Mennogespräch

Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario

March, 1992 Vol. 10, No. 1

Tavistock Mennonite Church: "50 Years of Remembering"

by Peter Erb

The Importance of Memory

Anniversaries such as the fiftieth anniversary of the Tavistock Mennonite Church call us to remember. Although we do not often think about it, remembering is a central aspect of each of our lives. Consider for a moment all the simple acts we do each day. We walk from one room to the next, for example, but we can do so only to the degree that we remember the lesson we learned on a day many years ago, the day we learned to walk.

Most—I would suppose all—of us have forgotten that day, although we have not forgotten its lesson. If we forget what we learned on that day, we will not be able to walk. And each time we walk, we can do so only in so far as we remember how to balance ourselves on two legs and how not to balance when we move forward. The same holds true of riding a bicycle, of learning to skate, of eating with a knife and fork. All the things we do, we have learned and each time we do them, we call to mind, we remember in some way, lessons learned many years earlier.

As human beings we are walking memories and one might say that we are human only to the degree that we remember. Imagine our situation if we forgot everything we learned prior to the time we were teenagers: We would not be able to crawl, walk, babble, talk, or feed ourselves. We would, in fact, not be human in any normal sense of the word; we would be unable to care for ourselves and certainly unable to care for others.

Healthy human beings remember. If they have learned to do something wrong and wish to do it correctly, they cannot simply forget the earlier bad lesson. Rather, they must go back through the steps that led them to the *mis*learning and *re*learn the lesson properly.

What holds for individuals, holds for communities too. Before I came to serve as assistant pastor at the Tavistock Amish Mennonite Church, I was involved as a community development worker in Cleveland with the voluntary service programme. Once, I was terribly frustrated with a person because he left a broken window in his house unrepaired. I could not understand why he simply did not go to the local hardware store, buy putty and a pane of glass and glaze it. When I finally came to realize that he had not grown up, as I did, in a carpenter's family in which glazing windows was as natural as snapping your fingers, I still could not understand why he did not ask someone for help. It took me some time to comprehend how impossible such an act was: That man could not glaze a window, not because he had forgotten how, but because after three generations of poverty, his community as a whole had forgotten how. There was no one for him to go to for advice. Neither he nor others could call that lesson to mind. The communal memory of window-repair, not to mention many, far more important memories, had completely gone. The community was, in many cases, in the position of having to reinvent the wheel.

Peter Erb (right) with Gerhard Peters at the Mennonite Archives of Ontario.

The Christian community is the same as any other community and that is why, as Christians, we are constantly called to remember. Christianity is a religion of history. Each Sunday we read the Scriptures together and remember in worship and study the acts of God with his people Israel and the early church. The Bible is, in essence, a history book, a book of stories to be remembered, or, as the Old Testament puts it in Deuteronomy 6, its central message of loving God in the

fullest way possible is to be "written upon our heart" and "taught diligently to our children." Scripture and tradition cannot be separated without violence. Our God is a God who is known for acts of love and mercy done throughout the past: God is the God of individuals now long dead, whom we are called to remember; God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the God who revealed the fullness of divine love, now two thousand years ago, in the life and death of the first among the many children of God, Jesus, the Christ.

All acts of remembering take us back and finally lead us to wisdom itself, that wisdom which, we are told in Proverbs 8 and 9, was there before anything was. In the course of time, the wisdom which was there at the beginning manifested itself in the person of Jesus, who bids us already in the book of Proverbs to "come eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed" (Proverbs 9:5). The most significant act we do together as a church, the celebration of the Lord's Supper, is an act of remembering.

Our Lord himself told us to do this and gave us the reason why: "Do this *in remembrance* of me." And Paul went on to tell us that when we eat the bread and drink of the cup, we "show forth the Lord's death." What we are being told here in 1 Corinthians 11 is that like any individual and any community we can remain healthy and active only to the degree that we remember the central lesson of our life; for Christians, the central lesson is Jesus' death, who although he was God became a servant for our sake, even to the point of dying as a condemned criminal for others. Thus, in Philippians we are told to "do" what we have remembered, what we have learned and received and heard and seen. And what have we so learned and received from the past? Surely that, which, wherever it appears, manifest Christ Jesus: whatever is true, honourable, just, pure, lovely, gracious, excellent, worthy of praise (Phil. 4:8–9).

Memories of the Tavistock Church

Because of the importance of memory, church anniversaries are significant events and we should look forward to them when they come. They give us the opportunity to find out fully who we are. They allow us to remember the best that we were and are and to rejoice in it. They direct us to rethink our weaknesses and improve on them. They offer us opportunities to recall those lessons we have learned and patterns we have established over the years which were not the best, and allow us to repent of them and relearn better ways.

I am almost the age of the Tavistock Church—not quite, but almost. I have been asked to reflect in this essay on my personal memories, but much is a blur. My mother, my brothers, Betty, and our daughters always laugh at me because I have so few conscious early memories. I have always tried to excuse myself for this by pretending that I jammed so many useless facts into my head over the years that something had to give. Some things did not give way, however.

Of the 'Presbyterian' church (now the Board of Trade Building) I can recall only that the floor slanted downwards toward the front and that it was gloomy inside. Perhaps my sense of the dark sanctuary has less to do with the actual light than it has with the darkness which surrounded everyone in Tavistock in 1942 when those few Amish Mennonite families who did not have horses to get to the East Zorra Church on the 16th line met for the first time in the Library Hall and then in the church building I remember. It was the darkest year of the war. For the 'dumb Amish', as some referred to us then, the gloom of the time must have been increased by their own confusion.

It was not easy to be Amish in 1942. Another 25 years would go by before the 'peace stance' became generally popular. Even in the early 1960s, when some of us first became involved in the combined programme to ban the bomb, such activity was looked on as highly questionable, and during the Vietnam years (in fact, even up to five years ago) was often interpreted as 'supporting the enemy.' In 1942 the 'peace stance' did not yet have ready claim to the many positive relief and voluntary programmes later developed by MCC and other Mennonite agencies. To be Amish in 1942 was simply to be non-resistant, and even if a man was sent to a camp at Montreal River or in British Columbia, he knew it was not anything like going to Europe. With family and friends he must have struggled with contradictory emotions as he heard of the death of friends far away to the east. In 1942 few Mennonites had heard of the 'Anabaptist Vision' or had available to them the books and studies which now enunciate the extraordinary aspects of our religious tradition and provide full explanations of it.

In light of this, the fact that the church met in Tavistock in that year, separated from the larger and therefore more comfortable setting at East Zorra, makes the action all the more striking and is a testimony to their living faith. I remember having a sense of that faith when I came into the kitchen one evening. My father was sitting at the table with a globe. He was looking for Korea, since "they just said on the radio that there's a war there." There are times when one does not need to make long philosophical disquisitions on the nature of faith; this was one of them.

I know the chronology is wrong and that this incident occurred after the dedication of the new church building in 1950, but coming as closely as the Korean war did to the dedication, I have always associated that memory of my father and the globe with the new building. And in spite of the years of historical training I have had, I have always interpreted that building venture as typical of my religious tradition: My grandparents and parents did not collapse when faced with another war which, for all they knew would reach world-wide and would be fought with that novel method of destruction, the atom bomb. Rather, they built a new building—they believed in the future. It might be for that reason that I always loved Luther's comment, "If I knew the world would go under tomorrow, I'd still plant my apple trees today," and that I take some pride in the role my Grandpa Erb played in the construction of the building and in the sign which my father and mother cut and stained for it, even though the name which once designated the church as 'Amish' and the sign itself now sit dust-covered among other memories of my personal past.

In the fall of 1965 or early in 1966 the Church Council called me in Cleveland and asked if I would serve as a part-time assistant minister. In some ways it is surprising I said "Yes". My theology had developed some distance by then and my memories of the Tavistock church were not all warm bean soup on a cold winter night. My memories of the Tavistock Amish Mennonite Church were of a typical church, and if I remembered its foundation and first building in the context of world war outside the community, I had and continue to have some fairly clear memories of regional wars within the community.

Struggles are common in every group and are not unexpected in one which

Mennogespräch is published semi-annually by the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario, Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ontario N2L 3G6.

Editor: *Reg Good.*
German Translation Editor: *Herb Enns.*
Review Editor: *Linda Huebert Hecht.*

Mennogespräch is received by all members of the Society. See membership form for current rates. All correspondence should be directed to the editor.

Assistance received from the Ontario Ministry of Culture & Citizenship is gratefully acknowledge.

ISSN 0824-5673

established itself at a point when the most rapid changes ever to occur in the history of humanity were beginning. It is important that we do not sidestep such issues, that in an anniversary we remember the controversies, the struggles, the disagreements as well as what we deem the positive accomplishments. I remember the controversies over revivalism, the hushed discussions when the Hammer episode finally and tragically closed, and the many petty antagonisms which arose over what appear to many now as minor matters of church polity and practice.

And yet, as I reflect on many of these now, not all that long after they have been forgotten generally—concerns over whether or not a song leader or other unordained person should stand level with the pulpit, over the nature of the lot and the selection of ministers, over the structure of the Sunday School, over proper decorum in church—I realize that the concerns were not at all minor. In fact, I have come to recognize that the debates maintained almost endlessly in the church of my youth are in large part representative of the central questions which continue to concern me today and which have more recently come to be of central importance for a great number of students of contemporary culture: What should be maintained as tradition in a world which increasingly cuts itself off so far from its roots that it cannot support itself against the slightest breeze? What can be accepted from the increasingly alluring offerings laid before us by an unconcerned and dynamic modernity and what cannot?

The problems which face us now within and without the church today are little different than those faced in what some might consider a far off age of forty years ago. What an anniversary such as this one calls us to remember is the way in which we made decisions about various things (about whether women should cut their hair, for example or wear prayer coverings) and to ask ourselves not whether we made the right decisions or the wrong ones, not whether the issue was significant or insignificant from our present vantage point, but *how* we made the decision. Did we, taking the example of women's prayer coverings, simply follow the times, allow the issue to go away, but not take seriously what underlying attitudes about the role of women remained as deeply rooted as they ever had? These are the kinds of questions we are called this year to remember again.

My earlier comment that I do not know why I said "yes" when asked to serve in a leadership role was really not properly stated. When I recall my own formation in the Tavistock church, I know only too well why I said "yes." At the time I was baptised, all the men in the baptismal group (one might expect that if the questions still remained, women might now be asked as well) were asked if they would serve as ministers if called by the church. I answered the question in the affirmative as did all the others in the group; when the call came to me in Cleveland, and the church voted on the proposal, I therefore had no choice but to accept.

It was not a mere matter of inevitability, of keeping one's word, however. There were other issues of personal loyalty involved as well, and one of the most important of these was my appreciation of the then pastor of the church, the man who had been the pastor for as long as I can remember, and the man who for me will always represent the Tavistock Amish Mennonite Church, brother Dave Schwartzentruber.

The days are now long past when Christians in a church such as this greeted one another un-selfconsciously with the term 'brother' or 'sister' and 'a holy kiss'. Brother Dave was one of the last generation to do so, a generation in which ministerial service was understood to be self-supporting and to be carried out as a result of a divine call, not a seminary education. Dave had only a grade eight education, but this did not limit him or his generation in directing the following generations for whom high school graduation would be the norm. In fact, it was he and not a high school teacher or university professor who first put the idea into my head to devote myself to studying the history of Christian theology. He did not put it in those terms, but I remember very clearly the Sunday morning when he made a few brief comments after church. I have no idea how many other people he similarly influenced in such simple ways.

And I remember, too, how open he and the whole congregation were when Betty and I decided after one year in the ministry here that we would go to the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, where I had been accepted as a student in a programme which specialized in a catholic theology, very much different from that of Amish Mennonites. In fact, Betty and I are daily reminded of this simple act of religious tolerance, since on our departure we were presented with a dish of dollar bills. The bills are gone, but the dish still sits on our coffee table. That the dish should have become for me a symbol of what is best in the tradition, isn't surprising. We often hear of the intolerance of sectarian groups, of Mennonite dogmatism and Amish shunning. In spite of the religious debates which sometimes rocked the congregations, my experiences are quite different, and once again, it may be because of Dave. Even on the testy issue of evolution, he once told me that he didn't find it surprising that some thought human beings were descended from monkeys. "After all," he commented, "when you see the way some of us act, it makes sense!"

The way in which Dave serves as a symbol of the Tavistock Church goes far beyond such matters as these, however. There are many anecdotes which could be told of him, but to close this reflection and to direct our memories more closely to the significance of this anniversary, I would like to remind many of you reading this (and inform others of you who never knew it) of one of the more important stories he told.

Dave's sermons were somewhat repetitive, and there was seldom a month went by during which we did not hear him tell the story of his relief work in Poland immediately after the Second World War and of one particular incident which summed up all he experienced there. Tears would regularly come to his eyes as he recalled the please of some small children he had seen, weeping at the close of a less than adequate meal: 'Mommy. Can't we have just one more potato?'

Someone once said that one can tell how civilized a people are, not by pointing to the greatness of their philosophers, theologians, and artists, but by studying how carefully they care for the weakest members of their world. The congregation in which I grew up certainly played its role in forming my mind to pursue the study of philosophy, theology, and art. I am certain that my central theological interest, an interest in the nature, role, and significance of tradition for Christian life, was directly stimulated by the regular, and sometime negative, insistence I heard that the Amish 'tradition' was being lost. In a sense I owe what academic success I have had to this congregation. But I owe something far more important to it as well, and I will ever remain thankful that it also formed me to recognise that wherever people suffered, even in lands as far away and as foreign as Catholic Slavic-speaking Poland, we are called to help, and that it is a mark of true Christian humanity to weep over that suffering. Of all the lessons I learned in the Tavistock Church, this is the most important of my almost fifty years of remembering.

Peter Erb chairs the department of religion and culture at Wilfrid Laurier University.

Growing Up on a Farm in Huron County

by Hubert Schwartzentruber

Hubert Schwartzentruber in 1953, MAO 1984–1.643.

I have many good memories of my early days on the farm 3 miles north of Zurich on the Goshen Line. Our farm was a very modest farm. I was born in 1929. My growing up years were very much affected by the great depression. We did not have fancy cloths and food but *I can not remember being unhappy.* The bean soup with safferin in it was very good. I still like the potato pancakes and the pork sausage and the roast beef and gravy. All those things that are not good for you. I must confess I can get along well without the coffee made from roasted barley. When my wife tries to convince me that yogurt would be so good for me I remember the "dick milich supp" which I only tolerated.

Having lived in the US for more than 25 years I often wondered why the Americans did not come to Millbank and learn how to make cheese. Or why they did not invite J.M. Schneider to teach them how to make summer sausage. They have not even heard of Silverwoods ice cream. Even the shoo fly pie my aunts made were made the way shoo fly pie should be made.

One of the memories that I carry with me is the spring sucker fishing. I remember one evening we went to the Bayfield river to go fishing. Our brother Vernon had an old model T Ford coupe. I think it was about a 1914. (It would be a valuable antique if we still had it.) I remember going down a steep hill to the river. We caught so many fish that evening that Vernon could not get up the hill with the fish in the trunk. We ate fried fish, cooked fish, canned fish and if there was any way to make fish taste good three times a day we tried it.

I was not familiar with the term "extended family" when I grew up. I was only 8 years old when my mother died. Almost weekly a few of my aunts would come and do cleaning and baking and canning for my father. I always looked forward to their coming. One of my aunts baked the best coffee cake you ever ate. I think it was only after I began in the ministry working with one parent families that I became aware that I too was from a one parent family. I suppose if there is anything that I would do over again, if I could, it would be to thank my father more sincerely for the good job he did being a father and a mother to us.

Growing up on a farm is more than a farm. It is a University. The best education that one can get is to learn an honorable life skill. The farm provided for that. One learned skills in business, soil management, carpentry, mechanics, crafts, food processing, mathematics, health care, transportation, manufacturing, social work, theology, natural science to name only a few.

I learned two languages on the farm before I was 5 years old. Perhaps even a third when the horses did not act right or when the cows broke through the fence, or when you stepped in a pile of fresh cow manure with your Sunday shoes on.

I usually got to drive the four horse team doing the farm work. I cannot say that I ever enjoyed that too much. A day got very long walking on the loose ground behind the spring tooth harrows. It was most annoying when you had one horse that always needed to be a step ahead of the other three and one that was perfectly happy two steps behind. You had to pull and poke at the same time.

But it was a new day when we got the John Deere tractor. The other day I was rehearsing the virtues of the old two cylinder John Deeres with a minister friend. We both agreed that John Deeres have souls. I am sure that ours had a soul and that it was soundly converted. In my growing up years the Zurich congregation gave monthly programs at the rescue mission in London. The nature of the programs was singing and preaching. I could not sing so I got to do the preaching. The week before I practised my sermon on the John Deere in the back 50. I know that tractor could not have resisted the hell fire sermons I preached from the steering wheel pulpit. That tractor is now peacefully resting in the barn of a cousin of ours. Whenever I have occasion to go by there I always need to stop for a few moments of silence.

I still have not gotten John Deere tractors out of my blood. Recently in New York state we drove past a farm and I saw an old John Deere in the field. At a closer look there was more than one. Of course we went in and to my pleasant surprise the man had fifty, one like I remember Ken Gascho had on the farm. In fact I recently purchased an old 1938 and restored it. I know it may not be proper for Mennonite preachers to take tractors to shows but it was a lot of fun.

My wife Mary is an excellent organist. I was at her house one time and her brother started his old John Deere. I said to Mary, "I really like your organ music and you must be the best organist in the world but I do like the sound of the John Deere a little better." That nearly ruined our relationship forever. But now Mary even knows the difference between a "D" and "B" or an "A" and a "GP".

But the amazing thing of the old two cylinder tractors is that the ones that are still running are mostly in museums or property of hobby collectors. As good as they were they had to give way to another tractor that was geared to the demands of the new day.

I of course need to reflect on the church that nurtured me. I was not very happy when I heard that they would no longer use the white brick church on the north end of Zurich. That building was there for 75 years or more. I had many memories from there. Some were good and some were not so good. But in my mind I did not want to change anything from what I had known it to be. It did not make sense to have a church on the west end of town when I should be in the North end. But like the John Deere, things have to change. The old building no longer served the needs of the 1990s. It was built to serve the needs of 1910.

I really do not remember many sermons that I heard there. In fact I would be hard pressed to give one sermon title. I do remember, however, the preachers that preached. The first minister that I remember was a man by the name of Christian Schrag. I really don't know if he was a good preacher or not. Maybe he was a person like William Rittenhouse, the first ordained Mennonite Minister in North America. He was apparently not a good preacher. Someone wrote back to Germany and said about William

Rittenhouse. Er ist ein "Shreglicha predicha". But I remember how after the sermon Christian Schrag came down the aisle and always took notice of me, a 7 year old, and never failed to also shake my hand.

I do remember when the evangelists came to the community. I can still see some of the dispensationalist charts in front of the church. It seemed to me that likely God looks at the chart to see what to do next. Even though I do not remember sermon titles there were many sermons admonishing us to be separate from the world. "Love not the world" was a favorite theme. But the Sunday School teachers taught us that God loved the world. I could never figure out why we should not love the world that God loved.

Somehow or other I got the idea that if you dressed in plain cloths you were a bit more "spiritual" than those who wore more modern cloths. The Sunday piety did not always match the Monday realities. I got a six-page letter from a concerned person on the evils of neck ties. One line I remember, "A neck tie is the rope that the Devil uses to lead people around."

I also remember the lists of sins that the evangelists called us to repent from. But they forgot the sins of racism, male chauvinism, dehumanizing of people, rejecting the gifts of women for leadership in the church, wife abuse, neglect of children, corruption in the structures of society, mistreatment of Canada's original people and one could go on and on.

I grew up knowing a few names of Anabaptist leaders but had no knowledge of what Anabaptism was all about. We wanted to be Mennonite with a dispensationalist theology. I recall laying awake at night afraid that the rapture might take place and I would get left. The preachers would interpret political events and pointed out where we are on the chart. Persons were labeled as the antichrist and told the end would soon be here.

I also have sad memories how we were taught that the Catholic church was a part of the antichrist system. I thought that my good Catholic friends where not Christian. I remember recently while visiting with my brother Orlen in Zurich I walked through the Catholic cemetery and looked into the church sanctuary and felt for the first time that here my brothers and sisters worship. And the names that I recognized on the tombstones will be part of the same resurrection that the ones in the Mennonite cemetery will experience.

I suppose I could continue to highlight some of the negative things that I remember. I do give thanks to God that in the midst of an imperfect congregation a person in need of renewal of faith could find faith. I think very early I sensed something inside of me urging me to make a commitment to Christ and the church and respond to a call for ministry. I shall forever be grateful for the opportunity I was given as a fledgling Christian to exercise my gifts in the congregation which has prepared me for my ministry. I remember going through the lot for deacon when I was about 19. That memory will likely never leave me. There were seven of us in the lot I was seated at the end of the row of seven. After we chose the books, the bishop started to search in whose book the lot lodged. He started at the other end and moved towards me. As he got closer to me and had not yet found the person chosen I became increasingly tense. The lot was found in the sixth person in the row. I felt both relieved and disappointed at the same time. I was relieved because I did not think I was ready for that. But not being chosen also seemed like rejection and maybe God was not calling me into ministry. I recall some counsel that Jesse Martin gave me after that and I felt at ease.

Christian Schrag.

Zurich Mennonite Church, MAO 1990–12.129.

The emphasis on separation from the world was however by no means all bad. It might be OK for some of us preachers to find some presentday applications for that theme. I remember the little old tin school house I attend. In the morning the teacher would have us make a circle around the flag poll and salute the flag. I as a Mennonite could not do that. I did not understand why. Only later, when I watched T.V. and saw the three Canadian navy ships take off for the Persian Gulf, could I understand.

In one sense there was very little in rural Ontario that prepared me for living and working in the inner city. The two major population centers that I knew were Zurich with about 600 people and Dashwood with perhaps 200. Of course once in a while we went to the big town of Exeter with perhaps 2000 people. And only on rare occasions would we venture to the really big city of London which then may have had 90,000. The only people that I knew were white and German like myself. I regret now that I did not get to know and benefit from the rich French culture in Huron County. I wish too that we would have had opportunity to learn the wisdom that was stored up in the Native communities for many generations. I never thought of even questioning the prisons of the reserves. We Canadians have not yet arrived at the toll gate where we need to pay for murdering and dehumanizing and stealing the homeland of a people.

I suppose the most important thing of growing up in Huron County was the theological foundation that was laid. I sensed in my growing up years the importance of community. The church was the centre for all of life. It was deeply ingrained in us that matters of faith took precedence over matters of material things. I read scripture from a somewhat different point of view now, but the foundation has not changed.

We were taught to take the Sermon on the Mount literally. If this world needs anything, it is peace makers. People who have the capacity to love their enemies and make them into friends.

Hubert Schwartzentruber was formerly missions minister for the Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada and is now pastoring a congregation in eastern Pennsylvania.

Amish and Tunkers Critiqued ca. 1830

edited by Reg Good

Amish preacher Christian Litwiller with yoke of oxen, MAO 1987-1.162.

The Klinckhardt Letters

[In 1829 a bankrupt Saxon lawyer, Christian Gottlieb Klinckhardt, emigrated to Upper Canada (Ontario) to seek his fortune. His sons Louis and Julius followed in 1831. In 1833 Pastor C.G. Temper published a collection of their letters home as a fund-raising effort to finance the emigration of Christian's wife and the rest of their children. It is from this letter collection, entitled ***C.G. Klinckhardt's Reise Nach Nord= Amerika und dessen erste Ansiedlung daselbst . . . ,*** *that the following excerpts are taken.]*

Regarding the people in this area, they are to a large extent totally without education, and religious fanatics besides, among whom the devil plays almost as important a role as the worship of God. I had the opportunity to hear a Tunker preacher this winter . . . whose sermon was nothing but nonsense and crude fanaticism. He said among other things that he remembers quite well when his sins left him, and he is very happy that he no longer finds pleasure in riotous company and the like. Another preacher once said that he could recall when the devil departed from him; he saw him running away along the fence-row. Next summer I may have the opportunity to copy down such a sermon, and then I will not neglect to send you a copy. In their meetings, these people show the greatest contrition, and sometimes one cannot understand a word of the sermon because of their groaning and sighing. Everything which can make life pleasant and comfortable is worldly lust among them; hence, it follows that a lot of them are lazy. Dancing and the like are strictly forbidden. Our neighbour, who is a Tunker, said to Julius, who had expressed himself that he would dance if he had the chance: "You can also dance in hell." In short, it is almost unbelievable how unenlightened these people are. Whoever can read, write and cipher is [considered] an intellectual. I believe I can declare that they are about as well educated as the Indians. Concerning these, they are the most peaceable people, and a large number of them are Christians, of the Methodist sect...

Among the Tunkers one finds very many moral attitudes, but great ignorance. Among the Mennonites more education is obvious. However, among the Amish, provincialism, ignorance, contempt for other sects, intolerance, and insubordination towards the political system prevails...

I live among the Amish, as well as among Tunkers. These [former] as a whole have very good principles, but a large part of their divine service consists of superficial ceremonies. All the men, except the young ones, were long beards because the Lord Jesus, as pictured in the Nürenberg bible, wears just such a beard. For the same reason, buttons are not permitted on men's clothing; no-one may wear suspenders, and the shape of hats is prescribed. Women may wear only plain, solid-coloured clothing. Women wear a white cap and girls wear a black cap of a prescribed cut. None of them may wear a coloured ribbon, and more of the same nonsense. Their ministers are chosen from among them, are farmers, talk gross nonsense in their worship services, and tyrannize their church, since they have the right to place their fellow members under the church ban, or totally excommunicate them. The Tunkers are less obscure, although still foolish enough. The Mennonites who generally live in Waterloo, are the most intelligent. I am on good terms with them all, and entertain a deep respect in the whole township, for which I can thank my spiritual superiority.

Rev. Proudfoot's Journals

[In 1834 the Rev. William Proudfoot, a minister of the "United Associate Synod of the Secession Church" of Scotland, visited Ontario churches under the care of the Missionary Presbytery. The following excerpt from his journals is reprinted from ***Ontario History*** *28(1932), 88.]*

In Wilmot where the farmers are all Dutch and in Waterloo the same we could do nothing because we cannot preach in Dutch. Most of these Dutchmen belong to the sect of the Aumish of whom I could learn nothing but that as an important article of their religion they cultivate long beards. The rest of the people are most Menees[t] which I do not yet understand. These Dutchmen have noble farms; farms which would do no dishonour to the Carse of Gowrie or Midlothian or East Lothian and yet it is said they are quite against giving any thing to ministers. They will hold no man a preacher who is not inspired by the Spirit and if he gets his preaching talents so easily he needs no pay. The Dutch in Waterloo are said to be a wild race, carried off by the wildest enthusiasm and there was something spoken about bad living which I had not time to inquire into.

Reg Good is associate archivist at the Mennonite Archives of Ontario and editor of ***Mennogespräch.***

People and Projects

The University of Saskatchewan has formally approved a one year reassignment of duties for Professor **Theodore D. Regehr,** author of volume III, **Mennonites in Canada,** beginning in summer of 1992. He hopes to complete a first draft of his manuscript during this time. Regehr's associate researcher/ assistant writer, **Marlene Epp,** has resigned due to professional and domestic committments. She will now serve on the reader's committee for Regehr's book.

Tavistock Mennonite Church will be celebrating its **50th Anniversary** the weekend of June 5-7 1992. Guest speakers for the celebration include Henry Yantzi, Wilmer Martin, Gordon Bauman and Ross Bender speaking on the theme of **Community and Commitment.** Roy Lichti, chair of the Anniversary Committee, invites all people formerly connected with the Tavistock Mennonite Church to make the pilgrimage to Tavistock to celebrate 50 years of looking back and reaching forward. A congregational history, edited by **Cathi Bender,** will be available for purchase.

The fourth annual award from the **Frank H. Epp Memorial Fund** has been granted to two individuals. **Edmund Pries,** a graduate student in history at the University of Waterloo, was awarded $2,100. to aid his dissertation research on "Oath Refusal and Radical Reformation Dissent." **Dorothy Yoder Nyce** of Goshen, Indiana received $700. towards her project of editing a book about global women.

A committee of Old Order Mennonites is preparing **Ontario and Canadian history texts** for their grade 7-8 **parochial school classes** in Ontario. Donald Martin is compiling the information and Rebecca Martin is composing the narrative. First drafts of Donald Martin's work have been circulated to readers.

Lorna Bergey is teaching an Elderhostel course on **Ontario Mennonite history** at Conrad Grebel College from 9-15 August. Plans include guest lectures from informed members of different Mennonite ethnic groups; an account of the formation and activities of MCC; and a bus tour of significant Mennonite sites in the Waterloo Region. **Elderhostel** is an educational experience for adults 60 years of age or older, and spouses or companions who are at least 50 years old. For more information contact Paul Penner at Conrad Grebel College; phone (519) 885-0220.

The board of directors of the Ontario Mennonite Historical Society is considering changing the name of their newsletter. ***Mennogespräch's*** editorial committee has been invited to recommend a new name to the board by year's end.

The Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario has established the **J. Winfield Fretz Award for Studies in Ontario Mennonite History.** The award will be offered at three levels: graduate, undergraduate (including local historians) and secondary school. The first award will be made in 1993. Submissions should be addressed to the editor of ***Mennogespräch***.

Lucille Marr, Vice-President of the Ontario Mennonite Historical Society, has accepted a tenure track position in Canadian history at **Augustana University College** in Camrose, Alberta.

"In a Mennonite Voice: Women Doing Theology" is the theme of a conference at Conrad Grebel College, April 30-May 2. **Lois Barret** of Wichita, Kansas, will present an address, "Women's Theology: Theological and Methodological Issues in the Writing of the History of Anabaptist and Mennonite Women."

The Amsterdam Summer University is offering a course on **"Mennonites in the Netherlands: From Martyr to Muppy (Mennonite Urban Professional People"** 31 August - 4 September 1992. For further details contact the Amsterdam Summer University (P.O. Box 53066, 1007 Rb Amsterdam, The Netherlands).

"The Church Historian as Interpreter" is the theme of a conference planned for May 21-23, 1992, at Goshen College in Indiana. The conference is sponsored by the historical committees of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church. For further information contact **Levi Miller** (1700 S. Main, Goshen, IN 46526).

Book Notes

Edith Tiessen and Astrid Koop have compiled cemetery transcriptions in ***Mennonite Graves on Pelee Island and the Reesor Settlement*** ([Leamington]: Essex-Kent Mennonite Historical Association, 1991), 37pp. Includes well-designed maps and detailed biographies.

Peter and Elfrieda Dyck describe their roles in the resettlement of displaced Mennonites from Russia following World War II in ***Up From the Rubble: The Epic Rescue of Thousands of war-ravaged Mennonite Refugees*** (Scottdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1991), 384pp.

Isaac Horst provides a brief German-language summary of Old Order Mennonite origins in ***Die Mennoniten: Ein Volk des Eigentums*** [Mount Forest: I.B. printing, 1991], 8pp.

Paton Yoder's ***Tradition and Transition: Amish Mennonites and Old Order Amish 1800-1900*** (Scottdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1991), 359pp. opens a window into the Amish world of the nineteenth century.

Roger Smith chronicles the history of Mission Services of London, Ontario, in ***From Golden Grain Grows a Mission: Commemorating the Fortieth Anniversary of Mission Services of London, 1951-1991*** (London, Ontario: Mission Services of London, 1991), 184pp. The mission was founded by Alvin and Madeline Roth in 1951 under the auspices of the Western Ontario Mennonite Conference. Mennonite sponsorship ceased in 1969 when the mission was incorporated as "Missions Services of London."

The current beliefs, practices, and social attitudes of Mennonites and Brethren in Christ in North America are analyzed by J. Howard Kauffman and Leo Driedger in ***The Mennonite Mosaic: Identity and Modernization*** (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1991), 308 pp. This sociological study is based on findings from surveys conducted in 1972 and 1989.

Countryside Mennonite Fellowship Church (Hawkesville, Ontario: privately printed, 1990), 89 pp. chronicles the history of the Countryside congregation, from its roots in the Conservative Mennonite Church of Ontario to its present affiliation with the Midwest Mennonite Fellowship.

New Amish-Mennonite Genealogical Sources

by Lorraine Roth

Delmer Bender, compiler of ***The Christian Ruby Family*** (New Hamburg, Ontario: [The Chrisian Ruby Family Book Committee], 1989), 231pp. describes the French origins of immigrant Joseph Ruby and family. He then traces the descendents of Ruby's eldest son, Christian. Stories and photographs illuminate the text. There is an index of descendents with their addresses.

Bruce Jantzi and Lorraine Roth, editors of ***The Family History and Genealogy of Jacob Wagler and Magdalena Gardner and Barbara Lebold, 1839-1989*** (Wellesley, Ontario: The Jacob Wagler Family Book Committee, 1989), 422 pp. provide background information on the Wagler, Gardner, Lebold and Gerber families. They then trace the descendents of Jacob Wagler, who came to Canada with his parents and grandparents at the age of nine. Many photographs, documents and family Bible records are reproduced. There is an index of descendents and spouses.

Lorraine Roth, editor of ***The Family History and Genealogy of Christian Steinman(n) and Veronica Eyer*** (Baden, Ontario: The Christian Steinman(n) Family Book Committee, 1990), 439 pp. documents the history of the Steinman(n) family in the Palatinate, France, Bavaria and Wilmot Township, Ontario. She then traces all the descendents of Christian Steinmann. There is an index of descendents and spouses.

Alfred Kipfer and Lorraine Roth, compilers of the ***John Steckly Family History, David and Magdalena (Ropp) Steckly Genealogy*** (Waterloo, Ontario: n.pub., 1990), 156 pp. devote twenty-one pages to the French origins of the Steckly and Ropp families. They then trace the descendents of David and Magdalena (Ropp) Steckly. Many photographs, documents and family Bible records are reproduced. There is an index of descendents and spouses.

Gerald Steinman, compiler of the ***Christian Lebold History and Genealogy*** (Cambridge, Ontario: Gerald Steinman, 1991), 156 pp. traces the entire genealogy of the Christian Lebold family with stories and photographs of the first generation. He provides background information on the Lebold, Blank and Roth families. There is an index of descendents and spouses, with women listed under their family names.

Lorraine Roth, editor of ***The Family History and Genealogy of Michael B. Yantzi and Jacobena (Kennel) Yantzi*** (New Hamburg, Ontario: Henry and Mae Yantzi, 1991), 183 pp. provides background information and extended family lists for the Jantzi/Yantzi family in France. She then traces the descendents of the Michael B. Yantzi family. Photographs and stories of the older generations are included. There is an index of descendents and spouses.

Catherine Schlegel, compiler of ***The Family of Johannes Sommer and Barbara Risser: 1825–1990*** (Tavistock: Catherine Schlegel, 1990), 112 pp. traces the descendents of Johannes Sommer and Barbara Risser who settled in East Zorra Township in 1838 or 1839. There is an index of descendents and spouses.

Susanna (Ebersol) Arthaud.

John Bradley Arthaud, compiler of ***The Emile & Susanna (Ebersol) Arthaud Family, 1765–1987, With Allied Families of Blank/ Plank, Lebold, Neuhauser, Schwartzentruber and Zwalter*** (Columbia, Missouri: John Bradley Arthaud, 1987), 104 pp. traces the descendents of Emile and Susanna (Ebersol) Arthaud. Susanna Ebersol, born 1822, was the daughter of Christian and Susanna (Neuhauser/ Blank) Ebersol, early settlers in Wilmot Township. She married Emile Arthaud, a French convert to the Amish faith, and emigrated with him to Iowa.

I would like to become a member of the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario. I will be informed of all Society events, will be eligible to serve on the various committees of the Society, and will receive ***Mennogespräch*** as part of my membership.

NAME _____ PHONE_____

ADDRESS _____

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SPECIAL INTERESTS_____

Memberships: Student – $5.00; Regular – $15.00
Additional membership at same address (one mailing) – $5.00

Mail to: Secretary, Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario
c/o Conrad Grebel College,
Waterloo, Ontario N2L 3G6