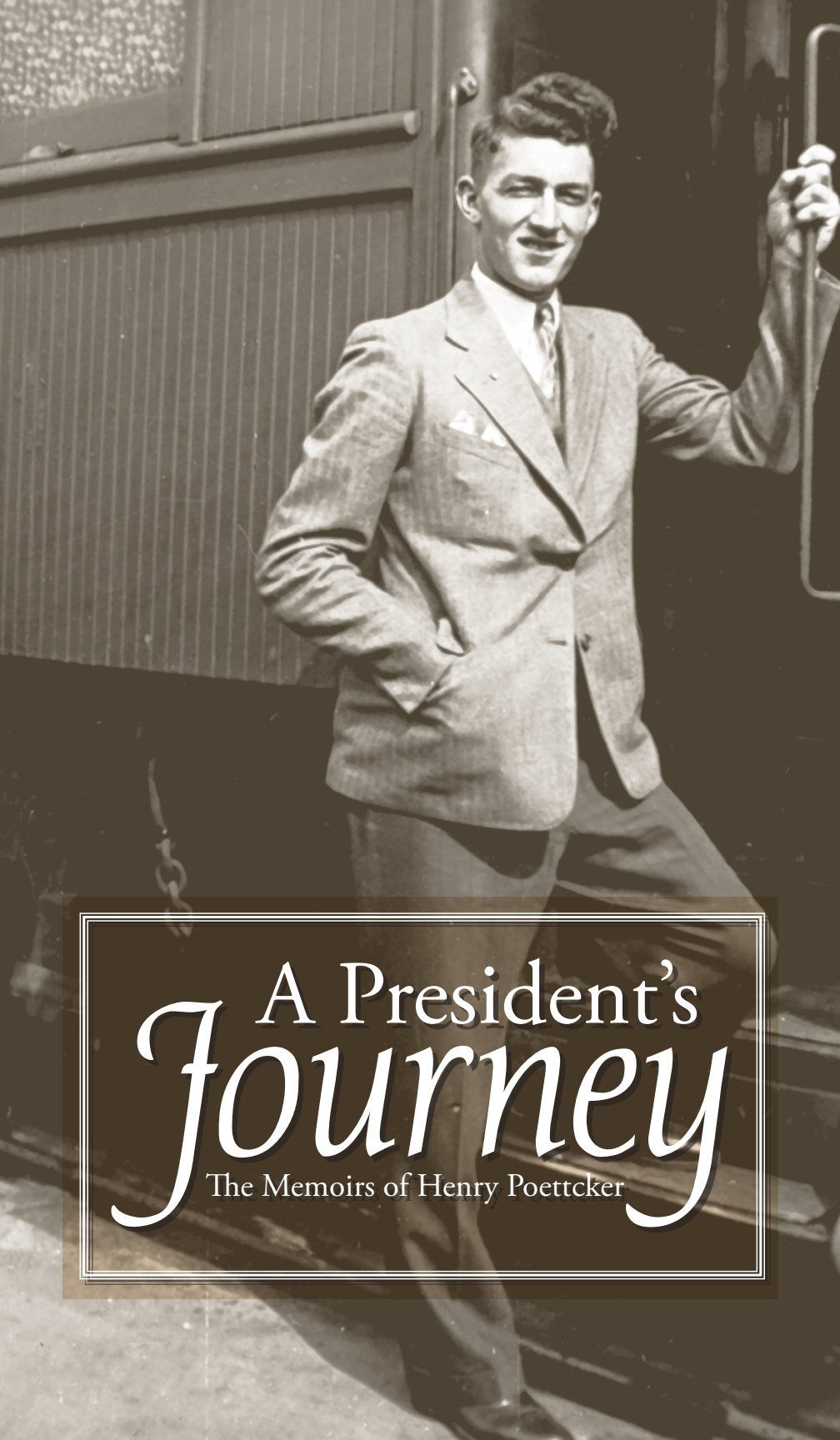

A President's Journey

The Memoirs of Henry Poettcker

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To my wife Agnes

and our children, Chrystyanna (Victoria), Ronald, and Martin,

and their families

Contents

Foreword

When we reach for the autobiography of a well-known person, we generally do so with one of three expectations. Family members and others with close personal connections to the author read in search of the larger picture into which these personal contacts and experiences can be placed. Others look for the details and the intimate touch in the story of someone they came to know only in the public arena. And then there are those who simply hope for a "good read." All these potential readers of this book may be well rewarded, depending of course on their personal tastes.

As both a colleague of Dr. Henry Poettcker and a personal friend of over fifty years, I belong to all of these groups, and perhaps that defines my role in providing this Foreword, namely to vouch for the authenticity of the story before us. Autobiographies can be misused. Many public leaders have attempted to justify themselves retroactively with respect to controversial aspects of their leadership, or generally to paint their lives in brighter colours than these perhaps deserve. Does this life story truly reflect its author as I have known him for more than half a century?

Yes, you can trust this narrative to be the genuine "signature" of its author, with one small caveat. In keeping with the humility and self-effacement that has marked Henry's whole life, his autobiography is characterized by understatement. To put it succinctly: Henry has been a much greater and more impressive leader than he makes himself out to be. And this is not a false humility adopted in retrospect, but a true quality of character.

Let me illustrate. The reader will come to a number of junctures in Henry's life story where invitations and encouragements for new ventures came his way, and I emphasize came *his way*, for he was never an advancement seeker or self-promoter. He did not display his own gifts, but others recognized them and challenged him to prepare for and assume leadership. When that happened, Henry reacted with surprise that he should

be chosen, and then applied all his energies to the task in order to serve others and God. When I hear the term "servant-leader," my first thought is of Henry Poettcker.

For a total of 31 years Henry Poettcker was president of two of the most significant Mennonite educational institutions in North America; nineteen years as president of Canadian Mennonite Bible College (CMBC), and twelve as president of Mennonite Biblical Seminary (MBS). Once a psychiatrist friend and I discussed Mennonite higher education, and the name of Dr. Henry Poettcker was mentioned. At that, my conversation partner paused, and then said thoughtfully and almost incredulously: "Thirty-one years as chief administrator. . . . It is hard to believe!" He knew from his practice what burdens and stresses such a role required, and here was Henry, still energetic and strong at the helm! And, as an aside, Henry gave top leadership to the General Conference Mennonite Church of North America, first as vice-moderator for six years, and then as moderator for another six.

Henry's years as president spanned times of major development, both at CMBC and at MBS, but I will illustrate this in the CMBC context, in which I, as registrar and dean during much of Henry's presidency, came to know him most closely. His assumption of office took place when CMBC was a fledgling school in its eleventh year. It consisted of two buildings surrounded by swamp and aspen(?) bush. The parking lot was thinly gravelled Manitoba gumbo. Offices, classrooms, and chapels were unpainted. Only the main office had a telephone. One faculty member held an earned doctorate, and the school had no university accreditation. It was a pioneering situation in every way. When Henry left the leadership to move on to MBS, CMBC had a well-developed campus of several buildings, an increased student number, a faculty with most members having a Ph.D., and the academic status of an Approved Teaching Centre of the University of Manitoba. What made Henry a good administrator?

First, Henry was an immigrant farm boy. Although only one year old when his family immigrated to Canada and settled on a farm in Alberta, he inherited the ethos of immigrants and pioneers: the story of growing up in poverty, making new beginnings, adjusting to a new culture, living through the great depression, and making do with little but not giving up.

Secondly, Henry is a devout Christian. Nurtured in a Christian home, he made a firm personal commitment to a life of faith and discipleship at the age of 15 years. He tells this story in a simple and non-dramatic way, but the

genuineness of this youthful commitment was borne out in a long life of leadership and service, often under difficult and pioneering conditions.

Thirdly, Henry was a hard and confident worker. Immigrants and pioneer farmers have to learn that. They become versatile and resourceful in order to survive and advance. They also have to be positive in their outlook. To call Henry an optimist would suggest something superficial, and Henry was never superficial. But he approached each task with confidence. On a Western Canadian grain farm, many things can be fixed with a pair of pliers and some binder twine. In his leadership of immigrant schools with tight budgets, the confidence that many things could be accomplished with frugal means remained a great asset for Henry when applied to institutional leadership.

Fourthly, Henry is a family man. This began in his parental home. A large family of boys growing up on a farm has to learn to get along, especially when the father is taken from them early. Family commitment continued for Henry in a loving partnership. Married at a young age, Henry and Agnes were a team in raising their own family, but also in the various areas of study and service to which they were led. In joy and in sorrow, in struggles and accomplishments, they stood side by side in mutual support.

Finally, Henry was a team builder. He took over the presidency of CMBC immediately after a major conflict between the previous president, another faculty member, and some members of the board of directors. In the course of nineteen years, Henry forged a spirit of collegiality among faculty, staff, and board of directors that made many stay at CMBC for decades, foregoing more prestigious and lucrative opportunities.

The autobiography before us will not enthral the reader with high drama or surprising revelations of behind-the-scenes institutional politics. But its balanced perspectives, its fair and non-judgmental evaluations, its ethos of service, and the self-effacing humility already mentioned detail and substantiate the qualities of a great Mennonite leader introduced in this foreword. It will also sample over half a century of Mennonite history in insightful vignettes.

Dr. Waldemar Janzen
Professor Emeritus of Old Testament
Canadian Mennonite University
Winnipeg, Canada

Preface

The decision to write my memoirs was inspired by my father when he told us children about our early life in Russia and our experiences in coming to Canada. His stories led me to become better acquainted with Mennonite history and to muse on how I fit into that picture. The motivation to tell my story through a book was strengthened when I noted how integral my faith was in my life. As a Christian I felt compelled to witness to my faith in Christ and to share how God has been central throughout my life.

While growing up it was natural for me to identify with the Mennonite faith because I observed it being lived out in my family and local church. Then as I moved into the broader community, I became acquainted first with Mennonites in America and then throughout the world. My commitment to the church was always strong and, as I pursued further education, those in my home church recognized my gifts of ministry to the church and society.

Given that my vocation involved teaching and ministering in two significant educational institutions, Canadian Mennonite Bible College and Mennonite Biblical Seminary, it seemed that those experiences were worth sharing with others. Members of my family and in my church community also encouraged me to write my story.

Over the years I worked at our family genealogy. As I gathered information I made notes of pertinent information that a book could include and drew up a table of contents which could be helpful both for structuring the material and for giving guidance for research I would need to do

As to readership I thought first of my immediate family, my wife Agnes, and our three children, Victoria, Ronald, and Martin. My siblings certainly showed an interest in such a story, as did the extended family. And the

number of potential readers increased as I thought of the 36 years I had spent in two educational institutions.

As my retirement approached it seemed appropriate to get serious about the project. I wondered how I might present the material. My family needed first consideration. For the sake of my children and grandchildren and of my siblings' growing families I would need to write simply and clearly so that the story I was planning to tell could be easily understood. I would write about many events but I also wanted to share how God had worked in my life.

I appreciate a number of people for their helpful contributions in making this project possible. First and foremost I mention Agnes, my wife, with whom I discussed what I planned to write, what I would include, and how I would express the several strands of my story. She read opening paragraphs and then entire chapters. She gave me helpful suggestions, reflected on the direction in which I was taking my story, and gave me solid advice and worthwhile critique. She was also always there to support me as only she could. A word of deep appreciation goes to my granddaughter, Charissa McIntosh, who typed the entire manuscript and in the process provided me with answers to my questions regarding computer usage.

I appreciate the work of CMU Press for considering my manuscript for publication and the chair of the committee, Dr. Harry Huebner, for responding positively to my brief rationale for why CMU should be the publisher of my book. My editor, Valerie Smith, gave me insightful critique, wise counsel, and pertinent suggestions on how to improve my expression, my style, and the arrangement of the material. She was encouraging and appreciative of my work. I am deeply indebted to her.

Henry Poettcker
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Part I

From Molotschna to Canada

Chapter 1

In a Land of Turmoil

My story begins, at least as far as available records show, in 1776, when my great-great-grandfather was born in Prussia, probably in the town of Klein Lunau near the city of Danzig. The name on his passport was listed as Johann Poetker.[1] His family, members of the Radical Reformation movement which began in Holland in the 1530s, probably spelled their name, Boetger. In the course of time several of these Dutch citizens were led to Prussia, in part because persecution of the Anabaptists took a heavy toll on their lives in Holland, but also because they were invited to Prussia for their farming and irrigation skills. Once they had readied the swampland for growing crops they thrived. Furthermore, they were given considerable freedom to practice their religious faith, a rare privilege in few European countries where the Catholic Church as well as many of the political rulers considered Anabaptists as *Schwaermer* (radical enthusiasts), who were either banished or put to death.

By the 18th century, religious freedom in Prussia was gradually restricted; this led to further migrations. One such movement led to Russia, due in part to an invitation from the Russian tsarina, Catherine the Great, to immigrate to her country. Included with the invitation was the promise of a number of

[1] Peter Rempel, *Mennonite Migrations to Russia 1788-1828* (Winnipeg, MB: Mennonite Historical Society, 2000), 190. Rempel reports that Johann Poetker applied for a visa in the city of Danzig: "October 2, 1823, a Mennonite from Klein Lunau, his wife Maria, sons Heinrich (b. ca. 1815), Johann 7 (b. ca. 1816), daughter Agnes 6 months (b. ca. 1823); passport from Marienwerder issued September 27, 1823; NR889 (sup 196)."

special privileges (known as the *Privilegium*) which, after some dialogue with the government, included: freedom of religion; free land; the right to brew and distil beer, vinegar, and brandy; exemption from military service and from military billeting; and ten tax-free years. Included also were: freedom to establish businesses; prohibition for outsiders to establish taverns in Mennonite settlements; permission to use their own inheritance patterns and regulations regarding orphans; and the stipulations that these Mennonite privileges were to be observed by all the government boards.[2] Beginning in 1788-1789, immigrants originally settled in four centres: Chortitza Colony, Molotschna Colony, Am Trakt (also called Koeppental), and Alexandertal (see maps in the Appendix). The Poetker family (also spelled Petker, Poetcker, and Poettcker) joined the group which founded the Molotschna Colony in the early 1800s. It was located in southern Ukraine just north of the Sea of Azov.

Both my father and mother were born in the Molotschna. My uncles and aunts grew up there in the closing years of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. The European scene was a checkered one. Several wars, various treaties, the vying for more land and more power—by France, Germany, England, Russia—all left dissatisfaction and growing anger, one country against another. The biggest eruption finally came with the outbreak of World War I which caused destruction of catastrophic proportions. While there had been national misunderstandings which led to turmoil within, such as the French Revolution that resulted in loss of life hard to imagine, it remained for the disruptive seeds of World War I to take their toll on the Russian people and set the stage for Russia's revolution in 1917.

Our Mennonite people too had experienced the effects of the international crises. Because of the recurring involvement in war, several times the Russian government had been on the verge of withdrawing their special privilege of exemption from military service. But some government officials remembered what had happened in the 1870s: when the decision to discontinue the exemption from military service was contemplated, some 18,000 Mennonites from the Chortitzer group emigrated to Canada and the United States. Now there was reason to consider changes very carefully. The officials wanted to retain the agricultural expertise of the Mennonites in

[2] Peter Hildebrand, *From Danzig to Russia*, trans. Walter E. Toews and Adolf Ens (Winnipeg, MB: CMBC Publications, 2000), 10f.

Ukraine. Consequently further consideration led them, in 1880, to suggest several options pertaining to the military question. Of these the Mennonites chose the one which they saw as the most "lenient," namely, allowing forestry service as an alternative to conscription. My brother John was aware that, before our parents' marriage, father had already spent several years in this service. In his diary, he referred to some of the places where he was serving and the type of work he was doing during the war as being similar to what he had been doing in his earlier stint in the military. Given that young men were called into military service in their late teens or early twenties, father probably served from 1902 to 1906.

During this time many Mennonites in Russia were well-to-do, some even wealthy. Modern machinery was being manufactured; steam power was available for threshing; and modern equipment was obtainable to operate manufacturing plants and flour mills. Unfortunately, however, there was also a growing poorer class. Large families did not have the size of farms needed to support their children—the average farm consisted of 176 acres—and the government enforced the law of primogeniture and refused to allow a farm to be subdivided. Hence the children with no land had to leave home when they married to earn their livelihood elsewhere. For all practical purposes they became second-class citizens within the Mennonite fold. The people without farming options became the "landless" ones; they were given small plots at the edge of the village and worked as farm hands or as industrial workers. The farmers with means were able to rent surplus tracts of land surrounding the settlement, but that did little to help those in need.

Thus by 1865 the Molotschna settlement had 1,384 landed farmers but 2,356 landless workers. Only the former had civic and economic rights. The latter were dependent on such goodwill as the former chose to grant them. Steps were finally taken to help distribute some of the surplus land to the landless ones, and also to begin daughter colonies in other locations where the needs of these workers and their families could be met. These conditions were unfolding within the context of continuing political upheaval. Vacillating foreign policy, which included the constant threat of cancelling the special privileges, did not help matters. Attempts at special reform through a succession of parliaments *(dumas)* were not successful, and into this mix came the onset of World War I in 1914 and, in Russia itself, the revolution of 1917. The tsars and the populace reached no basis of agreement and, within months,

Russia's course of history was forever changed. All of these developments also affected the growing Poettcker family.

A Poettcker and a Voth Join Their Lives

Details about the earlier married life of my parents are not well known to me since I was the second youngest of the family, and when I was born my mother was already 34 and my father 43 years old. I can imagine mother's youth from her vivacious personality and from the comments which she made occasionally when she was reminiscing about earlier days. Meeting with youth groups was common both in homes and at the church. She talked about skating—even with the boys! She enjoyed walks down the shaded lanes at the end of the village. She mentioned the times when friends came to visit, how they played various games, such as *Schluesselbund*, tag, hide-and-seek, and guessing games, and they knew it was curfew time when Father Kroeker would wind the grandfather clock. She talked about helping in the garden and with fruit harvests, about how luscious the watermelons, apples, peaches, and cherries were, and how tart the gooseberries. She had an eye for the beauty of nature, and could wax eloquent when she described the flower gardens and the beautiful trees which lined the village streets and surrounded the individual homes. As a conversationalist she could keep a group well entertained with her remarks and her stories—and best of all was her contagious laugh!

I mention Father Kroeker, yet mother's biological father was Peter Voth. Grandma Helena and he had four children. My mother was born in 1891, and she was five years old when Grandma married Jacob Kroeker on May 29, 1897. The death date of Grandfather Peter is not known but, since mother's brother Peter was probably born in 1893 or 1894, mother's father must have died shortly after that—or even before Peter was born. According to one of my aunts, this Peter died in infancy.

Since she was very young when her father died, mother suffered the heartache of loss early in her life. When her mother married again, there was suddenly a whole new family. Father Kroeker (b. October 10, 1846; d. February 9, 1919) had been married twice before, first to Elizabeth Wiens, with whom he had one child, Elizabeth; then he married Anna Quiring (b. January 29, 1854; d. November 19, 1896), with whom he had 11 children. Hence the family was composed of siblings, half-siblings, and step-siblings,

and mother lived her youth years within that family. I never heard her talk of her biological father, but she had much to say about her stepfather. He was a strict man, but could also be a big tease. I remember one anecdote which mother shared of him. When her mother and stepfather went for a walk and they passed someone pushing a baby carriage, he would say: "If I had to drive like that, I would rather walk!" Grandmother would immediately chide him for that remark. With the 14 children he sired, he may have experienced more than his share of this mode of transportation.

I know very little about my father's childhood and youth. He lost his mother at age 17. Five years later his father remarried, to a widow Helena Vogt, and he died six years later on August 25, 1911. Unlike mother, father was reserved, quite stern, and often moody. His oldest brother, David, was 10 years older than he. Between them were six siblings who all died in infancy so that father never knew any of them. Following him were three brothers who all reached adulthood. The next child, another brother, died in infancy; then came two more sisters but only the older one lived to adulthood. So unlike the oldest brother, who must keenly have felt the loss of six siblings while growing up, father experienced the loss of only two siblings in his younger years, the first when he was eight and the second when he was twelve.

My parents, Johann and Margaretha Poettcker.

Father was 13 years old when his oldest brother David was married. Although father was older than the other three boys, they were all married before he was: first Heinrich, then Gerhard, then Abraham. His brothers' marriages no doubt gave father something to reflect on. At that time age 28 was a bit old for a young robust man to enter into marriage. It was at brother Abraham's wedding on January 12, 1911, that he met a young woman, Margaretha Voth, who apparently captured his interest completely. A picture of her at age 22, three years after this event, shows her to be beautiful. She had very dark hair, combed back and rolled into a bun. Her disarming smile and pleasant expression must particularly have attracted father. She was

good company and, as they conversed, he no doubt wondered how he could arrange to see her again. That would take some careful planning since the distance between her home and his was 20 miles. He must have asked for her address because very soon he wrote her one letter and then another. And he also paid her a visit. It was when he was planning another visit that nature intervened. He decided to walk, and that meant taking the better part of a day just to get to her home. While he was en route the heavens clouded over followed by a heavy downpour. He was left with one alternative: abort his mission and return home. His next letter shared the sad news of the unfulfilled hopes. When mother shared this bit of information with us children, it was clear that she was completely taken in with this new friend. So the feeling they had toward each other was mutual.

Further plans continued. Since father was already 28, it seemed appropriate not to put off the wedding too far. Mother was much younger, two months shy of her 20th birthday. Because mother's stepfather was a man of means—he owned a flour mill—the wedding did not have to be especially frugal. Three months and nine days after brother Abraham's wedding, on April 21, 1911, Johann Poettcker and Margaretha Voth were married.

But now primogeniture came into play. Father was not the oldest son; hence he was not entitled to receive the farm. As long as he was at home, he helped with the work as needed. His father was still living at the time of our parents' wedding, but passed away in August of that year. I never heard my parents express resentment that the primogeniture practice prevented them from inheriting anything of the farm. Grandfather no doubt had some funds from which he could draw to help with the purchase of a farm elsewhere. Hence, following the wedding, the young couple took their possessions and moved from Friedensdorf and Schoenau to Rudnerweide, a village located 20-25 miles southeast of Friedensdorf.

Rudnerweide, established in 1820, consisted of 82 homes (farmsteads), with the farmland extending from the back of the *Wirtschaft* (homestead) out into the country. Positioned along a tributary of the Yushanlee River, Sisikolak, the village lay in a southwest-northeasterly direction, almost two miles in length. The Johann Poettcker home was located about one-third of the way down from the northeast end on the north-northwest side of the street. Half the distance from there to the northeast end was the church. The school was on the south side of the street, almost in the centre of the village.

Near the southwest end, also on the south side, was the blacksmith shop. Rudnerweide was similar in size to the larger villages of the Molotschna area. This would be the Johann and Margaretha Poettcker home for 14 years.

Johann and Margaretha Poettcker with their oldest son, Jacob. Ukraine, 1913.

The first years made immediate demands on our parents. While the loss of family members had been part of their lot, they were hardly prepared for the trauma of losing their firstborn, Katharina, one day after her birth. The loss of children was a rather common occurrence in the Mennonite colonies, especially before the training of doctors. From father's diary I have concluded that his emotional make-up made it difficult for him to accept such losses. He wrestled often with personal issues that he did not name, but was very thankful that God gave him the strength and trust to deal with them. That he could give support to mother is evident from the warm relationship they had. Also, the church fellowship recognized his empathetic nature and his spiritual discernment when the membership chose him as one of their lay ministers. The pain of losing Katharina was soon compensated for by the birth of a son, Jacob, on September 25, 1913.

My parents were still getting used to running their own farm when, in the middle of 1914, World War I broke out. In the fall of that year, father, as a reservist in the forestry service, was called to report for duty; and mother, a young wife of 23, with one child, took over the operation of the household and farmstead. She no doubt had people in the village to call on for help. In his diary, father wrote that, before he left for the forestry service,[3] he met with mother's three sisters and persuaded one of them, Susanna, to stay with mother. Also, some finances, although not in abundance, must have been available, for mother had servants who could help with the work.

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[3] During World War I approximately 14,000 Mennonites were mobilized. Of these, half went into the forestry service, which was scattered into all parts of Russia. *The Mennonite Encyclopedia II*, "Forestry Service," 353.

In the summer of 1914 they had prospects of a good harvest, but the approach of war shattered that hope. The harvest yield was lower than expected. No doubt this "baptism" into the role of being a manager of more than she ever bargained for gave mother the perspective as well as the courage to carry on in later years. First, she lived through the revolution, which caused such terrible suffering, and then the civil war, which raged throughout the country for several years (1918-1921).

Life in the Forestry Service

Father's time in the forestry service during the war lasted at least two years. The diary which he kept during that time ended with a leave in October 1915. Plans were that he was to be transferred to another part of the country for further service. He notes that, before going home on that leave, a call for carpenters had come from the authorities, and father—along with several others—had signed up for that opportunity, still within the forestry service but at another location. But shortly thereafter he changed his mind; he decided to remain where he had been rather than move to the carpentry position. There were others who wanted to take his place, but the authorities had not yet made that decision when father left on his leave. While at home he received a visit from one of his comrades in the service who reported that the substitution of another in his place was not granted. This was quite a disappointment for both mother and father, but they came to terms with it. Especially difficult for father was the fact that he and his brother Gerhard, who had been in the same barracks, would now no longer be together. The departure date from home back to the service camp was set for October 20. The week before, my parents took time to visit relatives in Schoenau and Friedensdorf. They returned from that visit on October 15. A brief notation about regulating matters for departure ended father's diary entries.

The diary gives good insight into what the forestry service was like. Once they arrived at the assigned location, job number one was to ready the barracks or cabins for occupancy. Roofs needed repair; floors were often nothing more than the ground on which the buildings were located. Tasks were assigned, roommates were chosen, and life began to take on a routine. Not many of them were cooks. Some learned how to cook, others just made do. Often individuals supplemented the regular fare with their own cooking. Strict regulations were few. There was time to relax when the weather was not

favourable: freedom to play games such as chess and dominoes, time to write letters (which were often carried back to the colonies by those going on leave), and, judging from the diary entries, a good bit of time to long for loved ones, who, without modern means of transportation and communication, seemed so far away.

If the locations of these forestry camps appeared distant, for father this was actually not the case. He spent his two years mostly in Crimea, which was 250-300 miles southwest of Molotschna. Train travel was available to within 30-40 miles of their village. At the closest railroad station they hired someone with horses and buggy or wagon to travel to their respective villages. Similarly, at the southern end in Crimea, horses or sometimes automobiles were rented to take them to the town nearest to their barracks. That could be up to 60 miles.

Margaretha with the two oldest boys, Jacob and Johann (John), 1915. Rudnerweide, Ukraine.

The work of the forestry service consisted of building roads into the mountains, planting trees, clearing brush for the buildings, cutting trees for lumber, and also constructing some buildings. They built their own barracks, but when it came to other buildings, such as the sanatoriums where wounded soldiers were brought for medical attention, other workers with special trades were brought in. In order to make the roads somewhat "all-weather" they had to crush rocks with sledge hammers and spread them on the new road. Work was primarily in the mountains, located near the shore of the Black Sea. Yalta was one town where they did some of their shopping. Father referred to seeing ships on the seas, and also detecting submarines when these surfaced. They could also hear cannon fire as these ships and submarines engaged in manoeuvres or in actual war.

In father's cabin the group had daily devotions, and for Sundays the occasional visiting minister came to preach. Singing and Bible reading for such an occasion, as well as during devotion time, was usually included. At

one point in the work assignment they had spare time in the mornings, and during that time they had Bible study—educational and uplifting, father calls it. In his private time he often read and studied his Bible. He was an introspective person, and reflected on his spiritual condition before God. He had an acute awareness of sin and was thankful that God had forgiven him. Yet he often wrestled with temptation and felt he needed to ask God to give him strength to withstand the evil one's wiles.

During that second year when the war was raging and father was back at his service position, the second son was born into the family on June 2, 1915. He was named after his father, Johann. So until father had completed his service, mother was raising two children by herself and keeping the *Wirtschaft* going.

Revolution and Civil War

As noted, father's diary did not go beyond 1915, so we have no account of what the end of that year brought for our parents. The war was making many demands. Because our Mennonites were German-speaking and one of Russia's enemies was Germany, the antagonism toward the colonies grew, all the more because the animosity toward large landowners was increasing. Repeated demands were made of the people in the colonies for horses, grain, and other commodities, and many of our Mennonites were called to serve as drivers to transport government officials and soldiers to the neighbouring villages or towns. Thus, in just months, many farmers had few, if any, horses left to cultivate their land and, with the grain also taken to feed the soldiers, even seed was not available to carry on farming. This meant that famine and starvation were imminent.

In March of 1917, Nicholas II was ousted from power, and the revolution, which had been smouldering over a number of years, was fanned into flames. By November, the Bolsheviks were in control. In the Mennonite colonies a bad situation became worse. The Bolshevik leaders, before Lenin and Trotsky, initially gave the Mennonites a reprieve from some of the policies being introduced but by early 1918, Lenin's first decrees "demanded that all the land owned by landlords, the crown, the churches and the monasteries, together with all the livestock and implements on such land, be transferred without compensation to the custody of peasant land committees and soviets . . . and industry, commerce and all economic control was placed in the hands of the

state."[4] Those opposed to the new regime—the former ruling classes, the leaders of the Orthodox Church, the owners of land and industry, as well as the non-Communist socialists—vehemently disagreed with such policies. The result was a civil war which lasted three years and produced a reign of terror with a staggering death toll.

The Bolsheviks were known as the Red Army, the opposition the White Army. Eventually all areas of Russia were affected by the fighting, the hardest hit being the areas of the middle Volga and Ukraine, where many of our Mennonites were located. Administrative local governments were replaced by soviets, consisting of workers, soldiers, and "dictators" who mercilessly exploited those under their jurisdiction. Robbery, imprisonment, torture, and murder were the order of the day. Legal rights were brushed aside and court hearings were called, or not, at the behest of the soviets, with punishment meted out swiftly. Better to kill ten innocent men than to miss one guilty one, seemed to be the motto. To be a landowner was tantamount to being guilty and usually the sentence was death by a firing squad. When the war zone came to the villages, anything could happen. During the German occupation, April to November 1918, there was another reprieve for the Mennonites. They were considered "their people," that is, the Germans accepted them sympathetically and supplied them with food and protection.

Meanwhile, mother was again expecting; she gave birth to the third boy, David, on August 28, 1918. The obvious political turmoil will not have made the pregnancy easy, but here was this further addition to the male members of the family at a time when the future seemed very bleak.

When the Germans retreated, the picture became even more disturbing. Now the Mennonites received a further charge: they were friends of the enemy. Consequently, they were terribly mistreated. The leader heading up the anarchists at this point was the notorious Nestor Makhno.

For a brief period of time, the senseless barbarity that ensued led to the formation of an armed resistance group among the Mennonites which was to stave off the aggressors on their own terms. Known as the *Selbstschutz* (self-protection or self-protectors) it functioned for about four months, but when the Bolsheviks joined the followers of Makhno in the area, the men laid down their arms. They had never intended to take sides in the civil strife but only

[4] Frank H. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus* (Altona, MB: D.W. Friesen & Sons, 1962), 31.

give protection to their loved ones. Again the retaliation was gruesome. Many *Selbstschutz* men were massacred, as were the rich landowners in the Molotschna Colony. Hardly a family escaped some sort of pillage or loss. Our father was spared, perhaps because he had been in the forestry service; or perhaps because he was known to treat his hired help fairly. Some, now part of the anarchist group, interceded for such benevolent employers, and were listened to by leaders now in control. Mother related that, when famine raged across the land, she baked bread every morning, cut it into slices, stacked it into a pile on the table so that hungry passersby could appease their hunger a little. With grain scarce, mother added chaff to the flour to give it a bit more fibre. She was grateful that, when her own children asked for something to eat, she always had enough to do one more baking.

There were, however, tragic experiences. One morning, cannon balls were fired by the opposing forces at either end of the village. One of the cannon balls struck our house, exploded, and left pellet marks on the door. One ball struck the window and ricocheted across the room just above where a baby was sleeping in his crib. Brother John says that he was about five years old at the time, so the baby was either David, or the first Henry, who was born in 1920. Whoever it was, he was not hurt. But the maid was not so fortunate. She was struck in the abdomen and was literally ripped apart. Within one hour she died. The horror is hard to imagine! When would the terrible conditions in the country change?

§ § §

Chapter 2

Emigration to Canada

Midst the horror and tragedy of war, our family life continued with both joy and sorrow. Henry lived only eight months; he died on October 14, 1920. But in 1921 Peter was added to our family of three boys. Since there were no girls, David (Dave) was drawn in by mother to help with the housework. He clearly had culinary skills and proved himself an excellent baker and cook, skills he never lost. Peter was a jolly boy and was ready to take his place and do his chores. When some of the boys misbehaved, Peter was rarely included. That may well be why father sometimes tended to favour him.

The early 1920s continued to be difficult. Because of the devastation and the destruction of farmsteads, Mennonites too were barely eking out a living. Many were dying of hunger as the civil war raged on. Among the nations from abroad which offered assistance were Canada and the United States. Committees and agencies were formed to help destitute Mennonite families in Russia. One was the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) which was founded on September 27, 1920. Supported by four Mennonite groups in the United States, MCC took action immediately to send three men to start the work in Russia. It took some time for plans to materialize to gain entrance for relief work, but finally in March 1922, two of these men were permitted to go into the country. They made arrangements to set up feeding facilities for those in desperate need. Within five months Mennonite kitchens were preparing food for 40,000 people daily. Frank Epp notes that at the height of the program 140 field kitchens were operating, feeding 75,000 persons daily, 80

percent of them Mennonites.[1] Further help, primarily for Mennonites, included medical supplies, clothing, and equipment and horses to help the farmers re-establish themselves. Unfortunately, the MCC operations were discontinued in Ukraine in 1924, and two years later in Siberia.

Besides the assistance given through MCC, an amazing number of contributions came from Canada, Germany, and Holland. Canada sent several trainloads of flour and $57,000 in financial support. Germany gathered funds from several sources amounting to $60,000. And Holland established a Commission for Foreign Relief. It sent representatives to Russia to oversee relief efforts and to help distribute financial assistance and clothing. The Commission also appointed several young people to assist in the care of a children's home which had opened in Orloff in 1922. These contributions came at a crucial time; as many as 9,000 Mennonites and the same number of Russians were saved from starvation.

In this setting, our family sought to carry on with the many restrictions facing us. At the start of the war, father had 14 horses to serve the farming needs. A few years later, that number had dwindled to one—and that one was hardly able to work. There was nothing left to do but for the neighbours to pool their horses and share the farm work. In some homes with no men, women used hand cultivators; apparently one woman held the cultivator and another pulled it to till at least a small patch of land. Feed for cattle was scarce so they were fed pumpkins and branches from trees to keep them alive. For fuel in the stoves, cattle dung was mixed with straw, formed into large patties, and dried.

Preparing for Emigration

Already when World War I was drawing to a close, strong considerations were given to emigrate. Various contacts were made: Siberian Mennonites approached the Dutch Mennonites for a loan to enable them to resettle; German colonists considered a return to Germany. This could have been an occasion for bad feelings among the groups but that did not happen. Conditions were simply too serious to allow additional factors to create further tension. My family had made a fairly complete shift to German

[1] Frank H. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus*, 57-59. See also Henry Becker, *Memoirs of Henry Becker* (Winnipeg, MB, 1990).

practices so they harboured no ill-will toward those who made overtures to the Dutch Mennonites. To advance emigration plans, in 1919, a *Studienkommission* (study commission) was appointed and delegated with the responsibility of visiting Western Europe and North America to report on the plight of the Russian Mennonites and to check out immigration and settlement possibilities. While such a trip was not easy to arrange, the government of Russia did not forbid it. Federal restrictions in the United States prohibited any large-scale entrance of Russian Mennonites into the country. A careful study of options to migrate to Mexico, made by A. A. Friesen, a member of the commission, also found reasons for not considering that country.[2] Friesen then turned his attention to Canada.

Initially, it appeared that Canada also had restrictions regarding Mennonites coming into the country. An Order-in-Council gave several reasons for barring their entry: 1) public opinion was against their peculiar customs, such as methods of holding property; Canadians thought it would be impossible for them to be readily assimilated; 2) it was felt that they would not assume their duties and responsibilities as citizens of Canada; 3) they were classed with Hutterites, who wanted to come to Canada from the United States to avoid conscription; 4) Mennonites already in Canada were reluctant to give up their German language, a strike against them because Canada was at war with Germany; 5) they wanted to operate their own schools to bypass public education that was mandatory for everyone; and, 6) their non-resistant, conscientious-objector stand was interpreted as shirking responsibility. These reasons were such that access to either Canada or the United States was not readily possible.

Changing the opinions of the law-makers and finding those who would listen to the Mennonite point of view was difficult. But David Toews, A. A. Friesen, and others prevailed and received from the leader of the opposition, W. L. Mackenzie King, the promise that if the Liberals were elected in the

[2] The reasons Friesen gave for not suggesting Mexico as a live emigration option for Russian Mennonites were: 1) social intermingling with the predominant Indian population would have negative effects; 2) Mexican politics were unstable; 3) religious restrictions, e.g., all clergy must be Mexican born; 4) property restrictions placed on the church; and 5) all citizens were expected to render military service. The President indicated he would issue a decree to meet the Mennonites' desires, but Friesen was not convinced. Frank H. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus*, 71.

coming election, he would have the Order-in-Council rescinded. The Liberals won the election, and the political obstacle to Mennonites coming to Canada was removed.

Then there was the matter of financing the Russian Mennonites' passage to Canada. This was a formidable barrier for, during the revolution and the civil war, they had had all their possessions confiscated and had no money to cover transportation costs. Fortunately the Liberal Government in Canada undertook an aggressive policy of promoting especially agricultural immigration. Hand-in-hand with the government stood the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) which was anxious to capitalize on any steps to bring immigrants to settle Canada's vast expanses, especially the prairies. A man-of-the-hour was Colonel J. S. Dennis who, back in the 1870s, had been an employee of the Hudson Bay Co. and happened to be on the ship which brought some of the 1874 Mennonite immigrants to Manitoba. He had only good things to say about them and already during World War I had suggested to the CPR that more Mennonites be contacted about coming to Canada. He was aware that the earlier group had needed and been granted a loan of $96,000 by the dominion government, which had been repaid with interest within 18 years. What better assurance of their trustworthiness did one need?

Negotiations for the necessary funds began in earnest. Unfortunately, the heavy demands on the Canadian and American Mennonites for the relief of Russian Mennonites had depleted their available monies for this venture. It was finally David Toews, chairperson of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, who placed his signature on the promissory notes and personally pledged that the loans would be repaid. The initial contract with the CPR was set up in July 1922, granting transportation credit for 3,000 persons. By the time it was ready for signing, the projected amount had risen to $140 per person. Further difficulties arose. First, an outbreak of cholera in Ukraine deterred some of the plans already underway. Second, the Canadian government insisted that all immigrants needed a certificate of medical fitness prior to entry into the country. In yet another development in the emigration efforts, the Soviets agreed to be more lenient; that is, they lessened the agricultural, commercial, and civil demands. Furthermore, Germany and Holland promised aid to the German colonists (including Mennonites). The latter two changes were a welcome development for many; they signalled a new lease on life in Russia so that most of the Mennonites no longer promoted emigration as strongly.

However, the homeless in Russia who had no means of getting a fresh start continued to ask their representatives to push for emigration. Many others did not want to consider this action, so a division developed in the ranks. But the process for emigration continued. Finally, negotiations were complete in Moscow and, after some months, also in Canada. In July 1923, the first group left Chortitza and arrived in Quebec on July 16. In 1924, those from Molotschna had their turn. That year, 5,048 immigrants went to Canada; in 1925, it was 3,772, and in 1926, 5,940. The total by the end of 1926 was 17,519, with another 847 who emigrated in 1927. Following that, very few made the journey. The figure for the total number who came to Canada in the 1920s is 20,000.[3]

Meanwhile in 1923 another Poettcker made his appearance. George was born on October 13. Now there were five boys. When George began to talk, he preferred the Ukrainian language to *Plattdeutsch* (Low German). Also, he soon acquired a discriminating taste in food. When grain became more and more scarce, mother felt it expedient to add a bit of chaff to the bread dough to make the flour go a bit further. George made it known that he did not fancy that bread. When he was asked why, he answered, "Doa es Sprie mank!" (There is chaff in it!) Some families added other foodstuffs such as corn, mustard seed, and beets.[4]

The Poettcker Family in Rudnerweide

My family directly benefited from the relief which came from other countries. Father had been home for several years after his forestry service, and kept the *Wirtschaft* going as well as possible. Mother had her hands full taking care of five boys. Father had accepted the church's vote that he serve along with the other lay ministers and took his turn filling the pulpit. One of the other ministers was Rev. David Janzen, whose family was also planning to emigrate. Unfortunately, father only had primary school education up to the sixth grade, so the formal preparation for his preaching task was limited. What he received he got from reading, private study, and prayer. Working at sermons often kept him up into the wee hours of the morning.

Visiting with the extended family continued, where discussions were carried on about leaving the land to which many strongly believed God had

[3] Frank H. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus*, 142ff.

[4] Henry Becker, *Memoirs*, chapter 5.

led them, by now more than a good century earlier. Father's oldest brother, David, had died on February 17, 1920, and his sister Maria, married to Peter Voth, died on November 14 the same year. On mother's side of the family, a number of members had also passed away: her stepfather, Jacob Kroeker, on February 9, 1919 and her brother Peter disappeared during the revolution of 1917.

The Difficult Journey

Preparations for leaving were further postponed because of the delay in planning in Canada and the indecision of the Russian government to clarify what was and was not possible. For example, getting passports and visas was a very tedious process and, once they were granted, there was a prescribed time limit on their use. Equally difficult was the sale of property, including land and goods. If the trip could not be undertaken, and the goods had already been sold, what then?

My picture 5-6 months after I was born in Rudnerweide.

In our larger family, only a minority was interested in leaving Russia. Because the political situation improved somewhat in 1922-1923, many felt it was almost a sacrilege to consider leaving what, at least before the revolution and civil war, had been seen as God's gift of their "promised land." Beyond our family many did decide to pull up roots and leave. For them the ominous rumbling of the disruptions of the past several years were portents of worse things to come. In the Poettcker family, Johann and Abraham belonged to this group. On mother's side of the family at least four siblings and four cousins decided to leave: sister Maria (Jakob Beckers), sister Susanna (Foths), Grandma Kroeker and her youngest two daughters, Helena and Sara. Helena's fiancé, John Enns, also travelled with the group. Some cousins also decided to risk going to the New World.

On March 27, 1925, at 8:45 p.m., I, another son also called Henry, was born. The practice of using the same name of a deceased sibling was common. Many family lists give evidence of this pattern; in some instances the same name was used up to four times. While some did not appreciate having received a deceased sibling's name, others even bragged about it. I never did

wonder about all the royalty that had the name Henry, such as eight English and four French kings, among others, but I did feel good that my parents appreciated the name enough to want to assign it to another of their children. My coming increased the number of boys in our family to six.

Preparations for emigration were finally complete. Father was fortunate enough to be able to pass his *Wirtschaft* on to our neighbours, the Edigers, who remained in Rudnerweide. The agreement was that if the situation should improve, they would send us money for the farm. A sale was held of machinery and household items, the proceeds of which were enough to cover the cost of passports and fare to Canada. Thus, we were one family which did not need to have travel costs (*Reiseschuld*) covered by the CPR loans. I was seven months old when, on November 25, we left for Moscow on the first leg of our trip to the New World and a land of new opportunity.

Train Travel to Moscow

November brought colder weather, so that when arrangements were made for the train travel to Moscow, we needed to reckon with this change. Only cattle cars were available. The sides were made of lattice panels so there was no way of keeping the wind from blowing in. Our group was to take the train at Tokmak, which was the closest station to Schoensee where the Beckers lived. This is probably where we stayed that last night before departure to be closer to Tokmak. Uncle Jacob had made the necessary arrangements for the cars. What consternation, however, to discover on arrival at the train station on November 24, the day set for departure, that there were no cars available to take us to Moscow. At the station two families were already waiting for us and the Beckers when we arrived. The best the agent could promise was that he had cars to reroute our group from Tokmak to Federovka the next day. (Federovka was west and a little south of Halbstadt, the seat of the district administration of the Molotschna Colony; it was on the direct rail line which

1925 Passport picture: From left, Peter (age 4), Mother (age 34), George (age 2). I am on mother's lap, six months old.

went from the Crimea north to Moscow.) Now we had to wait an extra day and find night lodging. Many of our homes were being occupied that day by those who had purchased them. To travel back 15-20 miles, then begin early enough to arrive at the station on time, was a repeat journey of many hours. We did all get some sleep at the homes of relatives in the surrounding villages.

The next day Wednesday, November 25, we boarded the train at 4:00 p.m. At Halbstadt and Lichtenau other members of the group were picked up. We were now a total of eight families, 62 persons in two cattle cars. Arrival time in Federovka was 7:00 p.m. There the connection was made with the train travelling on the main line from the Crimea to Moscow. But that train would not arrive until the next evening which meant finding another night's lodging. A house for such purposes was located not far from the station, but the crowded conditions made for a very restless night—in rooms that were far from clean. One can only imagine what the mothers with children were called upon to do while waiting for the next train. It was to arrive at 9:30 p.m. the next evening, Thursday, November 26. To heighten the tension, a special request had to be forwarded to add two empty cars to the train for these Molotschna passengers. There would be only a short stop; in ten minutes everyone was to be on board. It did happen, and all who understood the situation breathed a sigh of relief. We were on our way to Moscow.

The train cars had a woodstove in the centre. Food had been packed for the journey. The staples included roasted *Zwieback (*double-decker buns), dried fruit, and bread. *Prips* (a drink made of roasted rye ground like coffee), tea, and also some fruit juices were the drinks. There were no washroom facilities, so everyone made a quick exodus whenever the train stopped. For the children, chamber pots had to serve their purpose. That journey to Moscow was long and difficult. The further north we went, the more snow was on the ground, but mile by mile we were approaching the Russian capital.

The train pulled into Moscow station on Saturday morning. The agenda for the day was full. Crucial matters included a health examination and the checking of passports, tickets, and other documents. The Wall family and my cousin, Henry Becker, did not pass the health test, so the Beckers were faced with a decision: should the entire family or only Henry stay in Moscow? Because it was not clear how long the stay there would be—trachoma was one of the major conditions resulting in an unfavourable health ruling and it could take weeks to heal—a long wait for all of them could jeopardize the deadline

of passports and visas. A second examination made on special request resulted in the same negative finding so the decision was made that the family would continue on with the rest of the group, and Henry would remain with the Walls until his health condition had cleared. With all the other unfortunate happenings, this situation did not improve the despondent feelings of the Becker parents, but there was no other satisfactory solution.

On Monday, November 30, several men were delegated to see the *Ruskapa* (Russia Canadian American Passenger Agency) and the CPR representative, A. Ross Owen. Matters were all regulated, and our now smaller group boarded the train for the west. The destination was Riga, Latvia. (An entry in mother's passport by Russian immigration officials is dated December 2, 1925. On the next page is the Latvian visa with the same date when the documents were processed in Moscow.)

To Riga, London, and St. John

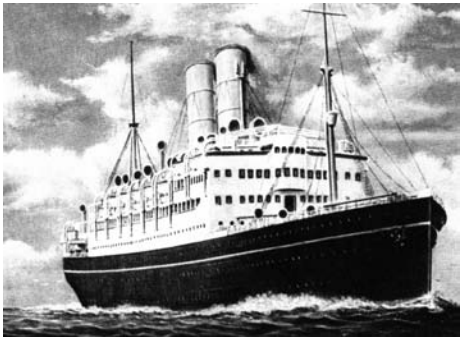
Further entries in the passport included December 4, "arrival in Riga," and December 5 (also Riga), "passed for departure." After leaving the train in Riga we were transported to the docks to board the ship which would take us to England. But first everyone was given an assignment, for which there was a separate entry in the passport: a "disinfectant cleansing bath" (similar to a sauna) to "be deliced."

The route followed was first through the Baltic Sea and then the North Sea. This sea voyage was rough. Brother John remembers that only Uncle Jacob Becker of the adults was well enough to take his meals; the others all succumbed to seasickness. The children stayed in the baggage area, and the food which agreed with them most was mother's roasted *Zwieback*. Most of the cabins were at the end of the ship. That didn't help upset stomachs because the ends of the ship rose and fell more than the centre of the ship. Here, Grandmother and Aunt Helen and Aunt Sara were more fortunate because their cabin was in the centre. Father was completely laid up, and I, the youngest of the family, developed pneumonia. For some time it was serious enough to raise the dreaded possibility that both of us might have to be buried at sea.

The passage to England took six to seven days. The ship docked at London via the Thames River. An entry on the inside cover of mother's passport reads: "Landed as Transmigrant under Bond, 11 December 1925—London." The port was very busy. Getting to shore from the ship meant

crossing many barges. Suddenly Dave was gone, and no amount of searching located him. There was space between the barges, so the family imagined the worst; he must have fallen into the water. The concern could not be adequately expressed to the sailors, who did not understand German. They also seemed to want to tell us something, but without success. When our group arrived on the dock, there was Dave, standing with one of the sailors who apparently had carried him ashore. What a relief, and how thankful my parents were. I can imagine my father saying "Thank you, dear Lord" as he did so often when good things happened or when a job was done.

From the dock, the group was immediately taken to the train station. Now, what excitement; this was no cattle-car train. It was one of England's best passenger trains, clean with proper seats and proper facilities. And the speed with which it covered the distance: London to Liverpool in four hours, at times travelling at 90 miles per hour. What was more, ham sandwiches were passed out to the passengers. What a change from what food had been up to that point.



The *Montnairn*, upon which our family came to Canada.

Unfortunately, in Liverpool there was no opportunity to do any sightseeing. The group was immediately transferred to the harbour to board another ship; it was the *Montnairn* that was loading to leave for Canada. The ship departed from Liverpool probably the same day we arrived, December 11.

The *Montnairn* was a considerably larger ship than the first one, and could maintain a more even keel for smoother sailing. Fortunately also, the storms on the Atlantic were less severe. Brother John remembers that father preached a sermon the first Sunday on board, which was December 13, but the effects of the earlier seasickness put him back in bed for the remainder of the voyage. The children enjoyed themselves immensely. There were so many places to explore, and taking meals in the dining room at the nicely set tables was such a treat. If only I had been older!

The voyage to the eastern coast of Canada took eight days. The exact port of landing was determined by the time of year. While many ships travelled along the St. Lawrence River many miles upstream, winter made it necessary to dock where the water was not frozen. Our port was St. John, New Brunswick. As the gangplank was lowered into place, we would once more reach solid footing on the wharf. No more "water, water, everywhere."

One of father's notebooks received just two entries, the second of which read: "Gelandet den 20ten Dezember 1925 auf dem Schiffe *Montnairn* bei St. John." (Landed on December 20, 1925, on the ship *Montnairn*, in St John.) Once more we could breathe a sigh of relief and say a prayer. The sea voyage, while tedious and accompanied by the most unwelcome seasickness, had brought us safely to the Canadian shore.

How far it may have been to the train station from the wharf is not known. No doubt there will have been provision to buy food stuffs which could be taken on the train. The remainder of the trip would be on solid Canadian soil. It would be a three-day and night journey to Winnipeg, Manitoba.

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Part II

Getting Settled in Canada

Chapter 3

Finding a Home in Canada

In St. John, as in Liverpool, there was no delay. We boarded the *Continental*, the train which operated on the first railroad line to span the country of Canada, the Canadian Pacific. It had been completed in November of 1885 and was owned by the company which had served as the travel agent for the many Mennonites that had already entered Canada.

The Interlude in Manitoba

The train ride to Winnipeg was long and the conditions were crowded—still no comparison to the ride from Federovka to Moscow. The earlier trip covered some 650 miles; this one was well over 2,000 miles. It was winter, but the passenger cars were heated and everyone had reclining seats for sleeping. There were opportunities to buy food, and the motion of the train was nothing like that of a boat on high seas. The train wound through forested terrain, around large lakes, and stopped at both small and large cities such as Quebec City, Montreal, Ottawa, North Bay, Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie, Port Arthur, and Kenora; then finally our destination—Winnipeg. The trip lasted just over three days, and the date was December 23, 1925.

Of the eight families that travelled with us, all except the Walls and Henry Becker came as far as Winnipeg. Some found their home in Manitoba (the Jacob Beckers). Others went on to Saskatchewan (the Ungers and Kroekers) and three families to Alberta (the Dycks, the Rempels, and later the Poettckers). Those who remained in Winnipeg made the necessary plans to be taken to the places that would later become their home.

The next day our family had yet another train ride: to St. Elizabeth, 45 miles south of Winnipeg. Our destination there was the J. B. Toews family, who opened their home to us for two months. The Jacob Becker family found a similar welcome on the Strutt farm near Meadows, Manitoba.

At the St. Elizabeth farm where J. Poettckers and Jacob Beckers lived for one and a half years, 1926-27.

We can only imagine what it meant for the Toews family to have a very tired family of eight persons—plus my grandmother and two aunts—join them for Christmas. Again, we have little information about how much room the Toews family had and how well prepared they were to feed such a large group. I can only imagine that plans for our first weeks involved many Mennonites in southern Manitoba who were charged with helping incoming immigrants. Christmas will have been rather quiet with rest so desperately needed for this group of travellers, who had by now been en route for a whole month under trying circumstances.

The Becker family and my family stayed with our respective hosts for two months. During this time preparations were made by our fathers to purchase a farm in the St. Elizabeth district, where we would begin to do what we could do best: farm. The farm consisted of 320 acres for which the owner had asked $60 per acre. Money to make a down payment of $2,000 had been borrowed

from Jacob Becker's cousin, Peter Quiring, of Henderson, Nebraska. I do not know what arrangements they made for repaying the loan, but they agreed to pay for the land by submitting a portion of the crop each year until the farm was paid for. The farm included a sizeable house, large enough to accommodate our two families. Possession date was in February. Grandmother also joined us. Aunt Helen and John Enns, who was with the group from Russia, were married in Winnipeg. When employment opportunities opened up, they moved to Langham, Saskatchewan and later to Rosthern, where they purchased a farm. Grandmother and Aunt Sara joined them there in 1926. Aunt Sara, not yet married, studied English, then took teacher's training in Saskatoon. After 13 years of teaching in Saskatchewan, on November 22, 1941, she married John Thiessen of Great Deer, a small town northwest of Saskatoon. He owned a small store and operated the post office.

Life on the St. Elizabeth farm was not easy. The land was not productive, so the first year was marked by crop failure. That, of course, did not prevent the children from having a good time. Our daily fare, though not sumptuous, did not compare to the lean years in Russia. Together the two families had 12 children. (Henry, the Beckers oldest son, after getting permission to leave Moscow, had to spend two further years in England before his trachoma was cured, so he was not yet part of the family in Manitoba.) The older children had their chores to do, and began to help with the farm work, but the remaining ones found the camaraderie most enjoyable. There were horses to ride, school was a welcome place, and the pleasant spring and summer offered a host of new opportunities for children.

The months passed quickly, and I had my first birthday celebration shortly after we moved to the St. Elizabeth farm. Nothing seemed to appeal to me more than to make forays of discovery, wherever they might lead. Apparently I was quite adept at finding my uncle's tobacco pouch and spilling its contents all over the floor. When my uncle came in, he asked more than once, "Who has been into my tobacco?" As if he didn't know! My curiosity knew no bounds, and moving into territory that was forbidden taxed my mother's patience, at times enough for her to resort to the traditional method of persuasion: spanking. But I had an advocate in my grandmother, who undoubtedly did her part in spoiling me; she usually took my side. When I was too bold or rambunctious, she would say to my mother, "Gret, nu schmaesht am nich waada." ("Gret, don't spank him again.") Being the

youngest, I no doubt had the luxury of eliciting sympathy more easily than the older children.

As the year moved on and prospects of a good crop dimmed, questions were raised about locating to a better farm. Where could one be found? The mail apparently brought the answer. Earlier I made mention of Rev. David Janzen who was one of the lay preachers in Rudnerweide. His family also emigrated, but their first choice was Mexico. After a brief stay there they came to Canada, settling in Springridge, Alberta. Mr. Janzen, who knew that our father had been chosen as a lay preacher, wrote to him and invited our family to come to Alberta, where land was available and where the two of them might jointly minister to the group which was locating in that southern Alberta region. This invitation, no doubt, had a strong influence on father's decision to move to Alberta.

The Bishop place in Springridge which became our home in 1928 (the car came 10 years later).

The Becker family planned to remain on the St. Elizabeth farm. However, after two more years they decided that farming there was no longer feasible and they chose a farm in Meadows, about 25 miles northwest of Winnipeg. No crop payments had been made because there was no crop for the first three years, and the land reverted back to the former owner. The $2,000 payment was a loss that could not be replaced.

Off to Alberta

Our move to Alberta came in June 1927. By then I was going into my third year, but I do not recall any details of the trip. We arrived in Pincher Creek, Alberta, on June 30. It was dad's hope that we would find a farm to rent or purchase. I have no information on where we stayed when we arrived, but from September 1927 to February 1928, father was hired to work for the Aron Koop family near the town of Glenwood. Once more we were invited to share a home, this time with the employer's family. The Koops lived on the ground floor of their two-storey house, and our family of eight occupied the upstairs rooms. One can imagine that the walls of the house almost needed to bulge to hold us all. This house was not as spacious as the one we shared with the

Beckers in St. Elizabeth. But our motto was, "Where there's a will there's a way." But it was not easy, for in a few weeks, on September 24, mother gave birth to another son, Abraham (Abe). Now we had the perfect number of boys: seven.

Harvest conditions that fall were not the best in Alberta either. Winter came early so the grain stayed in the field. The fall had been very wet, and the bundles needed to be removed from the ice to feed them into the threshing machine. But it was possible, and we lived through another winter. Something was different about the Alberta winter compared to that of Manitoba. Alberta had the warm Chinook winds, which could change a –30 degree Fahrenheit temperature to +35 within a few hours. Although the temperature could go fairly low, it rarely stayed there for any extended period of time. Even before spring came, the family anticipated another move. A search revealed that a farm was available for rent six-and-one-half miles west of the Koop farm.

Moving to the Bishop Place

The farm being considered was known as the Bishop place, named after the people who had lived there for some years. The one-storey house was fairly large. The west half was built of logs, about eight to nine inches in diameter. This part of the house included two bedrooms and a large living room. The east half of the house was constructed of two-by-four framing and ship-lap siding. Located in this half of the house were the kitchen, a bedroom, the pantry, and a stairway to the attic. A lean-to on the east end constituted an enclosed porch. The entire building was covered with a hip roof. The dimensions of the house were probably 24 feet by 38 feet, plus the porch which was five feet wide. The barn on the same yard was large enough to hold 10 milk cows and eight horses; at the south end was the chicken coop. A large granary stood between the house and the barn. In time, changes were made and new buildings were added to make the farm functional. Primitive as the buildings were, it was with a sense of gratitude and satisfaction that finally, after three years of "wandering," my family had found a place we could call home.

The buildings were located on an 18-acre plot on the southwest corner of a half-section of land; the remainder of the 320 acres was under cultivation. I remember the legal description of the farm: south half of section 2, township 6, range 28, west of the 4th meridian. The area was known as Springridge, the

postal address of the region. It was named because of a six-mile ridge of hills running east and west, just one mile north of our farm, with several springs bubbling forth from these hills.

Only 15 miles west were the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. The province boasted the title: "Sunny Alberta." There were few days of the year when we could not see the mountains, a series of snow-capped peaks stretching from the southwest to the northwest, a distance of 60 miles of picturesque landscape. The many farmsteads which dotted the landscape in every direction presented a most beautiful country scene.

The closest town in the district was Pincher Creek, 15 miles west of our farm. Like our region, which received its name because of geography and underground water, there was also a history to this town's name. Supposedly someone dropped pinchers into the nearby stream, so what could be more appropriate for this hamlet—which started with homes built along the stream—than to be called Pincher Creek. (A pair of pinchers, also spelled "pincers," is similar to a large pair of pliers which is used to cut wire, especially for building fences.) In 1928, approximately 1,000 people resided there. The population increased significantly when oil was discovered in the hills next to the mountains. Farming was on the rise. The soil was ideal for crops such as wheat, barley, oats, and rye to ripen before frost. Moisture was usually a given, and grass grew in abundance so that cattle ranching increased, especially in the surrounding foothills where the hilly terrain made cultivation difficult. Farmers, who did not have enough pasture land nearby, leased sections of land adjoining the mountains, and put the cattle out on the range for the summer months.

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Chapter 4

Settling into the Alberta Family Home

The rental agreement, which had been signed for the Bishop place on January 23, 1928, reveals some interesting information. Made for an initial period of three years, it dealt with the use of the land for seeding and harvesting several kinds of grain, how much should be summer fallowed each year, what percentage of the crops should be turned over to the owner for rental payment, and how the other items on the farm should be handled. Eight horses were included for use by the renter; if any foals were born, they would be equally divided between the owner and renter. The same held true for a heifer. The pigs were taken by the renter on share and, when ready for market, the owner would receive 60 pounds of live pork for each; the balance of increase would belong to the renter. Practically, this meant that, if a sow farrowed eight young ones and each grew to its proper market weight of 200-250 pounds, the renter would sell three for the owner and keep the other five for himself. That appeared to be a good recompense for feeding the whole herd in the months following the farrowing.

Apart from the livestock, the renter had full use of the machinery and implements, as well as the tools kept on the farm. Thus getting a start was made much easier, and what started as a rental venture finally ended in father purchasing the whole farm. After a number of years it was paid for in full to make it Poettcker-owned.

Father, no doubt, had not received a very high wage when he worked for the Koop family but, however meagre it may have been, when we moved to the new place there was enough money to buy one-half ton of coal to keep the home fires burning during the winter. By now I was almost three years old,

and Abe, the youngest, just five months old. What a tribute to my mother who could give birth to nine children, care for them, and, with a joyful spirit, look after the house and put food on the table.

Since we were all boys, we could double up in the two west rooms. We slept in double beds and managed rather well. Abe slept in a cradle in the third bedroom with our parents. Since breast-feeding was the common practice, there was no need for bottle warming. How appropriate that was in a house that had no heat during the night. Mother was the one who lit the fire in the morning, first in the pot-bellied heater in the middle of the living room, then in the cooking stove in the kitchen. Our rooms were so cold in the morning that we took our clothes to the heater and enjoyed the warmth while we dressed. Father and the older boys did the chores. From the very beginning father had cows to supply us with milk; seven boys could drink a lot of milk. Similarly, chickens provided us with eggs and the occasional meal. A cream separator supplied the cream for butter. And the other staple, flour, though it needed to be purchased until the first harvest was in, was always on hand. We did not go hungry.

School

Education and spiritual growth were also important to our family. The public school, named after the district, Springridge, was three miles from our new home, two miles east and one mile north. It was winter when we arrived and that meant getting three boys bundled up to stay warm. The mode of transportation was, of course, horses and, at that time of the year, a cutter. A cutter was a one-horse sleigh built of wood to form a box approximately $5^1/_2$ by $3^1/_2$ feet and about six inches high. The front end was built up about 18 inches; a 12-inch wide seat spanned the centre, about two feet from the front. A back, often very ornate and comfortable, was attached to the seat; the space behind the seat was used to place goods or supplies, or served as standing or sitting room for one or two more passengers. Under this structure, wooden or metal "skis" about a foot high were attached. A set of two poles, constituting the tongue, was fastened to the front. One pole was fastened to each side of the horse's harness near the collar. The harness traces were then attached to the singletree (the swinging bar at the back of the poles). Now the vehicle and horse were ready to move. Properly used this cutter could get the children to school in 25 or 30 minutes. When the weather was warm, we walked to school.

Usually, however, the trip was made with a buggy which was built very much like the cutter, but with wheels instead of skis. If only two persons were going to school, they could go by horseback on good old faithful, Jim, a brown gelding, quite tall and able to run with considerable speed.

After we moved to the Bishop place, three of the brothers started school. The oldest, Jacob, who was 15 by then, was needed for work on the farm, so did not attend the Springridge school, but John, Dave, and Peter did. George began the next year in 1930. Uncle Abraham and Aunt Mary with their five children moved into the district in 1932 to a farm just across the road from us, so often one or two of them were taken along on the cutter or buggy. For me 1932 was the special year when I reached the age of seven years and could start school. There was no kindergarten at that time.

One teacher taught all the eight grades at the one-room Springridge Public School. Anyone who was ready to take the ninth grade could do so by correspondence under the supervision of the same teacher. When I started school that person was Miss Rose Blair, perhaps 26 years old, a strict but friendly teacher. I remember only one time that I cried in school. We had driven to school on a very cold and blustery day. My mittens were not giving the warmth they should and my fingers became frostbitten. As I held them close to the stove, they began to warm up and they started to throb and tingle. The pain was so severe that I began to cry. Miss Blair came to rub my hands with her warm ones and gradually circulation returned and the pain subsided. I had discovered a strict teacher who was suddenly an understanding friend.

My cousins and I coming home from Springridge School, circa 1936. I am holding the reigns.

Before the teacher left for home after the dismissal of the children, she would write the next day's assignments on the blackboard. Since most of the time at school was not considered drudgery, those assignments were there tempting us when we arrived at school in the morning. So we quickly copied

the questions and completed them before the teacher arrived. What did we do in class time when we should be working at our questions? Read, of course. The library had a good selection of books and, as I recall, I read every book in it except for the larger encyclopaedias.

It was also this year at age seven that I had my first encounter with a family death. It deeply affected everyone. For a couple of days my mother had been crying, and an atmosphere of sadness had settled over the older members of our family: father, mother, and five older brothers. My younger brother and I were too young to grasp what was happening to so change our household. Word had been received that our Grandmother Kroeker in Rosthern had died. Because she had 1ived with my aunts in that location from before the time that we left St. Elizabeth, I did not remember her despite the fact that we had been so close for about a year. It was only later that I could grasp something of the loss which the family was experiencing and the legacy which she left us. When she married her second husband, Jacob Kroeker, in 1897, she joined a family of seven children (four of 11 children had already passed away), ranging in age from 17 to 5 years. To this family she brought three children from her first marriage. Together with her second husband she had two more. That meant she mothered 12 children. It was this person who had passed on.

The Johann and Margaretha Poettcker family, 1934.

Since mother was not able to make the trip to Rosthern for the funeral, a memorial service in our house was planned for our family and a few members of the Mennonite community. We did not yet have a church building. Our house, the simple log cabin, was large enough to hold quite a number of people. And so, even though we were far away, this was an opportunity for closure for a life that had known suffering, hardships, further pioneering

years, and finally, rest. Grandmother had reached the age of 71 years. In retrospect I give her a hearty thank you for being part of my life as well and am grateful for the providence of the Eternal One who leads people through every generation.

Our Worship and the Church

One cannot tell the story of Mennonite migration from Holland to Prussia, then to Russia, without talking about the church. The church is founded by Jesus Christ, who came to redeem fallen humanity and reconcile people with God. Jesus was confessed by the early believers as Redeemer and as Head of the group named the church (*ekklesia,* "the called out" ones). The church was not a building but a group of called-out people, whom Jesus named as disciples or learners. He empowered them as missionaries to proclaim the good news that Jesus came to reconcile sinful human beings back to God. This group of reconciled ones constituted the church through whom God was accomplishing the saving purpose in the world. Throughout history, a place was always found where church members gathered to worship. Mennonites did, and continue to do, the same, but they shied away from ornate structures which could become idols or could misrepresent what they were intended for.

When we arrived in Springridge in 1927 there was already a core Mennonite group, perhaps 55-60 including children, who had come from the village of Rudnerweide and from other villages in the Molotschna and Chortitza colonies. They gathered in homes for Sunday worship. Several of the families who joined in the worship services were members of the Mennonite Brethren (MB) Church, one of them Rev. David Derksen, a minister. (The Mennonite Brethren Church was organized in 1860 in Russia, when a group split from the *Kirchliche* group or Mennonite Church. Reasons were the desire for more spirituality and a change of the form of baptism from sprinkling or pouring to immersion. Since the immigrations, the MBs continued as a denomination here in Canada.)

Our Mennonite group in Springridge was formally organized as a church in 1928. Because two ministers and a number of other members were from the Bergthal Mennonite Church in Rudnerweide, the decision was made to organize in Alberta with the name, *Bergthaler Mennonitengemeinde* (Bergthal Mennonite Church).

Sunday morning called for rising early. After the farming chores were done, the horses were hitched to the wagon or sleigh, and we would drive to

the designated home for worship, sometimes as far as 10-12 miles. Families arranged their furniture in such a way that benches could be set up in the living room. Chairs were placed wherever there was room in the kitchen or bedrooms. Even beds were used to sit on. The service included singing and two sermons, one introductory, the second, the main one. The service lasted about one-and-one-half hours. Then the furniture was rearranged, the noon meal prepared (some food was brought by the other families), and everyone partook of a luncheon. As necessary, the afternoon might be used for the discussion of issues; sometimes special items were planned. We children played ball or other games, while in winter we explored the nearby hills to find the biggest ones for sleigh riding. What fun!

As time went on, Sunday school classes were introduced for the afternoon, usually one class for the younger children and one for the older ones. Those sessions usually consisted of telling Bible stories. Sometimes assigned homework included learning the stories by heart or memorizing Scripture. To know at least some Scripture verses from memory was seen as a step in appropriating the biblical truths and being prepared to respond in trust and faith to these truths, emphasizing especially the acceptance of salvation which Jesus offers. It was a treat to have visiting ministers come to share with us, sometimes with simple Bible exegesis, sometimes evangelistic messages; sometimes there were several visiting ministers at once and they would feature a biblical book and dialogue about its content.

Gathering in homes became increasingly problematic as our congregation grew. In the early 1930s we began to talk about building a church meeting place. But if we were to move in that direction we needed to answer some questions. Was it financially feasible? With our membership so widely scattered, where would a suitable location be? When should it happen? What kind of planning/guidance committee would be appropriate? Who would be in charge of construction?

Clearly some of these questions had no ready answers. But by 1933-1934, certain developments helped us reach some conclusions. Just across the road from the Springridge school lived the Janzen clan: four families, an unmarried brother, and an unmarried sister. One of the brothers was an excellent carpenter who, in the busyness of the past several years, had given his time to help several families in the community build new houses. He would be the ideal person to be in charge of a church construction project. Then, as

economic conditions improved, the Janzen family found farms that enabled them to move into separate homes. But one of the families wanted to stay and buy the farm which all had owned together. The carpenter brother located land just half a mile away and the fourth brother found land within three-and-a-half miles. Rev. David Janzen, the oldest brother, found land available right next to the first place. The school was located on a corner lot of that section. When Rev. Janzen made his purchase, he offered the congregation a plot of land on which to construct the church building, along with enough space for a parking lot, a shed for tethering horses, and a church cemetery. The gift was accepted, so the location question was resolved. But the very pressing issue of paying for the materials remained.

In the town of McLeod, just 25 miles away, an old hotel was being demolished to make room for a new structure. An investigation revealed that for $200 a buyer could dismantle the building and take all the lumber for personal use. Someone in our group heard of that offer. After some consultation, our members decided to accept it, for they saw it as a God-send. John Janzen, the carpenter, looked into the matter, and money was collected from the members to make the necessary payment. Dismantling of the building should move forward as soon as possible. *Gesagt, getan*! (Mention it and it's done!) The year was 1935. What would the timetable be? Deconstruction was planned for a period of time when farming operations were slack. That was in summer and, with appropriate arrangements, two dozen men and youth found neighbours with trucks, loaded up their tools, and travelled to McLeod to begin the task.

Soon the lumber piles grew, and daily this lumber was loaded onto the trucks and transported to Springridge. Of course the task needed to be done carefully, for the lumber was to be used again. Hence all the nails had to be pulled out, not to be discarded but to be put into containers and parcelled out to the different families. Long winter evenings were used to straighten out and ready these nails for reuse. I was now 10 years old, had learned how to swing a hammer, and could be one from our family assigned to this task. Actually there was an art to straightening out nails. A job not well done meant that a nail, even with only a slight bend, was a candidate to re-bend at the first swing of the hammer.

After the seeding was completed that spring (1936), the male members of the Mennonite community gathered at the designated spot for the next job: to

dig the basement. The lot was large enough to enable bringing in horses and a plough, first to plough the ground and then to use a large scoop to pull the dirt to either end. This process of ploughing and scooping the dirt was repeated until the hole was deep enough to allow the basement walls to be set up. These were so constructed that the floor joists (2 x 12s) were laid out along the top and set into the frames. Then the cement wall was poured to enclose the end of each joist on both sides of the basement. One job followed another, and the building slowly rose to its completion. We were fortunate to have the skilled carpenter, John Janzen, to oversee the work; he served both as the architect and the supervisor of construction. His many apprentices, of whom I was one, did their work under his careful eye. I showed adeptness for work on the roof, not only for the shingling, but also for attaching the trimming under the eaves along the gable ends. Careful work was called for to construct the dormers, the vertical windows in the roof which supplied light for the upper rooms. Climbing ladders was not a difficult task for me, and even working from ladders when there was no place to step on the roof was a job I quite enjoyed.

As mentioned, Rev. David Janzen and my father were preachers in the group. Several of the families belonged to the Mennonite Brethren Church; they too participated in building the church because we all worshipped together. In their group was Rev. David Derksen, who took turns with Rev. Janzen and my father in preaching to the congregation. Unfortunately, there came a time when leaders from outside our community, in this instance from the MB church in Coaldale, convinced their members that it was not proper for them to continue to worship with us, and they left. After some time they built their own church closer to the town of Pincher Creek. We children knew of no difference between the two Mennonite groups except when it came to baptism. The MBs held their baptism at the river where they immersed their candidates but we practised baptism by sprinkling or pouring.

There were only a few other churches in the community. Four miles south and one mile west of our place was a United Church which also drew its congregation from a rather wide area. On a hill ten miles southwest from our farm was a Roman Catholic Church with an impressive steeple silhouetted against the horizon with mountains serving as a picturesque background. But other churches—Lutheran and Baptist—were primarily in towns. Very little proselytizing went on; we had little to criticize when it came to our

neighbours. In fact, they became our friends, and we often shared equipment, transportation, or whatever might be needed. And we always felt that they appreciated us. At school, we also had our chums and our various ball teams that were not restricted to any one group. We never felt that as a Mennonite group we were belittled in any way.

A community hall was located on an acre of our half section of land, in the far corner straight east of our buildings. This hall was used for community meetings, sometimes for the school Christmas concert, and also for occasional dances. This latter activity we did not share with our neighbours, and they were aware of our non-participation in such events. They invited us, but were not slighted when we declined, giving us the freedom to live our social and religious lives differently from theirs. The choice of location for the hall was probably two-fold. One, this was a central place; there were farms in every direction for miles around and at least four schools within six miles of the hall, for use when a larger auditorium was needed. Secondly, the former owner of the land had probably been generous enough to donate the lot.

Experiences of Youth

Once the church was built, Sunday school classes were shifted to the morning and were held in the church basement. Eventually adult classes were also started in the auditorium upstairs before the regular service. As we grew older, our church family included a number of youth. Since singing was part of our heritage, soon a choir was organized. In addition, my oldest two brothers and the oldest two brothers of the Aron Koop family organized a male quartet, and soon sang regularly in the church services, at *Jugendvereine* (Christian Endeavour meetings), and at song festivals. Certain songs became favourites, none more so than "There's a Church in the Valley by the Wildwood." In German the favourite one was "Mein Elternhaus" (My Parental Home). The Koop boys sang the tenor parts, my brothers, baritone and bass. Because there were more boys growing up in our church community, in later years other male quartets formed.

During my growing-up years, age 15 and beyond, our church youth annually visited one of the General Conference (GC) Mennonite churches in Alberta—there were 10—for the spring song festival. Each year a different church hosted the event. Usually a guest conductor was invited from Saskatchewan or Manitoba, music was practiced in the weeks prior to the

festival, and then a mass choir sang at the festival. Naturally, this gave occasion for youth to socialize since, for the first number of years, travelling to other churches was difficult, both because of the poor roads and because the automobiles were old. (Flat tires were a usual occurrence on a trip like that.) These songfests gave occasion for new acquaintanceships which often led to courtship and marriage.

Brother John established his own household in 1939, the year before father passed away. He married Edith Cornelsen of Coaldale, Alberta, and, after the birth of their first child, they moved to Ontario, where they lived for three years. Marion, the second child, was born in Vineland, Ontario. They returned to Alberta and took up farming again in the Pincher Creek and Halifax districts and later also in the Ewelme area.

During the last years of his life, my father was not well. Medical examinations seemed to point toward cancer, and we wondered how long he would be with us. His pain became more and more intense but only later did we discover that he was suffering from chronic appendicitis, which finally developed into gangrene. The doctor was not aware of the severity of the effect of the failing appendix, but he did recommend an operation which was performed a week before his death. But the damage was done and father died of gangrene of the small intestine, identified by an autopsy. I was 15 years old. To me my father appeared to be an old man, yet he was only 57 when he died. At that time funeral homes and ambulances were scarce and their fees were more than most families could afford. Hence, several women in the congregation prepared people for burial. The carpenter, John Janzen, built most of the coffins in the community. He also made father's coffin. The funeral was held on May 9, 1940. This was one of the rare times when out-of-province relatives visited us. Father's departure left a vacancy in our home which was not easily filled. By then, five of my brothers and I were old enough to carry on the farm work. But the one who gave appropriate directives and counsel had departed to be with his Maker. Unfortunately, father did not see the day when we brothers were able to run the threshing outfit by ourselves, having the "man-power" to operate the threshing machine, load the racks, and also shovel the grain when needed.

The year 1941 was an important one for my oldest brother, Jake. We at home had no inkling of what might result from a trip he took to Vancouver with friends. But when he returned, lo and behold, he was engaged to Mary

Goerz, who had lived in Alberta a number of years earlier. The wedding was planned for November 2 in Vancouver, which gave some of us the opportunity to go to British Columbia for the first time. Jake moved there after the wedding and lived there for the rest of his life. He worked as a shipper for a hardware firm. The winter before his marriage he had had a bout with rheumatic fever, the after-effects of which he carried with him until his death.

In the meantime, brother Dave had joined the armed services and was sent to England to become involved in the European and North African part of World War II. He was gone for almost five years, and experienced the power of Rommel's forces in North Africa, then the slow progress of moving from there into Italy and finally back to France and Germany. He was assigned to cooking duties and as a driver for army officers, hence was probably spared some of the most destructive firepower the armies exchanged. He talked very little about his war experiences. Dave's choice to join the forces was not sanctioned by the Mennonite community, but several other youth did the same. If father had still been alive, he would not have appreciated Dave's decision. While Dave was in England, he had occasion to visit Glasgow where he found a young woman with whom he struck up a friendship, then a courtship. He married Lilly Stevenson just before he returned to Canada after peace was declared in Europe in 1945.

Brother George was the first of our family who broke a common Mennonite tradition of discontinuing school at age 16. Because the main means of livelihood was farming, many felt that more education was not needed. Our closest high school was 15 miles from home, so George went to Rosthern Junior College in Saskatchewan, a collegiate school, for his high school. My brother Peter and I were operating the farm, so neither of us pursued further education at that time, although I did complete my Grade 10 on my own by correspondence. The youngest brother, Abe, took his high school at Prairie Bible Institute in Three Hills, Alberta. This took him from home during the years, 1943-1947.

My Conversion Experience

It was the year after father's passing that I had a significant religious experience. I had already been moved by the Spirit of God to pay attention to life's spiritual dimension, but I continued to let things take their course. Then

in a matter of three to four weeks, I heard three sermons, all based on the passage from John chapter 4, the story of the Samaritan woman at the well and her dialogue with Jesus. After the third message, I was moved to follow the example of the woman to ask for the living water, and this was granted me. That proved a focal point in my life, for I experienced the new birth and was made a new creation in Christ. I was given the assurance that my life was now set in the right direction. I knew that my sins were forgiven and my guilt was gone. And I could respond further to a call to commitment to this One who had become my Redeemer. Life was never the same again.

This was also the time when prayer became real for me. Although Peter and I were by now taking care of the farm, during the winter months we did not both have to stay home to do the chores. So in 1941 Peter attended Bible school in Didsbury, Alberta while mother and I kept the home fires burning. Mother, however, was having trouble with her gall bladder, and one night she became very ill. After a big snowstorm, we were snowed in, and there was no way of calling for or getting mother to a doctor. So she and I prayed fervently, and the Lord heard our prayer. In a matter of days, mother was up and about again. From that time on, prayer was a significant dimension of my spiritual pilgrimage.

The next several years were meaningful for my brother Peter and me. Not only did we care for the farm, increasing the size by adding two more quarters of land to our holdings, but, because we did so much together, we had opportunities to discuss the Christian faith, our individual experiences, and to raise questions which every young believer faces. They no doubt took on special significance as well because war was raging, both on the European and the Far Eastern fronts. Now the stories which our parents had shared with us while we were growing up and which mother still told about our family's Russian experience took on added significance. As I think back to my father's reflections in his diary, I realize there is an affinity to the thoughts and feelings I have had.

Peter's year at Didsbury, 1941-1942, was an unforgettable experience. While there he met Ruth Brown, the girl who would become his marriage partner. During that year, as Peter was anticipating marriage, he and I became a carpenter team and built a house for him and his bride. The house was a beautiful bungalow with full basement, two bedrooms, a bathroom, and a kitchen. As the building neared completion, the wedding date was set for March 10, 1945.

Attendance at Menno Bible Institute

Interwoven with farming and building the house for Peter and Ruth, my years at Menno Bible Institute began in 1942. This Bible school was one of five Canadian schools established to give biblical training to our youth. It had its beginning in the home of Rev. P. P. Dyck of Rosemary. The number of students grew rapidly until the school was transferred to Didsbury in 1937. Classes were held in the church which was located in the country, about ten miles east of town. Several classes of 35-45 students had attended before I got there in 1942. That year the teachers were Wilhelm Pauls, Abe Koop, and Peter P. Dyck.

My teachers at Menno Bible Institute, Didsbury, Alberta, c. 1942. From left, Abe Koop, P. P. Dyck, Wilhelm Pauls.

The experiences in this school were enjoyable, exciting, mind-expanding, and fascinating. The biblical message came alive for me. One experience, which I will always cherish, was to memorize the Sermon on the Mount in German. In a new way I learned to appreciate the new birth and the essence of the good news of Jesus Christ. Some classmates experienced conversion during their months there. I learned to know what it meant to have the awareness of Jesus present in my life constantly. I heard the missionary call proclaimed, and became acquainted with those who went abroad to a variety of foreign assignments and who entered Christian ministry in numerous other settings. And prayer became a part of my life as never before. Often we heard the testimony from others of having heard God's call and responding in deeply moving ways.

Since I had no sisters, I had the opportunity here of learning to know the opposite sex. In this setting I could associate with both fellows and girls as part of the daily routine: meal time, class time, free time, and worship time. It was here that I met a young woman from Ryley, Alberta, Agnes Baergen, with whom I gradually struck up a friendship which, by my second year, developed into a deeper relationship.

While at Bible school I received my conscription papers. As I processed them, I made application for conscientious objector (CO) status. I was

requested to appear before a government official in Lethbridge, Alberta. The meeting was not difficult. This official simply asked whether I was a conscientious objector and, when I answered in the affirmative, he accepted that at face value, then asked further questions about what I was doing. When he heard that my mother was a widow and that my brother and I were operating the farm, he simply stated that I would be granted an agricultural postponement, and could continue to remain on the farm. I would, however, have to receive permission to leave the farm if I wanted to change to a different profession.

The Gerhard and Aganetha Baergen family at their home in Sedalia, Alberta, 1927. Agnes is standing at her mother's knee.

During the last year at Bible school Agnes Baergen and I began to consider whether our lives might lead to marriage. Our ages did not push us to move in that direction hastily; I was 19 and Agnes was 18. Both in the context of the church and during Bible school, I was being affirmed as one who should consider the ministry or a similar type of service. I personally also felt such a call and, when the home church asked, I agreed to allow my name to be placed on a ballot to elect lay ministers. But having seen how my father slaved over his sermons for many hours because he lacked formal education, I knew that I would want to get additional training to ready myself for the task. When I was one of the candidates that was chosen, I began to give the matter of continuing my education more attention. Agnes was in complete agreement that I further my studies so, following completion of Bible school, I pursued plans that would move me in that direction.

Indications grew stronger that the war was coming to a close. This moved a number of young people to consider continuing their studies. When I heard that applications to attend Mennonite Brethren Bible College were being approved, I also applied. (Canadian Mennonite Bible College was not yet in operation.) I was accepted for the fall of 1945. One of the issues which Agnes and I discussed in our correspondence was whether we should consider becoming engaged before I left for that year of study. When I visited Agnes before I left for Winnipeg, I asked her to marry me. She was not surprised,

and said yes. If I had any apprehensions about asking her father for her hand, they were soon allayed. He seemed to have sensed that such a step was in the offing and readily gave his approval. One experience which indicated that he had a sense of humour was a comment he made when he saw Agnes and me together. She was sitting on a bench beside the house and I was on my haunches holding her hand. When Father Baergen saw us in that position, he remarked, in Low German, "Now he's already tying her shoe."

Agnes' father and stepmother, Gerhard and Anna Baergen, at their farm home in Ryley, Alberta, 1945.

Agnes and I celebrated our engagement in her home; that was a pleasant event. We did not look forward to the long absence from each other if I should go to Winnipeg—there was no thought of making a trip back to Alberta at Christmas time—but we knew that our whole future lay before us.

Intertwined with the developments in Agnes' and my relationship were those of George and Theresa. As their wedding day approached, our family in Springridge was making plans to attend. At first we were somewhat apprehensive about time conflicts. Normally one would expect Bible College classes to begin in late September or at least in early October. That was not the case. The Bible College in Winnipeg as well as our Bible schools across the country were sensitive enough to their students' being needed for harvest duties. To accommodate students, the schools set the opening of the school term for the end of October. I did not need to worry whether I would be in time for the beginning of classes.

The day for travel to Regina for George and Theresa's wedding was set for October 10. Our family members attending would include mother, Peter and Ruth, Abe and I. We left in good time so that we could make the 350-mile trip to get to our destination by early evening. Unfortunately, we had car trouble as we were approaching Moose Jaw and had to spend the night in a hotel. The next morning several mechanics made the necessary repairs and before noon we were on our way to cover the last 40 miles. The wedding was lovely, and we could spend at least a short while with Theresa and George and her family.

The First Winnipeg Sojourn

Travel to Winnipeg was by rail, something I had not done often since that long journey when I was a child. I arrived in Winnipeg, where I knew few people, to make a new start. I would get to know the city, the college, its teachers and students, the Mennonite Brethren Church, and some of the General Conference (GC) churches—known in Canada as the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC).[1] Little did I know that, nine years later, I would be called back to this setting to serve as a teacher in a school that did not yet exist.

Traveling to Winnipeg, 1945.

The year 1945-1946 will always stand out as an important one. It left me with some knowledge and marked impressions. The first thing I learned was that if I was serious about further studies, particularly graduate studies, I would need to complete a lack from former years; that is, finish my high school. Since I had been needed on the farm during the years when I would normally have done so, I now looked at such options. The college courses were important in furthering my study of the Bible and in gaining a measure of maturity. One tool that I mastered during that year was the grammar of the German language in a course that I took with Rev. Henry Wall. Incidentally, learning German grammar also clarified many English grammar concepts, an educational lack in my public school education. A further experience, which I treasured a great deal, was to be a member of Ben Horch's choir and to have the privilege of singing Handel's *Messiah* for the first time. Also I learned to know first-hand the college that would be so similar to the one in which I would work years later. It was in this year that Bethel Mission Church, with the help of the GC and the CMC, purchased the building on Furby and Westminster. Rev. I. I. Friesen was the pastor. I was present at the first service held in the Furby Street Church, its dedication on November 11, 1945, and I learned to know a

[1] The term, Mennonite Church Canada (MC Canada), would come many years later.

number of people who would be my co-workers and fellow church members years later.

That year spring could not come soon enough since it brought Agnes and me closer to our wedding date, which had been set for July 4. (I knew nothing of the significance of that date for the United States nor that further involvements with the CMC would mean that almost every year conference sessions would conflict with our anniversary date.) I made the trip back to Alberta in early June. Instead of travelling back on the CPR, I took the Canadian National Railway (CNR) which was the northern rail route through Canada. This took me first through Ryley and my waiting fiancée. Final plans for the wedding were made, and we discussed various issues and caught up on our latest experiences.

Agnes and I before our wedding, 1946.

We had one amusing and somewhat embarrassing experience one day on our drive to town. The Baergen car was not available, so we took their horse and buggy and had a pleasant visit as we drove. Unfortunately, at one point a piece of white paper in the ditch was caught by the wind. The gelding was startled, jerked sideways, and snapped off one side of the wagon's tongue. I was able to calm him down and stop him without difficulty. But now my ingenuity had to kick in to do a little repair work to enable the tongue shaft to function again. I found some cord and a stick with which I spliced the broken tongue, and we could complete our drive to town. You can imagine what Agnes' brothers thought when we returned and I had to confess that I had to repair something that had broken on the buggy. "Horse got spooked, did it? Strange . . . Wonder where you were looking, instead of taking care of your driving?" But our drive was still worth more than any of that teasing.

With a kiss and "See you in three weeks, dearest," I took the train south to McLeod, where my brother Peter and my mother met me. That summer we would complete mother's house, and then make plans for the next stage of my studies. And this time I would take Agnes along.

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Chapter 5

Starting Life Together

Getting ready for our wedding did not take me long from where I was, 400 miles away. I had purchased my suit months earlier, so that item was taken care of. I purchased a ring for Agnes, and did a few things to ready our room for the summer. We would be spending two months with mother, finishing her house, which was almost complete. I packed some personal items which would go with us to our yet-to-be-chosen living place for the fall.

Agnes did many more of the preparations for the wedding that would take place in her home church in Tofield. Her wedding dress had already been purchased, and she needed to pack the things which she would take with her when she left home. There was a lot of baking to be done. Because sugar rationing was still in place—regulations from the time of the war—the women from the church were helping to supply the dainties, and they would also serve the meal. Of course, the Baergen house had to be cleaned as only my future mother-in-law knew how. In addition, a granary was fixed with extra beds to host the relatives that would be coming for the wedding. Some would stay in the house; the boys would move into the granary for a couple of days. Agnes' sister Helen was still at home, so she was co-opted to help with the many details.

We arrived from Springridge the day before the wedding. Mother had met the Baergens and already knew them in Russia, but for the others to get to know the Baergen family couldn't happen just by being introduced. Sharing in evening devotions was a new experience for my siblings. Father Baergen read a passage of Scripture, together with a meditation; then everyone knelt for

silent prayer, followed by the singing of a hymn which served as the spoken prayer. Sister-in-law, Ruth, remarked that this having family devotions with another family was an unforgettable experience for her.

The next day, July 4, dawned bright and clear. The wedding was slated for the afternoon. Sara, Agnes' oldest sister, took Agnes in hand and readied her for the special occasion. Before Agnes and I went out to the beautifully decorated car, we had a word of prayer, committing our lives to the Lord again and asking for divine sanction upon the special covenant which we would make in just a few hours. Peter drove the car and we arrived at Tofield Mennonite Church in half an hour. Agnes' two nieces, Anna and Louise Baergen, daughters of her second oldest brother, John and wife Agnes, were our flower girls. We had no other attendants. My brother Peter and Agnes' close friend, Mary Boese, would serve as witnesses.

Agnes and I on our wedding day, July 4, 1946 at the Tofield Mennonite Church.

To the beautiful strains of the opening number by the choir, "Gott gruesse Dich" (May God Bless You), we walked down the aisle with the two little girls scattering fragrant flower petals. Rev. George Franz brought the message, the choir sang several numbers, and Rev. David Boese performed the ceremony. (The wives of the two ministers were both second cousins to Agnes.) In the card containing the marriage certificate were a number of meaningful Scripture passages. One was Joshua 24:15: "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Another was: "Let the word of God dwell in you richly, in all wisdom; teach and exhort one another with Psalms, and with spiritual, joyful songs, and praise the Lord in your hearts" (Colossians 3:16).

The church sanctuary was completely full. When we proceeded to the basement for the meal, a warm, crowded fellowship awaited us. This was the time when I became aware of the large family from which Agnes came. I had known a few of her brothers and sisters. When I married Agnes, I not only got a wife; I also got 35 nephews and nieces. Over the years I learned to know most of them and to appreciate their roles in that family. They were scattered throughout Alberta and Saskatchewan so, whenever we travelled, we always had places to stay.

Following the meal, we returned to the Baergen farm just west of Ryley. There we took pictures, the youth played games, and we visited and snacked into the evening. The event was beautiful, and it was enriching and inspiring to meet so many relatives and friends. The inter-generational exchange was a wonderful way of getting to know the entire family and close friends.

Agnes and I with her sister Helen and brother Abe at the Baergen home, July 1946.

My family members and many of Agnes' *Geschwister* (siblings) left for their homes the next day. Our honeymoon was short. We travelled to Edmonton by train, spent a day seeing the city, and continued the process of getting to know each other—an adventure that has lasted these many years. We did a little shopping, then took the train to Calgary for another stop before travelling on to McLeod. There Peter picked us up to take us to mother's place and our home for the summer months until school started in September.

The summer passed quickly. Completing mother's house was a pleasant task, and Agnes was there to serve tea or coffee and cookies. We were happy to give mother a new home where she could live her remaining years with some of the amenities which she had done without for most of her life. When we left her place at the end of that summer, it would be the last time we would live with her. We often returned for visits, but our vocation would take us far from the Poettcker "home place."

The Coaldale Chapter

Fall brought the start of a new school year. I had resolved that one of the first educational tasks would be completing my remaining two years of high school. The Mennonite Brethren Church had established a new private high school in Coaldale in 1945. I chose this school to complete my collegiate studies; it seemed more suitable for a married person than the local public school.

First we needed to find an apartment to establish our first home. We found one above the Voth General Store on Main Street. We had our own

private entrance, a long wooden stairway along the outside of the building (not so good when the winter snows came). Plumbing was not yet common so, although we had a wash closet, water still had to be carried upstairs. We started with few household goods, but enough to get by quite nicely. A couch served as both our sitting room furniture and as a bed for the night. A bookshelf, a chest of drawers, and then boxes, as necessary, served to hold the extra items in a rather spacious closet. A table and chairs filled out the space. Agnes knew how to arrange the sparse furniture to give the room a homey atmosphere. With her artistic touch she hung pictures on the walls and placed doilies on the dresser and wherever appropriate. And so we settled in.

The Coaldale Mennonite Church, a CMC church where we worshipped, was about five blocks away, the grocery store just three blocks, and the school where I attended about three-quarters of a mile. Our means of transportation were our trusty legs which our Creator had given us. In those years we did not need to worry about keeping a gas tank full or spending money on costly repairs. For trips we took the bus and, when necessary, the train.

The first months of the school term went by rather quickly. I did not find the studies difficult and, although I was the oldest student in school, I enjoyed the camaraderie. On one occasion when the inspector visited the classes, he was curious to ask whether some of the students—I think he referred to one in particular—weren't almost old enough to vote! Two teachers, Henry Thiessen and John Regehr, did good work, and I remember only rare classes that were boring. Henry Thiessen was the principal, a jolly character, and in any conversational group his voice and laughter were usually dominant. It was my good fortune to take two extra classes in my twelfth grade. These were a bonus added to the regular curriculum, for which I received full credit in my freshman year in college to allow me to move into my sophomore year without difficulty.

There were few extra-curricular activities. We had a choir, which visited the occasional church in the province. We engaged in some sports, but without gym facilities, it was a challenge to keep our muscles toned, especially in winter. I did have the opportunity to practice my speaking and preaching gifts. It soon became known that I had been elected as a lay minister in the Springridge church, so I was often asked to speak whenever students had weddings or, in some cases, when friends whom I had learned to know in earlier years were in need of someone who could preach in English. Our church services were still almost exclusively in the German language.

Coaldale was a prominent Mennonite centre, often hosting speakers from either the MB or GC affiliation. This afforded us the opportunity to hear what was happening in the United States or in eastern Canada. It was here that I learned about the Mennonite Central Committee and heard educators from some of our Mennonite colleges and seminaries speak. Hence, I was somewhat informed about our schools when I was contemplating where I might continue my education, both to complete a college degree and to go on to graduate studies.

During our first spring in Coaldale, Agnes and I began to look for another apartment. Although we were doing quite nicely with the space we had, we were looking forward to an increase in our family. Our search led us to a two-room cottage toward the south side of town and, wonder of wonders, it was right next to the home of Agnes' aunt, Helen Peters, and her daughter Helen. That led to a time of family sharing for a year and a half which brought us close. (We have seldom lived next to Agnes' relatives, but years later the younger Helen was in the same city with us in Manitoba while she trained as a nurse. Often she served as a babysitter for our children).

With the purchase of this home, the stage was set for what would become a rather consistent pattern over the years: if the place isn't as suitable as it could be, just make it so. My carpenter's know-how and my electrical and masonry skills enabled me to renovate, repair, or build an addition as the situation called for. To this little two-room cottage, we added a small kitchen with a basement to make a rather cozy home.

Our first child, Victoria Anne, made her appearance on April 30, 1947. Unfortunately, I was not at the hospital to share the experience with Agnes, because in the past birth events usually excluded the fathers. She arrived at 5:00 a.m. that morning. A month premature, she weighed five pounds. For the first few weeks she slept in a doll carriage which we had procured earlier. When the principal of the school saw her the first time, he exclaimed, "Marie, look at the little doll!"

If Agnes had a bit of extra time on her hands during the previous months as I worked at my studies, that situation changed dramatically. We discovered that washing diapers could take a lot of time. But the joy of having this little treasure with us was most precious. She did her share of fussing, but she grew into a smiling cherub of whom our friends said later, "Her smile will take her far."

The two years in Coaldale went by quickly and, after graduation in June of 1948, we packed up to spend the summer in Pincher Creek-Springridge. That summer we experienced a special *Ebenezer* (in Hebrew, stone of help; also, a stone set up to commemorate something special, as a victory). This was the occasion when our home church, which had elected me as a lay minister, asked me and David Janzen, son of the elder in our congregation, to be ordained. After consideration we both agreed. Elder David Nickel of Rosemary performed the ceremony on August 28, 1948 in the Springridge church. I am especially grateful for Agnes' willingness to support me in this call from the very beginning. Ordination in the mid-1950s took for granted that the spouse would join her husband in kneeling for prayer with the laying on of hands to receive the blessing. I owe her my thanks and special commendation for the way in which she has stood by me over these many years.

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Part III

The Years of Academic Preparation

Chapter 6

Studies in the United States

The next step to prepare myself for ministry was to attend Bethel College in North Newton, Kansas. Making the first forays into a new country is always much easier if a close friend or relative has already paved the way. We had that advantage. For us, both brother George and wife Terri, and friends David P. and Helen Neufeld had preceded us to Bethel College. David would be completing his studies there in my first year, and George was going into his Junior year. Since George and Terri had been back to Canada for a summer visit, our schedules could be synchronized so we could travel together by car. A car-top carrier allowed us to pack extra household goods, and with a "bon voyage" we left on the 1400-mile trip to Newton.

I had several reasons for choosing Bethel College for the next chapter of my education. Bethel was one of the colleges of the General Conference Mennonite Church and had figured prominently as one of the GC educational institutions from which Mennonites both in the United States and Canada had received their training. Its course offerings included Arts and Science as well as Religion, and it had prepared many for their life's vocation and calling. Newton, the location of the college, was a prominent Mennonite centre, and housed the offices of the conference program boards which oversaw the general program and the mission outreach of the GC. I wanted to become better acquainted with this program and its personnel. Also I had already met and heard presentations by a number of the college's faculty. Furthermore, through correspondence with the school I had been given assurance of some financial support. I knew of Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, an MC institution, and Tabor College, Hillsboro, Kansas, an MB institution, but

neither of them was my first choice. Another very strong drawing card to Bethel was the fact that David Neufeld and brother George would be there for at least another year.

Travels went well. We took in some tourist sights along the way including the Rockies on the U.S. side of the border and the world-renowned geysers at Yellowstone Park in Wyoming. On the third day we had tire trouble which we solved after we discovered that one of the wheels had a cracked rim. With that problem taken care of, we arrived safely in North Newton, Kansas, on the fourth day.

College Experience in Kansas

The Bethel College campus was a beautiful sight in September. Stately trees dotted the campus, beautiful flowers still bloomed beside many of the buildings, luxurious green growth covered the lawns, and a creek meandered across the campus just behind the Administration building. In a letter to the 40th anniversary celebration of our graduating class of 1950 I wrote, "The majestic thrust of the Ad building still dominates the campus, and makes it feel like home." We began to appreciate that "hominess" on that September day in 1948 when we drove down the campus street to our first home there: one of the railroad passenger cars on the north side of the campus. (The wheels had been removed and the car placed on a foundation.) Our neighbours were the David Neufelds with whom we shared a bathroom located in the corner where our two cars joined to form a right angle.

It took some time to get used to what for us was a large campus. Gradually I found the buildings, then the classrooms within, and met, learned to know, and then appreciate the professors. Together Agnes and I found paths along which we could stroll as our daughter led us to new discoveries, and we learned to appreciate telling time by the peeling of the steeple bells. We also faced the danger of nature's ravages when tornado twisters threatened; we soon discovered in which basements we were to find shelter.

We also had to get used to another aspect of nature. Coming from the prairies, particularly the area close to the Alberta Rockies, I had been used to sunshine and low humidity. Kansas gave us plenty of sunshine, *but* with very high humidity. In fact, it was so high that for six weeks I continued to perspire without letup—day and night. Only when winter moved closer did the humidity become more normal.

The focus of my studies was two-fold: a double major in Bible and the Social Sciences. The former would get me started on the preparation I needed for the vocation of ministry. It was also an appropriate choice because, before we left Canada, I had received and accepted an invitation to return to Menno Bible Institute in Alberta as one of its instructors. Although this would take me from my home church for five months of the year, I would still be able to provide preaching service there during the rest of the year. The church was quite ready to agree to that kind of arrangement. They understood that teaching experience could only enhance my preaching skills and sermon preparation. As for the second major, Social Sciences, I felt that the knowledge of Sociology, Psychology, and History would give me a broader basis for life and for the further studies I hoped to pursue.

Transferring from the Canadian to the American college educational program did not prove difficult. In addition to receiving credit for my Alberta grade 12, which allowed me entrance as a sophomore, I also received 20 more credits by writing exams based on my studies at Mennonite Brethren Bible College. So with some summer courses, I was able to complete the Arts program in two years.

My brother George was in his second year, pursuing a Chemistry major. Our Psychology professor made an interesting observation. When we wrote our aptitude tests, the results, he said, were such that George should have been the preacher and I the scientist. He did assure us though that we would no doubt be able to handle the choices we had made.

One feature of the Bethel experience was the daily chapel. The second floor of the Ad building was finished as a chapel, complete with a built-in organ. Services varied from strictly devotional and biblical ones to those which focussed more on imparting information. Once again, here was a centre which brought persons to us from across the nation and gave us the opportunity to become acquainted with leaders in many different professional fields. Being a church college, many ministers and conference leaders shared their experiences with us.

Some months after we had arrived at Bethel, I was asked whether I might be open to doing some preaching in churches around Newton. I was ready to do this. One of my first assignments was in the Whitewater Church. I was to fill the pulpit for four Sundays until Rev. Walter Dyck, who was the Executive Secretary of the General Conference and was returning to pastoral work, was

ready to come. That proved to be a challenging experience; it was the first church in which I served as pastor following my ordination.

Toward spring, Pawnee Rock Mennonite Church, 100 miles from Newton, asked whether we would be open to a three-month assignment. This too was possible, although we could hardly have imagined that we would regularly drive such a long distance to church every Sunday morning for that period of time. Again it was invigorating for me and a change for Agnes and Victoria to get away from the campus. It also gave me the opportunity to learn to know the Western District Conference. After the service we were usually invited to a family's home for lunch, and arrived back in Newton by late afternoon. When I was not preaching elsewhere, we attended the Bethel College Mennonite Church.

In our second year at Bethel the Elbing Mennonite Church, 10 miles east of Newton, asked whether we would accept the church for a year, primarily for the Sunday service. I would replace their long-time pastor who was leaving for a service assignment in Europe. They offered us a farm house to live in during that time. The church had perhaps 50 members, and working with them was pure delight. What struck me immediately was that at their annual congregational meetings, they had no trouble finding teachers for the Sunday school classes and members to serve on the various committees. Everyone was ready to help where needed. During that year I commuted the 10 miles to the college for classes.

Financial need was becoming a pressing issue for us. I had sufficient funds for the first year, and my preaching assignment for the second year took care of our personal needs. Tuition fees were covered by a scholarship grant from the college. Although I had the possibility of borrowing money, I had not yet done so. I looked for other sources of revenue, and two became available. First, George and I found work with farmers on Saturdays helping with the harvest of their wheat, oats, and maize. A day's wages earned us $5.00. On the way home we would stop at the grocery store and buy most of our groceries for the week. My second source of income came from my summer work. I arranged my summer courses for the mornings, and in the afternoons I worked for another farmer just a few miles from the college. Studying for those summer classes was done in the evenings and Saturdays; that is also when I prepared my sermons. Needless to say, during those summer weeks I had little time for anything else.

The two years at Bethel passed quickly. They were enriching in a number of ways. First, of course, I completed the college courses for the Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree. My courses included Psychology, Sociology, and Bible. Through the latter I also acquired knowledge of Greek. Equally enriching were the opportunities to become acquainted with the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC), whose offices were at 722 Main Street in Newton. Walter Dyck, the Executive Secretary, introduced me to the office staff and, whenever I had questions about the Conference, he was a ready source of information. Another person I met was Rev. Walter Gering of the Eden Mennonite Church, Moundridge, with whom I would serve on the executive committee of the conference 12 years later.

For these and many more reasons, Agnes and I treasure the two years we spent in Kansas. Our three-year-old daughter was growing up fast. For the first three years we spoke High German to her. But in Kansas, when no one else did, her language gradually shifted to English. At times a German word slipped into her speech which could raise eyebrows. For example, one day she was so impressed with the bright light that she said, "It's hell (light) outside." ("Es ist draussen hell.") Never could one accuse Victoria of not making others feel welcome. She was adept at standing at the gate, and when someone came by, she would say, "Won't you come in for a minute?" The occasional person sometimes accepted the invitation, and mother would be quite surprised to receive a visitor.

Graduation was on May 30, 1950. Unfortunately, none of my siblings were able to attend. I would very much have coveted their presence at that milestone in my life. One chapter of my preparatory studies was now complete. However, when I thought of returning to Didsbury, Alberta, to teach in the Bible school, I still felt very unprepared. So I wrote to the Bible School Board to indicate that I wanted to continue my studies at the seminary. They agreed to let me do so. A positive development unfolded pertaining to our finances. My mother was growing older, and she and the seven boys agreed that it would be appropriate for her to parcel out the farmland to her sons. There was one problem: she had seven sons but only six quarters of land. So I suggested that, since I wanted to continue my studies, my brothers could pay me my share in cash. Now I had the wherewithal to pay for several years of further studies.

During that second summer in Kansas after graduation, I worked first for a farmer, then for a carpenter, to earn some needed extra money. I enjoyed

these jobs and think I even had some farming wisdom. One day we finished baling a neighbour's field of hay, and walked across to another one which had just been mowed. I picked up a bunch of hay, twisted it in my hands, and then said to Gus Regehr, "Well, tomorrow you'll be back to get me, and we'll do this patch." Gus laughed and said, "Henry, it will take two or three days to cure that hay for baling." The next afternoon Gus was back; we would be baling hay on that second field after all. He said, "Henry, you're much too smart to be just a preacher!"

My carpenter boss was a friendly and congenial man with whom I worked well together. His first wife had passed away and he had remarried. Agnes and I had many good visits with this couple, and developed a solid friendship with them. It was therefore sad news when some time after leaving Kansas, we heard that he had passed away; now his second wife was the one who was left alone.

This second summer became important for one more reason. The triennial sessions of the General Conference were slated for August 23-30, 1950, in Freeman, South Dakota. We planned to attend our first GC session. When final departure plans for leaving Kansas were completed, with our carrier again atop our car, we headed north for Freeman. We had the good fortune of staying with the parents of one of my classmates at Bethel. They lived on a farm about six miles from town, so we became familiar with the lay of the land in South Dakota. To make travelling to and from conference sessions a little easier, Mr. Waltner, our host, had me drive into his garage, then with a hoist he simply lifted the carrier off the car, set it aside, and we didn't have to worry about anything.

Conference sessions were informative for me. Neither Agnes nor I had ever attended such a large conference before. We had been present at several CMC sessions, a conference consisting of 66 churches. The GC at the time had 300 congregations. J. N. Smucker was the conference chairman, not known as well then as he would be later when he was appointed editor of *The Mennonite*, the GC weekly periodical. This Freeman conference was the occasion when a new constitution was being honed and shaped for the new winds that were blowing during those post-war years. Smucker's ability to lead the business sessions and to guide the discussions and the debate was exciting to see. It dawned on me that I was witnessing the church in action: the rank and file were discussing the business of the church. They did so intelligently,

with insight, with a heart for the task, with a readiness to give of themselves, and with an understanding and feeling for each other. Although the thinking was different and new for me and expressions were framed in different words, these delegates nevertheless saw themselves as brothers and sisters in Christ, sharing a common goal. I became aware of churches whose representatives came from six different regions of the United States and from across Canada. Fraternal delegates came from South America and from other denominations.

Here was an introduction which would follow me all my life. Except for one GC session in 1953, I would attend every triennial session from then until 1995. Having just graduated from Bethel College, which was related to the GC, I would go on to a GC seminary, and in a few short years would end up in a CMC school where I would remain for 24 years. But for now we were off to discover the Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Chicago, Illinois.

Seminary Experience in Illinois

I had made one earlier trip to Chicago by train. Then the city had been very foggy. We took the elevated train to the seminary on the south side. But I was confused in my directions and thought we were going east. Now, you must understand that, for a country boy growing up in the vast expanse of the Canadian prairies, nothing is more indelibly fixed in his mind than directions. And who would ever question the inexorable reality that the sun rises in the east? Well, imagine my chagrin to discover that in Chicago—at the seminary no less—that the sun rose in the north! I was told: no, the reality of the compass had not changed; only I had given it that change. On the second trip, as we approached the seminary early in September 1950, it was a sunny day and, on the basis of the map and the position of the sun, I was right in my directions, that is, until we reached the campus. There the directions changed again and, much as I tried to set them right in my mind, as long as we lived on that campus, the sun rose in the north!

Chicago is not only a large city; it has many sections which are not very clean. It did have some lovely areas with stately and beautiful buildings, but, unfortunately, Woodlawn Avenue in South Chicago was not one of them. But the seminary buildings were not far from Lake Michigan along which a beautiful shoreline drive led south from the business district near the navy pier to the University of Chicago. We were fortunate to have lovely parks and picnic areas not too far from the seminary where we could enjoy the lush lawns and the beauty of the lake and watch people fish from the shore.

Our first residence was on the third floor of 4644 Woodlawn Avenue, a large block with three wings containing 66 apartments. It was the largest building on campus which had a total of seven buildings. Our apartment had two bedrooms and a bath; and we shared a kitchen and a fairly large living-dining room with another couple, William and Willadene Keeney. An extra room was occupied by Harris Waltner in whose parents' home we had stayed in Freeman. He ate breakfast with us, but took his other meals in the seminary dining room. The apartment served our purpose well. But there were drawbacks: we had to climb about 30 steps up to our floor; there was no elevator. This meant that for Victoria to get to the playground, Agnes had to take her downstairs and down the street. In the second year when an apartment became available just behind the main house above a garage, we took advantage of the opportunity to move. There the playground was just outside the door.

The seminary classrooms were not at this location. Mennonite Biblical Seminary (MBS) was affiliated with Bethany Biblical Seminary, the seminary of the Church of the Brethren. Classes were held on the Bethany campus which was 11 miles away toward the centre of the city. That campus was quite large, had a new chapel, and the classroom building was spacious enough to accommodate around 200 students. Adjoining the campus was the large Bethany Hospital, which was also owned by the Church of the Brethren. We travelled to the Bethany campus, the first year with cars, the second year on a school bus. If classes conflicted with the schedule of the bus, students would take their own cars.

Woodlawn was located in a predominantly black community of Chicago, so we were thrown into a sociological mix trying to come to terms with the Afro-American influx from the southern states (at the time they were called Negroes.) Much of the white population had little understanding for equality between white and black. I remember well one morning in a high-class white congregation, just two blocks from the seminary, where I was asked to teach Sunday school—it was one of my practical assignments for class—when the superintendent ushered out the first black boy who dared to enter to see what the Sunday school was like.

At the seminary we had ample opportunity to relate to black people. The business manager, Mr. Neufeld, had hired me to do some building repair jobs. I joined a black painter who had worked there for several years, and together

we did the needed renovations. During those two years of working together, my attitude toward black people changed. The painter was a professional, and he dispelled the stereotypes many of us had. Some black students also came to take classes at the seminary. They roomed with other students, and joined in the various activities with no racial repercussions.

During the two-and-one-half years we spent in Chicago, Victoria grew to age five and very much enjoyed the children of the seminary community. Regular Sunday school was taught by members of the student body and by student spouses. A summer Daily Vacation Bible School reached out and drew in dozens of children from the community, many of them black. Woodlawn Mennonite Church was started in 1945 and, during the time we were there, two students served as pastors of the church. One was Robert Kreider, a history student at the University of Chicago; the other was Willard Wiebe, who had served as pastor of a church before coming to seminary. Church members were drawn from both the white and the black community.

Seminary classes were enjoyable and challenging. While at Bethel College, I had taken Introductory Greek with Dr. Erland Waltner, so I could already use one biblical language for studying the biblical text. I took the second language, Hebrew, during the summer of 1951. I found it more difficult than Greek but I did complete the course and was able to do textual work in studying the Hebrew Old Testament. Favourites in biblical studies were the letters of Paul and the four Gospels. All the classes, not only those in New Testament, helped broaden my horizons. Dr. Mallott, who taught Church History and Old Testament, based much of his teaching on the time line. After many years, I can still see that line drawn across the full length of the blackboard. The centre, 1054, marked the separation of the Western Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church. Dr. S. F. Pannabecker, President of MBS, challenged me with his survey of the History of Missions in the Orient. Pannabecker, who had spent two decades as a missionary in China, had the gift of a fast delivery; he seemed to think that the more he could say in the allotted time, the better it would be for everyone. Taking notes of his lectures required full concentration. In contrast, Dr. William Beahm, the Dean of Bethany, who made Biblical Doctrine come alive, was slow, deliberate, and exceptional in his choice of words. We will never forget his illustrations; and his sense of humour kept the class awake and entertained.

Chicago boasted a number of theological schools, so I was able to broaden my educational experience further by taking summer courses at Garrett

Biblical Institute. One course focussed on Christian Education, the second on Philosophy, specifically on the problem of evil. These studies provided the perspective of non-Mennonite professors, and helped me re-evaluate my Mennonite convictions.

At seminary we also participated in seminars and study conferences on various topics: missions, the church's commission, and the teaching of peace as an integral dimension of the Gospel. We were confronted with the mandate to see our brothers and sisters, no matter of what colour, as one in Christ, who are brought into one fold and serve in one universal church. In the Chicago setting, so poised for racial violence, living the Gospel was a challenge.

An annual highlight of our seminary experience was the trip to Camp Friedenswald in Michigan, not far from Elkhart, Indiana, for the all-seminary retreat. Located at the edge of a lake, the camp buildings were nestled among the trees. We enjoyed the walking trails, boating facilities, and worshipping in a lovely chapel at the foot of a hill overlooking the lake. There were Bible studies, times for meditation, for singing, for sports, and for eating. The second day usually ended with a late afternoon barbecue before the drive back to Chicago. Those were times when spiritual exercises became meaningful and the stage was set for regular practices of seeking God's presence and discovering God's comfort and encouragement.

As in Kansas, so also in Illinois, I had opportunities to do preaching. Usually this meant travelling some distance since there were only a few Mennonite churches in Chicago. One summer I went to Wayland, Iowa, for four Sundays to give the resident pastor a vacation break. Train was the common mode of transportation, but with the speed of trains the trip did not take very long, even though it was over 200 miles. On special occasions, I was able to get into Central District Conference churches and discover something of the richness of that conference's history. Originally a separate Mennonite denominational body, in 1945 it joined the General Conference as a district rather than as individual congregations. Six years later it would merge with the Middle District Conference of the GC. Earlier some of the churches had had Amish affiliation; still others had long been known as the "Stucky Mennonites." Now they were joined in one regional conference as well with the GC. For one who was primarily familiar with names of Mennonites coming from Russia with Dutch and German origin, I now learned to know people with Swiss and Amish names.

During the second year in Chicago, we were expecting a playmate for Victoria to join our family. Mid-morning on a warm June 17, 1952, Agnes indicated that it was time for us to head to the Bethany Hospital. Again, I couldn't stay with Agnes—no development on permitting fathers to join the birth event—so as I waited, I went to the cafeteria to have my lunch. When I checked back with the desk a little later, I discovered that no time had been wasted. Ronald O'Ray had made his arrival, weighing in at 7 lbs., 1 oz. at exactly 12:15 p.m. Both son and mother were fine. Was a sister ever proud of the little brother she had received. The day I brought Agnes and Ronald home, the neighbours across the hall had invited us for supper. After just a short while there, Victoria disappeared. She had gone back for her brother, picked him up with his blanket, and carried him to where we were. He shouldn't have to remain at home all by himself!

The routine of the Poettcker household was suddenly changed. Ronald knew how to make his needs known, whether or not it suited, either day or night. We made the necessary adjustments. Chicago's summers were very warm, and without air conditioning we resorted to the use of fans to keep conditions a bit more comfortable for all of us.

When Dr. and Mrs. Pannabecker heard of our new arrival, they paid us a visit. Before leaving, Dr. Pannabecker spoke a word of prayer for us and our son. We treasured that short visit. The spiritual nurture that was extended to us was so meaningful and appropriate.

There were other developments. During one of his trips to Chicago, Rev. J. J. Thiessen, chairman of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada and also chairman of the CMBC board, invited me to consider coming to Winnipeg to join the CMBC faculty. That was an unexpected turn of events. After all, I was continuing my studies with the understanding that, after seminary, I would honour my commitment and return to Didsbury to teach at Menno Bible Institute. What should I do now, having already received one extension for further studies? The invitation to come to Winnipeg had been accompanied with a hard-to-resist offer. Rev. Thiessen was going to ask the Conference for a stipend so I could continue my studies. After prayerful consideration, I was convinced that I should accept the offer and Agnes concurred with me. I wrote Rev. J. Sawatzky at Didsbury to inform him of Rev. Thiessen's invitation, and to ask whether the Bible School Board would release me from my earlier commitment. Rev. Sawatzky wrote back and said that the Bible

School Board could understand why the CMBC Board had invited me; and if this was a new opportunity for me to continue my education, they would not stand in my way but wish me the Lord's blessing.


Our home in Pennington, New Jersey, 1953-54.

With this new possibility before us and with the assurance of financial help, the final six months in Chicago included checking out graduate schools. I applied to three schools, one of them in Canada. The one that stood out was Princeton Theological Seminary (PTS) in New Jersey, both because of what I had gleaned from their information and through the recommendations of students who had attended there, including Donovan Smucker, an MBS professor. There was one hurdle: Princeton required the writing of entrance exams. That required several nights of extra study, and the time set aside for writing these exams. After completing that task, I sent the exams and the application to Princeton.

When the letter of acceptance finally arrived near the end of 1952, we began plans for our transfer to the eastern seaboard of the United States. Upon arrival I would have to meet with members of the New Testament department to further discuss my readiness for studies. Since I had passed the general entrance tests, I dared to think that this hurdle would also be overcome. With so many giving me their support, I felt ready to make this rather momentous decision. And again, Agnes stood with me to let this be a joint venture.

Graduate Studies in Princeton

With the additional summer school classes in 1952, I was able to complete my Bachelor of Divinity (BD) requirements after the first semester of my third year. We had now been on our educational safari for four years, and we had a major concern: were our family ties being nurtured sufficiently? We were projecting another two years before we could be back in Canada. During our Bethel stay we had gone home to Alberta for a visit in the summer of 1949. Then in 1951 during the Chicago period we travelled back to Alberta again. In

retrospect the last visit was most fortunate because it was the last time we saw Father Baergen alive. With my Chicago studies completed at the end of the year, we did not plan to travel back to Canada before transferring to New Jersey. Fortunately we were always able to stay in touch with family via mail.

December 1952 once again found us packing. This time we did not have to use the carrier because one of the Pennsylvania students had a trailer which he wanted pulled back to his home. Although we had very little furniture—only a high chair, a lamp, and a maple end table—in Chicago we had purchased a mattress that we did not yet want to part with. Hence, the trailer was doubly welcome. We packed up and left Chicago just after Christmas.

Our first temporary stop was Lansdale, Pennsylvania, where a small mission house had been vacant for some time. The mission committee of the Eastern District Conference had offered it to us until we found the right apartment for our needs. Agnes and the children stayed there for several days, while I went on to Princeton, 65 miles further, to register and to look for an apartment close to the school. I found one along the Jersey Turnpike about 10 miles from the seminary. We lived there for several months but the location was unsuitable and the apartment too expensive. After further looking, we found a farmhouse near the town of Pennington, New Jersey, just six miles from school. The house was divided into two sections. We occupied the kitchen and living room on the main floor and a bedroom upstairs, which we reached via a central hall stairway. This hallway was also used by the couple in the other half of the house to reach their upstairs bedroom. After cleaning and a bit of renovating, we settled in for the one-and-a-half years we spent at that location. During that time I would complete three of the four semesters which I spent in Princeton with the family.

Princeton Theological Seminary is a Presbyterian school established in 1812, with a beautiful campus, striking buildings, a functional albeit already old library, and residences which could house approximately 300 students. The classroom structure was a three-storey building; with large stairways in the centre of the building leading to the upper floors. The dining hall facilities were new, the chapel was a colonial structure, and large faculty residences dotted the campus. The beautiful flowers and trees provided a profuse array of colour.

Since I was now moving into doctoral studies, my classes focussed on the area of my major, the New Testament. My main professor, Dr. Otto Piper, was

a German academic who could not condone what Hitler was doing, so he had to leave the country. He spent a short time in England, then came to America to join the Princeton faculty as chair of the New Testament department. Dr. Piper endeared himself to his students by setting aside Friday afternoons for a tea and a free-for-all discussion on topics which anyone could suggest. It was a pleasure and an inspiration to hear Dr. Piper hold forth on any, often complex, topic. Certainly the gracious hostess, Mrs. Piper, added class to the event as she presided over her *samovar*, the Russian type of urn for making tea.

During our years at Princeton in the early 1950s, many German towns and cities were being rebuilt after the war. The Pipers had many relatives in East Germany, many of whom needed to get along with very little. To alleviate this need, Dr. Piper began his own service project: sending clothes to those in need. Every Friday he asked for volunteers to help pack parcels, then transport them to the port office to send them on their way. The Pipers felt deeply about the suffering of the East Germans and, to some extent, could identify with the hardships which our Mennonites had experienced in Russia.

As a professor, Piper was deliberate and comprehensive in his lectures. He was also a prolific writer and a very good adviser. He was knowledgeable and a deeply spiritual man. One of his hobbies was growing flowers—and they were gorgeous. High points for me were his courses in the formation of the Bible, the seminar on the Apostle Paul, and his excellent counsel as I chose my thesis topic: "The Hermeneutics of Menno Simons." The choice of that topic needs some explaining.

Already in the years before I came to Princeton Piper had given particular attention to the principles which biblical scholars were formulating and adopting in their studies and exegeses. To illustrate, he chose several sixteenth-century Reformers and their followers and illustrated how they had done their exegesis. Piper's students were so inspired by what he presented that several chose as their thesis topics the hermeneutics or principles of interpretation which their own leaders had used. Included were Zinzendorf by a Moravian, Pilgram Marpeck by a Mennonite, and, because I had worked earlier with some shorter essays that several exegetes had written about Menno Simons and his use of the Bible, I was drawn to do a more comprehensive study of the biblical principles for exegesis which he used. Since the Dutch language in which Menno wrote has many affinities to the

Low German, I felt I would be able to study Menno's work in the original. I did need to write a Dutch language exam, so I spent time studying Dutch grammar and reviewing its vocabulary. I missed only two words in the translation section of the exam.

Piper guided me very ably as I researched and wrote. Several years later, in April 1961, he was the first interrogator of my doctoral examination committee. He deftly guided me into my thesis topic and set the stage for other members of the group to raise their questions. I had been somewhat apprehensive about how I would fare during an oral exam, but was very pleased when I heard Dr. Piper tell Mrs. Piper later that evening, "We had a good time." But I'm getting ahead of myself.

Perhaps my most meaningful course was the Exegesis of 1 Peter taught by Dr. Tilman Kuist. In it I was able to put my knowledge of the Greek language to good use. As I wrote the exam for that course, I had adequate time to work through the entire letter. Its message to a suffering church had become part of my being.

A very enriching experience during these months of study was to become acquainted with foreign students and with students from other denominations. To worship with them in the daily chapel services, to listen to their experiences, and to share the deeper realities of our common faith was both humbling and uplifting. Because many of these students ended up teaching in various denominational schools, or serving churches in their respective denominations, I was later privileged to meet them at annual theological conferences.

For Agnes, the time in New Jersey was somewhat lonesome. Looking after two children was certainly enough to keep her busy, but living on a farm six miles from the seminary prevented her from having a circle of friends. Furthermore, the close relationships which our family had experienced on the Bethel and the MBS campuses just didn't develop in Princeton. Some of her needs were met when I was invited to speak at Mennonite churches in Pennsylvania. Socializing always accompanied such an invitation, and that included the family. Initially, I was asked to fill in one summer during a change of pastors in the Deep Run Church. During those months we lived with a widow and her son. Mrs. Wilhelmina Huber proved to be a true friend. During the second year, the Lansdale Church lost its pastor through death, and I was able to fill their pulpit for four months.

During this time we were again expecting an increase in our family, and Martin Paul joined us on August 9, 1953. He was chubby, congenial, content with life, and proved to be just the playmate Ron and Victoria were expecting. The farmyard with large trees, a swing, and a lush green lawn was the ideal playground, and here too the beauties of nature were a sight to behold. My mother paid us a visit while we were in New Jersey, just at the time when fall colours were out in all their glory. Looking south from the farmhouse, a hedge of trees ran east and west through the countryside. With several varieties of trees, it was very colourful and so beautiful that mother nostalgically said, "It is almost as lovely as it was in Russia." Also, the abundant rainfall kept the grass green until the late fall.

Studying at Princeton was a very good experience. We had the opportunity of attending daily chapel services with meaningful liturgy. The choir entered in procession and the singing was both beautiful and professional. Often, renowned speakers were invited, many from beyond the Presbyterian fold and a number from abroad. These included theologians, ethicists, and philosophers of the twentieth century such as J. S. Whale, J. K. S. Reid, T. W. Manson, Karl Barth and Oscar Cullmann. I could not always accept their theological positions but did learn from them. Princeton was also where I met Mennonite students with whom I would have meaningful associations in the years ahead.

Just before I finished the spring semester in 1954, we received word that Agnes' father, Gerhard Baergen, had passed away on May 17. To travel all the way to Alberta for the funeral was not possible. My examinations were about to begin, and we simply did not have the finances for an extra trip. Furthermore, the two small children demanded Agnes' constant attention. Victoria was old enough and could have stayed with me, but Agnes could not make the trip alone. That was a lonely time for us as we reflected on what dad had meant to their family and also to me after we were married.

As we moved closer to bringing our time in Princeton to a close, I needed to make sure that our finances would last until I began my teaching stint at CMBC. We never did have an abundant cash supply, but now I had to borrow $200 from a good friend to meet my financial obligations and to have the necessary money for the trip home. When I think back now, it hardly seems possible that we had spent six years of studies in the United States and incurred only a $200 debt. And imagine making that 2000-mile trip as a family and needing less than $200 to do so.

My examinations were completed in early June. I still needed one quarter of studies to finish the residence requirements at Princeton but the College in Winnipeg was anxious to have me there already for the beginning of the fall semester. That way I would be able to get acquainted with the students when they arrived. Also, if we left in June we could have the summer to get settled into our home, to get ready for my work in the classroom, and to have Victoria begin her classes in the public school.

Preparations for the homeward journey meant packing as much as our Chevie would hold, again with the roof-top carrier. Whatever else we owned was shipped by rail in three wooden trunks. Also, we had an extra passenger. The Walter Mills family from Deep Run Church had a daughter who had applied for summer service in Rosthern, Saskatchewan. They were worried that such a long trip alone would be rather risky, so we consented to take her along as far as Winnipeg. Conditions were crowded, but we managed. That trip to Winnipeg, begun on June 13, took us four days.

I did need to return to Princeton the following spring. I arrived there in late March 1955, did my final semester of classes, then wrote my final doctoral exams in late June and July. I returned to Winnipeg to pick up with my family again, to prepare for the classes which I would teach in the fall, and to begin the arduous task of doing the research and writing of my doctoral dissertation. This task took six years.

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Chapter 7

Back in Winnipeg

The trip to Winnipeg was uneventful. We arrived in Illinois on the second day and looked up our friends, Delbert Schrags, who lived in Mundelein, just north of Chicago. They were our first neighbours across the hall in our apartment above the garage at MBS in Chicago. During their studies, Delbert was serving a church in Mundelein and, after graduation, took the church full-time. Our stop gave us a good break and time to do some catching up. Victoria had played with their girls while we were on the MBS campus.

We arrived at the United States-Canadian border on the evening of June 17. After we got north of Minneapolis, we had taken Highway #59, but did not realize that if we got to the border too late in the evening, we would not be able to be processed as returning Canadians. So we had to backtrack until we found night lodging, a place that left *very* much to be desired. The next day we travelled west and then north to the Emerson, North Dakota crossing. We knew we would have no trouble there. Everything was in order and we arrived in Winnipeg in early afternoon.

For several nights we found lodging at the college building on Wellington Crescent. Victoria remembers that at the time she was introduced to a scrumptious snack consisting of bread sprinkled with brown sugar. On the first evening we saw our friend and travelling companion, Joanne Mill, off on the CN train to Saskatoon. The next day we looked for a house. We had done some pre-planning for that task. While in Newton, I became aware that the GC Board of Christian Service had funds available for church workers to purchase a house. Initially, I had discussed the possibility of accessing these

funds with J. Winfield Fretz, one of my professors at Bethel College, who was at that time chair of the Christian Service Board. After we found a house and agreed on a price, I wrote to apply for such a loan. When we had completed the necessary forms from our lawyer and he had notarized them, he said, "Now you need to send these to your church agency; they will process them and then submit the amount of the mortgage." You can imagine his surprise when I reached into my briefcase, and handed him the cheque for the exact amount, which I had already received in the mail.

The 1954 CMC Summer Conference Sessions

Some time before we left New Jersey for Winnipeg, the Program Committee of the CMC had asked whether I would be prepared to present a paper to the summer conference, which was to convene early in July in Abbotsford, B.C. Since I had received very welcome financial support from the conference, and would now be in the service of the college which was owned and operated by the CMC, I felt obligated to do so. But I was also looking forward to getting to know the Canadian conference churches and pastors better and to making use of my German, which I had not had occasion to use in preaching since I left Canada six years earlier. Fortunately, I had been able to do preparatory work for the *Referat* (paper) before we left New Jersey.

Since we would need to wait several weeks before we could take possession of our house, we packed up again, leaving some things in storage at the college, and then headed west on Highway #1 into the vast expanse of the Canadian prairies. In 1954 we did not yet have the good highway system which now spans the Dominion from sea to sea. Road construction was going on in every province, and the delays we encountered prolonged the time of our trip to Alberta to several days. We arrived at Springridge where mother and brother Peter and family lived on the home place. Agnes and the children stayed there while I took the train from Pincher Creek to the west coast to spend 4-5 days at the conference and become familiar with CMC business and the exciting things developing in the provinces. Since these were the pioneer years of CMBC, I was anxious to note the constituency response to what was developing in Winnipeg.

Over the years the Mennonite population of B.C. had markedly increased. Many had made progress in helping to develop the fruit basket of British Columbia as they moved to the rich orchards and berry fields of the Fraser

and Okanagan valleys. In July, strawberries and cherries were ripe for the picking, and the meals at the conference sessions offered fruit in abundance.

Most CMC churches had continued to use the German language for their worship services; hence, that was the primary language of the conference sessions. Rev. J. J. Thiessen was the conference chair, ably leading the sessions from beginning to end. My presentation, entitled "The Foundation Upon Which We Build," came on the first day. This was also the occasion for Rev. Thiessen to introduce this novice who was soon to join college faculty.

This was the first time I heard a report given by the president of CMBC, Dr. I. I. Friesen. Conference delegates received a summary of what had transpired on campus the previous year, what issues the faculty and board had dealt with, and what plans were being projected for the coming year(s). This would be my task for the years to come.

A special bonus for me during this time was being able to spend time with my oldest brother Jake, his wife Mary, and their family, who lived in Vancouver and whom I had not seen in a while. Their children were growing up: the eldest, John, was ten, Eleanor nine, Alvin eight, and their youngest, Edwin, was four. It was good to catch up after a ten-year absence.

Settling into Our New Location

Following the conference sessions, I returned to Pincher Creek to rejoin my family. There had been a tragic accident in my cousin Henry's family. His two oldest sons, Henry and Herbert, died in a drowning accident. The boys had gone swimming in a dugout about a mile from their home, got into a deep area, and both drowned. Another boy who was with them tried to but was unable to help them. The family was devastated, and mourned their loss for a long time.

We headed back to Winnipeg to establish ourselves in our new home at 274 Renfrew Street in the River Heights area. It was about a 30-minute walk to the college. Except for the houses constructed around the armed forces complex (Kapyong Barracks) just west of our place, there were not yet very many buildings in the Tuxedo area. Sir John Franklin School, which the children would attend, was two blocks west of our street. About half a mile further west was the Assiniboine Park which offered ample picnic space and many other diversions: the zoo, the pavilion, the floral conservatory, and one of the most beautiful flower gardens in Winnipeg.

Because we had very little household furniture and few appliances, some major purchases were necessary. We made these over the course of several months—and years. The house needed some immediate renovations but others had to wait until later. The house was a storey-and-a-half structure with four rooms downstairs and a large room with a gable roof upstairs. This room was one of the first to be renovated. By adding a partition, two rooms became the children's bedrooms. The yard needed some attention, and almost right away we planted several trees, including maple and fruit trees.

We had been church tramps for almost six years, so one of the first steps we took was to look up the Bethel Mennonite Church where I had worshipped eight years earlier when I was attending Mennonite Brethren Bible College. Bethel was desperately in need of more space in the building on Furby Street, and plans were well underway to construct a new building at Stafford and Carter. It was completed in 1955.

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Part IV

The Canadian Mennonite Bible College Era

Chapter 8

The First CMBC Era

When I joined the CMBC faculty in 1954, the curriculum contained a good selection of courses. As much as possible, these were assigned to maximize the educational strengths of the individual teachers. However, sometimes we were asked to teach courses which were not in our area of expertise and required a lot of preparation time. I found the first year very difficult. Since my major area of teaching was the New Testament I could take courses such as Introduction to New Testament, Life of Christ, and individual Bible book studies in stride. But until we appointed someone who had majored in Old Testament (two years later), I was also asked to teach Old Testament theology. I found the content exciting, but very difficult.

The entrance requirements for college studies were a Grade 12 diploma, but in the first years exceptions were always made. Students who did not have the necessary requirements had to write an English entrance test. Anyone who failed had to take a remedial English grammar course which I was asked to teach. Now I was grateful for the German grammar course I had taken years earlier at Mennonite Brethren Bible College; it had helped me learn English grammar. There were tedious but also hilarious times in the remedial class when students learned to laugh at their mistakes and foibles.

In the first three or four years of my new assignment, I was required to teach some of my courses in German. The constituency, particularly the churches of Manitoba, felt that students needed to know the German language to be able to minister when they returned to their home church. However, some students came from homes and churches where German was no longer used and to think that, just by taking classes instructed in German they would

learn the language well enough, was expecting the impossible. As the years passed, English became the language of instruction.

During my first two years the college was located in a large three-storey structure in a picturesque part of the city at 515 Wellington Crescent along the Assiniboine River. The first storey contained a large drawing room which served as our chapel, the executive offices, a kitchen and large dining room, and several classrooms. The second floor housed the library, the faculty office, and more classrooms. The third floor was a residence for male students who did their cooking in the downstairs kitchen. In total, the building had 16 rooms. The female students had a residence just north of Bethel Mennonite Church on Furby Street.

Of the nine faculty members, only the president and business manager had their own offices; the rest of us shared one large room with the desks set against the walls. Although this was inconvenient for meeting with students, we solved the matter by setting aside a separate room for that purpose. The president was Rev. I. I. Friesen, whose teaching field was Theology and Bible. The business manager was Rev. Henry Wall, who also taught German. Rev. Gerhard Lohrenz was a historian who taught secular history and church history. Rev. J. D. Adrian taught Homiletics and Bible, while David Janzen, my close friend from Springridge, taught Philosophy and Bible and also served as registrar. George and Esther Wiebe taught Music and directed the choirs; and I taught New Testament, Missions, and English.

In those years the student enrolment was 60-65. Classes were not large, averaging between 12-15 students, which made marking of papers manageable and allowed for one-on-one interaction with students. We met daily for chapel services, designated a prayer room for student use, and met every Saturday evening for a time of prayer and praise. The choirs visited churches regularly, and faculty were often invited to preach or to offer Bible studies in surrounding churches. Those were both enjoyable as well as informative experiences. During the course of our stay at CMBC I had occasion to visit most of the CMC churches from B.C. to Ontario.

Combining College with Church Involvement

As mentioned, we chose Bethel Mennonite Church as our place of worship in Winnipeg. Victoria was seven when we arrived, Ron was two, and Martin 10 months. Sunday school facilities in the Furby Street location were crowded, so

we were happy when the Stafford Street building was ready for occupancy just before Christmas 1955. A new pastor, Rev. George Groening, had been called just before we arrived. His family, along with a number of other families, had children the same ages as ours. Thus, we had an opportunity to visit and find fellowship for the entire family. It was under the leadership of Groening's predecessor, David Schroeder, that the church had become financially independent. (Bethel began as a mission church, supported by the Home Mission Board of the General Conference.)

Under Groening's leadership, the membership grew considerably with many coming to the city from outlying churches in southern Manitoba. This rapid growth led to further outreach. Actions were taken by the congregation to establish outposts, often called daughter churches. A Sunday school was begun in St. Vital which developed into the Sterling Avenue Mennonite Church. A second Sunday school was started in Oak Point northwest of Winnipeg. Then church services were begun and, in time, a church was organized there with the assistance of the Canadian conference. In 1960, Bethel agreed to establish a daughter congregation in the Elmwood area, and the Elmwood Bethel Mennonite Church was born. It remained on Talbot Street for almost 10 years; then the congregation purchased a building on Burrows Avenue to become the Burrows Bethel Mennonite Church.

More outreach endeavours followed. In 1963 action was taken to gather Bethel members and persons from other churches that were living in the Charleswood area to consider starting a congregation in that location. As a result Charleswood Mennonite Church was born with David Schroeder giving leadership in the first years. A new building was constructed on Haney Street in 1965. For these various ventures, the Bethel church gave financial assistance to each (as high as $15,000 for one) to help with start-up costs.

Midst all these exciting developments, Agnes and I were able to participate in teaching Sunday school and serving as deacons at Bethel. Agnes also led the Women's Mission Society, and I served on several committees and as chair of the congregation. We gave some consideration to joining one of the smaller groups which were being organized, but felt that Bethel was as easily accessible as any of the others. Several other demands were made on me. I was being considered for membership on several of the conference boards. Almost simultaneously I was asked to serve, first as member on the GC Board of

Education in 1956, then as vice-chair of the CMC in 1957. Both were three-year terms. The GC involvement led to my being elected to the Executive Committee, first as vice-chair and then as chair, each set of terms being six years from 1962 to 1974. Those assignments called for attending committee meetings held primarily in Newton, Kansas, the trips made almost exclusively by train. A one-way trip from Winnipeg to Newton took 30 hours, so travelling often took longer than the actual meetings. To make use of the time, I took along a portable typewriter, resting it on my lap or placing it on the suitcase beside me. When air travel became more common, travel time was greatly reduced. But even then I found the stress of out-of-town committee meetings difficult.

Work at the college was demanding and, as the student body increased, so did the need for more space. This was particularly evident in the inadequate facilities for faculty offices and classroom space and the need for more dormitory facilities. Plans for expansion led to several significant conference actions. One was the purchase of a large 20-acre tract of land in the Tuxedo area of the city. To make the purchase, the conference borrowed money from the bank. Plans were drawn up, contracts were let, and the first building was constructed in 1955. This consisted of the classroom wing, faculty offices, the chapel, the library, and the first kitchen-dining room. It was dedicated in February 1956. Three years later, a large three-storey student residence was constructed together with a larger modern kitchen and a sizeable dining room. This was actually phase one of a multi-phase construction. The main wing running east and west housed the students: the bottom floor apartments for married students, and the second and third floors for women and men, respectively. The shorter north wing housed the kitchen-dining room facilities, on the same level as the second floor of the south section, with some residence and storage rooms downstairs. That first building phase completed only half of the residence wing. An apartment was added on the west end for a faculty member to take up residence. This was a temporary addition. In 1961 a separate house was built on campus for the chief administrator. Because our earlier request to build faculty housing on campus was not granted by the city, I felt that at least one faculty member should reside there. This person would not be asked to take on extra duties.

A Change in Roles

Even as the campus facilities were expanding, changes were also imminent in the college leadership. Several developments led to this action. Expansion of the academic program called for an increase in personnel. At the same time, a major change taking place within the CMC was the move from the long-time elder system of church ministry to fewer lay ministers and more salaried clergy. Within the entire conference, this change led to tension and unhappiness among many of the elders who held the leadership within the *Lehrdienst* (ministerial). This change was seen by many as a struggle for authority. Resolution of this issue led to many conference actions and many committee meetings.[1] One point of contention was the practice of having more than one ordination. Until the middle of the twentieth century, elders received a second ordination for their office. But more and more, ministers raised the question: why, after having committed themselves to serving the church, would they need a second ordination to be qualified to officiate at communion and to baptize? There seemed to be no biblical basis for the common practice of double ordination. CMBC was involved in the issue for several reasons. Faculty members were asked to write papers delineating the biblical teaching which applied to the issue. Also, most faculty members were ordained, some with two ordinations.

At my office on 600 Shaftesbury Blvd. in the 1960s.

For the most part, relationships within the faculty were cordial and good. However, when several of the younger faculty articulated theological positions different from those of the earlier pastors, debates sometimes became very

[1] I dealt with this question in a paper entitled, "Policy Changes and Development in Leadership Patterns in MC Canada: 1950 to the Present," presented to a History symposium on July 3, 1997. This paper can be obtained from the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg. For another perspective on the issues, see Anna Ens, *In Search of Unity* (Winnipeg, MB: CMBC Publications, 1996).

intense. Also, many of the College Board members at that time were elders, and they sometimes held separate sessions where they made decisions with which many church members-at-large did not agree. This was the case when one faculty member, David Janzen, was seen as being too liberal in some of his views. The president, Rev. I. I. Friesen, saw Janzen's position as a threat; he shared his concerns with the College Board and with several elders in southern Manitoba. There were meetings, discussions, and papers written to try to resolve this issue. But in the end, David Janzen was dismissed from the faculty. I expressed my concerns to the College Board chair about the action taken, believing that Janzen's position had not been fairly presented. It seemed that some of the elders were also not satisfied with the way Rev. Friesen had dealt with the whole situation and with how he administered the college program. The stage was set for change. In this context I was approached by the College Board to accept the presidency of CMBC. I had not expected that the request for me to take the presidential role would come so quickly. Although there had been occasional conversation about a younger person taking the helm, to assume that position at age 34 was "really quite young!"[2]

The decision to accept this call was not an easy one to make. I agonized over it. I dialogued with individuals and with groups. Agnes and I prayed for God's leading. Finally, it seemed to me that, for the sake of the crucial role which CMBC was playing in our conference, I should accept the position. Again, Agnes supported me in this crucial decision. My inauguration took place in September 1959.

The move to the Tuxedo campus brought with it some new experiences. We particularly appreciated the open space: the spacious lawns, the beautiful forest just beyond the buildings to the west, and rows of planted trees along the edges of the campus, which became more impressive year by year. We had room for our own garden. And there were paths that led into the forest or, if that was too structured, we could leave the paths and walk freely. How

[2] In an unpublished paper entitled, "A Fifty Year Organizational History of Canadian Mennonite Bible College," Bruno Dyck suggests that the request made to the CMBC Board for financial support for doctoral studies was done with long-range presidential plans in mind," 13. That was not the way the financial request was communicated to me.

pleasant to meet deer coming out of the woods, or even grazing on the front lawn. We had the advantage of both country and city living.

To be sure, all of us had to make adjustments. Ron and Martin transferred from Sir John Franklin School to the Tuxedo School, a three-quarter mile walk from home. Victoria moved to the Tuxedo High School but two years later, in 1961, began to attend Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute in Elmwood for her Grade 9.

The children were all musical and took piano lessons. Ron was not too interested in practicing. For a while he tried playing the trumpet and soon learned the basics, but then turned his interests to other matters. He was quick to learn but needed special challenges to complete a task. He had a wry sense of humour, and was a persistent teaser. Martin began with piano lessons and did well, completing his Grade 4. He was slow, deliberate, and persistent in completing any task. He had patience that neither his brother nor his sister had. He had a vivid imagination and could even visualize himself as the preacher in front of a congregation. Learning was easy for him. Victoria was an easygoing young woman, very jovial and friendly. She had close friends and, for the most part, enjoyed her school work. She practiced her piano lessons faithfully, and later developed her voice into a lovely soprano. Studies, which did not challenge her, didn't get the necessary attention, but later she found college work very rewarding.

From left, Agnes, Victoria, Martin, myself and Ronald on my knee.

For the most part, the two years in our apartment on campus were a good experience for all of us. Agnes did have to put up with one "practice" which could be a bit trying. Next to our apartment was a student lounge where music students liked to rehearse their conducting. After they found a suitable hymn, they would sing the first stanza over and over again until, we assumed, they had perfected the technique. One day, when the one stanza was becoming *very* repetitious, there was an unexpected knock at our door. When Agnes

answered, she greeted the visitor with: "Did you come for the second stanza?" There was a perplexed look on Walter Franz's face. He was not a music student and had not been in the lounge to hear the repetition of the first stanza!

The move to the campus brought me into closer contact with student life. Learning the routine of the president's office and how to use the services of a secretary, giving leadership to the faculty, and keeping tab on the pulse of the institution were challenging and rewarding.

The faculty and staff gradually changed. Henry Wall was succeeded by P. R. Harder as business manager. Waldemar Janzen joined the faculty in 1956 to teach Old Testament and German. He also continued his studies in both areas, completing his doctoral work in Old Testament in 1969. David Schroeder completed his doctorate in New Testament in Germany in 1959, and joined the faculty that spring. Later he did further work in Philosophy, and also taught in that field. Gradually, we added arts courses to our offerings.

A Necessary Interruption

Princeton Seminary was pressuring me to complete my dissertation so, in the spring of 1960, I requested a three-month leave from the college. I returned to Princeton and immersed myself fully in research and writing. I had worked at a draft of the dissertation during summers and whenever I could find several days for concentrated research. I had spent time in the historical libraries of Goshen College, Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Bethel College, and Schwenckfelder Library in Pennsylvania, and had the research fairly well in hand. But it was clear that without uninterrupted time for actual writing, the job would not get finished. Hence, I chose to go to Princeton where I could benefit from the counsel of Dr. Piper. The writing went well and, when I handed in my first draft, Dr. Piper was satisfied with what I had done thus far. But one more chapter was needed to explore whether, in his work with the Scriptures, Menno Simons remained true to his interpretive principles. I needed to see if the main beliefs as I had stated them were borne out by his exegesis. In other words, I was being asked to prove that I had read Menno correctly.

I spent the summer doing further research and writing. At the end of the summer I returned to Winnipeg to resume my duties at the college. That fall was very busy; I used weekends to finish writing and revising the dissertation. In November I found recluse in a small hotel where no one would bother me

until the job was finished. My typist for the finished copies was Anne Neufeld, who had served as my secretary at college for several years, but had moved to Altona in the fall of 1960. I valued her services, but I had to make several trips to Altona to proofread and to give guidance. Early in the new year I was finally able to mail two copies of the completed manuscript to Dr. Piper for his and the examination committee members' reading and appraisal.

My oral examination was set for April 25, 1961. To prepare for that event, I travelled to Princeton already on the 20th to once more immerse myself in the tome which I had worked on for six years. I had a good oral examination experience, and the committee approved my dissertation and my defence. Later that spring, Agnes and I travelled to the Princeton commencement where, on June 1, I graduated with the Doctor of Theology (ThD) degree. (Ten years later that degree would be exchanged for the PhD degree.)[3]

It was very special that Agnes could share that graduation with me. After all, her contributions during the preceding years of study, the writing of the dissertation, and the beginning of my academic career in Winnipeg often left her with more than her share of family responsibility.

Things Are New

Only those who have gone through a similar experience can appreciate the load which was lifted from my shoulders when the dissertation was complete. As the process dragged on longer than it should have, some of the joy of research and writing diminished. The most difficult part was finding sufficient time to "stick with it." With so many details that keep a president occupied, I always needed a bit of time to shift into "dissertation mode." Often, just as I got started writing I would be interrupted by any number of issues. What a relief after that milestone of completing my dissertation! Now I could go to

[3] Princeton Theological Seminary had always offered to, and required of, students academic work of the highest quality. But in the course of several decades, other seminaries were also offering the Doctor of Theology (ThD) degree with academic demands leaving something to be desired. Princeton administrators therefore decided that they would exchange their ThD degree for the PhD, a degree that was recognized in academic circles throughout the world. There would be no further requirements for this degree, except that students needed to return their copy of the ThD degree. A sequel to that action was that the content of the Princeton ThD degree was changed, and subsequently offered for the completion of a practical studies program.

bed at night without the constant weight bearing me down, the weight of an unfinished task. I experienced a joy, which was so deep and so relaxing—and so welcome.

The house on CMBC campus where our family lived for 8 years.

There was something more. The house, which had been planned on campus for the chief administrator, was completed, and our family moved into a brand new home with three bedrooms upstairs plus a full basement with a large family room and another bedroom, which our boys immediately appropriated as theirs. A bonus was the fireplace in the living room upstairs, which our family thoroughly enjoyed. When company came and an extra bed was needed, Victoria had to vacate her bedroom. She was quite elated because she would get to sleep on the living room couch. How she loved watching the fire burn down in the fireplace, then fall asleep to dream till morning.

Martin and Ron measuring the water's depth with their gum boots, 1960.

The boys soon had a tree house at the edge of the woods just beyond the garden, built by them and their father. In winter, a small rink next to the garage afforded the setting for future hockey players (to give Wayne Gretzky a little competition if he should come by?). Getting the entire campus yard in shape took some time, but living in that location was a real joy. And what more could the youngsters desire than small floods in spring that afforded holes deep enough to sink the tallest gum boots out of sight!

Further Institutional Growth

The years 1961-1965 brought further changes at the college. To enrich our course offerings we introduced evening classes for students from Winnipeg and southern Manitoba churches. Then, with the conference covering travel expenses, we began to offer ministers' courses, usually held at the beginning of February. These were gradually changed to ministers and lay courses, and they attracted participants from all across Canada. Sometimes we brought in outside instructors to teach some of these courses. The 1965 president's report

indicated that seven faculty members taught the ministers and lay courses, while six instructors taught the evening courses.

Faculty interest in doing more writing and publishing led the Board to set up a budget in 1965 to provide funding for more concentrated attention in this area. A few years later a special fund was established to assist faculty in this venture.

An administrative concern which was raised several times dealt with provincial taxes. For years private schools were charged the education tax. A meeting was arranged with provincial officials about this issue and it resulted in the passage of Exemption Bill #14, which exempted schools such as CMBC from the education tax, saving the school almost $5000 annually.

Negotiations were carried on with the University of Manitoba (U of M) to see about further credits for CMBC courses. We are indebted to Waldemar Janzen, who served as college dean for many years, for carrying our side of the dialogue with the University in reaching an agreement in 1964 for CMBC students to receive university credit for up to five courses (the equivalent of one year of university). CMBC thus became "an approved teaching centre" for the University of Manitoba. That recognition continued with further courses added so students could get up to two years of transfer credit. CMBC faculty were also drawn in to teach occasional courses at the university campus. The academic integrity of the college was thus being acknowledged. From its beginning, a feature which marked the college as outstanding was its music program. In 1965 the Board approved a Bachelor of Music program which had been planned by the music faculty and the dean. It gradually grew in popularity. The choirs, so ably trained and led by George and Esther Wiebe, drew large crowds in churches and in the community.

A significant number of graduates went directly into church work not only as pastors but also other forms of ministry within the CMC churches—from Black Creek on Vancouver Island to Ontario in the east. Increasingly, pastors were being called from among CMBC students, and many were elected as members of CMC boards-commissions. The Mennonite Pioneer Mission, later renamed Native Ministries, was taken over from the Bergthaler churches in Manitoba by the CMC in 1965, and a number of CMBC students gave years of their lives ministering to the aboriginal people of Canada.

CMBC had a distinct philosophy of education which formed the basis of its planning. Waldemar Janzen wrote in a paper on the basic educational philosophy of CMBC that its aim was to "offer non-professional theological

education on a post-high-school level, together with sufficient instruction in the liberal arts to form a rich background and setting for such education."[4] That continued to be our purpose.

Within the family circle, 1964 was the year that my mother passed away after an eight-month struggle with cancer. All seven brothers were able to be present for her funeral in Springridge on November 29. What was more, they were all able to see her that last summer, although not at the same time. She had been a widow for 24 years, and left us a most worthwhile legacy. She learned to know many of the grandchildren as well as two great grandchildren. Only three brothers and their families were living in Alberta when mother completed her earthly sojourn. Until the last year, her health was such that she was able to visit her sons and families in Baton Rouge, Louisiana (George), Vancouver, British Columbia (Jake), and Winnipeg (Abe and me). Those visits were times of "catch-up" on experiences, but more so, an opportunity for deep sharing and reflection on what God had done for us as a family. When father had only a short time to live and knew that his death was imminent, he told mother that she needed to stay with the children longer (God willing) to continue to be a mentor and a model for us. That happened as we shared her visits in different settings. With thanksgiving we think back on those precious times together. Mother was put to rest in the Springridge church cemetery beside father's grave. Now they and we await the glorious resurrection.

As the year 1964-1965 came to a close, our children were looking toward the change which a Sabbatical leave would bring. Ron had completed Grade 8 and Martin Grade 7. Before the leave started we took a lengthy trip to visit family in Alberta, and to attend both the CMC conference in Abbotsford and the GC sessions in Estes Park, Colorado. That trip allowed the boys to visit first their Baergen cousins, then try out what the Conference Activities Committee had planned for the children. They enjoyed some of the sports, but the horse rides were too juvenile. Someone thought the horses had to be led. What kind of riding was that? Victoria did not make the trip to B.C. but

[4] Waldemar Janzen, "The Basic Educational Philosophy of Canadian Mennonite Bible College" (Winnipeg, MB: CMBC, 1966), 4.

travelled from Winnipeg to Estes Park with the youth group. She found the youth conference both enjoyable and provocative. She returned to Winnipeg for the summer session to complete her course in Elementary German.

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Chapter 9

Sabbatical at Bluffton College

It took considerable time to get ready for the first sabbatical in 1965-1966. We rented the campus house, including furniture, to a faculty member, Lawrence Klippenstein and his family. We took along only the clothing we would need. Initially, it seemed we might go to Europe for the year. The Mennonites of Holland were getting ready to host the Eighth Mennonite World Conference, and I was asked if I might help the Dutch Mennonite Conference, *Allgemeene Doopsgezinde Societaet*, with preparations for the conference sessions. I was certainly interested and eager to have the opportunity to practice the Dutch language again. But one of the stipulations for such an arrangement was spending a minimum of two years in Holland, and the CMBC Board would not grant me more than a one-year leave. Instead, I responded to an invitation from the newly appointed president of Bluffton College, Dr. Robert Kreider, to spend a year as acting dean at the school in order to give the administration more time to fill that position.

We left for Bluffton on August 6 and arrived on August 9. We spent the first few days in a room in one of the college buildings until the house we were to occupy became available. Its owners were moving to Florida for half the year. The house was easy to find and could be seen from the interstate highway. It was spacious with a large vacant lot beside it to allow for all kinds of activities. A favourite for all of us was swimming in the town pool. It was located beside a gravel pit with a deep reservoir to which one graduated after having mastered the techniques in the pool. A summer family permit enabled us to make full use of the swimming pool, and all three children became expert swimmers.

Victoria stayed in Winnipeg for the summer, then came to Bluffton on August 28 so our family could be together for the year. She moved into one of the student residences at the college. She began her year of studies with sophomore standing. Ron and Martin travelled by school bus to attend the public school in the town of Buckingham south of Bluffton.

Victoria joined the soprano section of the A Capella Choir. Both Ron and Martin joined the Boy Scouts in town and learned the skills of camping and roughing it in the wild. Martin became fascinated with radio, joined a radio club, purchased a radio kit, and kindled his interest in electronics. He would later develop this hobby through further study and it eventually became his life's profession. Ron's interest in model cars may well have been the spark which got him started as a mechanic. With father's help, even a motorized scooter brought out some of the boys' hidden talents. After some time Ron's interest moved to carpentry, cabinet making, and construction, which he still practices. For spending money, both boys found a paper route in Bluffton. Despite health problems (back pain and bursitis), Agnes did some private studies to prepare herself for further educational pursuits when we returned to Winnipeg.

Socially, we made new friends, both in the college and in the church. Some classmates from our time of study in the U.S. had found their way to Bluffton, and this gave occasion to pick up our earlier friendships. We rubbed shoulders again with Bill and Willadene Keeney with whom we had shared kitchen and dining room facilities while studying in Chicago. Burton and Eleanor Yost had been our neighbours there as well. Robert and Lois Kreider also lived in seminary housing during our Chicago chapter while he was doing a degree in history. And Elmer Neufelds were friends and fellow students from Bethel days and later also from seminary in Chicago; Elmer was now teaching philosophy at Bluffton.

The usual purpose of a sabbatical is the opportunity to carry on research. This would not be my reason for going to Bluffton. By now I had spent several years in administration and was eager to enhance my administrative knowledge in another setting. I had been a student in the United States and was eager to find out what an administrator's role would be in this context. Bluffton College was preparing for expansion. Faculty teams were planning to visit a number of other college and university campuses, both to look at types of possible buildings for the Bluffton campus and to study educational course

offerings which might enhance its program. As the acting academic dean, I was to travel with these teams, to inform myself of the bigger educational picture, and to suggest possible changes which Bluffton could consider.

In addition to focussing on administration, I was of course planning to do preparation work on my CMBC courses. Also, given the breaks which are commonly interspersed throughout the school year, particularly at Christmas, we hoped this would give us time to vacation with brother George and family in Louisiana.

I appreciated Dr. Kreider's readiness to structure my assignment in such a way that I could receive helpful pointers for CMBC's future building and expansion plans. I wrote a paper on "Christian Higher Education in Canada" for the Bluffton faculty; that gave me the opportunity to compare the Canadian and American higher educational systems.

Learning to know Bluffton faculty members enriched our lives in a number of ways. At CMBC our co-workers all focussed on religious studies with some arts education as a second field of study. Here many areas of academic concentration were represented: Mathematics, Sociology, Psychology, English, Education, Philosophy, Biology, Art, Political Science, and more—all the courses which make up the content of a Liberal Arts program. It was a thrill for me to interact with these colleagues who were committed both to the Christian faith and to teaching in their area of expertise.

Dr. Lloyd L. Ramseyer, who was teaching Psychology at Bluffton, had given 26 years of service, preceding Robert Kreider as president. I will never forget Ramseyer's speech made at the GC sessions in Winnipeg in 1956. Under discussion was the motion to move Mennonite Biblical Seminary from Chicago to the Goshen-Elkhart area to make possible an affiliation with a sister Mennonite institution, Goshen Biblical Seminary. Ramseyer did not support this action. However, when the motion passed, Ramseyer rose and asked for the floor. He said: "You heard my strong plea during the discussion to have the seminary remain in Chicago. The vote has resulted in what was not my choice. But now I want to go on record to pledge my support for the decision made; I will work to the best of my ability to make our affiliation with the Mennonite Church as meaningful as it can be. And I call on all of the delegates to join me in this undertaking." Here I saw the true spirit of brothers

and sisters coming to a decision, and then pledging to work as a united team to implement the action taken. Such a commitment moved me deeply.

While at Bluffton, we had many opportunities to attend fine arts productions and sports events. These provided a most welcome change of pace. (I had learned to know something of the excitement of students putting on theatre productions already when I was attending Bethel College, even though I never participated in them. It was there also that I became familiar with the different kinds of sports, such as basketball, tennis, and football, which were not played in our small rural school back in Alberta.) At Bluffton I came to appreciate these even more. I was pleased to be introduced to Mozart's opera *Cosi fan tutte*, and Tennessee Williams' drama *The Glass Menagerie*, presented by college students who were budding actors.

Our church home while in Bluffton was the First Mennonite Church, shepherded by Rev. Jacob T. Friesen. Jake was a sincere, able, and committed pastor, very much appreciated. The First Mennonite Church provided us with the privilege of attending the adult Sunday school class; we gained a deep appreciation for the faith of the members of this class. We discovered that one couple from the class was abroad for a three-year term under the Commission on Overseas Mission (COM). What struck me was that, not only were members of the class giving this couple financial support, they had also taken over the operation of their farm, so that when the couple returned they could resume farming without suffering any setback. That was a lesson in practical faith which we had not encountered in quite the same way before. It was an involvement which bound this group together in Christian love and gave them a reason for being.

Our daughter Victoria spent 3 years in Bluffton and graduated in 1968.

This church continued to be important to us even after we left since Victoria continued to attend there. She received baptism from Rev. Friesen, and was appreciated for her interest in social services and child education. She completed her BA at the college two years later and returned to Winnipeg, where her focus on the social sciences and in music prepared her for her profession within the city school system.

Bluffton's campus, like that of Bethel's, was picturesque. Sizable sections of the trees and shrubbery were still in their virgin state. And the beautiful flowers growing along the banks of a babbling brook which meandered through the wooded sections of the campus often drew us to walk there. Nestled under giant trees were several of the college buildings, some dating back many years and giving the campus both a quaint and a regal appearance. With sections of green lawn scattered here and there, the setting and the weather were such that the inauguration of President Kreider that fall was planned for outdoors. When thunder clouds gathered to the north of the campus during the event, there was some apprehension that we might have to run for cover to the sports auditorium. But Kreider took the threat in stride, later musing that it must have been Jack Purvis, his public relations man who, like a prophet walking a beat on the edge of the crowd, kept the storm at bay.

Bluffton College underwent several innovations during the year we were there. Computers were just coming on the scene and, during the summer of 1965, one was installed to be ready for the fall registration. It was a giant step forward to have the computer spew out its lists, without having the secretary tediously type hundreds of names. We did have one interesting experience. In the middle of the computer's noble and time-conserving work, a thunderstorm rolled in and a lightening bolt struck the power line, momentarily cutting off the power. All was not lost. The computer, in a split second, deciphered its task when the power was restored, but it did backtrack and begin its duplication task from the beginning.

New that year was also the introduction of a tele-lecture series for educational purposes. Three regional Christian schools joined Bluffton to be connected by radio-telephone to offer the same lecture to all four campuses live. The lecturers could make their presentations from one of the four locations and be picked up by the other three. Following the presentation, discussion could be carried on by students from all four schools. This innovation greatly enhanced the available resources of the individual schools with a substantial financial saving.

Bluffton's program saw another innovation. As a Mennonite school, it made contacts with those of Mennonite faith throughout the United States. Because travel time from Bluffton to such distant areas as Pennsylvania or Kansas, and especially California, was considerable, air travel became a common mode of transportation. One weekend shortly after our arrival at

Bluffton, I joined two other faculty members to fly to Pennsylvania to offer a workshop in one of the churches. We boarded a private, four-seater plane, and arrived at our destination in just four hours. This was not my first time flying, but covering the states of Ohio and Pennsylvania afforded a panorama most breathtaking to behold. Unfortunately the weather was not cooperative on the return flight. Foggy skies greeted us above the mountain range in western Pennsylvania after we were less than halfway into our return trip. We ended up finding a landing strip, renting a car, and making the rest of the trip in a trusty automobile.

Another bonus for me during the year at Bluffton was to meet monthly for a noon luncheon with the deans from the other three Mennonite schools: Bethel College in Kansas, Goshen College in Indiana, and Eastern Mennonite College in Virginia. We were able to dialogue about common interests and concerns of our respective programs and campuses.

The 11 months in Bluffton passed all too quickly. Now we needed to say goodbye to many friends and to an overall enriching experience. It was with some heartache that we bade our daughter farewell. Her studies there would continue for two more years.

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Chapter 10

The Second CMBC Era

When we got back to Winnipeg there was little time before I was re-introduced into responsibilities at CMBC. In only four days I needed to take seriously the notation in my date book: "Faculty Workshop" on September 1-2 at Camp Assiniboia. Preparations for the school year included checking details for registration days and long-range planning for the months ahead.

The schedule for the year 1966-1967 was very full, not only with the regular school routine and activities. Since CMBC was a conference school, our involvement with the CMC was many-faceted. Most faculty members served on various committees and boards, and were drawn into many meetings that were often held on the college campus. As mentioned earlier (see chapter 8 above), I was elected to positions both within the Canadian and the General conferences. The latter necessitated many train trips to the central offices in Newton, Kansas, and to Chicago, Illinois. Also, there were the regular annual meetings of the provincial conferences where the college needed to be represented.

Other occasions drew faculty members into assignments, for example when students asked us to officiate at their weddings. For me, three such events happened during 1966-1967, fortunately all in Winnipeg. In addition, two students asked me to participate in their ordination, one in Winnipeg and the other in Edmonton. Also, several other major events on the horizon called for considerable pre-planning time, again drawing me as college president into the process. One of these was the Billy Graham Crusade which was to convene in Winnipeg May 23-June 3, 1967. I did not have specific responsibilities except to sit on stage several times for the entire service. As

large as the attendance was and as thoroughly as it drew in the church community, most of that school year was influenced by the expectations which this forthcoming crusade engendered. Mennonites wondered how we could have our peace and non-resistance stance recognized at that event. When I checked with one of the Mennonite pastors, he did not think it wise to raise the issue. The general feeling among many Mennonite churches was that, since this was an evangelistic crusade to try to bring people into the church, it was probably better not to focus on the specific tenets of our belief system. Too often even raising the issue of pacifism caused disunity rather than unity. All of this indicated that we had not done our homework and that, in the future, we should make sure that we had specific input in establishing the purpose(s) of such a gathering. Both CMBC and CMC cooperated with the other groups to sponsor the event.

Also to convene during the summer of 1967 was the Mennonite World Conference in Amsterdam, Holland, July 23-30. Again, as president of CMBC, and possibly because I had presented a paper at the previous world conference in Kitchener-Waterloo, I was assigned a paper which was to deal with Anabaptist-Mennonite hermeneutics. I had prepared the paper in English for the printed program, but when I arrived in Amsterdam, I was asked whether, since we were in Europe, I could present my study in German. Of course I could, but I needed to work late into the night for several days to prepare the paper for presentation in German.

The trip to Amsterdam came with a special bonus. MCC had asked if I would lead a tour group to Israel prior to the conference. Since it was during the summer, I had the available time and gladly consented. Hence, immediately after CMC sessions in Leamington, Ontario, our tour group of 12 persons joined a charter flight of conference travellers at the Toronto airport on July 10 to make the trans-Atlantic flight to Amsterdam. The four-engine plane was propeller-driven, hardly comparable to today's jetliners. The flight took 12 hours, and did not quite go as planned. Somewhere above the Atlantic one of the four engines died. But with the necessary adjustment and with God's protection and guidance, the pilots brought the flight safely to Amsterdam.

In Palestine

Our group was in good spirits as we left Amsterdam for the Holy Land. The weeks before had seen the unfolding of the Six-Day War. If the war would

have dragged on, an alternate route would have taken us through Greece and Turkey. But for the Israelis the tourist season was an indispensable economic feeder into the national treasury, so no pains were spared to keep detours and travel difficulty to a minimum. We visited Greece and Istanbul, Turkey, prior to arriving in Tel Aviv on July 15.

During our time in Israel we took nothing for granted. At one check point, which led us on a detour around an obstruction in the road, the driver in front of us was refusing to follow the instructions of a guard stationed there. After heated conversation, the guard was ready to bring the butt of his rifle down on the car's windshield. The driver thought better of his contrary attitude. Our bus driver also had an unfortunate experience. He was caught speeding and was pulled over by a traffic patrol officer. No amount of arguing got him out of his difficulty: he received his speeding ticket.

It was one thing to read about Jerusalem; it was quite another to be there in person. We arrived at 3:30 a.m. on Sunday, July 16. After a mislaid list of our reservations was finally discovered, we settled in for a short rest in the OrGil Hotel, slept somewhat longer than usual, and then set out to visit the Garden Tomb with another group led by David Habegger from Illinois. With them we shared a worship service in the garden and celebrated the Lord's Supper seated on benches in the shade of large trees. The setting was lovely, quiet, and peaceful. From where we sat in the sunken garden, we could see the face of a cliff into which a tomb had been hewn. This was one of the traditional places considered to be the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, the man who requested the body of Jesus from Pilate so that he might bury it. Suddenly, in the middle of our worship service, an explosion nearby shattered the peacefulness and gave us quite a scare. Throughout the day, soldiers detonated landmines which were still being uncovered in the area following the Six-Day War. Habegger used the interruption to remind us that it was into exactly such a violent situation that Christ had come to bring peace. How vividly we were reminded of the volatile relationship which existed between the Jews and the Arabs. The worship time inspired us and renewed our faith in the crucified and risen Redeemer. At the brow of the hill into which the tomb had been hewn was the rock formation which, some suggest, had given rise to the name of the place: Golgotha, the place of a skull. Later, we also visited the large Church of the Holy Sepulchre, some distance west and south of the Garden Tomb. This church, another tradition holds, is the location not

only of the tomb but also of the place of Jesus' crucifixion. Coupled with this tradition is the view that this might also be the place where Jesus' path of suffering ended, the *Via Dolorosa*, when he carried the cross to the place of his execution.

Another very captivating sight was the temple area on which stood the Dome of the Rock with its golden dome and, a bit further south, the Al-Aqsa Mosque with a silver dome. These were built over many years when the Muslims were in control of the Holy Land. The Dome of the Rock was said to be built above the rock on which Abraham was instructed to offer up Isaac, but then had his hand stayed by the angel of the Lord. Because the Muslims controlled the two mosques in this area, the Jews worshipped on the west side of the Temple Mount, known as the Wailing Wall, where they came to pray and lament the loss of their temple.

We were able to spend some time at the Sea of Galilee, a lake 90 kilometres north of Jerusalem. Besides being beautiful, this spot is also significant because Jesus spent considerable time both at the lake and its adjoining towns. On the north end of the sea was Capernaum, the home of Peter where Jesus often visited. Just west of the lake was Nazareth where Jesus grew up, and a bit further west and south was Cana, the place where he performed his first sign, changing water into wine. And of course, the lake was where the disciples who lived in the area made their living, where Jesus supplied them with several large catches of fish, and where, on occasion, he spoke to the crowds who followed him, using a boat as his pulpit and the shore where the people were seated as the amphitheatre. Not far from the northwest shore was the Church of the Beatitudes, built on the traditional spot where Jesus probably gave the Sermon on the Mount.

Our group also had the privilege of taking a boat ride from Tiberias to Capernaum. From the middle of the lake we could see the western shoreline with its series of hills and valleys. One could imagine how the winds funnelled down the valleys to the water to create the drafts which, in just minutes, could whip the water into a frenzy and create the massive waves characteristic of that body of water.

When we made our way along the western plain which extends to the eastern coast line of the Mediterranean, we stopped briefly at the modern city of Haifa, the largest industrial area of Israel. As we continued south, we were struck by how irrigation has enriched and fertilized the land. Most significant

were the ruins of Caesarea, especially the sections of the aqueduct, a structure built by Herod the Great to bring water from Mt. Carmel to the city of Caesarea. This city was also where the Crusaders set up headquarters when they sought to wrest the land from the Muslims. That blot on British attempts to rout the so-called infidels from Palestine is one of the many sad chapters of world history. Perhaps the more recent attempts to force a peaceable co-existence on the Israelis and the Arabs have not achieved better results. Will the good news of Jesus Christ bring humankind to acknowledge that the only solution is the way of peace as accomplished by our Lord Jesus on the cross?

Our return flight from Tel Aviv via Athens to Amsterdam went off without incident. The flight over the Mediterranean was beautiful. From six miles up we could almost view the whole distance which Paul covered on his ocean voyage to Rome. As we ate breakfast, we feasted our eyes on the white caps riding the waves of the sea below. Those four hours of flying gave us the opportunity to reflect on our Holy Land experiences, to make comparisons with the understanding of the land we had gleaned from our earlier studies—from Sunday school days on through graduate school—and to ponder what role this modern country might play as the 20th century unfolded.

The Mennonite World Conference

The Mennonite World Conference (MWC) which convened in the Netherlands was the eighth such gathering of Mennonites from all over the world. Conference guests were keenly interested in the conference theme, "The Witness of the Holy Spirit," noted Erland Waltner, chair of MWC. Some presenters who wrote papers "were eager to explore the theological dimensions of finding the Holy Spirit in human experience," while "others were more concerned about the application of the Word of the Spirit to the burning issues of our time."[1] Whereas a dozen addressed theological facets of the theme, 45 other presentations in the sectional meetings focussed on the perplexing issues of the day.

The conference sessions convened in the RAI Congress Center, the stately and functional complex built for such large gatherings. Some 6,000

[1] Erland Waltner, in Cornelius Dyck, ed., *The Witness of the Holy Spirit: Proceedings of the Mennonite World Conference, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, July 23-30, 1967* (Elkhart, IN: Mennonite World Conference, 1967), III.

Mennonites from more than 30 countries came together to plumb the depths of the chosen topic and to experience fellowship with one another. One could not have imagined a more diverse group in their dress, lifestyle, and forms of expression, yet all were open to live in the unity of the Spirit and to allow that divine leading which brings us to oneness in Christ Jesus.

That oneness was tested by various observations and by some disturbing questions. In his highly provocative presentation on peace and modern revolutionary movements, Vincent Harding, professor at Spelman College, Atlanta, Georgia, quoted the American black genius, W. E. B. DuBois, as claiming that "The problem of the 20th century will be the problem of the color line: the relationship of the white races of Europe and America to the darker races of Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Islands of the Sea."[2] Harding asserted that he had no difficulty believing that the Spirit of truth was using such a person to break us Mennonites out of our uncaring stance. We needed to become aware of the explosive worlds of colour and revolution and to become more involved in the social problems of the day. Too often we have left those struggles to those suffering injustice.

Harding left us with challenges which could not easily be shaken. Would we hear the revolutionary voices as ones that would awaken us to recognize that our peace stance might actually serve as a cloak to cover our fears? Or was it an excuse to avoid the call to suffer when the situation required us to do so? Would we be able to give up our comfortable lifestyles, our ostentatious spending, and our unwillingness to actually hear that our Lord Jesus was asking us to take up our cross and follow Him? The communion service following Harding's presentation was a powerful movement of the Spirit. But were we ready to go to our brothers and sisters for reconciliation, then return to finish our sacred celebration? What did Jesus call us to do?

During the conference sessions it was my privilege to stay with a young Dutch couple, to enjoy their warm hospitality, to learn some practical Dutch expressions, and to ponder the family tradition which had taken our fore-parents to Holland more than four centuries earlier. The week passed quickly. We again joined our charter flight and, within a day, had returned to Winnipeg where we were reunited with our loved ones and could again resume our daily routines.

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[2] Vincent Harding, "Peace and Modern Revolutionary Movements," in *The Witness of the Holy Spirit*, 337.

Family Developments

Before focussing on the CMBC program, I share some personal developments within our family. Victoria remained in Bluffton after our sabbatical to complete her degree at the college. We returned to Bluffton for her graduation celebration. As a member of the Bluffton College choir, she had the privilege of accompanying the choir to Europe in the summer of 1967. Now she returned to Winnipeg with us and found employment in the city's educational system as a social worker with the Child Guidance Clinic.

Two years later, she had worked her way into the system well and had also found a life partner, Ross McIntosh. Ross had completed his science degree at the University of Manitoba and was working in the personnel department of the Winnipeg General Hospital. Their wedding took place on September 26, 1970 in the CMBC auditorium. Ross was a member of St. Andrews River Heights United Church, so both his pastor, Dr. C. Earle Gordon, and Rev. William Block of Bethel Mennonite Church officiated at the wedding. I walked the bride down the aisle and Agnes and I gave her away to belong to another. Some students helped us prepare for the occasion, and Uncle Abe lent his culinary skills by carving all the turkeys for the banquet (about 200 persons in attendance).

Ron and Martin had been waiting a long time to play a trick on their sister, and what better way was there than to "tin-can" the wedding car. We were aware of their plans, so we contacted our next door neighbour and asked if we could borrow their garage for the day. At a time when we sent Ron and Martin away on errands, we drove Ross' car into the garage, closed the door, and the car stayed there until that evening when the couple left on their honeymoon. The boys were very disappointed that they were not able to carry out their trick.

Ron attended high school after we returned from Bluffton, then began work as a mechanic in a local garage only a few blocks from our home. After four more years of living in the house on campus, we made another move. We found a house on Lanark Street in the River Heights area just over a mile from the college campus. It was across from J. B. Mitchell Public School (named after Ross' great-grandfather) and close to several small shopping centres. This location served as our home for eight years.

In the meantime Ron discovered the love of his life in the small suburb of Charleswood. Two years after Victoria and Ross's wedding, Ron and Carol-

Ann Morien were married on August 30, 1972. They chose the English Gardens in Assiniboine Park, about two miles from our home and just three-quarters of a mile north of the college campus, as their venue. The exact place of the ceremony was the sundial surrounded by trees and a variety of beautiful flowers. A small wedding party surrounded the couple as dad officiated. A small apartment near the centre of the city served as their first home. Martin, in the meantime, completed his last year of high school at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate.

Planning Ahead

During the late 1960s and the early 1970s we were satisfied with how the college program was developing. As the enrolment increased to over 100 students, we were able to develop a fairly well-rounded program. We had minimal turnover in faculty; most joined our teaching staff with what I observed as enthusiastic participation. We also advanced reasonably well in the academic field. As growing demands were placed on faculty, we in turn expected more from our students. Both we and our constituency made comparisons with other schools and universities, and we affirmed that our faculty was as competent as university personnel and that our students had a better-than-average record in their academic achievements.

Responses from our constituency varied. They commended the school for its good academic standards and greatly appreciated the music program, especially the choir presentations, and recognized the dedication of the teaching staff. The reports which students shared back home about their positive experiences contributed to recruitment of new students. Also, many parents appreciated the positive changes which they saw in their children. But criticisms were also expressed. Some felt that faculty should be more concerned about student lifestyles; we did not place enough restrictions on male/female relationships. Smoking and drinking were issues as well. At some conference sessions severe criticism was levelled at the faculty and administration for this perceived laxness. But it should be said that some in our constituency knew that we were dealing with what most parents face constantly; that is, whether to allow their children to make mistakes. Of course we could give illustrations of the changes which we saw in the lives of a number of the students, but confidentiality was at stake, and it was the

students we were trying to help. We felt that our board members were supportive of our solid Bible study and developing programs, the results of which were having a positive effect in our churches.

We received criticism of our theology and teaching, especially our apparent lack of emphasis on evangelism and missions. These criticisms resulted in part because the traditional methods of evangelism and missions were undergoing major changes. We were supportive of the study conferences on these topics that the General Conference held.

One major focus in our planning was faculty development. We were happy for the strengths which were evident in our group, and were thankful that four of our faculty members were working on their doctoral dissertations. And it was no small testimony to their abilities and qualities that both some faculty and staff received calls from other institutions. We further asked how we could supplement the strengths which we had and add new faculty members who combined sound scholarship with a healthy approach to evangelism that did not simply follow popular fads.

A second area of development was our course offerings. Over the years we had continued to add new courses and to eliminate those that no longer served their purpose. Specifically, we sought to integrate theology with the disciplines of economics and ethics. In the practical field we decided to take a fresh look at the "how-to" courses. This emphasis was appropriate at a time when the GC was planning to develop a new Sunday school curriculum. In all our planning we not only considered which courses to add but also how to incorporate changes of the past decades into existing courses.

A major change that was taking place in our constituency was the interest shown by women to enter the pastoral ministry. We were faced with the challenging question: How could we make a case for the legitimacy of supporting this training when the Bible stated that women should not speak in church? This led to several of our faculty presenting biblical studies and pointing out that correctives were needed to understand fully what biblical writers were saying. David Schroeder, for example, gave a helpful consideration of Paul's position on this issue. He wrote in one of his papers, "Paul recognized with Jesus that the new life must be lived in the world. He therefore tried to show what it would mean for women to be truly liberated and yet to live in a given historical setting. . . . Paul could say, 'There is neither

male nor female,' 'be subject to your husbands,' and 'be silent in the church,' without speaking against himself. He could do so because he was seeking to show what it meant to live the new life in the world of his day."[3]

As we pursued this issue further, we noted how the Old Testament gives accounts of many women who served, women who were in the ministry. These included Sarah, the wife of Abraham; Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron; and Deborah, the judge. In the New Testament there was Mary, the mother of Jesus, with her gripping Magnificat as she discerned the ways of God in her Son. Add Anna, the prophetess in the temple, who received the gift of seeing and recognizing the Christ-child. The four daughters of Philip, called prophets (Acts 21:8-9), were recipients of the gift of the Spirit to serve for the common good of the church. And there was Phoebe, the deacon of the church in Cenchrea, and Prisca, the co-worker of Paul.

Further Bible study showed that the early church was called on to deal with issues where there was no specific counsel given on how to resolve them. For example, when there was a split decision among the members whether Gentiles needed to be circumcised as a condition for becoming a believer, a study conference was called (Acts 15). The outcome of that meeting was an action which they based on the leading of the Spirit: circumcision was not needed to become a Christian. Before members of the early church came to their conclusion, they heard Peter's testimony of how Cornelius had received the Spirit when he believed; then Barnabas joined in as well and shared, along with Paul, what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles. We believed that this procedure could also be ours in dealing with issues. We too wanted to seek God's face, to ask for the Spirit's leading, and then to follow that leading.

Along with planning to clarify and improve our teaching approach and our course content and dealing with the issue of women in ministry, consideration was also given to a third area: the physical plant. Over the years it had slowly increased in value to $750,000. Debts amounted to $20,000. The board had been honouring a "gentleman's agreement" that the college would not request expansion monies from the conference for a number of years. But board members believed that the time was approaching for us to move forward to make our teaching and living facilities more adequate. At the

[3] David Schroeder, *The Mennonite*, 28 June 1975, 63.

Waterloo sessions on July 6-9, 1972, a motion was presented and passed, expressing confidence in CMBC's program and requesting the board to draw up plans for expansion and to submit these to the following year's conference sessions.

In order to prepare such a plan, the administration and faculty gave the matter concentrated attention. The rationale for the expansion had been evident in annual reports of the past several years. Now we needed to focus on the options: expansion of the library; extension of another wing to the present residence building; an additional wing to the present classroom building; or perchance construct a new building entirely. Our discussion led us to suggest that the Board recommend the construction of an additional wing to the present classroom building. This option was presented to the conference. Reaction was mixed: perhaps this plan was too modest; in light of the fact that the present structure was showing obvious wear, it should be removed and replaced with a more adequate and substantial one; or, decide how large you want your student body to grow and build accordingly. The green light was given to continue planning, and to focus on building either the additional wing or a new building entirely.

In the months that followed, attention shifted to what the structure might hold. It should include space for music facilities, a bookstore, lounge facilities, and office space. All of these should have both a functional and an aesthetic quality so that anyone who visited the campus would be taken in with the appropriateness as well as the beauty of the buildings. The financial plan to make this possible should include provision for the necessary equipment: more visual aids and classroom teaching aids; library facilities, including microfilm readers; and educational equipment for the historical library.

A final focus of development was the spiritual dimension of our program. We saw evidence of spiritual growth, of sharpened spiritual discernment, and practical expression of the Christian faith among our students. We remembered the meaningful prayer sessions on Saturday evenings when many learned to pray and to trust God for answered prayer. We remembered the intercessory prayer for missionaries during a weekly half-hour during the lunch break. And we remembered the many occasions for expressing our faith in song, whether in chapel services, in choir concerts, or in special Christmas and Easter programs. Not to be forgotten were the private times with individual students or colleagues when we shared deeply and found kindred

spirits in praising God. However, there were also sad experiences. One was the accident of Lynn Derksen who fell from a trailer being pulled by horses, then a second trailer ran over her. She did not survive her injuries. The family lost a daughter and sister and students lost a friend. That was a time of sorrow and reflection and, for many, life was changed forever.

Our planning in the area of spiritual reflection left us with the following hopes: first, that we as faculty and staff might continue to be sensitive to each other's needs; secondly, that we not take things for granted, rather strive for full commitment; thirdly, that we continue to discover the resources of God through Bible study and prayer; and finally, that we plumb the depths in our relations with students who expressed their desire for deeper experiences and a continued search for the will of God in their lives. We truly hoped and prayed that in the coming years we might have meaningful worship experiences through the chapels, the special events, and through our entire program.

Travel to South America

In 1970 I received an invitation to attend the annual sessions of the South American churches to be held in Loma Plata, Paraguay, in January 1971. After consulting with the board and with the faculty, all agreed that I should accept the invitation. I could arrange my trip so that I would stop off in Newton, Kansas, on the return journey to take in the Council of Boards sessions. The total time away would be four weeks.

My travels took me through New York to Rio de Janeiro, and then to Curitiba, Brazil. This city was to be the location of the next Mennonite World Conference, so the conference praesidium, on which I represented the General Conference, was meeting there for a planning session. That gathering also gave me the opportunity to become acquainted with leaders of our South American churches which I was slated to visit in the following weeks.

Following the meeting with the MWC representatives, I stayed on for services in the Curitiba churches, then travelled 60 kilometres southwest to Witmarsum. This was the first time I saw a South American Mennonite colony which was picturesque and functional. Their advanced school system and the successful cooperative economic ventures were really quite outstanding, although the most progressive of the colonies was no doubt the one at Loma Plata where the church was growing and reaching out to minister

to its neighbours. From Witmarsum I returned to Curitiba, where I had the good fortune of attending a session of the Mennonite Brethren conference which was meeting during the same week.

On Saturday, January 23 I arrived in Montevideo, Uruguay, which is located directly south of Brazil. One of the church members picked me up at the airport, and that evening I met with the congregational *Lehrdienst* (leadership council). I was asked to share information about the work of the General Conference which I would do in each of the churches I visited. Questions included: How was the GC involved in mission outreach? What was the membership of the GC and how did the conference function? How could the South American churches relate most meaningfully to the GC? The colony of Delta, Uruguay, was interested in having direct representation on the GC, something which the Argentinian group was also requesting.

They also asked whether it was possible to receive *Der Bote* by airmail. The answer to that question was "yes." *Der Bote*, the German weekly periodical begun in 1924 by D. H. Epp in Rosthern, Sask., was read by Mennonites around the world including many South Americans, but the cost of sending it by airmail was almost prohibitive. The paper, *Bibel und Pflug* (Bible and Plow), was begun in 1954 as an eight-page bi-weekly paper for Brazilian Mennonites and published in Witmarsum. Whereas *Der Bote* had a large subscription list, *Bibel and Pflug* did not. So the question was asked: How could the two periodicals work together? Another concern was whether churches in North America were also dealing with the issue of multiple ordination of elders. What responsibilities were the ministers without a second ordination given? And what about the possibility of women serving as ministers/pastors?

In Montevideo, the Mennonite churches were doing mission work in four locations in and around the city. Before I got to visit them all, I was taken 100 kilometres west on an all-weather road to the colony of Delta. There, we were met by Claus Dueck on his trusty Massey Ferguson tractor, which ploughed through the mud for seven more kilometres to the Dueck home just outside Delta.

Delta Colony was begun in 1955 by 40 families from Danzig, Germany. As in most other settlements, the church was the first to be organized followed by the public school. Eventually, the cooperative was organized. At this time, they were planning to construct a new church building in Delta. I met with

them on several evenings as they discussed their options. The next day Mr. Dueck and his tractor took me to the highway seven kilometres away where we connected with a bus, which was full and rather uncomfortable, for our journey back to Montevideo. We arrived in LaPas just outside Montevideo, the location of one of the mission stations. From there it was only a short distance to the location of the Mennonite seminary, *Centro de Estudios Menonitas* (Mennonite Study Centre). The seminary was located in a spacious house with temporary huts serving as classrooms. Faculty members at this school included John Driver and Ernst Harder.

After several meetings with the GC Mennonites in Montevideo, I flew back to the central part of the continent to Asuncion, Paraguay. Gerhard Goertzen, leader of the congregation in Asuncion where MBs and GCs worshipped together, took me around to see the sights. Asuncion had three cooperatives operated in the colonies of Neuland, Fernheim, and Menno. Wares from these buildings were distributed to other places as the orders came in for the goods and agricultural produce from wholesalers and retailers throughout the country.

Asuncion essentially served as a crossroads for Mennonites, both from within the country and from abroad. While we were in town, we met many such non-resident people. A modern travel agency, owned by a Mennonite, provided me the opportunity to have my tickets updated for my travel back to Newton. Plans were then made for me to visit two of the other colonies, Friesland and Volendam, before the conference in Loma Plata the following week.

For the shorter trip I boarded a six-seater plane to Friesland, about 35 minutes northeast of Asuncion. From aloft I could see the vast expanses of water which had formed into large lakes from the recent rains. Friesland had 14 churches with a total membership of about 930, both GCs and MBs. The GC leader, Johann Regehr, a lay minister who had his own farming operation, was serving the church gratis. After two services in his church, I had to find a way to Volendam. While we were waiting for the people in Asuncion to make the necessary arrangements, some MCC personnel flew in to have a three-hour meeting to deal with Friesland concerns. Since the aircraft would be idle during that time, I suggested to Rev. Regehr that perhaps this would be my opportunity to have the pilot take me to Volendam, a half hour's flight. Arrangements were made without difficulty, and I got to Volendam sooner

than expected. We discovered later that the pilot never reported this side trip—I suspect he made a few pesos under the table.

I had other surprises on my various flights. My first attempt to return to Asuncion wasn't successful. The second time, a plane took me and three other passengers south, but then the weather became an issue. Because of a series of thunderstorms in the area, as we approached Asuncion, the pilot decided to land on a makeshift airstrip some kilometres from the city. After waiting perhaps 90 minutes, the pilot decided he would take a chance on the weather and we took off, only to arrive in Asuncion in pouring rain. We landed safely but got very wet on our way from the plane to the terminal. From there I took a taxi to the *Mennonita Centro*, and then phoned Rev. Goertzen, the minister. He could not understand how I could be calling from the Mennonite Centre. "How did you get to Asuncion?" "By airplane," I said. "Impossible! No plane flies in such weather." But there I was, safe and sound; I let him know that I was ready for the afternoon service.

During the next week, all attention focussed on Loma Plata, one of the largest towns in the colonies, with 4,000 inhabitants. This was where the South American conference was to convene. The sessions were well attended. Invited speakers were John Howard Yoder and I. My presentation dealt with church leadership ("Das Amt in der Gemeinde") and an exegetical study of the Gospel of Mark. John Howard Yoder gave several biblical presentations.

Discussion included planning for the Mennonite World Conference in 1972 in Curitiba. One contentious issue arose because the government of Brazil had requested that no political concerns were to be placed on the conference agenda. Dutch Mennonites in particular insisted that, if the government could determine Mennonite church agenda, they would not participate in such a conference. After the discussion, a softening of the Dutch position enabled the planning to go ahead.

Another issue was raised by Ernst Harder: In light of the economic progress in our colonies, how can we learn from our brothers and sisters in North America who have had to wrestle with the application of the Gospel to the affluence which they have achieved? Is this affluence a sign of God's blessing, or the sinister inroads of letting "mammon" take control and set the direction for our lives? One of John Howard Yoder's presentations, focussing on 2 Corinthians 5:17-20, was very pointed. He expressed clearly the truth that being in Christ covers all our endeavours and, in fact, empowers all of

creation. That caused quite a stir among conference participants. Many had never seen the passage applied in this way. Too often people do not think that creation will be redeemed, but they have not thought through the implications of how God will deal with creation which is groaning to be delivered and, in the words of Paul, will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God (Romans 8:19-22).

It was a bonus for me that I met many family members of the South American students who had been and were attending CMBC. And I met some prospective students as well. Visiting in homes during the evening enabled me to see the farmyards, fields, and livestock. Walks through the town of Loma Plata gave me further insight into the various businesses and the agricultural processing that was being developed in a productive way. There were dairies bottling milk and cream and preparing butter and cheese; crops harvested included wheat, cotton, peanuts, and soy beans; and an amazing variety of fruit was requiring many factories to process it for distribution.

I appreciated the trip to Yalva Sanga. This was the Indian mission station begun by the Mennonite Brethren church, but now operated primarily by the GC Mennonites. The station had been developed in order to give aboriginals full responsibility in the operation of the "colony." Located there were a sawmill, a hospital, schools, a shoe shop, a bookstore and print shop, and, of course, a church. There was an administrator from the Mennonite group, and a *Siedlungskommitee* (settlement committee) on which the aboriginals, MCC, and Chaco churches were represented. This venture proved to be a practical and successful "community development."

In some areas a sizeable number of aboriginals had moved to the outskirts of the colonies and served the larger community as masons, carpenters, and as labourers in the various factories. This raised the standard of living of the aboriginals. Children received better health care and people lived longer. The aboriginals requested that they be more fully integrated into the community. In Yalva Sanga, the educational training was developed to such an extent that the students could become teachers in their own schools.[4] And of course, the growth of the churches in their midst continued.

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[4] Several years ago I learned that education of the aboriginals included learning the Low German language. I was present at a Mennonite Brethren Conference in Reedley, California, at which representatives from various countries gave reports. One

Two of us who attended the Loma Plata conference, Rev. Koop from Brazil and I, needed to leave early because of travel connections. So we took the "freight plane" back to Asuncion. My return flight from there took me to Buenos Aires and then, because of a missed connection, I took Peruvian Airlines to Miami via Lima, Peru and Panama. I then made connections to Houston to visit my brother George and his family for a day. The next day I arrived in Newton to lead the Council of Boards sessions for three days. Then it was home to Winnipeg and to the family on Lanark Street.

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was about the native mission work in Paraguay, and an aboriginal leader gave the report—in Low German! This had become the aboriginal's language of communication in the colonies. Also they commonly used Mennonite names, never mind if the woman was Jasch and the man was Tina.

Chapter 11

Sabbatical in the Far East

In the early 1970s we began to think about my next sabbatical leave. This time our circumstances would be different: we would be going without the children. Our daughter Victoria and our son Ron were both married and Martin was planning to continue studies at the University of Manitoba. Practically, it worked out well that Ron and Carol-Ann would live in our house while we were gone. Martin would join one of his friends in an apartment just a few blocks from our home. Victoria and Ross had joined the Ecumenical Institute and lived at the Winnipeg Centre, one of the 101 houses commissioned by the Institute throughout the world.

We hoped to take my next sabbatical abroad. For a number of years I had been teaching a course on the mission outreach of the GC. The conference had mission programs in China, India, the Belgian Congo (later Zaire), Paraguay, Colombia, and, more recently, in Japan and Taiwan. Mission personnel sometimes mused about the possibility of having teachers on the mission field for short periods of time, as was often done with medical personnel. In conversation with the executive secretary of the Commission of Overseas Mission, we were informed that an invitation had come from the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan for a visiting lecturer to join the faculty at their Taipei Theological College-Seminary. Some students from our Mennonite churches were attending this and other Presbyterian schools. That was exciting news because most of the Taiwan missionaries had been my students at CMBC and I was acquainted with the work in Taiwan through my teaching of the mission course. We contacted the executive secretary, asked questions, considered the options, and made preliminary plans to pursue this further.

One by one the questions were answered, and we decided to spend a year, 1973-1974, in the Orient. We would join the missionary family, that is, our GC missionaries in Taiwan, teaching one semester in the Taipei Theological College-Seminary and one in the Tainan Theological College-Seminary. The former was located on the north end of the Island, the latter near the southern end. On weekends I would give lectures in the various churches, focussing on Mennonite-Anabaptist history and theology. June 17, 1973 was the date of our commissioning by the Bethel church, and on Friday, June 22 we left for Vancouver.

Summer Travels

In order to get to the Far East, it seemed strange that we would be travelling west. Our itinerary would take us around the globe, and we chose to begin by going with the sun, thus gaining rather than losing time on the longer stretches of the journey. Our first stop was Vancouver, where we spent a day with Jake and Mary, my oldest brother and his wife. We were able to meet most of the family and catch up on their latest experiences.

Our next stop was Hawaii, that idyllic island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. For three days we basked in the sunshine on or near the beach with 70-degree Fahrenheit temperatures. In Hawaii one never speaks about the weather because it's always the same. The sights from many different vantage points were breathtaking. We watched the boats, the swimmers, the crashing of waves on the shore, and the surfers who sought to conquer the waves with their skill and daring. The mountainous terrain, the lush foliage, the different kinds of trees, and the pineapple plantations amid the rock formations were all unique sights to behold.

We took several boat trips around part of the Island of Oahu and also visited Pearl Harbour, the location of the ignominious attack on the U.S. fleet by the Japanese 32 years earlier, the event that brought the U.S. into World War II. Sobering was the sight of the warship which became the grave of hundreds of soldiers who were never removed from the sunken hull.

Our next port of call was Tokyo, Japan. Japan was where the GC established a mission station just a few years before the work was begun in Taiwan. The GC mission board felt that it would be appropriate for us to visit the churches in Japan as well. When the Mennonite Church mission

personnel heard of our plans for the Far East, they invited us to visit their work in Hokkaido, the northern Island.

With little formal introduction, the "Far East" quickly became part of our life. We spent seven delightful and enriching weeks in Japan. We were met at the airport by our good friend, Ferd Ediger, missionary in Japan for 20 years. His wife, Viola, had just left for America for the summer, so Ferd was our host for several days. After college and seminary, our ways had parted: they left for Japan and we left for further graduate studies. In between they had visited us back in Canada.

The time in Japan included three weeks in Kyushu with our GC missionaries and churches, two weeks in Hokkaido with the missionaries of the Mennonite Church and several of their churches, and then two further weeks in Tokyo, which was *very* hot at that time of year. During the three weeks in Kyushu where our GC mission was located we had the opportunity to visit all except one of our 10 churches with at least two days spent with each of the missionaries and/or the national pastors. It was a new experience to remove our shoes when entering the church. Slippers were supplied at the door, but that footwear was invariably too short for me. That, however, was a small price to pay for an enriching time of fellowship with many of our brothers and sisters in the faith. We were often struck by the radiance of the testimonies. The hours of sharing were priceless; the warmth and acceptance were genuine. Greetings which we conveyed from America were invariably reciprocated.

One of the highlights of the Kyushu experience was to meet with the families of two of our CMBC students, Kyoto Watanabe and Junji Kanai. While we visited with Kyoto's relatives, we also had the opportunity to look in on her grandmother who was convalescing in the hospital. The simple yet gripping faith which this sister revealed moved us deeply. This, incidentally, was the first time that I prayed with someone with an interpreter speaking the prayer in her tongue. The visit with the Kanais was equally meaningful, for here only a part of the family professed Christianity. But their friendly acceptance was overwhelming. We Westerners have much to learn about hospitality. Another highlight in Kyushu was teaching a two-day ministers' and workers' seminar on Mennonite History and Bible.

From there we travelled north to Hokkaido where we had 10 days of fellowship with the MC mission personnel. We became acquainted with both

missionaries and pastors, and worshipped in several congregations. I taught a one-week short course on Mark to church workers. It was given as part of an extension course headed up by Pastor Takio Tanase who, instead of locating the school at a central place, travelled to the churches and offered short courses there. This allowed for both young people and pastors to take courses without having to leave home. The week with the churches and pastors was followed by three meaningful days at a church Bible camp, where I was to deal with the ministry of the Holy Spirit as manifest in the book of Acts. Not so pleasant here were the myriad of mosquitoes. Especially in the evening when the lights were on, the buzz and the search for warm blood was relentless. The solution to get some respite was to light scented candles which repelled them. After a few minutes these candles were extinguished, but their wicks continued to smoulder and smoke. Then all the lights were turned off, and the doors and windows were opened. The smoke from the candles did a good job of ridding the room of most of the pests. After a few minutes, the doors and windows were closed, the lights turned back on, and we continued our meeting—an ingenious way of dealing with an annoying problem.

Our hosts in Hokkaido were the Ralph Buckwalters, the "spearhead workers" for the MC mission. They would start a new venture, then move on to a new location when the church was established. Just when we left, they were again ready to go to the city of Asahigawa where no Christian workers were present.

We had hoped to spend a few more days with our GC mission workers following the trip to Hokkaido, but we had experienced what it meant to be stranded with thousands of others when flights were cancelled because of a severe rainstorm. We also found out that reservations on the train were next to impossible to come by. So we stayed in Tokyo for the remaining two weeks, August 1-15, until it was time to leave for Indonesia. While in Tokyo we had the opportunity to visit a number of educational institutions but, because it was vacation time, we had few contacts with the educators serving there.

Before leaving on our trip, MCC had become aware of our sabbatical plans to spend the better part of a year in Taiwan so they extended an invitation for us to include Indonesia for a five-week visit. En route we travelled through Hong Kong. A two-day stopover in this island metropolis of 4 million people, half of whom seemed to be on the streets at all times, was an unforgettable experience. Then it was on to the Indonesian archipelago where

we zeroed in on Jakarta, the capital of Java. This compact city with few tall buildings had a population of 6 million people. If it was hot in Japan, it was hotter in Java, just 500 miles south of the equator.

In Java we were involved with three things: visiting and participating in a youth camp, speaking in churches on Sundays, and teaching a short three-week course on Anabaptism at the seminary in Pati. The latter had 50 students with our former CMBC student Hadinoert-jito serving as music instructor and dean of students. The newly appointed rector was Mesach Krisetya.[1] The school, known as AKWW was operated jointly by the two Javanese Mennonite synods, EMEK (European MCC) and by MCC (North America). There I also worked through an interpreter; students were most receptive. We were struck by the interest of the young people at the Bible camp, and their willingness to take in four solid hours of lectures and messages in hot, humid weather and then come back for more. Churches were also well attended. In a Muslim village, Sukodono, we enjoyed our visit to the little church begun just nine years earlier. Eventually 95 percent of this village became Christian.

Following our short course with the seminary students, Lawrence and Shirlee Yoder, the MCC directors, took us on a brief tour of the southern part of the island of Java. Most of the terrain was fairly even, but as we drove south, a mountain range to the west was seen to stretch along the entire coast. In Jokjakarta we observed the manufacture of *batik* cloth with its hand-painted design. Also impressive were the many silver- and gold-smiths whose wares and productions were sold world-wide. The religions were primarily Buddhism, Islam, and Hinduism. We saw a number of temples, a lovely castle of the old sultans, and numerous courtyards, watchtowers, and adjoining buildings of the royal court. Indonesia boasted one of the Seven Wonders of the World, the largest Buddhist temple named Candi Borobudur, which was located 40 kilometres northwest of Jokjakarta. Built by one of the kings of the Cailendra Dynasty toward the end of the eighth century, it was abandoned in 950 and suffered the same fate as all other monuments of central Java. The eruption of a nearby volcano, Meripi, buried the building and covered the ruins until the 19th century. The Dutch reconstructed the monument,

[1] Mesach had completed his studies at AMBS a year earlier in 1972. He served for several years as the chair of the MWC, and travelled extensively in America and in other parts of the Mennonite world.

supported financially by UNESCO, and it was again opened to the public in the 1970s.

Our five weeks in Java passed quickly and, on September 21, we left for the island of Taiwan, arriving in Taipei two days later. We were met at the airport by an entourage of 20 missionaries and church people. Now we were to encounter the third new culture within the first three months of our travels.

Taiwan, the Island Beautiful

Our first impression of Taiwan was that life was fast-paced. Jammed buses traversed the streets by the dozens from before 7 in the morning, thinning out during the middle of the day and then slowly increasing again toward the late afternoon and evening rush hours. Peddlers on tricycles and bicycles, most in need of repair, collected garbage or peddled their wares. Street sweepers had their mid-morning snack or their coughing break, then resumed their sweeping. And there were couples who strolled along the lane or on the campus, or, more often rode on motorcycles up and down the curving roads of Yang Ming Shan, the mountain on which the Taiwan Theological College-Seminary was located. All of this became part of our life very quickly.

Something else that struck us from the very beginning was the island's religious setting. Taiwan is a land of many religions. The main one, Buddhism, was initially brought from India to China, where it underwent changes before it came to Taiwan. An offshoot of Buddism was known as Matsu, mother of the sea. This was considered a folk religion, a type of animism in which spirits could bring almost anything back to life. Another religion was Confucianism which, just before the beginning of the Christian era, was chosen as the political system to govern the Chinese state. It relied very heavily on the merit system and was based on varying degrees of honesty. It was seen more as an ethical system than a religion. Yet another religion was Taoism, the Religion of Mystery, which boasted one of the most heavily endowed pantheon of gods. The Taiwanese believe that the more gods one worships, the better is their chance of faring well in the afterlife.

Our main reason for coming to Taiwan was to teach. We began at Taiwan Theological College-Seminary on the lovely mountain, Yang Ming Shan in Taipei. At that college I taught two courses: Romans and the Theology of the Reformers and Anabaptists, and Agnes taught a course in English literature. The latter happened on the spur of the moment when the dean of the

seminary heard that Agnes had done her college studies in English literature. From the beginning we had a very good experience. After four months in Taipei we went to the city of Tainan near the southern end of the island where I taught Pauline Theology and The Anabaptist Contributions to the Reformation.

Our second assignment was to visit the GC mission churches and to serve them in whatever capacity could be arranged. For the first months that meant preaching on Sundays in several churches, and giving a series of seven Sunday evening lectures on Anabaptism to churches in the Taipei area. I had an excellent interpreter. Unlike the common practice of alternating one sentence by the presenter followed by the translation/interpretation, this man had me present a paragraph; then he gave the content of that paragraph in Taiwanese. Peter Kehler, one of the missionaries, indicated to me that this was the best job of translation he had ever heard.

I also represented the General Conference at pastors' ordinations, at a church dedication, and at the significant occasion when the GC transferred the Taiwan mission to an elected board of Taiwanese church members and GC missionaries. This elected body would set the policies and have oversight of Taiwan missions. The Taiwanese body of churches was known as the Fellowship of Mennonite Churches in Taiwan (FOMCIT). Over the next several years, the GC members on the elected board were replaced by Taiwanese church members; thus the Taiwanese Mennonite church (FOMCIT) owned the corporation, including all the assets. This action saved the church from having to pay a heavy tax which would have happened if the church had taken the assets as a gift.

My further involvements included speaking at the FOMCIT conference, giving several lectures at China Evangelical Seminary, presenting the Anabaptist lecture series in Hwalien and in Tainan, meeting bi-weekly with our GC missionaries for a study of the Gospel of Mark, and speaking at several retreats. A happy result of meeting separately with the Mennonite students who were enrolled at the college was the opportunity of inviting them to our apartment for socializing and for giving them an occasion to practice their English. We did the latter more formally by having them read out loud from *The Mennonite*. Those were very enjoyable times. Agnes and I felt we learned as much as the students.

The work with the Taiwanese faculty at the Presbyterian schools, some of whom were from abroad, went well. We shared such responsibilities as

speaking in chapel, giving papers on special topics at faculty meetings, and having occasional social gatherings where we got to know the spouses and families. While we were in Taipei, we lived on the college-seminary campus in a special faculty residence, which was used primarily by visiting faculty. We had a spacious, fully furnished suite. Most welcome for providing heat was the fireplace in the living room, something few buildings had. Student residences had no heating, so in winter as soon as the sun shone—and that was not too often—students came outside to sit on the balconies or on benches in the yard to warm up. Fortunately winter lasted only two months of the year! The size of our living room made it very popular, both with students and with mission workers. Agnes' English class was not large, so she invited the students to meet in our living room for her class sessions. They appreciated coming to a warm place.

The missionaries also found the spacious rooms enjoyable for social gatherings. Hence our place was their first choice when we gathered for the Christmas meal. Using medium-sized tables, we could seat 23 persons and still have room to get around for serving. It was a tasty, pot-luck meal which we all enjoyed immensely. Even though it was the end of December, the weather was so pleasant and the flowers so gorgeous that, after the others had left by late afternoon, I took my camera and snapped pictures of at least seven different kinds of flowers that were in full bloom.

Our travels in Taiwan were by train or by plane. To get to the city of Hwalien on the east side of the Island, we needed to fly because the road across the mountains was not yet completed. But travel on the main rail routes was outstanding. We reserved seats on the special trains which travelled regularly and covered the distance between Taipei and Tainan in a matter of three hours. It was different with the other passenger trains. People crowded into them until they were so packed that some even sat on top of the cars. When necessary, these trains were placed on sidings to make way for the special trains; the schedule of the latter dare not be interrupted. At first we found the sight inside the cars a bit strange. Invariably most of the travellers had pitch black hair. Agnes' hair was reddish blonde with a little grey, but mine was white, so that I received a special name, "Pai Pocksu," which means "Teacher White." I could certainly never be incognito.

Although Taipei was the main city of Taiwan and our GC Taiwan mission was "headquartered" there, Hwalien had more workers than any of the other

cities because the Mennonite Hospital was located there. Among the first personnel to come to Taiwan were Dr. Roland and Sophie Brown. They were followed by other medical workers, both doctors and nurses. Already earlier MCC had carried on medical work in clinics in several centres, focussing both on medical and social work. When the GC Taiwan mission was established these workers were their first mission personnel who continued the program begun by MCC. The founder of the Mennonite Christian Hospital was Dr. Brown under whose leadership a 36-bed medical facility was opened in 1955. From the beginning the hospital was the centre for mobile clinic work in the mountains. However, it was clear that the hospital carried on what James Juhnke calls a "vigorous spiritual ministry, both to the staff . . . and among the patients."[2]

While we were in Hwalien for meetings we saw a most gorgeous sight: on several mountain sides along the Toroko Gorge—a road built along the steep walls of a river canyon—grew "hosts" of, not daffodils (as in Wordsworth's poem) but poinsettias. To see the vast expanse of those flaming flowers up the side of the mountains was indeed an awesome sight. God's creation in Taiwan had always been recognized; in fact, its name means "Island Beautiful."

The roadway along the canyon was a feat of engineering. No, perhaps it would be better described as a degrading illustration of construction built under duress. During their occupation of the island, the Japanese used the Taiwanese as slave labourers to construct the road, literally chiselling it and the tunnels out of solid rock. The road along the cliff looked like a U on its side with the open part facing the canyon, often without railing or rocks to offer protection from running off the side.

Toroko Gorge became significant for several other reasons while we were there. One Sunday during an afternoon service in the church in Hwalien, an earthquake suddenly rocked the island. First we noted the pictures on the wall swaying back and forth. Then we felt the movement under our feet and the benches moving. After a few seconds the movement stopped, only to be repeated a few seconds later. Outside the ground was moving as if a wave was passing by with a rise of perhaps four to six inches. The speaker paused and wondered whether we should go outside. When nothing further happened, we

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[2] James C. Juhnke, *A People of Mission: A History of General Conference Mennonite Overseas Mission* (Newton, KS: Faith and Life Press, 1979), 135-144.

went on with the service. Later, however, we heard that a bus travelling along the gorge was shaken so severely that the driver lost control and the bus fell many metres down into the canyon. Twenty-two people were killed and the rest injured.

At one spot along the gorge was a slight incline on which a small church had been built. It was located at the place where, prior to the Japanese occupation, Christians met for their services. The Japanese forbade them to meet, but this was a command which the Christians refused to obey. In secret, they created a hidden path in the woods behind the church which led into the forest. Somewhere along this path they held their meetings. At the front entrance, "watch-persons" observed the whereabouts of the Japanese overlords, and gave a warning signal if they approached. Then they quickly dispersed and escaped detection and capture. The little church served to remind the present congregation of the way in which the Lord had protected their forebears in the years gone by.

Twenty kilometres up the gorge was a beautiful open space ideally suited for a retreat centre. The Lutheran Church had constructed the necessary buildings. Our GC Taiwan mission and other groups often rented the facilities for retreats and conferences. We remember well the retreat which was held prior to the completion of our eight-month term of service on the Island Beautiful. This was our last meeting with the group. In the following weeks we needed to pack up what we had brought to Tainan from Taipei for the four-month period there. We said our good-byes and realized how much we had come to appreciate and love this group who were our GC representatives in mission in this place on our globe. In the years to come the Taiwanese mission would become self-sufficient and independent, and would begin to send workers to other parts of the world to preach the Gospel.

Whenever we boarded a train or plane in Taiwan, we had to take along our little black identification booklet. Without it we could not purchase tickets and, without an official signature indicating that we had paid the required taxes while in the country, we could not leave. But, "Every rule has an exception?" When we were ready to return from Tainan to Taipei after our last four-month period, I mentioned to the president of the college that I needed to get my little book stamped at the police station, and that would require notifying our business manager in Taipei to send us a check for the amount of taxes we were being levied while in Taiwan. The president looked

puzzled. Why were we being taxed when we had come to Taiwan to serve in their school without remuneration? He requested that I give him my booklet, and he would look into the matter. When he returned, he had somehow made his point to the official, the booklet was properly signed, and we did not have to pay any tax.

I close this section with a story about two of our students in Tainan, Timothy and Hanna. They invited us to join them on a trip to the southern part of the Island. We travelled by train, by bus, and, when necessary, by taxi. Whenever we transferred to a different train or bus, I would go to the ticket counter with Timothy and, if I was quick enough, would pick up both tickets and pay for them. After all, we could afford such a trip better than they could, I reasoned. The first evening after our meal at the hotel, Timothy asked whether we might talk. He had a story to tell us. During the year he had written an essay for a course he was taking. His professor felt that the essay was an outstanding piece of work so, without getting his permission, had submitted it to a magazine for publication. The article was accepted, and the editor sent Timothy a sizeable check as payment. Timothy was surprised not only because he was receiving payment but mostly because it was such a large amount. After discussion with Hanna, they decided they would use some of the money to give us a gift in the form of a trip to see the beauty of the southern part of the Island. But I had intervened too often to pay for the tickets, and so they had been robbed of the joy of giving. I was rightly chastened, and we were deeply struck by the kindness of the couple.

Agnes and I with Shirley Hildebrand, COM missionary and students Timothy and Hanna in Tainan, Taiwan, 1973.

For an interesting learning experience during our eight-month stay in Taiwan, I asked that Peter Kehler, missionary in Taipei, arrange an interview

with Dr. Chou-Lien Hwa. He was a Baptist pastor and chaplain to Madame Kai-Shek, wife of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek, leader of the Kuomindang, the Nationalist Political Party who, with his army, escaped from China to the Island of Formosa in 1949. The questions I asked Dr. Hwa were wide-ranging and included areas such as theology, education in Taiwan, evangelism, the Presbyterian and Baptist churches, crises they were facing, and suggestions for what the Western churches might do for those in Taiwan. He spoke English well, had a good grasp of both general and specific knowledge, and was articulate in his answers. I was happy to have him share frankly and openly.

The Trip Home

For the remainder of my sabbatical we had no more assignments but could enjoy a four-week holiday. One concern during the previous months was the lack of competent travel agencies in Taiwan to make arrangements for our airline tickets and our hotel reservations. I had begun the process shortly after the New Year, but in the last weeks of our Taiwan stay, we were still waiting for a number of replies to our requests, both for flights and accommodations.

After a round of "good-byes" to the missionary personnel in Taipei in their homes, we found ourselves at the airport on May 20, again with a large group, both of FOMCIT and Presbyterian church members, and of our GC missionaries. This time we were bidding farewell to many new friends and to a land and a people which had found a very warm spot within our hearts. How could we graciously accept beautiful leis woven especially for us, and a "citation" plaque presented to us by the church and college representatives, expressing deep appreciation for our time of service to them? Weren't we really the ones who had benefited most? And of course Thai Airlines outdid itself by generously giving all the female passengers orchid corsages, breathtaking in their beauty, both in shape and colour.

Our flight took us first to Hong Kong, and then to Bangkok, Thailand, where we encountered a people whose political and cultural history has been a checkered one. People have suffered a great deal because of a brutal regime and an economy that has not been able to provide adequate food for so many of its poor. The next day we flew to Dacca, the capital of Bangladesh. The airport there had no facilities for instrument landing. With a stiff wind blowing at right angles to the runway and an extremely low cloud cover, the first attempt at landing was unsuccessful. But the pilot put his skill to the test a

second time and we touched down safely. One of our travelling companions was a representative of an organization known as "Operation Mobilization," an agency which practises evangelistic outreach. Although he had flown many times, this man was simply petrified when we could not land the first time. When he saw that we were not particularly nervous, he came to sit with us for "moral support." What a strange coincidence: he was the speaker at an evening meeting to which the Art Defehr's, MCC directors for Bangladesh, had invited us.

We were met at the airport by our former student, Rob Enns, who was working with the MCC team in Dacca. The monsoon season had arrived early so that part of the country looked like a large lake with small islands protruding from the water and creating terrible living conditions for the people. Our hosts for the two days there were Harley and Mary Snyder of Ontario. Harley was in charge of the Jute Works in Dacca and Mary worked with the Inter-country Adoption Agency. We had a full day of sightseeing including one of the Bihari camps. The Biharis, who had been in control when Bangladesh broke away from Pakistan, were mostly Muslim, and they ruled with an iron hand. Power, however, was slowly being transferred to the Hindu population, the Brahmans and the Rajput, the priestly Hindu upper classes. Those in this camp were now the Muslim poorer class. One section of the health unit in the camp was giving inoculations to children; another, the milk unit, was mixing milk powder with water, then rationing out portions to hundreds of people. The staple food was rice. Harvesting was being done in an overabundance of water. Sanitation in the camps left much to be desired.

While in Dacca we discovered that Mother Theresa had a home for orphan children there. Arrangements were made for the children's adoption as requests came in. Another project in the same complex was sewing classes for women and young girls who were then helped to purchase a sewing machine with which they would make their livelihood.

We left Dacca on June 1 and arrived in New Delhi that evening. For the first night the travel agency had booked us into the Oberoi Hotel, one of the finest on our whole trip. When we were told the cost of staying there, we could understand why it was so luxurious. We remained for the night, but then found another hotel which suited our pocket book better—rooms were about one-third of the price of those at the Oberoi.

We could impossibly see all the sights of New Delhi in three days, so we took a tour by taxi the next day. That included seeing several Hindu temples,

the last of the Moghul tombs, Safdarjung which was described on a plaque as "the last flicker in the lamp of Moghul art in India," and several beautiful mosques. The president's palace with 350 rooms was the residence of the viceroy in British times. It was close to the very beautiful parliament buildings with an approach via a majestic tree-lined boulevard. A side entrance led to the India Gate, a World War memorial built for fallen Indian soldiers. During the British era the people of India were not allowed to use the special boulevard. Very striking was the Mahatma Ghandi memorial, called Raj Ghat. Constucted of black marble, the tomb was set in the midst of a beautiful garden, a fitting monument to this great Indian statesman. Another sight which dominated the landscape was the Red Fort, which had been used for defence purposes in earlier times. Built in 1648 of red sandstone, it had seven-foot high walls and housed the living quarters of rulers, generals, and hundreds of servants as well as huge stock rooms to store supplies. This fort was almost as impressive as the renowned Taj Mahal at Agra.

After we got our tickets for the next several instalments of our trip in order, we had some extra time in New Delhi. We first arranged to make the 80-mile trip to Agra to see the Taj Mahal. We travelled by bus without air-conditioning in 100-degree Fahrenheit temperatures. The Taj Mahal is the mausoleum built by Shah Jahan in memory of his favourite wife (sultana), Mumtaz Mahal. Constructed of brick overlaid with white marble, the beautiful structure can be seen from a considerable distance. It has been given names such as, "A Poem in Marble" and "The Marble Queen of Sorrow." Although it was built back in the 17th century beside a river, it shows no signs of sinking or sagging. It features lattice-work screening in marble, especially around the cenotaph. Twenty thousand workers spent 12-and-one-half years on its construction. Surrounding the building are carefully designed flower gardens with reflecting pools and enticing paths along which to wander and take in the stunning view. Unfortunately, some sections of the building were suffering from lack of upkeep due, no doubt, to the high cost of maintenance. Both the shah and his wife were buried there. We ended our time in New Delhi by visiting an art gallery and Bible Society House.

The flight to Tehran on Japan Airlines was uneventful with the best service. We changed planes to Air France and landed in Tel Aviv after midnight. A few weeks earlier Tel Aviv had experienced a terrible shoot-out with terrorists, so there we encountered the strictest security on our entire

trip. We landed a good distance from the terminal and were taken by bus to an outlying freight office where we and our baggage were thoroughly searched before we were taken to the terminal. On the flight with us was a government official; when he heard that we had no one to meet us for the drive to Jerusalem, he suggested that we join him in the limousine that was picking up him and his partners. He assured us that there would be enough room for us. A while later we were dropped off at the central bus station in Jerusalem from where we took a taxi to the Scottish Hospice south of the Temple Mount. It was 4:30 a.m. and we would need to wait until the matron got up before we could be checked into our room.

Because we were two days behind in our originally projected travel schedule, we could spend only two days in Palestine. On one we walked the streets and hills of Jerusalem; the second day we took a trip to Nazareth. Although I had visited Jerusalem before, I was now struck by the tense situation between the Arabs and the Israelis. My first trip to Israel in 1967 was only four weeks after the Six-Day War. Now the Tel Aviv incident had deeply shocked the nation, and security measures were evident everywhere. On the trip from Jerusalem to Galilee, our Palestinian driver was careful to drive on roads that weren't heavily patrolled by Israeli troops. When we arrived in Nazareth, he let us off and told us we were now on our own until the time of our return to Jerusalem.

We left Tel Aviv for Greece with a deep burden for what we felt would exact a high cost of resolving the rift and healing the many fractured relationships between the Arabs and Israelis. As we approached the Athens airport, we were struck by the sprawling expanse of white houses below us. Built on many hills, the houses stretched for miles in every direction. Landing here required the pilot's best skills. Because of the high terrain immediately next to the airport, which was on the lower shoreline level, he had to make a quick turn and sharp drop in altitude to reach the runway.

The stay in Greece allowed us to visit the most significant of the ancient ruins in Athens: the Acropolis and, further inland, the Delphi ruins. The Acropolis hill, known as the "Sacred Rock" of Athens, features some of the architectural masterpieces of ancient Greece. Over the centuries, this "rocky hill" has served both as a place of worship as well as a residential area. During the Classical period of Greek history (450-330 BCE), three important temples were erected on the ruins of the earlier ones: the Parthenon, the Erechtheion, and the Temple of Athena Nike.

The drive to Delphi in an air-conditioned bus took us through very picturesque countryside interspersed with many mountains. Pink oleander lined the roadway, cherry trees were in bloom, and cypress trees surrounded the many graveyard sites. Delphi's noted temple, the Temple of Apollo, reminds the visitor of the Apollo oracle. Oracles were the medium through which the gods communicated with human beings. Those who interpreted the oracles were priestesses; the one here was called Pythoness. Unfortunately, the responses of the intermediaries were so ambiguous or obscure that they were more misleading than informative. Breathtaking was the amphitheatre with its seats rising in a semi-circle, row by row, with each level approximately 16-18 inches higher so that the depth of the seats did not extend too far back. The acoustics were outstanding; no microphones or other hearing devices were needed. Not far from the theatre was a huge stadium. Every third year, Greece still hosts the Pythian games and the chariot races there.

On the return journey to Athens as the day was waning and the mountains cast their shadows against each other and across the valleys, we were reminded of our Alberta Rockies back in Canada. Agnes remarked that the buildings with their size, their style, and their variety gave a sense of grandeur to the country, which made it unique. On the way a theatre group provided us with some entertainment.

By noon the next day we were in Rome. We had no trouble going through customs. None of our bags were opened and, in minutes, we were in a taxi on the way to our hotel, the Traiana. Although it was an older place, it was charming and we enjoyed our stay there. If it was the Acropolis that dominated the city in Athens, in Rome two building complexes stood out markedly. One was the Colisaeum, also known as the Flavian Amphitheatre. It took its name from the line of Caesars, beginning with Vespasian in the first century with others to follow into the second century of the Christian era. The architecture of the Colisaeum was magnificent. But its ignoble character is marked by the memory of the gladiators and the persecution and martyrdom of many Christians.

The building far surpassing the Colisaeum in grandeur is, of course, St. Peter's Basilica and the larger complex, Vatican City, where we spent two days. Vatican City remains unique in the world. It is the headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church and is, at the same time, an independent country. Vatican City includes many buildings besides St. Peter's Basilica: the Papal

Palace, the Vatican Museum, the Vatican Library, the Vatican Gardens, and Belvedere Park. It covers 108 acres, and is completely surrounded by the city of Rome. We soon discovered that to be part of a bus tour of 40 people was not the best way to see the sights. So we returned on our own and walked to look at what interested us. There were literally hundreds of sculptures of biblical and historical figures on wall after wall. Some paintings of persons and scenes literally took our breath away, the great masterpieces of dozens of painters such as Giotti, Beato Angelico, Raffaello, da Vinci, and Caravaggio. The prince of sculptors, Michelangelo, has his greatest work there, the famous Pieta, Mother Mary holding the dead body of Jesus on her knee as she mourns his death. Who can ever forget the Sistine Chapel, the private chapel in the Vatican? The walls are decorated with paintings by artists such as Ghirlandajo, Botticelli, and Perugino, yet all are dwarfed by the world-renowned frescoes of Michelangelo: the Creation, the Deluge, and the Last Judgment. Carefully crafted tapestries and wall hangings adorned many of the walls, giving them a regal quality.

We were left with much to ponder. We had questions about what we had studied in church history about the tactics of church representatives such as Tetzel. He undertook the practice of selling indulgences to raise money for the construction of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, the gimmick by which people could pay for the forgiveness of their sins. The lavish use of gold, which was everywhere evident on sculptures, on paintings, on engravings, on vases and dishes, brought a fresh consideration of old criticisms: Does our Lord approve of such lavish practices by His church? At one point in our meandering through the many rooms, we took an elevator to the cathedral's lookout to see the city from higher up. The dome of St. Peter's, which is 420 feet high, still rose more than 100 feet above our position.

The next day brought us to Geneva, Switzerland. There we were met at the airport by our son Martin, who had come to Europe several weeks earlier to backpack through parts of Germany and Switzerland. It was so good to see him after a whole year's absence. We would be together for the rest of our trip as we toured Geneva and England.

Geneva is an interesting city. It was cool (in June) and reminded us of Winnipeg more than any other place we had visited. The streets were well kept, but had many twists and turns. Some were also at different levels, so it was quite a feat to get from one street level to the next, often requiring us to

take a long way around. The houses were tall and neat with flower gardens gracing the yards as well as the many parks. We saw the famous Geneva clock that was completely covered with flowers which moved around the dial with the clock's hands.

Geneva, a conservative city, featured many churches. Coming from the Orient we found it interesting that, in this city, all businesses, including stores, museums, and theatres, closed down on Sundays. We did find that the occasional small shop sold a few groceries and several cafés offered service. However, banks, for which the Swiss are so famous, were also all closed.

Geneva, like Rome, was a city steeped in history. Switzerland gave birth to the Reformation and was the birthplace of the Anabaptist movement. While Luther was preaching reform in Germany, Zwingli was doing the same here; Farel, Calvin, Beza, and Knox joined him. We were reminded of this by a large concrete sculpture which included these four reformers. Zwingli and Luther had separate monuments with only their names engraved on them. Along several concrete walls were the names of many other notables in the country.

We were able to arrange for several tours with Martin. The first took us out into the country. We drove through an agricultural area with growing orchards and vineyards. Nestled here and there were small villages, and one of our stops was at a small Catholic church. I was reminded of the song, "There's a Church in the Valley by the Wildwood," a favourite from the past. We also visited a vineyard with a wine cellar where people stopped to sample red and white wines and to hear the story of how they were produced. When we arrived back in the city, our guide pointed out the United Nations building and a house dedicated to the poet, Byron.

A second tour the next day took us into France through the town of Chamonix on the way to Mont Blanc, the highest peak in Europe. Here we transferred from the bus to a cable car to cross over to a neighbouring peak, le Brevent which was 22,525 metres high. That was a better vantage point from which to view Mont Blanc, and gave us the opportunity to take the longest cable car ride in the area. The weather was cool and it was too cloudy for taking clear pictures of Mont Blanc. We stopped for lunch at a restaurant halfway up the mountain, where we boarded another cable car; the distance to the top was too great for just one stretch of cables. Hence, the cables were cemented into the rock at this "station," and another set of cables stretched to the top, where they too were cemented into the rock. We saw a glacier on one of the slopes of an adjoining mountain.

Chamonix was a tourist town with many little souvenir shops and with nice houses. Nestled at the foot of a mountain, it was as quaint as many of the Swiss towns. The clear and cold Arve River ran through the town. We were glad to get back into the bus for the return ride. We were not adequately prepared for such cool weather at that time of year.

In Geneva, we soon noticed the prominence of Lake Geneva. Its southern tip touches the edge of the city and extends 40 miles toward the northeast. It offers all the water sports one can imagine. From St. Peter's Cathedral on its south shore we got a beautiful view of the lake. It seemed strange to be visiting a church with the same name as the one in Rome, but this was a Protestant, not a Catholic, church. Calvin had filled its pulpit for many years, resulting in a strong Calvinist following in the city. We climbed one of the cathedral's towers (164 steps); that allowed us not only a good view of the lake, but also of the rooftops and buildings of the old city. The church had no altar; the pulpit was on the side, and the building featured a fantastic organ.

A spectacular sight along the Rhone River, which cuts the city in two, was one of the most famous fountains which is supposedly the highest in the world. It spouts water 145 metres high with seven tons of water in the air at one time. We were not quite as taken in with the paintings in the art gallery, the Petit Palais. Picasso was one of the painters whose art was on display, but we had not yet gained an appreciation for his work. We would have preferred browsing in some of the libraries but we did not have enough time for that. It would have been good to have access to those facilities when I was working at my thesis on Menno Simons.

It was time to make arrangements for our further flight. Martin was fortunate to have brought his student card which gave him the opportunity of getting many discounts, including good fares on the trains and on his flight to London. He could also get a special card that gave him free bus travel in any of the cities in England and Scotland. Our tickets were in order and we took our flights to London. Martin's flight left first, and he was there to greet us when we arrived. We spent three more days together in London.

London was a city which I had seen briefly 49 years earlier when I was less than a year old. I also had a stop-over there on a flight to Africa seven years earlier when I took a tour of the city between flight connections. This time there were three of us and we decided that, in addition to seeing the city, we wanted to tour the countryside, particularly Oxford and Stratford-on-Avon,

Shakespeare territory. Our first tour in the city took us to the Tower of London and St. Paul's Cathedral. The latter brought back memories from public school days about Christopher Wren, the great architect-builder. In total, he built 51 churches, St. Paul's being the largest. When we were there, it was being renovated for the "small" sum of $3 million. At a height of 365 feet, supposedly one foot for each day of the year, it was 55 feet lower than St. Peter's in Rome.

The next day we left London to tour Oxford and Stratford-on-Avon. From our hotel by Underground to the Evans Tours headquarters and then by bus into the beautiful English countryside, we made a brief stop at Buckingham Palace where, on another occasion, we would witness the changing of the guard. We arrived in Oxford before lunch. Oxford University consists of 37 colleges, 32 for men and 5 for women, each with a chapel, a library, and a residence for the students. All have lecture rooms and a dining hall. It is not easy for students to get into Oxford University. Once in, they are subjected to the tutorial system of study. A tutor provides the necessary guidance during a weekly meeting at which time the student submits a paper. Classes and lectures are kept to a minimum. In English, the term "study" means "reading." Students who are successful often go on to "read" for a doctorate. We visited Jesus College which had an enrolment of 250 students. (Compare this with the University of London which had 40,000 students.) Oxford also has a number of boys' and girls' schools but these don't compare with the famous ones such as Eton. These schools are supervised by matrons whose quality is measured by how well they anticipate the tricks students can dream up. Discipline is strict and is meted out by the "dons," the fellows or tutors. The chancellor of Oxford in 1974 was H.W. McMillan, a former prime minister, who was really an administrator in absentia. He came to the campus only for special occasions. I couldn't help reflecting that of our faculty, no one had "read" at Oxford in preparation for coming to teach at CMBC. Later Peter Fast did spend one of his sabbaticals there.

Our next stop was Woodstock where, for centuries, a large circular theatre served as the place where all Oxford graduations were held. This was also the location of Christopher Wren's first churches. Sculptures adorned buildings and grounds everywhere. We had lunch in an old traditional inn. The menu featured chicken cooked in wine, or plaice, a common English fish. And then it was on to Warwick Castle. It was named after Richard Neville,

Earl of Warwick, dubbed "The Kingmaker," who was instrumental in placing Edward IV on the throne in 1461 and in restoring Henry VI to his throne in 1470. Here too history pervaded every institution and provided answers to many of our questions. We saw paintings of the early monarchs, and were reminded of the renowned men such as Anthony van Dyke, the Flemish painter, who served in the courts of James I and Charles I, and was knighted by the latter. In addition to the many royal portraits, van Dyke also painted a number of religious canvases.

The guide on our tour was an English scholar who often cited passages from English literature. He provided the lead-in for our next stop, Stratford-on-Avon, to the home of John Shakespeare on Henley Street where William was born. We also visited Ann Hathaway's cottage, located in Shottery just west of Stratford where Ann, William Shakespeare's wife, was born. We were told that the cottage was constructed of wood and wattle, the latter being a type of reed woven together to form the walls. This was no doubt the reason it had been dubbed the "half-timber" house. Shakespeare did not spend many years in this place because he was in London much of the time.

On the return trip to London our guide gave us an extensive history of the many English pubs. Ale was of course the drink of choice for the English. The guide informed us, with considerable disdain, that he had heard ale had been replaced by ice water at Jesus College, obviously a decided come-down for the students. "How could anyone study on that stuff?" he asked. There were at least 70,000 pubs in England. Add licensing and regulatory staff to the list of employees and you have a well-ingrained system that regulates a large part of daily life.

It was time to say farewell to a lovely countryside: the many sheep, which dotted the fields and meadows, the gorgeous flowers, and the impressive buildings in London. We packed up and, on our way to the airport, we met Martin once more at the bus station. He would spend two more weeks on the island before returning to Canada. We boarded our 747 jet which was filled almost to capacity. With a change of planes in Toronto, we arrived in Winnipeg. We had gained seven hours on our flight so it was still early enough to see the sun set, this time on the familiar Manitoba horizon.

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Chapter 12

Closing the CMBC Chapter

The return to Winnipeg came at the right time of year. Our children, Ron and Carol-Ann had readied the house for our occupancy again, and had moved to an apartment four miles away. I had the summer months to resume my CMBC assignments. The first item on the agenda was to write the annual report for the CMC sessions which were to convene July 22-26, 1974 in Steinbach, Manitoba. It was a beautiful week weather-wise, and the sessions started well with the ministers' conference providing an introduction to Dr. David Augsburger from the U.S as special speaker. The theme of the conference was, "Rejoice, Reflect, Respond." The first day also featured the Canadian Women's Mission Conference supper and the opening session in the evening. On the second day we heard David Augsburger's first message to the full conference. The presentation was followed by a discussion period during which Augsburger fielded questions from the audience. Rev. I. I. Friesen had just responded to an issue and was returning to his seat, when he suffered a heart attack and died shortly thereafter. When the attending doctor, one of Rev. Friesen's former students, made the announcement of his passing, I was asked to lead in a word of prayer. I especially remembered Mrs. Friesen, who was not present at the conference that day, and the other members of the family. The entire congregation was in emotional shock, and his passing had a sobering effect on everyone. After his period as president of CMBC, Rev. Friesen had continued a study program and completed his doctoral studies. Then he returned to the college to do part-time teaching. He continued his avid reading, giving attention to the latest books in the field of theology. Although he was very involved in the early years of CMBC's

development, he would also be remembered for his pastoral work at Bethel Mennonite Church and for his teaching at CMBC. Rev. Friesen was 74 years old.

That summer we also went to the General Conference triennial sessions in St. Catharines, Ontario. During my sabbatical leave the vice-chair had taken over the work of the executive committee, but there was no major conference held that year. My second three-year term as chair was completed with this 1974 conference session. Dr. Elmer Neufeld, president of Bluffton College, succeeded me. For the usual presidential message I was asked to share about my experiences in the Far East. I took the occasion to reflect on our visits to the three Mennonite church groups: in Japan, in Indonesia, and in Taiwan. Since our major time was spent in Taiwan I focussed on several of the issues which the Taiwan conference (Fellowship of Mennonite Churches in Taiwan) was facing and the new opportunities that were continuing to open up for them.

Our trip home from St. Catharines took us through Chicago where Ross and Victoria and their first child, Charissa, were involved with the Ecumenical Institute, which they had joined in Winnipeg several years earlier. Charissa was already one year old. Because of an ear infection she had had surgery to insert plastic tubing to allow the ear to drain properly. We were very happy to see her, our first grandchild, again. She was now quite different from the little tyke we kept in our hotel room in Saskatoon just before we left on our Sabbatical to Taiwan. She was a jovial child and did not make strange. It was good to visit with her and Victoria and Ross. This was a decision-making time for them; they were considering a year's stint in England with the Institute. Before that, they would return to Winnipeg for a brief time. Our return trip to Winnipeg was without incident, and we ended the summer by getting ready for a busy fall.

The Last Four Years at CMBC

In the fall of 1974 I was again fully involved with presidential duties at the college. The final four years of a 24-year stint with the school included major growth and significant changes. Enrolment that year was the highest ever: 130 full-time students. For a number of students, both within the college and beyond, the mood of pessimism and dissatisfaction was shifting to a more wholesome, positive, and optimistic outlook. More space became available

when the new north wing of the main building was dedicated on April 25, 1974. It contained the chapel, offices for college administration, conference offices, and several service areas including printing facilities, a mailroom, archival space, the bookstore, and a workshop. This addition allowed for the former chapel-auditorium to become a gym. The addition of the new facilities provided the occasion to repair some of the worn-down areas. But it also pointed up other necessary changes. The boiler was converted to propane, and an extensive list of further repairs was drawn up. Because we were receiving more and more requests for the use of our facilities from groups beyond our immediate conference churches, these repairs became more urgent.

Growth and change continued also in the academic program. Revisions were made to some policies governing cross-registration with the University of Manitoba, resulting in an increase in the number of cross-registered courses to 25-plus; also more upper level courses in Religion and the Liberal Arts were added. At the request of the college, the university considered our courses in Mennonite Studies and Old Testament as upper level courses in their department of religion.

Our music program received considerable attention in the mid-seventies. As an institution we worked hard at developing our choral program. It was, after all, through the contribution of our choirs that we reached our community and our churches, whether with the annual Christmas programs or the concerts by the oratorio choir in which CMBC choirs were supplemented by community singers. The music personnel, George and Esther Wiebe and Bernie Neufeld, had to draw a fine line when it came to choosing the music for these events. To include too much "new" music, with which our constituency was not familiar, could result in sharp criticism. Over the years, however, as more and more in the community heard contemporary music, it came to be appreciated. For musicians and singers the change to more modern repertoire happened far too slowly.

Agnes and I made sure to put these choir programs and renditions on our calendars. We did not want to miss any of the presentations at the Centennial Concert Hall. As one of the faculty members I had the privilege of accompanying the choirs, quartets, or octets when they visited churches. These experiences were always enriching. Hearing the music more than adequately compensated for any sense of burden I might have had about having to bring the message at the program.

The increase in course offerings obviously called for more faculty. The younger members submitted plans for further study. Adolf Ens continued his doctoral work in history at the University of Ottawa. Harry Huebner pursued doctoral studies in philosophy and theology at the University of Toronto, and Gerald Gerbrandt did doctoral work in Old Testament at Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Virginia. Several sessional faculty were called to teach English, Sociology, and Economics. And some students were given consideration as future CMBC faculty prospects, with at least one specifically encouraged to continue graduate studies in New Testament.

Interest in the minister-lay courses grew as we increased our offerings. The CMC moved to underwrite the major part of the cost for these courses. That action gave impetus to the growth of this important need within our constituency. One year we tried a joint venture with MBBC by offering courses for ministers, taught on both campuses alternately throughout the week. Those involved spoke appreciatively of their experience but, when we suggested a repeat of such a venture the following year, our sister institution declined. These courses were not given jointly again, but there were continued endeavours to plan other facets of our program together, such as overseas study tours sponsored by both colleges and accompanied by faculty members from each.

Over the years it became evident that there needed to be healthier dialogue between constituency and college administration-faculty. This led to a study in 1976-1977 facilitated by an educator, Henry Neufeld of Portage-la-Prairie. The issues dealt with included college-church relationship problems, the purpose and mission of CMBC, residence concerns, the type of courses taught, the approach to teaching, faculty training, communication, and student lifestyle. Resulting from the meetings, the workshops, and the interviews was a report which was to be presented to the Toronto conference sessions on July 26, 1977.

Changes in the Offing

But something was afoot of which I was not aware at the time. Dr. Erland Waltner's retirement as president of Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart was approaching, and a search committee was appointed to find a successor. It surprised me considerably when, in the spring of 1977, three of my close friends asked me in the course of several weeks whether I had given any

thought to making a change and going to Elkhart. I had not, and when this idea was presented to me, I could only wonder what had prompted three persons to speak to me in such close succession.

On May 28, 1977 the oldest daughter of my younger brother Abe and wife Doreen, Joyce Kathleen, and Stephen Kroeger were married in the college chapel. The guests had gathered and it was almost time for the wedding procession to start when Peter Sawatzky, vice-chair of the MBS board, tapped me on the shoulder and asked, "Could we step into your office for a moment?" Whatever was so urgent to call for a meeting now? Peter shared that the seminary board had asked him, while in session in Elkhart the day before, to extend to me the invitation to become the fourth president of Mennonite Biblical Seminary to begin July 1, 1978. They would await my response. He gave me a copy of the minute citing the action taken, which I read later: "The Mennonite Biblical Seminary Board of Trustees recommends that we extend a call to Dr. Henry Poettcker asking him to become the next President of MBS, beginning July 1, 1978 (following consultation with Goshen Biblical Seminary)." Peter Sawatzky had come directly from Elkhart to search me out and be the messenger to bring me the news before anyone else heard of the board's action.

The wedding was a beautiful event and we rejoiced with Abe and Doreen and Peter and Laura Kroeger as they gave their children a special blessing. But I had a hard time concentrating and kept thinking about that envelope in my pocket. Whatever had brought on this action? The wedding continued but I could not tell you what the biblical text of the message was.

That summer was significant in several ways. Just weeks before the wedding, plans for the renovation of our house were finalized. We had received special permission to extend our living room closer to the sidewalk to make possible a combined living-dining room. Included in the changes was the addition of a fireplace in the centre of the north wall. We had offered our son Martin a job for the summer to assist me in the construction project. But we wondered: With the call I had received, should we change plans? Was it worth all the effort for just one more year, if we accepted the Elkhart offer?

A faculty meeting the following week gave occasion for me to share the call that had come from the seminary board. I said I was open to their counsel and trusted that they would keep us in their prayers. My intention was to come to a decision within a week or ten days. One of the faculty members was

utterly amazed. He had been struggling with making a major change in his life and was finding it difficult to make a decision. And I would be able to do this so quickly? Yes, I said, letting the matter drag out would not be helpful.

Various considerations played a major part in deciding whether or not to accept the Elkhart offer. Two new grandchildren had arrived that spring and, if we moved, we would miss a very important dimension of family relationships. Martin was planning a wedding for the fall and, although he would be moving to Saskatoon, we would be much farther away if we moved to Indiana. And what of the call itself? This country lad from the foothills of the Rockies had ventured into a college environment and, after 23 years in that setting, was now comfortably settled in. What would a seminary community mean for me and us? Was I up to the task? Agnes expressed a few fears about such a change. She raised several of the practical questions: packing, moving, finding a new home when our current one was just being improved and made more comfortable. And what about breaking the close ties which we had developed over 23 years? But Agnes said that if I felt the Lord was calling us, she was ready to go with me. At the time she was working as a library assistant and cataloguer at the University of Manitoba, and had often considered the possibilities of further studies to get a library science degree. What might the future hold in that regard in Elkhart? I shared with our oldest son Ron that I had received this invitation and, as we discussed its implications, I mentioned that financially it would mean a reduction in income. His comment was, "Dad, money isn't everything."

What might be the CMBC board's reaction? Rev. Thiessen reacted negatively and expressed his reluctance at seeing us go. Another member wrote that he had taken me too much for granted, but he was not surprised that I might want to make a change. Yet after having given almost two dozen years to the institution, it seemed to me that, although none of the board members had ever hinted at it, perhaps now might be a good time for a leadership change.

One thing I felt I should do before making the decision was to visit the seminary and meet with the administration, faculty, and staff. That was possible in early June 1977. I flew to Chicago and was picked up by the former board chairman, James Waltner, who had just been replaced by Peter Sawatzky, and Marvin Zehr, chair of the presidential search committee. As we chatted during the two-hour drive to Elkhart, I asked them to make a case for

my coming to the seminary to succeed Erland Waltner. They pointed to my training, the experiences I had had in Winnipeg at the college, and the roles I had played in the conference structures of the CMC and in the General Conference. They referred to my many speaking engagements throughout the churches in both the U.S. and Canada which gave me knowledge of our GC and CMC churches which few people had. They referred to the study on baptism which I had written for the conferences. They also mentioned my positive experiences with them over the years and my good reputation at the seminary. Put all together, this was almost heady stuff!

When we arrived, I met with the dean, Ross Bender, who briefed me on the direction the seminary program was going. He summarized the four basic programs they were offering, noted the recognition which the seminary had received from the accrediting association, and spoke to the faculty needs that were currently under review. He gave me a cordial welcome, which I had also received from Joe Hertzler, the presidential assistant at Goshen, and from Virgil Claassen, business manager and treasurer. The GBS President, Dr. Marlin Miller, was not on campus the week I was there, but I had met him on other occasions. All in all, the reports I heard were good. Finances were coming in well and student interest was growing. Needed were more housing facilities for students. At my request, they shared about some issues which needed attention. The discussion was frank and amicable. Erland Waltner, the out-going president, assured us that he would be supportive and helpful.

New for me would be the administrative structure. The two seminaries had worked together on the same campus for several years with the administration committee consisting of the two presidents, the dean, and a student representative. This was the administrative decision-making body for AMBS. They reported that the committee was working well. They assured me of what I already knew: "When administrators choose to cooperate for the good of the whole, the results are positive." I came away from the seminary with a positive impression, and with a warm welcome expressed by many persons.

On June 15, 1977—this was actually 18 days after my encounter with Peter Sawatzky—I wrote the following letter to the CMBC board members:

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

With this communication I am tendering my resignation as President of the College, effective June 30, 1978. My reason for doing so is a call which

I have received to accept the presidency of the Seminary in Elkhart beginning with the 1978-1979 school year.

The decision for Agnes and me to terminate here has not been an easy one, for we have thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated our years at CMBC. Through some difficult years and many more enjoyable ones, we have always felt the support of the Board. We have received many positive affirmations again and again, and personally, I have found my relationship to the Board to be wholesome, understanding, and supportive.

When faculty goals and constituency expectations did not always seem to mesh, the Board was understanding, wise in its counsel and supportive in its actions. Thank you for all of this.

I want to take this occasion to express my sincere appreciation for cooperative, capable, and dedicated faculty members with whom I have been able to work over the past years. I do not hesitate to say that they are responsible for what CMBC is today, and if I have been one link in helping along, I give thanks to God. Their support and the support of the other staff members, as well as Conference personnel, I will long treasure.

I look forward to the final year with anticipation, for I believe we are on the threshold of exciting developments. Student prospects are good and the plans for the archives-library complex are going ahead well. It is humbling to be able to bring my period of service here to what I believe is a fitting climax. My prayers will continue to be with the institution in which God has now given me grace to teach and administrate for 23 years. My prayers will also be with you as you move to appoint a person to succeed me. May God guide you and bless you in your further responsibilities.

Sincerely yours in Christ,
H. Poettcker, President

The die had been cast, and there was no turning back.

That proved to be a busy summer. The Canadian conference convened in Toronto, July 23-27. The CMBC report that was presented there received in-depth consideration with delegates given substantial time to ask questions, to raise issues, to make suggestions, and to discuss at length the various matters which were raised. The follow-up to this discussion would be a four-day workshop held in Winnipeg, August 28-31.

Present at the Toronto conference were Rev. and Mrs. J. J. Thiessen, who were planning to celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary six weeks later on September 3. I had been asked to speak at that occasion, and in Ontario we discussed briefly what a suitable topic might be. Thiessens were in good spirits. I too was looking forward to a pleasant weekend with them in September.

As August moved along, various preparations for the new school year were underway. Toward the end of the last full week of the month I received a phone call from Saskatoon. Walter Thiessen, son of J. J. and Katharine, conveyed the sad news that Brother Thiessen had passed away. He shared the date of the funeral and then he asked if I would still be the speaker, albeit not for the anniversary but for the funeral. Change of venue and change of plans. For me that was a difficult assignment.

We gathered from near and far to share the event with the Thiessen family. The college faculty and many students and former students were present. If we had noticed anything about this long-time chair of the college board, it was that Brother Thiessen had a deep concern for young people and their preparation for life. Ministry in the church was very high on his priority list. This is not the place to give a full eulogy to a man whose life spanned almost nine decades, 1893-1977. However, I will cite briefly from the Foreword I wrote for his biography, written by Esther Epp-Tiessen.

> Once he [JJ] had emigrated to Canada with his family in 1926, he blossomed into the full-fledged person that he became: family provider, churchman, pastor, conference leader, college board chairman, student counsellor, and friend. . . . To remember many conversations and experiences from our 35 years of acquaintanceship is to open a panorama of revealing windows into JJ's life and character. Few have learned a third language as well as did this Russian Mennonite. Few became aware of the suffering of the many for whom he became a constant helper, a Christian brother, and a trusted friend.[1]

[1] For further information about J.J.'s contributions, see Esther Epp-Tiessen, *J.J. Thiessen: A Leader for His Time* (Winnipeg, MB: CMBC Publications, 2001), ix. See

The Last Year in Winnipeg

We did decide to make the changes to the living room of our house. Martin's earlier summer jobs, during which he had worked in a truss shop, provided him with a trade which we put to good use as we made our own trusses for the roof over the living room extension. A sub-trade was called in to do the brick-rock work for the fireplace. The result was a lovely addition to the living-dining room. On occasion our two oldest grandchildren came to spend the night with us; they enjoyed sleeping on the chesterfield watching the flames in the fireplace licking away and consuming the logs on the grate. The face of the fireplace featured various types of rock, beautifully placed, which gave it a rugged appearance. When it came to putting the house up for sale, we had ambivalent feelings, mostly of sadness and loss, for having to give up a comfortable attractive home. A year earlier we had also replaced the shabby garage with a new two-car structure, so the value of the property had more than doubled. For that reason alone, we had been wise to do the renovation.

In the fall, son Martin moved to Saskatoon to continue classes at the University of Saskatchewan which, he ascertained, had one of the best electrical engineering programs in Canada. The wedding of Martin and Erna Wiebe took place in Kelowna, B.C. on November 19, 1977. Erna had a three-year old daughter, Renée, from a previous marriage; she was present to add a special touch to the event. The wedding was in Kelowna because Erna's parents had moved there from Manitoba. Son Ron travelled to the wedding with us. We went by car to Calgary, and from there took a flight to Kelowna. This was also the city to which Agnes' brother Henry had retired, so this trip afforded the opportunity for brother and sister to have a good visit. Our car trip back home to Winnipeg from Calgary was problematic—the car heater stopped functioning. It was –30 degrees Fahrenheit so we had to use blankets and extra clothes to keep warm.

Ross and Victoria had returned to Winnipeg in 1976. They began operating a children's day care in their home, taking care of up to 20 children, ages toddler to 12 years. Becoming licensed to do that was a long drawn-out affair but, with perseverance, they even made application to have some of the regulations governing day cares changed for the better. McCare Day Care

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also Henry Poettcker and Rudy A. Regehr, eds., *Call to Faithfulness: Essays in Canadian Mennonite Studies* (Winnipeg, MB: Canadian Mennonite Bible College, 1972).

Centre had made a start that other similar agencies would pursue further. In 1977, Charissa received a baby sister, Bryanna Michelle, so these two girls were now part of the mix as McCare Day Care was developed at 34 Ruby Street. The roomy, three-storey house did, however, need major renovations. It served its purpose as a business and family home for 16 years.

Ron and Carol-Ann had settled into a house near Polo Park Mall about four kilometres from our Lanark Street house. After working as an auto mechanic, then as a life insurance salesman, Ron found more satisfying work in his profession as a carpenter-home improvement handyman. He soon established his own company, but after several years he accepted the position as shop foreman for Skillcraft Home Improvements. Carol-Ann was busy mothering two little girls, who would receive a baby brother shortly after we moved to Elkhart, Indiana.

At CMBC the year 1977-1978 focussed on planning for the future. The workshop referred to earlier convened August 28-31. In preparation, faculty members were each asked to submit crucial issues from the review process. Similarly, students were to list the concerns which they thought needed attention. The latter submission was processed by the Student Council. Raised were matters related to the physical campus, the sports program and need for a sports coordinator, and the request for a guidance counsellor. Further, students asked for library hours to include Saturday evening and Sunday afternoon. Also, they wanted input and representation on committees.

The annual report noted the activities of the faculty. Helmut Harder would take a one-year leave to do research and writing; John Friesen was returning from a sabbatical in Germany; John H. Neufeld was appointed to teach part-time in the area of homiletics. A four-year plan proposed that we hire a half-time sports coordinator for 1977-1978; a half-time person for public relations and admissions for 1978-1979; and other staff to be added as funds became available. Regarding new facilities, the plan called for the Heritage Centre to be built in 1978-1979, funded with a special gift; an apartment block with special funding of $750,000; and renovation of the dormitory including an addition worth $250,000, prepaid. Further buildings were to be added as funds became available.

Early in spring, Agnes and I needed to make a quick trip to Elkhart. Its purpose was two-fold: to look for and if possible purchase a house; and to put in an order for major appliances to be available when we moved in upon

arrival. We did find a house half a mile south of the seminary campus in a *cul-de-sac* where there would be minimal traffic. We were brave enough to purchase the house even though it was under three to four feet of snow. We could only hope that when the snow disappeared in spring, we would appreciate the landscaping and the view. We were not disappointed. As far as the appliances were concerned, we had always held Sears products in high regard so now too Sears received our order for a stove, a refrigerator, a washer, and a dryer with the instructions to deliver them four months hence.

At the CMBC commencement exercises on April 30, 1978, I fulfilled my final graduation duties as president. Waldemar Janzen as dean and I as president handed out degrees and diplomas for the last time. I spent the next several months organizing my office files for deposit in the archives. Then there were college, church, and family farewell meals—and the "good-byes." At the CMC sessions in Gretna the first week of July, I presented my final report to the conference delegates. Agnes and I were presented with a silver tray of recognition for our years of service at CMBC. Dr. George K. Epp was introduced as my successor. And with the completion of the college report, my responsibilities with the institution, which I had come to love and deeply appreciate, came to an end.

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Part V

The Elkhart Experience

Chapter 13

Relocating to the Seminary in Elkhart

The time between my final involvement with CMBC at the Gretna conference and getting ready to move to my new position in Elkhart, Indiana, was very short. After taking leave of family and friends on July 7, Agnes and I drove directly from Gretna to Grand Forks, North Dakota. This wasn't the actual start of our journey to Elkhart. We had reserved a U-Haul truck in Grand Forks to transport our possessions to Elkhart. Getting the vehicle in the U.S. would save us considerable money because it would not have to be returned to Canada. After picking up the truck, we returned to Winnipeg by mid-afternoon. There our "crew" was waiting. Two kind brothers from Bethel Mennonite Church, Jim Suderman and Herb Warkentin, plus our son Ron and son-in-law, Ross McIntosh, helped us load. We backed the truck up to the garage at 626 Lanark Street, where our goods had been packed and stored for the past three weeks. In two hours everything was loaded. We said our good-byes and a loaded U-Haul threaded its way down the back lane to Grant Avenue, then turned down to Pembina Highway which becomes Highway 75, leading to the U.S. border. We were off. To avoid driving two vehicles, we had sold our car to a friend; now we drove only the U-Haul to Elkhart, Indiana.

We arrived at the U.S. border around supper time. The officer at the Pembina crossing suggested that we go a mile east to Emerson and go through Noyes, Minnesota, where we could be fully processed and have all the necessary documents prepared immediately. The officer there briefly checked through the list of contents in our packed cartons, then pointed to the TV which was not in a box but had been placed in the centre of the other boxes.

The agent found the approval sticker which the U.S. required for this kind of electrical unit. In 20 minutes the documents had been checked and approved and the registration was prepared "according to the law" (so read the green residence card), the photos were attached, and we were "admitted immigrants to the U.S. on July 7, 1978."

We had agreed earlier that we would take our time on this trip to Elkhart. The vehicle was not difficult to operate, the roads were good, and we took three days to get there. Because we had spent six years in several states during the time of our studies and another year during our first sabbatical, we knew what to expect. Unlike the earlier times, we now had no children along. Our hearts were a bit heavy because we would not be seeing them very often from here on.

We needed to be at our new home on Monday morning, July 10. That was the day "four months hence" when Sears Roebuck & Co. was to deliver our appliances to 58358 Valley View Drive and assist us as needed to place and connect them. Another preparation for our arrival was to have the house cleaned. It had been vacated by the former owner at the end of June, so there was a week to get that done. We were indeed happy that, when we arrived on schedule, we could move into a clean house. We also discovered something about our seminary-church community. It was a standing "tradition" that new faculty members or church members were greeted with dozens of willing hands and feet to assist in unloading and helping the new arrivals move in. Because we had not brought the major appliances or very many items of furniture, the unloading went quickly. By the first evening all items needed immediately were in place, and we had the wherewithal to cook, eat, sleep, and even the chair and the desk on which to sign the delivery slips.

One thing we missed was, of course, a vehicle. The Dodge we left behind had served our purposes well, so we looked for another one. We made our purchase at the Dodge dealership in Elkhart. A new Dodge Aspen in 1978 cost us $5,671.00.

One more thing I needed to do with despatch was to visit my office, meet my secretary, touch base with the other administrators and faculty members, and be introduced to my job. The secretary, Mary Troyer, had been Erland Waltner's secretary and was ready to continue in the office. I had met her before and we had had considerable correspondence in the months prior to my coming, so a bridge had already been built for a working relationship.

Mary was a person who could anticipate what might be needed, and proved to be an appreciated co-worker.

Although all the boxes and larger items were now in the house, this did not mean that all the contents were in their proper places. That would need to wait. Within two weeks we had an assignment which would require an extended trip. Plans were being finalized for the Tenth Mennonite World Conference to be held in Wichita, Kansas in the last week of July. We had been asked to represent the seminary there. Of course we knew the area well from the two years we spent at Bethel College and from my many trips to Newton, the neighbouring city of Wichita, during the years when I was involved as a member of the General Conference executive. This trip would be a kind of home-going for us.

The Trip to Kansas

The Mennonite World Conference in Wichita was as diverse as one might have imagined. Represented there were Mennonites from 44 countries with 9,667 persons registered. Robert Kreider made the comment that too often we Mennonites developed principles, articles of faith, and unique characteristics in the negative—no secret societies, non-conformity, no flags on Memorial Day—but, he said,

> Wichita shattered our images and perceptions. Dispelled is the image that Mennonitism is to be equated with plain dress or Z*wieback* (double rolls) or Low German or the *Gesangbuch mit Noten* (Song Book with Notes). At Wichita we met and saw brothers and sisters . . . of many colours, many languages all calling themselves "Mennonites." We became aware that the Gospel of Christ can be shared not only through sermons and addresses, but also through strange and haunting songs, rhythms, dances, gestures, banners, movements of body, flashing images, movies, works of art, dramas, greetings, vigils, and a hundred more symbols of culture.[1]

I had been at two earlier Mennonite world conferences—Kitchener in 1962 and Amsterdam in 1967—but was in full agreement with the characterization that Kreider gave of the 1978 sessions.

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[1] Robert Kreider included these reflections in his address at my inauguration on October 20, 1978.

The proceedings of the week in Wichita were titled, "The Kingdom of God in a Changing World." Prepared by Paul N. Kraybill, the executive secretary, who succeeded his long-time predecessor C. J. Dyck, the printed proceedings contained most of the addresses and the many responses which followed. David Schroeder (from Canada) gave one of the major presentations under the main topic entitled, "The Church Representing the Kingdom." The responses were given by Andrew Lu (Taiwan), Paul Hofer (Switzerland), and Kilabi Bululu (Zaire). Following is a cross-section of people's responses indicating some highlights, impressions, and learnings.

Travis Kroeker wrote in *The Messenger*: "Theoretically, I have for some time affirmed that to be a Mennonite is to be a spiritual descendant of Menno Simons and the sixteenth-century Anabaptists and the appellation 'Mennonite' should be disassociated from a particular culture or ethnic heritage. At the conference this belief was confirmed. . . . Our commonness was not rooted in cultural homogeneity or common ancestry, but in our common commitment to Jesus Christ and the teachings of our Anabaptist forebears."

Margaret L. Reimer, in *The Mennonite Reporter*, put to rest the overused and incorrect term "ethnic Mennonite:" "To say that Mennonites are church and not an ethnic group is ridiculous. We are obviously no longer made up of only two or three ethnic groups but are now a group including probably hundreds of different cultures. This summer's world conference with representatives from 44 countries, was a vivid illustration of this multiplicity."

Arden Thiessen in *The Messenger* remarked about the gathering: "It was a spiritual treat. Perhaps the nature of the conference could best be summed up in the words of Million Belete of Africa: It was 'a celebration of peoplehood.'"[2] An apt comment by Katie Funk Wiebe provided another definition of Mennonitism: "A Mennonite is one who finds identity in the reality of the cross and becomes relevant in one's culture."

Will we ever forget Mary Oyer's leading us in singing that virtually raised the roof? Or as Bernie Wiebe said, "She managed at times to weld us into one

[2] These editorial comments were all taken (in excerpt form) from Paul Kraybill, ed., *The Kingdom of God in a Changing World: Proceedings of the Tenth Assembly Mennonite World Conference, Wichita, Kansas, July 25-30, 1978* (Lombard, Ill.: Mennonite World Conference, 1979), 201.

body, trying our voices at totally new musical variations (and gladly so)." Or what of the choirs that sang their way into our hearts and souls?

We left Wichita physically tired but spiritually refreshed, inspired anew to put into practice that to which we had been called. Erland Waltner's final paragraph in his article in the *Mennonite Weekly Review*, left us with a challenge: "For Mennonites and Brethren in Christ around the world to pray, 'Thy Kingdom come!' with new understanding and new commitment would indeed make the Wichita MWC a most decisive spiritual happening in our time, which in itself would be a new proclamation to our churches and to the world."[3]

Getting Our Bearings in Indiana

Back in Elkhart we needed to get serious about settling into our new home and taking on responsibilities at the seminary. One highlight event that fall was my inauguration as president of MBS, held on October 20 in the seminary's Chapel of the Sermon on the Mount. As that day approached, the planning committee for the occasion was receiving letters from invited seminary and university representatives informing us of their travel and arrival plans. The inauguration program listed 23 educational institution representatives and 13 church-conference leaders who had accepted the invitation to be present. I had not met many of the seminary presidents, and it was left to later contacts to learn to know them as partners in a common venture.

The speaker for that occasion was Dr. Robert Kreider, my good friend and former colleague when he was president of Bluffton College. Now Kreider was professor of Peace Studies and director of the Mennonite Library and Archives at Bethel College in North Newton, Kansas. A well-travelled church historian and statesman, a capable and gifted writer, a dynamic and motivating communicator, he suggested as a topic, "The People's Representative . . . Carried on Eagle's Wings." In his comments, based on Exodus 18-19, he intertwined two themes: a search for biblical models for management and the role of the seminary in the search for an enlarged understanding of peoplehood. He dealt with these two themes in a precise and powerful way. He gave me inspiration for the task ahead as he pointed to

[3] Ibid., 1.

Moses as an example of a wisely counselled administrator, and to our Lord who would carry me as on eagle's wings.

The assurance of prayerful support and well-wishes which Agnes and I received from many would sustain us in the days to come. The choir presented two powerful numbers: John Carter's arrangement of "O God, Our Help," and Lloyd Pfautsch's arrangement of Adam Drese's, "Commitment" (*Seelenbraeutigam).* The hour of sharing and fellowship which followed the program was a pleasant climax to my formal introduction to my new role.

About this time I began to notice problems with my eyesight. I had developed double vision which was a nuisance more than anything else. Examinations by an eye doctor and then a neurologist detected nothing. The only explanation they could give was a possible rupture of one of the small blood vessels near the eyes. I was told that this condition could correct itself in four weeks. And sure enough, one morning when I stepped out of the shower and glanced at the light in the ceiling, there was only one light instead of two. When I checked the calendar I noted that it was exactly four weeks since the double vision began. I could only be thankful for such a speedy recovery.

From my experience as a member on the Mennonite Biblical Seminary board, I came to the Elkhart setting with a fairly good awareness of the seminaries' *raison d'etre*—their justification for existence. The year 1978 was important for the joint institutions, Mennonite Biblical Seminary (MBS) and Goshen Biblical Seminary (GBS), because of a self-study of the programs in preparation for re-accreditation from the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) and the Northcentral Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA). In 1958 the two seminaries had formed an association—Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries (AMBS)—when MBS relocated from Chicago to Elkhart, and their joint work proved beneficial to both. In 1964, the GBS dean, Dr. Ross T. Bender, was appointed joint dean of both seminaries, and was given the task of writing the report of the self-study. He drew together the results of the painstaking research of the faculty and the students. This background allowed me to get on board with the full scope and content of the seminary program in those first months in Elkhart. An earlier study known as the Dean's Seminar[4] had prepared the ground for this second major self-study of

[4] The Dean's Seminar, which consisted of a committee of six faculty members and the dean, dealt with three major issues: 1) The nature of the Free Church, especially in

the seminaries' working together as one. The work of that committee continued to be an ongoing catalyst for the further development of the entire seminary program. By the end of the year, the study was ready for the visiting teams from the two accrediting agencies that arrived in February 1979.

The examining committee's task was to see whether the study demonstrated that the statement of mission-purpose by which the institution(s) operated was actually the basis which determined how the program was structured. When they had completed their work, the committees met with the seminary administration and presented their findings. Their verbal report was decidedly positive. Several recommendations were made, either that we justify a specific action or position or that we make changes to rectify a program deficiency. One such example was the ATS request for us "to show due cause why the MA in Peace Studies should receive further accreditation" since we had not appointed a full-time faculty member to the position of Peace Studies. Our report had already indicated that we were aware of other items that needed attention. We were commended for being aware of such lacks in our program. Both the ATS and NCA responded favourably to their committees' respective recommendation for a further 10-year accreditation. It was encouraging and humbling to hear from a director of the Lilly Foundation Inc. that the AMBS program was unique and that it stood out from other seminary programs with reasons for special note. (We had already been and continued to be recipients of a number of financial grants from Lilly to undertake various studies in preparation for further planning and the introduction of new features to the seminary program.) After his initial perusal of the self-study, Dr. J. Winfield Fretz, chair of the MBS board spoke of it as a comprehensive, lucidly written account and saw it as most helpful in providing "a sound basis on which to project the future seminary program."[5]

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the Anabaptist-Mennonite perspective, stated in contemporary terms; 2) The essential nature of the church's ministry today; and 3) The character of theological education for ministry in the 1970s to reflect the theology of the Free Church. The work of the committee of seven, which lasted for two years, resulted in the publication, Ross T. Bender, *The People of God: A Mennonite Interpretation of the Free Church Tradition* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1971). It effectively gave a model for further theological education at AMBS.

[5] Letter dated February 1, 1979, written by the chairman to MBS board members.

The Work of the Administrative Committee

My first year at the seminary was demanding but also very rewarding. I learned to know the administrative committee members with whom I worked closely. This committee was accountable to the boards of AMBS, GBS, and MBS. The administrative structure was not nearly as complicated as many assumed that it must be. One of the structural issues which the accrediting committees had wanted us to clarify was how the lines of responsibility were drawn. The administrative committee was made up of the two presidents, the dean, and a student representative, and it served as the institutional head of AMBS in the same way as the president did in other schools. No doubt we spent more time in deliberation and discussion than if there had been only one person making the final decisions, but this was a deliberate action by both seminaries to allow for the necessary dialogue to bring us to a common mind and then to the necessary action. Just prior to undertaking the self-study in 1978, the question was raised whether it would be advisable to unite the two schools into one, but after a careful testing of such a move, the current administrative structure was retained.

Already earlier, when I represented CMBC on the larger MBS board, I had been in contact with members of the administrative committee so I had some understanding of its work. However, to become a member of the committee was to be placed into the centre of the interplay of the members and the dynamics of its task. As someone who was not very vocal or insistent on getting my own way, I allowed some time to elapse before I "plunged in." From the beginning I felt free to ask for clarification, for explanations, for actions proposed, and for background materials when that was necessary. Because I rarely had an axe to grind, I was quite ready to let this committee work as it had been doing. That proved to be the best way as I moved into the task.

The administrative committee was only one of the structural facets of the two seminaries. Each seminary had its own board of control: GBS its board of overseers and MBS its board of trustees. These boards related to their parent church bodies: the Mennonite Church for GBS and the General Conference Mennonite Church for MBS. Within the AMBS structure, there were literally dozens of committees or councils; for example, business committee, curriculum committee, Institute of Mennonite Studies (IMS), executive council, Overseas Mission Training Centre (OMTC), coordinating council, and more.

There were roles within the administrative committee's sphere of operation which necessitated changes, particularly because there were two presidents, Marlin Miller at GBS and I at MBS. When Erland Waltner, my predecessor, resigned his position as chief administrator, he had been the chair of the committee. Now it seemed appropriate that Marlin Miller take over that role until I was a bit more acclimated to the overall functioning of the school. I, therefore, took over the position as chair of the faculty which included leading their weekly meetings. But this too was not set in stone. For example, when Marlin went on a sabbatical leave, I took over as chair of the committee and Joe Hertzler, Marlin's replacement for the year, led the faculty meetings. Again, there were other changes when Marlin's replacement on his second sabbatical was Richard Kauffman. Further adjustments were made during the periods when we needed to replace the dean. Administrative changes were such that I served with four different deans during my 12 years at AMBS. The positive dimension of these experiences was that I learned to know these persons beyond only their educational and teaching skills.

As MBS president I also related to the GC conference executive. In that setting MBS was parallel to the three program commissions: the Commission on Overseas Mission, the Commission on Home Ministries, and the Commission on Education. My role in the executive was comparable to the role of the executive secretary in the commissions. That necessitated at least two trips annually to the central offices in Newton. Earlier when I served on the General Board as conference chair, I gave attention to overseeing and coordinating the overall work of the conference. Now my focus was primarily on the seminary and its role of training ministers. The two meetings during the year were called to inform the commissions of each other's programs and to plan the annual budgets.

Other travel took me to the annual sessions of regional and provincial conferences to provide information on the seminary and to participate in relevant discussions pertaining to the churches' ministry. In order to lessen my travel assignments, I asked faculty members to represent MBS at some of the provincial sessions. One topic of discussion at these gatherings was the decentralization of seminary training. These deliberations led to the development of extension centres in at least five geographical locations: two in the U.S. in the Atlantic Coast and in Kansas; and three in Canada in Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia. These centres kept the seminary in touch with

its regional supporting churches. I was fortunate to teach courses in Kansas, B.C., and Alberta.

Although my presidential duties kept me busy, I left sufficient time in my schedule to teach at least one course per semester. I taught the Gospel of Matthew and several of the Pauline letters. Because the students knew New Testament Greek, it was appropriate to use the Greek text for our studies. That proved a wonderful experience for all of us. During several of the years that followed, I taught Greek Reading which enabled me to improve my own knowledge of Greek. There were exciting results. In one class in which we studied Paul's letter to the Colossians, I portioned out several paragraphs to groups of three or four students and asked them to present an exegesis of their respective passage to the class. I was very impressed with the group which was assigned the Christ Hymn (chapter 1). After dealing with the Greek text lucidly, they put it to music and sang it as the conclusion of their presentation.

Agnes and I at our home in Elkhart, IN, 1982.

That first year several other items were high on the priority list. A special study on education for minorities was underway. John Rogers, pastor of the Cleveland Heights Mennonite Church, was given leave for several months to do this study. Included were: a) meeting with Black and Latino representatives to ascertain their needs and hopes; b) meeting with administrators from Mennonite colleges; c) visiting institutions in Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York, to study their minority programs; and d) attending a conference on seminary education for Blacks in Atlanta, Georgia. John did good work, and we often referred to his findings and his recommendations as we developed this facet of our training program in the years ahead.

Another focus during my first year was the construction of a housing duplex. After deliberating for some time whether we should immediately construct two, we decided to build only one that year. Financially, each seminary provided half of the funds needed to cover the costs of construction.

For MBS that meant $350,000. This money was soon in hand. But there were also plans for retrofitting the current classroom building. For this second project, $150,000 had already been pledged. That got the financial drive off to a good start. To raise the balance of the funds, a new method was adopted. In order to involve as many people as possible, seminary associates were asked to help us distribute funding material in the various districts just prior to the actual fund drive. They did this for us gratis. Churches were asked to respond to a "fair-share" campaign with each member giving a $6.00 gift to the seminary for the building program. While not everyone responded, this campaign brought in about $150,000. Records showed that 25,000 members could have a share in this educational venture at AMBS. Who said that only the rich could participate in such a project!

Our Home on Valley View Drive and our Church Home

Our home at 58358 Valley View Drive was located less then a mile from the seminary and was beautifully situated in a *cul-de-sac* with two dozen other homes. From our dining room window in the back of the house, we looked across a field to a street running parallel to ours with large backyard lawns and gardens. The back of our lot had a row of towering trees. Some were chokecherry trees, giving us a chance to enjoy succulent fruit and also get exercise climbing a ladder to reach the top branches. The house stood on a slight knoll with the backyard gently sloping down 150 feet to the tree line. The south side had a high wooden fence, probably constructed to prevent children from wandering into the swimming pool in the neighbour's yard. The teenagers next door enjoyed their pool, although after a few years they left home, only to return later with children of their own to again make the pool a lively, noisy place.

We made several renovations to our house, such as placing a dividing wall between the kitchen and dining room, adding a wood-burning fireplace in the family room, and putting bookshelves into the room beside the family room to provide me with a roomy office. The house was split level with the living room and the kitchen-dining room on the first floor at ground level and the rest of the rooms in the upper part. Down six steps from the living room-dining room section were the family room, the office, the utility room, and bathroom. On the second level were three roomy and bright bedrooms and a bathroom. The south side of the dining room had a large opening with an iron

railing or baluster, so that from the dining room we could see the entire family room with the fireplace at the lower level. The dining room, living room, and family room provided enough space for us to invite in as many as 40 people.

Hively Avenue Mennonite Church became our church home. It was the second GC church in Elkhart county, and was located only three-quarters of a mile from the seminary campus. It was started when MBS moved to Elkhart, and many of the GC faculty members and staff became Hively church members. The membership was around 60 when we arrived, a close-knit group of mostly professional people. (There was one farmer couple). An important feature was the regular gathering after Sunday service for a potluck meal. Once a month it was for everyone; once or twice a month smaller groups met for a meal. Visitors were always welcome for lunch either at the church or in someone's home. Instead of hiring a janitor, each family took turns to clean the building for the weekend. Those who were unable to do the work could hire someone to take their place so they were included in the rotation. For special occasions, singers were co-opted from the congregation; for many years Mrs. Joan Enz led the singing groups. Hively church was well known because many of its members served on boards and committees of both regional and national conferences. Each Sunday service gave opportunity to share a concern or to request prayer for a person or a special matter. So, although we missed our Bethel church back in Winnipeg, we soon found our niche in the Hively fellowship.

When we first arrived in Elkhart, Agnes was kept busy with moving in, but she soon pursued further study. In Winnipeg, she had worked in a library for several years, but graduate study for this profession was not available there. She checked out several universities in the Elkhart area that offered a library science program. Indiana University had one of the best ones, and she could have enrolled full-time for a two-year program at the Bloomington campus. But that campus was 310 kilometres away. A combination of classes from other universities was also a possibility. She decided to first take some general courses at the seminary. Then she enrolled for classes in library science at a branch of the Indiana University located at Notre Dame which was only 15 kilometres from Elkhart. Next, she agreed with her advisor on which courses she should take during the summer sessions in Bloomington. She would also need two courses available as evening classes at the Fort Wayne campus 75 kilometres away.

During the summers of 1979 and 1980, Agnes spent five and nine weeks respectively on the Bloomington campus. I took three weeks of summer vacation during those two years so I could spend them with her in Bloomington. When she was busy with classes and studies, I would read or do other work. The weekends afforded occasions for sight-seeing or attending one of the Mennonite churches in the area. A former student of mine was also doing graduate studies at Indiana University so we often had Sunday lunch with her. Agnes finished her program, including the two classes at Fort Wayne, in the fall of 1980 and graduated with her Masters in Library Science from the University of Indiana on January 10, 1981. That was a wonderful milestone. Shortly thereafter, she was asked to set up the Mennonite Historical Library Room at the AMBS library with selected books from the Mennonite Historical Library (MHL) in Goshen. She also prepared a complete card catalogue of the MHL holdings in Goshen for use at the Elkhart location. This addition became a very significant feature of our Elkhart facilities, firstly because the books brought from MHL at Goshen afforded a good resource for student research; secondly, since the full card catalogue was available to them, they could request whatever books they needed, and a shuttle service brought them to the Elkhart library the next day.

Agnes spent 6 years as the reference librarian in the Mishawaka City Library.

Those first years at AMBS were very stimulating. I felt acceptance, support, prayerful undergirding, and a challenge to broaden both my academic horizons and my spirituality. One of the academic aims I achieved was to improve my Greek sufficiently to be able to teach the biblical New Testament books. A second aim was to do more reading of the source material needed to teach my courses. There I fell short, simply because my administrative tasks needed to take priority. There were many bonuses, however, when we planned workshops or sponsored book readings with scholars and pastors. One such event was a consultation on Norman Kraus' book, *Jesus Christ Our Lord*,[6] which was receiving considerable public discussion, both positive and negative. Six scholars presented papers dealing

[6] C. Norman Kraus, *Jesus Christ Our Lord: Christology from a Disciple's Perspective* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1987).

with biblical considerations, missiological issues, historical perspectives, and systematic evaluations. That was a learning experience for all of us; and Kraus incorporated several suggestions into the revised second edition of the book. Furthermore, as faculty, a bi-weekly dialogue focussed on papers written, book reviews published, or our understanding of a particular topic, such as, how to teach our respective courses in such a way as to give Jesus Christ his rightful place in our theologizing and educating.

An ongoing feature of our AMBS research was the Institute of Mennonite Studies. Periodically, the council of Mennonite seminaries authorized the publication of *Occasional Papers* to make essays available for discussion within the Mennonite theological community. The director of the institute was responsible for the publication of these materials.[7]

More and more specific attention was given to spiritual retreats to which both students and faculty were invited. Some of these were structured, others were more informal. Several years later, Marlene Kropf was appointed as spiritual formation director. Then some activities were given higher priority. Weekly prayer times, early morning or evening, were offered. Faculty members were assigned groups of graduating students with whom we met weekly to discuss pertinent issues that they might face once in a pastoral role. These times together often became deeply moving as students wrestled with questions affecting their spiritual life and growth. Most faculty members also joined a fellowship group of seminary personnel and church members where we shared our hopes and dreams, our struggles and our joys. Given the fact that we were there to learn, to help one another, to give and receive counsel, the opportunities for spiritual insight and growth were many. I was thankful that my spiritual perceptions were deepened, broadened, honed, and nurtured.

The AMBS Program

Earlier I indicated how MBS related to the structure of the General Conference Mennonite Church. During 1979 and following, GBS carried on discussions regarding formal relations with its sister institution, Eastern

[7] Over the years, beginning in 1979-1980, over a dozen of these *Occasional Papers* were published by the Institute of Mennonite Studies. These include Willard Swartley, ed., *Theological Education in Missional Perspective*, no. 2 (1981); Willard Swartley, ed., *The Bible and Law*, no. 3 (1982); and Leland Harder, ed., *Perspectives on Nurturing the Faith*, no. 6 (1983).

Mennonite Seminary (EMS). (EMS is an MC seminary located in Harrisonburg, Virginia.) In succeeding years the dialogue continued between the Mennonite Board of Education and the Board of Trustees of EMC, Inc. to try and establish guidelines for their future relationship. It became clear that we would need to stay in touch with them because the way in which the two MC seminaries related affected how we at Elkhart structured our program. Whether our connections would result in our "moving together" was an open question.

As in most years, 1979 brought some faculty changes, a reality with which administrations need to deal constantly. That summer Ross Bender resigned his deanship and went to Geneva, Switzerland, for a sabbatical leave. He returned a year later to teach again as full-time Professor of Religious Education. Willard Swartley was appointed interim dean for 1979-1980. C. J. Dyck, also on sabbatical leave, carried on research and returned to teach in the area of Anabaptist and Sixteenth-Century Studies. J. R. Burkholder of Goshen was appointed to teach Ethics and Peace Studies.

Besides the two seminaries, MBS and GBS, there were several other educational institutions in the Elkhart-Goshen community: Goshen College, Oaklawn Psychiatric Center, and the Greencroft Senior Center. The presidents and/or chief executive officers met regularly for lunch and for sharing common concerns and for developing plans to enhance our joint roles in the community.

Within the seminary context, the administrators found it helpful to separate their responsibilities from the regular routine to focus particularly on long-range planning. That action led to the appointment of the Long Range Personnel Planning Committee. The administrators who constituted this group were the GBS and MBS presidents and the joint academic dean. For several years GBS appointed an assistant to the president who often joined the committee. Its work became more urgent as the retirement of senior faculty members loomed on the horizon. One other task of the committee was determining times of sabbatical leaves for faculty members.

Because the curricular needs were not all met by full-time faculty, each year several part-time faculty were hired. Three examples for 1980 were Pauline Kennel who assisted in teaching Christian Education, and Theron Schlabach and John Oyer who taught in the area of Church History. To meet one of the requirements put forth by the ATS-NCA, that is, to hire a full-time

professor in Peace Studies, Leroy Friesen, was appointed to that position in 1980.

Continuing education was given priority because many churches were inviting faculty members for services. These included three-week short courses and weekend assignments for Bible study, evaluation of new religious movements, or special series during the Christmas and Easter seasons. Faculty members also taught at various extension centres. These assignments were challenging and time-consuming.

In the search for a new dean we made a number of contacts. Finding a new dean was not an easy task for several reasons. First, our salaries were lower than those in other schools. Second, several of the candidates had both administrative and teaching skills and were loathe to accept a position that would be primarily administrative. Third, some current faculty would not consider the position because they preferred to give full time to teaching and research. What to do? Our final decision was to call Jacob W. Elias from our own faculty, but with the arrangement that he be permitted to teach part-time. The seminaries had just introduced six new curricular designs into the Master of Divinity (MDiv) course of studies, so Elias was immediately called on to work at refining and adapting the total program.

Although our retrofitting project was going well financially, we needed to consider long-term financial needs. The person to help us with this was Harry E. Martens. Before he came to MBS following his partial retirement, he had worked for several other Mennonite institutions and, because he was well known throughout our Mennonite constituency, he had an entrée into many homes and communities. In addition to that, he had a winsome and pleasant personality. When suggestions were made to develop strategies for funding, he led us in drawing up plans. We were indebted to Harry for establishing endowment funds which helped to relieve the pressure on the operating budget. That pressure was primarily due to inflation, although the growth of the seminary's program also required additional financial support to make it viable.

The fundraising project in which Harry would be involved was set at one million dollars, and was allocated for five different projects, each for $200,000: Overseas Mission Training Centre; Erland Waltner Endowed Chair in Biblical Literature; MBS Grant-in-Aid Scholarship Fund; AMBS Grant-in-Aid Scholarship Fund; and Conservation of Campus and Buildings Fund. The

time frame for the procurement of these funds was three years, 1980-1983. This meant that at 10 percent interest there would be $20,000 available for each project. Harry had the ability to find people who had interests in particular phases of the seminary program and, whether on campus or on his travels, he had the foresight to do his homework and the persistence to make repeated calls. He also had an uncanny "sense" of knowing when to make the repeat call, and the reports he shared were so fraught with expectation that he—and we—were rarely disappointed with the outcome. When he was finished with the fundraising project, some of the projects even exceeded the projected amount. Thanks to Harry, our goal of $1 million was met.

The second of the projects was the Erland Waltner Endowed Chair in Biblical Literature. Endowed faculty chairs are common. In this instance the fund was created first to honour Erland Waltner who gave 23 years of service to MBS and who continued to work half-time during his retirement. Initially the fund's income supported Waltner's writing and lecturing projects and others as assigned by the institution. At his full retirement, the funds became available for projects chosen by the department or for funding the hiring of faculty for the ongoing work of the department.

As mentioned, another source of funding was the Lilly Endowment Grant. The re-accreditation study had raised questions related to courses, faculty needs, in-service training programs, pastoral and missionary leadership needs in churches—in short, with many facets of the program. As we continued our planning, we realized that if more funds were available we could more easily move forward, although we also knew that a proper measure of fiscal responsibility would be needed. When Marlin Miller and I paid a visit to the Lilly agency, we were assured funds would be available for this kind of planning. That was a signal for us to move forward. We made application and received a grant of $35,500. Because the newly appointed dean was still working his way into his role, I was appointed as director to oversee this project.

In our associations with the Lilly Foundation, every so often questions were raised about whether we should be accepting these funds. Some people wondered whether Lilly had come by their funds honestly. The Foundation was involved with pharmaceutical companies which, many felt, were overcharging their customers. Should we be dealing with an agency like that? It is interesting that most of the grants by Lilly were designated for education,

particularly to theological institutions. How to resolve this required more dialogue and study.

At any rate, our planning project was set in motion. First we hired two persons to process further the data that had been received over the past months from a pastor's survey which had drawn in pastors from both the MC and GC conferences. To supplement that data, interviews were conducted with conference executives and leaders. From this information the director drew up a list of the issues needing attention. To help with the processing, special faculty meetings were called and a summer seminar was the setting for looking in-depth at the issues.

The implications of the findings of the pastor's survey had a further direct bearing on seminary planning. There would continue to be a real need for pastors in the next decade, possibly as many as double the number which we had been graduating over the years. We were encouraged by the fact that more of the current students were opting for the three-year MDiv program; this would bode well for the availability of pastors for the future. The areas of the pastor's preparation which should receive priority in the program included Bible book studies, Bible interpretation, counselling, and evangelism. We placed evangelism at the top of the list by planning for a faculty appointment in that position within the next few months.

Regarding the number of pastors needed, we noted that, with more women students taking seminary training, we needed to deal with the issue of women in ministry. Some conclusions drawn from the pastoral survey indicated that only a small number of the churches were open to appoint women to pastoral positions. Encouraging was the fact that of those women who chose to serve in that capacity, most were well received. But on this issue, conference boards and churches would need to do their share.

Another issue which would call for much study and dialogue in planning for the future was our understanding of ministry.[8] The work of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada provided some insights. Could the specific role of the conference-based theological training centres be of help

[8] We spent at least three years preparing a fairly comprehensive statement on the nature of ministry. It was begun by Marcus Smucker and, with faculty input, revised several times. Erick Sawatzky continued refining it and completed his work by publishing a collection of essays written by co-workers in ministry at AMBS called *The Heart of the Matter: Pastoral Ministry in Anabaptist Perspective* (Telford, PA: Cascadia Publishing House; Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 2004).

here? And what have urban and minority programs taught us? Have we asked questions of overlap, decentralization, and fragmentation? Our ministry continued to call us to draw together, to live the oneness in Christ, and to work in a unified way in order to allow our endeavours to draw us together rather than pull us apart.

Amid all these changes and plans, I projected the time for my next sabbatical leave for the school year 1982-1983 so I would not be able to continue as the director to supervise the Lilly grant. I let my intentions be known to the Faculty Status and Counselling Committee. This committee's task was to oversee and to keep the calendar for the entire faculty planning for sabbatical leaves, to stay abreast of faculty tenure and their progress in professorial standing, and to give counsel to the Long Range Personal Planning Committee as needed. To put my coming sabbatical into context: my first sabbatical focussed on administration and curriculum building, my second one took us overseas to Taiwan under the auspices of the Commission on Overseas Mission. That one included a variety such as teaching, preaching, counselling, and, in several instances, representing the General Conference in working with the Taiwanese churches, especially to give support as the mission was transferred to the Fellowship of Mennonite Churches in Taiwan. It also included time for research. For the coming year I particularly wanted to study and work at research in the areas of my teaching. Location-wise, I narrowed down the options to two schools: Princeton Theological Seminary in New Jersey, where I had done my doctoral studies, or Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Virginia. The New Testament faculty at both institutions were ones with whom I would like to dialogue. I did, however, also want to consider Agnes' interests as I made my choice. She wanted to pursue her library interests, either in study or in a position where she could work with other librarians.

A few years earlier when two of our faculty members had done a study of law in the Bible and became involved in a summer session on law, I became intrigued with that topic. I wanted to find out what scholars had done in that area more recently and, in order to narrow the field and make a project more manageable, I intended to pursue a two-fold emphasis: righteousness and law in Paul, giving special attention to the letter to the Romans. Initially I planned to work on an article which might be published. We finally decided to opt for Richmond as the place we would go. Conversation with the Presbyterian School of Christian Education (PSCE), which adjoined the campus of Union

Theological Seminary (UTS), led me to accept the invitation to teach a number of courses to the Christian Education students, for which we would receive our living quarters.

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Chapter 14

Sabbatical in Richmond, Virginia, and in Israel

For the first part of our sabbatical year we were planning to travel. On July 28, 1982 we left for Winnipeg to visit family. Victoria and Ross and Ron and Carol-Ann lived only eight blocks apart, so they were often together when we visited. We stopped first at Ron and Carol-Ann's home to take in the birthday party of our youngest grandson, Ryan, now four years old. His older sisters, Angela age 7 and Shannon age 5, were there to help with the smaller visitors. The celebration was both jolly and noisy. What a treat to see that whole group together.

The next day, Agnes with daughter Victoria and granddaughter Charissa, now age 9, took a trip to the cabin at Victoria Beach on Lake Winnipeg. The cabin belonged to the parents of son-in-law Ross McIntosh, and, while we lived in Winnipeg, we often spent vacations there. Ross, Bryanna, granddaughter age 5, and I joined the others at the cabin the next day. We hiked, went swimming and golfing, and played games.

In Winnipeg a few days later we again spent time with Ron, Carol-Ann, and their three children. We took the children to the museum and saw other sights of the city on a lovely afternoon. Grandma sewed special jackets for the three grandchildren and we attended programs of the girls' singing groups. The directors were very capable, and the musical quality was outstanding.

On Friday, August 6, we left for Saskatoon where we spent some days with our son Martin, daughter-in-law Erna, and their two children, Renée age 8, and Nathan age 2. Charissa came along, so Renée had a playmate for a couple of days and we were able to continue our family fun. We enrolled the three children in swimming lessons. Martin was in the process of painting the

house, so I also found a brush, balanced myself on a ladder, and we did our visiting between brush strokes.

We returned to Winnipeg on Friday, August 13, and were treated to a surprise pre-sabbatical party to which our daughter had invited many of our former faculty members from CMBC. It was a pleasant time of sharing the most recent experiences and discovering some of the changes which were happening at our former stomping grounds. During the following week we joined our two families in Winnipeg to do some work before preparing for our return trip to Elkhart.

On Sunday, August 22, we had breakfast with Ross, Victoria, and their children, said our farewells, and got into our Dodge Aspen for the trip back to Indiana. We arrived there Monday evening, and stayed with Winfield and Marguerite Fretz for the night. Dr. Fretz was my stand-in as president of MBS during my sabbatical and they were taking care of our house while we were away. We had packed earlier and now only had to take the few belongings which we would need during our six-and-a-half month stay in Richmond, Virginia. With final details at AMBS and at the bank taken care of, we were off.

We arrived in Richmond at 3:30 p.m. on August 25 and, with our neighbour's help, we soon had our few belongings placed into the apartment, which the Presbyterian School of Christian Education (PSCE) had designated for us. We spent a few days getting used to our surroundings and, with a few "touch-ups" to the apartment we were ready to enjoy our temporary home on the PSCE campus.

The first person to stop in to see us was Lamar Williamson, professor of New Testament. He came early on September 1 to invite me to meet with faculty the next morning. The remainder of the week we took in the orientation sessions and the convocation at Union Theological Seminary (UTS). Supper that day was served in the president's dining hall. We had occasion for good food and fellowship all week. Classes began on September 9.

Some extras were soon added to the initial plans for our time in Richmond: leading chapel services occasionally, joining the faculty for special occasions, and participating in many of the year's regular events. The arrangement with Union Theological Seminary (on the adjoining campus) was that for $100 per month I could use library facilities, consult with faculty members on questions of mutual interest, receive assistance in finding library

sources, sit in on classes which I might find helpful, and attend theological discussions and special lectureships. I was considered a "scholar in residence."

High on my priority list was, of course, the library, and as soon as it could be arranged, I had an appointment with the librarian, Mrs. Acock. She showed me the stacks and the periodicals. She informed me of the procedures which governed the use of the library, wished me well, and indicated that her office would be open for any questions. The UTS library was a researcher's dream. Of some 100 articles which I collected on my chosen topic, only three were acquired through inter-library loan. I did encounter the problem of several other researchers wanting to use the same periodicals and books which I wanted. Having been tantalized by the summer study of law at AMBS in 1981,[1] I focussed my research specifically on Paul's understanding of law and righteousness in Romans.

The classes I taught at the PSCE were: an introduction to the Radical Reformation in a two-hour weekly session for 10 weeks in fall; and a two-week course on peacemaking in January. Since I had earlier done advance work on the Reformation course, I needed only about a day a week for preparations, so I had a lot of time for my research. It was so good to be able to spend hours in the library several days each week and read to my heart's content. After several weeks of concentrated reading, I formulated an outline, and chose the writers whose essays I wanted to use for my article. Preparations for the peacemaking course in January would take more time. That course was a particular challenge because this group of Presbyterian students were deeply involved with their church's current emphasis on peacemaking. When I dealt with the military's emphasis on building up a large enough arsenal to destroy the whole world, they wondered where I got information to allow me to say that. When I showed them the documents which I had requested from the Pentagon and other government sources that gave these figures, they were dumbfounded. They had supposed that it was just propaganda from the "enemies" of the government who fabricated this information. Suddenly they got a different picture. For discussion's sake I raised the question, if we already have double and triple the number of missiles to destroy each other, why do we push for ever bigger arsenals? Should not the extra dollars go to feed the millions of starving people, particularly children, around the world?

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[1] The papers which were presented during the summer workshop are included in *Occasional Papers*, no. 3: *The Bible and Law*.

Within the Presbyterian churches there was a real hunger for the kind of material which was coming from their own writers, such as Dr. Winn's studies on peacemaking. That fall, he gave a series of lectures at Union, beginning with "Jesus Christ the Peacemaker" and ending with "The Vision of Peace." Later I was invited to make a presentation on a "New Call to Peacemaking" in the local church. The pastor of the Ginter Park Presbyterian Church asked me to share thoughts focussed on the Anabaptist position. I had worked through the Presbyterian statement on "Peacemaking: The Believer's Calling," and commended them highly for this good piece of work done by their committee.

While I became involved in my work at the two seminaries, Agnes was scouting out the library. After completing her library degree a year earlier, she had assisted the librarian in Elkhart in setting up the Mennonite Historical Library Room. Now she checked the Richmond library for their procedure for listing and arranging historical materials, and for any further pointers to make the Elkhart reading room as useful and exciting as possible. She noted materials which she found particularly helpful. She also looked for other activities, including arrangements for a silent retreat. A phone call to the Dayspring Retreat Center just outside Washington, D.C. readied her for a week there in October. She drove to the given location, found it without any difficulty, and immersed herself in something she had craved for quite some time. She did, however, have to convince the Sister in charge that she was able to follow through on her intent. Very few people ever tried a whole week of silent retreat before they had had a few shorter periods of silence and reflection. But Agnes proved herself ready for the experience. In the closing interview, Sister Hoolahan said to her: "No more silent retreats of this length for some time. You'll get hooked on them!" Agnes cherished the silence, the directed meditation, and the lovely nature setting. Instead of another such retreat (to heed the Sister's counsel), in the next months she and I spent several days at two other retreat centres in Virginia.

Agnes then turned to the other major task which she had planned: sorting, arranging, and classifying the slides which I had taken over the years during my travels; she then developed a filing system which would make them readily accessible. Painstakingly, she grouped them according to location, numbered them (as only a good librarian can), gave them a brief word of description, and then entered this data into a loose-leaf notebook. That notebook has been a wonderful index for finding slides when we wanted to

use them for presentations, or just for reviewing the experiences of the past. I am grateful to Agnes for the months she spent putting the slides into proper order. There were almost 3000 of them.

Although we thought we knew very few people—if any—in the Richmond area, we soon met former students of ours from Winnipeg. Rudy Baergen from Tofield, Alberta, his wife Helen, and boys Rene and Joel, lived not far from our apartment. Rudy was in a doctoral program in New Testament at Union Theological Seminary. When it turned out that he was related to Agnes (his grandfather and Agnes' father were cousins), we became grandparents to the boys overnight, and arranged visits at short notice. A second couple whom we had learned to know at Bluffton College during my first sabbatical had moved to Richmond. He was a science professor and was a popular speaker, lecturing at many other teaching and research centres. Other persons were soon added to our circle of acquaintances. Within days of arrival we discovered the First Mennonite Church toward the west side of the city. The church membership was divided into four groups; individual groups met oftener than the Sunday service, so members of the group we were invited to join soon became our brothers and sisters in Christ. The pastor was Bruce Yoder, very personable, a captivating speaker, and a creative thinker. So, for six months we again had a church home.

Richmond was in an area of the United States which played a major role in the country's development. Two other locations preceded it as capital of Virginia. One was Jamestown for a few years; then the capital was moved just five miles inland to Middle Plantation. Jamestown was renamed Williamsburg, a city which played a crucial role as one of the harbingers which led to the American Revolution. When the war came to a close, Williamsburg's existence as the centre of government also ended. The governor, Patrick Henry, chose Richmond as the capital, and Williamsburg went into decline through the duration of the Civil War. Finally after 40 years, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., decided to return it to its former glory and provided the funds to make this possible. The current visitors to Williamsburg found a thriving eighteenth-century community. The original city with its geometric streets, together with all the major public buildings, was carefully reconstructed, and this city became the "pride of the nation.[2]

[2] From the website: http://www.williamsburg.com/history/ (accessed 13 May 2006).

Williamsburg is just an hour's drive from Richmond. The first time we went there shortly after our arrival, we took some of the walks and tours, and were duly impressed. We also drove to nearby Virginia Beach, and passed through the town of Newport News, home of Joe Hertzler, GBS assistant to the president. The second time we went to Williamsburg was in December, and we noticed the electric candles in almost every window, all with white bulbs. The houses radiated warmth and charm, and the soft, beautiful glow of the candles compensated appropriately for all the gaudy lights that flash around us at Christmas time.

The Richmond area provided opportunity for hearing a variety of speakers and participating in workshops. One day we drove to Fredericksburg to hear Tilden Edwards speak on the topic of contemplation. Tilden founded the Shalem Institute, an ecumenical Christian organization devoted to the support of contemplative spirituality. Agnes spent a day-retreat at Roslyn with Henry Atkin on the theme, "Letting Go and Letting God." On campus we heard a scholarly presentation on ethics by James Gustafson from Chicago.

Getting to know this setting on the eastern coast of the U.S. with its many educational centres was special. And, of course, we were reminded of our former students, both from CMBC and from AMBS, who had been there already or came later for graduate studies. Gerald Gerbrandt completed a doctorate in 1980 under the Old Testament scholar, Sibley Towner; Sheila Klassen-Wiebe a New Testament degree in 2001. Her husband Vern did doctoral studies in Old Testament and received a masters' degree in Theology.

I continued my research on the Pauline understanding of law and righteousness in his letter to the Romans. The Pauline scholars provided much to reflect on. As expected, I found little agreement on how they read and interpreted Paul. But reading their research did help me to find the structure and focus for my article. I began with the study of righteousness, then moved to the study of law. The two concepts are inseparable. Some scholars insisted that the concept, righteousness of God, brought us to the heart of Paul's theology. Certainly it is central in Paul's discussion in Romans. Others maintained that Paul's attitude toward the law was an integral part of both his life and his theology. One scholar contended that in the section, Romans 9:30ff., law and righteousness virtually mean the same.

Because most scholars agreed that Romans 3 is the heart of the letter, I chose that chapter as my focus. To bring just one issue to the fore as it touches

on the interpretation of grammar used in Scripture, I illustrate this with the debate that continues about the use of the genitive case of nouns. Specifically, this comes up in such phrases as the "righteousness of God," "faith of Christ," "obedience of Christ," "law of righteousness," "law of faith," and "law of works." The genitive case in such phrases can be used as a subjective genitive or an objective genitive. Using "righteousness of God" as an example, if the noun is used in the objective sense, righteousness is interpreted as the essence of God. If the noun is used in the subjective sense, righteousness is interpreted as God's action; he imparts righteousness to human beings. This debate is not resolved.

I list a number of results which the various debates have brought scholars to accept: a) A new appreciation for Jews and their use of the law. Paul's view was closer to that of the Jews than many have held. b) When Jesus used the expression, the end of the law, he referred not to its termination or abolition, but to its fulfilment; Jesus fulfilled the law. c) The acceptance of the subjective interpretation of several nouns speaks for correctives that need to be made. Illustration: Augustine and Luther too quickly identified Paul's statement that he was the chief of sinners with their own feelings of guilt. Paul cannot be pushed into that psychological frame.

As my research continued, so did the work with students. In mid-January, classes drew to a close. Exams meant extra work but, because my classes were not large (maximum was 15 students), the papers were corrected in short order. In the next weeks and months I was able to schedule appointments with several New Testament professors to discuss their work in the courses they were teaching. I also audited several courses: Gospel of Mark, Gospel of Matthew, and Paul's letter to the Romans. It was interesting to see how these professors operated, not the least to find out what kind of assignments students were given. The course I audited with Dr. Paul Achtemeier was Romans. I was particularly helped with the way he used the material which applied to the topics of law and righteousness. This would be invaluable information as I delineated Paul's position and noted comparisons with other writers' interpretations.

In the midst of these varied activities, in February no less, we were blanketed by six to seven inches of heavy snow. Schools were closed and classes were cancelled, even though the snow was gone in 24 hours. We rarely needed heavy jackets in that region of the country.

Early in spring we made arrangements to attend two further spiritual retreats in western Virginia, a very picturesque setting. These gave us the occasion for reading, reflection, journaling, and physical exercise. All of these activities helped to round out the change of pace the sabbatical leave was giving us.

Changing Locations

Plans to spend time in the Middle East had been made several months earlier. We made the travel arrangements with an agency in Winnipeg, by now a regular practice for us since we were given such reasonable rates. Although this meant a trip by car to Winnipeg, it was still cheaper to make arrangements in this way. Furthermore, a workshop would convene in Manitoba right after our return from the Middle East at the end of June which I planned to attend. And we could visit family again.

We left Richmond for Elkhart on April 9, and made contact with several faculty members there. I joined the Long Range Personnel Planning Committee for a meeting which had been called so that I could be present. On the agenda were faculty sabbaticals and the hiring of several new faculty members. This meeting set the stage for contacts to be made with prospective candidates, and interviews to be arranged for the weeks ahead.

We arrived in Winnipeg on April 12, and took care of the necessary details for the stay in Israel. Harry Huebner, CMBC faculty member, was on a two-year leave of absence for an MCC service assignment in Jerusalem. He was kind enough to make arrangements for our accommodations there till the end of June. We would be staying with a former student, Kathy Bergen, whose apartment was near the MCC complex which housed the West Bank directors. It was not too far from the Old City, so we were able to walk to many of the important locations: the Garden Tomb and the place called Golgotha on the northern edge of the city; the Temple Mount on which stood the Dome of the Rock and the Al Aqsa Mosque; the Mount of Olives east of the temple enclosure; and many of the churches built around the sides of the sacred hill.

Kathy Bergen's apartment was spacious and, because she would be gone, sometimes for several weeks, she asked us to make ourselves at home. We had an extra bedroom, and otherwise shared the kitchen, family room, and living room. The living room was quite large, so I arranged a table and chair in one corner where I continued my research and did my writing for the next few months.

During this time I made arrangements to see several scholars. They were Dr. Daniel Schwarz, who has studied the Dead Sea Scrolls; Isaiah Gafni, a professor at Hebrew University, well versed in Jewish history; Yehezkel Landau, a Jew born in the U.S. but then living in Jerusalem, one committed to working for peace in the Holy Land; and Fr. Frizzell, a scholar working in the École Biblique. At the Tantur Ecumenical Institute I was able to meet several international scholars from Britain and the U.S.

A Side-trip to Egypt

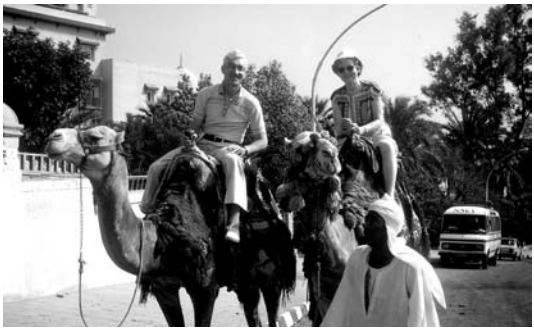
Early in May, a group of students from CMBC and two professors, David Schroeder and Gerald Gerbrandt, arrived in Cairo for an extended tour of the Holy Land. We took the occasion to join them in Cairo. We travelled by bus, and experienced what this kind of travel meant in a semi-tropical area. It took us about 12 hours. The route led us through Gaza, El Arish, Suez (where we took a ferry to cross the northern tip of the Gulf of Suez), then about 100 kilometres further to Cairo.

Cairo was known as the Jewel of the Orient, the city with a thousand minarets, and was considered the melting pot of ancient and modern Egyptian civilizations. Not without reason it was also known as the Triumphant City, the glorious capital of Egypt, the cradle of civilization, and the beacon of religion. Several days in the city does not permit the visitor to do justice to its many sites. The museums gave testimony to the distant past, as did the pyramids. We crawled into the tunnel of one of these awesome structures, wending our way into its centre to one of the tombs of a Pharaoh to see and ponder the history of that ancient past. It was while we were waiting to take that tunnel trip that we had our one and only ride on a camel.

Most significant for a view of the majority of the Pharaohs' tombs was a visit to the Valley of the Kings. Located on the West Bank of Thebes, the valley was hidden by a mountainous rocky cliff, forming a kind of backdrop to the temple complex. A total of 62 tombs have been discovered in that valley, some of which were never completed; many were pilfered by robbers, and some were protected by taking the treasures hidden there to other secret caves constructed for that purpose. Not all of the tombs were made for the kings or rulers, but the more important the dynasty, the grander the tomb. It was unfortunate that some early archaeologists were bent on finding treasures either for themselves or their sponsoring institutions. Consequently, many of

the sarcophagi, mummies, and thousands of other items were transferred to institutions and museums all over the world. To protect the treasures that have remained in the tombs, they have been placed behind glass walls.

We spent only one day in the area around Thebes, then returned to Cairo to visit several mosques, St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church, and various other unique structures, marvellous in their shapes and forms. We were fortunate to have the services of Vern Ratzlaff, the MCC representative in Egypt, as a guide for some of our tours. His comprehensive knowledge of the area and the people was just what we needed for an unforgettable meeting of religions and cultures. The return trip to Jerusalem was anticlimactic. The travel across the sand dunes was hot and uncomfortable. Our entrance back into Israel necessitated a long discussion with the officials on why we were there.



Agnes and I on camels beside a pyramid in Cairo, 1983.

Conversations on the bus indicated that the Israelis on board were not hesitant to vent their displeasure with the Arabs. Some women expressed their anger at little Arab boys who threw rocks at the soldiers' jeeps. They said nothing about the retaliation that followed: the homes of the boys' parents would be bulldozed to the ground—sometimes after only a half hour's notice. There were other inappropriate measures as, for example, when complaints from students in the Arab universities resulted in closure of the schools, even though final exams were only weeks away and a whole year's credit was forfeited.

Back in Jerusalem

The CMBC group left Cairo for Jerusalem at the same time we did, so we made plans to join them for some of their tours also in Israel and the West Bank. Agnes took fuller advantage of this than I did; I felt I needed to get to my writing. And I had the advantage of having been in the region once before. What made this time especially meaningful was that Harry and Agnes Huebner were able to lead the group to visit some places in the West Bank. I

did join the CMBC group on the trips that took us to the Herodium, to Qumran, and to Masada. The Herodium, about four miles southeast of Bethlehem, was one of a series of fortresses erected by Herod the Great, which he felt he needed to protect his kingdom. The mount chosen was made higher by piling on a huge amount of earth. It was conical in shape and surrounded by a ring of three walls. At the four points of the compass there were round towers used as lookouts to keep watch for intruders. At the foot of the mountain, Herod constructed palaces, pools, and terraces to serve as a palatial retreat. A grand staircase consisting of 200 steps made of white marble led to the citadel at the top, and an elaborate and costly aqueduct was to bring in water. In A.D. 72, the Roman general, Lucilius Bassus, reduced the structure to rubble. Today, paths still lead to the top from where the countryside is visible for many miles in every direction. Standing on that high location the view is overpowering.

Another fortress built by Herod was Masada. It is known as the desert fortress, and it far surpassed the others, both in its grandeur and invincibility. We are indebted to Flavius Josephus, the ancient Jewish historian, for a written description of its physical features and its interesting story. Herod built it between the years 37 and 31 BCE to serve as a refuge in which he could be safe from his enemies. The top of the plateau extends over approximately 20 acres (600 x 300 metres) and is surrounded by a double casement wall, wide enough to have storage rooms sectioned off between the two. The complex had storehouses, barracks, two palaces, an armoury, and large cisterns hewn into the rock to store enough water from the winter rains to last all year. Access to the top was via a "snake" path on the east, well-hidden and dangerous to climb, and on the west, an easier, less precipitous route guarded by a tower. One of the most notable buildings, a remarkable construction feat, was the protrusion at the north end of the plateau for one of Herod's palaces. This was called the king's palace-villa and was described by different writers as elegant, formidable, beautiful, and luxuriously built. Constructed in three levels, these were connected by a hidden staircase cut into the rock and hidden from view.

After Herod's death the Romans took possession of the fortress. Almost a century later a group of Jews rebelled against the Romans and recaptured it. The Romans continued to wreak havoc, particularly against the Holy City, and destroyed the Temple in CE 70. Some Jews escaped from the Romans and

joined the rebel group in Masada. It was this chapter of Jewish history which no doubt gave Masada its notoriety. These rebels were so committed to their fight against the Romans that they hung on for three years until the Romans finally devised a way to gain access to the plateau. It was early in the year CE 74 that they finally were able to get a battering ram into position to knock through the casement wall. However, the approximately one thousand besieged inhabitants were not to be taken alive. Rather, they burned the fortress and ended their own lives. By drawing lots, the Zealots among them chose a group of men who killed all those still in the stronghold. Then the ones chosen determined which of them would kill the remaining ones. The last one alive finally ended his own life. Just before the Romans entered the breach in the wall, the entire complex was set ablaze, so that when they entered, they were met by deathly silence. Their victory was a hollow one. Josephus sums up the situation. "And so met [the Romans] with the multitude of the slain, but could take no pleasure in the fact, though it were done to their enemies. Nor could they do other than wonder at the courage of their resolution, and at the immovable contempt of death, which so great a number of them had shown, when they went through with such an action as that was."[3]

Qumran, the ruins of an Essene monastery, is located north of the fortress of Masada and west of the northern tip of the Dead Sea. To have the opportunity of treading the ground where the Dead Sea scrolls were discovered was an indescribable experience. In his book, *The Dead Sea Scrolls,* John Allegro introduces us to the historic discovery. In 1947, in a cave near the Dead Sea, manuscripts of the book of Isaiah were found, older by more than a thousand years than any previously known manuscript of the Old Testament. Also discovered were the remains of a Jewish sectarian library dated in the first century CE, providing us with information not available before.[4]

The discovery of these scrolls began as a search by a Bedouin shepherd for a lost goat in very rough and rugged terrain. He ended up in a cave where he

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[3] From Josephus, "The War of the Jews," chapter 7, as cited in *The Works of Josephus*, trans. William Whiston (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987), 854-55.

[4] John M. Allegro, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Origins of Christianity* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1950), 17.

found a number of stone jars containing "leather scrolls" wrapped in linen cloths. Just mentioning the names of some of these scrolls indicates what an outstanding find this was: The Isaiah Scroll, the Manual of Discipline, the Habakkuk Commentary, the War Scroll, the Thanksgiving Scroll, and another copy of the Book of Isaiah. All of these find their current home in the Shrine of the Book in Jerusalem, a modern building in the Holy City, which catches one's eye with its cone shape and its pure white colour. Inside this museum, in the centre of the upper floor, is a large lighted drum around which the noted Isaiah scroll is wound and can be read and studied by the viewer.

Reflections

During our ten-week stay in Israel I realized again that this region is at once an interesting, exciting, challenging, and very disturbing place. This was my third visit. The first was a month after the Six-Day War in 1967 when soldiers on both sides were the outstanding heroes of their people. The driver of our bus, a tank operator in the forces, had driven his "machine" from the Israeli camp from which the push started all the way to the Suez without being stopped. The second time, Agnes and I stopped in Israel in 1974 on our way back from our Taiwan sabbatical. This was a year after the skirmish with the Egyptians, who proved to be their equal, and Anwar Sadat became the Middle Eastern hero. It was during the feast of Ramadan, the most unlikely time for such an assault, and the Israelis had to retreat. And now it was almost a year after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. During this third visit I experienced several conversions while in the country. The Palestinians became for me a people of warmth; flesh and blood persons in an oppressed setting, rather than people stereotypically seen as PLO terrorists. Moreover, many of them were dedicated Christians.

Israel and West Bank are lands of peoples from a hundred different countries with heavy propaganda that tries to empower the Israeli occupation. There are people with hopes and fears, with hatred and love; and one should focus on them rather than on the ancient relics and ornate churches whose worshippers have not learned to get along and overcome the futility of the inglorious past. I was saddened by what people can do to each other. I recognized the irony of the soldier with his gun, praying at the wailing wall, convinced he was following Scripture; or the woman prophesying in a charismatic meeting, purporting to have a message from God: "He who curses Israel will be cursed by God." I found it deeply disturbing to observe the

oppression by the Israelis of the Palestinians—from settlement strongholds built on land robbed from Palestinian peasants and other land misappropriation, to vineyard and orchard destruction, to village curfews which led to scores of deaths, to home demolitions because boys threw stones at soldiers' jeeps.

But I also saw hope. Just before we left the Middle East, I had the opportunity to attend a meeting of Arab Muslims, Jews, and Arab Christians in a Roman Catholic sister's residence just south of Tantur. These two dozen people shared their hopes and their dreams, and what each one of them was trying to do for the cause of peace. There was singing, prayer, and there were commitments to each other and to God, whom they all worshipped.

We made preparations for our departure on June 27. What saved us some time the next morning was that we could check in our packed suitcases (which were thoroughly searched by El-Al Airlines personnel) at the Jerusalem office. Our stay had been immeasurably enhanced by the many visits with Agnes and Harry Huebner and their family. Often they would stop in and chat or pick us up for a trip to see the notable places where MCC projects were being developed and locals supported in the "name of Christ."

June 28 was a long day. We left Tel Aviv at 8:00 a.m., arrived at Amsterdam at 12:30 p.m., boarded a KLM flight and reached Toronto at 4:05 p.m.—no, not the next day, but the same day. We arrived in Winnipeg at 8:20 p.m. Overcoming jetlag took a bit of time, but we could relax with our children and grandchildren. Plans had been made to get together at Clear Lake with Martin, Erna, and family from Saskatoon joining us there for several days. There was swimming, boating, tennis, table games, and for me it was a real treat to play tennis with my youngest grandson, Nathan. And of course we had lots of food. The weather was ideal for most of these activities. Back in Winnipeg, we spent a few extra days while our daughter Victoria recuperated from an operation. Then we headed back to Elkhart to bring the sabbatical to its conclusion.

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Chapter 15

Full Steam Ahead

The summer of 1983 back in Elkhart, I returned to my regular administrative duties. This included planning faculty workshops and summer courses. But there was a special event to attend: the joint MC-GC conference in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. There were movements afoot that were pushing our two conferences to continue to explore the possibility of more joint activities, more joint structures such as committees, boards, and conference agencies, and especially, further joint programming for our seminaries. This joint conference was a conscious attempt at seriously looking for ways to work together. After all, three major Mennonite groups—Mennonite Church, General Conference, and Church of the Brethren—had been jointly preparing Sunday school materials and hymnals for quite some time and our mission agencies had met and planned outreach strategies in cooperation already for decades.

Bethlehem was the first time the three seminaries, EMS, GBS, and MBS, prepared a joint report for the conference sessions. Presented in part in dialogue form and prompted by leading questions, conference delegates were given a composite picture they had not seen before. The chairpersons of the two conferences were Ross T. Bender (MC), long-time dean and professor of AMBS, and Florence Driedger, social worker from Regina, Saskatchewan, vice-chair of the GC. Florence was acting as interim chair because the chairperson, Kenneth Bauman, long-time missionary and church pastor, had passed away. The joint sessions went so well that when, in a lighter vein, one of the chairs asked the other how long it might be before the MCs and GCs would join, the answer was, "Before the turn of the century." Very few people

dared to dream that things would have developed to such an extent that by 1989 at the joint conference in Normal, Illinois, delegates called for specific actions asking its leaders to pursue a merger. From then on, when the conferences met separately and voted on whether the two should join, each conference approved such a move by an 80 percent affirmative vote. It was no longer only the seminaries that would pursue and fine-tune a joint program, but from here on, the two parent bodies would be just as intent on structuring the cooperative venture.

The Call for New Faculty

As noted earlier, when I began my work in Elkhart, the majority of faculty members were older persons. The professor of Theological and Biblical Studies had reached age 65 three years before we arrived. A year after our arrival four more professors had reached that age. Their fields were: New Testament, Homiletics, Christian Education, Field Education, and Pastoral Theology-Pastoral Counselling. By the mid-1980s, four more had reached age 65, their teaching fields including Old Testament and Hebrew (two professors), Greek, Church History, and Anabaptist Studies. At the end of the 1980s, two more faculty members also reached age 65.[1]

Several guidelines were followed in the search for faculty and administrative replacements. A first priority was to look within our conferences, trying to maintain a balance between the two seminary faculties. Secondly, administrators would be chosen not only for their administrative skills but also for their academic training, which would enhance our total teaching program. Thirdly, we needed to be sensitive to the call for more women candidates, both to serve with their special expertise and also to serve as role models for the growing number of women opting for seminary studies and pastoral roles in our churches. Acting on these criteria for our search was not easy.

Besides trying to find candidates for the areas mentioned above, there was a strong demand for more evangelistic and church musical training in our

[1] Our guidelines called for retirement at age 65. We assumed that having a fixed age would help us in our long-range planning for faculty replacements. Administrators also agreed to retire at 65, with the option of a further year or two of teaching if the curriculum called for academic courses which the administrators would normally teach.

program. And to make matters more challenging, some faculty left before reaching retirement age. The areas affected were Overseas Mission training, Pastoral Counselling, and Field Education. Reasons for leaving were health issues, change to a different institution, a mission assignment which after its completion would put the faculty member at retirement age, and family concerns.

Our planning and search for full-time teaching and administrative personnel resulted in the following appointments. In the years 1979-1983 we appointed an acting dean for one year, an associate professor of Peace Studies, a full-time dean, an admissions counsellor, and two persons for Theology, History, and Ethics (five appointments). In the year 1984 we appointed a director of Information Services, an instructor of Communications, an assistant professor of Pastoral Theology, an associate professor of Old Testament, a professor of Christian Education, a director of Field Education for one year, an administrative vice-president, and an assistant professor of Church History (nine appointments). In the years 1985-1989 we appointed a director of Field Education, an instructor in Evangelism and Church Planting, a coordinator of Church and Seminary Relations for MBS, an acting dean for one year, a registrar, an associate professor of Old Testament, an instructor in Homiletics, an assistant director of Spiritual Formation, an admissions counsellor, a professor of Church History, a professor of Sixteenth-Century Studies, and an assistant professor of New Testament (12 appointments). This totals 26 positions in all.

With these hirings we had partially fulfilled our goal of increasing the number of female faculty and administrators. There were now seven on our staff. These many hirings illustrate that I was fully involved in helping to supervise the change of the "old guard." It was obvious how hard the Long Range Personnel Planning Committee had worked at this task.

Along with the appointment of faculty was the pressure to work consciously at structuring the curriculum to accommodate the necessary changes. Approval was given by ATS for an MA in Theological Studies. We wondered whether this might be the time to find a person to direct our several MA programs. The grant from the Lilly Foundation helped us pursue some of the goals of the re-accreditation study. Besides the work of replacing the necessary faculty, we needed to consider implementing in-service training programs and meeting the pastoral and missionary-leadership needs in our churches.

The suggested steps were taken and we were able to make some important curriculum changes. Also, the new dean was able to use his creativity and abilities to good advantage. Specifically, he worked with the six curricular areas for the MDiv program: Pastoral Ministry, Evangelism and Church Planting, Pastoral Counselling, Christian Education, Overseas Mission training, and an academic focus. The details of preparing and listing the course offerings and course requirements took several years to implement.

The pastor's survey, which I mentioned earlier, needed to be taken seriously. One of the assignments given to Marcus Smucker, who served as chair of the GBS board prior to his appointment to the seminary faculty, was to prepare a statement on Spiritual Formation. The faculty gave their input and, several drafts later, we had a statement which we could present to our boards. Concerns focussed on whether spirituality could be "programmed" and whether spiritual directors might invariably foster a "spiritual hierarchy." Further questions were raised about how the new emphasis related to previous courses in our curriculum such as Discipleship and Devotional Life. Needed was research on Roman Catholic practices which related to spiritual disciplines; they had many things to teach us in the area of prayer and devotions. The document which was accepted by faculty and boards had three main sections: the first gave historical and theological perspectives; the second delineated the presuppositions and guidelines that undergirded our stance; and the third gave practical guidelines and explicit proposals for our AMBS community. Specifically, consideration was given to the implications for the curricular and extra-curricular program, the type of personnel called for, and the budget requirements. The comment made was that, although the initial cost of implementing the program need not be very high, the longer range goals, as outlined in Smucker's report, would continue to call for extra funds.

Several other items were part of the unfolding plan. One was the continued functioning of the women's advisory council. Together with the administrative committee, it helped to establish priorities: suggestions for women personnel that might be considered for some of the open positions and appointing a member to the administrative committee in an advisory capacity—something which proved to be both appropriate and functional.

At this time the use of inclusive language came under much-needed scrutiny, both as this applied to general usage and to theological language. Some in the constituency expressed misgivings and were afraid that attention

to this issue might lead to major changes or to the misuse of biblical texts. We prepared a statement on the topic which sought to give guidance and to assure the constituency that we were not opening the door wide to everything which might be deemed acceptable within society as a whole.

The guidelines for our use of God-language were summarized as follows: worship is intended to draw all who are assembled toward God through the Lord Jesus Christ. Enrichment comes through the full use of God-images, old and new, to deepen our experience of our holy God. Scripture uses the term Father both to stress humanity's origin, as in the Old Testament, and to note the intimacy with God, as in the New Testament. Already in the Old Testament where the term Father is used, there were also maternal images in some of the same contexts. Pronouns can be kept to a minimum because one has a variety of names which can be used for God. When they are used, sensitivity for both masculine and feminine pronouns broadens our experience of God. Texts for worship should be so chosen that the inclusive language would be honoured.

The addendum to the statement includes a reminder that the distinction between gender and sex is difficult to grasp in English, but is very crucial to understand the biblical witness on this topic. While the Bible uses masculine and feminine, paternal and maternal imagery for God, it does not identify God with sexual form; this is part of the Hebrew faith's protest of the Canaanite religions and forms part of the first commandment against graven images. Christian tradition has also honoured this distinction.

Focus on the 1987-1989 Self-study

One further item was included as part of the overall planning; that had to do with preparation for the next self-study. The awareness of this pending study toward the end of the decade was constantly before us as we carried on our long-range planning. We were governed from the beginning of this process by seeking to do justice to what the previous self-study called for. As we moved into 1987, the administrative committee prepared a preliminary proposal for the future self-study plan. Throughout the unfolding of that plan, the faculty was invited to participate in discerning what would be most helpful and enable us to make the self-evaluation as meaningful as possible.

Four sections were projected, dealing in turn with the purposes of the study, the structure required for the task, the timetable which was to guide us,

and, specifically, the areas to review. The latter included the mission-purpose statements and the summary, which would draw together the projections made and set out the strategy for implementation. The timetable called for the summer of 1987 to the fall of 1988 as the time when the document would be put into its final form. The ATS-NCA team visit was set for February 19-22, 1989.

The completion of the self-study marked a milestone for the entire campus and, when the evaluation team gave its report, we were thankful for the many positive observations. Noted, in particular, was the nature of our long-range planning which set the stage for bringing reality into what we projected, for carrying out our mission, and to be true to what we claimed to be. We appointed a special task force to oversee the efforts which we envisioned to implement the program that we believed our constituency needed, and to which it gave its hearty approval. I wished my colleagues well as they carried on a program which I had come to appreciate and which I trusted would be enthusiastically supported.

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Chapter 16

Farewells and Return to Winnipeg

During the closing year of the self-study, the boards also had to take action in finding the successor to the present presidential duo. The MBS board had already received my notice to retire at the end of the year, 1989-1990. When the two search committees met to share results of their "homework," they discovered that both came to the meeting with the same first choice of candidate. The end result was, of course, for most of us a foregone conclusion. There would no longer be two presidents, but the same person was now recommended as the president of the two hitherto separate institutions. Dr. Marlin Miller was the nominee and, with such a united call, he said he could do nothing but accept. The board session at which the decision was made final was a moving experience, and all who were involved left the meeting with deep thankfulness and the conviction that the Spirit of God had guided the process.

That action, taken in 1989, set out a whole new agenda for the year before the new president would take office. There would be administrative changes, structural changes, and the addition of further personnel: a new dean, an assistant dean, and an administrative vice-president.

In June of 1990, I wrote my last presidential report to the MBS board. I recalled that 13 years earlier I had heard that candidates considered for the presidency must be young enough to have at least a 12-year tenure before s/he would reach the age of 65. That 12-year period was now concluding for me and, in a matter of weeks, my successor would take over. In that report I mentioned my deep appreciation for my colleagues; the challenges which had confronted me; the good relationships I had with faculty, staff, and board

members; and the good understanding between and among all the groups mentioned. I had a special word of appreciation for the students: the inspiration which they gave me, the questions with which they challenged me, the commitment which they made to God and to the church, and the convictions which they demonstrated in their daily walk.

Coffee breaks during the last several weeks, which gave the opportunity to reminisce about many items and experiences, were always too short. All of us remembered Bill Armstrong who, as an army veteran, felt that he should amend our program. After some time with us, he didn't return. There were anecdotes about amusing incidents. It also gave the occasion for us to speak about personal experiences which the new faculty members had not yet heard.

Occasionally some of the retired faculty in the neighbourhood dropped in and shared about their recent escapades. I recall two examples. One office assistant was now honing her tractor driving skills and helping her husband with the lawn-mowing. She did quite well until one day the tractor ran away on her and took a bath in the pond. She managed to get off just before it plunged in. What had impressed her particularly was the long hiss before the motor stopped. And we could all feel with Millard Lind when the sequel to a car accident, which he had shortly before his retirement, left him confined to a wheelchair. During his teaching career he was noted for his rapid gait as he went down the hall. When this accident happened, the students gave him a tricycle bell which he was to use when he got to a corner to warn others that he was coming.

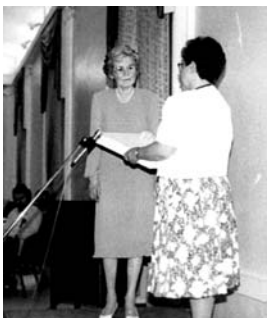
As Agnes and I reflected on our experiences over the past decade, we could only thank God for the grace operative in our lives. We believed that those years had opened new growth possibilities which we had not anticipated. They were undoubtedly part of the reason I chose "hope" as the focus for my graduation message. I resonated with Alexander Pope who so fittingly affirmed that hope springs eternal in the human breast. With that powerful impetus we were ready to move on.

Several weeks in June were spent putting the office files in order. There would now be one president for AMBS, and the last word of the school's name would be changed to the singular: Seminary. The MBS presidential files would now come to an end. As I put these documents in order I was reminded of P.B. Wiens, a former editor of *Der Bote*, who wrote about going through some former issues of his paper and readying them for the incinerator. I took some

of the personal files with me, but there was no reason to keep files which duplicated those in the other office so these were taken to the shredder. Several weeks later, I would bid my office a fond farewell.

The farewell event on June 5, 1990 placed a capstone on our time in Elkhart. It was held in the Athenian Room of the central office complex of the Mennonite Church. About 100 people gathered there to wish us well. Present were family members from as far away as Alberta, friends and colleagues, former students from afar, and close co-workers with whom I had rubbed shoulders on many occasions over the years. Our good colleague, Jake Elias, had contacted people and requested them to send submissions of appreciation which he had bound into a book entitled, "Epistles to the Poet-tckers." What a treasure of well-wishes and reminiscences that we continue to enjoy. Add to that the carving which the administration had commissioned John Gaeddert, my college classmate, to craft for me. John outdid himself by combining a series of motifs into an impressive statue. He wove together my religious background and my doctoral dissertation (a bust of Menno Simons). John included some of my childhood memories such as an Alberta grain elevator and a plough with stalks of grain skirting both. The church windows of the AMBS Chapel of the Sermon on the Mount were also featured. The entire piece was shaped like the chapel; in addition, a replica of the chapel was engraved on the convex side. They gave Agnes a large plate, fashioned by a potter, our student Dick Lehman of Goshen. The plate featured several ears of grain on a grey and blue background.

Receiving my carving from Dr. Miller, President of Goshen Biblical Seminary at the farewell gathering, June 5, 1990.



Agnes receiving her plate from Ruthann Miller at the farewell gathering.

Additional "last events" were added to the never-to-be-forgotten farewell. One was a final teaching and research seminar and forum on theological

education held on June 21-22 with Dr. Barbara Wheeler, president of Auburn Seminary in New York, as our process person. She had considerable experience with seminary education and, together with Dr. Joseph C. Hough Jr., edited a book entitled, *Beyond Clericalism: The Congregation as a Focus for Theological Education*.[1] Faculty members were asked to read this book and focus on individual chapters for the study. Wheeler's contributions to the topic and to our task were much appreciated.

Another "last" was the coming of Tom Price, a staff writer for *The Elkhart Truth*, for an interview on June 27. This was another occasion for me to reminisce about my 12 years in Indiana, and to place that period into perspective with the earlier years of my sojourn. The newspaper article was entitled, "Orderly transition at seminary." That statement spoke well to our team's ability to plan and carry out those plans and if, as a member of the team I was able to help that transition become a reality, I can only be thankful.

Back to Winnipeg to Retire

Preparing for the trip which would take us back to Winnipeg included packing many boxes and cleaning out the house. And the tradition of members of the AMBS community helping with packing and loading continued to hold. No fewer than a dozen people declared their readiness to be there for us and, on the given day, 15 came to give us a hand.

Because we had more than one vehicle, I convinced my brother Abe from Winnipeg to come to help us with the driving. The loading started on July 13, and by 3:00 p.m. on the next day we were ready. The U-Haul had a front-wheel trailer to which we attached our Dodge Spirit; I would be the driver for that duo. Abe and Agnes would trade off driving the van. When we were ready to leave at 3:00 p.m., the van refused to start. We found that the ground wire from the battery had disconnected. That problem was quickly remedied, but the battery now needed further attention which a quickly summoned tow-truck gave with a fast-charge. Then we lined up and, at 4:30 p.m., with a fond look at our home of 12 years, we were on our way to Winnipeg.

The trip proved uneventful. We stopped at Madison, Wisconsin, for the first night. Agnes had joined me in the U-Haul at the last rest stop, and when

[1] Barbara Wheeler, *Beyond Clericalism: The Congregation as a Focus for Theological Education* (Atlanta GA: Scholars Press, 1988).

we neared the turn-off to our motel, we became concerned when Abe with the van was nowhere in sight. Had he taken another turnoff earlier? We decided to go on to the Red Roof Inn, which was visible from the highway. Shortly after Abe drove up.

The second night we spent in Fargo, North Dakota, and then headed for the border. The crossing entailed more than we had bargained for. When the Canadian official looked at our list of goods, he said that he needed values placed on all of them. But he was congenial enough and moved the process along fairly quickly so that an hour later we re-entered our home country. Unloading the U-Haul and the van took us all of the next day. Our new home was at 527 Borebank Street, again in the River Heights area of the city not too far from where we had lived for eight years before we moved to Elkhart.

Now I must bring this book of memoirs to a close. As I write this, our retirement has already stretched into a number of years, but is not yet "complete." I chose to leave that chapter of my life unreported and unreminisced.

Thank you for joining me on this journey.

§ § §

Appendix

Tables & Maps

Table 1

HUSBAND Johan Poetker (Petker) (My Great great Grandfather)
Born ca. 1786 Place Klein Lunau, Prussia
Chr. Place
Marr Place Klein Lunau, Prussia
Died Place Friedensdorf, Molotschna, Ukraine
HUSBAND'S FATHER HUSBAND'S MOTHER
HUSBAND'S OTHER WIVES

Sources: Peter Rempel, Mennonite Migration to Russia 1788-1828. Johann Poettcker diary; info' from other family members. Prepared by H. Poettcker, Nov. 19, 1992.

WIFE Maria Nickel
Born ca. 1790 Place Klein Lunau, Prussia
Chr. Place
Died Place Friedensdorf, Molotschna, Ukraine
Bur. Place
WIFE'S FATHER WIFE'S MOTHER

SEX M/F	CHILDREN Given Names	SURNAME	WHEN BORN DAY	MONTH	YEAR	WHERE BORN TOWN	STATE OR COUNTRY	DATE OF FIRST MARRIAGE To WHOM	WHEN DIED DAY	MONTH	YEAR
1 M	Heinrich	Poetker			1815	Klein Lunau	Prussia				
2 M	Johann	Poetker			1816	Klein Lunau	Prussia				
3 F	Agnes	Poetker			1823	Klein Lunau	Prussia				
4											
5											
6											
7											

(Passport issued from Marienwerder, Prussia Sept. 27. 1823, NR 889 [Sup 196]. Visa issued in the city of Danzig on Oct. 2, 1823: "Johann Poetker, Mennonite from Klein Lunau, his wife Maria, sons Heinrich 8 [b.ca. 1815], Johann 7 [b.ca. 1816], daughter Agnes 6 mos. [b.ca. 1823])"

Table 2

HUSBAND Johann Poettker (Petker) (My Great Grandfather)
Born ca. 1816 Place Klein Lunau, Prussia
Chr. Place
Marr ca. 1847 Place Friedensdorf, Molotschna, Russia
Died Place
HUSBAND'S FATHER Johan Poetker HUSBAND'S MOTHER Maria Nickel
HUSBAND'S OTHER WIVES

Sources: Peter Rempel, Mennonite Migration to Russia 1788-1828. Johann Poettcker diary; info' from other family members. Prepared by H Poettcker, Nov. 1992.

WIFE
Born Place
Chr. Place
Died Place
Bur. Place
WIFE'S FATHER WIFE'S MOTHER

SEX M/F	CHILDREN Given Names	SURNAME	WHEN BORN DAY	MONTH	YEAR	WHERE BORN TOWN	STATE OR COUNTRY	DATE OF FIRST MARRIAGE To WHOM	WHEN DIED DAY	MONTH	YEAR
1 M	Heinrich	Poettker	29	Aug.	1848	Friedensdorf	Russia	29 Aug. 1968 Katharina Baerg	26	Dec.	1910
									02	Nov.	1900
2 F	Catharina	Poettker	(no data)			"	"				
3 M	Johann	Poettker	15.	Oct.	1850	"	"	09 Nov. 1872 Maria Engbrecht	25	Aug.	1911
									20	Aug.	1911

Table 3

HUSBAND Heinrich Poettcker (Poettker) (My Grand Uncle)
Born 29. Aug. 1848 Place Friedensdorf, Molotschna, Russia
Chr. Place
Marr 29. Aug. 1868 Place Friedensdorf, Molotschna, "
Died 26. Dec. 1910 Place Holland, Europe
HUSBAND'S FATHER Johann Poettker (Pottker) HUSBAND'S MOTHER Maria Nickel
HUSBAND'S OTHER WIVES

Sources: from Heinrich Poettker, Waterloo, ON and Allison Poetker, Wpg. Prepared by Henry Poettcker 2002.

WIFE Katharina Baerg
Born 4. July, 1850 Place Molotschna, Taurien, Russia
Chr. Place
Died 3. Nov. 1937 Place Ontario, Canada
Bur. Place
WIFE'S FATHER Johann Baerg WIFE'S MOTHER

*Wilhelm married a 2nd time: Jan. 1928, to Anna Kasper Friesen, at Blumenfeld Menn. Church. She died June 12, 1938 in Winnipeg, MB.

SEX M F	CHILDREN List each child (whether living or dead) in order of birth: Given Names	SURNAME	WHEN BORN DAY	MONTH	YEAR	WHERE BORN TOWN	STATE OR COUNTRY	DATE OF FIRST MARRIAGE To whom	DAY	MONTH	YEAR	WHEN DIED DAY	MONTH	YEAR
1 M	Heinrich	Poettker	22	June	1869	Lindenau, Molotschna	R.	4. Dec. 1897 Maria Wall	14	07	1915	26	02	1922
2 M	Johan	Poettker	8	Jan.	1871	" "	R.	5. Oct. 1897 Katarina Rempel						
3 M	Jakob	Poettker	24	Aug.	1872	" "	R.	15. June 1914 Helene Petkau	01	08	1936			
4 M	Gerhard	Poettker	7	Mar.	1875	" "	R.	21 Oct. 1897 Justina Hildebrand						
5 M	*Wilhelm	Poettker	30	Sept.	1876	" "	R.	Oct. 1908 Susie Buhler	05	03	1941	25	02	1926
6 M	Peter	Poettker	6	Aug.	1878	" "	R.	21 Oct. 1903 Katharina Goerzen	23	12	1935			
7 F	Margaretha	Poettker	5	Nov.	1880	" "	R.	Abram Riediger						
8 F	Katharina	Poettker	27	Jan.	1884	" "	R.	24 Nov. 1925 Heinrich H. Pottker						
9 F	Maria	Poettker	21	Sept.	1886	" "	R.	---------				05	05	1973
10 M	Abram	Poettker	5	Feb.	1889	" "	R.					07	03	1890
11 M	Abram	Poettker	22	July	1891	" "	R.					01	08	1891
12 F	Anna	Poettker	8	June	1894	" "	R	--------- Clarence Schedler						

Table 4

HUSBAND Johann Poettcker (My Grandfather)
Born 15 Oct. 1850 Place Friedensdorf, Molotschna, Russia
Marr 09 Nov. 1872 Place " " "
Died 25 Aug. 1911 Place "
HUSBAND'S FATHER Johann Poetker HUSBAND'S MOTHER Maria ?

Sources: Record of family births-deaths, from Jonann Poettcker's diary, last item dated May 11, 1916. Letters from Germany. Prepared by Henry Poettcker, Nov. 1992.

WIFE Maria Engbrecht
Born 20 Oct. 1849 Place Russia
Died 20 Aug. 1900 Place Friedensdorf, Molotschna, "
WIFE'S FATHER WIFE'S MOTHER

SEX M F	CHILDREN List each child (whether living or dead) in order of birth: Given Names	SURNAME	WHEN BORN DAY	MONTH	YEAR	WHERE BORN TOWN	STATE OR COUNTRY	DATE OF FIRST MARRIAGE To whom	DAY	MONTH	YEAR	WHEN DIED DAY	MONTH	YEAR
1 M	David	Poettcker	29	July	1873	Friedensdorf	R.	19 10 1895 Anna Harder	17	02	1920	05	04	1946
2 M	Heinrich	Poettcker	04	Sept.	1875	"	R.					18	09	1882
3 M	Johann	Poettcker	13	Feb.	1877	"	R.					02	04	1879
4 M	Peter	Poettcker	13	Feb.	1877	"	R.					30	05	1877
5 F	Maria	Poettcker	12	Feb.	1879	"	R.					19	12	1881
6 M	Jacob	Poettcker	24	Apr.	1880	"	R.					06	05	1882
7 F	Elizabeth	Poettcker	23	Aug.	1881	"	R.					30	04	1882
8 M	Johann	Poettcker	19	Dec.	1882	"	R.	21 04 1911 Margaretha Voth	06	05	1940	26	11	1964
9 M	* Heinrich	Poettcker	06	Aug.	1884	"	R.	24 11 1905 Maria Krueger			1941	15	12	1906
10 M	** Gerhard	Poettcker	16	Oct.	1885	"	R.	ca. 1910 Anna Sawatzky			1942			1916
11 M	Abraham	Poettcker	23	Jan.	1887	"	R.	12 01 1911 Maria Dueck	11	08	1934	07	02	1970
12 M	Jacob	Poettcker	09	July	1888	"	R.					20	09	1890
13 F	Maria	Poettcker	06	April	1890	"	R.	--------- Peter Voth				14	11	1920
14 F	Aganetha	Poettcker	27	Aug.	1893	"	R.					02	01	1895

OTHER MARRIAGES *Heinrich married a 2nd time to Sara Pankratz, b.ca. 1886. Married 21.02.1907 Died Dec. 1941.
**Gerhard married, 2nd time, ca. 1918, to Elisabeth Plett, b. 1895.

Table 5

HUSBAND Johann Poettcker (My Father)
Born 19 Dec. 1882 Place Friedensdorf, Molotschna, Russia
Chr. Place
Marr 21 April, 1911 Place Schoenau, Molotschna R.
Died 06 May, 1940 Place Coaldale, Alberta, Canada
HUSBAND'S FATHER Johann Poettcker HUSBAND'S MOTHER Maria Engbrecht

Sources: Father's diary, genealogical tables, Father's family lists. Prepared by H. Poettcker summer, 1998

WIFE Margaretha Voth
Born 20 June, 1891 Place Schoensee, Molotschna, Russia
Died 26 Nov. 1964 Place Pincher Creek, Alberta, Can.
Bur. 29 Nov. 1964 Place Springridge, Alberta
WIFE'S FATHER Peter Voth WIFE'S MOTHER Helena Born

Sex M/F	CHILDREN Given Names	SURNAME	WHEN BORN DAY	MONTH	YEAR	WHERE BORN TOWN		STATE OR COUNTRY	DATE OF FIRST MARRIAGE DAY MONTH YEAR To whom	WHEN DIED DAY MONTH YEAR
1 F	Katharina	Poettcker	25	05	1912	Rudnerweide, Molot.		R.		26 05 1912
2 M	Jacob	Poettcker	25	09	1913	"	"	R.	02 11 1941 Mary Goerz	13 08 1988
3 M	*John	Poettcker	02	06	1915	"	"	R.	26 02 1939 Edith Cornelsen	15 07 1999
4 M	David	Poettcker	28	08	1918	"	"	R.	16 07 1945 Lillias Stevenson	29 11 1999 03 06 2007
5 M	Heinrich	Poettcker	07	02	1920	"	"	R.		14 10 1920
6 M	Peter	Poettcker	19	09	1921	"	"	R.	10 03 1945 Ruth Brown	29 05 2008
7 M	George	Poettcker	13	10	1923	"	"	R.	11 10 1945 Theresa Apazeller	11 12 2006
8 M	Henry	Poettcker	27	03	1925	"	"	R.	04 07 1946 Agnes Baergen	
9 M	Abraham	Poettcker	24	09	1927	Glenwood, Alberta		Can.	17 05 1952 Doreen Hoeppner	
10										
11										

OTHER MARRIAGES
*John married a 2nd time, to Mary Fielding, b. 14.05.1923,in Yarmouth,NS. Mary died in Calgary, AB. 31.12.2001.

Table 6

HUSBAND David Poettcker (My oldest uncle)
Born 29 July, 1873 Place Friedensdorf, Molotschna, Russia
Chr. Place
Marr 19 Oct. 1895 Place " " "
Died 17. Feb. 1920 Place " " "
HUSBAND'S FATHER Johann Poettcker HUSBAND'S MOTHER Maria Engbrecht

Sources: Dad's Diary and several lists of grandfather's family. Prepared by Henry Poettcker, May 1998.

WIFE Anna Harder
Born 21 March, 1874 Place
Died 05 April, 1946 Place Jurga Territory, Kamerow, Russia
Bur. Place
WIFE'S FATHER WIFE'S MOTHER

Sex M/F	CHILDREN Given Names	SURNAME	WHEN BORN DAY	MONTH	YEAR	WHERE BORN TOWN		STATE OR COUNTRY	DATE OF FIRST MARRIAGE To whom	WHEN DIED DAY MONTH YEAR
1 F	Margaretha	Poettcker	24	11	1896	Friedensdorf, Molot.		R.		20 12 1898
2 M	Johann	Poettcker	18	01	1898	"	"	R.	in Friedensdorf	04 04 1922
3 F	Mariechen	Poettcker	11	09	1900	"	"	R.	in Friedensdorf	1924
4 F	Anna	Poettcker	25	12	1902	"	"	R.	24 05 1926 Abram Friesen,in Dahetesaj	29 03 1990
5 F	Margareta	Poettcker	14	07	1904	"	"	R.		01 1927
6 M	David	Poettcker	10	06	1906	"	"	R.	disappeared 1935 Maria Sawatzky	08 01 1981
7 M	Peter	Poettcker	24	04	1908	"	"	R.	Sara Foth	20 12 1937 31 12 1973
8 M	Heinrich	Poettcker	14	05	1910	"	"	R.	disappeared 1941	
9 F	Helene	Poettcker	20	12	1911	"	"	R.	08 12 1935 Peter Becker,exiled,'37 d.'38	17 07 1997
10 F	Liese	Poettcker	26	03	1916	"	"	R.		
11 F	Sara	Poettcker	26	03	1916	"	"	R.		

Table 7

HUSBAND Heinrich Poettker (Petker) (My Dad's second brother)

Born 06 Aug. 1884 Place Friedensdorf, Molotschna, Russia
Marr 24 Nov. 1905 Place " " "
Died Dec. 1941 Place In Russian Captivity
HUSBAND'S FATHER Johann Poettker HUSBAND'S MOTHER
HUSBAND'S OTHER WIVES 2) Sarah Pankratz

Sources: Father's diary, letters and family trees from family in Europe. There was extensive research. Prepared by Henry Poettcker, Nov.2007

1st WIFE Maria Krueger

Born 1885 Place
Died 15 Dec. 1906 Place Friedensdorf
Bur. Place
WIFE'S FATHER 1st wife had one child

2nd WIFE Sarah Pankratz

Born ca. 1886 Landskrone, Molotschna, Russia
Chr.
Died 1941 Russia
WIFE'S MOTHER 2nd wife had two children

SEX M/F	CHILDREN Given Names	SURNAME	WHEN BORN DAY	MONTH	YEAR	WHERE BORN TOWN	STATE OR COUNTRY	DATE OF FIRST MARRIAGE To WHOM	DAY	WHEN DIED MONTH	YEAR
1 F	Anna	Poettker (Petker)	15	12	1906		R		24	09	1941
								Isaak Baergen	07	10	1938
2 M	Hans	Petker			1908		R				1940's
								Susie Schartner			1940's
3 M	Gerhard	Petker	23	Nov.	1909		R.	15 10 1939		02	1990
								Liese Dick	b. 19 08 1918		

Table 8

HUSBAND Gerhard Poettker (My Dad's third brother)

Born 16 Oct. 1885 Place Friedensdorf, Molotschna, Russia
Marr ca. 1909 Place " "
Died Disappeared 1942 Place In Russian Captivity
HUSBAND'S FATHER Johann Poettker HUSBAND'S MOTHER Maria Engbrecht
HUSBAND'S OTHER WIVES 2) Elisabeth Plett

Sources: Father's diary, letters and family trees from relatives in Europe. There was extensive research. Prepared by Henry Poettcker, Nov. 2007

1st WIFE Anna Sawatzky

Born ca. 1890 Place
Died ca. 1916 Place
Bur. Place
WIFE'S FATHER 1st wife had 3 children

2nd WIFE Elisabeth Plett

Born ca. 1895
Marr. ca. 1918
Died ca. 1933
WIFE'S MOTHER 2nd wife had 8 children

SEX M/F	CHILDREN Given Names	SURNAME	WHEN BORN DAY	MONTH	YEAR	WHERE BORN TOWN	STATE OR COUNTRY	DATE OF FIRST MARRIAGE To WHOM	DAY	WHEN DIED MONTH	YEAR
1 F	Maria	Poettker	17	07	1911	Friedensdorf	R.	ca. 1930	06	11	1978
								Gerhard Dyck, appreh.			1941
2 F	Anna	Poettker	21	12	1914	"			05	05	1997
								Georg Markheim			
3 F	Elisabeth	Poettker			1916						1916
4 M	Gerhard	Poettker	24	11	1919	Friedensdorf	R.		17	11	1944
								Maria Wiens			
5 M	Johann	Poettker	23	03	1921	"	R.	10 05 1955			
								Susanne Ewert			
6 F	Elisabeth	Poettker	26	12	1922	"	R		13	12	1971
								Edward Tom			
7 M	Heinrich	Poettker	21	08	1924	"	R.		05	05	1984
								Amalia Knorr			
8 F	Katharina	Poettker	08	11	1925	"	R				
9 F	Gertrud	Poettker	12	02	1928	"	R.				
								Abram Loepp			
10 F	Sara	Poettker	06	03	1930	"			10	05	1933
11 M	Bernhard	Poettker	05	05	1932	"					
								Adina Ullmer			

Table 9

HUSBAND Abraham Poettcker (Dad's 4th brother) Sources:
Born 23 Jan. 1887 Place Friedensdorf, Molotschna, Russia
Marr 12 Jan. 1911 Place Schoenau, "
Died 11 Aug. 1934 Place Pincher Creek, Alberta, Canada
HUSBAND'S FATHER Johann Poettcker HUSBAND'S MOTHER Maria Engbrecht
HUSBAND'S OTHER WIVES

Father's diary, letters & family trees from family members in Europe. Personal research by Henry Poettcker, prepared Aug. 2008; revised later.

WIFE Maria Dueck
Born 24 Dec. 1890 Place Schoenau Molotschna, Russia
Died 07 Feb. 1970 Place Coaldale, Alberta, Canada
Bur. Place
WIFE'S FATHER Henry H. Dueck WIFE'S MOTHER Maria Kroeker

SEX M/F	CHILDREN List each child (whether living or dead) in order of birth: Given Names	SURNAME	WHEN BORN DAY	MONTH	YEAR	WHERE BORN TOWN	STATE OR COUNTRY	DATE OF FIRST MARRIAGE DAY MONTH YEAR To WHOM	WHEN DIED DAY MONTH YEAR
1 M	Henry	Poettcker	20	Dec. 1912		Friedensdorf, Molot.	R.	15 04 1934 Katie Raabe	14 04 1986
2 M	Abraham	Poettcker	22	Nov. 1914		" "	R.	03 06 1943 Anna Thiessen	
3 M	David	Poettcker	04	Feb. 1918		" "	R.	---------	21 09 1918
4 F	Mary	Poettcker	30	July 1919		" "	R.	---------	26 10 1921
5 M	John	Poettcker	11	Sept. 1921		" "	R.	20 Oct. 1945 Katie Friesen	10 06 1970
6 F	Mary	Poettcker	13	April 1924		Schoenau, "	R.	11 June 1944 John H. Dyck	
7 F	Elizabeth	Poettcker	06	Nov. 1926		Marion, S.D.	U.S.A.	10 04 1949 John Thiessen	
8 F	Anne	Poettcker	20	July 1929		Springridge, Alberta	Can.	---------	10 10 2005
9								---------	
10								---------	
11								---------	
p.								---------	

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5. After John's death, Katie married Henry Klassen, 20, March 1974.

Table 10

HUSBAND Peter Voth (My dad's brother-in-law)
Born ca. 1890 Place Molotschna, Russia
Chr. Place
Marr ca. 1915 Place Friedensdorf, Molotschna, Russia
Died ca. 1924 Place " " "
HUSBAND'S FATHER HUSBAND'S MOTHER
HUSBAND'S OTHER WIVES Maria Goerzen - after Peter Voth died, she married Peter Wiens.

Sources: Dad's Diary and some other notes, as well as family notes from Europe. Prepared by Henry Poettcker, March/Apr. 2007

WIFE Maria Poettcker
Born 06 April, 1890 Place Friedensdorf, Molotschna, Russia
Chr. Place
Died 14. Nov. 1920 Place " " "
Bur. Place
WIFE'S FATHER Johann Poettcker WIFE'S MOTHER Maria Engbrecht

SEX M/F	CHILDREN List each child (whether living or dead) in order of birth: Given Names	SURNAME	WHEN BORN DAY	MONTH	YEAR	WHERE BORN TOWN	STATE OR COUNTRY	DATE OF FIRST MARRIAGE DAY MONTH YEAR To WHOM	WHEN DIED DAY MONTH YEAR
1 F	Suse	Voth			1917	Friedensdorf,	R.	---------	in infancy
2 M	Heinrich	Voth			1919	"	R.	---------	in infancy
3								---------	
4								---------	
5								---------	
6								---------	
7								---------	
8								---------	

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OTHER MARRIAGES After Maria died, Peter Voth married Maria Goerzen. No dates available. When Peter died, Maria Goerzen married Peter Wiens. They had one son, Peter.

Table 11

HUSBAND Franz Born (Henry's Great Grandfather)

Born 14. 10. 1841 Place (On Mother's side)
Chr. Place
Marr Place
Died 22. 03. 1907 Place
HUSBAND'S FATHER HUSBAND'S MOTHER
HUSBAND'S OTHER WIVES

Sources: Several members of the Born family, especially Heinrich and Margaret, children of the above. Prepared by Henry Poettcker, May 2000.

WIFE Katharina Regehr

Born 23. 06. 1839 Place
Chr. Place
Died 16. 08. 1913 Place
Bur. Place
WIFE'S FATHER WIFE'S MOTHER

SEX M F	CHILDREN Given Names	SURNAME	WHEN BORN DAY	MONTH	YEAR	WHERE BORN TOWN	STATE OR COUNTRY	DATE OF FIRST MARRIAGE To WHOM	DAY	WHEN DIED MONTH	YEAR
1 F	Helena	Born	14	10	1861			Peter Voth	16	10	1932
2 F	Maria	Born	19	12	1865			Franz Peter Goertz	10	11	1952
3 M	Franz	Born	05	03	1874			Maria Baerg	23	12	1932
4 M	Gerhard	Born	19	06	1876			Liese Dueck	08	02	1933
5 F	Sara	Born						Heinr. Kroeger			ca. 1914-15
6 F	Anna	Born						Jakob Toews			ca. 1902
7 M	Isaak	Born						Elizabeth Rempel		03	1965

Table 12

HUSBAND Gerhard G. Baergen (Agnes Poettcker's Great Grandfather)

Born 21 Sept. 1802 Place Laddekopperfeld, Poland
Marr 21 April 1824 Place
Died 18 Dec. 1889 Place Kleefeld, Russia
HUSBAND'S FATHER Elias von Baergen HUSBAND'S MOTHER Gertruda Regehr
HUSBAND'S OTHER WIVES 2) Maria Buller b.19.09.1804; 3) Helena Wedel b.06.08.1825

The Baergen Heritage--1725-1975. M.O. Unruh, G.G.Baergen. Gerhard J. Baergen: Ancestors & Descendants, E. Baergen. Prepared by Henry Poettcker, Nov. 2007

WIFE Maria Wall Wittenberg, Widow

Born 12 April 1796 Place Laddekopperfeld, Poland
Chr. Place
Died 24 Aug. 1827 Place
WIFE'S FATHER WIFE'S MOTHER

SEX M F	CHILDREN Given Names	SURNAME	WHEN BORN DAY	MONTH	YEAR	WHERE BORN TOWN	STATE OR COUNTRY	DATE OF FIRST MARRIAGE To WHOM	DAY	WHEN DIED MONTH	YEAR
1 F	Gertrude	Baergen	26	03	1826				24	03	1827

Table 13

Sources: The Baergen Heritage--1725-1975. M.O. Unruh, G.G. Baergen. Gerhard Johann Baergen: Ancestors & Descendants. E. Baergen. Prepared by Henry Poettcker, Nov. 2007

HUSBAND Gerhard G. Baergen (Agnes Poettoker's Great Grandfather)
Born 21 Sept. 1802 Place Laddekopperfeld, Poland
Marr 18 Oct. 1827 Place
Died 18 Dec. 1889 Place Russia (R.)
HUSBAND'S FATHER Elias von Baergen HUSBAND'S MOTHER Gertruda Regehr
HUSBAND'S OTHER WIVES 1) Maria Wall Wittenberg b.12.04.1796; 3) Helena Wedel b. 06.08.1825

WIFE Maria Buller
Born 19 Sept. 1804 Place Laddekopperfeld, Poland
Chr. Place
Died 16 Dec. 1842 Place Friedensdorf, Russia
WIFE'S FATHER WIFE'S MOTHER

SEX M/F	CHILDREN Given Names	SURNAME	WHEN BORN DAY	MONTH	YEAR	WHERE BORN TOWN	STATE OR COUNTRY	DATE OF FIRST MARRIAGE DAY MONTH YEAR To WHOM	WHEN DIED DAY MONTH YEAR
1 F	Maria G.	Schmidt Baergen	01	09	1828	Friedensdorf	R.	Benjamin Schmidt	12 1869
2 F	Sara Enns	Baergen	11	01	1830	Paulsheim	R.	Jacob Enns	1907
3 F	Katharina	Schmidt Baergen	21	04	1832		R.	Heinr. Schmidt	
4 M	Gerhard E.	Baergen	28	10	1833	Friedensdorf	R.	23 10 1856 Helena Becker b. 19 10 1836	17 07 1899
5 F	Daughter	Baergen		03	1935	"	R.		03 1835
6 F	Flizabeth	Baergen		01	1836	"	R.		12 1836
7 M	Peter Gerhard	Baergen	05	08	1837	"	R.		11 11 1899 (in Oklahoma)
8 F	Susanna	Baergen	08	03	1840	"	R.		

Table 14

Sources: The Baergen Heritage--1725-1975, M.O. Unruh, G.G. Baergen. Gerhard J. Baergen: Ancestors & Descendants, Ernie Baergen. Prepared by Henry Poettcker, Nov. 2007

HUSBAND Gerhard G. Baergen (Agnes P.' Great Grandfather)
Born 21 Sept. 1802 Place Laddekopperfeld, Poland
Marr 04 Feb. 1843 Place Russia (R)
Died 18 Dec. 1889 Place Kleefeld "
HUSBAND'S FATHER Elias von Baergen HUSBAND'S MOTHER Gertruda Regehr
HUSBAND'S OTHER WIVES 1) Maria Wall Wittenberg,b.12.04.1796; 2) Maria Buller,b.19.09.1804

WIFE Helena Wedel
Born 06. Aug. 1825 Place Alexanderwohl, Russia
Died 03 Oct. 1874 Place Friedensdorf, "
Bur. Place
WIFE'S FATHER WIFE'S MOTHER

SEX M/F	CHILDREN Given Names	SURNAME	WHEN BORN DAY	MONTH	YEAR	WHERE BORN TOWN	STATE OR COUNTRY	DATE OF FIRST MARRIAGE DAY MONTH YEAR To WHOM	WHEN DIED DAY MONTH YEAR
1 F	Helena G.	Baergen Bolt	20	01	1844	Friedensdorf,	R.	Peter H. Bolt	
2 M	Heinrich G.	Baergen	05	12	1845	"	R.	22 02 1872 Maria Schmidt	30 09 1928 29 08 1897
	Heinrich G.	Baergen (second marriage)						summer 1901 Elizabeth Franz Enns	d. 07 1922
3 M	Jacob G.	Baergen	06	09	1847	"	R.	12 03 1872 Maria Reimer	09 01 1918 16 03 1889
	Jacob G.	Baergen (2. marr)				"		Mrs. Margar Goosen	25 01 1924
4 F	Anna G.	Baergen	21	09	1848	"	R.	23 10 1875 Cornel. Abrahams	01 06 1907 04 10 1883
	Anna G.	Baergen Abrahams	2nd marriage					26 06 1884 Peter Martens	03 01 1927
5 M	Johann G.	Baergen	12	03	1852	"	R.	09 01 1875 Anna Unger Eckert	24 11 1908 09 1917
6 M	Cornelius G.	Baergen	24	11	1854	"	R.	30 06 1876 Helena Sawatzky	08 1922 03 1922
7 M	Abraham G.	Baergen	12	01	1857	"	R.	16 12 1880 Justina Wiebe	15 12 1928 15 07 1921
8 F	Eliesabeth G.	Baergen	28	11	1858	"	R.		01 12 1858
9 F	Eliesabeth G.	Baergen	23	11	1861	"	R.	Franz Fr. Friesen	27 02 1923 18 12 1943
10 M	Isaak G.	Baergen	30	06	1865	"	R.	07 01 1893 Maria Fast	09 1933

Table 15

HUSBAND Johann G. Baergen (Agnes Poettcker's Grandfather)
Born 12 Mar. 1852 Place Friedensdorf, Molotschna, Russia
Marr 09 Jan. 1875 Place "
Died 24 Nov. 1908 Place "
HUSBAND'S FATHER Gerhard G. Baergen HUSBAND'S MOTHER Helena Wedel
HUSBAND'S OTHER WIVES

Sources: The Baergen Heritage--1725-1975. M.O. Unruh, G.G.Baergen. Gerhard J. Baergen: Ancestors & Descendants. Ernie Baergen. Prepared by Henry Poettcker, Nov. 2007

WIFE Anna Unger Eckert
Born 30 April 1841 Place Waldheim, Russia
Chr. Place
Died Sept. 1917 Place Friedensdorf, Molotschna, Russia
WIFE'S FATHER WIFE'S MOTHER

SEX M F	CHILDREN Given Names	SURNAME	WHEN BORN DAY	MONTH	YEAR	WHERE BORN TOWN	STATE OR COUNTRY	DATE OF FIRST MARRIAGE DAY MONTH YEAR / TO WHOM	WHEN DIED DAY MONTH YEAR
1M	Gerhard J.	Baergen	16	10	1875	Friedensdorf	R.		04 08 1876
2M	Peter J.	Baergen	16	10	1875	"	R		09 04 1876
3M	Gerhard Johann	Baergen	26	03	1877	"	R.	18 02 1903 / Margaretha Baerg	17 05 1954 / d. 20 12 1912
	Gerhard Johann (2nd marriage)	Baergen				"	R.	26 04 1913 / Aganetha Martens	17 05 1954 / d. 02 01 1929
	Gerhard Johann (3rd marriage)	Baergen						22 09 1929 / Anna Warkentin Voth	17 05 1954 / d. 1 02 1972
4M	Cornelius Johann	Baergen	18	01	1879	"	R.	/ Anna Regehr	1943 / d. 22 12 1968
5M	Peter Johann	Baergen	20	02	1881	"	R.	/ Aganetha Unger	?
6M	Abraham Johann	Baergen	22	08	1882	"	R.	1904 / Barbara Goosen	25 06 1933 / d. 04 03 1932

Table 16

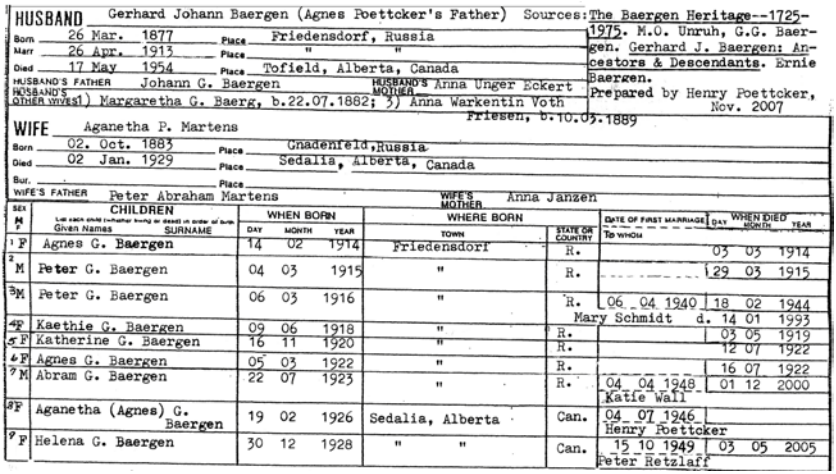
HUSBAND Gerhard Johann Baergen (Agnes Poettcker's Father)
Born 26 Mar. 1877 Place Friedensdorf, Molotschna, Russia
Marr 18 Feb. 1903 Place " "
Died 17 May 1954 Place Tofield, Alberta, Canada
HUSBAND'S FATHER Johann G. Baergen HUSBAND'S MOTHER Anna Unger Eckert
HUSBAND'S OTHER WIVES 2)Aganetha P. Martens b. 02.10.1883;3)Anna Warkentin Voth, b. 10.05.1889

Sources: The Baergen Heritage--1725-1975. M.O. Unruh, G.G. Baergen. Gerhard Johann Baergen: Ancestors & Descendants. E. Baergen. Prepared by: H. Poettcker Nov. 2007

WIFE Margartha Baerg
Born 22 July 1882 Place
Died 20 Dec. 1912 Place Friedensdorf, Russia
Bur. Place
WIFE'S FATHER Gerhard Jakob Baerg WIFE'S MOTHER Sara Peters

SEX M F	CHILDREN Given Names	SURNAME	WHEN BORN DAY	MONTH	YEAR	WHERE BORN TOWN	STATE OR COUNTRY	DATE OF FIRST MARRIAGE DAY MONTH YEAR / TO WHOM	WHEN DIED DAY MONTH YEAR
1F	Anna G.	Baergen	23	10	1903	Landskrone	R.		1903
2M	Sara G.	Baergen Nachtigal	23	10	1903	"	R.	07 04 1929 / Joh. D. Nachtigal	26 08 1983 / 04 02 1978
3M	Anna G.	Baergen Wiens	20	01	1905	"	R.	15 04 1928 / David D. Wiens	16 07 2004 / d. 20 07 1971
	Anna G. (2nd marriage)	Wiens Dorn						24 09 1977 / Jakob Dorn	d. 18 07 1996
4M	Gerhard G.	Baergen	12	07	1906	"	R.	12 04 1931 / Mary Peters	21 09 1981 / d. 24 08 1993
5M	Johann G.	Baergen	08	12	1907	"	R.	05 11 1932 / Agnes Regehr	07 09 1976 / d. 15 06 1996
6M	Heinrich G. (Henry)	Baergen	21	08	1909	"	R.	18 01 1941 / Bernice Patricia Scranton	29 12 1997 / d.
7F	Margareth G.	Baergen Wiens	18	01	1911	"	R.	12 09 1937 / Jacob B. Wiens	17 05 1991 / d. 17 05 1997

Table 17



HUSBAND Gerhard Johann Baergen (Agnes Poettcker's Father) Sources: The Baergen Heritage--1725-1975. M.O. Unruh, G.G. Baergen. Gerhard J. Baergen: Ancestors & Descendants. Ernie Baergen. Prepared by Henry Poettcker, Nov. 2007

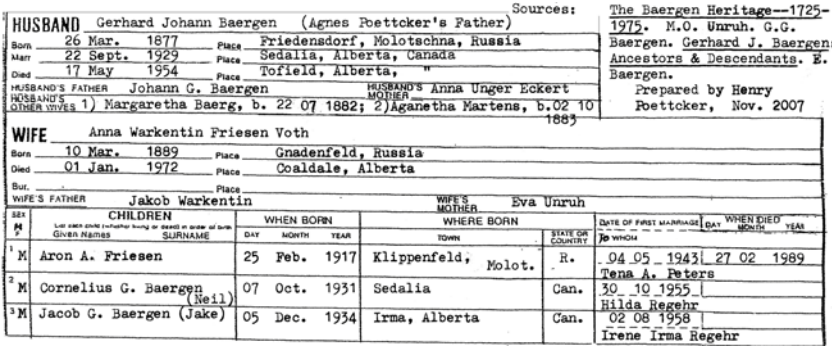
Born 26 Mar. 1877 Place Friedensdorf, Russia
Marr 26 Apr. 1913 Place " "
Died 17 May 1954 Place Tofield, Alberta, Canada
HUSBAND'S FATHER Johann G. Baergen HUSBAND'S MOTHER Anna Unger Eckert
HUSBAND'S OTHER WIVES 1) Margaretha G. Baerg, b.22.07.1882; 3) Anna Warkentin Voth Friesen, b.10.03.1889

WIFE Aganetha P. Martens

Born 02. Oct. 1883 Place Gnadenfeld,Russia
Died 02 Jan. 1929 Place Sedalia, Alberta, Canada
Bur. Place
WIFE'S FATHER Peter Abraham Martens WIFE'S MOTHER Anna Janzen

SEX M/F	CHILDREN Given Names	SURNAME	WHEN BORN DAY	MONTH	YEAR	WHERE BORN TOWN	STATE OR COUNTRY	DATE OF FIRST MARRIAGE DAY MONTH YEAR / TO WHOM	WHEN DIED DAY MONTH YEAR
1 F	Agnes G.	Baergen	14	02	1914	Friedensdorf	R.		03 03 1914
2 M	Peter G.	Baergen	04	03	1915	"	R.		29 03 1915
3 M	Peter G.	Baergen	06	03	1916	"	R.	06 04 1940 Mary Schmidt	18 02 1944 d. 14 01 1993
4 F	Kaethie G.	Baergen	09	06	1918	"	R.		03 05 1919
5 F	Katherine G.	Baergen	16	11	1920	"	R.		12 07 1922
6 F	Agnes G.	Baergen	05	03	1922	"	R.		16 07 1922
7 M	Abram G.	Baergen	22	07	1923	"	R.	04 04 1948 Katie Wall	01 12 2000
8 F	Aganetha (Agnes) G.	Baergen	19	02	1926	Sedalia, Alberta	Can.	04 07 1946 Henry Poettcker	
9 F	Helena G.	Baergen	30	12	1928	" "	Can.	15 10 1949 Peter Retzlaff	03 05 2005

Table 18



HUSBAND Gerhard Johann Baergen (Agnes Poettcker's Father) Sources: The Baergen Heritage--1725-1975. M.O. Unruh. G.G. Baergen. Gerhard J. Baergen: Ancestors & Descendants. E. Baergen. Prepared by Henry Poettcker, Nov. 2007

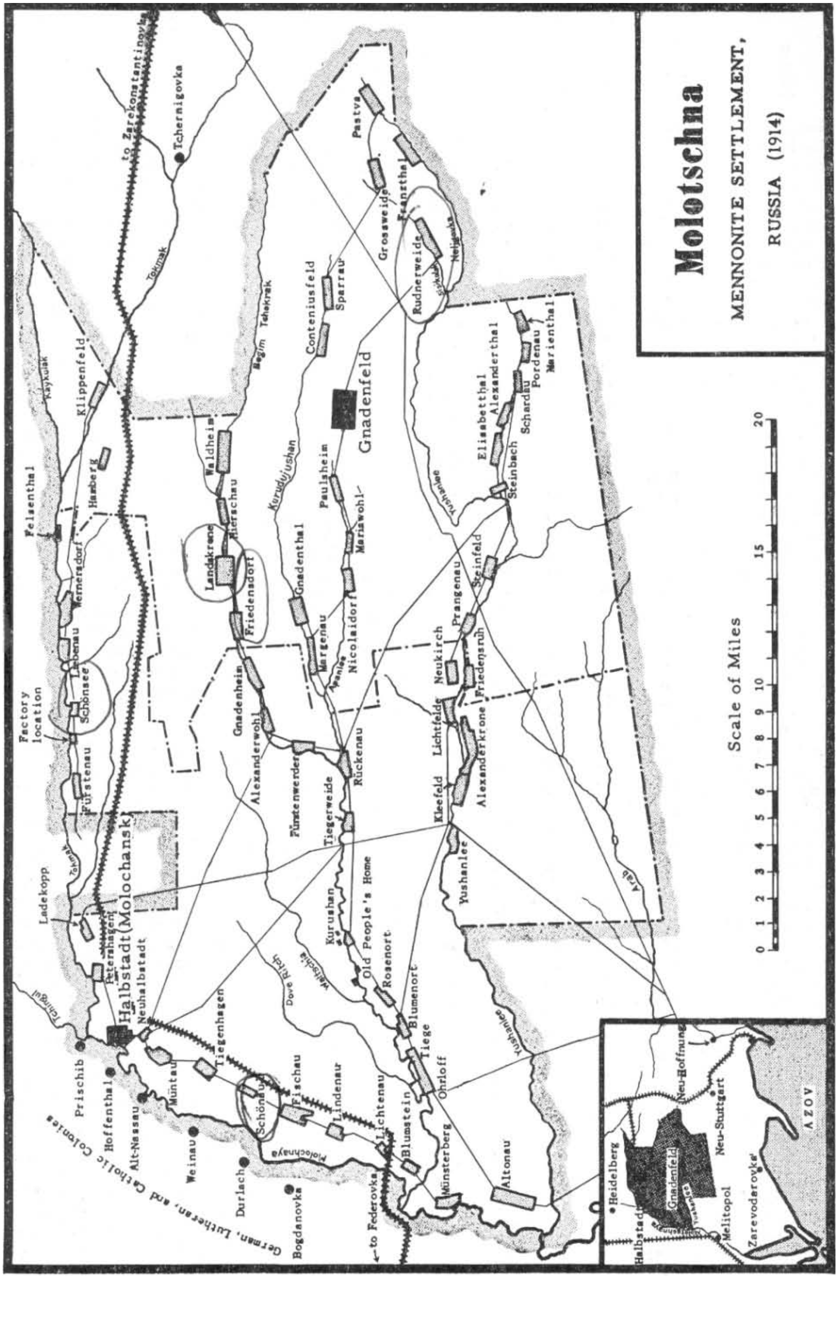
Born 26 Mar. 1877 Place Friedensdorf, Molotschna, Russia
Marr 22 Sept. 1929 Place Sedalia, Alberta, Canada
Died 17 May 1954 Place Tofield, Alberta, "
HUSBAND'S FATHER Johann G. Baergen HUSBAND'S MOTHER Anna Unger Eckert
HUSBAND'S OTHER WIVES 1) Margaretha Baerg, b. 22 07 1882; 2)Aganetha Martens, b.02 10 1883

WIFE Anna Warkentin Friesen Voth

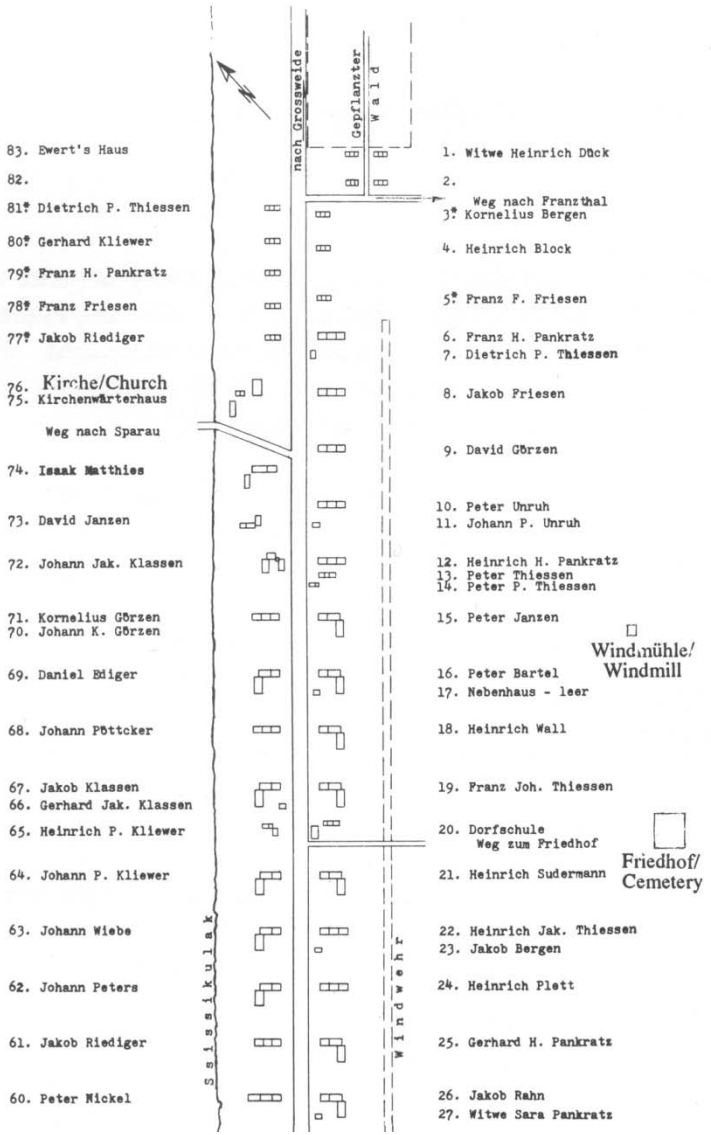
Born 10 Mar. 1889 Place Gnadenfeld, Russia
Died 01 Jan. 1972 Place Coaldale, Alberta
Bur. Place
WIFE'S FATHER Jakob Warkentin WIFE'S MOTHER Eva Unruh

SEX M/F	CHILDREN Given Names	SURNAME	WHEN BORN DAY	MONTH	YEAR	WHERE BORN TOWN	STATE OR COUNTRY	DATE OF FIRST MARRIAGE DAY MONTH YEAR / TO WHOM	WHEN DIED DAY MONTH YEAR
1 M	Aron A.	Friesen	25	Feb.	1917	Klippenfeld, Molot.	R.	04 05 1943 Tena A. Peters	27 02 1989
2 M	Cornelius G. (Neil)	Baergen	07	Oct.	1931	Sedalia	Can.	30 10 1955 Hilda Regehr	
3 M	Jacob G. (Jake)	Baergen	05	Dec.	1934	Irma, Alberta	Can.	02 08 1958 Irene Irma Regehr	

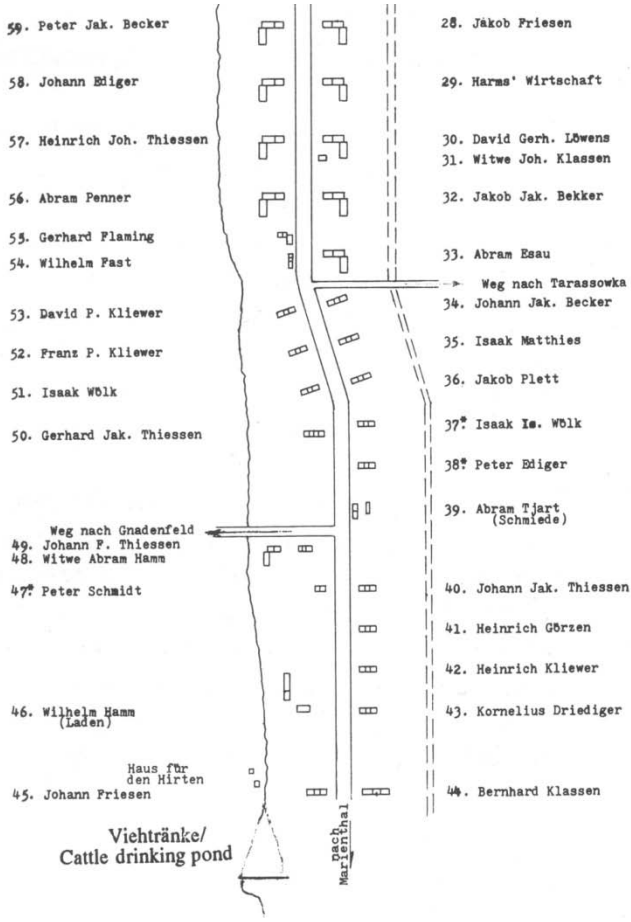
Name of settlement	Province	Year of founding	Acreage	No. of villages
ORIGINAL SETTLEMENTS				
1. Chortitza	Ekaterinoslav	1789 f.	102,163	18
2. Molotschna	Taurida	1804 f.	324,000	57
3. Trakt (Köpental)	Samara	1853	37,800	10
4. Old Samara (Alexandertal)	Samara	1861	37,800	10
DAUGHTER SETTLEMENTS				
5. Bergtal	Ekaterinoslav	1836 f.	30,000	5
6. Huttertal	Taurida	1843	8,910	2
7. Tschernoglas	Ekaterinoslav	1860	2,700	1
8. Crimea	Taurida	1862 f.	108,000	25
9. Kuban	Kuban District	1863	17,550	2
10. Fürstenland	Taurida	1864	18,900	6
11. Borozenko	Ekaterinoslav	1865	16,570	6
12. Schönfeld (Brezol)	Ekaterinoslav	1868	150,000	4
13. Yasekovo	Ekaterinoslav	1869	23,315	8
14. Zagradovka	Kherson	1871	56,130	16
15. Baratov	Ekaterinoslav	1872	9,804	2
16. Shlachtin	Ekaterinoslav	1874	10,800	2
17. Neu-Rosengart	Ekaterinoslav	1878	23,306	2
18. Aulie-Ata and Ak-Mechet	Turkestan	1882	21,600	7
19. Memrik	Ekaterinoslav	1885	32,397	10
20. Miloradovka	Ekaterinoslav	1889	5,670	2
21. Ignatyevo	Ekaterinoslav	1889	38,132	7
22. New-Samara (Pleshanovsk)	Samara	1890	59,400	12
23. Naumenko	Kharkov	1890	14,356	3
24. Borisovo	Ekaterinoslav	1892	13,770	2
25. Orenburg (Chortitza)	Orenburg	1894	63,669	14
26. Suvorovka	Stravropol	1894	10,800	2
27. Olgino	Stravropol	1895	12,150	2
28. Orenburg (Molotschna)	Orenburg	1898	29,700	8
29. Bezenchuk	Samara	1898	5,000	37
30. Omsk*	Akmolinsk and Tobolsk	1899 f.	1,080,000**	29
31. Terek	Terek District	1901	66,960	15
32. Trubetskoye	Kherson	1904	118,800	2
33. Central	Voronesh	1909	7,358	1
34. Sadovaya	Voronesh	1909	16,052	17
35. Barnaul*	Tomsk	1908	135,000	58
36. Pavlodar*	Semipalatinsk	1906	37,800	14
37. Minussinsk*	Yeniseysk	19 ?	10,800	4
38. Andreasfeld	Ekaterinoslav	18 ?	10,519	3
39. Kuzmitzky	Ekaterinoslav	18 ?	4,860	1
40. Arkadak	Saratov	1910	25,496	7
41. Amur*	Amur Region	1927	?	?

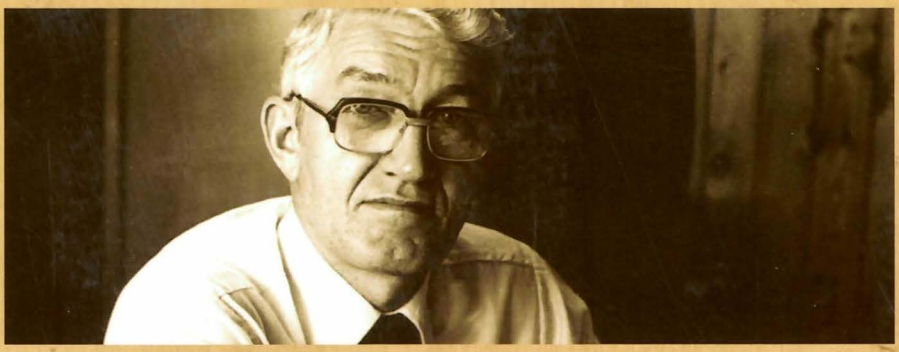

Molotschna
MENNONITE SETTLEMENT,
RUSSIA (1914)
Scale of Miles
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 15 20
to Zarekonstantinovka
Tchernigovka
Tokmak
Pastva
Grossweide
Franzthal
Rudnerweide
Contenlusfeld
Sparrau
Gnadenfeld
Klippenfeld
Felsenthal
Hamberg
Waldheim
Hierschau
Landskrone
Friedensdorf
Paulsheim
Mariawohl
Gnadenthal
Margenau
Nicolaidorf
Elisabetthal
Alexanderthal
Schardau
Pordenau
Marienthal
Steinbach
Steinfeld
Prangenau
Neukirch
Friedensruh
Lichtfelde
Alexanderkrone
Kleefeld
Yushanlee
Wernersdorf
Lindenau
Schönsee
Factory location
Fürstenau
Gnadenheim
Alexanderwohl
Fürstenwerder
Tiegerweide
Rückenau
Ladekopp
Petershagen
Halbstadt (Molochansk)
Neuhalbstadt
Kurushan
Old People's Home
Rosenort
Blumenort
Tiege
Orloff
Prischib
Hoffenthal
Alt-Nassau
Weinau
Durlach
Bogdanovka
Muntau
Tiegenhagen
Schönau
Fischau
Lindenau
Lichtenau
Blumstein
Münsterberg
Altonau
Molochnaya
Dove Rich
to Federovka
German, Lutheran, and Catholic Colonies
Heidelberg
Halbstadt
Gnadenfeld
Melitopol
Neu-Hoffnung
Neu-Stuttgart
Zarevoderovka
AZOV

Das Dorf Rudnerweide/The Village of Rudnerweide
Molotschna, Ukraine



(Continued on page 216)


59. Peter Jak. Becker
58. Johann Ediger
57. Heinrich Joh. Thiessen
56. Abram Penner
55. Gerhard Flaming
54. Wilhelm Fast
53. David P. Kliewer
52. Franz P. Kliewer
51. Isaak Wölk
50. Gerhard Jak. Thiessen
Weg nach Gnadenfeld
49. Johann F. Thiessen
48. Witwe Abram Hamm
47. Peter Schmidt
46. Wilhelm Hamm (Laden)
Haus für den Hirten
45. Johann Friesen
Viehtränke/ Cattle drinking pond
Bach Marienthal
28. Jakob Friesen
29. Harms' Wirtschaft
30. David Gerh. Löwens
31. Witwe Joh. Klassen
32. Jakob Jak. Bekker
33. Abram Esau
Weg nach Tarassowka
34. Johann Jak. Becker
35. Isaak Matthies
36. Jakob Plett
37. Isaak Is. Wölk
38. Peter Ediger
39. Abram Tjart (Schmiede)
40. Johann Jak. Thiessen
41. Heinrich Görzen
42. Heinrich Kliewer
43. Kornelius Driediger
44. Bernhard Klassen



Dr. Henry Poettcker's memoirs recount his passage from a Russian Mennonite farm boy to the president of Canadian Mennonite Bible College (now CMU) and the president of Mennonite Biblical Seminary (now AMBS). Under his leadership, both institutions experienced major development and growth, and yet, where others would boast of such accomplishments, Dr. Poettcker reveals a modest life of devotion to God.

"For nearly 40 years, Henry Poettcker served as an important leader in the Mennonite Church. Never one to demand centre stage, he was a great team builder. Through his memoirs we come to know him as someone who exemplified faithful, humble obedience to God's call."

Gerald Gerbrandt, President,
Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, Manitoba

"Reading these memoirs I frequently picture myself as a grandchild hearing family stories. I am drawn by anecdotes about deprivation and provision, God's call, the challenges and joys of church work And I sense the winsome faithfulness of a humble leader."

Jacob W. Elias, Professor Emeritus of New Testament,
Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Indiana

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