorial principle." Identification only with Christians of a particular state, they thought, was too limited an understanding of the universality of the kingdom. Their vision for a true church which transcended political and cultural boundaries in its outreach qualify them for the recognition given by Littell that they were indeed ecumenical in their missionary outlook and in their concern for fellowship with believers everywhere.²⁹

II. CONFRONATION OF CHURCH AND THE WORLD

The Swiss Brethren drew a sharp line between the church and the world (cultural environment) and the church and the state. Michael Sattler wrote in the "Schleitheim Articles of Faith" that "A separation shall be made from the evil and wickedness which the devil has planted in the world; in this manner, simply that we do not have fellowship with them in the multitude of their abominations."³⁰ Some years later Menno Simons wrote: "All the evangelical scriptures teach us that the church of Christ was and is, in doctrine, life and worship, a people separated from the world."³¹

This attitude was based on the belief that the church could not be the new community of faith as long as it was linked to the world. As citizens of the heavenly kingdom their criteria and norms were to be no longer shaped by the power structures and values of the world, but by the Scriptures. This orientation led them to believe that the church was called into the new order of the Kingdom of God to represent and promote the interest of this Kingdom. The state, on the other hand, was called to govern the kingdom of this world.³² It was responsible for the maintenance of law and order, and social justice. A certain amount of force was justified to accomplish these ends; the church, however, would never use the instruments of the state to accomplish her purposes. The only force she could exert was the power of suffering

love.³³ The Anabaptists thus sought not only freedom from the influence of the state, but also renounced any use of power in building the church or winning converts. Only methods compatible with the inner nature of the church were permissible.

It must be kept in mind that the debates between Zwingli and the early Anabaptists were not concerned with whether the political order was evil or not; it was a question of jurisdiction.³⁴ The Anabaptists believed that the state had no jurisdiction over the affairs of the church. By taking this radical stance, they were the first Europeans to set forth a doctrine of secular government.³⁵

The doctrine of two worlds which grew out of the Anabaptist attempt to define relations between church and state called for an eschatological view of history.³⁶ In this view, the old age--the kingdom of darkness which rules the hearts of men and determines their decisions in social, political, economic and religious spheres--is passing away.³⁷ The new kingdom--God's Kingdom-- is the visible church of Christ.

It was this eschatological hope which sustained the Anabaptists during severe persecution. Frequent references to "even now" but "not yet" indicate that the Brethren were aware of their present condition but had an eschatological outlook which reflected their assurance of the ultimate triumph of God. This hope was also a powerful missionary incentive: They believed that the church was the historical instrument whereby the sovereignty of Christ would, in God's time, be established.³⁸

Their insistence on freedom from the state and the magisterial church was also related to their belief that growth in power, wealth and prestige--which comes with establishment--affects not only the external relationships of the church, but also the inner life and nature of the congregation itself.³⁹ This was in keeping with their understanding of Brotherhood, church order and missionary mandate.

The Anabaptist vision for society, as C. J. Dyck has pointed out in his article, "Anabaptism and the New Social Order," was a "bold new socio-religious mode."⁴⁰ The church was the new social and cultural option, the only theological reality. It would, in God's time, become the society of the future. Meanwhile, they would live and serve in the old society. It is quite clear that their vision of a new society grew

out of their understanding of the "two kingdoms" doctrine.⁴¹ It is also evident that their social consciousness was heightened by their missionary vision. Dyck, in the article referred to above, links the missionary vision to the early Anabaptist view of a new society:

It is clear that the missionary response was for the Anabaptists the primary alternative to the methods of the magisterial reformers and the believer's church an attractive alternative to the Corpus Christianum. Not coercion, but persuasion, not primary emphasis on reforming society but on establishing a new society, not individualistic salvation but personal experience and corporate faith were their alternatives....This was in a real sense, a program for society; not for the creaking social, political and ecclesiastical machinery inherited from the middle ages, but for the people who were caught in it.⁴²

It may be noteworthy that missionary activity in this context was political activity-- a revolutionary concept which may well explain the intensity of reaction displayed by the civil authorities against these sixteenth century radicals.

It would be incorrect to maintain that they translated this vision perfectly into their social, political and economic lives. In some instances they even failed to take advantage of the limited options which were open to them. To deny social relevance of the Anabaptist vision for society, however, is to fail to understand their view of the church in light of their view of the world.

World View of the Anabaptists

The Anabaptists viewed the Reformation in very different terms from their contemporaries. They believed that the Reformers were not only half-hearted in their reform efforts, but were willfully resisting the whole truth of the gospel.⁴³ The Brethren saw Zwingli as one setting aside the "divine world" and "adulterating it" with the human word.⁴⁴ What they failed to see was that Zwingli was viewing the Reformation within the context of a world view which grew out of intimate relations between church and state. Calvin Redekop viewed the Reformers as victims of a "total ideology."⁴⁵

The Anabaptists promulgated a world-view which was the product of a deep body of beliefs--recognition of one authority, a willingness to identify with suffering

humanity and a commitment to use only methods compatible with the inner character of the church. Although they succeeded in freeing themselves from the "total ideology" of the Reformers, they too were victims of a "total ideology." This ideology was radical, out of line with the world in which they lived. While no less total than that of the Reformers, it gave greater freedom to practice biblical Christianity at its best. This "total ideology" of the Anabaptists constitutes the vision of the Free Church, a vision which earned for them the claim to have been the first Free Church in modern times.⁴⁶

III. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ANABAPTIST VISION FOR MENNONITE BRETHREN

Mennonites in Europe and North America have been subject to many outside influences throughout the past 400 years and, according to J. H. Yoder, the Mennonites have been transformed in their very character.⁴⁷ In spite of these influences--some of them wholesome--the Anabaptist vision has not been altogether lost. A biblical orientation, voluntary service, believer's baptism, mutual aid and missionary activities are evidences of the original commitment.

Dr. J. A. Toews, in his recent history of the Mennonite Brethren, refers repeatedly to the influence of the Anabaptist vision upon the theological and organizational orientation of the Mennonite Brethren conference. Several quotations reveal his conviction:

The Mennonite Brethren church throughout its history has emphasized biblical authority on all matters of faith and practice. The early Brethren recovered much of the biblical⁴⁸ orientation of apostolic Christianity and of the early Anabaptist movement.

The search of the early Brethren for biblical patterns and principles for the fellowship of believers did not occur in a theological vacuum, however, but in a definite church related and historical context. In their attempts to understand biblical revelation the brethren were influenced (perhaps much more than they realized) by their spiritual heritage as well as by the literature and ministries of contemporary evangelicals.⁴⁹

This emphasis on spiritual identity with the views of the Anabaptists and especially of Menno Simons is found repeatedly in the correspondence of the brethren.⁵⁰

Although there has been a weakening of the church's theological foundations in recent times, the confessional documents of the Mennonite Brethren church to the present day strongly maintain this historical connection and orientation.⁵¹

It is also possible to find support for this historic connection in the writings of P. M. Friesen, J. H. Lohrenz, F. C. Peters, C. Krahn, R. Kreider, and Ross Bender. To what extent the Anabaptist vision has been a significant guiding influence, however, has not yet been established.

Mennonite Brethren, like other Mennonite groups, have been influenced by a wide range of theological and ecclesiastical ideas.⁵² Furthermore, identity with Anglo-Saxon culture in North America has exposed them to social and cultural influences not faced in Russian or early American experience. When considering all these influences, one might be nostalgic for simpler days when life-style, theology and church order were less encumbered. It may be more helpful, however, to view the past as an opportunity to rediscover roots, tradition and heritage which could provide continuing guidance in a search for an authentic church life.

Those of us who have found renewal in the rediscovery of our heritage are haunted by a belief that there is a distinct understanding of the nature of the church and its ministry which should shape the pattern of theological education, church life and ministry for our time. This inclination is supported by research which demonstrates that rediscovery of the Anabaptist vision was a contributing factor towards church renewal. Robert Kreider, in the article, "The Anabaptist Conception of the Church in the Russian Mennonite Environment" sees the influence of the Anabaptist vision in the developments which led to the establishment of the "Brueder Gemeinde" and the "Kleine Gemeinde."⁵³ In his article, "Anabaptist Vision and Mennonite Reality," John H. Yoder refers to the recovery of the Anabaptist vision as an agency working for renewal within the Old Mennonite Conference.⁵⁴

The rich spiritual heritage of the Anabaptist-Mennonites indicates clearly that there were points at which the Anabaptists differed from their religious contemporaries. Examples include: nature of authority, nature of the church, meaning of baptism, the mission of the church, state-church relations and the pattern of ministry. The shape of these concerns was determined by the way they read the

Scriptures and applied them in their particular historical situation. Questions of theology, ethics, church polity, missions and relations to the cultural environment were, moreover, determined by their understanding of the church. Their theology was, to use C. Krahn's term, "ecclesio-centric."

The crucial question is: How shall we make a judgment about the contemporary significance of our heritage? To put the question another way: In what ways does that heritage provide guidance in the development of church life, conference planning and mission activities?

Recent developments indicate that the Free Church concept is more fully understood today than it was in the past. The list of scholars who have contributed to this cause is long, including North Americans and Europeans--many of whom represent other Christian traditions. It is also my view that Anabaptist-Mennonite history is being more systematically taught in M.B. schools than it was in the past. Both developments will prove helpful as we face the question of heritage and tradition.

Another factor which will influence the future of the Mennonite Brethren Church is that Mennonitism is breaking out of its ethnic and cultural isolationism.⁵⁵ Mennonite tendencies toward isolation were strengthened during their early stay in Russia by an aversion to the Slavic culture--which they considered inferior to their own. This tendency was reinforced by close association and identification of German culture with Mennonite faith.⁵⁶ Other factors contributing to their isolation were: non-conformity, lack of interest in missions, rural environment and ethnic character.

Mennonite Brethren are no longer bound by these cultural and ethnic factors as they have been in the past, at least not to the same extent. Most have abandoned the relationship between separate ethnic identity and religious life. Nevertheless, there continues a prevalent notion that Mennonitism provides something distinct to the religious life of the church.

J. A. Toews rather fittingly describes the changes which have been and are at work among Mennonite Brethren in the following statement:

During the relatively short period of a little more than one hundred years, the Mennonite Brethren have experienced the repeated impacts of tremendous cultural change. They have come from Europe to America; they have changed their language of communication from German to English; they have moved from country to city in large numbers; they have largely left agricultural pursuits and entered the various professions; and they have risen economically from lower classes to middle class in society.⁵⁷

In recent decades many traditional practices have been abandoned or challenged. Many old cultural barriers have fallen away in face of social contacts and educational and professional activities. Today, as never before, the M.B. Conference is being challenged to examine its hermeneutical procedures and its practical application to determine the constants and variables in its doctrine and practice. Extensive borrowings from a wide range of sources are affecting church government, teaching and mission strategy. There is also evidence that some feel at home in the world and share the ideals which undergird the Canadian-American way of life.

J. A. Toews, speaking of the dangers and opportunities that confront Mennonite Brethren as they seek adaptation to the Anglo-Saxon way of life, states:

A sense of nonconformity and separation from the world, which was formerly reinforced by a linguistic barrier, can now be obtained only by a greater effort in systematic teaching of biblical principles and by cultivating a deeper spiritual life. Not all congregations have vision for the challenge of new opportunities on the one hand, and new dangers on the other, provided by the assimilation and the larger "outside language group."⁵⁸

Despite these changes, I believe that the historical memory of being a pilgrim and alien people has not been eradicated. But this awareness of being a called-out people--a free people--needs to be nurtured. Increasing numbers of Mennonite Brethren long for a return to the emphasis of the Free Church. The opportunity to once again become a prophetic church has been provided by the complex interplay of changes at work in the Mennonite Brethren Conference.

While it is evident that Mennonites have "piggybacked" on the intellectual traditions of the great churches, in Christendom at large there is a new openness to the Anabaptist understanding of the Free Church vision. Mennonites are continuing to borrow--bringing in many elements incompatible with Anabaptism⁵⁹--but they are also beginning to exert an influence on both Catholic and mainline Protestant churches.

John Howard Yoder comments:

There are still those who do not really believe that the church-state separation is universally ideal and normative, but the number of those advocating renewal of the classical partnership of throne and altar is diminishing rapidly.

With the Roman Catholic communion now committed explicitly to religious liberty, with most major bodies having made the same move in the course of the nineteenth century, and with the orthodox who historically had been most committed to this model, largely under the control of Marxists and Muslim governments, the case for religious liberty, on the level of theoretical proclamations, no longer needs to be made. What in Michael Sattler was heresy and Roger Williams still a civil offence is now normative Christian political theology.⁶⁰

In the same article Yoder speaks more forcefully of the relevance of the Free

Church vision:

The Believer's Church vision is not only biblically mandated, it is of increasingly visible contemporary relevance around the world, and our only regret should be our feebleness in finding for it in every age a new worthy incarnation.⁶¹

ENDNOTES

1. The term "Free Church" was not used in the sixteenth century. The traditional definition of the Free Church, which refers to the separation from the state and other institutions, is only a preliminary approach to the central issue of being free to hear the voice of God and obey it. For a fuller definition of the Free Church concept see: Donald F. Durnbaugh, The Believer's Church: The History and Character of Radical Protestantism (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1968), pp. 8-22.
2. Referred to in Ross T. Bender, The People of God (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1971), p. 137.
3. Gunnar Westin, The Free Church Through the Ages. Virgil A. Olson, trans. (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1958), p. 20.
4. For a systematic treatment of the groups within the established church which advocated ideas akin to the Anabaptists see Leonard Verduin, The Reformers and Their Stepchildren (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964). Also see: Westin, The Free Church Through the Ages, pp. 9-20.
5. John Oyer, Lutheran Reformers Against Anabaptists (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964), p. 3
6. For a review of the historians, both hostile and friendly, who viewed the church as central in the life and practice of the Anabaptists see: Franklin H. Littell, "The Anabaptist Concept of the Church" in Guy F. Hersberger, The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1957), p. 119.
7. Cornelius Krahn, "Prolegomena to an Anabaptist Theology," MQR, XXIV (January, 1950), pp. 10-11.
8. Ibid., p. 11
9. John H. Yoder, "The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision," Concern, No. 18 (July, 1971), p. 14.
10. Bender, People of God, p. 71.
11. Schleithem Articles of Faith in MQR, XIX (October, 1945), p. 249.
12. Harold S. Bender, "The Mennonite Conception of the Church and its Relation to Community Building," Concern, No. 18 (July, 1971), p. 29.
13. Franklin H. Littell, "The Anabaptist Concept of the Church," in Guy F. Hersberger, ed., Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1957), p. 23.
14. Calvin Redekop, The Free Church and Seductive Culture (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1970), p. 99.
15. C. J. Dyck, "Anabaptism and the Social Order," in Jerald C. Bauer, ed., The Impact of the Church Upon Culture (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. 220ff.
16. Erland Waltner, "The Anabaptist Conception of the Church," MQR, XXV (January, 1951), p. 12.

17. C. J. Dyck, "Anabaptism and the Social Order," p. 26.
18. Littell, Anabaptist View of the Church, p. 95.
19. Bender, The People of God, p. 88, and Waltner, MQR, XXV (January, 1951), p. 12.
20. John H. Yoder, "Anabaptist Vision and Mennonite Reality," edited by A. J. Klassen. Papers read at the 1969 Aspen Conference, p. 5.
21. Bender, The People of God, p. 23.
22. Ibid., p. 81.
23. Yoder, Concern, No. 18, p. 18.
24. Littell, The Anabaptist View of the Church, p. 112.
25. Bender, People of God, p. 86. For a full documentation of the missionary expansion of Anabaptism throughout Europe see Franklin H. Littell, The Anabaptist View of The Church, pp. 109-137; and J. D. Graber's article on "Anabaptism Expressed in Missions and Social Service," in G. F. Hershberger, ed., The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision, pp. 152-166.
26. Dyck, "Anabaptism and the Social Order," p. 222.
27. Harold J. Grimm, The Reformation Era (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co. Inc., 1973), p. 211. The territorial principle was recognized as early as 1520 but was codified in 1555.
28. Littell, The Anabaptist View of the Church, p. 19.
29. Bender, People of God, p. 87. See also John H. Yoder, "The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision," Concern, no. 18, p. 15.
30. MQR, XIX (October, 1949), p. 249.
31. Menno Simons, Complete Works, II (Elkhart, IN, 1871), p. 37.
32. Robert Friedmann, "The Doctrine of the Two Worlds," in The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision, ed. Guy F. Hershberger, p. 110.
33. Harold Bender, "Anabaptist Vision," in Ibid., pp. 51ff.
34. The early beginnings of Anabaptism are told more fully by: Fritz Blanke in Brothers in Christ (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1961), and by John H. Yoder in "The Turning Point in the Zwinglian Reformation," MQR, XXXII (April, 1958), pp. 128-140).
35. Bender, The People of God, p. 82.
36. Robert Friedmann, "The Doctrine of the Two Worlds" in Guy F. Hershberger, ed., The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision, pp. 111-113.
37. Ibid., p. 110.
38. Ibid., p. 116.

39. John H. Yoder, "The Anabaptist Understandings of the Nature and Mission of the Church With Implications for Contemporary Mennonite Church Organization" (April 10, 1967), an unpublished manuscript, p. 3. Referred to in Ross Bender, The People of God, pp. 73-74.

40. Dyck, "Anabaptism and the Social Order," pp. 207-229.

41. Friedmann, "The Doctrine of the Two Worlds," p. 116.

42. Dyck, "Anabaptism and the Social Order," pp. 207-229. See also Paul Peachy, "Social Background and Social Philosophy of the Swiss Anabaptists, 1525-40," MQR, XXVIII (April, 1954), pp. 120ff. The Anabaptists were primarily concerned with biblical issues and matters of discipleship. The severe persecutions made it difficult for them to identify with sixteenth century society and it made it difficult for them to establish ordered life of any kind. Paul Peachy and C. J. Dyck have however proven that in spite of difficult times the Anabaptists did contribute to social and political thought.

43. For a fuller treatment of Anabaptist views see Oyer, Lutheran Reformers Against Anabaptists, p. 95. See also Littell, The Anabaptist View of the Church, p. 2.

44. Ibid.

45. Redekop, The Free Church, p. 95.

46. Littell, "The Anabaptist Concept of the Church," in The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision, p. 120. See also Fritz Blanke, "The First Anabaptist Congregation: Zollikon, 1525," MQR, XXVII (January, 1953), p. 33.

47. Yoder, "Anabaptist Vision and Mennonite Reality," p. 37. Yoder is of the opinion that the vision is becoming blurred: "All of us see our constituencies influenced more by mainstream mass media religion than by any specifically Anabaptist type of vision." On p. 20 he says, "...the cultural identity after years of stability has now begun to shift faster than the theological leadership."

48. J. A. Toews, A History of the Mennonite Brethren Church (Hillsboro, KS: Mennonite Brethren Publishing House, 1975), p. 361.

49. Ibid., p. 362.

50. Ibid., p. 363.

51. Ibid., p. 364.

52. A most helpful paper on this subject is John H. Yoder's "Anabaptist Vision and Mennonite Reality," pp. 2-46.

53. Robert Kreider, "Church in the Russian Environment," MQR, XXV (January, 1951), p. 26.

54. Yoder, "Anabaptist Vision and Mennonite Reality," pp. 10ff. He also identifies those influences from without which have worked for renewal.

55. Toews, A History of the Mennonite Brethren Church, pp. 324-330.

56. Ibid., p. 324.

57. Ibid., p. 323.

58. Ibid., p. 326. John H. Yoder states in "Anabaptist Vision and Mennonite Reality": "It does not suffice to say that the locus of renewal has moved from the grassroots to the center, leaving the grassroots prey to other forces."

59. Ibid., pp. 5-22.

60. John H. Yoder, "The Believer's Church: Global Perspectives," in The Believer's Church in Canada (The Baptist Federation of Canada and MCC [Canada], 1979), p. 4.

61. Ibid., p. 7.