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THE MENNONITES IN CANADA

by

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That the Mennonite Churches have enriched
the religious and economic life of Canada.

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Chapter I

THE EUROPEAN BACKGROUND

The Origin and Rootage of the Mennonite Movement

In Switzerland - The Mennonite Church had its origin in Switzerland in Reformation times. It was founded by followers of Ulrich Zwingli who were unable to accept the compromise which he and Luther made in setting up a Protestant state church system. It was these people who completed the Reformation which Luther and Zwingli began. They were the founders of the Mennonite Church.

It must be kept in mind of course that the founders of the Mennonite Church in Switzerland did not adopt the name Mennonite for the new church which they established. This name was given to it much later. In fact even today the Mennonites of Switzerland do not have it as their official name. The name Mennonite was given to that branch of the church which was established in Holland, in which Menno Simons became the leader after the year 1536. It was only later that the name Mennonite was carried over from Holland into Germany and into Switzerland, and finally into America. The first name of the church in Switzerland was simply "Brethren". The enemies of the Brethren called them "Anabaptists" because the Brethren refused to accept infant baptism as a valid baptism and insisted upon adults being baptized upon confession of their faith. The name "Anabaptist" means literally "rebaptizer". Thus, in history, the early Mennonite Church in Switzerland as well as elsewhere in Europe, is formally known by the name "Anabaptist". This is rather confusing, since other groups, somewhat similar to the Mennonites, particularly in the matter of

insisting upon adult baptism, were also called Anabaptists, and thus the name came to be used to refer to a number of religious groups some of which had radically different viewpoints on certain questions from the Mennonite proper.

The birthplace of the Mennonite Church is to be found in the city of Zurich, Switzerland, in the year 1525. A little group of devoted Brethren who felt in their hearts deeply convinced that they should follow the teachings of the New Testament completely, and endeavored to set up a church according to the pattern of Christ and the Apostles, met together for prayer, seeking guidance from God, the date being about January 21st, 1525. They found the guidance they sought and were convinced that they should institute a brotherhood of believers upon the basis of baptism and confession of faith. In that meeting they baptized one another, Conrad Grebel baptizing George Blaurock, and Blaurock baptizing the remainder of the group. From that meeting they went forth with joyful conviction that they should continue their fellowship, and should teach and preach their faith, and summon men everywhere to become members of the body of Christ. Thus the Mennonite Church was founded in a prayer meeting.

One of the most unusual men among the early leaders of the Anabaptist Brethren was the mining engineer named Pilgram Marpeck. In 1528 he was made to suffer greatly because of his faith, being expelled from his position and suffering confiscation of his property. Marpeck was an able leader and writer and may be considered the "Menno Simons of the South" in terms of his influence and significance.

At least three books written by him have been preserved, one of 1542 entitled "Admonition", a treatise on baptism and the Lord's Supper, a second of 1544 entitled "An Explanation of the Testament", and a third written about the same time as a large volume entitled "Vindication". These three volumes are the most extensive source material for the teaching of the early Swiss Brethren, and may still be read with profit.

In Holland - The seed of the Menmonite faith had been sown in Holland in the year 1530, first in the city of Emden, then in the city of Amsterdam, and from there throughout all the Low Countries. The man, who scattered the seed, was Melchior Hofmann, at first a Lutheran lay-preacher, then an Anabaptist in Strasburg, then a wandering Anabaptist preacher for a few years, who ended his life in a ten year long imprisonment in Strasburg in 1543. Meanwhile the group remained as a body of peaceful Brethren holding very similar doctrines to those of the Swiss Brethren, their spiritual ancestors. This group was organized in the year 1533.

In the year 1536 they won to their cause a very able Catholic priest, who was at that time serving in the parish of Witmarsum, Friesland. This priest, named Menno Simons, who was baptized by Obbe Philips in the year 1536, shortly afterward was persuaded to accept ordination as an elder or bishop, and from that time on became the outstanding leader of the group.

Because it was soon clear to all that Menno Simons was the outstanding leader of the group, people gradually began to name the

group after Menno, first using the name "Menist" about the year 1544, later changed to "Mennonite". This is the origin of the name of the Mennonite Church. Since Menno Simons' writings were numerous and powerful, and since he soon became the most widely known figure of the whole movement, writers and historians generally came to call both the Swiss and Dutch Brethren after his name. Later however, the Dutch Mennonites preferred to call themselves "Doopsgezinde", which translated into English would be something like "Baptism-minded".

Menno, although a price was early placed upon his head, travelled and labored unceasingly throughout Holland and northern Germany from Amsterdam up the Baltic coast as far as Danzig. He was particularly influential through his writings, a total of twenty-four volumes being published from the year 1539 to 1561 under his name. He was looked up to by his brethren as the father of the church until his death at his home in Wuestenfelde near Oldesloe in 1561. Menno Simons was born in a little town Witmarsum, a few miles from the North Sea in Friesland, Holland in the year 1496. He came from a peasant family, but being set apart for the Catholic priesthood, received the usual training for that office and by 1524 entered upon his career in the church. For twelve years he served as parish priest. Even though Menno Simons was a Catholic priest, he himself testifies that he knew nothing of the Bible until years after he was in the service of the church.

The story of Menno Simons' conversion as told by himself in his own writings is an interesting one. It was not a sudden conversion, but one that finally came with overwhelming power at the end of a long

period of struggle. The struggle began in the very first year of his service as a priest in 1525, when he began to doubt that the bread and wine of the mass were actually changed into the body and blood of the Lord.

The rise of the Memnonite Church took place in the era of the Reformation. The Reformation is the period of history, between 1517 and 1575, which marked the rise of Protestantism. During the Reformation period some of the countries of western Europe broke away from Catholicism. Before the time of the Reformation the church of western Europe was solidly Roman Catholic, with the exception of a few small sects, such as the Waldenses and the Bohemian Brethren, which had maintained their existence despite all persecution. Church and state were united in all countries.

The Waldenses, whose origin cannot definitely be placed, but records of whose existence take us back to the twelfth century, might be compared to the Lollards of England, who did not form a separate church organization but were rather what may be designated a school, or an association of similarly minded persons.

The Basic Conception of the Nature of Religion.

The followers of Ulrich Zwingli in Switzerland and many others like them in western Europe had been expecting a complete reformation of the church, and a restoration of the New Testament Christianity taught by Jesus and the apostles. They wanted the church to be composed of believers only, men and women who had an experience with God and who had committed their lives in unreserved obedience to His Word. They wanted no half-Christian profession following the customs and traditions of the time, and maintaining an outward form of godliness but denying the power thereof.

The foundation principle of the Mennonite Church from the beginning, has been knowledge of the Scriptures and practice of its teachings.

The Mennonites believe in the triune God who has revealed Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. They hold that man, being born in sin and naturally inclined toward evil, can be redeemed from the curse of eternal death only through the one eternal and sufficient redeeming and atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ; that the new birth is the work of the Holy Spirit who accompanies the Word with His powerful working; and that sanctification is a fruit and result of saving faith in Jesus Christ and is progressive throughout life.

As perceptible means of grace they employ the Word of God, Holy Baptism, and the Lord's Supper. Feet washing is practiced according to the Lord's example, but is not considered as an essential part of

the communion service.

They read nowhere of infant baptism, but they did read of baptism upon confession of faith, and decided that only adults should be baptized.

The correctness of baptism on a confession of faith is more and more recognized. Not only does the entire large Baptist church reject infant baptism, but also in the younger Protestant churches, like the Methodist and Congregational, (in Canada at present belonging to the United Church of Canada), there are many members, who give adult baptism their preference.

The Mennonites read "Thou shalt not kill", and declined to participate in war.

They read Christ's injunction, "Swear not. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil", and they chose to obey that injunction. History has testified to the dependability of their simple affirmation.

The Mennonites were the first body of religious people of modern times to advocate the doctrine of non-resistance as taught in the New Testament, and apply it in literal, practical ways to every day life, and antedate the Quakers, Baptists and other denominations advocating this doctrine.

The Mennonites are one among the few religious denominations still adhering to this distinguishing characteristic of the literal

followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Mennonites are well known as a people of frugal habits, sterling character, simple devotion and unpretentious disposition as pertaining to worldly honor and greatness.

Separation from the world, by some of the denominations even to the extent of dress and manner of life, and nonaffiliation with the world in politics, secret lodges and other alliances that would tend to destroy their individuality and spirituality as disciples of the lowly Nazarene, has been rigidly adhered to by the primitive body. They have hitherto been a "peculiar people", "zealous of good works".

Modern Baptists claim Menno Simon as one of the early leaders of their church. There appears to be no doubt that the Baptists owe much to their early contact with the Mennonites at Amsterdam.

The Mennonites were, as were the Anabaptists, opposed to the State dictating regarding matters of religion; they both insisted that religion was a matter between man and God and not between man and the State.

When therefore, the Anabaptists and Mennonites fled to England from the Netherlands in the 16th century and brought about an industrial revolution, they also sowed the seed of the wholesome discontent which ultimately resulted in the planting of religious freedom by the Pilgrim Fathers in America.

And the Mennonites exercised a direct influence upon the very

members composing the passengers of the Mayflower. This band of christians under their leaders Robinson and Brewster had to leave their home-town, Scrooby in England, and found its way to Amsterdam, where they came into direct touch with the large Mennonite Congregation of that city, who were then shepherded by de Rys and Gerrits, two prominent Dutch leaders of the Mennonites.

From Amsterdam Robinson with a small band of followers left for Leyden in 1609 and from this latter place embarked in 1620 for America, and have since become famous as the Pilgrim Fathers.

Its Theological Outlook

A statement of faith of the Memmonite Churches:

We hold steadfastly to the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the power of God unto Salvation, believing that it is only by grace through faith in Christ's atoning death on the cross and His glorious resurrection that men are saved from their sins and receive eternal life.

We believe that all who receive the Lord Jesus by faith are born again of the Holy Spirit with power to overcome sin and live a life pleasing to God.

We likewise hold that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the inspired Word of God and accordingly the Word of life and the supreme and final authority in faith and practice.

We believe, that the whole life must be brought under the lordship of Christ and that obedience to His will in all things is the ultimate test of discipleship.

We believe, that the way of life is taught by Christ and the Scriptures which is God's plan for the individual and for the race, and that those who espouse discipleship of Christ are bound to live in this way, thus manifesting in their personal life and social relationships the love and holiness of God. We believe that this way of life means the fullest exercise of love, scriptural nonresistance to evil, and complete avoidance of the use of violence, including warfare. We believe further that the Christian life will

of necessity express itself in nonconformity to the world in life and character.

We believe, that the Christian Church consists only of believers who have repented from their sins, have accepted Christ by faith, are born again, are baptized on confession of faith, and sincerely endeavor by the grace of God to live the Christ life of holiness and love.

We believe that the Church is a brotherhood in which all bear one another's burdens, and in which each considers himself a steward unto God of his life and possessions, and consecrates all that he has to the kingdom of God.

We believe, that the Church, the Bride of Christ, has a high and holy calling, not only ministering to its own membership, but testifying to the will of God to the world at large.

We believe, that it is the duty and privilege of all believers to witness for Christ and His Gospel to all men everywhere, to teach all things commanded by Him, and in His name and Spirit to minister to the needs of all men both spiritually and materially.

We believe, that while, in this world, true believers will suffer tribulations, yet God is faithful unto death, and that accordingly we should always abound in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that our labor is not in vain in the Lord.

We believe in a triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God is the creator of all things in heaven and on earth. God the Father

is the Father of Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son. The Son is our Saviour and Redeemer. He was made sin for us. He is therefore the fullest expression of God's love for "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life". The Holy Spirit is proceeding from both the Father and the Son . He is the spirit of regeneration and seals the believer unto the consummation of redemption at Christ's return (Mat. 28:19; Mat. 3:16-17; John 1:1-4; John 15:26; Isa. 48:16).

We believe that the Old and New Testament, called the Bible, is God's word and although written by men, was inbreathed by the Holy Spirit, and is therefore the infallible record of God's dealing with His creation, and particularly with man. It is God's revelation of His will and plan of redemption (II. Pet. 1:20-21).

We believe that God created all that there is visible and invisible and that He created man in His own image (Gen. 1:1-29).

We believe that our first parents, Adam and Eve, did not remain in their original state of innocence and happiness but through the subtlety of Satan they were induced to doubt and disobey God and did eat from the forbidden tree of knowledge and thus lost this original state (Gen. 3:1-24, II. Cor. 11:3).

We believe that God made full and ample provision for our salvation from the fall in Christ Jesus; and believing on Him we are saved, and being saved we have both the desire and the duty to bring the Gospel to others (John 3:16; Acts 4:20; Mat. 25:19).

We believe that the church is the body of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, having been called out of the world by a living faith in a crucified, risen, ascended and returning Christ; who so have become partakers of the divine nature that have the power to be called the sons of God and are joint heirs with Christ. They are the body of which Christ is the head (John 17:16; Acts 2:41; Eph. 2:19-22).

We believe that Christ has commanded that all who believe in Him and His shed blood and have become children of God should be baptized in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, not as a means of salvation, but as the outward sign of their covenant with God, and their having been crucified with Christ. The means of salvation is that living faith in Christ which worketh by love (Mat. 26:26-28; I. Cor. 11:24-26).

We believe that the family is the first institution ordained of God in the garden of Eden and confirmed by Christ, and must be regarded and honored as the holiest temporal relation between two persons on earth, because it is typical of the believer's relation to Christ. Such a union is to be for life, and divorces are unscriptural (Gen. 2:18-24; Eph. 5:22-23; Mat. 5:31-32).

We believe that the office of the worldly government is a necessity and ordained of God. But Church and State, the one a heavenly and the other an earthly institution, are to be organically separate from each other. Where demands of the state are in direct conflict to the order of God one must obey God rather than man (Rom. 13:1; Acts 5:29).

We believe that a Christian should abstain from any and all forms of oath as well as profanity and idle words and a false affirmation which is justly regarded as perjury (Mat. 12:36; Mat. 5:34-37).

We believe that the believer's friendship to the world is at the expense of the friendship of God, and they shall be a separate people not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; hence, we do not permit our members to be members of oath bound lodges also, for by it they are violating our position on the oath and they are yoked to unbelievers.

We believe that according to the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Apostles, and the example of our Lord and Master and the first Christians, believers cannot take part in any carnal strife or warfare, either domestic, religious or civil, or between individuals, factions or nations. The believer is admonished to have peace with all men, to love his enemies and pray for them. The Christian duty is to be subject to the higher powers, but when demands are made by a government contrary to our convictions from the Word of God, e.g. military service, we are governed by the word of the Apostles: "We ought to obey God more than man". (Gal. 5:17; James 4:1; Acts 4:19).

We believe that through the fall of man, the first Adam, death came upon all of the human race, for "death is the wages of sin". For the believer "death is to be absent from body and to be present with the Lord". For the ungodly death is to suffer separation from God in Torment (Gen. 2:7; II. Cor. 5:8; Rom. 5:12).

We believe that there is a resurrection of the body as Christ was

bodily raised from the dead as first fruits of them that sleep. They that are Christ's at His coming shall have part in the "first resurrection" at the beginning of the millennium, at the end of which there will be a general resurrection (I. Cor. 15:2-4; I. Cor. 15:23; Rev. 20:4, 12).

We believe that the righteousness of God and the sinfulness of man make it necessary for a judgment to come. This will come as declared in the Scriptures and Jesus Christ will be the judge (Mat. 13:40-42; Heb. 9:27; II. Cor. 5:10).

We believe that the state of the blessed will be one of perfect joy and happiness and glory, far surpassing our present comprehension. All this has come to them through the unsearchable riches of Christ's grace and mercy in redemption, hence they will find their greatest joy in praising and adoring Him saying: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing. - Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might be unto our God forever and ever. Amen". (Rev. 5:12; Rev. 7:12).

The Doctrine of the Church - the Ministry - the Sacraments

A Church, what is it?

A band of faithful men

Met for God's worship in some humble room

On hillside or lone glen,

To hear the counsels of His Holy Word,

Pledged to each other and their common Lord.

These, few as they may be,

Compose a Church, such as in pristine age

Defied the tyrant's steel, the bigot's rage

For where but two or three -

What'er the place - in faith's communion meet

There, with Christ present, is a Church complete.

The Mennonites stress not the form, though it has its proper place, but a spiritual awakening, an experience, a decision, and a definite stand for Jesus, before being accepted into the fellowship of the Church.

Concerning the Church they believe and confess that the Church of Christ is composed of all that through true faith in Jesus Christ and through obedience to the Gospel have separated themselves from the world and have their fellowship in the Holy Spirit with God the Father and Jesus Christ their only mediator. Although the members of this Church belong to all nations and are divided in denominations, yet they all are one in Christ Jesus their head.

Christ had said "Love thy neighbor as thyself", and in deep earnestness they undertook to be followers of Christ in the religion of love. They never pretended to be a "holy" church, but clearly saw the implication of religious toleration in Christ's command to love, and announced this principle to a world that had for centuries endured oppression and persecution, instigated by a church that was not built on love but on force, and which had left behind a trail of martyr's blood.

Yet another practice of the early church, based on the teaching of Christ (Mat. 18:15-18) was the exercise of church discipline. Church-discipline is for the individual a constant call to watchfulness, and where this watchfulness is wanting in the individual, the church steps in, guarding and protecting. This discipline frees the church of dead elements, that paralyze the church and check its development. It is the guardian of the good name of the church in the world, and it makes her testimony more effective. No church that wants to fulfill its mission can be indifferent in regard to church discipline.

Because their confession of faith is founded solely on the true and eternal Word of God, it is destined finally to find general recognition; for God's will and purpose must prevail in the end.

The Mennonite Churches are but a small body in the kingdom of God on earth. Yet they join in the common prayer of all true believers, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth".

Sad to say, to many of their members and perhaps even to many of

their congregations, the confession, that has come to them from their fathers, is only a dead letter; an outward thing, which has never become a matter of personal conviction with them and whose principles they therefore do not know how to apply. Therefore it is necessary, that in every generation the congregations take to heart the words of the poet:

What from thy father thou inheritedst,
Acquire it, that thou mayest possess it.

The Church's Independence - When the Mennonite Church was formed it was, as has been remarked, the only church which held to the principle of congregational independence. Probably through the influence of the Dutch Mennonites the English Congregationalists, in the beginning of the 17th century, and soon afterwards the English Baptists, founded independent congregations. These two large church bodies have till today, like the Mennonites, no controlling authority over the individual congregation.

The Office of Ministers and Deacons.- The Mennonites believe in the universal priesthood of the believers. As a holy priesthood all believers have liberty to enter into God's presence and as a royal priesthood all have liberty in service (I. Pet. 2:5,9).

Elders, bishops and overseers (these refer to the same persons) are those, whose qualifications meet the requirements as recorded in the Word of God. They are chosen by the Lord through the Holy Spirit and set apart by the Church. Pastors, evangelists, or teachers are gifts to the Church from its Risen Head. The Spirit leads in the ex-

ercise of all gifts. The Church is to judge discerning what is of the Spirit and what is of the flesh, and is responsible to see that no unprofitable ministry is forced on the saints (I. Cor. 14:29). And the Church commends and ordains laborers to the ministry according to their gift and as it is led by the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:1-3; II. Cor. 8:19). The Church is responsible to God to recognize such.

Four definite lines of teaching are given in Rom. 12, Eph. 4 and I. Cor. 12 to 14 for guidance.

Each teaches that lowliness of mind is necessary in the exercise of all gifts (Rom. 12:3; Eph. 4:2; I. Cor. 13).

Each teaches that the children of God are members of One Body, all necessary to each other, and that each of them has a definite place to function in that Body (Rom. 12:4,5; Eph. 4:4-12; I. Cor. 12:12).

Each makes it clear that no member is without gifts, that to each God has given something to contribute to the welfare of the Body, and that the giving to each member ^{of} some gift entails the responsibility to use it (Rom. 12:3; Eph. 4:7; I. Cor. 12:7).

Each teaches that God has given a variety of gift to meet a variety of need (Rom. 12:6; Eph. 4:7; I. Cor. 12:8-10).

All service ^{is} to be done for the perfecting of the saints till the Church reaches the stature of the fulness of Christ, (Eph. 4:12-13).

The ordination of a Mennonite minister does not impart upon him any new virtues, holiness or special knowledge. It adds responsi-

bility and new obligations. He continues to toil alongside of others, to fulfil his every day's work, to plow his field, and to labor for his family's income. And at the same time to preach the gospel, to visit the sick, to pray with the dying and heartbroken, to minister to the needy and to perform all functions and that in most cases without any compensation.

Regarding the offices, and election of persons to the same, in the church, the Mennonites believe and confess: That, as the church cannot exist and prosper, nor continue in its structure, without offices and regulations, that therefore the Lord Jesus has Himself (as the Father of the house), appointed and prescribed His offices and ordinances, and has given commandments concerning the same, as to how each one should walk therein, give heed to his own work and calling, and do it as it becomes him to do, to govern the church, feed the Lord's flock, watch over, maintain, and care for the same; and likewise to teach the church to observe all things whatsoever the Lord commanded them (Eph. 4:11-12; Luke 6:12-13; 10:1; Mat. 28:20; I. Tim. 3:1; 4:14-16; Acts 1:23-24; Tit. 1:5; Luke 19:13; Acts 6:3-6; I. Tim. 5:9; Rom. 16:1-2; II. Tim. 2:2).

The church shall count such servants worthy of double honor, shall love them, obey them, impart to them all manner of good, according to the Scriptures (I. Tim. 5:17-19; Heb. 13:17; I. Thess. 5:12-13; I. Pet. 5:5; Luke 10:1,7; Gal. 6:6; I. Cor. 9).

The lay ministry is still held up in theory by the Mennonite

churches. In practice it is more or less abandoned. The present day requirements of the churches brought the change. As all candidates of most of the Mennonite Conferences must be presented first to the Conferences for acceptance and approval, the small local churches can not continue in the old custom to choose one of their brethren and ordain him for the ministry. Some of the lay ministers, who were installed before by local churches, are called upon at present only as assistants, others are never asked to serve. They had to settle down as farmers or in some other work.

The churches readily assist promising candidates, sending them to the Bible schools first, helping them further to attend colleges. The Mennonites have seven colleges and two seminaries in the U.S.A. In 1944 the M.B. Bible College in Winnipeg was established by the Mennonite Brethren Conference. The college has applied for affiliation with the University of Manitoba.

Plans for two more colleges in Canada to open their doors *this* coming fall are being evolved.

Practically all our churches in the U.S.A. have at present paid ministers for their service. The Canadian churches are following suit.

Further changes are brought by the Mennonite youth especially in the matter of the language. The majority is not satisfied any more with public school education. They go through high schools. Many continue in collegiate institutes, colleges, universities. And the English language is becoming their language.

At present most Mennonite Sunday Schools are conducted in the English language, youth gatherings also use mostly the English language. All special meetings are conducted partly in German and partly in English. Some of our churches, a few of them in Winnipeg, use at present only the English language.

Concerning the office of deacon, the Mennonites believe that the church shall choose men according to the example of the apostolic church, as such are designated in Acts 6:1-6; and Tim. I. 3:8-10.

The Lord's Supper.- The Mennonites believe in and observe the breaking of bread, or the Lord's Supper, as the Lord Jesus instituted the same (with bread and wine) before His suffering, and also observed and ate it with the apostles, and also commanded it to be observed to His remembrance, as also the apostles subsequently taught and observed the same in the church and commanded it to be observed by believers in commemoration of the death and sufferings of the Lord - the breaking of the worthy body and the shedding of His precious blood - for the whole human race. So is the observance of this sacrament also to remind every one of the benefit of the said death and sufferings of Christ, namely, the redemption and eternal salvation which He purchased thereby, and the great love thus shown to sinful man; whereby all are earnestly exhorted also to love one another - to love its neighbor - to forgive and absolve him - even as Christ has done unto them - and also to endeavor to maintain and keep alive the union and communion which they have with God, and amongst one another; which is thus shown and represented to them by the aforesaid breaking of bread (Mat. 26:26;

Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19-20; Acts 2:42,46; I. Cor. 10:16; 11:23-26).

Practice of Footwashing.- The apostle Paul, in his first letter to Timothy (5:10), refers to feet washing, indicating that it was observed in the apostolic church. Within about a century from the time of the apostles, Tertullian (A.D. 160-220) makes mention of it as an observance in the church. Ambrose (340-397), Augustine (354-430) and others of the church fathers defended it. This practice was far more common in the early church than has been generally supposed.

In the synod of Toledo, in Spain, held in 694, the assembled bishops decided that only those who had participated in feet washing should be permitted to take part in the communion service. Bernard of Clairvaux (1113-1153) defended feet washing as a divine commandment. Some of the dissenting sects of pre-Reformation times also observed it. In the Eastern (Greek) Church and in the Church of England this rite was practiced until a comparatively recent date. It was commonly observed on Thursday of Passion week.

Luther, in his Greater Catechism, favorably mentions feet washing as an observance. Caspar Schwenckfeld (1490-1561) taught that feet washing is a commandment of Christ, as well as baptism and the Lord's Supper.

The first mention of feet washing among the Anabaptists dates from the year of their first organization (1525). Menno Simons mentions feet washing twice in his writings. The further Mennonite Confessions of 1577, 1591, 1600, 1627, 1630, 1632 all teach feet washing.

There is good evidence that all Mennonite churches of the Netherlands and northern Germany practiced this ordinance. And when the Mennonites in 1874 and 1875 emigrated from Russia to America, very many of the churches observed feet washing. Some of them have kept it up till now.

The Mennonites confess a washing of the feet, of the saints, as the Lord Jesus did not only institute and command the same, but did also Himself wash the feet of the apostles, although He was their Lord and Master; thereby giving an example that they also should wash one another's feet, and thus do to one another as He did to them; which they also afterwards taught believers to observe, and all this is as a sign to remind every one of the true washing - the washing and purification of the soul in the blood of Christ (John 13:4-17; I. Tim. 5:9-10).

Its Views of Church and State

In Holland, as in Switzerland, the Catholic authorities persecuted the new movements thoroughly. Hundreds of martyrs lost their lives, and thousands were persecuted with imprisonment, torture and exile. Because of the harsh rule of the Catholic overlords of Holland who were at that time Spanish, a revolt broke out soon after the middle of the 16th century, which led to a long and bitter war, though it finally brought the independence of Holland. The leaders of this war of independence were Protestants to a large extent, and since they themselves were persecuted they were more inclined to be tolerant of the Mennonites, even though the latter as nonresistants did not take part in the war.

At the beginning of the Reformation period a number of religious leaders began to point out the unscripturalness of some of the teachings of Romanism. The earliest leaders in this movement were (Martin Luther), Germany and (Ulrich Zwingli), Switzerland, the founder of the Reformed Church. The governments favored a reformation and protected these reformers. Within a few years, however, it developed that these governments would tolerate a Protestant creed only on the condition of a union of the new church with the state, just as Catholicism had been thus united. This meant that the whole population of these states would be required by civil law to accept the Protestant creed. In consequence both Martin Luther and Ulrich Zwingli, after the first years of their reform efforts saw themselves confronted by momentous questions. The point to be decided by the most prominent

leaders of the Reformation movement was to be either a persecuted or a persecuting church. Contrary to their former teaching, both Luther and Zwingli consented to the organization of state-controlled churches in which the voluntary principle was entirely abolished.

The decision of the leading Protestant reformers in favor of a union of the church with the state gave the occasion for the rise of the Mennonite Church. Conrad Grebel and Felix Manz, the first leaders of the Swiss Brethren, had been associated with Ulrich Zwingli in his struggle with Romanism. When Zwingli, in the autumn of 1523, entered his course, Grebel, Manz, and others saw themselves compelled to part company with him. The Mennonites defended the Biblical doctrine of the Christian church as consisting of those "called out" from the world, "called to be saints", of those who voluntarily take upon themselves the obligations of the Christian profession, and who are determined to be loyal to their Lord and obedient to His Word. They rejected the principle of compulsory church membership. This, be it noted in passing, explains why Menno Simons wrote more extensively on repentance, conversion, and personal holiness of life than any other writer of that period. He and his brethren were vitally interested in the personal salvation of men. There is conclusive evidence that the members of the early Mennonite and other evangelical Anabaptist churches considered it their calling to be missionaries. Leonard Bouwens, a Mennonite bishop in the Netherlands, baptized over 10,000 persons in many places in less than twenty-five years.

Ulrich Zwingli fully expected that Conrad Grebel and his assoc-

iates would likewise finally accept the creed prescribed by the civil rulers. Zwingli believed that the Swiss Brethren, after the government would undertake their persecution, would indicate a willingness to surrender their distinctive principles and unite with the state church. In this expectation Zwingli was entirely disappointed.

The first martyr to be executed by Protestants was Felix Manz, who was drowned in the Limmat River at Zurich in January 1527. He died as a hero of the faith. His execution by Protestant authorities caused a great sensation, but many other executions by Protestant governments followed. In none of the Protestant (Lutheran and Reformed) states were the Mennonites and other evangelical Anabaptists permitted to live, much less were they tolerated in the Roman Catholic states. Before the year 1532 a number of martyrs in the German province of Tyrol alone was estimated at 1000. In the Netherlands (modern Holland and Belgium) the number of Mennonites who suffered martyrdom was about 1500.

In Holland the persecution ended at a comparatively early date, namely in 1576, while in both the Catholic and Protestant cantons of Switzerland the persecution of the Mennonite people continued unabated for over two hundred years longer. In the first 10 years more than 5000 of the Swiss Brethren were put to death. One of the last Mennonite martyrs of any country, Catholic countries not excepted, was the bishop Hans Landis who was condemned to death and beheaded by the Protestant authorities of the canton Zurich, in 1614. The Mennonite Church in Switzerland, during the centuries of persecution,

may be truly said to have been as a city that is set upon a hill which cannot be hid. The population in general were deeply impressed by their piety and the scripturalness of their teaching.

An important description of the life and character of the Swiss Mennonite people of over two centuries ago is contained in a book published in 1693 by the state authorities of the canton Bern in Switzerland. It is a book of over 700 pages, entitled "Probierstein des Taeuferthums" (Touchstone of Mennonitism). The author is George Thormann, a minister of high rank in the Reformed state church.

The greatest book of Mennonite authorship which has gone through several translations and many editions, is "Martyr's Mirror".

A Swiss historian Ernst Mueller, a pastor of the Reformed Church, in a reliable work on the history of the Mennonites, says: "The strength of the Mennonite Church is in her history". Assuredly, the sources of the strength of the Church are of a more vital character than her history. And yet, the history of the Mennonite Church is an important factor in the work of the Church. The same author expressed the opinion that among the Christian denominations the Mennonites occupy the outstanding position for undergoing the severest persecutions.

"Judged by the reception it met at the hands of those in power, both in Church and State, equally in Roman Catholic and in Protestant countries, the Anabaptist movement was one of the most tragic in the history of Christianity; but, judged by the principles, which were put into play by the men who bore the reproachful nickname, it must be pronounced one of the most momentous and significant undertakings

in man's eventful religious struggle after the truth. It gathered up the grains of earlier movements, it is the spiritual soil out of which all nonconformist sects have sprung, and it is the first plain announcement in modern history of a programme for a new type of Christian society which the modern world, especially in America and England, has been slowly realizing - an absolutely free and independent religious society, and a State in which every man counts as a man, and has his share in shaping both Church and State."

These words of Rufus M. Jones in his "Studies in Mystical Religion. London, 1909" constitutes one of the best characterizations of Anabaptism and its contribution to our modern Christian culture to be found in the English language.

It is a remarkable fact that the history of the Mennonite Church proves a fascinating study to many who are members of other denominations. Most of the more important books on Mennonite history were written by non-Mennonites.

Its Sense of Responsibility for Society

Looking back over the history of American Mennonites during the past twenty-six years we observe an increasing effort on their part to translate Christian faith and love into action. A significant part of this desire has been manifested in a growing interest and activity in relief services. Lives, talents, and possessions have been generously given in a ministry of aid to the brotherhood and helpfulness to war sufferers in many parts of the world. Such a ministry is inspired by the example of Christ and motivated by the love of God which is shed abroad in hearts through the Holy Spirit.

In July, 1920, the new-created Mennonite Central Committee was waiting prayerfully before God. On one hand stood the dire need of the brethren in Russia. On the other hand was the strong desire of American and Canadian Mennonites to help. To bridge the gap between the need and the gifts, to become a servant in administering relief - this was the task for which the M.C.C. was created by the churches. Almost unsurmountable political difficulties and physical handicaps were involved in the administration of the first project. However, as we look from the vantage point of the present we realize that much more was accomplished than we dared to anticipate in 1920. Thousands were fed, clothed, and assisted in finding a new home. Since that time the story has been repeated many times.

If a program of relief is to be administered consistent with the spiritual convictions and Christian witness of the churches it represents, such concerns must then enter vitally into the operation

of the service activities. It is with this in mind that the M.C.C. officially adopted a statement of faith for the guidance of its program and workers. This statement, and expression of what is believed to be the basic convictions of all bodies cooperating in the work of the M.C.C. is titled "Our Heritage of Faith". To understand the policies and functions of the M.C.C. it is necessary to become acquainted with this statement and to know somewhat of the history of Mennonites and the faith they embrace.

By and large the constituents of the M.C.C. in United States and Canada are the blood and spiritual children of Anabaptists of the Reformation period.

Principles of faith which the Anabaptists held in common with other evangelical Christians, such as freedom of conscience, separation of church and state, and voluntarism in religion, which are generally accepted by Christians today, and which are embraced by their descendants in America today, as defined in "Our Heritage of Faith", are: That the atoning death of Christ and His glorious resurrection are the provisions whereby men are saved from sin and receive eternal life. That all who are born of the Holy Spirit receive power to overcome sin and live a life pleasing to God. That the Old and New Testament are the inspired Word of God and the supreme authority in faith and practice. That the ultimate test of discipleship is the bringing of the whole life under the lordship of Christ. That the disciples of Christ manifest in their personal lives and social relationships the love and holiness of God, which means overcoming evil with love and avoiding violence, including warfare. The Church consists of penitent believers who have *been* regenerated, baptized on confession of faith, and who sincerely endeavor

to live a life of holiness and love. It is a brotherhood in which each member considers himself a steward unto God and consecrates his all to the Kingdom of God, and besides ministering to its own membership testifies of the will of God to the world at large. It is the duty and privilege of all believers to witness for Christ to all men everywhere, to teach all things commanded by Him, and in His name and spirit minister to the spiritual and material needs of men.

It is ⁱⁿ this background of faith and history that the Mennonites carry on their endeavors for the well-being of the brotherhood and the outreach of the Gospel into all the world. The story of Mennonites suffering for their faith and migrating with the hope of finding a land tolerant of their beliefs and practices continues into modern times. Accordingly the original assignment of the M.C.C., which gave rise to its organization, had to do with bringing relief to the Mennonites in Russia. The second assignment related to the migration of upwards of 2,000 Mennonites to Paraguay. Again, today, many Mennonites in Europe are in need of brotherly assistance and many are refugees in need of new homes and security. A major purpose of the M.C.C. relates to the desire of the American and Canadian brotherhood to serve in behalf of fellow Mennonites both at home and abroad.

However, in much larger way it reaches out to all men everywhere, especially during times of national and world crisis, such as wars. In this larger aspect the M.C.C. has also been asked to serve from time to time.

The call of help from Russian Mennonites had reached the American brotherhood during 1919 and the early months of 1920. Following the

earlier reports came the "Study Commission", composed of Prof. A. Friesen, Prof. B. Unruh, Mr. H. Ediger the former Mayor of Ekaterinoslav the largest city in Southern Russia, and Mr. C. Warkentin, a farmer sent to America by the Mennonites of Russia. They travelled throughout the churches in the spring and summer of 1920 presenting the need and telling the story of famine and suffering in Russia. Emotions were stirred and the desire to send relief increased. The relief committees of the various groups began to plan and organize for the sending of aid.

It was soon apparent that gaining entrance to Russia, arranging for the collection and shipment of food and clothing, and the setting up of facilities for distribution of materials on the field was a stupendous task. Several of the relief organizations sensed that a larger and more effective work might be carried out through a common agency. The "Study Commission" strongly urged a united effort in order to send relief on a large scale and as early as possible. Consequently, representatives of several of the relief committees met at Elkhart, Indiana, July 27th and 28th, 1920. At this meeting a resolution was adopted in favor of creating a central committee and asking that the various relief committees meet to do so. A joint meeting was called at Chicago, Illinois, September 27th, 1920, and the Mennonite Central Committee was officially organized.

The activity of the Mennonite Central Committee during its years of existence naturally falls into three chapters. Two of these chapters have been written and the third is being written at

the present time. The two chapters in the past pertain more especially to the bringing of relief to stricken members of the Mennonite body. The third chapter, while also providing for the need of brethren, includes the broader aspects of relief and peace.

Russia Famine Relief, 1920 to 1925.- The relief work in Russia was primarily famine relief. Supplies of food and clothing were distributed in the Ukraine, the Crimea, and European Russia beyond the Volga River, areas in which large Mennonite colonies were located. A careful attempt was made to also provide for the native Russians in the regions served. While much of the work was discharged by local personnel, sixteen American workers were sent to Russia. In cash, \$680,000 was spent, and considering the value of food drafts, clothing, and flour sent, \$1,161,906.42 was poured into this work of mercy.

Clayton H. Kratz was a member of the first Mennonite relief unit to Russia. He with Arthur Slagel and Alvin J. Miller were the first workers to be sent by the Mennonite Central Committee. They were sent to initiate the relief work in behalf of the Mennonites in Russia in the great famine of 1920 to 1922. After venturing into the Ukraine in the fall of 1920, Clayton Kratz was taken prisoner by the Red Army and never returned. Efforts to find him were fruitless and doubtless no one will ever know where he lies buried. Prof. A.J. Miller, in charge of the later work in Russia, writing about this event, said, "No marble shaft marks the spot where his body returned to earth. But his name is graven on the hearts of thousands and thousands whom he came to help. Their children's children will repeat the story of the

Mennonite youth who came from far-away America to save their life and gave his own".

At the same time a relief work was carried on among the refugees in Constantinople, Turkey from 1920 till 1922 and \$200,738.56 has been spent for that relief.

Paraguay Colonization, 1930 to 1937.- The second chapter of M.C.C. service was a relief service plus an effort in colonization of Mennonite refugees. Several thousand refugees who had escaped from Russia were in Germany and in need of help. Later smaller groups of similar refugees arrived in Harbin, China. After Paraguay was decided upon as the place of settlement, much money and effort was expended in equipping the refugees for the long trek, aiding the settlers on arrival, and bringing assistance through the hardships of pioneering in the Chaco. In 1937 a large tract of land was purchased in order to secure a more favorable price for the colonists. Including the land purchase, \$251,403.57 was spent for this relief effort.

The Mennonites of Holland had assisted 1,244 Mennonites to migrate to Brazil.

Relief to War Sufferers, 1939 to 1946.- The outbreak of World War II in 1939 led the M.C.C. to undertake work in devastated Poland and thus began the third chapter of relief service. Since this initial effort relief services have been initiated in France, England, Holland, Germany, Denmark, the Middle East, India and China. Large shipments of clothing and food being directed to relief areas, especially to

Western Europe. By the end of 1945 a few more than one hundred workers from the United States and Canada were serving on relief fields under M.C.C. direction. The assignment of Civilian Public Service administration was made to the M.C.C. in 1940 and the broad fields of peace and relief were thus entered together. For the latter service contributions were received in the amount of \$2,000,811.58 and the expenditures for this service alone reached the sum of \$1,856,122.31.

At the time of the outbreak of World War II the Mennonite groups had a central agency of their own which had gained considerable prestige with the governments at home and abroad and had experience in relief services - The Mennonite ^{Relief} Committee. Accordingly, when Poland was overrun by the German army a commissioner was dispatched to investigate the possibilities of sending Mennonite relief to the devastated areas. A modest work was begun and continued until Germany declared war on United States in December, 1941. The relief work of the Canadian branch of the M.C.C. was started during this time in England. But the Polish work was the first step that initiated the broad program of relief under M.C.C.

As the war in the West continued and France and England were involved in 1940, a commissioner was sent to Europe to prepare the way for relief work on a large scale in these two countries. Work was carried on in unoccupied France from early 1940 until the occupation of this territory by Germany in late 1942. Relief services consisted mainly of the care and feeding program for undernourished French school children in Lyon. Mennonite relief personnel again entered

France in March, 1945, and undertook the direction of six children's homes. The interest in France also included the sending of tons of food and carload lots of wheat and flour for relief purposes. The work in England was begun in May, 1940, and the services rendered included the immediate aid to victims of bombing, and relief to neglected children, orphans, and older people. In London a Mennonite center was established which contains the administrative offices for the M.C.C. work in Europe.

In July, 1945, relief work was extended to Holland and in the early months of 1946, to Germany and Denmark. Earlier contacts had been established in the Alsace-Switzerland area. The concerns in these areas had to do more especially with the needs of the Mennonite brotherhood which was greatly effected by the war. Large shipments of clothing, shoes, soap, and food were sent, especially to Holland and Germany.

Shortly after the work in these regions had begun, it became known that large groups of Mennonites from Russia were in Germany and other European countries as displaced people. It was also discovered that a considerable number of the Mennonites located in the Danzig-East Prussia-Poland area had been evacuated to Denmark and were there in internment camps. The M.C.C. moved to bring aid to these stricken brethren.

The temporary migration and evacuation of thousands of refugees from the Balkan countries into the Middle East brought to the M.C.C. another relief opportunity. Beginning in the fall of 1943 until the

fall of 1945, fifteen Mennonite workers served varying lengths of time in the camps of Yugoslav and Greek refugees in Egypt and Palestine. This service was under the administration of U.N.R.R.A. As the refugees were repatriated a number of the Mennonite workers were transferred to Italy where they continued under U.N.R.R.A.

Maria Fast, one of the M.C.C. workers in Egypt, lost her life in May 1945 while assisting in the repatriation of Yugoslav refugees. After accompanying a group of Yugoslavs to their homeland the ship on which she was returning struck a mine and sank. Sister Fast leaves behind a record of faithful, consecrated service and her sacrifice remains as a challenge to many other M.C.C. relief workers who have heard the call to help.

Contributions for War Sufferers Relief reached for the time of July 1st, 1937 to November 30th, 1944 the amount of \$761,810.10 from the American Mennonite churches and \$228,967.04 from the Canadian Mennonite churches, the total of \$990,777.14 of which \$735,570.87 were expended in that time.

The contributions increased greatly when the hostilities ceased and the great need came to the knowledge of the Mennonite churches. The contributions from the Canadian Mennonite churches for 1945 were \$130,700.00 and for 1946 the amount was \$352,800.00. This brings the extended relief from the Canadian Mennonite churches till the end of 1946 to a total of nearly \$712,500.00. The total church membership in Canada is about 40,000.

A grievous famine prevailed in Bengal during the last half of 1943 and the first half of 1944. As a result of an appeal from Mennonite missionaries in India, the M.C.C. began modest work near Calcutta. Food and medicines were distributed and followed by reconstruction measures. The relief program continued in India as supplementary to Mennonite missionary endeavors there. Although American and Canadian Mennonites have been greatly interested in bringing relief to China it was impossible to enter the country with workers and materials until the late fall of 1945. A strong Mennonite relief program is beginning in China.

During World War II the M.C.C. also moved into relief services in Latin America. In Paraguay, these services were really an extension of the interest in the well-being of the Mennonite colonists. However relief projects in behalf of the people of Paraguay were begun. At Itacurubi, in 1945, a supplementary childfeeding program was undertaken. A hookworm eradication project and a leper colony and hospital were begun. These efforts were initiated as "thank you" projects for the Paraguayan reception of the Mennonite colonists. The services in behalf of the colonists were increased. Professional assistance, in the way of doctors, dentists, teachers, agricultural experts and engineers were sent by the M.C.C. A center was opened up in Asuncion and maintained to represent Mennonite interests and concerns in Paraguay.

M.C.C. entered Puerto Rico through an invitation from the Brethren Service Committee to establish Civilian Public Service units on the island. A relief and C.P.S. unit was set up near Aibonito in

the summer of 1943. Mennonite personnel, including C.P.S. men, reached almost fifty by the summer of 1945. A hospital has been built and is operated along with community building services of various kinds.

Viewing the relief activity of the Mennonite churches through M.C.C. during World War II and the year following it is apparent that the relief activities of the churches in America and Canada have greatly increased. The great and extensive need moved upon the hearts of the people, and it is also believed that there is an increasing awareness of the excellent opportunity peace churches have to give witness to Christian love through relief activities. Although summary figures on this chapter of work cannot yet be given, as of November 30, 1945, 109 workers were on the field. During the fiscal year, December 1, 1944, to November 30, 1945, food given was valued at more than \$120,000; clothing valued at more than \$260,000 was shipped to foreign countries; and cash contributions totalled around \$385,000.

The Section for Mennonite Mutual Aid was created by the Mennonite Central Committee in March, 1944. The purpose of the section is to serve the constituent groups in regard to problems of demobilization, rehabilitation, and colonization. The initial work of the section related to the needs of C.P.S. men in Mennonite camps as they faced the situation of returning to their home communities after a number of years in camp. Since M.C.C. is the servant of the church its chief concern is to see that C.P.S. men become reestablished in civilian occupations where they can become active church members.

The Aid Section has also concerned itself with the larger problem of colonization. As the problems of colonization continue to be faced, there is evidence that the Aid Section will have frequent occasion to be of service to the churches it represents.

The headquarters of the Mennonite Central Committee is at Akron, Pennsylvania. The Canadian Office of the M.C.C. is located at Kitchener, Ontario.

Special Points Such as Cooperation and Christian Brotherhood

The cooperative idea was for the Mennonites an expression of the Christian principle, as laid down in the Holy Scripture, "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). Their Church activities, social life and all other undertakings were governed accordingly.

To achieve the objective they settled in smaller or larger closed group settlements. This pattern has been followed from its very beginning to the present day. As the steps were taken jointly by all the members of a group they were strong enough to achieve their objectives.

But this procedure, the use of the Dutch language in every day life and the German language in their church-services resulted in a misconception in many instances of the Mennonite attitude to their adopted homeland, by their neighbors. Especially it was the case in the time of war, when the "Pacifism" of the Mennonites became a reality and had in many instances to undergo the test.

Only for a certain length of time in every case it was possible to keep up their isolation in closed group settlements. Others penetrated into the settlements. When they learned to know the Mennonites and what their attitude actually was, they became their advocates.

At the same time the Mennonites changed their view upon their

special mission to their fellow citizens and became aggressive workers. The result is gratifying. The Mennonites became known, respected and well looked upon subjects of the countries of their adoption. Their lines are filled, their Churches enriched by new members from the ranks of all classes of the population. Their joint aim is to serve the Lord, while serving others.

Colonization.- No colonization occurs without a previous migration, but not all migrations result in colonization. When the latter is the case, migrations result in settlements. There is a difference between settlement and colonization. Settlement is the process of adjustment to new environment after migration.

Once settled in the new land, members of the daughter colony remember the homes they left and tend to idealize them. Their first inclination is to reproduce as far as possible in the new community the institutions, organizations, and social patterns of the parent colony. In Mennonite history this is well demonstrated in southern Manitoba among Old Colony Mennonites who came to Canada in 1874-80 and established themselves in small European type agricultural villages which were the exact replicas of those they had left in Russia. In fact, one can find among the Canadian Mennonites exact blueprints of village patterns which were brought from Russia or drawn from memory by those who had recently come from there.

Mass colonization among the Mennonites might be compared to the transplanting of a mature and full-grown tree, as is done in modern tree surgery. The tree may be moved hundreds of miles from one geographic area into another and yet continue to grow with hardly any interruption, for it is moved as a total organism. So it is in the case of mass

migration where, if entire churches or communities are not transplanted intact, there are at least sufficient numbers of like-minded individuals to establish a daughter colony or congregation that carries on the customs and principles of the parent group. This has happened repeatedly in Mennonite history.

On the other hand, we have to state, that Mennonites who colonized during pioneer days in Canada, had to establish an economy of their own. They had to produce their own goods, and market them; they had to manufacture much of what they used; and they had to create what ever commercial and industrial activities they needed. But coming in sufficient numbers and settling in compact communities they were able to perform these functions by and for each other, although not without much hardship. But the significant fact in connection with this type of colonization is that everything about it is created and controlled by the group. It is thus colonization in the most genuine sense of the term. The life and culture, the backgrounds, traditions, ideals, customs, habits, institutions, and activities are all colored by this fact.

There is generally a minister among the new colonists. Religious services are at first held in the homes or in schoolhouses; later small meetinghouses are erected, or abandoned buildings from other churches are bought. If there are no ordained ministers in the colony, one is either chosen from the group or called from outside. The meetinghouse serves as a community center, a place for regular fellowship, a source of inspiration, and as a place to discuss the problems of the day and make plans for the morrow.

The Mennonite Church has not been built around creeds, theologies, or even personalities that have been glorified to the point of sainthood. It has been built rather around the idea of a Christian brotherhood, the members of which are all equally responsible for a high ethical, moral, and religious life centered in Jesus Christ. It is obvious that individuals who subscribe to this conception of Christianity will seek to live in close proximity to each other and fellowship frequently with one another. It is only in this way that the concept of Christian brotherhood becomes fully meaningful.

Not a small factor in accounting for Mennonite colonization is the matter of persecution. Throughout most of their history Mennonites have been unpopular. This unpopularity often goes beyond the stage of mere dislike and results in positive persecution. This has resulted in driving those of like mind and faith close together for mutual encouragement, assistance, and concern for each other's welfare. Settling in groups of like-minded people, therefore, results in a sense of strength that comes from numbers and a feeling of unity. Historical circumstances, therefore, very often made colonization a matter of necessity.

Another cause of Mennonite colonization is that of economic necessity. As a result of poverty, which was sometimes the result of persecution, Mennonite migrants have had to leave their homes in search of greater economic opportunity. Often too poor to migrate alone they have repeatedly been compelled to migrate and settle together.

It is the religious conviction of the Mennonites that has caused them to be willing to make the great sacrifices which generally

accompany the early stages of colonization. Only the most spiritually minded and religiously undergirded suffer voluntarily for the sake of religious ideals. A study of the recent Mennonite communities that have been established in Canada by those Mennonites who came out of Russia in 1923-30 as religious refugees from the Soviet Union demonstrate this fact. These people, for the most part, came out of Russia penniless, they endured the hardships and discomforts common to all refugees without a home, with broken family ties and the hardships of travel to a foreign country.

A transportation debt to the C.P.R. in the sum of \$1,800,000. was contracted, which has been paid in full.

When they arrived in Canada they were confronted with the task of establishing new homes in the face of a coming decade of economic depression. All of them were thus still further tried after escaping from the terrors of Bolshevism. Yet through all these difficult years of trial and suffering the great majority retained their religious fervor, praised God for His goodness, and continued to depend upon Him for protection and guidance. This must be said in spite of the many differences of opinion and differing shades of Mennonite theological and social views. No matter how much they quarrel within the Mennonite family, when faced with opposition, persecution, and hardships from without they submerge their differences and stand together as one united body. Religion thus has a cohesive power. It draws men together and helps them unitedly face common difficulties.

Chapter II

THE HISTORY OF THE MENNONITES IN EUROPE

Back of practically every persecution to which the Mennonite people have been subjected by governments and which caused them to uproot their homes, and move to countries more hospitable in prospect was their tenacious objection to render military service. It is a principle which they are not willing to surrender and for which they have suffered much.

In the period of the Reformation Prussia was under the sovereignty of the kings of Poland. It was apparently after the year 1548 that Menno Simons, accompanied by Dirck Philips, visited the city of Danzig on the Baltic Sea. After Menno's death Dirck Philips came again to Danzig and labored there jointly with the local minister Hans Sicken until 1568. Numerous Mennonite refugees from Holland found it possible to take up residence near there and later also in the city of Danzig.

In the region of the lowlands between Danzig and Elbing under the sovereignty of the kings of Poland, the Mennonites were tolerated at an early date. The kings of Poland in 1642 and again in 1660 and 1694 granted them "letters of protection". By these documents they were given state recognition. The letters stated at length that by their work of building dikes and dams in sections along the Vistula and Nogat rivers, and by their expert methods of cultivating these lowlands, they had rendered the country inestimable services.

In the year 1737 King August II of Poland published a manifesto stating that the Mennonites had been called into the country to

clear and bring into cultivation the swampy wastelands of those regions, and that they had given proof of their expert knowledge of the most practical methods for accomplishing this task. For this reason, the manifesto stated further, they were granted the privilege of freely practicing their religion, of holding religious services in private houses and other places (not in special church buildings), of having their own schools with teachers of their communion, of instructing and baptizing their own youth, and so forth. Until about 1750 the religious services of these churches were conducted in the Dutch language.

In 1772 the region between the cities of Danzig and Elbing and other eastern districts, in which Mennonite churches of Dutch descent were located, was incorporated into the Kingdom of Prussia under King Frederick the Great. At that time the Mennonite congregations sent two of their men to Potsdam, the residence of the king, to submit a petition for the recognition of the privileges permitted them by the former government. The Mennonite delegation did not yield in their demands. Finally the king became angry and asked, whether they really wanted to go through the wall with their foreheads. The prompt reply, "Yes, Majesty, we are looking for the spot in the wall, we can get through", resulted that King Frederick guaranteed them "for all times" exemption from military service.

The Mennonites of the country districts of Prussia during the eighteenth century enjoyed great material prosperity. A decree designed to make it difficult for Mennonites to acquire more land was published in 1789. Somewhat later the government prohibited their

further acquisition of land. And persons born of non-Mennonite parents who had in recent years united with the church, were not eligible for military exemption.

At the time when such measures of oppression were enacted in Prussia, Czarina Catherine II of Russia addressed a number of decrees to the Mennonite people. As a result of this, the migration to Russia started.

The Russian government made to the Mennonites through a special envoy in 1786 the generous offer, which was confirmed by delegates sent on a tour of inspection to Russia the same year. This offer included the following remarkable terms; free transportation to Russia, one hundred seventy-five acres of free land per family, a loan of 500 rubels (\$250.00) and support for each family at a cheap rate until the first harvest; complete freedom of language and schools; complete military exemption; self government within their settlements; no taxes for ten years and only a nominal federal tax thereafter. Only one limitation was made, namely, that the Mennonites do no religious work among the native Russians. These privileges were guaranteed in a special imperial decree in perpetuity, i.e., "forever".

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In 1788 the first group arrived followed by other groups until

(1) In 1810 with others also my great-grandfather Abraham Neufeld arrived. He was born on the 15th day of May 1792 at Marienburg near Danzig, the son of Rev. Johann Neufeld, minister of the Dutch Mennonite Church at Marienburg.

by 1840 a total of 1,150 families with probably not less than 6,000 souls thus found their way from Prussia to South Russia, most of whom settled in two large compact groups. Mennonite population in Russia 1914 is estimated to have grown to 100,000 souls, all through natural family increase, in spite of the large emigration of 1874-1880, which drained away to America at least one third of the population. Daughter colonies were established from time to time, which went as far as the Amur river on the Russian-Manchurian border, where they planted prosperous colonies.

At the beginning some church services in Russia were still held in the Dutch language, which gradually was replaced by the German language. One of the reasons for this change was that a number of young men studied in Germany, still more in Switzerland, where they took their advanced studies in the German language. In the homes the Dutch language has been preserved to this day and brought along to all the countries, in which the Mennonites settled.

When in 1873 about 15,000 Mennonites had left for Canada and the U.S.A. the Russian government became alarmed, realizing too late that it had not taken Mennonite nonresistance seriously enough. Determined to hold as many of them as possible the Tsar sent General von Tottleben to the colonies in April 1874. After acquainting himself with the faith and the convictions of the Mennonites he offered them civilian service of an entirely nonmilitary character as an alternative to military service.

In 1875, therefore, an official ukase was published announcing

the service program for the Mennonites as promised by Tottleben the year before. The term of service was to be of the same length as that for the men in the army, and those in the service were to be so grouped as to enable them to maintain worship services after the manner of their faith. After the completion of their term of service the Mennonites would be placed into the reserves, liable to be called again in case of war. When the program was actually inaugurated in 1880 it was confined to forestry alone.

When the war of 1914-18 began the demands for service increased and during the course of the war some 12,000 Mennonites were engaged in government service, about 6,000 in the forestry and another 6,000 in the hospital and medical corps service. The latter formed complete hospital units of their own who gathered soldiers from the battlefields and took them back to hospitals on trains manned by the Mennonites. The expense of all this service was met by the Mennonites themselves. During 1917 alone the Mennonites contributed over \$1,500,000 for the support of their men in these two forms of service.

The Russian revolution after the First World War finally reached the Mennonite colonies. Since 1930 Mennonite communities have ceased to exist, Mennonite worship has been suppressed, Mennonite church life has been destroyed, and Mennonite youth have been communized. The old colonies with their high culture, wealth, and civil life have been wiped out. The great famine of 1920-22 did not result in a heavy loss of life because of the splendid relief work carried on by the American

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 Mennonites at that time. But the "liquidation" of the "Kulak", or prosperous peasant class, by the government in 1927-1932, followed by the severe famine of 1933-34, did. Execution, deportation to the forests of Vologda and Archangel, to the gold mines of the Ural, or to Siberia, or merely "re-settlement" in other places - all caused enormous mortality among the Mennonite population. It is estimated that at least half the Mennonite population of Russia, or over 30,000 persons, perished at that time.

But we should not overlook the thrilling rescue of over 25,000 Mennonites from Russia in the two great migrations of 1923-28 and 1929-1930. The former movement brought over 20,000 souls to Canada under the direction of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization.

The Mennonites in Russia were Dutch racially; German, culturally; and Russian nationally.

Mennonites have made many migrations for conscience' sake, but none until 1923 in such a large and compact settlement as that from Eastern Prussia to Russia. The occasion for this migration was the generous offer of the Russian government to induce settlers to occupy the territory in the Ukraine then recently conquered from Turkey, but

(1) The headquarters of the Mennonite Central Committee for this all-Mennonite relief work was at the beginning at Scottdale, Pa., where the writer was engaged primarily in this work and also in editorial work at the Mennonite Publishing House.

the cause was the persecution of the Mennonites by Prussian authorities. Both the Prussian state and the Lutheran state church were determined to prevent any further growth of Mennonitism in the land, for they had seen Mennonites become increasingly prosperous and numerous during the eighteenth century. Furthermore the nonresistant Mennonites were a threat to the military power of the growing Prussian state, which was taking the lead in militaristic policies among the states of Europe.

Communist seizure of power in Russia in 1917 brought the Mennonites into conflict with the views of the new rulers and for years they all longed to escape from the iron rule of the Soviets. Their last chance came in 1941 when the Germans invaded Russia. Whole villages of Russian Mennonites gathered up their possessions and fled westward from the Ukraine. Only 10,000 of the 25,000 who started out on a perilous wartime trek across Europe survived, assembling in towns and villages along the western fringe of the continent to await transportation by sea to new homes in the western hemisphere.

Mr. C.F. Klassen of Winnipeg, special relief commissioner for the Mennonites in Europe, found them scattered through Holland, Denmark and Germany after Allied forces liberated western Europe. Following Mr. Klassen's special survey, the Mennonite Central Committee set to work on plans to evacuate them. A special displaced people's section, established by the Mennonite Aid Section, now is busy in Europe and is looking after many of the refugees awaiting evacuation. The Mennonite Central Committee considers that haste is necessary to evacuate the group lest they be forced to return to Russia under terms of the Yalta agreement.

2,310 Russian Mennonite refugees from Western Europe arrived in March 1947 in Paraguay, South America, on the Dutch S.S. "Vollendam" chartered by the Mennonite Central Committee. The destination of the others has not been announced yet. Mennonites who went to Paraguay in a previous colonization programme in 1930 have undertaken to settle the first 1,000 persons. A fund of \$500,000 collected by Mennonite churches in Canada and the United States will be used to transport the entire group and to settle the remaining on Paraguayan farm lands. The evacuation will cost millions of dollars, to be raised by the Mennonites on this continent.

From the total of 500,000 Mennonites, 200,000 reside in the United States and 81,500 in Canada.

Chapter III

THE MENNONITES COME TO CANADA

The Church Life of Canada at the time of Their Coming

Among the first settlers to Canada were also Mennonites. They came from Pennsylvania to Ontario with the same ideals in Christian faith, the same broad evangelical convictions, still upheld and cherished by the progressive Mennonites of today. The belief, that the first settlers in Canada proper were only Catholics, falls far short of the actual truth.

The Mennonites came also west with the first settlers to be instrumental in a special way in opening Canada's prairies to become the great food producing country of the world.

The new settlers of all the different nationalities and racial origins brought their religions and beliefs along, establishing their churches. Vigorous mission work was done by the different churches, the Mennonites, Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Congregationalists, Baptists, clashing all along the line with the Catholics, and with skirmishes between themselves.

The pattern of the work of the noble pioneer ministers and mission workers under difficulties and hardships is in many cases still the pattern of the Mennonite minister's work of today.

The way of thinking of the Mennonites and their church life has put its impression upon all their neighbor's ways of life and has undoubtedly influenced all other churches in their lives and establishments.

Special Regulations Adopted by the Government:Education; Exemption from Military Service; and Others

There is no doubt that the prospect of educating their children in their own way, free from molestation or restriction of any kind, as promised them by the Canadian Government was an equally powerful inducement to come to Canada as the exemption from any military service. These promises induced them in 1874 to exchange their comfortable homes, their more fertile fields, and the much more congenial climate of Southern Russia for the homeless and uninhabited stretches of the uncultivated prairies of Western Canada, and its severe climate. Oh the privation, suffering and labor of these pioneering days! Britishers considered these prairies "fit for the buffalo only", and were unwilling to live on them and wrest a living off them.

After the crushing of the first Riel rebellion the Canadian Government was on the look-out for settlers capable to undertake the task of breaking up these unpromising prairies of Western Canada. The then Secretary for the Colonies in the British Cabinet, The Right Honorable, The Earl of Kimberley, was induced to get in touch with Mr. Zahrobs, the British Consul at Berdiansk in Southern Russia, for the purpose of persuading the Mennonites of Russia to emigrate to Canada. Mr. William Hespeler, who at a later date became known as the Honorable William Hespeler, speaker of the Manitoba Legislature under the Roblin Government, was sent to Russia to extend an invitation to the Mennonites to come to Canada. Because of their fear of losing the right to remain exempt from military service in that country, he found the Mennonites in a receptive mood.

The Canadian Government prepared the way for their coming to Canada as well as for other denominations who held similar views. The following are extracts from a report of a committee of the Privy Council, which was duly approved by the Governor General-in-Council on the 25th day of September 1872.

"The Honorable, the Minister of Agriculture, reports that it is expedient to give the Mennonites in Russia the fullest assurances of absolute immunity from military services if they settle in Canada.

"That a subsection of section 17, of the Act 31, Victoria, chapter 40, is as follows:-

"Any person bearing a certificate from the Society of Quakers, Mennonites or Tunkers, or any inhabitants of Canada of any religious denomination, otherwise subject to military service, but who, from the doctrines of his religion, is averse to bearing arms and refuses personal military service shall be exempt from such service when balloted in time of peace, or war, upon such conditions and under such regulations as the Governor General-in-Council may from time to time prescribe.

"That under this section all persons above mentioned, and the Mennonites are expressly included, are absolutely free and exempted by the Law of Canada from military duty, or service either in time of peace or war.

"That the intention of the Act in conferring upon the Governor General-in-Council and the power of making conditions and regulations

was to enable the Government to provide, if necessary, for the registration of the exempted persons, in such a manner as to prevent persons belonging to any other denominations than those specified in the section of the Act above quoted from avoiding military duty under false pretences.

"That the Constitution does not confer upon the Governor General-in-Council any power to override or set aside, under any circumstances the plain meaning of statute law, and he recommends that this explanation be conveyed to the Mennonites in Russia.

"The committee concur in the foregoing report and advise that a copy of this minute be transmitted to your Excellency to the Earl of Kimberley". (Signed) John J. McGee, Clerk, Privy Council."

An extract of this Order-in-Council was transmitted to the Mennonites in Russia. After some further negotiations a delegation composed of twelve of their number, came in 1873 to Canada in order to select a suitable tract of land for their people and to make final arrangements with the Canadian Government for the removal from Russia of a considerable group of Mennonite people to Canada.

These men received from the Immigration Branch of the Department of Agriculture a document dated the 23rd day of July, 1873, which set out in detail the "advantages offered to settlers, and the immunities afforded to Mennonites, which are established by the Statute Law of Canada by orders of His Excellency, the Governor General-in-Council, for the information of Mennonites having intentions to migrate to Canada via Hamburg".

Of the fifteen "advantages" and "immunities" enumerated, the first and the tenth only quoted:

"1. An entire exemption from military service is by law and Order-in-Council granted to the denomination of Christians called Mennonites".

"10. The fullest privileges of exercising their religious principles is by law afforded to the Mennonites, without any kind of molestation or restriction whatever; and the same privileges extend to the education of their children in schools".

This document was signed by John Lowe, Secretary of Department of Agriculture.

On August 13th, 1873, after the delegates had left Canada, the above document was embodied in Order-in-Council, P.C. 957, except that clause 10 is changed to read as follows:

"That the Mennonites will have the fullest privilege of exercising their religious principles, and educating their children in schools, as provided by law, without any kind of molestation or restriction whatever".

The insertion in the Order-in-Council of the phrase "as provided by law" did not become known to the Mennonite people until 46 years later when Court proceedings had been instituted against a number of otherwise respectable Mennonites for not sending their children to the public school. The discovery of this change in wording, it would seem, was made before the Manitoba Court of Appeal on the 12th day of August,

A.D. 1919, before whom two of these cases were argued.

Anyone interested in a detailed account of the Judge's decision will find the same fully reported in Volume 3 pages 286 etc. of the Western Weekly Reports (1919-3 W.W.R. 286).

The first laws exempting Mennonites and others from military service were made more than a quarter of a century after the Mennonite people had settled in Canada. The first such law, 1808, under King George III, mentions Quakers, Mennonites, and Tunkers as exempt from military duties and service in time of peace or war, but required the payment of certain sums of money in lieu of such service. At that time there were settlements of Mennonites in Lincoln and Waterloo counties in Upper Canada, now Ontario. This law continued with a number of amendments until 1855, when Quakers, Mennonites and Tunkers, or members of any denomination whose religions were adverse to bearing arms, were allowed exemption from military service in times of peace or war, without the payment of money. This law continued in force until the passing of the Military Act, 1917. It is commonly thought by people outside of Canada that the law of 1868 was passed in order to get the Russian Mennonites to move to Canada, but it existed several years before the Canadian Government knew of the unrest among the Mennonites in Russia. The Order-in-Council providing for Russian Mennonites was made in 1873. Rev. Prof. H.H. Ewert says, "It should be noted that the exemption of Mennonites, Quakers, and others from military duty does not rest upon, nor date from, an Order-in-Council adopted in 1873, (This is the date of making final plans with the Mennonites in Russia) but upon a statute

of law passed in 1868, which is not a measure of a special inducement to intending settlers, passed for the occasion, but a statement of policy and principle". Bishop S.F. Coffman writes, "The law of 1868 is cited in the Order-in-Council in 1873". These three laws were not war measures, but were made in times of peace.

When the Russian government refused to support the promise of their Czarina, Catherine II, giving Mennonites exemption from military service they sent a committee to America to examine the laws of Canada and the United States. The committee of the Privy Council of Canada, after examining into the matter and reporting that the Act of 1868 especially named the Mennonites as having exemption from all military service, also recommended that the fullest consideration be given to the Russian Mennonites. The Canadian government, by Order-in-Council passed July 23, 1873, extended to the Russian Mennonites conditions which were very satisfactory. The following is a part of the Order:

"An entire exemption from military service is by law and Order-in-Council granted to the denominations of Christians called Mennonites. The fullest privilege of exercising their religious principles is hereby afforded to the Mennonites without any kind of molestation or restriction whatever".

While this Order was passed primarily for the benefit of the Russian Mennonites who, on the strength of the Order, moved to Western Canada, the same favor was accorded to Mennonites in all parts of the Dominion because of the Order and because of the statutory provisions

of 1868 which were repeated in the statutes of 1886, and reasserted in the revisions of 1906. No distinctions were made between Russians and other classes of nonresistant people until the war broke out and the Military Service Act of 1917 was passed. In the Act provisions were made for certain classes who were not to be called into service and who would be in no way amendable to the Act. Among those were certain religious orders, ministers of the Gospel, Government officials and those persons who came under special treaties of 1873 (The Russian Mennonites).

After the passing of the act of 1917 there was a difference made by the officials between Mennonites of the East and West. All of those living west of Ontario were considered as under the Exemptions of the Act, and were not to be called for service, were not required to register to claim exemption on any grounds. Those Mennonites, Quakers, and Tunkers who had previously enjoyed total exemption from military service who were living in Ontario were considered amendable to the Act and were required to register and claim exemption. The brethren in the West were notified to do so also and this led to some complications with the officials of the West which were later adjusted. The government at Ottawa constantly asserted their purpose to stand by the conditions of the treaty, and to regard the Order-in-Council as a sacred obligation. In the same way the Mennonites of all Canada were treated during the second World War.

Rev. A. Cook, M.A., a minister of the Anglican Church published in the St. James Leader, the following in answer to the editorial:

"There is a strong similarity between the request for exemption of Christian Scientists from the proposed National Contributory Health Insurance Scheme and that of the exemption from Military Service granted the Mennonites seventy years ago". I take strong exception to this your editorial of June 3rd 1943 in the "St. James Leader".

The exemption feature of the Mennonites was only one that anybody might have expected from a hard working, peace loving people. A people who without any hesitation would pull off their coats to don overalls and gumshoes and cheerfully settle down to any manual labor. A people who by their science applied were a most desirable asset especially to our country because of its arable possibilities. Through such possibilities they would and have provided food not only for themselves but possibly for the whole Dominion, and also for those who by reason of their white collared calling are not prepared, sometimes even averse to manual labor. From the view point of Military, Naval, and all clerical callings, such people should be doubly exempted for their science as applied by themselves, secondly as applied for others who depend altogether on the result of their labors. To say, that they only considered for their own safety in requesting exemption from military duty is only half the truth, for they were obviously providing against the dangers to which others might be unwittingly exposed."

Chapter IV

HISTORY OF THE MENNONITES IN CANADA

First Settlements and Centres of Location

The first Mennonites came to Canada in 1799 and settled in Ontario. They came from Pennsylvania, which they left because like the Empire Loyalists they did not want to live under a government that had come into existence through a revolution. In the course of time they spread over the countries Lincoln, Haldimand, York and Waterloo. Some have engaged in manufacturing, but the majority are farmers. They are thrifty and much respected by their neighbors. Their number is estimated at 12,000.

When the Russian government withdrew some of the privileges granted to the Mennonites, thousands of them went to Canada and the United States in 1874.

What appealed to them particularly was the promise of the Dominion Government that they should be exempted from military service and should have the privilege to educate their children without any molestation whatever. In addition the government promised them large tracts of land for free homesteads, 8 townships, east of the Red River, and 17 townships west of the Red River. The eastern reservation was first filled up. Then the western reserve was occupied. This was a treeless prairie and had been passed over by home seekers from Eastern Canada, who thought the open prairie unsuited for settlement. "Imagine", states one writer, "the astonishment of the dwellers on the Pembina Mountains when on a certain morning they saw the plains before them dotted with long lines of campfires which announced to the early settlers that thousands of Mennonites had taken possession of the lands they had

discarded". The Mennonites demonstrated the possibility of a poor homesteader settling on a treeless prairie by building sod houses and covering them with thatch roof made of tall grass.

"Their coming to Manitoba in such large numbers, their courage in facing the privations of pioneer life in a country without suitable means of communication, without established markets and without other desirable conveniences, the energy they exhibited in turning the wild prairie into fertile fields and pleasant human habitations made them the object of wonder and surprise", writes another writer.

In the economic sense history records that time and again the Mennonites have been engaged in the task of bringing new and neglected lands to a state of prosperity. In 1786 a party of Mennonites entered upon such a task in Ontario. Likewise, the descendents of those who pioneered in Russia brought under cultivation parts of uncultivated areas in the four Western Provinces.

Lord Dufferin, the then Governor-General of Canada had ^{this} to say to a gathering in Winnipeg about the impressions he had received on the occasion of a visit to the Mennonites of Western Canada: ~~These are his words.~~ "Although I have witnessed many sights to give me pleasure during my various progresses through the Dominion seldom have I beheld any spectacle more pregnant with prophecy, more fraught with promise of an astonishing future than the Mennonite settlement. When I visited this interesting people they had been only two years in the province, and yet in a long ride I took across the prairie which but yesterday

was absolutely bare, desolate and untenanted, and the home of the wolf, the badger and the eagle, I passed village after village, homestead after homestead furnished with all the conveniences and incidents of European comfort and a scientific agriculture, while on the other side of the road were cornfields already ripe for harvest and pastures populous with herds of cattle stretching away to the horizon. Even on this continent, the peculiar theatre of rapid change and progress, there has nowhere, I imagine, taken place so marvelous a transformation".

The Mennonites first settled in villages. These were organized in the following way. From 15 to 25 farmers would agree to a more or less common usage of their homesteads. On one quarter or half a quarter the village was laid out. A quarter or two at the end of the village was reserved for a common pasture. The remaining quarters were divided into strips, so that each farmer would cultivate a strip in each quarter, the idea being that good and poor land should be shared equally by all of them. But each farmer retained the deed for his homestead. Nothing was held in common. In each village was built a school house in which school was kept for seven or eight months. Within a few years there were about 110 villages built, 45 in the Eastern and 65 in the Western reserve. But in the course of time most of these villages disbanded or organized themselves on a plan where each farmer could till his own land.

The Mennonites also organized at once some cooperative institutions. One was a mutual insurance company and another was a kind of a trust company which took care of orphan inheritances and other moneys

that might be instructed to it.

The Canadian Pacific Railway was instrumental in helping large numbers of Mennonites in both the 1874-80 and the 1923-30 migrations.

In 1874 the Russian Government, having threatened to withdraw the privilege of exemption from military service, caused over 7,000 Mennonites to leave Russia and to settle in Manitoba. By August 1876 their number was 7,146.

By the end of 1871, there were found only 11,963 souls inhabiting the territory now known as the Province of Manitoba. This population was composed of 1,565 whites, 5,757 French half-breeds, 4,083 English half-breeds, and 558 Indians.

At the present time, the area between the C.N.R. line running through Giroux and La Broquerie as the Eastern Boundary and the Pembina Hills and beyond, as the Western Boundary, is occupied chiefly by these people. *Mennonites.*

The colony had the great honor as stated already of a personal visit in 1877 from the Governor-General of Canada, Lord Dufferin, and his wife, Lady Dufferin. In the presence of a large concourse of people Lord Dufferin gave them the assurance, "Nor will you be called upon in the struggle to stain your hands with human blood", and further in the same speech, "If then you have come hither to seek for peace - peace at least we can promise you".

This settlement prospered greatly. By 1893 all lands in these

reserves were taken up, and a migration set in for the unoccupied lands in Saskatchewan, where new settlements were planted which rival in extent those of Manitoba. Alberta has also received a share of the Manitoba surplus. The important settlements in Saskatchewan center around Rosthern, Langham, Drake, Herbert and Swift Current, and in Alberta around Didsbury and other places.

A severe setback came when Dr. Thornton, as Minister of Education of the Province of Manitoba forced through his educational policy in 1911 and the years following. Favored by the war fever that permeated the country at the time, the last vestige of the privilege to conduct their schools as they saw fit, promised to them in 1873, was swept away with the result that several thousand of the Old Colony and Sommerfelder Mennonites left the country, depriving this province of Millions of dollars which it could ill afford to lose.

It is true their places have been filled by the Russian Mennonites, who came to Canada in the year 1923 and thereafter, but valuable citizens were lost by what is now generally admitted, the mistaken policy of Dr. Thornton.

In connection with the bringing in of the Russian Mennonites, the C.P.R. and later the C.N.R. deserve great credit, particularly Col. Dennis of the C.P.R., Dr. Black of the C.N.R., the late Bishop David Toews of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization at Rosthern Sask. and Rev. B.B. Janz, then Russia and now at Coaldale, Alberta.

No other factor but a sincere religion has made the Mennonites

willing to face the hardships of migration bravely and meet uncertainties courageously. The religious faith of the Mennonites not only makes them willing to sacrifice but also binds them together into a single body so that the feeling of kinship develops. Most of the Mennonite colonists were poor and had to be helped. A local homesick rhymester, longing for the comforts he left behind bemoans his fate with these words:

Mit Traenen seh ich an die Staette,
 Die ich zum Wohnsitz mir erwaeHLT,
 Kein Haus, kein Herd, kein Stuhl, kein Bette,
 Kein Pferd, kein Vieh, kein Fleisch, kein Mehl,
 Kein Schuessel, Loeffel, alles fehlt,
 Wie los bin ich auf dieser Welt.

(With tears I look upon the place,
 That I have chosen for my home,
 No house, no stove, no chair, no bed,
 No horse, no cattle, no meat, no flour,
 No pan, nor spoon, all is lacking,
 How loose am I on this world.)

There are a number *of* instances in Mennonite history of mass migration of unusual size, thousands of Mennonites moving from one country to another in the course of a few years. All migrations of Mennonites are resulting in permanent settlements. This does not mean that people who fall into this classification do not move again after having once moved and settled. It means rather that when they

do migrate it is with the intention of establishing a residence and settling down permanently. Mennonite migrations are homogeneous group migrations.

Mennonites have not migrated by individual families but rather in small groups of two, three, or half dozen families at a time. When only a few families migrated into a new area it was usually with the hope, if not the understanding, that other Mennonite families would soon follow. Very frequently these hopes did not materialize and as a result throughout numerous parts of Canada one finds today small Mennonite settlements which are the result of fragmentary migrations. Such migrations were very often poorly planned, loosely organized, and sometimes composed of the economically and socially more unstable population of the home community. There is a close relation between human migration, economic opportunity, and spiritual freedom. Among Mennonites there has been no greater single cause for migration than the desire for religious freedom. It was the restriction of religious liberty that caused 15,000 of them to leave Russia for America. And it was the outright attempt to destroy not only religious freedom but religion itself in Russia in the early twentieth century that caused almost 30,000 Mennonites to seek refuge in America, 20,000 of them in Canada.

Undoubtedly many Mennonites have migrated for reasons other than purely religious ones. Economic, social, and psychological motives have also played a part, but on the whole these motives have been overshadowed by the one fundamental motive - religion. But the economic factor is sometimes so closely identified with the religious that it is

impossible to separate the two. This is much more frequently the case in internal migrations than in international migrations, although in the latter it is not completely absent. Mennonites have often been induced to migrate to new areas by enthusiastic, and sometimes unscrupulous, land agents.

The privilege of getting land cheap, or entirely free, in Canada by homesteading caused many Mennonites, as well as others, to take advantage of what seemed a good opportunity to become economically established. The higher priced land in the more densely populated and industrial area was often sold and the money used to buy and develop cheap lands farther west.

Besides religious and economical causes of migration there are also certain social and psychological factors. For instance, there are Mennonites who migrate from one area to another for the sake of adventure. Young married couples who have no stake in the home community and no job that is challenging may be lured to a new area several hundred or a thousand miles away where they think prospects for making a living are much brighter than they are at home. Older men who have lost their possessions and are discouraged with the outlook in the local community may be similarly attracted to new areas. When one or two families move out of a community into a new one, and report circumstances favorable, others are immediately tempted to migrate likewise. Kinship, too, is an important factor in determining migration. In some cases whole villages or churches moved bodily from one country to another, retaining the original organization intact.

It must be said to the credit of the Mennonite people at large that no significant migrations have been made in response to get-rich-quick schemes such as a gold rush, an oil boom, or the opportunity of high paying jobs in industrial plants during periods of inflationary wartime wages.

Another factor in successful Mennonite colonization is that of adequate leadership. In the successful community the leader has the necessary vision as well as the loyalty of the members of the group. He also has the ability to make efficient use of opportunities and of talented individuals in the group. This includes the ability to prevent the breakup of the group because of internal dissension and personal conflict; ability to provide for necessary economic outlet and expansion; the development of a technique by which the younger generations can be successfully used and integrated into the community as a whole. In brief, strong community leadership has resulted in the successful building of a strong church organization in each community and, as we have stated before, it was an important factor in developing harmonious relations within the group.

A special factor which has been significant in determining the success of Mennonite colonization is that of favorable governmental laws and concessions. Governmental attitude is after all largely a reflection of public opinion, and public opinion is a significant factor in Mennonite colonization. If the attitude of many citizens in an area is hostile toward the Mennonites it may prevent the establishment

of strong colonies. Usually where the official attitude of the government has been friendly and where the invitation to establish a new Mennonite colony has been characterized by generous concessions the attitude of the individual citizens in that country has been the same. Favorable governmental attitude toward Mennonites was expressed by the Russian government under Catherine the Great in the late eighteenth century; by William Penn in Pennsylvania; by Canada and the United States from 1874 to 1880 during large Mennonite migrations; and again by Paraguay and Brazil 1926-1930 when Mennonite immigrants from Russia and Canada were warmly welcomed.

In 1874 the Canadian government appropriated \$88,000 as a loan to be used by the Mennonites for colonization purposes in Canada. This act is unique in history as an expression of friendliness by a government toward Mennonite colonization. The generous attitude toward exemption from military service, freedom of education, and almost complete political and social liberty are further evidences of a friendly governmental attitude toward Mennonite colonists.

Let me list here yet one factor which has contributed to successful Mennonite colonization, it is that of adequate planning and systematic supervision. It must be said in fairness to the fact of history that Mennonite colonization has usually not been characterized by careful advance planning. It has been even less characterized by administrative supervision from an official church organization. This may in part be explained by the fact that often Mennonites have had to flee from country to country on relatively short notice and under adverse circumstances, nevertheless it reflects a lack of central organization

and provision for taking care of such emergencies. When planning has been done the results have been gratifying.

An illustration of planning and supervision is found in the work of the Canadian Pacific Railway. It is a well-known fact that between 1923 and 1930 the C.P.R. helped 20,201 Mennonite settlers come to Canada. The C.P.R. was willing to do this because it owned steamship lines in addition to its network of railways. It also owned millions of acres of land in Canada which it wished to have settled. The immigration of Mennonites to Canada seemed to offer an economic advantage to the C.P.R. as well as to the Mennonite settlers.

A further factor of importance in determining successful Mennonite colonization efforts is the matter of adequate financial credit. The colonies which have succeeded best are those which had some financial capital in addition to the social and spiritual assets mentioned above. Oftentimes colonists succeeded in spite of financial deficiencies but the struggle was long and hard and perhaps unnecessarily difficult. These failures might have been avoided if adequate financial assistance had been available. On this point the Canadian Pacific Railway has developed a definite philosophy of land settlement. After many years of attempted land settlement and development of millions of acres of Canadian territory the C.P.R. came to the conclusion that to sell land and even to get settlers to move on the land was not sufficient. The C.P.R. decided that the settlers needed a minimum of assistance with which to begin farming operations. James B. Hedges, in his story of the Canadian Pacific Railway's history of colonization, "Building the Canadian West",

makes this comment in connection with the Mennonite immigrants of 1923-1930 and the C.P.R. land settlement policy:

"By virtue of their traditional devotion to the community form of settlement, the Mennonite immigrants whom the Canadian Pacific was bringing to Canada were clearly indicated as the ones who did make a success of group settlement on the large farms. But while the Mennonites were good human material they were so largely without means as to preclude the possibility of their purchasing the lands in the ordinary way. Where groups of Mennonite families were settled on the large farms additional buildings and equipment must be provided by the vendors and added to the price of the land. The total cost was then to be liquidated by the annual delivery to the vendor of one-half of all crops and livestock produced on the land. In this way every incentive was given to the settlers to achieve maximum production as a means of effecting the most rapid payment for the land".

This quotation illustrated how important the C.P.R. considered adequate financial capital as a prerequisite to colonization success. Where Mennonites had finances of their own or sufficient assistance in getting established in new communities the chances of success were much greater than where this was not the case.

This was not practiced in former times. It should be said in fairness to the C.P.R. that its record of colonization is, on the whole, very commendable. But in the effort to settle the Canadian Western prairie lands the C.P.R. used a variety of methods some of which were questionable. One of them was to assist in the organization of subsid-

ary agencies to promote the sale of land. These agencies were not always so straightforward in their methods as was the C.P.R. The general plan was for these agencies to buy land from the C.P.R. and then resell to individual settlers at a profit.

The Mennonites were by far the largest single group to colonize under C.P.R. supervision. The day was gone when the settlers were placed on the land and promptly forgotten; where each man shifted for himself as best he could. The aim and the purpose of immigration promotion on the part of the C.P.R. now was to build the settlers into the economic life of the country.

The evolution of policy on the part of the C.P.R. is very significant. It illustrates how a large organization like the Canadian Pacific Railway with its vast areas of land to settle, after settling thousands of families on farms, comes to the conclusion that the mere selling of land and even settling of this land is not sufficient, but that careful supervision after settlement is the wisest, most efficient, and preferred long-term colonization policy.

We have to mention also some causes of failure in Mennonite colonization. And we ask: Why have many of the efforts of colonization in the past been complete or partial failures?

The causes of colonization failures are many. Seldom, if ever, is failure due to a single cause, just as successful colonization is seldom due to a single factor. People may attribute failure to poor leadership, poor land, inadequate financial strength, or to any one of

a dozen other reasons, and it may be true that one or another of these factors was prominent. But it is seldom true that one single factor accounts for the total failure.

Colonization failures are, furthermore, not sudden events due to a single act or deed but are the result of gradual processes or developments that occur over a long period of time.

Colonization failure may be defined as the unsuccessful attempt of a group of colonists to establish a church or community in a new geographical area. But it may also be the failure to establish a community that has the customs, traits, traditions, beliefs, ideas and cultural patterns of the mother colony. If the new community is unable to establish a Mennonite congregation which holds to the traditional religious principles of the group, if it is unable to hold the group together for the purpose of work and worship and social fellowship and, therefore, preserve the distinctive group consciousness, it necessarily becomes a colonization failure.

In Canada the Old Colony and Sommerfelder Mennonites were firmly established in village agricultural colonies following the migrations to Canada from Russia in 1874. The adoption of rigid school laws in Canada to force all ethnic groups to become Canadianized during World War I caused most of the Old Colony Mennonites and many of the Sommerfelders to seek new homes in Mexico and Paraguay. This resulted in a breakup of the well-established and often prosperous communities there.

One of the most prominent causes of colonization failure is

inadequate preparation. A study of many unsuccessful colonization efforts convinces one that many could have been prevented with even moderate preparation before actual colonization was begun.

Their Methods of Community Life - agriculture, schools, etc.

Christian mutual aid has been a major factor in contributing to successful Mennonite colonization. Not merely in social and religious matters is mutual aid practiced but in the economic and business activities of the local community as well. One may also make the generalization that Mennonite colonies have prospered economically and spiritually in direct proportion to the degree to which they have practiced Christian mutual aid. There are very few exceptions to this generalization. This means that brotherly love and religious motivation are not confined to mere theory but in many communities have been put to test in economic practice. In the various settlements of recent Mennonites in Canada one finds co-operative creameries, cheese factories, stores, credit unions, marketing associations, producers' societies, hospitals, burial societies, and health associations.

All these activities are carried on as community organizations. They are owned by the people who use them; profits are shared by the community and losses are borne by the community. This means that the individuals have an opportunity to work together during the week as well as pray and worship together on Sunday.

Mutual aid is more than a temporary device to meet hardships during migration and the early stages of colonization. It is a technique for helpful Christian living in the community after the colony is firmly established. Incidentally, this is not a new discovery. Mutual aid is a human technique as old as religion itself.

Another factor contributing to the success of Mennonite colonization is the willingness to work hard and to live simply. The Mennonites have a long standing reputation for industry and frugality. This willingness to work hard and live frugally made possible the transformation of the barren plains of Western Canada into productive agricultural lands, with livable homes and growing communities. The same must be said of the recent immigrants from Russia who established themselves in various parts of Canada. In the Frazer Valley in British Columbia Mennonite Colonists developed previously unsettled and unproductive areas by means of prodigious effort and sacrifice. Here men and oftentimes whole families walked from three to five miles to hop fields where they labored for as little as fifteen cents an hour. In this way they earned money to buy food and clothing and save a few dollars to make a down payment on a piece of land. Crude houses were built, gardens and small fruit farms were put into cultivation, in "spare time".

The land agent in the Frazer Valley who was responsible for the establishment of several hundred Mennonite families there, makes the statement, that the willingness of the Mennonite colonists to work diligently at any task given them made a favorable impression upon the native settlers. He personally sold land and other equipment to many of these settlers on credit without security because he was convinced that people working as hard as they did were worthy of such credit. As a result of this diligence, family co-operation, and neighborly assistance, the people in time made noticeable economic progress.

Today, after ten to fifteen years of hard work, these colonies have productive farms, large new church buildings, and substantial houses.

Two Collegiate Institutes have been erected, one at North Abbotsford at a cost of \$40,000 and one at Yarrow at a cost of \$150,000 raised by freewill subscriptions. The latter has an enrollment of 350 pupils this school-year of 1946-47.

Mennonite colonists have believed in and demonstrated the dignity of labor. This characteristic has made Mennonites as colonists attractive to governments and to private concerns having undeveloped lands for settlement. Simplicity of life and willingness to work are indisputable contributions to the success of Mennonite colonization.

It does not matter in the long run how great the religious spirit or how strong the practice of mutual aid or how unstinting the human labor, if the soil is poor, the rainfall insufficient, the climatic conditions unfavorable and the markets inaccessible, a colony cannot succeed economically nor spiritually.

Frequent comments have been made about the uncanny ability of Mennonites to select the best land for their settlements. People making such statements seem to assume that it is because of the selection of good land that Mennonite colonization succeeds and Mennonite communities prosper. There is some truth in the assumption, but it does not satisfactorily explain the total situation. The other phase of the explanation lies in the use made of the land acquired. The methods of farming

employed and the care and nurture given the soil over the years determines whether agricultural areas decay or flourish.

The great secret of successful colonization is the introduction of new agricultural practices to particular areas. In this way a poor colonization prospect may be transformed into a very favorable prospect. By the introduction of new crops or new methods of farming unproductive land can often be made productive.

The Mennonite farmers in Southern Manitoba living around the towns of Altona, Winkler, Gretna, Plum Coulee, and Horndean illustrate yet another type of agricultural adaptation which may contribute to successful colonization. Instead of depending on grain crops entirely for a source of income these farmers are beginning to plant row crops such as sunflowers, table beans, soybeans, Argentine rape, and sugar beets. This in itself is not unique, but the accompanying program of processing these crops in the home community is unique, at least in Mennonite rural communities.

In 1946 thirty one sections of land were planted with sunflowers, which yielded 13 million pounds, or 650 pounds to the acre, a total crop worth \$585,000.

These farmers have erected a co-operative oil extraction plant at Altona, in which they perform the initial stage of processing the oil producing vegetables. In this way not only will there be a change in the type of product raised but there is at present already a significant change in the method of marketing. It means that the farmers

can control the distribution of their product longer than if they sold the vegetable products directly without processing. The second plant is being built at present at Winkler.

German poetry in Canada has been largely confined to the Mennonite communities, which have produced a flood of hymns, commonly more pious than poetic. The most industrious of these religious versifiers is Rev. Isaac P. Friesen, of Rosthern, Sask., who has published a large two-volume collection of his hymns, entitled "Im Dienste des Meisters" ("In the Service of the Master"). In Eastern Canada, the most active poet has been Bishop Jacob H. Janzen, D.D., of Waterloo, whose "Durch Wind und Wellen" appeared in 1928.

For German Mennonite fiction, the chief source of inspiration is found in the horrors their people endured in Russia during the Communist revolution. Thus Gerhard Toews has written three vivid novels entitled "Die Heimat in Flammen" ("The Homeland in Flames"), "Die Heimat in Truemmern" ("The Homeland in Ruins"), and "Hinter den Roten Mauern" ("Behind the Red Wall"), all dealing with this engrossing theme; and a similar impulse lies behind Bishop Johann Peter Klassen's "Dunkle Tage" ("Dark Days"), and Prof. D. Neufeld's, Ph.D., "Tagebuch aus dem Reiche des Totentanzes" ("Diary from the Realm of the Dance of Death"). Most prolific fiction-writer of them all is Rev. Peter J. Klassen of Superb, Sask., who has poured out a perfect spate of tales, both in High German and Plattdeutsch, in book-form and through German periodicals in the West. Klassen has a vivid power of description, a strong sense of humor, and (one suspects) more than a hint of exaggeration in some of his quasi-biographical yarns.

They also tried their hand at drama. Here the commonest type of work is a brief one-acter, humorous or religious in character, suitable for performances in Sunday Schools or at church socials. The most prolific of their playwrights is Peter J. Klassen (in both High German and Plattdeutsch), but interesting dialogues and plays have also been published by A.J. Loewen, Jacob H. Janzen and J.J. Wall.

The Mennonites have also published copious accounts of their past perils and outwandering. Especially worthy of note are the memoirs of Jacob H. Janzen (Aus meinem Leben) and the numerous narratives of Peter J. Klassen. A Mennonite spokesman states: "Our second great migration was to the Mennonite communities of the prairies. From the far colonies of southern Russia did we come, seeking for religious liberty and a peaceful land, and now, for more than half a century our piety and thrift have been built into the enduring structure of Canadian life. Others have played a more spectacular part in the life of the Canadian nation; but none have contributed more fundamentally than our deep religious faith."

An item of interest might be the fact that the Mennonites have taken a great interest in the education of their teachers. A Mennonite Collegiate Institute was established at Gretna, Manitoba in 1892, and a similar institution was set up and maintained at Rosthern, Saskatchewan. As a result of these efforts all of the Mennonites schools in Manitoba alone, about 150 in number, were supplied by Mennonite teachers, holding the full teachers' certificates.

The Mennonites in Canada own and maintain at present:

5 Mennonite Hospitals,

2 Mental Hospitals,

6 Old Peoples' Homes,

5 Girls Homes;

In the field of education:

1 Bible College,

5 Collegiate Institutes,

18 Bible Schools;

And in publication:

9 religious papers and all the Sunday School lesson helps.

Differences Between Branches of the Mennonite Church

From the earliest time the Mennonite Church laid down certain restrictions - rules of conduct - that were obligatory for the members. These restrictions had reference to worldliness in general and to such points as dress, manner of life, worldly amusements, etc., in particular. If the church members were convinced Mennonites, they believed such restrictions to be a necessary characteristic of a true Christian Church. The cry that the restrictions are conflicting with the personal liberty of those who were "set free" by Christ was in those early days raised, not by church members, who by their free choice had united with the Church, but by outside opponents of the Church and enemies of the cause.

The time came, when there were those within the borders of the Church who raised the fervent cry "no restrictions". Of them "the historic faith of the Church" may be summed up in one word: liberty. And they penetrated the Church and pressed upon it the seal of a Church, who substituted the principle of liberty for the fundamentals of the faith. This set aside the faith once for all delivered to the saints and made liberty the principle thing. It made an idol of liberty. The Christian teaching that there is something higher than liberty was forgotten. In fact, liberty as an end in itself, that is to say if it has no religious or moral objective, is not true liberty, no more than that anarchy is political liberty.

The drift into theological liberalism began in about the year

1860. And one of the Mennonite ministers has said, "Our business is to fight orthodoxy". Another prominent Mennonite minister admitted publicly, that the substitution of the principle of liberty for the Christian faith has proved a failure.

The Dutch Prof. Opzoomer has said, "To be a Protestant it is not sufficient to have a zeal for liberty. It is true that the principle of faith loses its strength without the principle of freedom, but the principle of freedom is meaningless without the principle of faith".

As result, small groups of pious Mennonites led by devout ministers, left the old church to establish a new church on the old original principles of the Mennonite faith. They added to the name Mennonite another distinct name for recognition. Their ranks were filled by other outgoing members from the old church and new converts to their faith. Often the new churches went just half the way. New sesséssions followed.

Two branches of the Mennonite Churches practice baptism by immersion on confession of faith, one branch by immersion or pouring or accepting into membership without baptism, leaving the decision to the member in question. All other Mennonite Churches practice the baptism by pouring, a few of them on confession of faith, several upon memorizing the Mennonite catechism.

"Ye shall know them by their deeds" is applicable also to the Mennonite Churches. Those who keep up the restrictions, show a mission-

ary spirit, willingness to cooperate with other evangelical churches, and a vigorous spiritual life.

A living church is constrained by the love of Christ (II. Cor. 5:14) to do mission work. A mission work has been started in Mexico by the Bergthaler Mennonite Church in Canada without receiving any help from the settled Mennonites in Mexico. And the mission work among the Chaco Indians in Paraguay was started by the Russian Mennonites, who migrated from Russia to Paraguay without getting any assistance from the Mennonites who migrated from Canada to Paraguay. Their missionaries are all members of the Mennonite Brethren Church. Two couples of them went from Canada to Paraguay to step into the begun mission work.

Effect of World War I - Their Attitude During the Conflict

A few small groups of the Mennonites, the descendants of the first Mennonite immigrants to Western Canada took the stand of demanding the full privilege of exemption without assuming any obligation in return. And literally they acted accordingly in the First World War.

The largest groups of the Mennonites, the Ontario Old Mennonites, the Mennonite Brethren Church and the Mennonite Church, representing by far the majority of the Mennonites took another stand. They expressed their willingness to do their share in serving their country in the time of emergency. Many a young man volunteered for the medical corps and rendered a most needed service in healing wounds and eliminating despair and hardship caused by the cruelty of the war of 1914-1918.

Migrations From Canada

Those Mennonite Churches, who did not accept any responsibility during the First World War, knew that a change was bound to come, if another war would come. Therefore when the war ended in 1918 one of the two groups, the Old Colony Mennonites, with the exception of only some scattered families left for Mexico, where similar privileges were granted them. From the second group, the Sommerfelder Mennonites, part left for Paraguay. Neither of them gained in economic welfare, nor in religious life. A number of their families returned to Canada, the rest were forced to stay in the new country for lack of means for their return.

The Second World War is over. Again a new group, the Kleingemeinde Mennonites, and some of the remainders of the two groups of the dissatisfied Canadian Mennonites are planning to migrate from Canada. A delegation of the Kleingemeinde Mennonites has toured Mexico and recommended that country, but the church by a great majority decided to send a delegation to Paraguay, as it was plainly stated by the leaders, that Mexico was too close to Canada and their youth may return to Canada. A delegation is to leave shortly for Paraguay to complete there all arrangements for the immigration of a whole church. Small groups of the Old Colony Mennonites who were left in Canada after the First World War have completed the arrangements to follow to Mexico.

On the other hand thousands of progressive Mennonites in Europe would prefer by far to come to Canada instead of going to any other country.

The main reason for the migration from Canada in the opinion of the writer is the founded fact, that those named groups were and are losing their youth at an increased rate. They were and are not satisfied with the old form of religious life. They looked for and tried to get the chances, other youth has in education, in fellowship and in life. They too wanted to mould their lives themselves and not follow the laid-down patterns, so often contrary to their wishes. Many stood up for their freedom, leaving their churches and joining in most cases other Mennonite churches. Their meeting with other youth in camps and other places during the war increased this feeling. To prevent further loss their church leaders, assisted by influential church men, chose to migrate to Mexico, where the population is on a much lower level, and to Paraguay's Chaco, inhabited only by native Indians, what would keep the youth in the bounds of their churches. This cannot and will not solve the spiritual need of their youth, neither guarantee the future of their own churches.

The Old Characteristics Remain After Settling in Canada

We find that Mennonites in different localities present different appearances. Therefore knowing only a particular congregation, or Mennonites of a certain locality, would not mean knowing the Mennonites in general. Still the Mennonites have some common characteristics.

One of these is their strong spirit of independence. They will resent any interference with what they consider their rights. It must not be forgotten that they were the first to deny the authority of the state over the individual conscience.

Another characteristic is their deep sense of the sanctity of human life. They were the first to take a positive stand against war, and they were the first in the United States to raise a protest against slavery.

In the Encyclopaedia Britannica we read that the Mennonites lay great stress also upon the sanctity of a man's word. This, no doubt, is true in former generations, but it is feared that the present generation, in some localities, is getting more lax in this respect.

It must be pointed out also, that the Mennonites are imbued with a strong democratic spirit. Centuries before the United States declared the equality of men, all members of the Mennonite church were treated as equals. There existed no distinction, in a social way, between ecclesiastics and laity, between lords and servants.

Having so often been put on the defensive for their faith, a strong conservatism has been developed.

Without claiming that the Mennonites are more benevolent than other Christians it must be stated that a commendable spirit of altruism is fostered by them. Appeals for the support of worthy causes like the Bible Society, orphan asylums, missionary enterprises find a ready response among them. No less than the monumental sum of \$1,293,000 was contributed by them to save the lives of their brethren and of many Russians in Russia during the famine in that country. When the grasshopper plague in 1875 brought much distress to the first Mennonite settlement in Manitoba, the Mennonites in Ontario lent them \$20,000 and went security at the government for a loan of \$96,000, every cent of which was repaid in due time.

We must not be blind to their mistakes. One of the sad^dest and most hurtful weaknesses of the church has been lack of aggressiveness. Their conservatism has exposed them less to the dangers of those who push out into the open battle; but it also created the opportunity for outside forces to win away the young people and those most exposed to foreign influences.

This disposition has cost the Mennonites dearly. Many of its most promising young people have forsaken their cause and joined other denominations.

It has also, time and again, led individual congregations into formalism of a deadening kind, from which curse some have not yet been able to free themselves. However, by far the larger portion has at last realized this, and is making rapid advances along the lines of education and better teaching. The church has become more aggressive

both at home and in the mission field. Their foreign missionaries may be found in every continent; their home missionaries in many of the larger cities of Canada.

World War II - How the Mennonites Reacted to it

With much greater emphasis the interpretation of the privilege granted to the Mennonites manifested itself, when the Second World War broke out. The Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches of Canada adopted at once a resolution to offer their services to the government to the limit of their ability on the war front as well as on the home front, short of bearing arms. The Ontario Mennonites and the General Mennonite Conference reached similar decisions. And it was carried out.

Mennonite stretcher bearers were found on the battle fronts. Among the unnumbered cases were the following:

A group of unarmed Mennonite medical corps men in uniforms was gathering and caring for the wounded men after the fighting ceased during the invasion. Some of the wounded could not be moved and help had to be administered right there. One of the Mennonite young men set out to get some blankets or mattresses. After a short walk he was taken under fire by a German lieutenant. He jumped behind a tree and called upon him in German to stop shooting and to help him get some mattresses for the wounded. He was asked, who he was. The answer was "I am a Mennonite from Canada and came to help those in dire need". The officer let the Mennonite go unmolested in his Samaritan work.

Another Manitoba young Mennonite lad was attached to a group of Canadian military personnel. His fearless work in fulfilling his duties won him the admiration of his superiors and fellow soldiers. And while bringing help to the wounded under heavy fire a bullet struck

this unarmed Mennonite mercy worker and terminated his service and his life.

A number of casualties is the lot of the Mennonites and many parents, wives and children mourn with the rest of mourners.

In London, England and at many other strategic places you could find Canadian Mennonite fire fighters, who were in the first lines during the German blitz and further enemy raids, remaining on duty calls at any hour day and night.

Wherever Canadian Nursing Corps were performing their noble service Mennonite nurses were among them.

The Mennonite relief workers followed the armies on all fronts, to care for the destitutes, the homeless, the hungry and starving children and grown-ups and old feeble folks, whose lot from the ravages of war was such a pitiful one.

Where ever a Mennonite relief worker comes, he looks out for those in need, helping them alike. This was the case during the First World War. It was practiced in Russia during the great famine of 1921-1922, when the relief kitchens were set up in Russian villages just the same as in the Russian Mennonite villages.

Attitudes Adopted Towards Other Churches Generally

The progressive Mennonites were always willing to cooperate with other Protestant churches. As devoted Protestants they knew, that advancement of the Protestant cause was the advancement of their own cause. At the same time it was a spiritual call jointly to promote the Kingdom of God on the home front and in the foreign mission fields. In this case the Mennonites were always willing to cooperate, interlocking their mutual interests, which has born gratifying results.

The Mennonite Brethren Church of Russia and the Baptist Church of England conducted jointly their mission work in India since 1888, until the Communist revolution in Russia brought to a close all mission work and most church work in Russia.

Relations With the United Church of Canada

One Monday morning in early 1938, the late Dr. J.A. Cormie, Superintendent of Home Missions of Manitoba, asked me to join him and Rev. (now Dr. and President of Dalhousie University, Halifax, N.S.) A.E. Kerr at a light lunch. A phone call brought Mr. Kerr to the meeting place. There we discussed the possibility and advisability of a getting closer together in understanding and cooperation between our two Conferences of the United Church of Canada and the Mennonite Brethren Church. We agreed, that by doing so we would serve our Lord and Savior, we would serve our churches, and we would serve at the same time our community and our country. In the important questions of our faith we agree and only minor questions show a difference of opinion. And the time was here to make a step in the proper direction.

That meeting was the first step. The second was agreed upon. And soon after the matter was discussed over a cup of coffee at Mr. Kerr's residence in the presence of a number of Church leaders. It was presented to the executives of both our Conferences. Hearty invitations were extended and accepted. From that time fraternal greetings were presented in a proper way to the Conferences in question. I have to state the fact, that the United Church delegates Dr. Cormie, Dr. Kerr, Dr. Graham, Dr. Freeman, Dr. Allisson, Dr. King, Dr. White and others through the years were especially gifted ones for such an occasion bringing greetings in English and by Dr. W.C. Graham in a masterly German. What I gained personally as a delegate from the Mennonite Brethren Church to the Conference of the United Church of Canada for seven years was that I found

a whole Conference of friends. Some greeted me there in English, some in German, a few in Ukrainian, and even some in my dear Pennsylvania Dutch.

A real understanding and the wish to help each other was the result. And we were indeed thankful for it. So we reached the goal set forth.

Three years later at our Conference our Mr. Henry Schellenberg, a close relative of mine, asked me: "Uncle Herman, would you be willing to recommend me to the United Church delegates, Dr. J.A. Cormie, Superintendent of Home Missions and Dr. B.W. Allisson, President of the Manitoba Conference of the United Church of Canada, as a missionary to the Indians at a United Church Mission?" I gladly agreed and Mr. Schellenberg was accepted and appointed to the United Church mission work among the Indians. Mr. Schellenberg went as the pioneer into the joint work for our Heavenly Father. His outstanding service terminated last fall, when he was called through death to his reward. Dr. John Jackson of the United Church conducted his funeral at the Mennonite Brethren Church, Winkler, assisted by Rev. J.G. Wiens of the Mennonite Brethren Church. Mrs. Schellenberg carries on the work at the Indian Springs, Indian Reserve. After a year of Mr. Schellenberg's service, Dr. Cormie asked me: "Mr. Neufeld, give me more Schellenbergs." My reply was: "Let us pray and work, and you will have the workers." My labor was not in vain.

Mr. Schellenberg was followed by two ordained men of our Church,

a number of missionaries and teachers to reach the total of twenty six at one time in the Mission work of the United Church among the Indians from our brethren, something we never anticipated, we never expected. But our Lord knew the purpose of bringing three workers together at a light lunch to tackle a big problem. Some Mennonite workers left the field, others went into the work. Another Mennonite missionary-teacher went on my recommendation to the United Church Mission at Little Grand Rapids on January 16th, 1947.

The best and strongest features of a mutual understanding were advanced between one of the largest Mennonite groups the Mennonite Brethren Church, *and the largest* Protestant group in Canada, the United Church of Canada and it will bear fruits for furthering the good cause in eliminating misunderstandings.

Their Chief Contributions to the Building of a VigorousCanadian Protestantism

In opening the country for the economic life the Mennonites were among the pioneers in the East as well as in the West. A great influence indeed had the Mennonites on Canada's growth, helping to make Canada, what it is today.

In religious matters the influence was not as well marked. But the lives of the pioneer Mennonites were an unspoken message and challenge, which was not and could not be overlooked. It pressed its seal upon the thinking of the people, who came from nearly every country of this world with its background, its mode of thinking, its customs of life and its religion and beliefs. And the Mennonite influence as of the most democratic in its conception of church and community life ranks among the first upon forming the Canadians of today.

That the influence of the Mennonites was felt and reckoned with was proved by the offer of the Catholics to the Mennonites to make the school issue a common matter. It would assure the Mennonites, they were told, to win their case for separate church schools and strengthen at the same time the Catholic church schools. The cooperation was refused by the Mennonites, as reported to the writer by a Catholic priest from St. Boniface.

A real Mennonite is a real though a humble Christian, and at the same time a proud Canadian. The once non-aggressive Mennonites became aggressive in every way, with a more broader view on life and

life's problems. In all Protestant church organizations of today Mennonites are represented. To achieve objectives set forth the counsel and aid of all the Protestant churches, including the Mennonites, is required.

None of the Mennonite youths, who volunteered for the armed forces during the wars, were stopped by their churches. In percentage it equals the enlistments of all other groups in Canada. And they returned as members of the Mennonite churches.

For those, who for conscience sake could not bear arms, other services were provided just as important for Canada's emergencies as the fighting army. And as a matter of fact at all those labor camps were representatives of all other groups and of all the Canadian churches. Canada is the land of freedom. This standard has been kept up in time of peace and of war.

The intermarriage is a problem, if the other party is a Catholic. Just a few such cases involving Mennonites as one of the parties of the union are known in Canada. A young Mennonite man married a Catholic girl. He was forced to join the Catholics. A couple years later that wife came to me for spiritual help. She was converted through grace. Soon after both joined the Mennonites. Intermarriage between Mennonites and other Protestants is hardly a problem for the Mennonite church. My youngest brother, Dr. A.H. Neufeld, Professor at McGill University and Major in the army, married a Swedish girl. Several of my nephews married English girls. Many Mennonite soldiers brought English war brides along. The Mennonite churches usually get the other party of the union also into its fold.

Whoever learns to know the real Mennonites cannot resist the deep conviction, that if he cannot join their ranks for one reason or the other, it will be his duty forthwith to lift up the standard of his own church to a higher level.

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