

**LEADERS**  
**Of The**  
**Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde**  
**In Russia, 1812 to 1874**

---

**LEADERS**  
**Of The**  
**Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde**  
**In Russia, 1812 to 1874**

Volume Six  
The Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde Historical Series

---

ISBN: 0-9694504-0-4

Copyright (c) 1993. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any means without the written permission of the publisher.

Published by:

Crossway Publications  
Box 1960, Steinbach, Manitoba,  
Canada, R0A 2A0.

Printed by:

Country Graphics and Printing Ltd.  
Box 128, Rosenort, Manitoba  
Canada, R0G 1W0.

### **The Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde Historical Series**

- Volume One: *History and Events: Writings and Maps pertaining to the History of the Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde from 1866 to 1876*, 166 pages. . . . . \$8.00
- Volume Two: *The Golden Years: The Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde in Russia 1812-1849*, 355 pages. . . . . \$16.00
- Volume Three: *Storm and Triumph: The Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde 1850-1875*, 337 pages. . . . . \$16.00
- Volume Four: *Profile of the Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde 1874*, 312 pages . . . . . \$16.00
- Volume Five: *Pioneers and Pilgrims: The Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde in Manitoba, Nebraska and Kansas, 1874 to 1882*, 604 pages. . . . . \$20.00
- Volume Six: *Leaders of the Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde in Russia, 1812-1874*, 932 pages . . . . . \$30.00
- Prospective Volume Seven: *Genealogy of the Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde in Russia 1812-1874*.

Note: For mail orders add \$5.00 postage for the first book and \$3.00 per book for any additional volumes. Volumes One to Six, inclusive, can be purchased as a set for \$100.00 plus \$20.00 postage for Canada and U.S.A. Cheques should be payable to "Crossway Publications". Overseas postage quoted on request. Prices subject to change without notice.

# LEADERS

OF THE MENNONITE KLEINE GEMEINDE IN RUSSIA 1812-1874

Volume Six of the Kleine Gemeinde Historical Series

---

Edited by Delbert F. Plett, LL.B, Q.C.

---

<b>Table of Contents.</b> . . . . .	5
<b>Acknowledgements.</b> . . . . .	7
<b>Dedication</b> . . . . .	8
<b>Foreword.</b> . . . . .	9
<b>PART ONE: Prussian and Molotschna Background.</b> . . . . .	13
Chap 1. Introduction to KG Historiography. Dr. John Friesen.	
Chap 2. Aeltester George Hansen, 1636-1703. Dr. Harvey G. Plett.	
Chap 3. The Prussian Emigrants, 1788-1840. Henry Schapansky.	
Chap 4. The Pioneer Molotschna Gemeinde and the KG. Dr. Adolf Ens.	
Chap 5. Prussian Roots of the KG. Delbert F. Plett.	
Chap 6. The KG as Sectarian Farmers 1850-75. Dr. Royden K. Loewen.	
Chap 7. Theology of the KG. Dr. Archie Penner.	
<b>PART TWO: Aelt. Klaas Reimer 1770-1837.</b> . . . . .	113
Chap 1. Biographical Sketch. Dr. Al Reimer.	
Chap 2. Ein Kleines Aufsatz: Autobiography of Klaas Reimer.	
Chap 3. Two Letters 1819 and 1830.	
Chap 4. Sermon for Communion 1829.	
Chap 5. Sermon on the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares.	
Chap 6. Sermon on Love and Brotherhood 1832.	
<b>PART THREE: Aelt. Abraham Friesen 1782-1849.</b> . . . . .	223
Chap 1. Biography. D. F. Plett.	
Chap 2. Two Letters 1820 and 1849.	
Chap 3. The Franz Thiessen Incident 1821.	
Chap 4. Documents 1820-1843.	
Chap 5. A Simple Declaration 1845.	

<b>PART FOUR: Rev. Heinrich Balzer 1800-1846.</b> .....	295
Chap 1. Interpretation. Dr. James Urry.	
Chap 2. An Epic Poem.	
Chap 3. Preparatory Sermon 2 Corinthians 13:5.	
Chap 4. Sermon Galatians 6:15-16, 1836.	
Chap 5. Balzer Genealogies. D. F. Plett.	
<b>PART FIVE: Aelt. Johann F. Friesen 1808-1872.</b> .....	355
Chap 1. Biography. D. F. Plett.	
Chap 2. The 1866 Division, Three Letters.	
<b>PART SIX: Aelt. Heinrich Enns 1807-1881.</b> .....	379
Chap 1. Biography. D. F. Plett.	
Chap 2. Letters 1866-1869.	
<b>PART SEVEN: Rev. Klaas Friesen 1793-1870.</b> .....	401
Chap 1. Biography. D. F. Plett.	
Chap 2. Sermon Luke 18:9-14.	
<b>PART EIGHT: Rev. Johann Dueck 1801-1866.</b> .....	427
Chap 1. Biography. D. F. Plett.	
Chap 2. Ministerial Journal 1848-1862.	
Chap 3. Commentary. John Dyck.	
<b>PART NINE: Isaac Loewen 1787-1873.</b> .....	509
Chap 1. Biography. D. F. Plett.	
Chap 2. Letters 1863.	
Chap 3. Letters 1865.	
Chap 4. Letters 1867-1871.	
Chap 5. Commentary. Dr. Harry Loewen.	
<b>PART TEN: Johann Toews 1793-1873.</b> .....	591
Chap 1. Biography. D. F. Plett.	
Chap 2. The Watchful Eye of God.	
Chap 3. Two Poems 1862.	
<b>PART ELEVEN: Heinrich Reimer 1791-1884.</b> .....	613
Chap 1. Family Sketch. D. F. Plett.	
Chap 2. Writings 1864-1875.	
<b>PART TWELVE: Rev. Peter Baerg 1817-1901.</b> .....	647
Chap 1. Biography. D. F. Plett.	
Chap 2. Letters 1867-1869.	

<b>PART THIRTEEN: Aelt. Abraham L. Friesen 1831-1917.</b> . . . . .	673
Chap 1. Biography. Henry N. Fast.	
Chap 2. Sermon Ephesians 6:10-17.	
Chap 3. Sermon 1 Corinthians 15:58.	
<b>PART FOURTEEN: Rev. Gerhard P. Goossen 1832-1872.</b> . . . . .	707
Chap 1. Biography. D. F. Plett.	
Chap 2. Letters 1866-1870.	
<b>PART FIVETEEN: Aelt. Jakob A. Wiebe 1836-1921.</b> . . . . .	741
Chap 1. Biography. Dr. Leland Harder.	
Chap 2. Letters 1864-1869.	
Chap 3. Response. D. F. Plett.	
<b>PART SIXTEEN: Aelt. Peter P. Toews 1841-1922.</b> . . . . .	819
Chap 1. Biography. D. F. Plett.	
Chap 2. Five Poems 1859-1865.	
Chap 3. Sermon for Easter 1 Thess. 4:14, 1867.	
Chap 4. Letters 1866-1869.	
Chap 5. The Holdeman Attraction 1882. Dr. Clarence Hiebert.	
<b>Index</b> . . . . .	923

---

## Acknowledgements

Rev. Ben Hoepfner has assisted in the massive task of the primary translation of the sermons and letters published in this book and in the keyboarding of this information onto computer. All students and friends of Russian Mennonite history are very much in his debt for this labour of love. I am grateful to Edie Giesbrecht, Winnipeg, Manitoba, who assisted in proofreading the manuscript and offered many helpful suggestions.

I also acknowledge my indebtedness to Cornelius L. Toews (1891-1982), Steinbach, Manitoba, and Peter A. Plett (1898-1990), Landmark, Manitoba, who were my mentors during the early stages of my work starting in 1978. They gave generously of their time to assist me in the transcription and interpretation of the various documents in the *Kleine Gemeinde Schriftum*.

### **Dedication**

This book is dedicated to Peter P. Toews (1841-1922) of Blumenhoff, Borosenko, South Russia, and later of Gruenfeld, Manitoba, and Swalwell, Alberta, Canada, who served as Aeltester of the Kleine Gemeinde from 1870 to 1882. This book, and indeed, the Kleine Gemeinde Historical Series, were made possible largely by the extensive collection of historical documents gathered together by Peter P. Toews during this time.



**Peter P. Toews (1841-1922)**

Artistic rendering of Peter P. Toews by Henry P. Fehr, Steinbach, Manitoba from an old photograph, as remembered by Mr. and Mrs. Peter R. Wiebe, Steinbach, Manitoba on September 19, 1983.

## Foreword

"What is the price of a man's soul?" The impact which major decisions had on a person's eternal destiny articulated the lives of many individuals within Mennonite congregations in 19th century Russia. For the members of the conservative Kleine Gemeinde (KG) this spirituality was a communal experience so that the religiosity of the whole was also the spirituality of the individual. Therefore, one also asks, "What is the price of a community's soul?" For when the soul is lost, everything is lost. This raises the question, "What articulated and defined the spirituality of the Kleine Gemeinde?"

For the unprejudiced and judicious reader, the answer to these questions and more is found between the covers of this book. Within these pages, and the documents which they set forth, the reader will find an expression of the soul of the KG people; a definition of that which inspired them to persevere in their faith in the face of logic, reason, and frequently, their own apparent self-interest. These sermons, letters and diaries capture the *zeitgeist* of the Mennonite world of 18th century Prussia, which was transplanted to the fertile steppes of Southern Russia, and from there again to Canada and the United States. Here once again new villages--and paradigms--arose from the prairies and gave renewed meaning and life to the dreams which those grandmothers had in their hearts as they choked back tears of farewell, watching the horse-drawn wagon trains of their children and grandchildren leaving villages like Tiegenhagen and Fürstenwerder, not far distant from the mighty Vistula River, as its gurgling, muddied waters flowed onward to the sea and into infinity.

It is appropriate that the largest section in this book is devoted to Klaas Reimer (1770-1837), for within his heart and mind flowed the spirit and genius of Prussian forebears of generations past, giving definition and life to the hopes and dreams of many for a spiritual renewal in the new lands of Southern Russia. Reimer--more than anyone else--stamped the infant reform movement in the Molotschna with his character and being. On reading his sermons one finds their principle teachings are of a genuine discipleship, love for fellowman, and a restitutional faith focused firstly on the apostolic church and, secondly, on the Anabaptist-Mennonite leaders of the Reformation times who, they believed, followed in true succession to the Gemeinden or religious conventicles instituted by their beloved Saviour Jesus Christ.

His successor, Abraham Friesen (1782-1849), articulated the same spirit within the context of an holistic faith which found expression in pro-active social and economic policies. Friesen was quite willing to act assertively in the face of convention, and sometimes directly contrary to the Moloschna establishment, when he reached out to save condemned sinners like Franz Thiessen, or when he passionately counseled the Hutterites regarding community of property. At the same time, his conservative--though enlightened--leadership gained him the respect of colony leaders such as Johann Cornies and government officials like Kontinius and Eugene von Hahn just as the farming prowess of his parishioners gained them the respect--although often grudgingly--of their neighbours within the numerous Molotschna village communities where they lived.

And then there was Heinrich Balzer (1800-1846), the youngest of the "big three." He was a well-educated and intellectual man who obviously delved deeply and introspectively into the meaning of life. He examined questions such as the essence of faith and the meaning of Christain truth and came to see discipleship in terms of "simplicity in Christ." His well-known treatise, "Faith and Reason" was characterized as ". . . the most powerful statement in Mennonite literature" by Dr. Robert Friedmann. Balzer's poetry such as his "Elegy for Klaas Reimer," or the throbbing power of his "Poem of encouragement to the Brethren," gave evocative voice to the spirit of the 18th century Mennonites as seen through the eyes of the KG. In his article, Dr. James Urry--presently the leading expert on the Russian Mennonites--has remarked on the faith of Balzer ". . . for its clarity of vision and appeal to the basic foundations of Mennonite faith." Professor Urry describes Balzer as ". . . an informed, intellectual conservative by choice, rather than a conservative holding onto perceived traditions out of ignorance or stubborn narrow-mindedness."

The years 1850 to 1866 are explored through the lives of Johann F. Friesen (1808-1872) and Heinrich Enns (1801-1881). The careers of the two men span this period: Friesen was elected as Aeltester at the beginning--in 1847, and Enns at the end of the period--at the time of the division of the KG in 1866. Friesen was a seasoned and respected ecclesiastical statesman whose leadership--together with Ohrloff's Johann Harder--resulted in the peaceful resolution of several divisive Molotschna Colony issues such as the "church building" dispute, the "barley" dispute, and the secession of the Mennonite Brethren in 1861. Enns, on the other hand, was more of the zealous reformer and promoter of Anabaptist-Mennonite literature being a principal figure in three publications between 1860 and 1865. Neither one would survive the 1866 division with their reputation's unsullied; in fact, both of their careers were devastated by this event and the disputation which came in its aftermath.

The middle period of the KG is best understood through the lives and writings of five men: Klaas Friesen (1773-1870), Rosenort, Molotschna, was elected as a deacon in 1824 and as a minister in 1838--a position which he served until 1866 when he was removed from office. He was the youngest brother of Aeltester Abraham Friesen (1782-1849) and a co-publisher of the three volume edition of Menno Simons' *Foundation of Christain Doctrine* in 1833-4. Johann Dueck (1801-1866), Muntau, was elected as a minister in 1849 and served in this office until his death. His "Ministerial Journal 1848-1862" provides an intriguing insight into the inner workings of the KG and the functioning of the ministerial relative to discipline and its parishioners in general. Isaac Loewen (1783-1873), Lindenau, was elected as a deacon in 1837 but was removed from this office in 1848 because of lack of deligence regarding one of his son-in-laws who had struck his maid servant. Loewen's writings reveal a devout and pious man who dearly loved his children and particularly his son Heinrich who had left the church and came to a tragic death in 1863. Johann Toews (1793-1873), Fischau, was an introspective and reflective man, sincerely concerned for the well-being and salvation of his children. His memoirs "Das Wachsame Auge Gottes," edited and published after his death by son Peter P. Toews (1841-1922), reveal the intense spirituality of a Molotschna farmer who had spent his boyhood years in the Vistula delta in Prussia. Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) of Muntau, was a dearly beloved Ohm in the Gemeinde--a

pillar of his community. His writings paint a poignant picture of a philosopher-farmer who reflected deeply upon the truths of the Gospel and also tried to relate the same in writings to his children and friends.

An examination of the lives and writings of these Ohms and ministers, as opposed to looking merely the Bishops and Aeltesten, provides a much better picture of the depth of spirituality and religiosity within the KG and what it meant to be "Kleingemeinsch." In one sense these five men and others like them of their generation, represented a vital link between the 17th Century culture they had left behind in Prussia and the old religious order of George Hansen and Hans von Steen, to the younger generation to whom the reins of leadership would devolve during the turbulent 1860s.

The years 1866 to 1874 are explored through the writings of five younger men--all of whom were born well after the turn of the century. They would lead their people out of Russia in 1874-6. Abraham L. Friesen (1831-1917) was the Moses of the American branch of the KG. Through his extensive writing and publication efforts and pro-active stance on many social issues such as the move to Meade, Kansas, he carried on many of the best traditions of his grandfather Aeltester Abraham Friesen (1782-1849). Steinbach historian, Henry N. Fast, has provided a short, yet comprehensive, survey of his life and career. Peter Baerg (1817-1901) was the steadfast and stalwart Lieutenant of Aeltester Peter P. Toews in the Crimea; he remained true to the restitutional vision of the KG through three separate divisions and deserves to be recognized as one of the Fathers of the 6000 member modern-day Evangelical Mennonite Conference in Canada, as well as the 2,000 member "Kleingemeinde" in Belize and Mexico. Little was known about minister Gerhard P. Goossen (1831-1872) until recently, probably because of his untimely death at the age of 41. His translated letters published here for the first time, reveal a man of great spiritual sensitivity and personal warmth. As Peter P. Toews' confidante and right-hand man in the Borosenko settlement northwest of Nikopol, he played a prominent role in salvaging a strong and cohesive Blumenhoff branch of the KG from the disarray of the 1866 division.

Mennonite historians--conditioned by pietist and small "l" liberal understandings of Christain truth in the tradition of Peter M. Friesen and C. Henry Smith--have always lauded Jakob A. Wiebe (1836-1921) for leaving the KG in 1869 and adopting traditional pietist-fundamentalist teachings such as conversion experience, assurance of salvation, immersion baptism and pre-millennialism. The contrary view is that the "new order" Mennonites such as the Brüdergemeinde and Krimmer Mennonite Brethren frequently were organized on a new legalism far more oppressive than the one which they replaced. Newly available KG sources including the rich and abundant *Schriftum* of Peter P. Toews allow for a whole new look as this question. Dr. Leland Harder makes good use of these documents in arguing that Wiebe, perhaps, never intended to depart from traditional conservative Mennonite faith and practice and that he was forced to do because he was rejected by the KG leaders in Borosenko. No doubt this interpretation will draw vigorous criticism. Harder, nevertheless, has made a fine contribution to the historiography of the Mennonites who settled in the plains of Kansas and Nebraska with his well researched and abundantly documented article.

The last five chapters of this work centre around the life and career of Peter P. Toews (1841-1922). Just as Klaas Reimer represented the founding of the KG

and the primary articulation of its restititional vision, so Toews more than anyone else represented the end of the movement in its Russian configuration and theological stance. The biography of Toews provides a fascinating glimpse of a meditative and reflective man who preferred writing poetry to the stress and trauma of leadership. Toews rose, nonetheless, to fulfil the challenge and needs of his community at the most critical time of its history and successfully gathered a Gemeinde of 150 families and orchestrated their immigration from Russia and settlement in Manitoba. The paper of Dr. Clarence Hiebert provides a personal glimpse of the reasons Toews had for leaving the KG in 1882 at a time when his personal prestige was riding high and his leadership of the Manitoba congregations firmly established.

These then are some of the leaders of the KG: Klaas Reimer--the founder, Abraham Friesen--the builder, and Heinrich Balzer--the thinker, Peter P. Toews--poet and historian. Taken together their writings form a powerful body of Christian literature and teaching. When looking at "Kleingemeinde" congregations in Belize and Mexico to this very day, one occasionally wonders what became so deeply ingrained in the psychology of these people that they remained fiercely loyal to its tenets long after the flower and beauty which had blossomed forth with its founding in the Molotschna in 1812 had faded and become but a distant memory? This body of religious writings, more than anything else, provides the answer to this question.

Delbert F. Plett  
March 6, 1993

# PART ONE

## PRUSSIAN AND MOLOTSCHNA BACKGROUND

### Chapter One

### Introduction

An Introduction to the Historiography of the Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde and to Volume Six of the Kleine Gemeinde Historical Series entitled 'Leaders of the Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde in Russia 1812 to 1874', by Dr. John Friesen, Professor of History and Theology, Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3P 0M4

---

#### The Kleine Gemeinde Historical Series.

During the past number of years, Delbert Plett has been making a major contribution to our knowledge of the Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde, and thereby to our knowledge of Russian Mennonite history in general. He has published five books, consisting of both primary and secondary writings. Most of the primary material has consisted of writings by leaders of the Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde during its one hundred and eighty year history. This volume continues that pattern, namely publishing the writings of the leaders during the KG's Russian era. This study is thus not a social history of ordinary people, but a view of the KG church from the standpoint of its leaders. The writings provide glimpses into the everyday life of ordinary people, but it is nevertheless life from the perspective of leaders. The fact that this volume is possible is a tribute to both the extensive literary activity of the KG leaders, and to a community which prized literary productions highly enough that these letters, diaries, sermons, and occasional writings were preserved.

This volume also continues Plett's interest in the issue of interpretation. In his earlier writings Plett argued that Mennonite historians had misinterpreted the KG story and its significance. He contended that the KG literary contributions had been ignored, its community-mindedness had been dismissed as narrow-mindedness, and its vision for a church based on the Anabaptist principles of the 16th century had not been recognized. Plett's writings were designed to correct these misinterpretations. In this volume, Plett's introductions to various people, as well as to the KG's Prussian roots, continues to address issues of interpretation. Although Plett's original reinterpretations of the KG have undergone some refinement, the various articles in this volume show that to a very large extent

Plett's more positive interpretation has been vindicated. As more and more KG writings have come to light, Plett's interpretation of the KG has stood the test.

Plett's work, however, also has an eye toward the future. He is convinced that the KG past can provide direction for the future. Present-day KG people, he feels, too often drink deeply at the wells of evangelical-fundamentalist fountains and thus contaminate the waters of the KG past. Another way to state this concern is to say that the principles which the KG developed while battling pietism in Russia, are being lost under the influence of evangelicalism-fundamentalism in Canada. Plett's writings about the KG are thus a call for renewal and reform based on a proper understanding of the KG past.

### Historiography.

Russian Mennonite historiography did not begin with a negative view of the KG. One of the first Russian historical writers, Franz Isaac, was quite positive in his evaluation of the KG, although he acknowledged that they had a negative reputation in their early days. In his study, *Die Molotschnaer Mennoniten: Ein Beitrag Zur Geschichte Derselben* published in 1908, he discussed the KG in a short section under the heading of church developments.<sup>1</sup> He recognized that the KG had emigrated in the 1870s and that they thus were no longer resident in Russia. He characterized the KG as striving for ethical consistency, organizing their lives around the themes of pacifism and servanthood in Matt. 5:39-41, willing to bear suffering and persecution without complaint, and at first at least, not participating in community elections. Along with the observation that in their early years the KG had a negative reputation among Mennonites in Russia, he noted that they had been unjustly persecuted by the other Mennonite groups.

A much more negative view of the KG was presented by Peter M Friesen. This is the negative view which Plett finds most offensive. Peter M. Friesen characterized the KG as, "too narrow-minded, too frightened, too isolationist, and too opposed to education to make a profound impact."<sup>2</sup> It is curious that alongside these negative evaluations, Friesen included lengthy excerpts from a number of KG documents. These documents actually provided a more balanced view than did his own commentary about the KG.

Subsequent Mennonite historians, in both Europe and North America, tended to perpetuate Friesen's rather than Isaac's interpretation. An example is C.H. Smith's study in 1941. In addition to a number of factual errors, he described Klaas Reimer as, narrow, contentious, and critical, and the KG church as fanatical and excessively emotional.<sup>3</sup> He noted their concern for reform along the lines of historical Anabaptist-Mennonite beliefs, but dismissed these beliefs as secondary to KG identity. Heinrich Goertz in his 1949 study of the Molotschna settlement, characterized the KG as narrow minded and opposed to education.<sup>4</sup> Early Mennonite Brethren writers' views of the KG were illustrated by Heinrich Bekker, a MB leader during the 1860s.<sup>5</sup> His writings predated both Isaac and Friesen. His norm for authenticity was whether the KG conformed to the MB movement. Bekker thus concluded that despite being a renewal movement, the KG did not measure up because they did not emphasize conversion nor assurance of salvation.

Among European Mennonite historians, Anna Brons ignored the KG. The *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, in articles about the KG (1937) and Klaas Reimer (1958), merely stated the basic factual information, and did not characterize them either

negatively nor positively, although both studies by Isaac and Friesen were cited. Non-Mennonite scholars like Ehrt and Klaus, who focused on the economic and social dimensions of the Russian Mennonite settlements, ignored the KG since they paid scant attention to church developments.<sup>6</sup> The various articles in this volume continue the process of interpretation, but in a much broader and more nuanced manner than in previous studies.

### **Introduction to 'Leaders of the Kleine Gemeinde'.**

Harvey Plett's article on the Polish/Prussian background to the KG story is particularly helpful because so little is generally known about the Polish/Prussian Mennonite experience. He points out the church context out of which the KG leaders came, namely from the Flemish Mennonite faction. Since the Flemish were the more conservative of the two major factions, the Flemish and Frisian, this helps to understand the mind-set with which the early KG leaders approached change and renewal.

Plett goes on to discuss the influence of one of the major Flemish Mennonite leaders, Georg Hansen. Hansen, a late eighteenth century Flemish Mennonite leader in Danzig (Gdansk) was one of the first Mennonite leaders in the Polish region to write in German. He thus reinterpreted Menno Simon's theology in the German language in a Polish setting. Plett's contention is that Hansen's theology developed during his defense of the Mennonite cause in the late seventeenth century was influential in the formation of the KG and was used by them up to the twentieth century.

Henry Schapansky continues tracing the Polish/Prussian roots of the KG experience. His article is based on extensive research of the exact congregational origin of the early KG people, as well as of their relative wealth. Very seldom have social and economic contexts been analyzed carefully in Russian Mennonite studies, and therefore this study is of special significance. His general conclusion is that the KG fits into, and attempts to perpetuate, the more traditionalist faction of the Polish/Prussian Mennonite communities in the Vistula-Nogat River regions. He prefers the term traditionalist to conservative, arguing that it is less value laden.

In his article, Adolf Ens begins with a discussion of the church setting in the Polish/Prussian context, and then goes on to discuss the changes which the Mennonite groups experienced in New Russia. His focus is on the establishment of church organizations in both the Chortitza and Molotschna settlements, and their relationship to the civil organizations which Mennonites were required by the Russian government to organize. As Ens points out, the existence of two structures in the Mennonite communities in Russian, civil and church, meant that the role of the church was significantly redefined from what it had been in Prussia.

Klaas Reimer's critique of the Molotschna Mennonite church was that it was being redefined in a way that was inconsistent with historical Anabaptist-Mennonite principles. Ens's article points out that throughout his life, Reimer exhibited a considerable ambivalence to the larger Molotschna church structures. On the one hand he rejected the direction of their developments, and on the other he constantly sought their approval and confirmation of his role as leader, and thus their validation of his church's existence.

Delbert Plett's article of the Prussian roots of the KG uses family origins as

the base. Using the 1776 census (Konsignation) of Mennonites in the West Prussian territories, and with the help of various church books and genealogical studies, he identifies those families who have some connection with the KG history. With this method he is able to establish the Prussian churches from which the KG families originated, those families' relative wealth, the geographical area from which they came, how they were interrelated through, and the importance of, matrilineal connections. As Plett notes, this study raises the question whether there were shared experiences by the forerunners of the KG which predisposed them to join together to form a reform church? Plett's study pulls together a large amount of detailed family information.

Royden Loewen's article turns the reader's attention to the Molotschna background to the KG. He begins his study with an analysis of the economic developments in the Molotschna settlement, and then continues with the Borosenko settlement. He places these developments within the larger economic changes which were transforming agriculture in Russia in the 19th century. He develops the thesis that although the KG, who were primarily farmers, were caught up in the change to export-driven capitalist farming, they nevertheless managed to maintain traditional household economic units. The traditional and the new economic patterns existed side by side in the KG experience. A most fascinating aspect of Loewen's study is his use of a number of very detailed diaries (Tagebücher) by KG people who recorded their entries in the middle of the nineteenth century. These sources provide his article with the kind of immediacy that a general analysis cannot accomplish.

The last chapter in the introductory section is a theological discussion of the theology of the KG. Archie Penner addresses one of the questions which lay at the heart of Delbert Plett's original foray into KG research, namely, were the KG reformers Anabaptist in their theology? Despite the tantalizing nature of this question, Penner's analysis of ten KG sermons is the first serious study this issue. The sermons which Penner analyses were all written by leaders during the first fifty three years of the KG history. He studies both the sources they used, as well as the content of their theology. In regards to sources, he discovered that they relied heavily on the writings of Menno Simons and Dirk Philips, thus confirming their knowledge of sixteenth century Anabaptism. In regards to content, he analyses their view of some of the classical Christian theological categories, namely Christology, atonement, salvation, faith and works. He concludes that the sermons reflect a view of these issues which is quite consistent with the views of sixteenth century Anabaptists. In particular, he argues that the KG ministers' belief in discipleship caused them to revise the classical theological views in a direction that was similar to what the sixteenth century Anabaptists did.

## **Conclusion.**

These six studies at the beginning of this volume provide a good setting for the subsequent material in the book. They also break new ground and will hopefully inspire further research in these areas. The subsequent sections in the book deal with individual leaders and their writings. The writings of fifteen leaders are included, each one accompanied by a biographical article. The biographical articles usually also provide helpful interpretation of the person's writings, his context, and of his significance. The list of leaders extends from Klaas Reimer, the

founder of the KG, to Jakob A. Wiebe and Peter P. Toews, two people who had the distinction of each leading a split in the KG, and of making the transition from Russia to North America; Toews to Manitoba and Wiebe to Kansas. Leland Harder discusses Wiebe's life and reasons for leaving the KG to form the Krimmer Mennoniten Brüdergemeinde, and Clarence Hiebert concludes the book with an analysis of the reasons why Peter P. Toews was attracted to John Holdeman.

#### **Endnotes: Introduction.**

1. Franz Isaac, *Die Molotschnaer Mennoniten: Ein Beitrag Zur Geschichte Derselben* (Taurien, Russia: Halbstadt: Kommissionsverlag und Druck von H. J. Braun, 1908), 91-92.

2. Peter M. Friesen, *The Mennonite Brotherhood in Russia (1789-1910)* translated from the German (Fresno, California: General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, 1978), 93.

3. C. Henry Smith, *The Story of the Mennonites* (Berne, Indiana: Mennonite Book Concern, 1941), 422-425.

4. H. Goertz, *Die Molotschnaer Ansiedlung: Entstehung, Entwicklung und Untergang* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: Echo Verlag, 1949/50), 57.

5. Jakob P. Bekker, *Origin of the Mennonite Brethren Church*. English Trans. by D. E. Pauls and A. E. Janzen (Hillsboro, Kan.: The Mennonite Brethren Historical Society of the Midwest, 1973), 18.

6. Adolf Ehrh, *Das Mennonitentum in Russland von Seiner Einwanderung Bis Zur Gegenwart* (Berlin-Leipzig, Germany: Verlag von Julius Beltz, 1932); A. Klaus, *Unsere Kolonien: Studien und Materialien Zur Gecschichte und Statistik Der Auslaendischen Kolonisten in Russland*. Aus dem Russischen uebersetzt (Odessa, Russia: Verlag der 'Odessaer Zeitung,' 1887)

# Chapter Two

## George Hansen 1636-1703

**A Biography of Aeltester George Hansen (1636-1703): A Polish Flemish Mennonite Leader.** By Dr. Harvey G. Plett, Box 1420, Steinbach Bible College, Steinbach, Manitoba, R0A 2A0, 1992.

---

### Introduction.

Just prior to the middle of the sixteenth century, Mennonites from the Netherlands and northern Germany moved to Poland.<sup>1</sup> The move to Poland was occasioned by two reasons. First, they found escape from religious persecution by migrating to Poland. Poland was the only country that had religious toleration during the sixteenth century. As a result many Mennonites, especially from the Netherlands where persecution was intense during 1550s and 1560s, found their way to the country of freedom.

A second reason for migrating to Poland was economic opportunity. The Mennonites settled in the urban center of Danzig where they engaged in the textile industry, brewery business as well as running small stores. Many Mennonites also settled in the rural agricultural lowlands of the Vistula Delta. Landholders were happy to employ Mennonites for land reclamation for much of the lowlands, which is six to ten feet below sea level, lay under water due to allowing the drainage system to fall into disrepair. The expertise of the Dutch farmers in building drainage canals, windmills and working the land made them desired tenants.

The Polish Mennonites maintained close connections with the Dutch Mennonites.<sup>2</sup> As a result when a split occurred in the Netherlands it was exported to Poland. One such major split was Frisian-Flemish division. The Frisian group by and large may be described as more liberal while the Flemish group, the larger of the two groups, was more conservative. The Mennonite *Kleine Gemeinde* later known as the Evangelical Mennonite Conference has its roots in the Flemish group. Georg Hansen, the subject of this chapter, was a key church leader in the Danzig Flemish Mennonite church during the latter half of the seventeenth century.<sup>3</sup> His teachings, which have been well preserved in his writings, have influenced the thinking of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference

### Background and Career.

George Hansen was born in in 1636.<sup>4</sup> One may assume his birth-place was Danzig though the first recorded evidence of a Hansen in the Flemish Danzig church is 1657. It is also most probable that Hansen's family, probably not of Dutch or German origin, joined the Mennonite church either in the Netherlands or northern Germany. It is possible they were of Scandinavian origin.

The few definite facts we know about Hansen are his date of death, 1703,

his election as minister and deacon, 1665, and elder in 1690. We know that he wrote his *Ein Glaubens-Bericht fuer die Jugend* in 1671. This was followed by a short confession of faith in 1678. The shorter Confession was submitted to Bishop Sarnowski who was investigating the orthodoxy of the Mennonites. In 1678 he wrote an expanded version of his answers to the interrogation he had been subjected to in 1678. *Erforscher der Wahrheit* was written in 1680. His final work entitled *Spiegel des Lebens* was written in 1699. In addition, one of his letters has been preserved. There were other materials written by him which have not been located to date.<sup>5</sup> It is also most probable that he carried on a more prolific correspondence than only one letter. No information is available to date about his marital status, family if any, or parental lineage. Grudgingly we leave those questions unanswered hoping that as the various libraries are being searched for documents concerning the Mennonites some more information will be found.

Many people are not aware that the Mennonites lived under Polish rule longer than under Prussian rule. When the last vestige of Poland disappeared with the final partition in 1792, the migrations to Russia were in full swing. Mennonites had lived in Poland for 250 years before the German Prussians annexed the Vistula Delta region. In comparison the Mennonites lived under Prussian rule for some 150 years, 1792-1945.

The distortion that the Prussian rule was the Golden Era for the Mennonites in Poland needs modification.<sup>6</sup> During the long Polish rule Mennonites were tolerated and usually protected. When the Danzig merchants wanted to get rid of them the town council or rural representatives came to their defence. When the land estates wanted the Mennonites banished the Church landholders came to their rescue. The Mennonites were required to pay for their stay and freedom with extra levies but they were never persecuted, that is arrested, jailed, executed, or banished by a Polish Monarch. The Mennonites could have their own schools, their own church services, and live according to their understanding of Scripture. True they were always in an ambivalent situation because they were not granted citizenship because of their refusal to swear the oath of allegiance. In addition, they were frequently levied special fees due to the fact that they were foreigners. There seems to have been a love-hate relationship going.

In 1665, the Danzig Flemish Mennonite Church was in need of a deacon and so proceeded to elect one from their own brethren as was customary. Georg Hansen, being 28 years of age, was elected deacon on March 16, 1665.<sup>7</sup> It was only three months later when there was need to elect a minister. Again the church followed their custom of electing ministers from the candidates which were always deacons. On June 29, 1665, Hansen was elected minister. Since a minister was always elected from the deacons it was necessary to have enough deacons. Also the one elected minister would have to be replaced. And so often a deacon election preceded the minister election. At times these elections, depending on the circumstances, were separated by a lengthy time span while at other times the two elections were conducted at the same meeting.

In March, 1690 the Flemish elder Dunkel died. Consequently a new elder had to be elected. Whereas ministers were elected from the deacons, elders were elected from the ministers. Hansen was elected elder in August of the same year though his ordination took place in November. The church was without an elder for some four and a half months and an unordained elder for some three more

months. At the time of election Hansen was 54 years of age. Since the elder whom Hansen was replacing was already dead, a guest elder Niefeld officiated at the ordination service. Hansen served as elder for nearly 13 years. He died in office in January, 1703. During Hansen's tenure as elder they elected a co-elder in 1694. The reasons for this are not clear but it may be due to the heavy work load. The ministerial brethren all served without remuneration and so at times it appears it was decided to have co-elders.

### Leadership.

Hansen was a shoemaker and in this capacity was well suited for the task. It is known that many leaders for social reform, whether as a revolutionary or peaceful person, in the 16th and 17th centuries were articulate craftsmen, including cobblers.<sup>8</sup> Thus Hansen stands in a tradition of leadership.

Georg Hansen was a very active and successful leader. Not only did he preach but he also wrote a number of lengthy books. This very literate man forces us to ask, "Where did he obtain the learning? How did he become so literate?" The answer lies in two directions. First, it is quite obvious that he had considerable person abilities that he used well. He had a keen mind which he used under God to articulate and successfully defend the faith of himself and the church.

Secondly, he received some schooling some place. He must have attended the Mennonite school where he grew up. The evidence is beyond dispute that one of the first things Mennonites did when they moved to a new area was build a church which usually doubled as a school.<sup>9</sup> Mennonite interest in schooling was a logical development of their insistence on believer's baptism. A baptismal candidate would have to know the catechism and the Bible since candidates were taught and examined prior to baptism. This naturally required ability to read which in turn resulted in a strong emphasis on schooling. That reading was a common ability of both men and women as well as young and old is evidenced by the fact that Hansen wrote a German statement of faith to meet the need of the young people who by then could read the German better than the Dutch.<sup>10</sup> That women in the Mennonite churches could read is clearly indicated by Menno Simon's letters to a widow in Poland in 1549, the wife of Leonard Bowens 1553, and a letter of comfort to the wife of Ein Edes in 1557.<sup>11</sup> Interest and support of education among the Polish Mennonites is further illustrated by the Mennonite boys attending the non-Mennonite Elbing Gymnasium as early as 1600 and as young as 6 years old.<sup>12</sup> Some of these boys were from Danzig. At times boys were sent to the Netherlands to obtain a better education.

Hansen was well read. In addition to the Bible, one can identify at least 34 books that Georg refers to with knowledgablness in his *Antwort zum Erforscher*.<sup>13</sup> Among these books are five hymnals, the writings of Mennon Simons and Dirk Philips, the *Martyrs' Mirror*, the writings of Peter Twisck and *Die Wandelende Seele*. In addition, Hansen refers to books which Mennonites had written disputing issues among themselves and warned against reading them. He advised his readers not read such books as Obbe Philips' tract and *Das bekuemerte Herz*. Georg's familiarity with these many books gives us a clue as to the source of his thinking as well as to the depth and breadth of his knowledge.

A futher clue to the influence and ability of Hansen is seen in the nine books and letters he wrote himself. As noted above we know only of one of his

letters, in all likelihood he wrote many more. As one reads Hansen's writings one cannot but be impressed at his biblical knowledge. He quotes the Bible profusely in such writings as *Glaubensbericht*, *Spiegel des Lebens*, and *Antwort zum Erforscher*. Not only is the Bible quoted but he uses it to establish his position on various issues. This is well illustrated by his argument for baptism by pouring. Among other points he argues that water was handled at Cornelius' baptism and therefore it could not have been immersion. This is also an indication of his hermeneutics and biblicism. Hansen sought to follow the Bible.

By 1671 the Mennonites had been in Poland for over a century. Despite their isolation from the rest of society, both by design as well as by the society, acculturation was taking place. One of the signs of this acculturation was the fact that by 1670 most of the young people could read German better than Dutch. The Mennonites had come with a Dutch language. The areas they moved into, though under Polish rule, was largely German speaking. This language shift, so well known to the various migrating Mennonite groups, created its unique problems. One of these problems is that of teaching the faith. In which language will you do it? The mother tongue or the newly acquired language. As has happened in Canada with the acceptance of English, so the acceptance of High German and Low German among the Mennonites in Poland was well under way by the second half of the 17th century.

As a result of the language shift the request for a German statement of faith was gaining momentum. Hansen, though not the bishop, took it upon himself to write a Confession of Faith to meet that need. The result was his 1671, *Ein Glaubens Bericht fuer die Jugend*. The Confession contains 22 articles covering all the key doctrines held by evangelicals generally but he also focuses on the Anabaptist emphases such as: the Church, ministers in the Church, baptism, communion, footwashing, the ban, separation from the world as well as State, no swearing of oaths, the free will of man, and Christ's coming. Quoting many Scriptures he elaborates the 22 articles in some 318 pages. His theology is essentially the same as what we find in Mennon Simons and Dirk Philips.

The *Glaubens Bericht* served as book for instructing people in the faith for over a century. This speaks of the thoroughness of the writing. Any brief parousal of the Confession will support the extensive coverage found in it. It is of interest to note that Hansen's writings were taken along to Russia and later to Canada and the United States. Hansen's writings were brought along by EMC forbearers. Klaas J. B. Reimer, a member of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference and descendant of founder Klaas Reimer, donated a copy of Hansen's *Fundamentbuch* to the Steinbach Bible College. Hansen's statement of faith was printed in Cuauhtemoc, Mexico as late as 1963 when elder Johann Friesen from Reinland, Manitoba, requested that a copy be published. This strongly suggests that the theology of several of the Mennonite groups now living in North America have been significantly influenced by Hansen's material.

### 1678 Interogation.

In 1678, the Catholic Bishop of Danzig with the blessing of the king invited representatives from the Flemish and Frisian churches to appear before him and a panel of theologians to explain their faith.<sup>14</sup> Each group was given a set of questions. The Flemish received 48 questions while the Frisians received 40. The

reason for this interrogation seems to have been the fact the Mennonites had had some contact with the anti-trinitarian pacifist Socinians. The Socinians had made very direct advances to the Polish Mennonites, especially the Frisians, hoping to amalgamate with them.<sup>15</sup> Due to theological differences and disparate social class the proposed union never materialized. Then in 1658 the Socinians were expelled from Poland. This connection was not forgotten and so those opposing the Mennonite economic competition charged the Mennonites with the Socinian heresy.

In preparation for the interrogation Hansen wrote a short confession of faith so that the catholic leaders could examine the Flemish faith. In addition he wrote brief answers to the 48 questions. Later these answers were enlarged and published with the briefer statement and answers under the title *Fundamentbuch*. Hansen was not the elder but appears to have been the more articulate. He was given the task not only of writing the answers but also leading the defence at the hearing. Elder Dunkel signed the statement of faith indicating that it had official Flemish sanction. Hansen as writer and spokesman signed it as well.

On January 20, 1768, almost to the date, 243 years after the founding of the Anabaptist movement in Zurich, Hansen stood before king and bishop defending the faith that had cost many their life. Hansen handled the situation well. He was courteous, diplomatic, and forthright. In answer to the question, "Do you recognize the pope?" He answered we leave the pope his value. When the interrogation was finally finished, the Flemish were declared as not being heretical. However, they were again required to pay a sum of money to remain in Poland. This payment was not considered a bribe to be declared free of heresy but rather a tax on foreigners. Hansen at the end of his report about the interrogation says,

As a result of the examination we were fully exonerated from all suspicion. However it cost a large sum of money again. It was hard to raise the amount but God helped us do it.<sup>16</sup>

### **The Ban, Erich Seeman.**

One of the teachings of the Flemish church as well as other Mennonite bodies was the teaching about the ban or excommunication. There is one incident during Hansen's eldership that created some tension. It was the excommunication of Erich Seeman.<sup>17</sup> Seeman was a painter in the employ of the city of Danzig, 1683-1698. He had been able to obtain permission to paint without joining the Painters Guild. The permission was for painting portraits. Hansen was opposed to painting portraits largely on the basis of the second commandment which forbids making any images. Consequently he encouraged Seeman rather to paint landscapes.

Seeman responded favorably and began painting landscapes only to find that the Guild opposed this and gave him opposition. He also noted that the various Mennonite shops had a variety of painted signs advertising their wares. When Hansen approached Seeman concerning his return to painting portraits, Seeman responded that as soon as the various shop signs would be removed he would stop painting portraits. The signs did not come down and neither did Seeman stop portrait painting. Hansen, with the backing of the church, put Seeman under the ban. Seeman protested but to no avail. As a result, Seeman moved to Warsaw

pursuing his skill there until 1704 when he moved to London, England, where he ultimately died. Of the seven children born to the Seemans only the names of two appear in the Danzig church records. As happens again and again, by the mid-eighteenth century portrait painting was no longer an issue. A pastel drawing of Danzig Flemish elder Hans von Steen has been found, dating from mid-eighteenth century. This is, of course, the nature of things as one lives in a dynamic culture.

### High View of Scripture.

Anabaptists/Mennonites hold to a high view of Scripture. It is their goal to follow the teachings and precepts of Holy Writ as closely as possible. Hansen was no different in this. However, as one reads his *Glaubens Bericht* one is quickly made aware that Hansen was very familiar with the Old Testament Apocrypha. He quotes them as supporting data for points of faith just as he cites Biblical texts. However, when he refers to the canon he says only those books are canonical that are ordinarily accepted but fails to list those books. The position on the Apocrypha is not clear. Hansen certainly followed the principle that the Apocrypha is helpful literature. The evidence could easily be interpreted that he accepted them as authoritative as the other Scriptures. Certainly his use and free citing of them without any indication that they are of less authority leaves it open to conjecture.

### Conclusion.

Georg Hansen, Flemish church leader, left his mark on the Danzig Flemish Church during the last half of the seventeenth century. His leadership was effective both within the church as well as to those outside. His theology stands in close continuity of Menno Simons, Dirk Philips and other early Anabaptists. His writings perpetuated those doctrines and left a goodly heritage for the years to come. His writings have been used until the latter half of the twentieth century. This is a good witness to the effectiveness and enduring quality of his writings. Many of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference teachings find expression in what Hansen taught. There is evidence that our forefathers did use his writings. We have our faith today, thanks to the efforts of men such as Georg Hansen.

### Endnotes. George Hansen 1636-1703.

1. Horst Penner, *Ansiedlung Mennonitischer Niederländer in Weichsellmündungsgebiet von der Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts bis zum Beginn der preussischen Zeit* (Mennonitischer Geschichts Verein, 1940), 5-17; Herbert Wiebe, *Das Siedlungswerk niederländischer Mennoniten im Weichselltal zwischen Fordon und Wissenberg bis zum Ausgang des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Wissenschaftliche Beiträge zur Geschichte und Landeskunde Ost-Mitteleuropas, no. 3 (Marburg a.d. Lahn: Gottfried Herder-Institut, 1952), 3-4.

2. This close connection is evidenced by the correspondence between the Polish and Dutch Mennonites. See *Inventaris der Archiefstukken Berustende by de Vereendige Doopsgezinde Gemeente Te Amsterdam*, Items A-1552 to A-1570, Items B-2925 to B-2941, Items C-693, C-694, C-698 to C-701.

3. Harvey G. Plett, "Georg Hansen and The Flemish Danzig Mennonite Church: A Study in Continuity" (University of Manitoba, unpublished doctoral thesis, 1991), 394 pages.

4. Most of the personal information about Hansen is based on Harvey Plett's thesis.

5. Herman G. Mannhardt *Die Danziger Mennonitengemeinde* (Danzig: Selbst Verlag, 1919),

6. John Friesen, "Mennonites in Poland: An Expanded Historical View," *Journal of Mennonite Studies*, 4 (1986), 95-108.
7. For the elections of Hansen see the Danzig Church records. Microfilm copies are available at the Mennonite Heritage Center, 800 Shaftesbury Boulevard, Winnipeg, Manitoba.
8. Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels* (Manchester: University Press, 1959), 108-125.
9. Wiebe, *Siedlungswerk*, 10-13.
10. Hansen, *Glaubensbericht*, 1-2, 160.
11. Simons, *Complete Writings*, 1028-1029; 1038-1040; 1052-1054.
12. Kurt Kauenhoven, "Mennonitensoehne auf dem Gymnasium in Elbing, 1600-1784," *Mennonitische Geschichtsblaetter*, 18 (1961): 17-19.
13. Hansen, *Antwort zum Erforscher*, 125-128.
14. Georg Hansen, *Interrog. Trif Mennonisten soman Clarchen nennet Beantwortet von Georgen Hansen Ihren Vermahner 20 Jan. in 1678*, MS 694, Biblioteka Gedanska, 373-374.
15. *Inventaris*, B-2928, B-2932.
16. Mannhardt, *Danzig Mennonitengemeinde*, 78.
17. For a discussion on the Seeman case, see Harvey G. Plett, Doctoral thesis, 213-218.

# Chapter Three

## Prussian Emigrants 1788-1840

**A Survey of the background of the Prussian Emigrants 1788 to 1840 relative to the Divisions in the Russian Mennonite Community and particularly in the Molotschna Colony.** By Henry Schapansky, 914 Chilliwack Street, New Westminster, B. C., V3L 4V5, 1993.

---

### **Introduction: Terminology.**

In a paper published in 1989, Dr. John Friesen has categorized the Russian Mennonites of 1820-1850 as ideologically "progressive" or "conservative" (conservers).<sup>1</sup> In the progressive division, we find most members of the Ohrloff, Alexanderwohl and Rudnerweide Gemeinden. In the conservative group, we find the majority of the Molotschna Mennonites, and almost all of the Old Colony or Chortitza Mennonites, including the Berghthaler Gemeinde.

I do not like the term "progressive" and "conservative" as they can have a prejudicial connotation. In my view, the Russian Mennonites of 1820-1850, as in previous and subsequent periods, were again faced with the major issue of their relationship with the society around them. The traditionalist view, held by the majority group, was that worldliness was an evil, and that integration and assimilation in the society around them involved a surrender of the fundamental religious beliefs (and to a much lesser of their cultural beliefs) on which their lives were based.

This view has been held by almost all the Mennonite groups from 1550 to 1750 and was an integral part of true Christianity, involving implicitness, humility, honest and plain dealing and piety. Worldliness and true Christianity were thought to be incompatible, and this view has survived well into the twentieth century. In this context, seemingly petty disputes involving style of dress and the decoration of wagons have philosophical and religious significance. Needless to say, in matters such as education and politics, much stronger and more well defined guidelines had developed. The traditionalists therefore regarded education as necessary, but too much education and sophistication as likely to lead to assimilation and to a disregard for their fundamental anabaptist beliefs. The holding of government offices and involvement in political affairs was also an evil to be avoided.

During the 1700s, some relaxation in the attitude towards the world developed among the Mennonite merchants and tradesmen of Danzig and Elbing. This was to lead to a complete split in the Danzig and Elbing congregations after 1800, and after this period, despite the apparent leadership of the urbane and sophisticated city Mennonites in questions of academic interest, the real leadership in spiritual matters passed to the "land" and emigrants Mennonites.<sup>2</sup> After a time, the Russian Mennonites no longer really regarded the Prussian Mennonites as true Mennonites, particularly after the emigration of the more conservative (and mainly "land") Mennonites, to America as well as to Russian in the nineteenth century.

### Non-traditionalists.

In Russia too, the breaking away of the traditional Mennonite beliefs also developed somewhat parallel to the West Prussian experience. The Russian non-traditionalists had no particular qualms with the idea of integration and assimilation into Russian society. They later had an aggressive approach to missionary work among non-Mennonites, and were generally disposed to learn Russian and work with Russian officials. Bernhard Fast, a minister of the Ohrloff Gemeinde wrote several patriotic poems including poems praising the Tzar. Johann Cornies, the well known head of the Agricultural Society, worked closely with the Russian government, and was, incidentally, a member of the Ohrloff Gemeinde.

Heinrich Hesse, a Gebietschreiber of the Old Colony, and a one time colleague of Cornies, became fluent in Russian and had many friends in the Russian gentry. Coincidentally, both Cornies and Hesse were widely disliked and very unpopular in the Old Colony and among many of the Molotschna Mennonites.<sup>3</sup> They were both authoritarian and had no respect for the democratic nature of the traditionalist Mennonite community. Hesse, in particular, was critical of the Old Colony Oberschulz Jacob Bartsch for his democratic ways, "Rechtspflege", and stated "Ein Jeder will sich lieber seine echte Freiheit wahren, als dass er Dienst nimmt . . ." It should be remembered that Hesse was of Lutheran background and fled to Russian in 1808 to escape conscription by the French. He married into a Mennonite family, but did not share many of the traditionalist Mennonite beliefs. Curiously untraditional was his fervent Russian nationalism and his attitude during the Crimean War: "Konnte nur bis unsere Kavallerie zum Einhauen kommen! . . . Ich mochte doch wissen, was eure spitzen Demokraten in der Stadt zu meinen Versen sage wurden."

From the non-traditionalist group was to arise the Brüdergemeinde. The division of the Russian Mennonites into Kirchliche and Brüdergemeinde was to have devastating and long lasting effects on the Russian Mennonites.

John Friesen categorizes yet a third ideological group, the Kleine Gemeinde (KG). Although the KG was indeed independent in almost every respect from the other churches in Russia, and at times supported the Ohrloff Gemeinde, I believe nevertheless, that they were only a branch of the traditionalist group. They differed only in the firmness to which they held to the idea of no compromise with the world. The majority of the traditionalist group did reluctantly admit some form of compromise, in practical situations, and in various contexts.

### The Traditionalists.

The traditionalist group has not fared well in the literature (unjustly so in my opinion). Several obvious reasons for this come to mind. They of course did not leave much behind in the way of written material. And the Russian bureaucracy would naturally favour the assimilationists, and did in fact, interfere in the organization of the traditionalist group, removing leaders, and dividing and weakening its jurisdiction. The proselyting and aggressive approach of the non-traditionalist group naturally extended to their writing, and the works of Peter M. Friesen, Franz Isaac, Bernhard Fast, etc., only paint a very negative picture of the traditionalist group.

The majority traditionalist group suffered great losses in nineteenth century Russia. Perhaps the most significant one was the loss of the strongest "conserver"

sections through emigration to America in the 1870s. Weakening of the traditionalist beliefs with the gradual accumulation of wealth and increasing material prosperity, together with one concession after another, discredited the traditionalist group in the eyes of the progressive group.

Yet, another reason the traditionalist group has not had a favourable press is that, by now, we are all non-traditionalists and fairly well integrated into our respective societies. To a great extent, we have lost touch with our traditionalist ancestors, so that very few writers even today examine seriously the beliefs and attitudes of the traditionalist group.

### **Reasons for the Division.**

An interesting question and the focus of this essay is how and why the Russian Mennonites came to be divided into traditionalist and non-traditionalist groupings, and how this split may have paralleled the West Prussian experience. There are several *a priori* possibilities. One idea is that the immigrant Mennonites were already divided into these groupings before they arrived in Russia. Another is that this split arose from the Flemish-Frisian division which had occurred shortly after the founding of the Anabaptist movement and which solidified in West Prussia in the 1600s and 1700s. Yet a further possibility is that the split may have arisen from the differences between rural and city Mennonites in West Prussia, or from differences between the Delta and Valley (Vistula) Mennonites.

For all these possibilities, there is some evidence that each contributed to the division of the Russian Mennonites. That this split began to take place very early in the period of Russian settlement and was solidified with the founding of the Brüdergemeinde in the 1860s leads us to seriously examine the West Prussian origin of this division.

We have some knowledge of the origins of the Mennonites who emigrated to Russia before 1815.<sup>4</sup> The vast majority of these immigrants came from the central Gross-Werder Flemish Gemeinden of Tiegenhagen, Rosenort, Ladekopp, Fuerstenwerder (Bärwald), and Heubuden, from the Flemish Elbing-Ellerwald Gemeinde, and from the Flemish Danzig Gemeinde (mostly from the subdivision known as the Danzig "Land Gemeinde"). Only a very few of these immigrants came from the Frisian Gemeinden of Orloffersfeld, Thiensdorf, Tragheimersweide, Montau and Danzig. In the Old Colony there was an identifiable Frisian group composed mainly of Lithuanian Frisian Mennonites, and a group from the Tragheimersweide Gemeinde. Other than these groups, all the other Frisian immigrants can be viewed as isolated cases. Our information on the individuals and groups who emigrated after 1815 is much less precise, although the information available suggests that the majority of these Mennonites were now from Frisian Gemeinden.

### **Influence of time of Emigration.**

Although each of the above divisions in the West Prussian Mennonites contributed in some way to the division of the Russian Mennonites described above, one very key factor seems to have been largely ignored by historians. And that is the enormous impact on the thinking of all Western Europeans, West Prussian Mennonites included, of the Napoleonic era and war period (and of course of the ideas of the French Revolution).

The majority of the traditionalists had already immigrated to Russia before the devastating years 1806-1807. The Old Colony Mennonites had immigrated to Russia even before the outbreak of the French Revolution. In southern Russia, they were almost totally isolated from the European wars and the revolutionary ideas of the period.

The Mennonites left behind, on the other hand, were totally affected by the wars. We need only look in the West Prussian church books to observe the tremendous increase in death in 1807 (due to illness, malnourishment and not necessarily direct casualties).<sup>5</sup> The effects of the war on the Flemish Danzig Gemeinde are documented in Hermann G. Mannhardt's work.<sup>6</sup> The Heubuden Gemeinde, for instance, cancelled the annual baptismal services in 1807 (usually an important event in the church year). The West Prussian Mennonites were profoundly shaken by the war. During and after the war, we see an increased rate of assimilation into Prussian and German society. It follows without a great deal of additional comment that the Mennonites who immigrated to Russia after 1815 were in many respects very different than pre-war immigrants.

In addition, of course, most of the strongly traditionalist Mennonites had already left West Prussia prior to 1806. They went to Russia in the expectation and hope of preserving their beliefs and culture. Those that remained in Prussia may have been more comfortable with the thought of integration into Prussian society.

Two of the three non-traditionalist Gemeinden immigrated *en masse* to Russia in the years 1819-1821, namely the Rudnerweide Gemeinde and the Alexanderwohl Gemeinde. It is interesting that both of these were basically Frisian Gemeinden. The Rudnerweide Gemeinde derived its name from a village of the Tragheimersweide Gemeinde, which was Frisian, but a number of the members of this Gemeinde were also from other Frisian Gemeinden, notably from the Frisian Gemeinde of Montau. The Alexanderwohl Gemeinde was composed of members of the Przechowko (Wintersdorf) Gemeinde who were classified as "Old Flemish" and regarded as a particular group, but who socially and ideologically were very closed to their Frisian neighbours. Most of the surnames in this Gemeinde (except possibly Ratzlaff and Pankratz) are found extensively in all the other Frisian Gemeinden. It is also interesting that these two Gemeinden were Valley as opposed to Delta Mennonites. There is considerable evidence that Valley Mennonites were much more Germanified than their Delta counterparts.<sup>7</sup>

Many of the leaders of the Brüdergemeinde, including Johann Klassen, were from families who came to Russia after 1815, as were leaders of other peculiar groups, including Nicholas (Klaas) Epp who lead a group into Central Asia to await the second coming of Christ.

One has the impression that most of the non-traditionalists were from Frisian backgrounds. It is clear from data available that many Frisian Mennonites immigrated to Russia after 1815. Those that came before 1815 seem to have integrated quite well into the traditionalist group. Many members of the Bergthaler Gemeinde, a conservative traditionalist group came from the Frisian Gemeinde of Kronsweide in the Old Colony.

In West Prussia, however, the melding of Frisian and Flemish churches, especially after the war, had an accelerating influence on the assimilation of the Mennonites. If we take the Danzig Flemish Gemeinde for instance, which totally united with the Frisian Gemeinde at Neugarten after the war, we see that it was

the bequest of the widow Flugge (Eliesabeth Ekker, formerly Mrs. Bestvater) which led to the establishment of a paid ministry at Danzig, and coincidentally to the complete break of the Danzig Land Gemeinde from the City Gemeinde (The Bestvaters were previously members of the Frisian Gemeinde).

At the same time, a very large percentage of Danzig Frisian and Orloffersfelde Gemeinden were of middle class or of wealthy status as documented in the census list of 1776 and in Hermann G. Mannhardt. The Frisian Gemeinden generally were much more non-traditionalist than the Flemish Gemeinden, throughout the 18th century although this view is perhaps not yet fully accepted. Of the Delta Mennonites, a review of the census list of 1776 shows that Frisian Mennonites, although a minority, were much wealthier on a per capita basis than their Flemish neighbours (in cases where the record keeper thought there could be some doubt as to the church affiliation he put "ORL." after the village). The various Bauernverzeichnissen collected by Dr. Horst Penner likewise reveals a larger portion to be land-holding Frisians than would be expected from their numbers in the total Mennonite population.<sup>8</sup>

### Conclusion.

Although it is unwise to make extensive generalization, it is nevertheless clear to me that the split into traditionalist and non-traditionalist groups in Russia received its major impetus from the immigrants who came to Russia after 1815 and that a large percentage of these were from Frisian backgrounds.

If this analysis is correct, that the Mennonites who settled in Russia before 1815 had a common cultural and spiritual background which would tend to unite rather than divide them, we need to discover how the KG came to be formed and why this split came about before the later immigrations after 1815.

In my view, it is a question of leadership. Some of the leaders of the KG, notably Klaas Reimer and Kornelius Janzen had come from the Danzig Land Gemeinde (the Neunhuben Gemeinde) and had seen the signs of changes in the traditionalist beliefs at first hand in the city Gemeinde. They were, therefore, more disposed to defend the traditionalist view and to be alert for signs of changes.<sup>9</sup> Of the Chortitzer leadership, David Epp also came from the Danzig region, and seems to have adopted a similar position to Klaas Reimer, although he died in 1802, and his influence was therefore limited. David Epp became embroiled in a conflict with the Hoepfner group, although details of this conflict are sketchy. Jacob Hoepfner and some of his colleagues appear to have taken a "progressive" non-traditionalist approach to settlement, which was opposed by the Lehrdienst. In later years, the Hoepfner group was portrayed as a heroic group, whereas the Lehrdienst was portrayed as backwards and regressive.

The early spiritual leaders in the Molotschna did not have this background and were therefore more complacent and less concerned with the safeguarding of the Mennonite heritage. In fact, the first Aeltester of the Molotschna church, Jacob Enns, came from the Heubuden Gemeinde, one of the strictest of the "land" Gemeinden. It was because Klaas Reimer and other felt the Molotschna Lehrdienst did not provide the leadership required that a rupture occurred.

## References

- Epp, D.H. 1910. *Heinrich Hesse und seine Zeit*. Botschafter, Russia (published by Echo Verlag, Manitoba, 1952).
- Goertz, A. 1976. Research Notes, the Marriage Records of Montau in Prussia. *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, 240-250.
- Hesse, Heinrich 1993. *Autobiography*. *Der Bote*, Jan. 27 to Mar. 3.
- Penner, H. 1978. *Die Ost and West preussischen Mennoniten*. Weierhof.
- Schapansky, H. 1989. "From Prussia to the Old Colony." *Mennonite Family History*, Vol. VIII-4, 134-136, Elverson, PA.
1990. "Neuenburg, the Old Colony Russia, the First Settlers 1788-1808." *M.F.H.*, Vol. IX, 93-97.
1991. "Einlage, the Old Colony Russia, the First Settlers 1788-1808", *M.F.H.*, Vol. S-1, 26-3; Vol. X-2, 74-78.
1991. "Neuendorf, the Old Colony Russia, the First Settlers 1788-1808," *M.F.H.*, Vol. X-4, 148-155; Vol. XI-1, 28- 32.
1992. "Rosenthal, the Old Colony Russia, the First Settlers 1788-1808," *M.F.H.*, Vol. XI-3, 112-119; Vol. XI-4, 166-171.
- 1993a. "Schonhorst, the Old Colony Russia, the First Settlers, 1788-1808." To appear in *M.F.H.*, Vol. XII-2.
- 1993b. "Chortitz, the Old Colony Russia, the First Settlers 1788-1808." unpublished manuscript.

## Endnotes: The Prussian Emigrants 1788-1840.

1. Friesen, "Mennonite Churches and Religious Developments in Russia 1789-1850," in Friesen, ed., *Mennonites in Russia: Essays in Honour of Gerhard Lohrenz* (Winnipeg, Man.: CMBC Publication, 1989), 43-74.

2. Although Mannhardt depicts the history of the Danzig congregation in the 1700s and 1800s in very positive terms, the factual detail presented nevertheless presents a picture of a continuous decline in Mennonite standards, from the inability to attract its young men into service and the creation of a paid ministry, to the final acceptance of the military service. At the same time the Danzig Mennonites did become very wealthy in this period.

3. Hermann Hesse, in his autobiography, was very contemptuous of his Old Colony colleagues, particularly of those in the ministry. Hesse later also had a falling out with Cornies.

4. See the discussion in B.H. Unruh, D. Plett and H. Schapansky (references).

5. The death toll was very high in all the Gross Werder Gemeinden, but the highest mortality rate may have been in the Thiensdorf and Heubuden Gemeinden. Other disruption in the social fabric of the Mennonite life in West Prussia can be seen in the Tragheimersweide church books, where there are several instances of the birth of children occurring before the marriage of the parents. Whether this is due to poor record keeping or to irregularities in relationships is undetermined, but is due nevertheless to the war.

6. Mannhardt, H. G., *Die Danziger Mennonitengemeinde* (Selbsverlag der Danziger Mennonitengemeinde, Danzig, 1919).

7. See for instance the research of Dr. A. Goertz on the subject.

8. The identification by surnames is a good guide, some surnames were predominantly Frisian, some predominantly Flemish, and some mixed.

9. Indeed, we need only take Klaas Reimer's own account at face value; see Klaas Reimer, "Ein Kleines Aufsatz," Part Two, Chapter Two.

# Chapter Four

## The Pioneer Gemeinde

---

**The Founding of the Molotschna Mennonite Church and Its Development up to the Formation of the Kleine Gemeinde.** By Dr. Adolf Ens, Professor of History, Canadian Mennonite Bible College, 800 Schafesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3P 0M4, 1992.

---

### Introduction.

The literature on the founding events of the church in the second Mennonite settlement in Russia is as sparse as it is for the first. Founded on the Molochnaia River 1804-1840 and popularly known as the Molotschna Colony, this settlement's growth and many of its developments were much more rapid than those of Chortitza. In part this divergence arises from initial differences.

### Beginnings of Chortitza and Molotschna Compared.

Neither the 1788 nor the 1803 emigration was planned or organized by the church in Prussia. Rather, smaller or larger groups of families and individuals decided to leave, generally with some encouragement and guidance from the church leadership.<sup>1</sup> In some cases poor families were assisted financially by the Prussian Gemeinden to make their emigration possible.<sup>2</sup>

In the absence of direct involvement of the church there was no formal leadership of the two emigration movements. The 228 families leaving for New Russia in 1787-1789 to some extent acknowledged Jacob Hoepfner and Johann Bartsch as leaders, but their status even as "delegates" in 1786 was unclear.<sup>3</sup> Their role in decision-making during the actual immigration was even less well defined, accounting at least partly for their shameful treatment by the settlers. The 342 families arriving in Russia during 1803-04 did not have even this kind of leadership.<sup>4</sup> Since the *Privilegium* obtained by the Chortitza church from Czar Paul I in 1800 covered them as well, there was no need for advance delegates. Land inspection trips to the Molochnaia region were undertaken from Chortitza where most of the newcomers spent their first winter.<sup>5</sup> These immigrants were, in a sense, merely a continuation of the earlier migrations to Chortitza.

No minister accompanied the first settlers in either migration. Later historians found this remarkable in the 1788 movement<sup>6</sup> but seemed unwilling to believe that it was also the case fifteen years later.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, organizing the church in Molotschna was less difficult than it had been in Chortitza primarily because an established sister congregation was now much closer and because all of the early immigrants here were Flemish so that the Frisian-Flemish division was not a factor here.<sup>8</sup>

By far the most significant difference between the two settlements lay in the

socio-economic status of the immigrants. On average the settlers in Molotschna brought with them much more capital than had the earlier group.<sup>9</sup> Together with the better support system which the Russian government now had in place for needy families and the benefit of the experience of the Chortitz settlers, this made the pioneer period in Molotschna much easier and shorter. By 1807 a visitor to the settlement noted that very few houses were still unfinished and a decade later the same visitor reported Molotschna economically far ahead of Chortitz.<sup>10</sup>

### Founding of Colony and Church.

The immigrant families who arrived in 1803 spent the winter in Chortitz where they elected 37-year old Klaas Wiens from Herrenhagen, Amt Marienburg, as their first Oberschulz.<sup>11</sup> Still relatively youthful, Wiens was well-to-do and considered a prudent, far-seeing person, although strongly self-willed.<sup>12</sup> Elected as his assistants (*Beisitzer*) were Jakob Enz and David Hiebert.<sup>13</sup> Hiebert, who settled in the village of Lindenau on 15 September 1804,<sup>14</sup> helped Wiens in establishing nine villages in 1804 and another eight the following year, following the pattern established in Chortitz.<sup>15</sup>

Economically aggressive, Wiens took two homesteads in the village of Altona and rapidly expanded his own economic base. At the same time he energetically worked for the economic and cultural improvement of the settlement, eager to follow suggestions of the government. For example, when Contenius hoped that the Mennonites would introduce silk culture, Wiens was not only the first to plant mulberry trees in his own garden but also persuaded the village of Altona to set aside a tract of land for this purpose.<sup>16</sup> In spite of this, or perhaps because of it, Wiens lasted only one term as Oberschulz, being succeeded in 1806 by Johann Klassen, Rosenort, another wealthy entrepreneur.<sup>17</sup>

Unlike Chortitz, where the congregation was organized en route in Dubrovno, a civil administration was in place in Molotschna before the church was founded.<sup>18</sup> This gave Oberschulz and Gebietsamt a kind of precedence over church leadership because they were required to be responsible for everything initially.

On 10 April 1804 the 193 newly arrived families met in the church at Chortitz to elect their first ministers. Chosen were 36-year old tailor Jakob Enns (1768-1818) from Siemensdorferfeld, and two farmers, David Huebert (age 30) mentioned above, and Abraham Wiebe (age 40) from Königsdorf, all three Amt Marienburg.<sup>19</sup> Enz and Hiebert had earlier been elected *Beisitzer* in the civil administration.<sup>20</sup> They were ordained by Johann Wiebe, Aeltester of the Flemish congregation in Chortitz.<sup>21</sup> Abraham Wiebe, who settled in Münsterberg 20 June 1804<sup>22</sup>, and David Huebert became the first two resident ministers in Molotschna. In the spring of 1805 another five ministers were elected: Jacob Vogt, Johann Vriesen<sup>23</sup>, Heinrich Enß, Cornelis Jantzen<sup>24</sup> and Johann Penner.<sup>25</sup> Two ordained ministers arrived in Chortitz from Danzig in November 1804: the retired 76-year old Cornelius Epp (1728-1805), and Klaas Reimer (1770-1837), brother and son-in-law, respectively, of the late Aeltester Peter Epp (1725-1789) of Danzig. Reimer settled in Petershagen 5 June 1805.<sup>26</sup>

Early in 1805 the organization of the church was completed by holding Aeltester elections. Molotschna settlers voted on 25 February in Lindenau and new arrivals in Chortitz on 5 March.<sup>27</sup> Candidates were the three ministers elected

in 1804 and Klaas Reimer.<sup>28</sup> The latter had been elected minister in Danzig on 1 February 1801 and was thus the senior of the four.<sup>29</sup> However, Enns was chosen by majority vote and ordained by Johann Wiebe of Chortitza on 23 April 1805.<sup>30</sup> On 18 July 1805 he settled in the village of Tiegenhagen, Molotschna and began his leadership of the large congregation of some 350 families scattered over seventeen villages.<sup>31</sup>

The first beer brewery and the first church building were erected in 1809, the latter with funds donated by Czar Alexander I. The following year a second church building and a water mill were added.<sup>32</sup> Other "useful industrial plants" reported in 1848 included a distillery, three vinegar breweries, two dye works, and a cloth factory.<sup>33</sup> With only two church buildings (in Ohrloff and Petershagen) for the eighteen villages founded by 1806, most church services continued to be held in homes or other buildings.

### Early Tensions in Church and Colony.

Before the church was fully organized, serious strife erupted in the colony. Oberschulz Klaas Wiens and his *Beisitzer*, the newly elected minister David Huebert, quarreled over some lumber. An appeal was sent to Aeltester Johann Wiebe of Chortitza in the winter of 1804-05 to help settle the matter. The ministers Klaas Reimer and Jacob Enns, still in Chortitza, and a Jacob Dyk accompanied Wiebe on this reconciliation trip.<sup>34</sup> In spite of protracted discussions Wiebe was unable to get Huebert, judged the guilty party, to concede. He and Reimer then persuaded Wiens, though innocent, to give in for the sake of reconciliation.<sup>35</sup>

As a result of this process and its outcome it was difficult for Wiens to look with confidence to the church leaders for guidance in solving disputes justly, and accounts at least in part for his frequent clashes with Gemeinde and Aeltester and for the pattern this set for the civil government in its relation with the church.<sup>36</sup> Reimer was deeply disappointed that Huebert, a minister, would not give in, that Aeltester Wiebe inadequately confronted Huebert, that disputes like this occurred at all among Christians, and that in the midst of such unsettled strife elections for Aeltester were held. It re-enforced his aversion to settling in Molotschna.<sup>37</sup> For Enns it meant that his leadership of the church began with serious tension among himself, his civic counterpart in the colony, and two of the senior ministers in the church.

Enns entered his term as Aeltester with good intentions but very little experience and appeared to be unequal to the task. Reimer considered him "too rash."<sup>38</sup> Later historians were harsher in their description: David Epp characterized him as having "mehr Herrschertalent als Hirtensinn" (more talent for ruling than pastoral giftedness) while P. M. Friesen thought he was perhaps "entirely devoid of God's life-giving Spirit -- and an exceedingly violent character."<sup>39</sup> Faced with a very large and rapidly growing church whose members came from many different communities and several congregations in Prussia, Enns needed to create a sense of unity and a set of common expectations in ethics and church life. He quickly discovered that "a number of members were not serious about living according to the Gospel" and was more than willing to allow the Gebietsamt (colony administration) to bring offenders to justice and administer punishment.<sup>40</sup> On several occasions he also appealed to the Chortitza church

leadership for help in dealing with issues.<sup>41</sup> This is not surprising, since Enz began his leadership with virtually no prior experience as a minister and headed a large team of ministerial colleagues all of whom, except Reimer, were complete beginners.

Those immigrants who had undertaken the move to Russia in hopes of effecting some reform in church life found Enns' style of leadership difficult to accept. This included some of his colleagues, especially the most senior active minister, Klaas Reimer.

### **Emergence of the Kleine Gemeinde (KG).**

While still in Prussia, Reimer had admired the theology and piety of Aeltester Peter Epp of Danzig, whose daughter Maria he married nine years after Epp's death. He then moved to Neunhuben from Petershagen but found himself in increasing disagreement with the largely urban Danzig congregation and the lax leadership of its elder Jacob de Veer. Fortunately, the rural part of the congregation had been granted the status of "Quartier" in 1792, giving it virtual independence from the congregation in the city except for the tie through a common Aeltester who officiated at the ordinances (baptism, communion, election and ordination of ministers).<sup>42</sup> The leading minister of this rural congregation was Cornelius Epp, Maria Reimer's uncle whose home the Reimers shared. Here Claas Reimer was elected minister in 1801.<sup>43</sup>

The low level of moral life, the inconsistent and unscriptural church discipline, and the governmental restrictions on Mennonite land acquisition, combined with Aeltester Peter Epp's frequent admonition to his children to go to Russia, finally persuaded Reimer in 1804 to emigrate. A group of twenty-eight adults, many of them inter-related, joined him and Maria (see Table I).<sup>44</sup> Apparently most did not share his zeal for reform, since none seem to have joined his secession group during the next seven years, even though as many as twelve of them settled with him in the village of Petershagen.<sup>45</sup>

Reimer did find a kindred spirit in Petershagen. It was his colleague, the youthful (b. 1780) Cornelius Janzen from Münsterberg, Prussia, elected minister in 1805.<sup>46</sup> Serious about upright moral living, these two criticized not so much the Gebietsamt and its punishments as the church ethos which made such punishment necessary.<sup>47</sup> Aeltester Enns and minister David Huebert, however, not only condoned corporal punishment by the civil government but advocated and practised it themselves.<sup>48</sup> On one occasion Reimer and a witness confronted Enns at his home: "Is it true, Ohm Jakob, that you have thrashed your hired man?" "Go to the barn and ask him," replied Enns. They did so, and "Toms," who was a member of Enns' congregation, responded: "Yes, but I richly deserved it."<sup>49</sup>

This probably reflects the widespread acceptance of corporal punishment as discipline for adult members. Nevertheless, when Enns presented this issue at a brotherhood meeting and allowed Reimer and Janzen to respond to it from the viewpoint of Christian nonresistance, members began to take sides and the rift became public. Reimer and Janzen then began to hold separate worship services in Petershagen, and by request in Münsterberg, without the elder's consent. This naturally angered Enns, but the final separation came over an even more serious concern. When the Aeltester officiated at communion services in Ohrloff and Petershagen while he himself was in a state of unreconciled conflict with minister

Huebert, Reimer gave up on the Große Gemeinde. He left, even though "to leave the Gemeinde when there is as yet no hint of refuge in another is not within human power. . . . What other choice is there for a Lehrer [minister] who seeks to save his soul from eternal punishment?"<sup>50</sup> A group of eighteen families left the church. This was in 1812, the same year that the elder's harassment drove the former Oberschulz Klaas Wiens out of the colony to found his own estate at Steinbach.

### **The Dynamics of Separation.**

The new Gemeinde would not be properly constituted until it had an Aeltester of its own. Reimer and Janzen and their small group patiently worked at this during the next four years. For Enns to have ordained an elder for them would have meant tacit admission that Reimer was right and he wrong, and would have split his Gemeinde. Aeltester Wiebe of Chortitza could not have done so without breaking the traditional solidarity of the larger Flemish church. The four Prussian Flemish Aeltesten, whom Reimer apparently contacted over the head of Enns with the help of former Oberschulz Klaas Wiens, withheld approval and urged Reimer's group to have patience.<sup>51</sup>

Unexpected help came from the small Frisian congregation in Schönwiese. Apparently acting independently, Heinrich Jantzen, Aeltester there since June 1797, served communion in Petershagen to 40 members on 13 March 1815, baptized three of their candidates in Schönwiese later that year and again served communion in Petershagen 21 May 1816.<sup>52</sup> According to Reimer, Jantzen also officiated at his election as Aeltester in 1815 but not at his ordination. Whether this was solely because of the strong opposition to such a move by the Flemish elders Wiebe and Enns, or because Jantzen was himself not ordained by an Aeltester, is not clear.<sup>53</sup> In the end, the separatist group convinced itself by 1816 that election was more important than ordination and justified a non-traditional ordination by a minister instead of an Aeltester through an appeal to unusual circumstances and various historical precedents.<sup>54</sup> Reimer did not arrange for a successor during his tenure as elder. When the KG wanted to choose a new elder in 1837 after Reimer's death the issue clearly had not gone away and they appealed to Aeltester Bernhard Fast of the Ohrloff congregation for assistance in the election.<sup>55</sup>

Aeltester Enns on his part also did not know how to react to a division in the congregation. Mennonite history in Poland-Prussia-Danzig and in Russia offered no precedent to follow. Indeed, the inherited Flemish-Frisian division was rapidly disappearing here as it already had earlier in the Netherlands. Sometimes alone, sometimes together with his Chortitza colleague Johann Wiebe, Enns threatened with ministerial elections to replace Reimer and Janzen, exile to Siberia, excommunication and refusal to recognize baptisms performed by Reimer.<sup>56</sup>

The Gebietsamt considered the two ministers defrocked, refusing them exemption from statutory labour and harassing them in other ways.<sup>57</sup> This the small congregation suffered willingly and saw to it that their members never had to be disciplined by the civic authorities.<sup>58</sup>

### **Concluding Observations.**

The early years of the Molotschna settlement reflect sharply the tension

between the Anabaptist concept of the pure church and the Russian reality of a *Volkskirche* in which all adults in the community were also part of the church. The dilemma was heightened by the privilege of self-government thrust on the Mennonite community by the Russian government. This meant that lay members of the church served as civil administrators with magisterial powers exceeding in some cases those of church officials. On the other hand, it meant that when church discipline yielded certain offenders to the "secular arm" it was not to the jurisdiction of "outsiders," but to fellow members of the same congregation.

Klaas Reimer pursued the ideal of a pure church governed according to the Rule of Christ in Matthew 18. He left the "dissolute Babel" in Danzig in hopes of restoring an evangelical congregation in Russia. When Jakob Enns was ordained as Aeltester of the whole Molotschna church, he shouldered the enormous burden of moulding into one Gemeinde all of the immigrant members transferring in from various communities in Prussia. To transform that mixed multitude into an ideal "pure" church was not realistic and Enns felt himself bound by his office to deal realistically. The events clearly show that he was not the man to achieve an acceptable compromise. Reimer's only hope of achieving his ideal was by separation. That was inherent in the situation from the outset. Yet, once achieved, he remained ambivalent about the separation. He and his KG wanted official recognition from the very church from which they had separated themselves.

The clashes between Enns and Reimer had been so persistent and bitter that the basic issue probably could not have been clearly articulated by them. In an exchange of letters in 1838 their successors, Bernhard Fast and Abraham Friesen, did so. In response to the KG request that the Fast lead the election of an elder for them and "thereby establish a formally organized Gemeinde" among them, Fast responded: "We have recently understood from you yourselves that in your mind you are not striving to undergird our church order and to help us confirm it."<sup>59</sup> He invited them to join one of the established congregations and together build the Gemeinde. With KG members living interspersed throughout the Molotschna villages, a separate congregation did not make sense unless the separation were complete.

The response of Friesen and colleagues formally protests "that you should in some way have understood from us that we are not committed to assist you in the regulation of your Gemeinden and in the establishment of the same."<sup>60</sup> But the letter then goes on to paint such a dismal picture of the "uncleanliness and disgrace [that] lies hidden in the official Gemeinden" and expresses such a "violent sense of indignation and antipathy towards all the human ordinances of these formal Gemeinden," as to make one wonder why they would want recognition from such bodies. Yet, the letter concludes by saying that while they will now conduct the election themselves, they will approach Fast once more regarding the ordination.

#### **Endnotes: The Pioneer Gemeinde.**

1. See Adolf Ens, "The Tie That Binds: Prussian and Russian Mennonites (1788-1794)," *Journal of Mennonite Studies*, 1990, 34-51, for Prussian church involvement in the movement to Chortitza. On the migration to Molotschna see "Streiflichter auf die ersten Gemeindebildungen an der Molotschna," *Unser Blatt* 1 (May 1926): 171.

2. N.N., "Kurzer Beitrag zur Geschichte der Molotschnaer Mennoniten," *Christlicher Familienkalender*, 1900, 103.
3. Assessment of their status ranges from Heinrich Heese: "zwei bevollmächtigte der Mennoniten," ("Kurzgefaßte geschichtliche Übersicht der Gründung und des Bestehens der Kolonien des Chortitzer Mennonitenbezirkes," *Unterhaltungsblatt für deutsche Ansiedler im südlichen Rußland*, 1851, Nr. 8-10; reprinted in M. Woltner, *Die Gemeindeberichte von 1848 der deutschen Siedlungen am Schwarzen Meer* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1941), 4) to Brons: "reisten auf eigene Hand und auf rußische Kosten." (A. Brons, *Ursprung, Entwicklung und Schicksale der altewangelischen Taufgesinnten oder Mennoniten in kurzen Zügen übersichtlich dargestellt* (Norden: Dietrich Soltau, zweite Auflage, 1891), 284.) In between are Peter M. Friesen, *Die Alt=Evangelische Mennonitische Bruderschaft in Rußland (1789-1910)* (Halbstadt: Raduga, 1911), 72: "beglaubigt durch eine Vollmacht mit Unterschrift von 60 mennonitischen Männern," and Jacob Quiring, *Die Mundart von Chortitza in Süd=Rußland* (München: Druckerei Studentenhaus München Universität, 1927), .
4. "Die ersten Anfänge der Kolonie Ohrloff," *Unser Blatt*, 1 (August 1926), 270; Woltner, 88.
5. Franz Harder, "Die Auswanderung aus der Danziger Mennoniten-Gemeinde nach Rußland," *Mitteilungen des Sippenverbandes der Danziger Mennoniten-Familien Epp - Kauenhowen - Zimmermann* 3 (1937): 104.
6. E.g., Peter M. Friesen, 73; C. Henry Smith, *Story of the Mennonites*, 5th ed., revised by Cornelius Krahn (Newton: Faith and Life Press, 1981), .
7. Smith, 259, says that the Molotschna settlers "brought their ministers with them." Peter M. Friesen, 703, thinks that the first Aeltester, Jakob Enns, was elected as minister in Prussia. A. Braun, *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, I: 593, *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, II: 225, and H. Görz, *Die Molotschnaer Ansiedlung: Entstehung, Entwicklung und Untergang* (Steinbach: Echo Verlag, 1950/51), 56, report this as fact. John Friesen, "Mennonite Churches and Religious Developments in Russia 1789-1850," in John Friesen, ed., *Mennonites in Russia 1788-1988* (Winnipeg: CMBC Publications, 1989), 56, assumes that prior to the election of an Aeltester, worship services were led "by Lehrer [ministers] who had been ordained in the Danzig and West Prussian churches." In fact, no ministers from Prussia came to Molotschna until after the ordination of an elder.
8. Görz, p. 54; D[avid H.] Epp, "Hundertjahrsfeier der Lichtenauer Gemeinde und Kirche am 31. Oktober 1926," *Unser Blatt*, 2 (December 1926): 75.
9. Peter M. Friesen, 101; Görz, 9.
10. Peter M. Friesen, 152, 154.
11. Woltner, 99; In official correspondence he is addressed as "Gebietsvorsteher." Samuel Contentius, Odessa, 26 March 1804 to Claas Wiensz, Peter J. Braun Archive, file 89-1-4(1804), microfilm, Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives. Benjamin H. Unruh, *Die niederländisch-niederdeutschen Hintergründe der mennonitischen Ostwanderungen in 16., 18., und 19., Jahrhundert* (Karlsruhe: By the author, 1955), 317, Fam. 3.
12. Abraham Braun, "Kleine Chronik der Mennoniten an der Molotschna seit ihrer Ansiedlung bis in mein 80. Jahr," *Mennonitisches Jahrbuch*, 1907, 67. The Brauns were next door neighbours of Wiens in Altona.
13. Correspondance in MHCA, Peter J. Braun Archive, 89-1-4 (1804).
14. Unruh, 312, fam. 15.
15. Woltner, 88; Unruh, 312, Fam. 15; Franz Isaak, *Die Molotschnaer Mennoniten* (Halbstadt: H.J. Braun, 1908), 12.
16. Braun, "Kleine Chronik," 67-68.
17. Isaak, 87.
18. Contentius, 26 March 1804 to Wiens, refers to instructions he gave to the Gebietsamt on 18 September 1803.
19. Letter, Jakob Wienß, Chortitz, to Johann Kauenhowen, Danzig, 11 April 1805, in *Der Bote*, 5 January 1938, 4; also in *Mitteilungen*, 6/3 (1940): 69; Jakob Enns, "Kleine Lebensskize," *Mennonitische Rundschau*, 9 December 1908, 14; Unruh, 323, Fam. 15; 312, #15; 316, #4; Delbert Plett, *The Golden Years: The Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde in Russia (1812-1849)* (Steinbach: D.F.P. Publications, 1985), 169. *Namenverzeichnis der Aeltesten, Lehrer, und Diakonen der Taufgesinnten Mennonitischen Gemeinden in Ost=und West=Preussen, Lithauen, Polen und den new angesiedelten Kolonien in Ruszland* (Elbing, Agathon Verlag, 1835), 24.

20. It is not clear whether they resigned their office when they were installed as ministers. Huebert, as noted above, seems to have assisted Oberschulz Wiens in founding the first villages.

21. The suggestion of James Urry, *None But Saints: The Transformation of Mennonite Life in Russia 1789-1889* (Winnipeg: Hyperion Press, 1989), 76, that they were ordained by Klaas Reimer, is highly unlikely.

22. Unruh, 316, fam. 4.

23. Unruh, 339, #65, and 306, #3, identifies him as from Krebsfelde, settling in the village of Muntau. D. Epp, "Hundertjahrsfeier," 76, and Peter M. Friesen, 703, note that he was one of 4 ministers opposing Aeltester Bernhard Fast in the 1822-24 division. Editor's note: Johann Friesen (1763-ca.1830) of Muntau and later Rosenort, Molotschna, was the brother-in-law to Klaas Reimer and the founder of a large Kleine Gemeinde dynasty. His son Johann F. Friesen (1808-1872) was the third Aeltester of the congregation.

24. Arrived Petershagen 5 June 1805 from Münsterberg, Amt Tiegenhof. Unruh, 321, #13; 350, #68.

25. Jakob Wienß reports this election in his 11 April 1805 letter. *Namensverzeichnis* (1835), 22, also lists Franz Wiens as a minister in the Petershagen congregation since 1805.

26. Plett, *The Golden Years*, 163; Peter M. Friesen, 106. Unruh, 321, #4.

27. Enns, 14.

28. Wienß, 1805 letter.

29. Peter M. Friesen, 106.

30. Enns, 14, clearly refers to the tailor from Siemensdorferfeld, even though he never gives his full name; the first time it is "Is.E." and after that always "I.E." (which in Gothic print is identical to "J.E."). Unruh's identification (348, #36) of Jakob Enns, Hochzeit, Danzig, b. 1763, as becoming Aeltester is almost certainly in error, though Urry, 76, n. 34, and A. Braun, *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, I:593, *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, II: 225, accept it. Harder, "Die Auswanderung," *Mitteilungen* 3 (December 1937): 190, and Heinrich H. Schroeder, *Rußlanddeutsche Friesen* (Döllstadt: Selbstverlag, 1936), 86, make no mention of this Jakob Enns becoming a minister. There is certainly nothing in Reimer's autobiography to suggest that he and Aeltester Enns came from the same congregation.

31. Enns, 14. Unruh, 323, #15, gives the date as 23 August 1805. Smith, 272, erroneously assumes that "they founded independent congregational units from the start, either by villages or groups of villages." Isaak, 91, emphatically states that they "vereinigten sich . . . zu einer Kirchengemeinde." Cf. Jakob Wienß, 1805 letter: "die ganze Molotschnaer Gemeinde."

32. Woltner, 92; Isaac, 91.

33. Woltner, 92.

34. Plett, *The Golden Years*, 163. Peter M. Friesen, 107, n. 2, misleads the reader with his comment that Wiebe and Dyk were co-elders of the Chortitza church. Dyck was only elected minister a year later (21 January 1806) and not ordained as Aeltester until 1812. (Letter, Jakob Wienß, Chortitz, 4 February 1806 to Johann Kauenhowen, *Der Bote*, 4 May 1938, 5; Peter M. Friesen, 700). Plett, Vol. VI, Part Two, Chapter Two, n. 14, page 149, suggests that Jacob Dueck was not the later Chortitza elder but the father of the future KG minister Heinrich Wiebe, who settled in the village of Ohrloff.

35. Plett, *The Golden Years*, 163. It is difficult to assess Huebert's role in the difficult early years of the church. As the only settler in the 21-family village of Lindenau who was wealthy enough not to require government assistance (Woltner, 99), he was a prominent member of the community. Church services and brotherhood meetings were regularly held at his home (Reimer, "A Short Exposition", page 127), and in the 1818 visit of Alexander I to the Molotschna colony, his family hosted the Czar for a meal ("Ein hoher Besuch," *Christlicher Familienkalender*, 1900, 112-13). Reimer opposed him on issues of corporal punishment and subscribing funds for the Napoleonic war effort, but seems to have got along with him well on a personal basis ("A Short Exposition," 126). In the 1822-24 split he was one of four ministers opposing Aeltester Bernhard Fast (Epp, "Hundertjahrsfeier"; Peter M. Friesen, 703).

36. Braun, "Kleine Chronik," 68. Wiens eventually (1812) withdrew from the community, selling everything he could not take with him, and settling on a private estate, Steinbach, so far outside of the colony that it seemed at the time almost "ausser Rußlands Grenzen." *Mennonitisches*

*Lexikon*, IV: 241.

37. Plett, *The Golden Years*, 164. Editor's note: At this time, Reimer--together with several associates--was negotiating for the purchase of the 1,000,000 ruble Volenko estate on behalf of 162 families.

38. *Ibid.*

39. D. Epp, "Jahrhundertsfeier," Peter M. Friesen, 75 (Engl. transl., 92). See also Görz, 56; Braun, "Kleine Chronik," 67.

40. Isaak, 91.

41. Klaas Reimer, "A Short Exposition." Plett, *The Golden Years*, 168, 171.

42. Harder, 106.

43. Klaas and Maria Reimer had in fact purchased a half share in the *Wirtschaft* of her uncle Ohm Cornelius Epp in Neunhuben, Prussia.

44. Over half of the immigration group were related to each other. Klaas Reimer and Johann Regier were married to the daughters of Peter Epp, formerly Aeltester of the Danzig Gemeinde in Prussia. The first wife of Peter Classen (born 1749) was Sara Epp, also a daughter of Peter Epp. Cornelius Epp (1728-1805) was the uncle of these sisters and the protege and former partner of Klaas Reimer. Peter Classen Jr. (born 1775), Catharina Classen (born 1777)--married to Franz Wiens, and Magdalena Classen (born 1778)--married to Abraham Enz, were the children of Peter Classen and his second wife Sara Wölke (born 1762). Cornelius Wölke was the brother to Catharina Wölke. Gertrude Regier (born 1775) who married Peter Classen Jr. was the daughter of Michael Regier (born 1747).

45. Plett, *The Golden Years*, 152-56. Editor's note: It is assumed that Reimer was supported by his brother-in-law Regier since several of Regier's children were prominently involved in the KG. However, according to Henry Schapansky, Regier settled in Krons Garten.

46. See above, n. 21. Editor's note: The Janzen family also originated in the village of Petershagen where Klaas Reimer was born and raised. The Janzen's were a powerful and wealthy family in Petershagen, Molotschna.

47. Isaak, 91.

48. Reimer, "A Short Exposition," 125-7.

49. Braun, "Kleine Chronik," 69.

50. Plett, *The Golden Years*, 170-71; Peter M. Friesen, 107.

51. Plett, *The Golden Years*, 173. Reimer, "A Short Exposition," Part Two, Chapter Two, 133.

52. Cornelius Hildebrand, handwritten notes in *Namens-Verzeichniss der in Deutschland, Ost- und Westpreußen, Galizien, Polen und Rußland befindlichen Mennoniten-Gemeinden, sowie ihrer Aeltesten, Lehrer und Vorsteher* (Danzig: Edwin Groening, 1857), 78. Original in Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives, Winnipeg.

53. Peter M. Friesen, 75, 108; Reimer Feb 1819 letter to Aelt. J. Fast (Plett, Vol. VI, Part Two, Chapter Three). Reimer's assumption that Jantzen was ordained by the visiting minister Cornelius Warkentin of Prussia in 1794 (Peter M. Friesen, 108) is likely wrong, as Jantzen was apparently not elected as minister until January 1797 (Hildebrand, 67).

54. Reimer, "A Short Exposition," 133.

55. Peter M. Friesen, 111-12.

56. Reimer, "A Short Exposition," 137; Peter M. Friesen, 108; Plett, *The Golden Years*, 171, 173.

57. Plett, *The Golden Years*, 172.

58. Braun, "Kleine Chronik," 69; "Kurzer Beitrag," 110.

59. Peter M. Friesen, 111; Abraham Friesen, "A Simple Declaration, 1845," Part Three, Chapter Five, 291-193. Fast had himself experienced a split of the Grosse Gemeinde in 1824 and witnessed the Flemish Aeltester Jakob Dyck of Chortitzta ordain an elder for the breakaway faction. Had this been a "permissible" split because Fast was ordained by a Frisian, or because the group separating from the elder was so large, or because the Gemeinden in Prussia and Chortitzta were largely in sympathy with the dissidents?

60. Plett ms. VI; Friesen, 24; Peter M. Friesen, 112, calls it a "gelungene Antwort," while chastising Fast for his shortsightedness.

**Table I**  
**Emigrants from Danzig Werder in August 1804**

<u>Name</u>	<u>(Date)</u>	<u>Origin</u>	<u>Dest'n</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>Unruh</u>
Cornelius Epp	(1728-1805)	Neunhuben		42	349-42
Claas Reimer	(1770-1837)	Neunhuben	Petershagen	43	351-95
Maria Epp		"		43	
Johann Regier	(1759-)	Neunhuben	?	44	351-93
Catharina Epp		"		44	
Maria Thielmann	(1778)	Neunhuben (maid)		45	352-113
Franz Wiens	(1779-)	Neunhuben	Petershagen	46	321-5
Catarina Classen	(1777-)	"		47	321-5
Peter Classen	(1748-)	Hochzeit	Petershagen	48	321-14
Catharina Woelke	(1760-)	"		48	321-14
d. Helena	(1786)		-		-
son-in-law Abraham Enz	(1779)				-
friend Henry Bock	(1784)				-
maid Maria	(1779)				-
Peter Classen Jr.	(1775-)	Hochzeit	Petershagen	49	321-2
Gertrud Regier	(1775-)	"	"	49	321-2
Anganetha Regier	(1781-)	Scharfenberg	?	50	351-89;355-5
f. Michael	(1747-)	"	Fuerstenau	-	355-5
2nd w. Cath. Harder	(1770-)	"	"		-
s. Abraham	(1773-)				
s. Michael	(1779-)	emig. 23.08.1804			
d. Catharina	(1783-)				
d. Eva	(1787-)		-		355-5
Cornelius Woelke	(1755-)	Hochzeit	Blumenort	51	354-147
Magdalena Epp	(1760-)	"	"	51	"
d. Catharina	1783-		-		
Margarethe Wieler	(?)	Schottländer Wiesen	?	52	347-7(?)
Behrend von Bargaen	(1789-)		?	52	
Jacob Enns	(1763-1818)	Hochzeit	Tiegenhagen	53	348-36
Maria Entz	(1775-)	Hochzet	"	53	"

# refers to "Alphabetische Verzeichnis der ausgewanderten Familien=Väter und =Mütter sowie der Einzelpersonen. (Nummern nach der Zeit der Auswanderung)," in Franz Harder, "Die Auswanderung aus der Danziger Mennoniten-Gemeinde nach Rusland," in *Mitteilungen*, 3 (December 1937):188-9. From other sources we know that #42 and #53 emigrated 23.8.1804, and so assume that all intervening numbers did as well. Those without numbers are not in the Danzig list.

# Chapter Five

## Prussian Roots of the Kleine Gemeinde

A Study of the 18th Century Prussian Social, Economic, Genetic and Religious Roots of the Kleine Gemeinde Mennonites of the Molotschna Colony, South Russia, 1812-1874. By Delbert F. Plett, Box 1960, Steinbach, Manitoba, Canada, R0A 2A0; assisted by Henry Schapansky, 914 Chilliwack Street, New Westminster, B. C., Canada, V3L 4V5.

---

### Introduction.

In 1803-1804 many Flemish Mennonites of the Danzig and nearby Gross-Werder area in Prussia immigrated to Russia where they established the Molotschna Colony some 100 verst north of the Black Sea. Almost from the start a number of these pioneers were involved in a reform movement whose principle motif was the restoration of the apostolic church in the tradition of Menno Simons and Dirk Philips. Between 1812 and 1816 eighteen families formally started what became known as the Kleine Gemeinde (KG). By the 1820s additional adherents had been attracted to the movement which soon became known for its practice of the New Testament teachings of nonresistance, community of sharing and the publication of the first Anabaptist devotional books.

But who really were these conservative reformers? Obviously they were visionary; the ideals which attracted them to the reform movement on the Russian steppes are relatively well known.<sup>1</sup> Their religious literature articulated the need for an earnest spirituality, simplicity in Christ and a life of discipleship. Writings, such as Klaas Reimer's autobiography (see Part Two, Chapter Two), make it clear that many of these people were motivated by such ideals long before they left their old Homeland. The purpose of this paper is to explore the Prussian roots of the KG in order to gain insight into their background, and possibly, to provide some basis for understanding the decisions which some of their descendants made several generations later.

### The Cornelius Warkentin Story.

The story of Cornelius Warkentin, a wealthy farmer in the village of Halbstadt, Prussia, in 1776, provides an interesting--albeit subjective--focus to this study. Warkentin had decided to emigrate and it was still winter time as the preparations were made for the journey to Russia. Goods were packed and items which would not be taken along were offered for sale. Ohm Cornelius was busy packing his treasured library of Mennonite devotional writings when he was confronted by his son Cornelius (1770-1847) who had no use for such ideas. The story of this incident is related by John B. Wiens in the book *Taunty Wilmschy*:

Son, Cornelius, stared in disbelief at the chest full of books, and he stated with emphasis, "Vodakjy," he cried. "Surely you do not plan to take all those ancient books along to Russia, do you?"

"Indeed, I wish to do so," father replied calmly.

"But you can easily fill a chest with them, and in addition, they are heavy. Surely there are many other things which we must take along to Russia and which would be much more useful."

"Which we would use?" replied father. "Do you mean to say that we will not use the venerable family bible, the *Gesangbuecher*, and the catechism? And the *Martyrs' Mirror* in which we find preserved the reports of the suffering and the glorious victories of our forefathers; surely we would wish to read them for our spiritual strengthening? Who knows what difficulties lie before us there. It is most beneficial for us--especially in difficult times--if we have edifying reading material at hand," added father in an earnest tone.

"Ah," chided Cornelius. "That big book could be sold for a lot of money here in Prussia; and money--and lots of it--is what we need in Russia where everything will have to be built from scratch. By comparison, hardly anyone will want to read those ancient fables."

Father Warkentin was a pious man, yet, of a strong nature. The attitude of his son caused him great sorrow; he replied somewhat heatedly, "You have no regard for these books which is a bad sign of our spiritual situation here in Prussia. That is why I want to leave here. Over there, hopefully, we can start anew spiritually. But if we will start in Russia with an attitude the way you have demonstrated I do not want to move there at all. I hope that your children and grandchildren will have a different attitude than you. For man does not live by bread alone. I repeat, if these books are staying here, I will remain here as well."

He was somewhat agitated and he put not only this book, but also a copy of Menno Simon's writings and "*Die Wandelnde Seele*" into the chest. The later was a book which Klaas Reimer had warmly recommended to him. His son was very angry at Reimer. "Why was he always finding fault," he often asked? "Why did Ohm Klaas always find something to expound upon regarding the ancient and venerable ways of the Mennonites?" It also disturbed him that his parents were being influenced by him; he wanted to be rid of this disturber who could remain in Prussia to preach his new tidings.<sup>2</sup>

Ohm Warkentin found it sad that his son Cornelius gave no regard to the sermons of spiritual renewal preached by Klaas Reimer (1770-1837). No--for his part--he would certainly never allow himself to go to a new country without these precious teachings. But grandfather Warkentin never commenced on this long awaited journey; he died in the spring of 1803. Nevertheless, grandmother Warkentin remained equally inflexible regarding the books--just as her husband had been; and whether he wanted to or not, Cornelius was forced to take these books along when he immigrated to Prussia in 1818.<sup>3</sup> Cornelius Warkentin Jr. later inherited a large part of his father's estate, and with the money he was able

to purchase the land of his choice in Blumstein, Molotschna. He soon became a prosperous Vollwirt; the breeding of horses lay particularly dear to his heart. Ironically, he had two daughters as headstrong as he was; one of them, Elisabeth, joined the KG--over his strident objections--where her husband later became a minister.<sup>4</sup> The other daughter, Anna, refused to obey her father's injunction not to visit her sister and was eventually much influenced by her philosophy although she never joined the KG.<sup>5</sup>

The story of Ohm Warkentin's spiritual struggle provides some valuable clues for a profile of early KG adherents. It affirms the general perception that the shared religious experience of the emigrants was very important to them. It also illustrates how past events impacted on decisions which their descendants made, often generations later. But obviously the questions and issues relating to the immigration go far beyond the religiosity of the Molotschna pioneers. Were there other shared experiences in the former homeland which predisposed them to make the decision they made? Were there social and cultural traits which can be objectively identified? The farmers of the KG were known as being among the most prosperous in the Molotschna Colony.<sup>6</sup> Was this economic good fortune based solely on the premise that as a minority group the members of the KG had to work harder and smarter to maintain their social and cultural autonomy? Or was their success based--at least in part--on common cultural and economic ties which their parents had brought along with them from Prussia?

Certain things such as socio-economic status and church affiliation are relatively easy to establish once the appropriate people have been identified. Some 105 of the 371 Molotschna pioneer families listed on the 1808 Revisions-Listen of the Molotschna Colony have been identified as having some KG descendants and/or connections.<sup>7</sup> Many additional families moved from Prussia in 1818 and later, and can be identified from immigration records and documents in private family archives. Does the information regarding their ancestors affirm or refute the picture of one KG ancestor as in the story of Ohm Warkentin? These and other similar questions have long been of considerable interest.<sup>8</sup> The purpose of this study is to compile the available data in order to shed some light on these matters.

#### **The Marienburg Werder, Prussia.**

The Molotschna pioneers, and likewise, the founders and later adherents of the KG originated in an area known as the Marienburg Werder. This was a parcel of land encompassing a triangular area with Danzig (now Gedansk) at the northwest corner, Elbing at the northeast, and Marienberg at the south tip. A. Driedger has described this area as follows:

... a level lowland along the Baltic Sea at the mouth of the Vistula River, consisting of the Gross-Werder (large marsh) between the Vistula and Nogat, and the Kleine-Werder between the Nogat and Lake Drausen. With the Danzig Werder to the west of the Vistula and the lowlands lying north of the Vistula and Danzig and Elbing they constitute the Vistula Delta. About 160 sq. miles of cultivated land lie from 3 to 7 feet below sea level.<sup>9</sup>

The Marienburg Werder was settled by the Teutonic order in 1242. After

1350 century the Gross-Werder was settled by German settlers, but by 1466 it had passed into the possession of Poland. During this time the area was desolated when dams along the Vistula River were breached causing severe flooding. In 1582 Mennonites were invited to resettle these lands which were largely covered by water and overgrown with weeds. Their success is described as follows:

The draining of these lands below sea level not only created new farm land, but also increased production on the higher lands by lowering the water table. Although the Dutch had the lowest, least valuable land, they improved the soil so consistently that their villages in a short time not only equalled but surpassed the more elevated villages of the Teutonic Order in the number of cattle and productivity of the soil. This settlement of Flemish and Frisian Mennonites in the Vistula-Nogat delta is the cradle of Mennonitism in Russia and of a large block of that in America.<sup>10</sup>

### 1776 Konsignation.

This study will seek to identify the Prussian ancestors of the KG on the 1776 Konsignation which was a census listing of the Mennonites in the Marienberg Werder in Prussia.<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately the ancestors of a number of families cannot be found on this listing. Although identified at various times and places in the Prussian church and parish records, they are not included. This omission is partially due to the fact that the Konsignation did not encompass the Danzig Mennonites and some villages in the northern part of the Grosswerder. Henry Schapansky writes as follows in this regard:

... I think some comment regarding the list of 1776 with respect to the settlers of both periods is possible, even where the ancestors may not have been in the territory covered or where the father may have died prior to 1776 and the mother remarried. This is very common and makes the locating of people in 1776 challenging. Very difficult to find are those males from 1756-1764, since there are big holes in the church records into which many of these fall.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, for example, Abraham von Riesen (1756-1810) of Kalteherberg, Prussia, and later Ohrloff, Molotschna, whose family was the most important in the KG, is not included because Kalteherberg was close to the Baltic Sea and not in the area covered by the 1776 Konsignation. The family is included here as being from Tiegenhagen, Prussia, which is listed as the birthplace of son Peter von Riesen in the 1825 immigration records.<sup>13</sup> Another example of a family not found in the 1776 Konsignation is that of Heinrich Reimer and Agatha Epp--the parents of Klaas Reimer (1770-1837), founding Aeltester of the KG. In his autobiography Klaas Reimer states that he was born in Petershagen and therefore his family is listed as such. These families--and others like them--are included here in order to make this study as complete and as useful as possible.

It is trite to say that the 1776 Konsignation is--nonetheless--the most complete listing of its kind. It precedes the 1808 Revisions-Listen by only thirty-two years and allows for a relatively useful comparison. Accurate identifications can be

made through careful study of family and denominational records. The KG is the best documented Russian Mennonite denomination and, therefore, such information is readily available for many families.

The 1776 Konsignation lists 2442 male family heads resident in West Prussia and contains the following information: the name of the male family head, the village of residence, occupation, total number of occupants, men, women, sons, daughters, male servants, female servants, their stations in life, and financial circumstances. Thus for example, someone may be listed as being a 'Landwirt' or farmer by 'occupation' and a 'Eigenteumer' or freeholding landowner under 'status'. Most of the families in the Konsignation are listed as "Schlect" or as being of only moderate means. The status seems to include small independent farmers, artisans and craftsmen. 615 families are listed as being "Mittel mäsizig." The families would be well-to-do with servants and their own properties. Henry Schapansky explains the meaning of this term relative to the *Bauern-Verzeichnisz*, a record of landowning Mennonites from Prussia in early years:

It is noteworthy that a majority of these [families] were Frisian Mennonites, confirming the tradition that many of the Flemish Mennonites were descendants from urban Mennonites. Although, there are certainly many Flemish on these lists, I suspect that only very few immigrants to Russia were descendants of families listed on the *Bauern-Verzeichnisz*.<sup>14</sup>

Of the 2442 families listed in the 1776 Konsignation only 15 families are listed as "Gut" or very wealthy.

Church affiliation can be established from the village of residence as the inhabitants of a village usually belonged to a particular Gemeinde.<sup>15</sup> The profile of a family can be supplemented by reference to the Prussian Mennonite Gemeindebuecher, Parish Registers--both Lutheran and Catholic, local government and family records.

### 1808 Revisions-Listen.

The 1808 Revisions-Listen contains the names of 371 families resident in the Molotschna Colony, South Russia, in that year. It includes the following information: 1) Wirtschaft number on which the family lived in the village. This is of interest since all the farmsteads in a village were numbered and probably list the villagers in order going down the village street thereby indicating who was a neighbour in the village. The head of family listed in both the 1776 Konsignation and the 1808 Revisions-Listen is invariably male. Among the conservative Mennonite groups such as the KG, the matriarchal kinship connections were often as important--or even more so--than the patriarchal.<sup>16</sup> Therefore the female family head has been identified wherever possible and listed under her name as well. 2) Head of household, name of spouse (the first name only and not the maiden name) and respective ages. Additional informational is sometimes available in the immigration records for 1803 and 1804 with details such as place of birth and actual birth dates of family members.<sup>17</sup> The maiden name of the spouse is usually listed in the immigration records referred to above. 3) Place of origin in Prussia which is not necessarily the same as the place of residence of the ancestor

listed in the 1776 Konsignation. 4) Names and ages of children and other members of household such as servants, in-laws or parents. 5) The property listing includes the number of wagons, harrows, horses, cattle, sheep and grain and hay on hand. The number recorded in this paper for the wealth of each family is the total of the number of implements, cattle, horses and sheep listed in the Revisions-Listen. This is an arbitrary figure, but provides some basis for establishing comparisons. Additional information on the early Molotschna settlement period can be gleaned from the 1848 "Gemeinde Berichte" published by Woltner in 1941.<sup>18</sup>

It is noted that not all families identified in the 1776 Konsignation are included in the 1808 Molotschna Revisions-Listen. In some cases--such as the venerable Ohm Cornelius Epp (1728-1805)--their progeny did not immigrate to the Molotschna, and in other instances, they did not emigrate to the Molotschna until 1815 and later. The date of immigration to Russia in and of itself is extremely significant. Henry Schapansky has made the following observations in this regard:

I think the immigrants after 1815 had a disturbing impact on the Mennonites already in Russia, particularly, with respect to the Molotschna. After 1815, there were many West Prussian Mennonites with rather radical views of one kind or another. Most of the *Brüdergemeinde* received their impetus from immigrants after 1815. With respect to the *Kleine Gemeinde*, I don't think their profile is any different than the other Mennonite groups before 1815. The fact that the *Kleine Gemeinde* founders were from the 1803-1806 [immigrants] only meant that there were fewer barriers for the well-to-do to immigrate than before 1803.<sup>19</sup>

108 of the 371 families listed in the 1808 Revisions-Listen of the Molotschna Colony have been identified as having some KG connections and/or descendants. Of these 32 are listed twice, which means that there was a connection through the female side as well as the male. This demonstrates the relative strength of the matriline in the KG in the early part of the 19th century. 19 families are listed who immigrated to the Molotschna after 1818 confirming the previously held view that by far the greatest portion of the KG came from the original pioneer stock of the Molotschna. 2 families are listed who originally immigrated to the Chortitza or Old Colony and connected with the KG later.

### **Core Families.**

Helpful, also, to this study is the concept of a core group of KG families defined as those families whose history from 1804 to 1874 was integrally interconnected with the denomination. These would include families such as Klaas Reimer, Abraham von Riesen, and other ministers, leaders and lay individuals actively involved in the formation and subsequent evolution of the denomination. In many cases, these families or their children may have intermarried several times--and in some case almost exclusively--with other core group families. The core group also includes some families who immigrated to Russia after 1818 where the above characteristics apply. For the purpose of this study the group families are distinguished from "KG-related families" where possibly only one marriage or other interconnection with a core group family occurred. The core families and

their ancestors have been identified as such by the addition of an asterisks \* before their name in the appropriate listing. 25 of the 100 families identified in Prussia have been designated as part of the core group. Obviously the categorization is arbitrary, but the concept will help to analyze and understand this aspect of the KG story.

### Conclusions:

This study includes 103 Prussian families, 82 of whom are listed in the 1776 Konsignation. Several items of interest are evident from a review of the data provided:

1) **Place of origin.** Some ninety percent of the KG adherents had their roots in the northern portion of the Marienburg triangle along the banks of the Vistula River. The Gross-Werder area was first settled by the Mennonites during the 1560s. The most common villages of origin were Tiegenhagen--7, Tiegenhoff--5, Reinland--4 and Petershagen--4. Tiegenhagen, for example, was a village founded in ca. 1350 by the Teutonic Knights; it was depopulated when their rule decayed. Attempts were made to resettle the area after 1550 and "by 1640 it had become the Mennonite centre of the Tiegenhof lowlands. Tiegenhagen was also the seat of the Mennonite fire insurance which was founded in 1623 and covered all farms and other buildings owned by the Mennonites in the Grosswerder."<sup>20</sup> Of the 19 families listed in the four villages mentioned, 12 belonged to the core group. This indicates that Klaas Reimer received extensive "home town boy" support when he started his reform movement several decades later.

2) **Congregation of origin.** The Mennonites in the southern portion of the Gross-Werder area were served by the Heubuden Gemeinde which was established in the middle of the 16th century; 20 of the families identified in Prussia belonged to the Heubuden Gemeinde. The northern part of the Gross-Werder was served by the Aeltester from Danzig until 1735 when it was divided into four congregations; Tiegenhagen, Rosenort, Ladekopp (Orloff) and Fuerstenwerder (Baerwalde). Most of the KG originated from these Gemeinden which were the most conservative and the least Germanized of the congregations in Prussia. Of the families identified in Prussia, 24 came from the Tiegenhagen Gemeinde. This compares to about 25 per cent or 94 of the 371 families who settled in the Molotschna in 1804/5. Since the most conservative congregations in the Gross-Werder were of the Flemish Mennonite branch this characteristic held true for the Molotschna generally--at least during the early pioneer period--and for the KG as well. The most interesting statistic is that 14 of the 25 core group families came from the Tiegenhagen Gemeinde. Also surprising is the fact that 6 families originated from the Frisian Tragheimersweide Gemeinde and 1 family from the Prezchowka Gemeinde.

3) **Time of Immigration.** 85 of the 100 Prussian families in the study had progeny who emigrated to Russia in 1803-1804 and were pioneer families in the Molotschna. Surprisingly 19 families joined the KG from among the later immigrants who were generally more influenced by pietism and more Germanized. The ranks of the later immigrants also included a number of prominent KG leaders such as: Heinrich Balzer (1800-1846) of Tiede, prominent theologian; David Klassen (1813-1900) of Margenau, Heubodner Gemeinde delegate to America; Cornelius S. Plett (1820-1900) village Schulz in Kleefeld; Jakob A. Wiebe

(1836-1922), Crimean Aeltester; Johann Dueck (1801-1866) of Muntau, minister; Heinrich Ratzlaff (1848-1922), Jansen, Nebraska, minister; and Peter Baerg (1817-1901) of Nikolaidorf, Crimean minister.

4) **Socio-economic status.** Of the 82 families identified on the 1776 Konsignation, 12 were listed as "mittel mäszig". Of the core group of 25 KG-related families, 8, or about one-third, were "mittel mäszig". This compares to an average of about 25 per cent for the general Mennonite population listed in the 1776 Konsignation. This statistic is noteworthy in light of the general view that very few of the "mittel mäszig" status families immigrated to Russia. Of the 17 families listed in 1776 who were ancestors of those who joined the KG after 1818, only 2 were "mittel mäszig", namely; Johann Plett of Fuerstenwerder, and Peter Wiens of Fuerstenau. And yet, both sets of their immigrant children were poor which may susport the previously held suspicion that the generous assistance which the KG offered to its poor may have played a role in some of these cases. At the same time, both sets of immigrant families had children who rose to prominence in the KG: Johann Plett of Fuerstenwerder was the grandfather of Aeltester Peter P. Toews (1831-1922); and Peter Wiens of Fuerstenau was the grandfather of Anna Wiens, the mother of Jakob A. Wiebe (1836-1921), the fifth Aeltester of the KG.

The 25 core group families had 42 sets of children listed in the 1808 Revisions-Listen. Of these, 7 are listed more than once indicating that their spouses also came from a core group family and again demonstrating the strength of the matriline within the early KG. Of the remaining 35 KG-related families in the 1808 Revisions-Listen the average wealth is 21.5. This compares to an average of 15.4 for 143 families listed in the 1808 Revision-Listen in the villages of Muensterberg, Blumstein, Lindenau, Muntau, Petershagen and Ohrloff. The 6 villages referred to constitute one-third of the 18 in the Molotschna at the time. The average wealth for Lindenau and Muntau--perhaps two fairly typical villages--was 14.8 and 13.4, respectively. The average in the village of Blumsein, where 13 of the 21 families had some KG connection, was 19.5. The village of Ohrloff--home of the great Johann Cornies--had an average of 17.7. Ironically the KG started in Muensterberg and Petershagen, two of the wealthiest villages, with an average of 23.2 and 20.3 respectively. Of the 21 farmers in Muensterberg, 13 had KG connections, and of the 18 families in Petershagen, 12 were KG-related. These statistics directly contradict suggestions by historians such as Dr. Frank H. Epp that the founding members of conservative groups like the KG were from a lower genetic and socio-economic class.<sup>21</sup> In fact it reinforces what would be obvious to most non-Mennonite scholars, namely, that the well-to-do and property owners in a rural society--and perhaps, indeed, in any community--generally tend to be conservatives.

5) **Education and learning.** It is widely accepted that the founders of the KG were articulate and literate farmer-philosophers. Although there is no objective data at this point it seems as if at least some of their ancestors were of the same disposition. Whether this was the result of their religiosity--which encouraged a personal, albeit, communally-interpreted knowledge of the scriptures and of the writings of the faith--is only speculation at this point. Certainly many of the KG had a sound basic education and were more sophisticated in the ways of commerce through their business dealings and so on. E.g. The KG were the first people among the Russian Mennonites to involve themselves in translating the

considerable religious literature of the faith from Dutch into German and in publishing these writings.<sup>22</sup> Possibly further research can establish that these traits were already found among many of their ancestors in Prussia--and particularly so among the core group families.

6) **Data base.** Even those readers who do not sympathize with the vision and goals of the KG will acknowledge that the massive *Schrifttum* of this denomination can serve as valuable base of information from which other less fortunate groups can build. E.g. Many prominent religious and secular leaders in the Molotschna shared the ancestral roots of the KG. The data in this study can be used for various purposes and additional observations can be based thereon. Presumably other scholars will find and extrapolate their own trends and sociological factors therefrom. Hopefully everyone reading this article with genealogical information on the Prussian roots of their families will provide the same to the writer in order that this data base can be expanded and made as inclusive as possible. Many additional families could be listed, and as the information becomes more complete, the more discernible the sociological, economic and religious dynamics become.

7) **Case study.** In many ways, historical research regarding the Prussian Mennonites is still in its infant stages. It is hoped that this paper can serve as a modest beginning with respect to the genealogical roots of those families who immigrated to Russia in late 17th and early part of the 18th century. The foregoing compilation shows that the KG can serve as a sort of historical tunnel whereby Mennonite life in Prussia during the 1770s can be viewed from the relative comfort of the 20th century. It is exciting to see a profile of the 18th century Prussian ancestors of the KG emerging from the darkness of the unknown past. This profile is important since it establishes the genetic base of at least a quarter of all descendants of the Molotschna colony. This case study is important as it illuminates a part of the historical heritage of all Mennonites who trace their roots to Imperial Russia.

## 1776 Konsignation - West Prussia

Name	Village	Status	Gemeinde
Andres, widow <sup>23</sup>	Herrenhagen	Landwirt/s	Heubuden
Andres, Johann m.	Grossdorf	Gruetzer/s	Rosenort
Balzer, Hein (1773-1842) <sup>24</sup> m. Anna Ewert (1768-1812) 2m. Anna Ewert (1773-1842)	Schweingrube		Trag.
Bargmann, Jakob (died 1780) <sup>25</sup> m. Katharina (died 1775)	Leske	Eigentumer/s	Heubuden
Bartel, Jakob <sup>26</sup> m	Insel Kueche	Landwirt/s	Trag.
Born, Abraham (1765-1813) <sup>27</sup> m. Catharina Doerksen	Heubuden		Heubuden
Boschmann, Albrecht (died 1782) <sup>28</sup> m.	Czattkau		Heubuden
Boschmann, David <sup>29</sup> m.	Lackendorf	Arbeiter/s	Elbing
Berg, Michael (died 1781) <sup>30</sup> m.	Dammfeld	Landwirt/s	Rosenort
Bergen, Elias (1742-1808) <sup>31</sup> 2m. Anna Tocws 3m. Gertrude Regier (1763-1828)	Muensterberg	Landwirt/s	Heubuden
Bergen, Jakob (1758-1833) m. Margaretha Wall 2m. Elisabeth Niessen	Neuteicherwald	Lein./s	Fuerstenwerder
Bergen, Wilhelm (1734-1805) m. Katharina Reimer (died 1789) 2m. Katharina Wall (born 1764)	Mierau	Landwirt/s	Ladekopp

## 1808 Revisions-Listen - Molotschna, Russia

Name	Village	Wealth	Relationship
Andres, Judith (born ca.1772)	Lichtenau	18	daughter
m. Jakob Heidebrecht (born 1776) <sup>32</sup>			(see below)
Andres, Margaretha (born 1771) <sup>33</sup>	Lichtenau	18	daughter
m. Wilhelm Bergen (born 1774)			(see below)
Andres, Catarina (born 1777) <sup>34</sup>	Lichtenau	20	daughter
m. Abraham Isaac (born 1775)			(see below)
Balzer, Heinrich (1773-1842) <sup>35</sup>	Grossweide	immigrated 1818	same
m. Anna Ewert (1768-1812)			
2m. Anna Ewert (1773-1842)			
Barkmann, Jakob J.(1794-1875) <sup>36</sup>	Rueckenau	immigrated 1818	grandson
m. Gertrude Klassen (1800-1847)			
Barkmann, Martin J.(1796-1872) <sup>37</sup>	Rueckenau	immigrated 1818	grandson
m. Katharina Regier (1800-1866)			
Bartel, Johann (1764-1813) <sup>38</sup>	Kronsgarten	immigrated 1796	child
m. Aganetha Quiring (born 1770)			
Born, Catharina <sup>39</sup>	Schoenau		widow
Born, Anna (1798-1835)	Neukirch	immigrated 1818	child
m. Peter Ensz (1791-1857) <sup>40</sup>			
Boschmann, Albrecht (born 1778)	Fischau	16	child
m. Agatha ? (born 1778)			
Boschmann, Daniel (born 1771) <sup>41</sup>	Fischau	20	child
m. Maria Boschmann (born 1776) <sup>42</sup>			(see below)
Boschmann, David (1767-1850)	Rosenort	13	child
m. Marg Lepp (born 1775)			(see below)
Boschmann, Sus (1763-1841) <sup>43</sup>	Muensterberg		child
m. Hermann Neufeld (1760-1835) <sup>44</sup>			(see below)
Boschmann, Gerhard (born 1795) <sup>45</sup>		immigrated 1847	child
m. Katharina Berg (born 1800)			
Boschmann, Maria (born 1776)	Fischau	20	child
m. Daniel Boschmann (born 1771)			(see above)
Boschmann, Sara	Blumenort	18	child
m. Isaac Toews (born 1765)			
Berg, Jakob (born 1771) <sup>46</sup>	Rosenort	48	son
m. Sara Siemens (born 1761)			
Berg, Katharina (born 1785) <sup>47</sup>	Rosenort	19	granddaughter
m. Isaac Ensz (born 1770)			
Berg, Saara (born 1783) <sup>48</sup>	Rosenort	18	granddaughter
m. Peter Born (born 1779)			
Bergen, Gertrude (1763-1828) <sup>49</sup>	Schoensee	21	widow
Bergen, Jakob (1758-1833)	Schoenau	20	same
m. Margaretha Wall			
2m. Elisabeth Niessen			
Bergen, Helena (1779-1846) <sup>50</sup>	Schoenau	21	daughter
m. Peter Fast (1780-1852)			
Bergen, Johann (1783-1851)	Muensterberg		son
m. Maria Koop (born 1784) <sup>51</sup>			
Bergen, Wilhelm (born 1774)	Lichtenau	18	son
m. Margaretha Andres (born 1771)			
2m. Margaretha ? (born 1768)			(see above)
Bergen, Gertruda (born 1758)	Blumenort	14	daughter
m. Julius Enns (born 1742) <sup>52</sup>			

## 1776 Konsignation - West Prussia

Name	Village	Status	Gemeinde
Bergen, Heinrich (1745-1812) m. Maria ? 2m. Katharina Spenst (born 1764)	Leske	Landwirt/s	Heubuden
Brandt, Bernhard <sup>53</sup>	Ellerwald 4	Landwirt/s	Trag.
Braun, Jakob (died before 1783)	Tiegenhagen		Tiegenhagen
Braun, Isaac (1734-1812) m. Margaretha Martens (1736-1818) <sup>54</sup>	Vierzehnhuben	Pachter/s	Fuerstenwerder
Dyck, Isebr. (1720-1797) m. Anna Hamm (1724-1783)	Neumuensterberg	Landwirt/mm	Fuerstenwerder
Dyck, Jakob <sup>55</sup> m.	Leske	Landwirt/s	Heubuden
Dyck, Klaas (1743-1826) <sup>56</sup> *Eds, Abraham m. ?	Walldorf Neuteicherwalde	Landwirt/s Arbeiter/s	Rosenort Fuerstenwerder
*Enns, Cornelius (1743-ca.1806) m. Catrina Friesen (born 1761)	Lakendorf	Arbeiter/s	Elbing
*Epp, Cornelius (1728-1805) m. Sarah Andres (1727-1758) 2m. Christina Fast (1737-1796)	Neunhuben	Landwirt/mm	Danzig
*Epp, Peter (1725-1789) <sup>57</sup> m. Catharina Wiens (1730-1776)	Neunhuben	Landwirt/mm	Danzig
Esau, Peter	Ellerwald 4	Arbeiter/s	Trag.
*Fast, Bernhard <sup>58</sup> m. Susanna ?	Grossmausdorf	Landwirt/s	Rosenort
*Fast, Bernhard <sup>59</sup> m.	Walldorf	Landwirt/s	Rosenort
Fast, Elias (1747-1780) <sup>60</sup> m.	Tiegenhoff	Arbeiter	Tiegenhagen
Fast, Peter (1730-1806) <sup>61</sup> m.	Orloff	Landwirt/s	Ladekopp
Federau, Solomon (1724-1806) m. Maria Klassen (1734-1798)	Danzig		Danzig
*Friesen, Abr (1756-1810) <sup>62</sup> m. Margaretha Wiebe (1754-1810)	Tiegenhagen	mm <sup>63</sup>	Tiegenhagen

# 1808 Revisions-Listen - Molotschna, Russia

Name	Village	Wealth	Relationship
Bergen, Heinrich (1745-1812) <sup>64</sup> m. Maria ? 2m. Katharina Spenst (born 1764)	Kronsgarten		same
Bergen, Heinrich (born 1778) <sup>65</sup> m. Katharina Klassen (born 1779)	Fischau	20	son
Brandt, Peter (born 1779) <sup>66</sup> m. Elisabeth Siemens (born 1788) <sup>67</sup>	Blumenort	16	son
Braun, Jakob (born 1760) <sup>68</sup> 2m. Anna	Tiegenhagen	30	son
Braun, Jakob (born 1768) m. Anna Wiebe; 2m. Maria ? <sup>69</sup>	Schoenau	19	son
Dyck, Hermann <sup>70</sup> m. Helena v. Bergen (1779-1846) <sup>71</sup>	Schoenau		son (see above)
Dueck, Jakob (born 1766) <sup>72</sup> m. Katharina Schierling (1751-1812) <sup>73</sup>	Ohrloff	22	son
Dueck, Johann (born 1779) <sup>74</sup> m. Maria Penncr (born 1779)	Petershagen	24	son
Dyck, Klaas (1743-1826) <sup>75</sup>	Muntau	immigrated 1817	same
Eidsen, Cornelius (born 1770) <sup>76</sup> m. Helena Spenst (born 1776)	Fischau	20	child
Enns, Cornelius (1782-1834) <sup>77</sup> m. Maria Wiebe (1784-1845)	Fischau	17	child (see below)
Epp, David Aelt. (1750-1802) <sup>78</sup> m. Mag. Kroecker 2m. Anna Bergmann (born 1762)	Chortitza		child
Epp, Maria (1760-1806) m. Klaas Reimer (1770-1837)	Petershagen	27	child (see below)
Epp, Sara (1753-1779) m. Peter Klassen, (born 1749)	Petershagen	32	child (see below)
Esau, Cornelius (born 1778) <sup>79</sup> m. Anna Kornelsen (born 1774) <sup>80</sup>	Fischau	16	child (see below)
Fast, Daniel (1753-1829) <sup>81</sup> m. Katharina Neufeld (1751-1811)	Tiegenhagen	28	child (see below)
Fast, Berend (born 1758) <sup>82</sup> m. Saara Harms (born 1758)	Lichtenau	20	child (see below)
Fast, Johann (born 1770) <sup>83</sup> m. Katharina Harms (born 1766)	Blumstein	18	child (see below)
Fast, Wilhelm (born 1773) <sup>84</sup> m. Maria Enns (born 1769) <sup>85</sup>	Fischau	18	son
Fast, Peter (born 1780) <sup>86</sup> m. Helena (1779)	Muntau	6	grandson
Fast, Abraham (born 1796) <sup>87</sup> m. Eliesabeth Bergmann (born 1796)	Tiege	15	son
Federau, Abraham (born 1762) <sup>88</sup> m. Maria Wiebe		immigrated 1817	son
Friesen, Abraham (1756-1810) m. Margaretha Wiebe (1754-1810)	Ohrloff	29	same
Friesen, Abraham (1782-1849) m. Katharina Wiebe (1781-1854)	Ohrloff	3	child (see below)
Friesen, Anna (1785-1857) <sup>89</sup> m. Cornelius Sawatzky (1781-1840)	Ohrloff	21	child (see below)
Friesen, Margaretha (1784-1835) <sup>90</sup> m. Johann Friesen (1763-ca.1830)	Schoenau	30	child (see below)
Friesen, Helena (1787-1846) m. Klaas Reimer (1770-1837)	Petershagen	27	child (see below)

## 1776 Konsignation - West Prussia

Name	Village	Status	Gemeinde
Friesen, Arend (1722-1793) <sup>91</sup> 2m. Anna Wiens (1758-1805)	Blumenort	Hacker/s	Rosenort
*Friesen, Isebrandt <sup>92</sup> m. Helena Penner	Plattenhof	Arbeiter/s	Tiegenhagen
*Friesen, Jakob m.	Reinland	Arbeiter/s	Tiegenhagen
Friesen, Isaac (born 1748) <sup>93</sup> 2m. Anna Warkentin 3m. Katharina Penner	Stadtfeld	Landwirt/s	Heubuden
Goossen, Jakob (1713-1785) <sup>94</sup> 2m. Maria	Stobbendorf	Landwirt/s	Tiegenhagen
Giesbrecht, Jakob (1708-1776) m.	Pietzhendorf	Landwirt/s	Ladekopp
Giesbrecht, Gerhard (born 1747) m. Susanna Heide (born 1762) <sup>95</sup>	Krebsfeld	Landwirt/s	Rosenort
*Harder, Johann (1733-1803) <sup>96</sup> m. Maria Toews 2m. Sara Klassen (1731-1769)	Sandhof	Landwirt/s	Heubuden
Harder, Joh (died before 1814) <sup>97</sup> m. ?	Walldorf		Rosenort
*Harms, Johann <sup>98</sup> m. ?	Ellerwald 3	Lein./s	Elbing
Heydebrecht, Jakob m. Catharina Fast	Krebsfeld	Landwirt/s	Rosenort
Hiebert, Jakob	Schoensee	Arbeiter/s	Orloff
Isaac, Jakob m.	Reinland	Landwirt/s	Orloff
*Isaac, Peter (1732-1807) <sup>99</sup> m. Justina Schroeder (1743-1803) <sup>100</sup>	Baerwalde	Eigenteumer/mm	Fuerstenwerder

## 1808 Revisions-Listen - Molotschna, Russia

Name	Village	Wealth	Relationship
Friesen, Daniel (1752-1826) m. Sara (1744-1796) 2m. Maria Klassen (1775-1842) <sup>101</sup>	Petershagen	31	son
Friesen, Klaas (1774-1839) <sup>102</sup> m. Elisabeth Friesen (1776-1839)	Lindenau	13	child
Friesen, Johann (1763-ca.1830) m. Maria Thiessen 2m. Margaretha Friesen (1784-1835)	Schoenau	30	child  (see above)
Friesen, Peter (born 1768) m. Anna Neufeld 2m. widow of Martin Born	Lindenau	23	child (see below)
Friesen, Isaac (born 1748) <sup>103</sup> 2m. Anna Warkentin 3m. Kath. Penner (died ca.1808)	Altona	39	same
Friesen, Jakob (born 1774) m. Maria Thiessen (1764-1830) <sup>104</sup>	Muensterberg	28	child (see below)
Goossen, Franz (born 1752) <sup>105</sup> m. Judith	Ladekopp	17	son
Giesbrecht, Jakob (born 1763) <sup>106</sup> m. Helena Reimer (born 1775) <sup>107</sup>	Blumstein	21	child (see below)
Giesbrecht, Gerhard (born 1747) m. Susanna Heide (born 1762) <sup>108</sup>	Muntau	23	same
Harder, Johann (1764-1826) <sup>109</sup> m. Helena Stees (born 1756)	Blumstein	18	child
Harder, Agatha (1796-1857) m. Martin Klassen (1770-1845)	Rudnerweide	immigrated 1841	child (see below)
Harms, Johann (born 1773) <sup>110</sup> m. Maria Fast (born 1769) 2m. Anna Neudorf (born 1784)	Blumstein	21	child
Harms, Katharina (born 1766) m. Johann Fast (born 1770) <sup>111</sup>	Blumstein	18	child (see above)
Harms, Kornelia (born 1768) m. Johann Fast (died 1803) 2m. Peter Neufeld (born 1781)	Lindenau	13	child
Harms, Peter (born 1763) <sup>112</sup> m. Agatha Thiessen (born 1768)	Blumstein	18	child
Harms, Saara (born 1758) m. Berend Fast (born 1758) <sup>113</sup>	Lichtenau	20	child (see above)
Heidebrecht, Corn (born 1780) <sup>114</sup> m. Marg. ?	Lichtenau	12	son
Heidebrecht, Jakob (born 1776) <sup>115</sup> m. Judith Andres, (born 1772-3)	Lichtenau	18	son (see above)
Hiebert, Johann (born 1760) <sup>116</sup> m. Katharina Martens (born 1758)	Halbstadt	13	child
Isaac, Abraham (born 1775) <sup>117</sup> m. Katharina Andres (born 1777) <sup>118</sup>	Lichtenau	20	son (see above)
Isaac, Franz (1784-1853) <sup>119</sup> m. Marg Warkentin (1788-1868) <sup>120</sup>	Tiege	11	child
Isaac, Justina (1774-1831) m. Gerhard Kroecker (born 1769)	Tiege	8	child
Isaac, Peter (1780-1857) <sup>121</sup> m. Marg Wiens (1781-1843) <sup>122</sup>	Tiege	22	child (see below)
Isaac, Phillip (1769-1813) <sup>123</sup>	Tiege	42	child

## 1776 Konsignation - West Prussia

Name	Village	Status	Gemeinde
Janzen, Kornelius (1718-1793) <sup>124</sup> m. ? (1718-1793)	Broeske	Landwirt/s	Ladekopp
Janzen, Abr (born 1747) <sup>125</sup> m. Aganetha Epp (born 1845)	Petershagen	Landwirt/s	Tiegenhagen
Janzen, Johann <sup>126</sup> m. ?	Alt-Rosengard		Orlofferfelde
Kasdorf, Johann <sup>127</sup> m. Anna Dirksen (died 1788) 2m. Anna Harms	Heubuden	Arbeiter/s	Heubuden
Klassen, Abr (1739-1819) <sup>128</sup> m.	Tiegenhagen	Landwirt/s	Tiegenhagen
Klassen, Johann (1724-1804) <sup>129</sup> 2m. Justina Neufeld (1747-1817)	Tiegenhagen	Landwirt/s	Tiegenhagen
Klaasen, Johann (born 1745) m. Susanna	Mierau	Landwirt/s	Ladekopp
Klassen, Julius (1707-1793) m. Margaretha Mathies	Heubuden	/mm	Heubuden
Klassen, Martin (died 1774) <sup>130</sup> m. Elisabeth ? <sup>131</sup>	Tiegenhagen		Tiegenhagen
Klingenberg, Jakob <sup>132</sup> ?	Fuerstenauerfeld	Landwirt/s	Rosenort
Koop, Andreas (died ca.1816) 2m. Maria Janzen 3m. Kath. Epp <sup>133</sup>	Kleinmausdorf	Arbeiter/s	Ellerwald
*Koop, Johann (born 1739) <sup>134</sup> m. ? (died 1785) 2m. Marg Wiens	Schoeneberg	Arbeiter/s	Ladekopp
*Kornelsen, Hans (1746-1828) m. ? Barkman	Tiegenhoff	Arbeiter/s	Tiegenhagen
Kroeker, Franz <sup>135</sup> 2m. Agatha Klassen	Alt-Muensterberg	Landwirt/s	Fuerstenwerder
Kroeker, Julius (1747-1799) 2m. Margaretha Kroeker (born 1772) <sup>136</sup>	Schoenberg	Arbeiter/s	Ladekopp

## 1808 Revisions-Listen - Molotschna, Russia

Name	Village	Wealth	Relationship
Janzen, Johann (1752-1823) <sup>137</sup> m. Maria Bergmann (1758-1808) 2m. Anna Fast	Petershagen	53	child (see below)
Janzen, Abr (born 1747) <sup>138</sup> m. Aganetha Epp (born 1745) <sup>139</sup>	Petershagen	36	same
Janzen, Corn (born 1780) <sup>140</sup> m. Aganetha Janzen <sup>141</sup> (born 1778)	Petershagen	19	child
Janzen, Jakob (born 1784) m. Aganetha ? (born 1785)	Petershagen	15	child
Janzen, Johann (born ca.1777) <sup>142</sup> m. Amecke Klingenberg <sup>143</sup> 3m. Elis Joost		immigrated 1818	child (see below)
Kasdorf, Johann <sup>144</sup> m. Anna Dirksen (died 1788) 2m. Anna Harms	Fuerstenwerder	immigrated 1818	same
Kasdorf, Peter (born 1775) m. Maria Steffen (born 1780)	Blumstein	17	son
Klassen, David (1813-1900) <sup>145</sup> m. Aganetha Brandt (1816-1904) <sup>146</sup>	Margenau	immigrated in 1838	grandchild
Klassen, Johann (1758-1812) <sup>147</sup> 2m. Helena Conrad (1752-1846)	Tiege	32	child
Klaasen, Johann (born 1745) <sup>148</sup> m. Susanna	Altona	71	same
Klassen, Maria (born 1793) m. Johann Friesen (1789-1840) <sup>149</sup>	Ohrloff		daughter
Klassen, Peter (born 1749) m. Sara Epp (1753-1779) <sup>150</sup>	Petershagen	32	son (see above)
Klassen, Katharina (born 1777) m. Franz Wiens (born 1779) <sup>151</sup>	Petershagen	9	grandchild
Klassen, Peter (born 1775) <sup>152</sup> m. Gertrude Regier (born 1775)	Petershagen	12	grandchild
Klassen, Martin (1770-1845) <sup>153</sup> m. Kath Toews (1760-ca.1817) 2m. Agatha Harder (1796-1857)	Rudnerweide	immigrated 1841	child (see above)
Klassen, Peter (born 1774) <sup>154</sup> m. Katherina ? (born 1778)	Altona	immigrated 1818	child
Klingenberg, Amecke m. Johann Janzen (born ca.1777)		immigrated 1818	child (see above)
Koop, Andreas (1773-ca.1806) <sup>155</sup> m. Maria Weiss (born 1771)	Muntau		child
Koop, Johann (born 1766) <sup>156</sup> m. Elisabeth ? (born 1767)	Muntau	16	child
Kornelsen, Abraham (1769-1831) m. Agatha Schellenberg (1778-1858)	Lichtenau	22	child (see below)
Kornelsen, Anna (born 1774) <sup>157</sup> m. Cornelius Esau (born 1778) <sup>158</sup>	Fischau	16	child (see above)
Kroeker, Franz (born 1773) <sup>159</sup> 2m. Susanna Neufeld (born 1771)	Muensterberg	21	son
Kroeker, Marg. (born 1772) <sup>160</sup> m. Julius Kroeker (1747-1799) 2m. Jakob Wiebe (born 1776)	Blumstein	25	widow (see below)

## 1776 Konsignation - West Prussia

Name	Village	Status	Gemeinde
Lepp, Kornelius (1750-1812) <sup>151</sup> m. Aganetha Friesen (1753-1823)	Altendorf	Landwirt/s	Orloff
*Laewen, Johann (1738-1797) m. Anna Siemens (1734-1803)	Tiegenhagen	Arbeiter/s	Tiegenhagen
*Leeben, Isaac (1737-1797) m. ?	Tiegenhoff	Arbeiter/s	Tiegenhagen
Loewen, Elias (died 1803) m. Maria Vogt 2m. Helena Thiessen (born 1745)	Kalthof	Lein./s	Heubuden
Loewen, Wilhelm (died 1794) <sup>162</sup> m. Margaretha Braun (born 1794) <sup>163</sup>	Walldorf		Rosenort
Martens, Jakob <sup>164</sup> m	Lackendorf	Landwirt/s	Elbing
Mathies, Johann (died 1774) <sup>165</sup> m. Khristina Loewen (1736-1785)	Heubuden		Heubuden
Mathies, Jakob m. Anna Wiebe <sup>166</sup>	Leske	Landwirt/s	Heubuden
Neufeld, Johann <sup>167</sup> m.	Mausdorferweide	Landwirt/s	Rosenort
Neufeld, wid.(1729-1806) <sup>168</sup>	Neuteichhinterfeld	Landwirt/s	Orloff
Neumann, Andreas <sup>169</sup> m. Margaretha Abrams	Klein Schardau	Landwirt/s	Trag.
Peters, Gerhard <sup>170</sup>	Neulanghorst	Arbeiter/s	Rosenort
*Plett, Johann (born ca.1730) m. ?	Fuerstenwerder	Landwirt/mm	Fuerstenwerder

## 1808 Revisions-Listen - Molotschna, Russia

Name	Village	Wealth	Relationship
Lepp, Cornelius (born 1781) <sup>171</sup> m. Margaretha Wolf (born 1774)	Blumstein	33	son (see below)
Lepp, Margaretha (born 1775) m. David Boschmann (1767-1850)	Rosenort	13	daughter (see above)
Loewen, Margaretha (1767-1823) m. Cornelius Toews	Lindenau	16	child (see below)
Loewen, Isaak (1759-1834) <sup>172</sup> m. Margaretha Ens	Lindenau	14	child
Loewen, Jakob (born 1771) <sup>173</sup> m. Kath ? (born 1764)	Muntau	12	child
Loewen, Elias (born 1764) m. Helena Fast (born 1774)	Muensterberg	14	child
Loewen, Daniel (born 1776) m. Maria Weisz (born 1771) <sup>174</sup>	Muntau	11	child
Loewen, Johann (born 1781) m. Katharina ?	Muntau	11	child
Martens, Paul (born 1769) <sup>175</sup> m. Katharina ?	Schoensee	21	son
Martens, Katharina (born 1769) m. Jakob Doleski (born 1769) <sup>176</sup>		immigrated 1806	daughter
Mathies, Jakob (1760-before 1808) <sup>177</sup> m. Katharina (born 1764)	Altona		child
Mathies, Susanna (born 1786) <sup>178</sup> m. Heinrich Ens (born 1788)	Lindenau	13	grandchild
Mathies, Margaretha (1757-1819) <sup>179</sup> m. Wiens, Johann (1753-1816)	Tiege	25	daughter
Neufeld, Eleonora (1762-ca.1830) m. Gerhard Neufeld (1758-1817)	Lichtenau	29	child
Neufeld, Elisabeth (born 1763) m. Jakob Wiebe (born 1764)	Ohrloff	22	child (see below)
Neufeld, Anna m. Peter Friesen (born 1768)	Lindenau	24	child (see above)
Neufeld, Kath (1751-1811) <sup>180</sup> m. Daniel Fast (1753-1829)	Tiegehagen	28	step-child (see above)
Neufeld, Herm. (1760-1835) <sup>181</sup> m. Susanna Boschmann (1763-1841) <sup>182</sup>	Muensterberg	43	child (see below)
Neumann, Jakob (1790-1849) <sup>183</sup> m. Maria Peters (1791-1849)		immigrated after 1818	child
Peters, Anna (1761-before 1808) m. Abraham Krueger (born 1751) <sup>184</sup>	Petershagen	13	daughter
Peters, Abraham (born 1762) <sup>185</sup> m. Sara (born 1760)	Petershagen	16	son
Peters, Jakob (born 1775) <sup>186</sup> m. Anna Martens (born 1773) 2m. Helena (born 1774)	Schoenau	25	son
Plett, Michael (born 1760) 2m. Anna Wiens	Halbstadt	27	child
Plett, Johann (1765-1833) <sup>187</sup> 3m. Esther Smit	Blumstein	immigrated 1828	child

## 1776 Konsignation - West Prussia

Name	Village	Status	Gemeinde
Ratzlaff, Adam (born 1750) <sup>188</sup> Katharina Ratzlaff (1769-1810)	Deutsch Konopat	Weber/s	Przechowka
Regehr, Franz <sup>189</sup> m. Katherina Enns	Neu-Muensterberg		Fuerstenwerder
Regier, Peter (1740-1811) <sup>190</sup> m. Judith (1750-1808)	Prangenu	Landwirt/s	Ladekopp
*Reimer, Heinrich <sup>191</sup> m. Agatha Epp	Petershagen		Tiegenhagen
*Reimer, Arend (died 1808) <sup>192</sup> m. ? 2m. Marg Braun (1758-1788) 3m. Susanna Dyck (1763-1846) <sup>193</sup>	Petershagen	Arbeiter/s	Tiegenhagen
Reimer, Jakob (born 1752) <sup>194</sup> m.	Tiegenhagen	Arbeiter/s	Tiegenhagen
Reimer, Johann m. Anna ?	Altmuensterberg	Arbeiter/s	Heubuden
Rempel, Bernhard <sup>195</sup> m. Barbara Fast <sup>196</sup>	Reinland		Tiegenhagen
Sawatzky, Johann <sup>197</sup> m. ? 2m. Anna Dyck 3m. Katharina Wiens	Ellerwald 2	Landwirt/s	Heubuden
*Schellenberg, Gerth (1725-1802) m. Anna Klassen 2m. Christina (Kath.) Reimer (1736-1805)	Tiegenhoff	Arbeiter/s	Tiegenhagen
*Siemens, Johann <sup>198</sup> m. ?	Neustaedterwalde	Arbeiter/mm	Tiegenhagen

## 1808 Revisions-Listen - Molotschna, Russia

Name	Village	Wealth	Relationship
Ratzlaff, Adam (born 1783) <sup>199</sup> m. Helena Schmidt (1785-1868)	Frauzthal	time unknown	child
Regehr, Johann (born 1759) <sup>200</sup> m. Katherina Epp (born 1764) <sup>201</sup>	Kronsgarten	time unknown	child
Regier, Isaac (1797-1840) <sup>202</sup> m. Maria Giesbrecht (1800-1855) <sup>203</sup>	Muntau	time unknown	grandson
Reimer, Klaas (1770-1837) m. Maria Epp 2m. Helena Friesen (1787-1846)	Petershagen	27	child (see above) (see above)
Reimer, Helena (born 1779) m. Jakob Regier (1774)	Schoenau	8	child
Reimer, Jakob ((1780-1871) <sup>204</sup> Margaretha Guenther (born 1783)	Tiege	21	child
Reimer, Heinrich (1791-1884) <sup>205</sup> m. Maria Fast (1795-1859) <sup>206</sup>	Muntau		child
Reimer, Jakob (born 1752) 2m. Helena	Muntau	8	same
Reimer, Helena (born 1775) <sup>207</sup> m. Jakob Giesbrecht (born 1763)	Blumstein	21	child (see above)
Reimer, Dirck (born 1782) <sup>208</sup> m. Susanna Dyck (1763-1846)	Muntau	12	child
Reimer, Abraham (born 1773) m. Maria Friesen (born 1780)	Muensterberg	19	son
Reimer, Johann (born 1774) <sup>209</sup> m. Margaretha Klassen (born 1767)	Muensterberg	13	son
Reimer, Peter (born 1787) m. Susanna ? (born 1785)	Ladekopp	12	son
Rempel, Peter (1792-1837) <sup>210</sup> m. Kath Berg (1780-1831) 2m. Marg Sawatsky (1808-1892)	Muntau	immigrated 1818	child
Sawatzky, Cornelius (1781-1840) <sup>211</sup> m. Anna Friesen (1785-1857)	Ohrloff	21	son (see above)
Sawatzky, Isaac (born 1772) m. Margaretha ? (born 1783)	Tiegenhagen	27	son
Sawatzky, Johann (born 1765) m. Anna Wall (born 1769)	Tiegenhagen	19	son
Schellenberg, Gerh (1759-1813) m. Helena Guenther (born 1757)	Blumstein	23	child
Schellenberg, Jakob (born 1772) m. Catharina Braun (born 1769)	Tiegenhagen	17	child
Schellenberg, Arou (1773-1853) m. Helena Neubauer (1769-1842)	Blumstein	18	child
Schellenberg, Agatha (1778-1858) m. Abraham B. Kornelsen (1769-1831)	Lichtenau	22	child (see above)
Siemens, Claasz (born 1758) <sup>212</sup> m. Katharina Friesen (born 1768) <sup>213</sup>	Rosenort	44	child

## 1776 Konsignation - West Prussia

Name	Village	Status	Gemeinde
Thiessen, Heinrich (1724-1794) m.	Dammfelde	Landwirt/s	Rosenort
Thiessen, Isaac	Lackendorf	Arbeiter/s	Elbing
Thiessen, Jak.(died before 1788) <sup>214</sup>	Walldorf		Rosenort
Thiessen, Martin (1737-1822) <sup>215</sup> m. Elske Penner (1740-1821)	Lachenwald		Tiegenhagen
*Toews, Cornelius (1735-1800) m. Elisabeth Regehr (1737-1811)	Ladekopp	Landwirt/mm	Ladekopp
Warkentin, Corn (died 1803) <sup>216</sup> m ?	Halbstadt	Haeker/s	Heubuden
*Warkentin, Martin (1705-1782) <sup>217</sup> m. ?	Tiegenhoff	Arbeiter/s	Tiegenhagen
*Warkentin, Hans (died 1805) <sup>218</sup> m. ?	Petershagen	Landwirt/mm	Tiegenhagen
Wiebe, Dirck <sup>219</sup> m.	Reinland	Arbeiter/s	Tiegenhagen
*Wiebe, Peter (b. 1755) <sup>220</sup> m. Elisabeth ?	Stadtfeld		Heubuden
Wiebe, Heinrich (born 1746) m. Judith Dyck 2m. Maria Dyck	Blumenort	Arbeiter/s	Rosenort
Wiebe, Heinrich <sup>221</sup> m. Katharina Schierling (born 1751)	Neuteicherwald		Ladekopp
Wiebe, Jakob (1725-1807) <sup>222</sup> m. Khristina (1729-1792) 2m. Justina Kroeker	Renkau		Heubuden
Wiebe, Johann (1697-1780) m	Schoensee	Landwirt/mm	Ladekopp
Wiens, Franz (1722-1803) <sup>223</sup> m. Eliesabeth Regier 2m. Susanna Wiebe	Herrenhagen	Landwirt/s	Heubuden
Wiens, Johann (born 1748) m. Sara Klassen	Ziegendorf		Heubuden
Wiens, Nikolas (1732-1794) <sup>224</sup> m Barbara Penner (1738-1814)	Fuerstenwerder		Fuerstenwerder
Wiens, Peter <sup>225</sup> m.	Fuerstenau	Landwirt/mm	Rosenort
Wittenberg, Jak. <sup>226</sup> m. ?	Robach und Zeyer	Arbeiter/s	Rosenort
Wolf, Gottfried m.	Krebsfeld	Landwirt/s	Rosenort

## 1808 Revisions-Listen - Molotschna, Russia

Name	Village	Wealth	Relationship
Thiessen, Heinrich (died 1782) <sup>227</sup> m. Susanna Siemens (born 1761) <sup>228</sup>	Rosenort	48	son
Thiessen, Dirk (born 1770) m. Maria Reimer (born 1750)	Muensterberg	15	son
Thiessen, Isaac (1763-1835) m. Helena (born 1767) <sup>229</sup>	Muensterberg	38	son
Thiessen, Franz (born 1772) <sup>230</sup> m. Helena Thiessen (born 1772)	Schoensee	8	son
Thiessen, Peter (1775-1839) <sup>231</sup> m. Gertruda Born (1774-1816)	Rosenort	25	child
Thiessen, Maria (1764-1830) m. Jakob Friesen (born 1774) <sup>232</sup>	Muensterberg	28	child (see above)
Toews, Cornelius (1766-1831) <sup>233</sup> m. Margaretha Loewen (1767-1823)	Lindenau	16	child (see above)
Warkentin, Corn. (1777-1847) <sup>234</sup> 2m. Kath. Warkentin (1784-1852)	Blumstein	immigrated 1818	child
Warkentin, Martin (1764-1853) m. Agatha Warkentin (born 1765) <sup>235</sup>	Blumstein	21	child
Warkentin, Philip (born 1780) <sup>236</sup> m. ? (born 1779)	Rosenort	11	grandchild
Warkentin, Johann (1760-1825) 2m. Margaretha Thiessen (1767-ca.1806)	Blumenort	30	child
Wiebe, Jakob (born 1764) <sup>237</sup> m. Elisabeth Neufeld (born 1763) <sup>238</sup>	Ohrloff	20	child (see above)
Wiebe, Peter (born 1755) <sup>239</sup> 2m. Maria Siemens (born 1760)	Schoenau	37	same
Wiebe, Maria (1784-1845) m. Cornelius Enns (1782-1834) <sup>240</sup>	Fischau	17	child (see above)
Wiebe, Peter (born 1779) m. Anna Kroeker (born 1774)	Lichtenau	26	child
Wiebe, Claasz (born 1781) m. Anna ? (born 1786)	Tiege	9	child
Wiebe, Katharina (1781-1854) <sup>241</sup> m. Abraham Friesen (1782-1849)	Ohrloff	3	child (see above)
Wiebe, Peter (born 1765) <sup>242</sup> m. Anna Fast 2m. Anna Theichgrof (born 1769)	Lindenau	14	son
Wiebe, Jakob (born 1776) m. Margaretha Kroeker (born 1772) <sup>243</sup>	Blumstein	25	son (see above)
Wiens, Johann (1753-1816) <sup>244</sup> m. Margaretha Mathies (1757-1819)	Tiege	25	son
Wiens, Margaretha (1781-1843) m. Peter Isaac (1780-1857)	Tiege	22	grandchild (see above)
Wiens, Johann (born 1748) <sup>245</sup> m. Sara Klassen (born 1757)	Altona	44	same
Wiens, David (1775-1838) <sup>246</sup> m. Katharina Enns	Schoenau	31	child
Wiens, Franz (1773-1838) <sup>247</sup> m. Friesen (1775-1845)	Grossweide <sup>248</sup>	immigrated in 1825	child
Wittenberg, Ab (born 1760) <sup>249</sup> m. Helena Wiens (born 1763)	Muensterberg	25	child
Wolf, Margaretha (born 1774) m. Cornelius Lepp (born 1781) <sup>250</sup>	Blumstein	33	daughter (see above)

## Endnotes: Prussian Roots of the Kleine Gemeinde.

1. Plett, ed., *The Golden Years* (Steinbach, Man., 1985), 355 pages, and *Storm and Triumph* (Steinbach, Man., 1986), 337 pages.

2. John B. Wiens, "Taunty Wellmschy" *Anna Warkentin Wilms (1824-1910)* (Winnipeg, Man.: Kindred Press, 1970), 75 pages. J. B. Wiens was married to the granddaughter of Anna Warkentin Wilms (1824-1910). Summarized excerpts from this book were published by Mary Dueck Regehr, "Taunty Willmschy Anna Warkentin Wilms," *Der Bote* (1981), 10. This article is a short abridgement of a fictionalized biography of daughter Anna Wilms, nee Warkentin. The foregoing quotation includes some parts of both accounts. See Plett, "Cornelius Warkentin 1777-1847 Genealogy," unpublished paper, Steinbach, 1992, 5 pages.

3. *Ibid.*.

4. Elisabeth Warkentin (1819-1905) married Gerhard Schellenberg (1827-1908) of Ohrloff, Molotschna. The family later moved to the Borosenko settlement and from there to the village of Rosenfeld near Kleefeld, Manitoba. See Plett, "Gerhard Schellenberg Genealogy 1725-1802," in Plett, ed, *Pioneers and Pilgrims* (Steinbach, Man., 1990), 441-443.

5. Anna Warkentin (1824-1910), also a lover of horses like her father, married Heinrich Willms. Because she was her father's favourite she inherited almost his entire estate and the family became quite wealthy. Heinrich Willms also served several terms as the Schulz or mayor of the village of Tiege; see John B. Wiens, 18. An English language summary of the story of Anna Warkentin Wilms (1824-1910) was published in 1978 by Mary Regehr Dueck, "Taunty Wellmschy: Anna Warkentin Wilms (1824-1910)" in Mary Lou Cummings, ed., *Full Circle: Stories of Mennonite Women* (Newton, Ks.: Faith and Life Press, 1970), 192-202.

6. James Urry, *None But Saints: The Transformation of Mennonite Life in Russia 1789-1889* (Winnipeg, 1989), 108.

7. As published by Benjamin H. Unruh, *Die niederländisch-niederdeutschen Hintergründe der Mennonitischen Ostwanderungen im 16., 18. und 19 Jahrhundert* (Karlsruhe, 1955), 304-330.

8. Fortunately information on the late 18th century Prussian Gemeinden is rapidly becoming more accessible. Mention should be made in this regard of researchers such as Dr. Adelbert Goertz and Dr. Glenn Penner who have been active in the process of deciphering and interpreting the Prussian church records which are extant and of publishing this information. Of particular interest is the work of Henry Schapansky who is the leading expert on the Prussian roots of the founders of the Chortitz or Old Colony settlement founded in 1789. Mr. Schapansky has done considerable research on the Prussian roots of particular KG families and has been kind enough to make this information available to the writer. It is largely through this assistance that this article is possible at this time. Henry Schapansky, 914 Chilliwack St., New Westminster, B. C., V3L 4V5. Information provided by Mr. Schapansky specifically for this article will be cited here; information provided for other articles will be referenced there. Also of great assistance will be the recently available 1835 Molotschna Colony census which lists the names of the fathers of some of the Molotschna pioneers and which will assist in verifying connections to the Prussian church records.

9. A. Driedger, "Marienburger Werder," *ME* 3, 481-482.

10. *Ibid.*

11. As published in Horst Penner, *Die ost-und westpreussischen Mennoniten* (Karlsruhe, 1978), 414-468.

12. Henry Schapansky to author November 6, 1992.

13. Unruh, 372.

14. Henry Schapansky to author September 17, 1990.

15. For a listing of village names and church affiliations see, Glenn Penner, "West Prussian Mennonite Villages ca. 1540-1820," unpublished paper, presented to a meeting of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, 1979--courtesy of Dr. Glenn Penner, Box 373, Plum Coulee, Manitoba, R0G 1R0.

16. This is illustrated by the Abraham von Riesen (1756-1810) family, where maternal connections to the family were highly treasured even generations later. Plett, "Abraham von Riesen 1756-1810 Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874* (Steinbach, Man., 1987), 265-293.

17. The immigration records have been published by Unruh, 336-355.

18. Woltner, *Die Gemeinde Berichte von 1848 die Deutsche Seidlungen am Schwarzen Meer* (Leipzig, 1941), 163.

19. Henry Schapansky to author November 6, 1992.

20. Horst Penner, "Tiegenhagen," *ME* 4, 721-722.

21. Frank H. Epp, *Mennonites in Canada 1786-1920: The History of a Separate People* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1974), 195.

22. Klaas Reimer (1770-1837), for example, is known to have translated parts of Menno Simons' *Fundamentbuch* from Dutch to German. An extract of a piece of translation dealing with the practice of shunning, is recorded in a journal belonging to Rev. Gerhard Schellenberg (1827-1908) formerly of Ohrloff, Molotschna, and later of the village of Rosenfeld, near Kleefeld, Manitoba. Gerhard Schellenberg, "Dieses Buch gehoeret Gerhard Schellenberg in Rosenfeld geschrieben an 1860 im Februar Worin etliche Erklarungen und Vorantwortungen Enthalten sind," unpublished journal, Kleefeld, Manitoba, 53 pages, courtesy of Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba. The practice of reading in Dutch and translating to German was common among the KG. This was the case not merely among the leaders but also among the laity. A number of lay parishioners, such as Isaac Loewen (1787-1873), read avidly in Dutch and translated the same to German; see Part Nine, Chapters One to Four. Another case in point is Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) of Muntau, Molotschna, and later Gruenfeld, Manitoba; see Plett, "Heinrich Reimer 1791-1884 Muntau," Part Eleven, Chapter One.

23. She was the widow of Martin Andres, who died August 8, 1775. They are listed in the 1776 Konsignation with 3 sons and 2 daughters. Henry Schapansky to author March 25, 1993.

24. Information on Heinrich Balzer (1773-1842) is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, "Heinrich Balzer family chart," received September 21, 1990.

25. Jakob Bergmann (died 1780) was presumably the father of Jakob Bergmann (1756-before 1819) of Neustaedterwald, Prussia, who may have been the father of Jakob J. Barkman (1794-1875) and Martin J. Barkman (1796-1872) who immigrated to Russia as single men in 1818 and settled in the village of Rueckenau, Molotschna, where both of them, in their time, served as the village Schulz. Jakob Bergmann (died 1780) may have been the son of Abraham Bergmann (1708-1777), who is identified in Koselitzke in 1772 and who is listed in the 1776 Konsignation in Neuedorf. This information is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author November 28, 1992. Mr. Schapansky writes as follows, "My material on Jakob Bergmann. The Gustav Schulz material was not helpful, in that very little information is given. The attached charts should be regarded as speculative, but is the best guess I have. Jakob Bergmann would have been born in 1756, not 1765." In a letter to the *Rundschau*, Gustav Schulz writes that the parents of the two Barkman brothers, Jakob and Martin, who immigrated in 1818 and settled in Rueckenau, were Jakob Bergmann and Katharina Wiens--Gustav Schulz, letter to the *Rundschau* December 14, 1910; see also Plett, "Jakob Barkman Genealogy 1765," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 279-297.

26. Henry Schapansky has written that in his view Jakob Bartel was the father of Franz and Johann Bartel who immigrated to Krongarten. Schapansky to author November 21, 1992.

27. Identification of Abraham Born (1765-1813) as the ancestor of Anna Born (1798-1835), the wife of Rev. Peter Ensz (1791-1857), is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author April 30, 1991.

28. Information regarding Albrecht Boschmann and his children is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author November 21, 1992. See also Plett, "Boschmanns in the Kleine Gemeinde," unpublished paper, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1992, for additional information regarding the Boschmann families referred to in this paper.

29. Information regarding David Boschmann and his children is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author November 21, 1992.

30. Michael Berg (died 1781) was the son of David Berg who was baptised in 1751. Information regarding the Michael Berg family is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author May 22, 1993.

31. Information regarding Elias Bergen (1742-1808), and the Prussian connections of the other Bergen families referred to herein, is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author November 21, 1992.

32. He was the son of Jakob Heydebrecht listed in Krebsfeld, Prussia, 1776. See Plett, "Jakob Heidebrecht Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 415-426.

33. Schapansky to author March 25, 1993.

34. Henry Schapansky writes as follows regarding the family of Johann Andres: ". . . Peter Andres (born 1765) [listed with the family of Franz Kroeker, Lichtenau, Wirtschaft 11, Revisions-Listen; Unruh, 313] is very likely the son of Johann Andres, Kl. or Grosz Mausdorf 1776: 1 son, 3 dau., and a brother of Margaretha, born 1769, [Mrs. Wilhelm Bergen] and Catharina, born 1771, [Mrs. Abraham Isaac], later of Lichtenau, Molotschna." Schapansky to author April 21, 1993.

Henry Schapansky writes as follows regarding the family of Hermann Andres shown with the family of Johann Riedger, Wirtschaft 17, Lichtenau, recorded in 1808 Revisions-Listen (Unruh, 314): "Yes, I believe he is related to the other Andres in Lichtenau and was a son of Johann Andres, Kl. Mansdorf, 1776"--Henry Schapansky to author May 22, 1993.

35. Heinrich Balzer (1773-1842) was elected as a minister in 1810. Unruh, 366. His son Heinrich Balzer (1800-1846) was the famous KG philosopher and theologian of Tiege, Molotschna. Another son Peter Balzer (1827-1902) immigrated to Kansas during the 1870s where they settled in Superior Township, McPherson County. See James Urry, "Heinrich Balzer (1800-1846): Kleine Gemeinde minister and conservative Mennonite philosopher" and Plett, "Balzer Genealogies"--published in Part Four as Chapters One and four.

36. According to a letter by Gustav Schulz, *Rundschau*, December 14, 1910, the parents of the two Barkman brothers, Jakob and Martin, of Rueckenau, Molotschna, were Jakob Bergmann and Katharina Wiens. See Plett, "Jakob Barkman Genealogy 1765," 279-297, where the birthdate of the father is given as 1765. Henry Schapansky, letter to the author November 28, 1992, writes in this regard that the birth year of Jakob Barkman would have been 1756 and not 1765. Jakob Barkman (1794-1874) was the father of Peter K. Barkman (1826-1917), Margenau, and later Rosenfeld, Borosenko Colony, who settled in Steinbach, Manitoba, in 1874.

37. Martin J. Barkman (1796-1872), Rueckenau, was the father of KG preacher Jakob M. Barkman (1824-1875) who drowned in the Red River, near Winnipeg, Manitoba, in 1875. Several of his siblings settled in Jansen, Nebraska, and one brother, Peter M. Barkman, settled in Gnadenau, Kansas.

38. Johann Bartel (1764-1813) immigrated to Russia in 1797 where he settled in the village of Kronsgarten, 80 verst north of the Chortitz Colony. He was elected as a minister in the same year. He was the father of Jakob Bartel (1808-1872), Neukirch, Molotschna, who was the father of Jakob F. and Johann F. Bartel, who settled in Jansen, Nebraska, together with their mother and step-father, during the 1870s. Johann Bartel (1764-1813) was also the father of Peter Bartel, who was the father-in-law of Cornelius P. Toews (1836-1908) of Hierschau, Molotschna, who later served as a delegate for the Blumenhoff KG at Borosenko. See Plett, "Johann Bartel 1764-1813 Kronsgarten," unpublished paper, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1992, 7 pages.

39. She was the widow of Abraham Born (1765-1823) of Heuboden, Prussia.

40. He was the father of Peter Enns (1822-1896) who settled in the East Reserve village of Altona near Chortitz, Manitoba, in 1874. In their later years the family moved to Steinbach, Manitoba. Plett, "Peter Enns 1791-1857 Genealogy," unpublished paper, 5 pages, sets forth additional information regarding this family.

41. His son Davit Boschmann (1797-1885) took over the family Wirtschaft. His daughter married Johann Willms. See Gerhard S. Kornelsen letters, courtesy of John K. Schellenberg, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1985. These documents are presently in the possession of the Archives of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference, 440 Main St., Steinbach, Manitoba.

42. She was the daughter of David Boschmann and hence the aunt of Katharina Boschmann (1832-1878) who married Bernhard Harder (1832-1884), the famous Russian Mennonite poet and evangelist. Schapansky to author November 21, 1992.

43. They were the parents of Rev. Heinrich Neufeld (1791-1865) of Rosenort, Molotschna, who married Regina von Riesen, the youngest sister of Abraham Friesen (1782-1849), the second Aeltester of the KG. See Plett, "Peter Neufeld 1697-1769," unpublished paper, Steinbach, Manitoba, 31 pages, for a more complete listing of this family. Most of the Heinrich Neufeld (1791-1865) children settled in Inman, Kansas, during the 1870s.

44. Hermann Noufeld served as the Schulz of the village of Muensterberg during the period 1812/16; see Klaas Reimer, "Ein Kleines Aufsatz," Part Two, chapter Two.

45. They were the parents of Katharina Boschmann (1832-1878) who married Bernhard Harder (1832-1884), the famous Russian Mennonite poet and evangelist. Plett, "Johann Harder Genealogy 1764-1826," 364-365.

46. Jakob Berg (born 1771) was the owner of an estate in Dammfelde, Prussia; see Unruh, 329 and 336. He married the Sara Siemens, the widow Heinrich Thiessen (died 1796). Her son Klaas (Nicholas) Thiessen (born 1790) was the father of Johann W. Thiessen (1813-1888) of Contentiusfeld, Molotschna, and later Jansen, Nebraska. One speculates whether she was possibly related to Claasz Siemens of Wirtschaft 15 in Rosenort, who had many descendants in the KG.

47. Hermann Berg, brother of Jakob Berg (born 1771) of Wirtschaft 19, Rosenort, died September 20, 1787, in Dammfeld, Prussia. He was married to Anna Wall (born 1753) who emigrated to Russia and lived with her daughter, Mrs. Isaac Ensz, nee Katharina Berg, on Wirtschaft 14 in Rosenort; Henry Schapansky, letter to the author August 10, 1993.

48. She was the daughter of Hermann Berg who died September 20, 1787 at Dammfeld, Prussia, and the granddaughter of Michael Berg (died 1781) Dammfeld, Prussia.

49. Elias von Baergen (1742-1808) was the father of Gerhard Baergen (1802-1889) who lived in Friedensdorf and then Kleefeld, Molotschna. His son, Gerhard Baergen (1833-1899), immigrated to the United States where he settled in Harvey County, Kansas. A daughter Judith may have been married to a Gerhard Willms (1792-1837) who was the father of Gerhard Willms (1820-1900) who settled in Mountain Lake, Minnesota, during the 1870s. Plett, "Baergens in the Kleine Gemeinde," unpublished paper, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1992, 9 pages, has additional information regarding all the Baergen families referred to herein.

50. They were the parents of KG teacher and minister Bernhard Fast (1809-1878) of Rosenort. Plett, "Genealogy of Daniel Fast 1753-1829," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 339-41.

51. She was the daughter of Johann Koop/Kopp of Wirtschaft 15 in Muensterberg in 1808. See Plett, "Koop families in the Kleine Gemeinde," unpublished paper, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1992, 16 pages.

52. Their daughter Gertruda Ensz married Johann Plett (born 1786) son of Michael Plett of Halbstadt.

53. Henry Schapansky, letter to the author January 19, 1993, has written that the connection of Bernhard Brandt, Ellerwald 4, as the father of Peter Brandt (born 1779), Blumenort, Molotschna, ". . . is somewhat speculative." Edward R. Brandt has suggested Martin Brandt, Ellerwald 3, in the 1776 Konsignation as the father and writes as follows; "Martin Brandt is the probable ancestor according to Hermann Thiessen. The 1776 census shows a Martin Brandt on the Third Road (Trift) in Ellerwald, but there are also a Peter and a Berend Brandt on the Fourth Road. A son of Berend Brandt, also known as a Berend, stayed in Prussia. If the three young Brandt males who migrated to Molotschna were brothers, as I surmise, this would preclude Berend Brandt from being #32." Edward R. Brandt, *Brandt Roots 1605 - 1988* (13-27th Ave. S. E., Minneapolis, Minnesota, 55414, 1988), 29.

Jakob Hoeffpner (1797-1883), Chortitza--the son of delegate Jakob Hoeffpner (1748-1826), Chortitza--married Anna Brandt (1804-1877), the daughter of Johann Brandt (1787-1848) and Katharina Warkentin, the daughter of Johann Warkentin (1760-1825), Blumenort, Molotschna. For a description of her tragic death by drowning on a trip to visit her parents in the Molotschna Colony, see Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 185-186. Peter P. Isaac has suggested that Johann Brandt was possibly a brother to Peter Brandt (born 1778).

54. Identification of Isaac Braun (1734-1812) as the father of Jacob Braun (born 1768), Schoenau, Molotschna, is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author March 25, 1993.

55. Identification of Jakob Dyck, 1776 Leske, as the father of Johann Dyck (born 1779), who settled in Petershagen, Molotschna, in 1805, is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author March 25, 1993.

56. Identification of Klaas Dyck in the 1776 Konsignation is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author August 10, 1993.

57. Peter Epp (1725-1789) left many descendants in the KG through his daughter Catharina Epp (born 1764) who married Johann "Hans" Regier from Neumuensterberg. There were also various interconnections with the KG through the family of his brother Cornelius Epp (1728-1805) who had farmed together with Klaas Reimer in Neunhuben. Klaas Reimer immigrated to the Molotschna together with his wife's uncle Cornelius Epp. See Plett, "The Peter Epp Family Tree 1690," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 299-328.

58. The information that Bernhard Fast of Grossmausdorf is the father of Daniel Fast (1753-1829) of Tiegenhagen, Molotschna Colony, is not certain. In a letter of September 12, 1992, Henry Schapansky, writes as follows; "I think the father of Daniel Fast was a Bernhard Fast who was living at Grossmausdorf in 1776. I believe he is incorrectly listed as Gerhard. There were 2 adult males and two adult females living with this family. I think Daniel was one of these and an Anna (born 1756) who married Jakob Wiebe (1760-1804) was another. The wife of Bernhard was likely a Susanna. I have seen Bernhard and Gerhard sometimes mixed up in lists because of the similarity in writing."

59. I am indebted to Henry Schapansky for identifying Berhend Fast, Walldorf, as the father of Johann Fast of Blumstein, Molotschna, and Bernhard Fast of Lichtenau, Molotschna. Schapansky to author September 6, 1992.

60. Identification of Elias Fast (1747-1780) in the 1776 Konsignation is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author August 10, 1993.

61. Identification of Peter Fast (1730-1806), Orloff, Prussia, as the father of Abraham Fast (born 1760), Tiege, Molotschna, is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author March 25, 1993.

62. The Abraham von Riesen (1756-1810) family is not listed in the 1776 Konsignation and their place of residence in Tiegenhagen is based on the immigration records of 1825 where it is stated that son Peter von Riesen was born in Tiegenhagen in 1779. Unruh, 372. A widow Friesen is listed in the village of Tiegenhagen in 1776, "... 2 sons, mm, Orlofffelde Gemeinde." It is possible that Abraham von Riesen (1756-1810) is one the two sons listed. In a letter of August 22, 1992, Henry Schapansky writes as follows regarding this proposition; "This is certainly possible, (I have located one son, a Nickolas) although I rather doubt it, on the basis of the fact that the Abraham was probably of conservative views and this would not fit in with an Orlofffelde Gemeinde connection (Frisian). Also, as far as I know, no Wiebes married into the Frisian church before about 1820 (approximately)." Of course, it could always be possible that Abraham von Riesen left the Frisian Church and married a Wiebe. This might even explain the paucity of information regarding the ancestry of Abraham von Riesen (1756-1810). The fact that Abraham von Riesen had a son Klaas would fit with the fact that the widow Friesen listed in Tiegenhagen in 1776 had a son Nickolas.

63. The indication that the Abraham von Riesen (1756-1810) was of the "middle wealthy" or "mm" category is based on information in family and immigration records that he was a landowner and a mill owner. "Abraham von Riesen (1756-1810) was in fact resident in Kalteherberge in 1798 where his son Peter was baptised." Schapansky to author January 20, 1991.

64. The Heinrich von Bergen family settled in Kronsgarten and most of their children lived in various Old Colony villages. Only son Henrich Bergen (born 1778) moved on to the Molotschna Colony. Courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author November 21, 1992.

65. Heinrich Bargaen (born 1778) appears to be the father of Isaac Baergen (1821-1875) whose wife was the widely renowned "Docka Bergensche" of Mountain Lake, Minnesota; see Bernhard Baergen, *A Bargaen-Neufeld Genealogy A Biographical Anthology* (North Newton, Kansas, 1962), 173 pages. Mrs. Baergen married for the second time to Gerhard P. Neufeld, the first Aeltester of the First Mennonite Church in Mountain Lake, Minnesota; see Plett, "Peter Neufeld 1697-1769." Anganetha Baergen--a daughter of Heinrich Baergen--married Heinrich Friesen (1822-1903) of Nikolaidorf, Molotschna, who settled in Inman, Kansas, during the 1870s. Mike Hornbaker, *The Bergen History* (Box 192, Maize, Kansas, 67101, 1982), 120 pages and 1987 update, 7 pages.

66. They had several children who were prominent in the KG: Elisabeth who married Abraham W. Friesen (1812-1889), the son of Aeltester Abraham Friesen (1782-1849); Klaas Brandt (1813/17-1857), whose sons settled in Rosenort and Blumenort, Manitoba, in 1874; and Aganetha

Brandt (1816-1904) who married David Klassen (1813-1900), who served as the land inspection delegate to America for the Heubodner KG in 1873.

67. Elisabeth Siemens was the daughter of Claasz Siemens (born 1758), Rosenort, Molotschna.

68. Information regarding the parents of Jakob Braun (born 1760) is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the editor April 21, 1993. Jakob Braun (born 1760) was the father of Jakob Braun (1789-1855) of Tiegenhagen, Molotschna; see Johann J. Braun, "Familienbuch," unpublished journal--courtesy of John Braun, R.R.2, Box 6, Morris, Manitoba, R0G 1A0. The information is also recorded that Jakob Braun Jr. married Helena Goossen (1799-1888).

69. Jakob Braun (born 1768) has been identified as the father of Isaac Braun (1795-1831) who married Elisabeth Toews (1796-1861), whose son Isaac Braun (1815-1869) married Margaretha Loewen, the daughter of Isaac Loewen (1787-1873), Lindenau, Molotschna, see Plett, "Cornelius Toews Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 223-5. Jakob Braun (born 1768) also had a son Jakob, born 1813. He is about the right age and could have been the Jakob Braun who married Elisabeth W. Friesen (born 1820), the daughter of the KG Aeltester Abraham Friesen (1782-1849), Ohrloff. This is purely speculative at this point.

70. Hermann Dyck immigrated to Russia in 1803 but died shortly thereafter as his widow married Peter Fast (1780-1852) in 1806 and the couple are shown on Wirtschaft 6 in Schoenau in the 1808 Revisions-Listen. Hermann Dyck had one son Jakob Dick whose children are listed in Plett, "Genealogy of Daniel Fast (1753-1829)," 339.

71. She was the daughter of Jakob Bergen (1758-1833), Schoenau, Molotschna.

72. Jakob Dueck had a double Wirtschaft in Ohrloff. He must have had a large set of buildings as a number of the early brotherhood meetings of Molotschna Gross Flemish Gemeinde were held at his place.

73. She was married for the first time to Heinrich Wiebe, Neuteicherwald, Prussia. Her daughter Katharina Wiebe (1781-1854) was the wife of Abraham Friesen (1782-1849), the second Aeltester of the KG. Her son Heinrich Wiebe (born 1773) was a minister of the KG until 1828 and was one of the leaders of the false-humility movement in the KG.

74. In his "Ein Kleines Aufsatz," Klaas Reimer, frequently refers to his "in-law" and neighbour Johann Dueck (born 1779). The exact connection between Dueck and Reimer is not clear, but it is obvious that the two men were close friends.

75. Klaas Dyck (1743-1826), Muntau, was the father of KG minister Johann Dueck (1801-1866); see Part One, Chapter Eight.

76. Plett, "Cornelius Eidse Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 253-259, has additional information on their descendants.

77. Cornelius Enns was the father of Heinrich Enns (1807-1881), the fourth Aeltester of the KG; cf. Part Six, Chapter One.

78. David Epp (1750-1802) served as a Aeltester of the Flemish Gemeinde in Chortitz; See Plett, "The Peter Epp Family Tree 1690," 310-311.

79. They were the grandparents of Johann Esau (1832-1904), Fischau, Molotschna, and later Rosenfeld, Manitoba, who served as the Brandaeltester of the East Reserve KG for many years. Plett, "Cornelius Esau Genealogy 1772," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 330-331.

80. Henry Schapansky, 914 Chilliwack St., New Westminster, B. C., V3L 4V5, writes as follows; "Anna Kornelsen, his wife, was a daughter of Johann Kornelsen, Tiegenhoff 1776: 1 son, 2 daughters; Tiegenhagen Gemeinde." Schapansky to author January 16, 1993.

81. For a listing of this family see Plett, "Genealogy of Daniel Fast 1753-1829," 337-360. Their descendants included son Bernhard Fast (1783-1861), who served as the Aeltester of the Ohrloff Gemeinde from 1821 until his death, and grandson Bernhard Fast (1809-1878), Rosenort, who served as a minister of the KG during the 1840s.

82. They were the parents of several children with connections to the KG: Sarah Fast who married Peter Warkentin (born 1789)--see Plett, "Martin Warkentin Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 468-472; daughter Helena Fast married Peter Reimer, son of Johann Reimer, Muensterberg, Molotschna--see Plett, "Daniel Fast 1743-1829 Genealogy," 356; and son Bernhard Fast (1790-1854) whose children stayed in Russia after 1874--see Plett, "Peter Neufeld Genealogy."

83. Johann Fast (born 1770) was the father of Johann Fast (1794-1864) who married Elisabeth Warkentin (1796-1852) who were the parents of Johann W. Fast (1837-1924) pioneer publisher in Hillsboro, Kansas, as well as a number of families in Jansen, Nebraska; see Plett, "Martin Warkentin 1764 Genealogy," 475.

84. Wilhelm Fast (born 1773) was the father of Wilhelm Fast (born 1794) who was the father of Heinrich Fast (1826-1890), who settled in Steinbach, Manitoba in 1874; see Peter P. Toews, "Genealogy register," in Plett, *Profile 1874*, 43. Heinrich Fast (1826-1890) was the great-grandfather of historian Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba, through whose dedicated research the connection to Wilhelm Fast (born 1773) of Muntau was established.

85. According to Henry Schapansky, Maria Ens (born 1769) was the daughter of Heinrich Ens listed in Mierau in the 1776 Konsignation, and who is listed as being moderately well-to-do. Enns apparently immigrated to Einlage, Old Colony, in 1784-1785. Schapansky to author August 10, 1993.

86. According to Henry Schapansky, Peter Fast (born 1780) of Muntau, was the son or grandson of Elias Fast (1747-1780) of Tiegenhoff, Prussia: Schapansky to author August 10, 1993. Peter Fast (born 1780) has been associated with the early KG movement as some of the early KG brotherhood meetings were held there; see Klaas Reimer, "Ein Kleines Aufsatz," in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 187.

87. Abraham Fast (born 1760), Tiege, is the father of Maria Fast (1795-1859), the first wife of Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) of Muntau, Molotschna; see "Heinrich Reimer 1791-1884, Muntau," Part Eleven, Chapter One.

88. Abraham Federau (born 1762) was the father of Wilhelm Federau (born 1799) who married Elisabeth Warkentin (1802-1850), the daughter of Johann Warkentin (1760-1825) of Blumenort, Molotschna; see Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," 182, 187 and 222. The Wilhelm Federau family lived in Tiege, Molotschna.

89. Cornelius and Anna Sawatzky were the parents of a number of KG families including Abraham Sawatzky (1807-1882) who settled in Jansen, Nebraska, in 1874. For a listing of their family, see Plett, "The Abraham von Riesen (1756-1810) Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 274-7.

90. Johann Friesen (1763-ca.1830) was one of the senior ministers of the Molotschna Grosse Gemeinde also known as the Lichtenau-Petershagen Gemeinde. He was the father of Johann F. Friesen (1808-1872) the third Aeltester of the KG; cf. Part Five, Chapter One.

91. Henry Schapansky writes that ". . . the connection [of Daniel Friesen, Muensterberg, Molotschna] to Arend Friesen is somewhat speculative, but probably correct." Schapansky to author March 25, 1993.

92. Identification of Isebrandt Friesen in Plattenhof, Prussia, is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author October 10, 1992.

93. I am indebted to Henry Schapansky for his research connecting the families of Jakob Friesen (born 1775), Muensterberg, Isaac Friesen (1788-1814) and Johann Friesen (1783-1816), Altona, and Susanna Friesen who married Dirk Warkentin of Altona. Schapansky to author March 25, 1993.

94. According to a letter of Henry Schapansky of August 18, 1993, Jakob Goossen was also the father of Johann Goossen listed in Tiegenhagen in 1776 whose sons immigrated to Russia after 1803 and settled in the Molotschna colony—Johann, Jakob and Heinrich in Schoensee, and Gerhard in Blumenort. According to the 1835 census, Gerhard had a son Gerhard born in 1811 which would make him the right age to be the KG school teacher Gerhard Goossen (1811-1854). See Part Fourteen, Chapter One, for a further discussion of this possible connection.

95. Identification of this family in the 1776 Konsignation is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author January 16, 1993.

96. Johann Harder (1733-1803) was the son of Johann Harder and Gertruda Classen, Hofbesitzer in Polish Huben. Gertruda Classen was the daughter of Jakob Classen also a Hofbesitzer in Polish Huben. See Plett, "Johann Harder Genealogy 1764-1826," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 361-362. I am indebted to Henry Schapansky, letter to the author dated September 6, 1992, for the identification of the parents of Johann Harder (1764-1826) in the 1776 Konsignation.

97. Henry Schapansky, "Johann Harder family sheet," letter to the author October 10, 1992.  
98. Henry Schapansky writes that Johann Harms is incorrectly listed as Martin Harms in the 1776 Konsignation. Schapansky to author November 6, 1992.

99. Peter Isaac (1732-1809) was the son of Philip Isaac (1694-1753) and Maria Reimer (1701-1770). For a detailed write-up on the Isaac family see Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," 179-224.

100. Henry Schapansky has written that the name of Peter Isaac's wife was Justina Schroeder and not Anna Schroeder as reported by Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," 180. Schapansky to author November 6, 1992.

101. Their son Johann Friesen (1797-1875) was the father of Justina Friesen (1833-1916) who married Jakob A. Wiebe (1836-1921), founder of the K. M. B. According to a letter in the *Rundschau* on March 11, 1903, Johann Friesen (1797-1875) moved to Halbstadt in 1833 where he died. The letter also states that another son, Isaac Friesen (born 1811), was the father of Mrs. Heinrich Huebner, who died in Nebraska on January 28 [1903]—courtesy of Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1990. Another son, Jakob Friesen (1817-1894) also lived in Ohrloff, Molotschna, from where they moved to Gnadenu, Kansas, in 1874, where he owned the mill; see Jakob J. Friesen, "Autobiography of Jakob J. Friesen, Family Father," unpublished typewritten journal, 12 pages and attached genealogical notes—courtesy of Raymond F. Wiebe, University College, Campus 1, Box 6, Wichita State University, Wichita, Kansas, 67208, 1983.

102. They had many descendants among the KG, including son Cornelius F. Friesen (1810-1892), who served as the school teacher in several villages including Alexanderwohl and Margenau. Later he and his family settled in Blumenort, Manitoba. The story of the Friesen family is chronicled in some detail by his daughter, Helena Jahnke, "Lineage of my Grandparents, Klaas Friesens, born in West Prussia," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 209-212.

103. They were the parents of four KG related families: Jakob Friesen (born 1774), Muensterberg, see below; son Johann Friesen (1783-1816), who married Margaretha Mathies (1792-1843)—see "Klaas Friesen, Biography," Part Seven, Chapter One; son Isaac Friesen (1788-1814) who married Regina Friesen (1795-1852), a sister of Abraham Friesen, the second Aeltester of the KG; and daughter Susanna Friesen (1785-1819) who married Dirk Warkentin (1788-1837), Wirtschaft 11, Altona, and was the mother of Dirk Warkentin (1815-1869) of Petershagen who was the Aeltester of the Petershagen-Lichtenau Gemeinde—see Harry Warkentin, "The Warkentin Genealogy (1788-1983)," unpublished paper for Mennonite History course at CMBC, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1983.

104. She was a sister of Peter Thiessen (1775-1839), Rosenort, Molotschna. Jakob Friesen was an early adherent of the KG and is identified as such in the *Autobiography of Klaas Reimer*; see Klaas Reimer, "Ein Kleines Aufsatz," Part Two, Chapter Two.

105. Franz Goossen (born 1752) was the father of Johann Goossen (1779-1864) who married Katherina Neufeld (1786-1865), whose son Heinrich Goossen was a church Bishop in Mountain Lake, Minnesota; see Plett, "Peter Neufeld Genealogy 1697-1769," for additional information. Franz Goossen (born 1752) was also the father of Helena Goossen (1789-1888) who married Jakob Braun (1788-1855) of Tiegenhagen, Molotschna; see Plett, "Gerhard Schellenberg Genealogy 1725-1802," 460, for a reference to their family.

106. Their daughter Maria Giesbrecht (born 1801) married Johann Harms (1798-1887) of Margenau, son of Johann Harms (born 1771) who settled on Wirtschaft 12 in Blumstein in 1804; see Plett, "Johann Harms Genealogy 1771," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrins*, 390-394.

107. She was the daughter of Jakob Reimer (born 1752), Muntau.

108. Their son Peter Giesbrecht (1794-1842) married Maria Harder (1795-1856) the daughter of Johann Harder (1764-1826) who settled on Wirtschaft 16 in Blumstein in 1804; see Plett, "Johann Harder Genealogy 1764-1826," 376.

109. Johann Harder (1764-1826) was the grandfather of two very well-know Russian Mennonite leaders, namely: Bernhard Harder (1832-1884), the evangelist and poet; and Johann Harder (1811-1875), the Aeltester of the Ohrloff Gemeinde. Johann Harder (1764-1826) was also the father of Elisabeth Harder (1800-1834) who married Johann Toews (1793-1834), and they had a large family, most of whom were closely connected with the KG.

110. For additional information regarding this family, see Plett, "Johann Harms Genealogy 1771," 387-415.

111. Johann Fast (born 1770) was the father of Johann Fast (1794-1864) who married Elisabeth Warkentin (1796-1852) who were the parents of Johann W. Fast (1837-1924) pioneer publisher in Hillsboro, Kansas, as well as a number of families in Jansen, Nebraska. See Plett, "Martin Warkentin 1764 Genealogy," 475.

112. This couple appear to be the parents of Wilhelm Harms (1808-1846) who married Helena Schulz, the widow of Isbrandt P. Harder (1817-1840), the brother of Johann Harder (1811-1875), Aeltester of the Ohrloff Gemeinde. It appears that another son Peter Harms died in 1874. Plett, "Johann Harms Genealogy 1771," 408.

113. They were the parents of several children with connections to the KG: Sarah Fast who married Peter Warkentin (born 1789)--see Plett, "Martin Warkentin Genealogy," 468-72; daughter Helena Fast married Peter Reimer, son of Johann Reimer of Muensterberg, Molotschna--see Plett, "Daniel Fast 1743-1829 Genealogy," 356; and son Bernhard Fast (born 1790) whose children stayed in Russia after 1874--see Plett, "Peter Neufeld Genealogy."

114. He was the father of Cornelius Heidebrecht (1808-1890), Schulz of the village of Lichtenau in 1848 at the time of the "Gemeinde Berichte." His brother, Peter Heidebrecht (1782-1862), Lichtenau, was the father of son Peter Heidebrecht (1815-1896) who settled in Jansen, Nebraska, together with his family in 1874. See Plett, "Jakob Heidebrecht Genealogy," 418-24.

115. She was the daughter of Martin Andres (died August 23, 1775) whose widow is listed in Herrenhagen, Prussia, in 1776. Schapansky to author March 25, 1993.

116. Deacon Johann Hiebert (born 1760) originated in Schoensee, Amt Tiegenhoff, Prussia. He settled on Wirtschaft 17 in the village of Halbstadt, Molotschna Colony, in 1804. Unruh, 306. He had a son Abraham Hiebert (born 1790) who appears to be the father of Johann Hiebert (1816-1890) later of Gruenfeld, Manitoba. Peter P. Toews, "Genealogy Register," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 48. This connection is based largely on the fact that the Johann Hiebert family of Halbstadt in the 1808 Revisions-Listen is the only one which fits the ancestral description provided by Albert H. Hiebert and John H. Toews, ed., *The Family of Johann Hiebert 1816-1975* (Hillsboro, Kansas, 1975), 125 pages. Johann Hiebert (born 1760) also appears to be the father of Margaretha Hiebert (1797-1855) who married Abram Wiens (1779-1844), Altona, Molotschna. See Plett, "Wiens Families in the Kleine Gemeinde," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 510-511.

According to John P. Dyck, *Braeul Genealogy (1670-1983)* (Springstein, Manitoba, 1983), 91, Johann Hiebert (born 1760) was a brother to David Hiebert (born 1764) who settled on Wirtschaft 21 in Muntau in 1804. Unruh, 308. Henry Schapansky, however, has identified Johann Hiebert (born 1744) of Rotebude, Prussia (1776 Konsignation) as the father of David Hiebert, Muntau--Henry Schapansky, 914 Chilliwack St., New Westminster, B. C., V3L 4V5, letter to the author January 16, 1993.

117. It appears that their son Jakob Isaac (born 11.3.1813) is the Jakob Isaac (1813-1881) who married Sara Sawatzky (1816-1894), the daughter of Anna Friesen and Cornelius Sawatzky of Ohrloff, Molotschna. Plett, "The Abraham von Riesen (1756-1810) Genealogy," 276, provides a listing of their children.

118. Three families are listed in the Revisions-Listen of 1808 for Lichtenau where the wives share the Andres surname. It seems likely that there is some relationship.

119. Franz and Margaretha Isaac, Tiege, were the grandparents of a number of KG-related families who settled in Manitoba in 1874 including grandson Rev. Abram P. Isaac, and the writer, Peter P. Isaac, of Gruenfeld (Kleeefeld), Manitoba. See Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," 188-211.

120. She was the daughter of Johann Warkentin (1760-1825), Blumenort, Molotschna.

121. They were the parents of Rev. Franz Isaac, Tiege, who was the author of the historical work, *Die Molotschnaer Mennoniten* (Halbstadt, 1908). They were also the parents of Anna Isaac (1807-1873) who married Johann F. Friesen (1808-1872), the third Aeltester of the KG. Many members of the Isaac family were well educated and served as school teachers and ministers.

122. She was the daughter of Johann Wiens (1753-1816) of Tiege, Molotschna. For a listing of the Wiens family see Plett, "Wiens families in the Kleine Gemeinde," 498-502. Henry Schapansky has written that the name of Peter Isaac's wife Margaretha Wiens and not Maria Wiens as reported

by Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," 182. Henry Schapansky to author November 6, 1992.

123. They are the great-great grandparents of Helmut Pankratz, former Mayor of Steinbach and member of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba whose mother was an Isaac. Also of this family line is Dr. Jakob Isaac of Winnipeg, Manitoba.

124. Kornelius Janzen (1718-1793) was the Stammvater of the Petershagen, Molotschna, Janzens. See family listing of Cornelius Janzen family, courtesy of Mennonite Genealogy Inc., Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1985. I am indebted to Henry Schapansky for deciphering these records for me and for connecting the same into the 1776 Konsignation. Henry Schapansky to author September 6, 1992.

125. Abraham Janzen (born 1747) was the son of Kornelius Janzen (1718-1793) of Broeske.

126. Henry Schapansky writes as follows regarding this family; "Unfortunately I have not yet located Johann Janzen Sr. in the Konsignation of 1776. I suspect at this point that he was living at Alt-Rosengart, Klein-Werder. The vast majority of the Jansens belonged to the Frisian Church, as did Johann Janzen Sr. He may have moved from the Klein Werder to Fuerstenau after 1776. At any rate, he and most of his family were members of the Orloffferfelde Gemeinde which was Frisian. However Johann Janzen Jr. married into the Flemish Gemeinde, something which was becoming acceptable at the time . . . It seems that Johann Janzen Sr. moved from Fuerstenau(erweide) to Reinland circa 1797"--Schapansky to author July 27, 1990.

127. Johann (Hans) Kasdorf of Heuboden was the son of Isaac Kasdorf (died 1765) and Anna Berg (died 1780) of Danzig Hoff. Two of their children, namely, Isaac (born 1735) and Esther (born 1737)--married to Gerhard Neufeld--immigrated to Rosenthal in the Chortitz Colony in 1788--courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author May 22, 1993.

128. Identification of Abraham Klassen (1739-1819), Tiegenhagen, Prussia, as the grandfather of David Klassen (1813-1900), Margenau, Molotschna, and later Rosenhof, Manitoba, is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author dated January 16, 1993.

129. Henry Schapansky writes as follows regarding the identification of Johann Klassen (1724-1804) Tiegenhagen, as the father of Johann Klassen (1758-1812); "This Johann Klassen is difficult to locate in 1776. However, the attached chart seems to be the most probable family sketch. This note in Unruh seems to be suspect and contains errors, so I have rearranged some of the dates to give a more likely picture. At any rate, Johann Klassen (1758-1812) was living at Tiegenhagen from 1783-1788. Two of his sons were baptised at Moesland (Heuboden Gemeinde)." Schapansky to author October 10, 1992.

130. Information regarding Martin Klassen (died 1774) and his children is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author October 10, 1992. Family records show Tiegenhagen as the place of birth of Martin Klassen (1770-1845), which is therefore assumed to be the place of residence of his father, Martin Klassen (died 1774). Dietrich Martin Klassen, "Family Bible records," trans. and ed. by Mrs. Martha White, Misa, Arizona, received via Mike Penner, 717 W. Elm St., Olathe, Kansas, 66061, courtesy of Frank G. Friesen, 6705 Glen Dale Dr., Arlington, Texas, 76017. Friesen to author October 2, 1992. This Bible is presently owned by Mr. and Mrs. Minsch, LaMesa, California. Henry Schapansky has written in this regard as follows, "Re. the Martin Klassen material I sent, I don't believe he was born in Tiegenhagen at all. I think he was born, as indicated on my chart, at Simonsdorf-Berendt (1771) and that he later (much later) moved to Tiegenhagen before immigrating to Russia in 1841." Schapansky to author November 6, 1992.

131. The widow of Martin Klassen married for the second time to Kornelius Epp of Simonsdorf who is listed in the 1776 Konsignation with 4 sons and 4 daughters. Courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author October 10, 1992.

132. Identification of Jakob Klingenberg, Fuerstenauerfeld, is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author July 27, 1990.

133. Information regarding Andreas Koop, Klein-Mausdorf, Prussia, is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author August 28, 1992.

134. Henry Schapansky writes, "The father of Johann Koop (born 1766) was most probably Johann Koop (born 1739), Schoenberge . . . Margaretha Wiens was his second wife, his first wife died 15.9.1785. My article on Einlage also has some comments on this family." Schapansky to author November 6, 1992.

135. Information regarding Julius Kroeker (1747-1799) of Schoenberg and Franz Kroeker of Muensterberg, Prussia, is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author April 21, 1993.

136. Margaretha Kroeker (born 1772) married for the second time to Jakob Wiebe (born 1776) and settled in the village of Blumstein.

137. Johann Janzen (1752-1823) was the son of Kornelius Janzen (1718-1793) of Broeske. For a listing of the family of Johann Janzen (1752-1823) see Katie Peters, *Genealogy of Johann Janzen 1752-1977* (Winnipeg, 1977), 408 pages.

138. For additional information on the family of Abraham Janzen (born 1747), see Plett, "The Peter Epp Family Tree 1690," 320-321.

139. She was the sister to Rev. Cornelius Epp (1728-1805).

140. He was the son of Johann Janzen (1752-1853)

141. She was the daughter of Abraham Janzen (born 1747).

142. Unruh, 363. See Plett, "Johann Janzen Genealogy," unpublished family sketch, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1992. Johann Janzen (born ca.1777) lived in Reinland, Prussia. He was the father of Cornelius Janzen (1812-1864) who lived in Neukirch, Molotschna, whose family settled in Blumenort, Manitoba, and Janzen, Nebraska. The information regarding the origin of Johann Janzen (born ca.1777) is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author July 27, 1990.

143. She was the daughter of Jakob Klingenberg, Fuerstenau. Schapansky to author July 27, 1990.

144. Johann Kasdorf was the father of Peter Kasdorf (born 1775) of Wirtschaft 7 in Blumstein in the 1808 Revisions-Listen: Unruh, 314. Johann Kasdorf was also the father of Elisabeth Kasdorf (1792-1864) who married Gerhard Schellenberg (1797-1837). Their children included Gerhard Schellenberg (1827-1908), KG minister of Ohrlhoff and later Rosenfeld, Manitoba; Plett, "Gerhard Schellenberg Genealogy 1725-1802," 441, has a listing of descendants.

145. David Klassen (1813-1900) was the son of Abraham Klassen (1766-1813), Tiegerweide, Prussia, by his second marriage to Maria Klassen, the daughter of David Klassen. She married for the second time to Jakob Bergmann, Mierau. Abraham Klassen (1766-1813) was the son of Abraham Klassen (1739-1819), Tiegenhagen, Prussia--courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author January 16, 1993. See also David Klassen letters published in Plett, ed, *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 105-113.

146. She was the daughter of Peter Brandt, Blumenort, Molotschna.

147. The Klassen family was quite enterprising and rented the land on which the village of Neukirch was later settled and also another parcel which they gave the name Tiegerweide on which they established a large cattle and sheep ranch. Woltner, 120 and 140. Johann Klassen (born 1758) was the father of Johann Klassen (1785-1841) who served as the Oberschulz of the Molotschna from 1827-1833. Abraham Klassen (1828-1906) who became a KG minister and later settled in Alexanderfeld, Kansas, near Hillsboro, was his son.

148. Johann Klassen (born 1745) was the father of Jakob Klassen (born 1785) who is shown on Wirtschaft 14 in the 1808 Revisions-Listen--courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author January 16, 1993.

149. Johann Friesen (1789-1840) was a brother to Abraham Friesen (1782-1849), the second Aeltester of the KG.

150. Sarah Epp (1753-1779) was the daughter of Aeltester Peter Epp (1725-1789) of Danzig, Prussia. Their daughter Magdalena was married to an Abraham Ens (born 1779) who may possibly be the Abraham Enns resident in Neukirch referred to by Aeltester Abraham Friesen (1782-1849) in a letter of February 8, 1840, published in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 256-257. This is purely speculative at this point.

151. Franz Wiens was elected as a minister in 1805. Unruh, 353.

152. Some of their descendants are listed in the genealogy book by John P. Dyck, *Klauss Dueck and descendants (1743-1981)* (Springstein, Manitoba, 1981).

153. Martin Klassen (died 1774) had a son Martin Klassen (1770-1845) who was married for the first time to Katharina Toews (1760-ca.1817) who was the widow of Johann Martens (1759-1795) of Palschau. Martin Klassen was married for the second time to Agatha Harder (1796-1857) the daughter of Johann Harder of Walldorf, Prussia. Schapansky to author October 10, 1992. See also the research of Dr. Glenn Penner, Glueph, Ontario, quoted in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 71.

Martin Klassen (1770-1845) is described as a Landwirt in the immigration records of 1841. Unruh, 382. Rudnerwiede is shown as the place of death of Martin Klassen in the Bible of his son Dietrich Martin Klassen (1835-1920), Hoffnungsthal, Kansas, and therefore, is assumed to be the place of residence. Martin Klassen (1770-1845) was also the father of Martin Klassen (1823-ca.1888) of Gnadenu, Kansas; cf. Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 71.

154. Peter Klassen (born 1774) immigrated to Russia where he is listed as the servant of Johann Warkentin (1760-1825) of Blumenort, Molotschna. Unruh, 348. He had a brother Franz Classen (born 1773), who is simply listed as immigrating to the Molotschna in 1818, no village given. Unruh, 360. Courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author October 10, 1992.

155. Andreas Koop (1773-ca.1806) is listed in the immigration records of 1804. Unruh, 350. He must have died shortly after the immigration since his wife was married to Daniel Loewen, Wirtschaft 20, by the time of the 1808 Revisions-Listen; see Unruh, 308. I am indebted to Henry Schapansky for drawing these connections to my attention. Letter to the author August 28, 1992. Andreas Koop (1773-ca.1806) appears to be the father of Heinrich Koop (1805-1859), a wealthy KG Vollwirt resident in Landskrone, Molotschna, during the 1840s; see Plett, "Koop Families in the Kleine Gemeinde," unpublished paper, 1992, 13 pages.

156. Johann Koop (born 1766) settled on Wirtschaft 14 in Muntau in 1805. He was the father of Johann Koop (1801-1838) whose son Johann M. Koop (1831-1897) was a wealthy farmer of Muntau, who established the village of Neuanlage (later Twincreek), Manitoba, in 1878. See Plett, "Koop Families in the Kleine Gemeinde"; cf. Royden K. Loewen, *Blumenort: A Mennonite Community in Transition* (Blumenort, Manitoba), for considerable information regarding the Johann Koop family.

157. Henry Schapansky, 914 Chilliwack St., New Westminster, B. C., V3L 4V5, writes as follows; "Anna Kornelsen, his wife, was a daughter of Johann Kornelsen, Tiegenghoff 1776: 1 son, 2 daughters; Tiegenghagen Gemeinde." Schapansky to author January 16, 1993.

158. They were the grandparents of Johann Esau (1832-1904), Fischau, Molotschna, and later Rosenfeld, Manitoba, who served as the Brandaeltester of the East Reserve KG for many years. Plett, "Cornelius Esau Genealogy 1772," 330-331.

159. Their daughter Anna Kroeker (born 1796) was one of the three youths to be baptized into the KG by Aeltester Heinrich Janzen in Schoenwiese in 1815; see *Namenverzeichnis der Mennonitischen Gemeinden*, published in 1857, owned by Kornelius Hildebrand, Chortitzta, dated 1860, whereon Rev. Hildebrand made a handwritten note regarding this baptism. Franz Kroeker (born 1773) also had a son Peter Kroeker (born 1806). Klaas Reimer (1770-1837)--founding Aeltester of the KG--died at the home of Peter Kroeker in Lindenau in 1837, who may have been this son, Peter, born in 1806; see Plett, "Abraham von Riesen (1756-1810) Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 277; see also Plett, "Cornelius Eidse Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 258, who refers to a Peter Kroeker--of approximately the correct age--who was married to Maria Eidse. Further letters in the *Rundschau* indicate that this Peter Kroeker family lived in Lindenau--courtesy of Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba. Franz Kroeker (born 1773) also had a son Franz (born 1802) who could have been the father of Franz Kroeker (1835-1905) who married Anna Barkman, the daughter of KG village Schulz, Martin J. Barkman (1796-1872) of Rueckenau, Molotschna. This connection is purely speculative at this point; see Plett, "Jakob Barkman Genealogy 1765," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 289.

160. Margaretha Kroeker (born 1772) was married for the first time to Julius Kroeker (1747-1799) of Muensterberg, Prussia. She married for the second time to Jakob Wiebe and settled in the village of Blumstein, Molotschna. Her son Franz Kroeker (1798-1853) was married to Hedwig Martens (1798-1861) and the family lived in Margenau. They were the parents of Jakob M. Kroeker (1836-1913) who was elected as the Aeltester of the Manitoba KG to replace Peter P. Toews in 1883; see "Editor's comment" in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 580-1. The deaths of Franz Kroeker and his wife Hedwig are referred to in Johann Dueck, "Ministerial Journal," in Part Eight, Chapter Two, entries for February 12, 1853, and March 9, 1861, respectively.

161. In a letter of January 16, 1993, Henry Schapansky writes that his current analysis regarding the Lepp family is ". . . a bit speculative re. Kornelius born 13.4.1781, but the most probable situation." According to the chart, Cornelius Lepp died in Tiegenghagen on December 6, 1812.

162. Information regarding Wilhelm Loewen and his children is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author November 21, 1992.

163. She remarried after her first husband's death to Arend Janzen (born 1764) and the family settled on Wirtschaft 19 in Halbstadt in 1804. Unruh, 326. Courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author November 21, 1992.

164. Jakob Martens was the father of Jakob Martens (died ca.1833), whose son Jakob Martens (born 1779) married Katharina Thiessen (born 1786), the daughter of Isaac Thiessen (born 1770), Wirtschaft 21, Muensterberg, 1808. Schapansky to author March 25, 1993.

165. The information regarding the family of Johann Mathies (died 1774) is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author November 28, 1992.

166. Identification of Jakob Mathies, Leske, 1776, as the father of Mrs. Johann Wiens, nee Margaretha Mathies (1757-1819), of Tiege, Molotschna, is courtesy of Henry Schapansky. He writes as follows, "Her mother [the mother of Margaretha Mathies] was not Elisabeth Wiens but Anna Wiebe; Elisabeth Wiens was the second wife of Jakob Mathies. (Assuming of course no errors exist in your sources indicating the relationship between Jakob M. and Elisabeth W.)"--Schapansky to author March 25, 1993.

167. Information regarding the family of Johann Neufeld of Mausdorferweide, Prussia, is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author 1992.

168. In a letter to the author of January 16, 1993, Henry Schapansky writes as follows; "Peter Neufeld 1697-1769. As you indicate, this family is well documented and your research is excellent. I would have no doubt in saying that this family is listed as 'Widow Neufeld, Nentechinterfeld, no children listed (alone as a single widow)' in the census of 1776. Her children were probably with other families, or working or apprenticed in 1776 (the 2 youngest daughters were probably taken in by relatives)."

169. Information regarding Andreas Neumann and his children is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author November 21, 1992.

170. Gerhard Peters died before 1787. Information regarding Gerhard Peters and his children is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author May 9, 1993.

171. Cornelius Lepp (born 1781) was the father of Cornelius Loepp (1810-1891), Muntau. See Plett, "Jakob Heidebrecht Gencalogy," 416 and 424. Their daughter Anganetha Loepp (1808-1881) married Jakob W. Friesen (1808-1889) the son of Abraham Friesen (1782-1849), the second Aeltester of the KG. The Jakob W. Friesen family may have taken over the Loepp Wirtschaft in Blumstein since the family lived in that village where Jakob later also served as the Schulz.

172. Isaac Loewen (1759-1834) of Lindenau, Molotschna, was the father of Isaac Loewen (1787-1873), the forefather of all the KG Loewens and Pletts in Steinbach and Rosenort, Manitoba, and in Meade, Kansas; cf. Part Nine, Chapter One.

173. He was the father to Helena Loewen (1806-1879) who married KG minister Johann Dueck (1801-1866) of Muntau. She married for the second time to Ohm Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) also of Muntau. See Plett, "Heinrich Reimer 1791-1884," Part Eleven, Chapter One.

174. She was the widow of Andreas Koop (born 1773-ca.1805), see Plett, "Koop families in the Kleine Gemeinde."

175. They are believed to be the parents of Anna Martens (1805-1866) who married Johann Koop (1801-1838), Muntau. He is the only Molotschna settler in the 1808 Revisions-Listen with a daughter of the correct age; see Plett, "Koop families in the Kleine Gemeinde."

176. They may be the grandparents of Heinrich D. Friesen (1827-1877) of Landskrone, Molotschna, who married Katharina Schellenberg (1824-1901); see Plett, "Gerhard Schellenberg Genealogy 1725-1802," 442 and 462--courtesy of Henry N. Fast, Box 387, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1990.

177. The immigration records of 1804 state that Jakob Matthies (1760-before 1808) immigrated to Altona, Molotschna. According to the information provided by Henry Schapansky, letter to the author November 28, 1992, Jakob Matthies died sometime between 1804 and 1808, whereupon his widow, Katharina, married for the second time to Franz Thiessen (born 1779) who settled on Wirtschaft 4 in the village of Rosenort, Molotschna, in 1805. It appears that the children recorded for the family in the 1808 Revisions-Listen are the children from her first marriage to Jakob Matthies. Daughter Margaretha Matthies (1792-1843) married for the first time to Johann

Friesen (1783-1816) from Altona and they had one son Isaak Friesen (1816-1886) who married Susanna Reimer (1820-1895), the daughter of Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884), Muntau, Molotschna. The Isaac Friesen family lived in Waldheim, Molotschna. See Plett, "Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 228-229.

Margaretha Matthies (1792-1843) married for the second time to Klaas Friesen (1793-1870), KG minister and the family lived in Altonau until her death; see Plett, "Abraham von Riesen Genealogy 1756-1810," 282-285. They, in turn, were the parents of Abraham M. Friesen (1834-1908) who settled in Blumenort, Manitoba, in 1874. His great-grandsons include: Frank F. Reimer, founder of Reimer Express; and Cornie F. Loewen, founder of Loewen Millwork, Steinbach, Manitoba. According to Arnold Neufeldt-Fast, 3-109 Marlborough Ave., Kitchener, Ontario, N2M 1H7, letter of November 8, 1992, his great-great grandfather, Abraham Matthies (1797-1860), was another son of Jakob Matthies (1760-before 1808), Altona. The family apparently lived in Pordenau, Molotschna, as this is where there son, Aron Matthies was born in 1818. See also John P. Braun, "Family Chronicle: Braun/Wiebe," unpublished paper, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1989. Abraham Matthies (1797-1860) married Anna Braun (1797-1863) who may have been the daughter of Jakob Braun (born 1760) who settled on Wirtschaft 3 in Tiegenhagen, Molotschna, in 1805. Unruh, 322.

178. Information regarding the connection of Mrs. Heinrich Ens (born 1786) to the family of Jakob Matthies (1760-before 1808) is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author November 28, 1992.

179. Johann Wiens (1753-1819) and Margaretha Mathies (1757-1819) of Tiege, Molotschna, were the parents of Elisabeth Wiens (born 1793) who married Klaas Thiessen (born 1790). They, in turn, were the parents of Johann W. Thiessen (1813-1888) of Conteniusfeld who settled in Jansen, Nebraska, in 1874. See Plett, "Wiens families in the Kleine Gemeinde," 501-502.

180. For a listing of this family see Plett, "Genealogy of Daniel Fast 1753-1829," 337-360. Their descendants included son Bernhard Fast (1783-1861), who served as the Aeltester of the Ohrloff Gemeinde from 1821 until his death, and grandson Bernhard Fast (1809-1878), Rosenort, who served as a minister of the KG during the 1840s.

181. Hermann Neufeld served as the Schulz of the village of Muensterberg during the period 1812/16, see Klaas Reimer, "Ein Kleines Aufsatz," Part Two, Chapter Two.

182. They were the parents of Rev. Heinrich Neufeld (1791-1865) of Rosenort, Molotschna, who married Regina von Riesen, the youngest sister of Abraham Friesen (1782-1849), the second Aeltester of the KG. See Plett, "Peter Neufeld 1697-1769," for a more complete listing of this family. Most of the Heinrich Neufeld (1791-1865) children settled in Inman, Kansas, during the 1870s.

183. Their daughter Katharina Neumann (1818-1890) married Johann Baerg (1813-1892) who later settled in Mountain Lake, Minnesota. See Plett, "Jakob Baerg 1777-1845 Genealogy," unpublished paper, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1992, 11 pages. Henry Schapansky has also written that Jakob Neumann and his family came from Hintersee, Prussia, where daughter Katharina Neumann was born in 1818. Schapansky to author November 21, 1992. Jakob Neumann and Maria Peters were also the parents of Susanna Neumann (1820-1891) who married Peter Baerg (1817-1901) of Prangenu, Molotschna--later KG minister in the Crimea and Manitoba; see Plett, "Peter Baerg (1817-1901) Biography," Part Twelve, Chapter One.

184. He was a brother to the clockmaker Peter Krüger in the Chortitz Colony. Glenn Penner, "The Early Krueger/Kroeger Family in Prussia," in *Mennonite Family History* (January, 1989), 18-9.

185. They were the parents of Catarina Peters who married Peter Neufeld, the son of Hermann Neufeld of Wirtschaft 17 in Muensterberg; see Section Five (B), Plett, "Peter Neufeld 1697-1769," 8-10. Peter and Katharina Neufeld were the parents of Gerhard P. Neufeld (1827-1916) who served as the pioneer Aeltester of the First Mennonite Church in Mountain Lake, Minnesota, from 1878 to 1909.

186. They are believed to be the parents of Helena Peters (1807-1847) who married Johann Esau (1805-1855), the son of Cornelius Esau (born 1772) of Wirtschaft 19 in Fischau. This connection is speculative and based solely on the fact that there were only two Peters families in the 1808 Revisions-Listen with a daughter Helena born in 1807. The other one is Johann Peters

(born 1776) who settled in the village of Fuerstenau in 1807 and is considered less likely to be the father; see Plett, "Cornelius Esau Genealogy 1772," 330 and 333.

187. Johann Plett (1765-1833) was the forefather of all the KG Pletts. He was the grandfather of Johann Harder (1811-1875), Aeltester of the Ohrloff Gemeinde, and Peter P. Toews (1841-1922), Aeltester of the Blumenhoff branch of the KG.

188. I am indebted to Henry Schapansky for providing a record of the family of Adam Ratzlaff (born 1750), listing 8 children: Schapansky to author May 22, 1993.

189. Henry Schapansky has written that "... Franz Regehr was likely deceased in 1776. The 2 sons Peter and Johann were likely at Krons Garten 1814-16." Schapansky to author October 10, 1992.

190. Identification of Isaac Regier (1740-1811) as the father of Isaac Regier and the grandfather of Isaac Regier (1797-1840) is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author July 21, 1993.

191. The proposition that Heinrich Reimer and Agatha Epp--the parents of Klaas Reimer (1770-1837)--lived in Petershagen is corroborated by the fact that a widow Heinrich Reimer is listed in the village in the *Bauern-Verzeichniz* for 1772. Although she does not have her own buildings and farmyard she is listed with 19 morgen of land and is one of the larger landowners in the village.

192. Information regarding the family of Arend Reimer (died before 1808), Petershagen, Prussia, is courtesy Henry Schapansky, letter to the author November 28, 1992.

193. Susanna Dyck (1763-1846) married for the third time to Dirck Reimer (born 1782), the son of Jakob Reimer (born 1752), a neighbour living on Wirtschaft 18 in Muntau--courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author November 28, 1992. She was the mother of Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) of Muntau and later Gruenfeld, Manitoba. See Plett, "Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 239-245.

194. Information regarding the family of Jakob Reimer (born 1752) is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author November 28, 1992.

195. Identification of Bernhard Rempel and of the connection to the family of Johann Janzen (born ca.1777) is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author July 4, 1990.

196. She married for the second time to Johann Janzen (born ca.1777) who immigrated to Russia in 1818. Unruh, 363.

197. Henry Schapansky writes "that he [Johann Sawatzky] was never a member of the Tragheinersweide Gemeinde. [He was] first a member of the Ellerwald Gemeinde, then Heubuden!" Schapansky to author May 22, 1993.

198. The information that Hans Siemens is the father of Classz Siemens (born 1758) of Rosenort, Molotschna, is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author, August 22, 1992.

199. Adam Ratzlaff (born 1783) was the father of Heinrich Ratzlaff (1810-1864) who married the widow Peter Dueck (1801-1842), nee Anna Harms (1808-1874); Schapansky to author May 22, 1993. The couple lived in her home village of Blumstein, Molotschna. They were the parents of Heinrich Ratzlaff (1848-1922) of Jansen, Nebraska, who served first as a KG minister and later as a Brüderthaler minister; see Heinrich Ratzlaff, "Autobiography," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 187-192, for additional information regarding this family.

200. Johann Regehr was a clockmaker and evidently settled in the village of Krons Garten--Schapansky to author October 10, 1992. They were the parents of Johann Regehr (1802-1842) of Schoensee who served as the Oberschulz of the Molotschna colony for the years 1833-1841. Their daughter Aganetha Regier (1793-1863) married Johann Klassen (1785-1841), who served as the Oberschulz of the Molotschna from 1827-1833. Katharina, another daughter of Johann Klassen (1785-1841), married Martin J. Barkman (1800-1866), Rueckenau, most of whose children later settled in Jansen, Nebraska.

201. Daughter of Aeltester Peter Epp (1725-1789). See Plett, "The Peter Epp Family Tree 1690," 300-309.

202. Isaac Regier (1797-1840) was the father of Jakob Regier (1832-1893) who married Anna Toews (1832-1906), a sister of Aeltester Peter P. Toews (1841-1922); see Plett, "Isaak Regier/Johann de Vehr Genealogy," unpublished paper, 2 pages, for additional information regarding this family; cf. Peter P. Toews, "Genealogy register," 23, family 45. Birth and death dates of Isaac Regier and Maria Giesbrecht have been verified by Helen Rieger, Steinbach, Manitoba,

August 14, 1993.

203. Henry Schapansky has concluded that Maria Giesbrecht (1800-1855) was the daughter of the Jakob Giesbrecht (born 1771) shown on Wirtschaft 4 in Muntau in the 1808 Revisions-Listen; Unruh, 306; Schapansky to author July 21, 1993.

204. They lived on Wirtschaft 14, Tiege. Unruh, 326. They were the parents of Susanna Reimer, who married Abraham Isaac (1819-1909). He was the son of Rev. Abraham Isaac (1795-1864), the son of Philip Isaac 1769-1813) of Tiege. Henry Schapansky has written as follows regarding Jakob Reimer and Margaretha Guenther: "Jakob Reimer was probably working at Gershero and was baptised there in 1779"--Schapansky to author May 22, 1993. Peter B. Isaac, Arnaud, Manitoba, has written as follows regarding Jakob Reimer and Margaretha Guenther: "They were predeceased by 7 children and survived by 3. A son Jakob Reimer was survived by 2 daughters. One was married to teacher Hermann Janzen and lived to the age of 90 years; the other was married to a Bernhard Friesen, whose age I am not familiar with--apparently around 70 years. Daughter Margaretha Reimer married Jakob Schellenberg; they both died young. They were survived by 2 children, a son Abraham and a daughter Margaretha, who was crippled in her left hand and foot: she was married to a Peter Klassen. They had a large capital; both of the children immigrated to America during the 1870s. The second daughter Susanna was married to Abram Isaac, both of them from Tiege; they were my parents;" see Peter B. Isaac, "Familienbuch," unpublished journal, 93--courtesy of Helmut Pankratz, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1990. Peter B. Isaac also writes that his parents were first cousins since their mothers were sisters, Guenther. Abraham Schellenberg (1839-1854) settled in the village of Gruenfeld, Manitoba, during the 1870s; cf. Plett, "Gerhard Schellenberg Genealogy 1725-1802," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 437.

205. The children of Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) all married into KG-related families. His son Heinrich Reimer (1818-1876) farmed in Prangenu, Molotschna, and settled in Blumenhof, Manitoba, in 1875. See Plett, "Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) Genealogy," 239-245.

206. Maria Fast (1795-1859) appears to have been the daughter of Abraham Fast (born 1760) who settled in the village of Tiege in 1805. Unruh, 326.

207. Their daughter Maria Giesbrecht (born 1801) married Johann Harms (born 1798), son of Johann Harms (born 1771) who settled on Wirtschaft 12 in Blumstein in 1804. See Plett, "Johann Harms Genealogy 1771," 390-394.

208. Dirck Reimer (born 1782) married Susanna Dyck (1763-1846), the widow of Arend Reimer (died before 1808), who had settled in Wirtschaft 5 in Muntau in 1804. I am indebted to Henry Schapansky for providing the information regarding this intriguing question which has puzzled genealogists for some time. Schapansky to author November 28, 1992. Susanna Dyck and Arend Reimer were the parents of Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) of Muntau, Molotschna, who later settled in Gruenfeld, Manitoba, and who was the father of a large family.

209. Son Peter Reimer (1806-1886) married Helena Fast (1805-1892), the daughter of Bernhard Fast (born 1758) who settled in Lichtenau, Molotschna, in 1804. The Peter Reimer family lived in Conteniusfeld. Their daughter Helena Reimer (1829-1908) married Peter F. Warkentin (1820-1894), and lived in Fischau with her husband where they had a treadmill. In 1875 they moved to Kansas. Their son Bernhard Reimer (1832-1893) immigrated to Inman, Kansas; see Dorothy Wiens, *The Jakob B. Reimer Record* (Lincoln, Neb., 1983), 85 pages.

210. His daughter Elisabeth Rempel (1814-1893) married Abraham F. Reimer (1808-1892) the son of Aeltester Klaas Reimer. Plett, "Peter Rempel (1792-1837) Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 233-238, has more information on the family of Peter Rempel, Muntau.

211. Cornelius and Anna Sawatzky were the parents of a number of prominent KG families including Abraham Sawatzky (1807-1882) who settled in Jansen, Nebraska, in 1874. For a listing of their family see, Plett, "The Abraham von Riesen (1756-1810) Genealogy," 274-277.

212. Claasz and Katharina Siemens were the parents of a number of KG family heads including Gerhard Siemens (1805-1877) who immigrated to Rosenort, Manitoba, in 1874; Sara Siemens (1809-1885) who married Cornelius Janzen (1812-1864) of Neukirch; and Helena Siemens (1812-1888) who was married to Rev. Abraham F. Friesen (1807-1891) of Neukirch, Molotschna. For additional information on the descendants of this family, see Plett, "Genealogy of Daniel Fast," 354 and 360.

213. Henry Schapansky to author August 22, 1992, also writes that, "He [Claasz] married Katharina Friesen (born 1768, baptised 1785) on October 4, 1787 at Muensterberg/Heuboden Gemeinde. She was the daughter of Jakob Friesen, at that time, at Muensterberg."

214. Jakob Thiessen (died before 1788) was the father of Jakob Thiessen (born 1760), who immigrated to Einlage, Chortitz Colony in 1818, and Heinrich Thiessen (born 1773), who immigrated to Rosenthal, Chortitz Colony in 1818--courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author May 22, 1993.

215. This family is missing from the 1776 Konsignation. Henry Schapansky explains this as follows, "The answer is quite simply that Lakenwald (not to be confused with Lakendorf) was in the Scharpan, and hence part of the Danzig Territory and not Prussian Territory in 1776. He is listed in the general census of 1793, however, (territory taken over in 1793)." Schapansky to author October 10, 1992. For a family history, see Hermann Tiessen, *Martin Thiessen und seine Nachkommen 1737-1977* (Breslauer Str. 3, 3167 Burgdorf, Germany, 1977), 420 pages.

216. Only one Cornelius Warkentin is listed in the 1776 Konsignation in Halbstadt which is given as the place of birth of son Cornelius Warkentin (1777-1847) in family records. Gerhard Schellenberg (1827-1908), "Familienbuch," unpublished family records, Kleefeld, Manitoba, courtesy Henry N. Fast, Box 387, Steinbach, Manitoba, R0A 2A0.

217. The connection of Martin Warkentin (1705-1782) of Tiegenhoff, Prussia to Martin Warkentin (1764-1853), Blumstein, Molotschna, is courtesy of Henry Schapansky. Schapansky to author March 15, 1991.

218. The connection of Johann Warkentin (1760-1825) of Blumenort, Molotschna to Hans Warkentin, Petershagen, Prussia is based on the fact that the father of Johann Warkentin (1760-1825) is known to have been a Johann Warkentin. Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," 188. This connection is verified by the research of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author August 22, 1992. According to the immigration records Johann Warkentin (1760-1825) was born in Blumenort, Prussia. Unruh, 353. This is verified by the 1848 "Gemeinde Berichte" for Blumenort where it is stated that the village was named Blumenort in honour of the place of birth of Johann Warkentin the wealthiest of the settlers. Incidentally the school teacher of the village of Blumenort in 1848 is listed as Heinrich Warkentin who is undoubtedly the son of Johann Warkentin (1760-1825). See Heinrich B. Friesen, "Journal," unpublished family record, Inman, Kansas. Of further interest is the fact that the "Gemeinde Berichte" for Rosenort, Molotschna, state that the founder of the settlement, Johann Warkentin of Blumenort in the Elbinger Kriese, named the village Rosenort, in honour of the village of Rosenort in the old Homeland which lay near to Blumenort. Woltner, 125-126 and 128-129. Johann Warkentin (1760-1825) also had a servant, Peter Klassen, from Grubenhagen near Elbing who was born 1774 in Simonsdorf. Unruh, 348.

219. Information regarding the family of Dirck Wiebe, Reinland, Prussia, is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author 1992.

220. Henry Schapansky has written as follows, "This Peter Wiebe is difficult to locate in 1776, I suspect that he may have been from the Danziger Nehrung, and possibly still at home in 1776. His father may have been a Heinrich Wiebe." Schapansky to author October 10, 1992.

221. According to Henry Schapansky, Heinrich Wiebe from Neuteicherwald died before 1804 by which times his wife had married for the second time to Jakob Dueck. Letter to the author January 20, 1991. Identification of Heinrich Wiebe and Katharina Schierling (born 1751) as the parents-in-law of Abraham Friesen (1782-1849) is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letters to the author September 17 and 21, 1990.

222. Henry Schapansky has noted that Jakob Wiebe of Renkau, Prussia, may have been born in 1725 or 1745. Schapansky to author April 21, 1993.

223. Identification of the Franz Wiens family in the 1776 Konsignation is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author January 16, 1993.

224. Identification of Nicholas Wiens (1732-1794) as the father of David Wiens (1775-1838), Schoenau, Molotschna, is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author January 16, 1993. Henry Schapansky writes further that minister Jakob Wiens (1761-1812), Rosenthal, Chortitz Colony, was also a son of Nicholas Wiens (1732-1794).

225. Identification of Peter Wiens, Fuerstenau, Prussia, as the father of Franz Wiens (1773-1838) is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author January 16, 1993.

226. Only one Wittenberg is listed in the 1776 census and is, therefore, assumed to be the father of Abraham Wittenberg (born 1760). This connection has been verified by Henry Schapansky. Schapansky to author March 25, 1993.

227. Heinrich Thiessen died in Dammfeld, Prussia, in 1796. His widow remarried to Jakob Berg (born 1771) and in 1805 the family settled on Wirtschaft 19 in Rosenort, Molotschna. Unruh, 329. Henry Schapansky to author January 16, 1993. Berg had a capital of 2,000 ruble after the immigration. He served as a Beisitzer of the Gebeitsamt and was killed by Tartars in 1811 when he and several other men ventured forth on the steppes regarding surveying matters. Woltner, 126. Jakob Berg owned an estate in Prussia. Unruh, 336.

228. Susanna Siemens and Heinrich Thiessen were the parents of Nicholas Thiessen (born 1790) who married Elisabeth Wiens (born 1794), Tiede. They, in turn, were the parents of Johann W. Thiessen (1813-1888) of Contentiusfeld who settled in Jansen, Nebraska, in 1874; see Plett, "Wiens families in the Kleine Gemeinde," 501-2.

229. Their daughter Helena Thiessen (1793-1827) married the widower Peter Heidebrecht (1782-1862), Lichtenau, Molotschna; Plett, "Jakob Heidebrecht Genealogy," 422-4. Another daughter Katharina Thiessen (1795-1882) married Gerhard Neufeld (1795-1869), the son of Hermann Neufeld (1760-1835) of Muensterberg. The Gerhard Neufeld family lived in Lindenau where they were visited by the Czar in 1845; see Kornelius P. Neufeld, "Register Heft des Kornelius Peter Neufeld, Mersia, Ontario, und frueher Schoenfeld, Süd=Rusland," unpublished journal, 2, courtesy of Eric Neufeld, Box 1474, Swan River, Manitoba, R0L 1Z0; Plett, "Peter Neufeld 1697-1769," 11-15, has a listing of their children and grandchildren. For a listing of death dates for the children of Isaac Thiessen (1763-1835), see Kornelius P. Neufeld, 17.

230. All indications are that he was the Franz Thiessen who was jailed together with his daughter Anna for incest. The KG interceded on behalf of the family and tried to assist them in the face of opposition from the Grosse Gemeinde and the Gebeitsamt; see Part Three, Chapter Three.

231. Their son Peter Thiessen (1808-1873) of Schoenau became a KG minister in 1849. He was the father of Abraham F. Thiessen (1832-1889) the famous Molotschna land reformer who later settled in Jansen, Nebraska. Another son, Johann P. Thiessen (1852-1920) became a State Senator in Nebraska. Henry N. Fast, "The Kleine Gemeinde in the United States of America," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 111, provides additional information on the Thiessen family.

232. According to the family study by Hermann Thiessen, 8, Jakob Friesen was born in Tiegenhagen in 1775. Unruh, 316. He was an early adherent of the KG and is identified as such in the Autobiography of Klaas Reimer. See Klaas Reimer, "Ein Kleines Aufsatz," Part Two, Chapter Two.

233. Cornelius Toews (1766-1831) was the grandfather of Aeltester Peter P. Toews (1841-1922); cf. Part Ten, Chapter One.

234. Plett, "Cornelius Warkentin 1777-1847 Genealogy," unpublished family history, 1992, 5 pages, has more information regarding this family.

235. She was the daughter of a Johann Warkentin. This information courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author March 15, 1991. Plett, "Martin Warkentin 1764 Genealogy," 467-91, has a listing of her family.

236. Philip Warkentin (born 1780) was the son of Jakob Warkentin, the son of Martin Warkentin (1705-1782) of Tiegenhoff, Prussia. Philip Warkentin (born 1780) had a brother Peter Warkentin who settled on Wirtschaft I, Rosenort, Molotschna, shortly after 1808 where a son Jakob was born to him in 1812. This information is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author March 15, 1991.

237. Jakob Wiebe (born 1764) was the father of Helena Wiebe (1789-1836) who married Wilhelm Loewen (born 1785) from Tiede, Molotschna. Another son, Dietrich Wiebe (born 1794) lived in Neukirch, Molotschna. Courtesy of Henry Schapansky, "Dirck Wiebe genealogy chart," 1992.

238. She was the daughter of Johann Neufeld of Mausdorferweide, Prussia.

239. Peter Wiebe (born 1755) was a wealthy Vollwirt who settled on Wirtschaft 21 in Schoenau. Unruh, 309. In addition to a large inventory of cattle and horses he had 1125 ruble cash when he arrived in the Molotschna. Woltner, 97. Peter Wiebe (born 1755) was the grandfather of

Heinrich, Peter and Jakob Wiebe who settled in Blumenort, Manitoba, in 1874-5.

240. Maria Wiebe was the mother of H. Enns (1807-1881), the fourth KG Aeltester.

241. Her mother, nee Katharina Schierling (born 1751), married for the second time to Jakob Dueck (born 1766), a wealthy farmer who settled on a double Wirtschaft in Ohrloff in 1805. Unruh, 324. Her brother, Heinrich Wiebe (born in 1773) of Ohrloff became a minister of the KG during the 1820s and eventually was the leader of the false-humility movement against founder Klaas Reimer in about 1828. Jakob Dueck (born 1766) must have had spacious buildings since many brotherhood meetings for the Molotschna Gross Flemish Gemeinde were held at his place during these years; cf. Klaas Reimer, "Ein Kleines Aufsatz," Part Two, Chapter Two.

242. Peter Wiebe and Anna Theichgrof were the parents of Anna Wiebe (1802-1881) who married Jakob Toews (1805-1873), the uncle of Aeltester Peter P. Toews (1841-1922); Plett, "Cornelius Toews Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 226-31, has a listing of their descendants.

243. She was the widow of Julius Kroeker (1747-1799), Schoeneberg, Prussia. Together they has three sons: Jakob (born November, 13, 1791), Julius (born August 7, 1796) and Franz (1798-1853). Schapansky to author March 25, 1993. Franz Kroeker married Hedwig Martens (1798-1861) and they were the parents of four KG families including Jakob M. Kroeker (1836-1913), who served as the Aeltester in Rosenort, Manitoba, for many years. See Jakob M. Kroeker, "Life's story of the deceased beloved Jakob M. Kroeker," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 577-81.

244. Johann Wiens (1753-1819) and Margaretha Mathies (1757-1819) were the parents of Elisabeth Wiens (born 1793) who married Klaas Thiessen (born 1790). They, in turn, were the parents of Johann W. Thiessen (1813-1888) of Contentiusfeld who settled in Jansen, Nebraska, in 1874. See Plett, "Wiens families in the Kleine Gemeinde," 501-2.

245. Johann Wiens (born 1748) was the father of Abram Wiens (1779-1844), Altona, Molotschna, who married Margaretha Hiebert (1797-1855) the daughter of Johann Hiebert, Halbstadt. See Plett, "Wiens Families in the Kleine Gemeinde," 510-511. Johann Wiens (born 1748) was also the father of Aganetha Wiens (1797-1860) who married Dirk Warkentin (1788-1837). Warkentin, in turn, was the father of Dirk Warkentin (1815-1881) who became the Aeltester of the Lichtenau Gemeinde in 1841 to replace Heinrich Wiens (1800-1872).

246. Their son Johann Wiens (1800-1887) was the father of Aganetha Wiens (1826-1855) and Katharina Wiens (1833-1877), who married the sons of Martin J. Barkman, Rueckenau, Molotschna. See Plett, "Wiens families in the Kleine Gemeinde," 502-504.

247. They were the parents of Anna Wiens (1810-1876) who was the mother of Jakob A. Wiebe (1836-1921), the founder of the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren. See Plett, "Wiens families in the Kleine Gemeinde," 514-515.

248. The village of residence for Franz Wiens (1773-1838) is not available but Grossweide seems the most likely as several of their children lived there.

249. Abraham Wittenberg (born 1760) was resident on Wirtschaft 14 in Muensterberg. Unruh, 316-317. He was the father of Paul Wittenberg (born 1793) who was one of the three KG baptismal candidates baptised by Aeltester Heinrich Janzen in Schoenwiese in 1815. See *Namenverzeichnis der Mennonitischen Gemeinden* (1857) annotated by Kornelius Hildebrand, Chortitza--courtesy of Dr. James Urry, letter to the author June 1990.

250. Cornelius Lepp (born 1781) was the father of Cornelius Loepp (1810-1891), Muntau. See Plett, "Jakob Heidebrecht Genealogy," 416 and 424. Their daughter Anganetha Loepp (1808-1881) married Jakob W. Friesen (1808-1889), the son of Abraham Friesen (1782-1849), the second Aeltester of the KG. The Jakob W. Friesen family may have taken over the Loepp Wirtschaft in Blumstein since the family lived in that village where Jakob later also served as the Schulz.

## Chapter Six

# The Kleine Gemeinde as Sectarian Farmers 1850-75

---

**The Kleine Gemeinde as Sectarian Farmers: An Economic Portrait of the Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde, 1850-1875.** By Dr. Royden K. Loewen, Department of History, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1992. This article appears within a chapter of the following book: Royden K. Loewen, *Family, Church and Market: A Mennonite Community in the Old and the New Worlds, 1850-1930* (Toronto, Ont.: University of Toronto Press, 1993).

---

### Introduction.

The land in New Russia rises and falls gently; it extends, almost flat and without a break to the horizon. Deep gullies and broad valleys holding small slow rivers relieve the monotony of the steppe, their existence suggesting the presence of the Dnieper River and the Black Sea which they feed. The earth is rich black chernozem, but dry, receiving little more than 35 centimeters of precipitation from rain and snow each year. The horizon is barren except for the domesticated trees that surround and shelter orderly villages. The rivers dictate the contour of the roads. The steppe everywhere bears the mark of man. It is divided into long strips of wheat and rye and barley, and into huge pastures offering sheep and cattle their nourishment.<sup>1</sup>

This was the physical setting of the Mennonite colonies of New Russia, a government region in the heart of present-day Ukraine. Here, in the provinces of Ekaterinoslav and Taurida, the conservative majority of Mennonites pursued their aim of safeguarding an old way of life. They sought to maintain a separate identity and organize pacifist, agrarian lives within their families, their villages and the church congregations. It was an aim deeply rooted in an historical identity and a sectarian ideology of "separation from the world." And it seemed protected in the Mennonites' social status of "free peasants" which enabled them to negotiate special, feudal-type agreements of separation from host societies. In New Russia, both religious aim and social status coalesced under the "Privilegium," the Mennonites' particular set of agreements with the Russian government.

Still, life in Russia was not static; a rising global economy and far-reaching political reforms were transforming New Russia. It was becoming a more integrated, pluralistic and commercialized society. Conservative Mennonites in New Russia were compelled constantly to devise strategies to reproduce their traditionalist lives within a changing social context. For conservative Mennonites

that way could be found only in the continuation of an agrarian existence, guaranteeing a household mode of production and control of social boundaries. Ironically, this conservative aim of "separation from the world" could only be ensured by interacting with the "world" of markets and government agencies.

### Section I.

Embodying the aim of a separate identity with particular vigour at mid-century were the Kleine Gemeinde (KG) Mennonites of the Molotschna Colony. The tiny KG congregation of only 400 souls was a minority in a larger Russian Mennonite community of 30,000; yet in many ways it was representative of the mainstream of conservative, agrarian Mennonites. Historian Delbert Plett, has argued that the KG based their vision of culture and church on readings of sixteenth-century Anabaptist writers, of "the continuation of the nonresistant church."<sup>2</sup> As such they "represented the sound middle centre on the Russian Mennonite religious scene."<sup>3</sup> This entailed a communal-oriented church congregation which emphasized humility and submission to both God and neighbour, insisted on a strict interpretation of pacifism, taught a serious and sober outlook on life, and demonstrated a willingness to separate oneself from "worldly society." Religion was seen as an earnest, all-encompassing corporate activity. The members of the KG sought the continuation of an agrarian-based, Gemeinde-centered community.

New Russia, and particularly the Molotschna Colony, however, was not a static milieu. As James Urry has argued, the nineteenth century was a period of transformation for Mennonites in Russia. During this time, society in New Russia became more commercialized and pluralistic. Ethnic heterogeneity, for example, undermined any hope that the Mennonites might have had for cultural and social isolation. By 1851 there were 1.4 million Ukrainian nobles and serfs and Western European colonists in the government districts of Ekaterinoslav and Taurida alone. Over time the Mennonites' neighbours included Ukrainian peasants, Nogais Tartars, Doukhobors, Hutterites and Jews from nearby settlements, and German Lutherans and Catholics from a dozen larger colonies. Mennonites also regularly encountered itinerant Jewish merchants and craftsmen, travelling Gypsy bands and visiting Russian government officials.<sup>4</sup>

The Molotschna Mennonites' closest relationships were with the 12 neighbouring German colonies, comprised of Lutheran, Catholic, and Hutterian free peasants who were also granted special religious privileges, spoke German, and participated in the commercialization of agriculture.<sup>5</sup> They too would emigrate from Russia after the political reforms of the 1860s and 1870s, and settle in agrarian settlements in the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas and the Canadian Northwest. In Russia, the Mennonites and these other German-language colonies had similar cultures and economies. It is true that the Lutheran colony on the Molochnaia River was considerably poorer than its Mennonite counterpart; the Lutheran colony had an annual per capita income of only 5.8 rubles in 1855, much less than the 18.8 rubles of the Mennonite Molotschna colony.<sup>6</sup> When Mennonites compared themselves to all 15 of their neighbouring German colonies, however, it was clear that others were also experiencing the growing prosperity of a mixed agricultural economy. Indeed in 1855 six of the 16 foreign colonies in Taurida had a higher per capita rate of income than the Molotschna Mennonites.<sup>7</sup> These

similarities encouraged trade between the various colonies, common economic strategies and the occasional inter-marriage. An especially close tie developed between those Molotschna Mennonites and Lutherans who shared an attraction for the religiosity of German pietism.

A second factor that brought change to the Mennonite colonies in New Russia was the commercialization of agriculture, due both to the rise of world markets and the Russian government's policy for economic development in New Russia. The Russian government had made no secret of the fact that the Mennonite settlements were designed not to assert the merits of religious sanctuary, but to establish an agricultural model for a backward peasantry and to secure the region for Russia by developing a rural economy. To ensure that this would occur, the government in 1830 helped set up a voluntary "Landwirtschaftliche Verein," or Agricultural Society, on the Molotschna colony. This society was headed by Johann Cornies, a powerful, progressive and wealthy Mennonite farmer, who often pressured reluctant farmers to modernize. Under his leadership the society built experimental farms, introduced new crops and established building codes. He introduced innovative agricultural methods, such as the planting of shelter belts and the four-crop rotation. Before long, local Mennonite observers reported that the "Landwirtschaftliche Verein controls the industry of every Mennonite [and sees to it] that his fields are well worked, that he plants trees in the correct manner, that his house is in order and in all his activities he is an economic leader."<sup>8</sup> According to Urry, the result was not only an improved economy, but new attitudes of individualism and personal gain. Thus, by the time Cornies died in 1848, the pattern for change and modernity among the Mennonites had been set.

That pattern, however, was strengthened by a qualitative change in global economic development after mid-century. North Atlantic industrialization, described by E.J. Hobsbawm as "the most fundamental transformation of human life in the history of the world," meant that merchants turned their capital to the use of technology and labour to the production of marketable goods.<sup>9</sup> Mennonites were directly affected by the changes. The English factory system required raw materials, including coal and iron for the factory itself, and cereal grains to feed the factories' workers. In turn, England was able to sell its manufactured products to commodity-producing places like New Russia, undercutting cottage industries and encouraging rural residents to concentrate on agricultural commodity production instead.<sup>10</sup>

New Russia was one of these "commodity-producing places." By 1850 it was Russia's most economically advanced region, ready to take advantage of the growing world market. Between 1800 and 1850 land prices in New Russia increased tenfold from 1.5 rubles per "desiatina" (2.7 acres) to 15 and 20 rubles. During the same period the number of sheep increased by 400%.<sup>11</sup> Grain exporting also began. In 1829 the Dardanelle Strait connecting the Black Sea to the Mediterranean was opened to British ships and during the 1830s half a dozen Black Sea ports opened. While the Crimean War stalled the export economy, it took off after 1860. Between 1860 and World War I the acreage dedicated to wheat in the black soil provinces of Taurida and Ekaterinoslav doubled.<sup>12</sup> By 1881 Odessa had surpassed St. Petersburg in the volume of export trade. Indeed, recent studies have indicated that between 1865 and 1870 Britain imported twice as much wheat from

New Russia as from the United States.<sup>13</sup>

A third change, a series of political reforms, affected the Mennonite colonies as drastically as did the economic transformation in New Russia. These reforms, introduced by Alexander II following the Crimean War, were meant to transform the Russian feudal state into a homogeneous, integrated society in which no special privileges would exist for any one group. Russia's defeat in the Crimean War in 1856 forced the recognition that only far-reaching social reform and industrialization could change its fortunes. Among the first steps to reform was the abolition of serfdom in 1861.<sup>14</sup> Within a decade, fiscal reform had systematized the state's economy and put a check on inflation caused by the issuing of paper money during the war; administrative reforms had established democratically-elected municipal councils and local justices of the peace; education reforms had introduced more secondary schools and commenced the partial russification of all regions; military reforms had begun abolishing Russia's primitive army and replacing it with universal military service. There were signs everywhere of the end of special privilege and the opening up of Russian society according to "non-class principles."<sup>15</sup>

## Section II.

The story of the conservative KG Mennonites in the third quarter of the nineteenth century is the search to maintain the old ideology of "separation from the world" in this changing environment. They sought to realize conservative religious values and a sober and simple way of life in the midst of economic and social change. At the root of that aim was a strategy of economic survival. While the agrarian lives of KG farmers were intricately tied to nature's seasonal rhythms and to the old values of household production, new strategies had to be employed in the changing context of New Russia. During these years KG colonists made two significant changes. First, they sought new sources of arable land in the Borosenko colony located 150 kilometers northwest of the Molotschna. Second, they commercialized their holdings; they sold more wheat into an export staple economy, relied more on a cash economy, hired more wage labour, searched for wider credit sources, and faced the reality of growing gaps between rich and poor.

The transition the Mennonite colonists experienced during these years was more than commercialization or embourgeoisement. Peasant farmers, of course, did not wake up one morning to the realization that they were capitalists. Traditional modernization and Marxist studies chart the inevitable replacement of peasant production with capitalistic production. Studies of English agriculture, in particular, tell the story of the displacement of the rural peasant by wealthy landowners who enclosed their properties and established commercialized farms.<sup>16</sup> More recent studies have questioned this deterministic model and have emphasized the compatibility of traditional economic modes of production with industrial capitalism. Harriet Friedmann's description of "simple commodity producers," small cash-cropping family farmers who are integrated into the industrialized world, is useful in understanding the economic base of Mennonite farmers.<sup>17</sup> Friedmann argues that the term "peasant" does not adequately describe the relationship of household producers and a market economy. The term "simple commodity production" is more satisfactory, as it designates a household economic unit, highly self-sufficient in labour and consumption, but one which must produce for the

market place in order to secure the means to reproduce its mode of production.

This designation serves well in analyzing Mennonite farmers. Mennonites pursued both self-sufficient, land-owning, family-oriented units of production, as well as a version of commercialized agriculture that benefitted from economies of scale, produced surpluses for export, and was integrated into a cash economy.<sup>18</sup> It is true that unlike Friedmann's North American farmers, Mennonites in Russia hired up to 50% of their labour requirements. However, this was a practice rooted in the specific economic conditions of New Russia, where farm machinery was dear and labour was cheap, and it was geared to household reproduction and not capital accumulation for its own sake. It is true too that unlike Friedmann's farmers, Mennonites did not abandon a communal-orientation upon commercialization.<sup>19</sup> Even after Mennonites became "competitive" they maintained a strong sense of religious community, bolstered by their minority status and special religious privileges.

KG Mennonites in New Russia, thus, are better described as household commodity producers than peasants. Despite their social and religious separation they participated fully in the economic transformation of New Russia in general, and the Molotschna Colony in particular. Mennonite historian P.M. Friesen, a frequent critic of conservative Mennonites, conceded in 1911 that "the Kleine Gemeinde, in spite of its unhealthy Mennonite narrowness and severity, never came into conflict with the [progressive] Agricultural Society . . . The yards, fields, gardens and cattle of the Kleine Gemeinde belonged to the best of the colonies [sic]."<sup>20</sup> The agricultural reports in regional German-language newspapers substantiate Friesen's observations. The Odessa-based *Unterhaltungsblatt*, for instance, named KG farmers - Johann Warkentin and Johann Friesen - among the Molotschna's leaders in dairy production in the 1850s; and farmers Isaac Loewen and Johann Toews were recognized for their silkworm farms.<sup>21</sup> Finally, young KG farmers, like Cornelius Plett, could be found in the newly established villages in the eastern sections of the Molotschna, indicating that they belonged to well-to-do families who had the means to purchase expensive land.<sup>22</sup>

The KG households' close ties to the market economy of New Russia was seen in the dislocation that many of these farms faced in the 1850s. Inflating land prices associated with a burgeoning population and a growing economy, threatened a traditional way of life throughout New Russia.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, by 1860 only 49%, 1519 of the 3082, of Mennonite households in the Molotschna Colony owned their own land.<sup>24</sup> By the 1850s more and more Mennonites were forced to enter the trades and household craft production despite their falling profitability and an associated stigma attached to non-landed activity.<sup>25</sup> KG members were no exceptions. A typical young KG Mennonite was Johann Esau; he recalled later that "financially unable to buy land, father became a tradesman . . . and soon started his own shop, manufacturing combs, horns for sausage making and other articles which were made of animal horns."<sup>26</sup> Others members wrote of forays into blacksmithing, wagon building, and merchandizing, while others purchased tread mills and oil presses for custom service.<sup>27</sup> Increasingly, young Mennonites were forced to find work in agricultural support services or household industry.

Landlessness was clearly a problem for the KG, as it was for other groups, because it had adverse political, economic and religious implications. Only the landed had a right to vote in the village councils. Only an agrarian existence was

considered appropriate for a people committed to a simple, separate way of life. And only agriculture was considered economically stable. The falling profitability of cottage industries was placing the economic health of many households at risk. Clearly a new strategy was required in the 1860s to ensure the continuity of a traditional way of life.

That strategy for the KG necessitated the relocation of the entire congregation, beginning in 1865, to the new colony of Borosenko in the province of Ekaterinoslav. Here land had become available following Alexander II's act to release the serfs in 1861. Nobleman Borso was among many other large estate owners who now found themselves without free labour with which to work their inefficient farms, and who, thus, began selling their estates. So severe was this problem that between 1861 and 1905 large landowners in New Russia sold some 26 million desiatini of land, 14 million during the 1860s alone.<sup>28</sup> Mennonites scrambled to secure some of these land sources for new sub-colonies. Between 1862 and 1871 the Molotschna colony officially founded 47 new villages on 122,000 desiatini.<sup>29</sup> Other settlements were founded privately by groups such as the KG congregation. In 1865 the KG negotiated a deal for the purchase of 6137 desiatini, more than 16,500 acres, of Borosenko land.<sup>30</sup>

In a sense the migration of 1865 was to be as significant as the move to North America a decade later; Borosenko was intended to provide for the survival of the agrarian household and the sectarian community in a context of industrialization in a similar fashion to that of the move to North America in 1874. It was especially significant that the migration to Borosenko provided the vast majority of KG households, including the poor, with the land required to reproduce a familiar way of life. Indeed, it was the poor who initiated the migration to Borosenko. Peter Toews, one of the two church Aeltesters in the late 1860s, recalled how in 1863 ". . . the poorer brethren of the Gemeinde . . . submitted a petition to the [church] ministerial requesting that the Gemeinde . . . purchase land to help the 'landless.'<sup>31</sup> Other sources note a similar concern. It was "as farmland became scarce and the family increased," noted a son of a KG farmer, that "the church . . . bought a tract of land from a certain landlord named [Borso], and a number of families . . . settled [there] in seven villages."<sup>32</sup> Other Molotschna land renters, craftsmen and schoolteachers also recalled how the Borosenko strategy allowed them to become landowners for the first time.<sup>33</sup>

Because the decision to purchase Borosenko was a congregational initiative and not one undertaken by the larger Molotschna colony, almost the entire KG congregation made the relocation. The move was a serious one. It involved relocating 150 kilometers northwest to an unknown region across the Dnieper River. Here on Borso's estate, lying on the banks of the Busuluk and Soljenaja Rivers, 120 KG families (700 souls) settled in six villages.<sup>34</sup> These villages included, Heuboden, Rosenfeld, Blumenhoff, Neuanlage, Annafeld and Steinbach; each founded within a two year span between 1865 and 1867 (see Map # 3).<sup>35</sup> In the years after 1867 other families continued coming to Borosenko. In 1870 a number of KG families moved from Markusland, a temporary settlement located just to the north of the Chortitza colony, while others continued to trickle in from the Molotschna. These later migrants often settled on land outside the initial boundaries of the colony.<sup>36</sup>

Borosenko, however, was not a compact KG colony. The 131 square kilometre

area, containing 12,000 desiatini of land also contained settlements of Mennonites from the Chortitz colony. Indeed, in the years after 1865, Chortitz Mennonites founded no fewer than six villages in Borosenko. These included Nikolaithal, Schoendorf, Ebenfeld, Felsenbach, Eigengrund and Neuhochstaedt. There were also small towns comprised of former Ukrainian serfs and state peasants. The most notable of these towns was Sholochown, known to the Mennonites simply as Schalag, located at the confluence of the Busuluk and Soljenaja.<sup>37</sup> And as travel laws in New Russia were liberalized after 1861, Jewish merchants, craftsmen and doctors set up shop in several Mennonite villages.<sup>38</sup>

### Section III.

Everyday life in Borosenko Colony resembled life in the Molotschna. The diaries and memoirs of the settlers suggest, that except for a greater concentration on farming, life remained rooted in the sectarian village and household, and reflected a simple, self-sufficiency tied to nature's cycles. If the availability of land safeguarded this traditional pattern of life, the continuing development of New Russia's market economy ensured that the KG could not remain aloof from an increasingly pluralistic and industrial society. The sales of wheat into an international market, a money economy, agronomic innovation, rising land prices, the tapping of cheap wage labour were signs that the traditionalist KG were becoming integrated into a new economic environment. At Borosenko, the co-existence of tradition and capitalism continued to evolve.

Most of the Borosenko settlers lived in agrarian villages similar to those in the Molotschna. These villages were, however, somewhat smaller, usually containing between 12 and 22 family farms. Johann Dueck, a schoolboy in the village of Blumenhof, later described his memory of the village: "... a small stream ... the Soljenaja lay behind the row of houses in Blumenhof. [It] was a village of one and a half rows of [farmyards], as a number of houses were built in a row perpendicular to the main street at the lower end of the village."<sup>39</sup> The farms, too, were smaller than those of the Molotschna, usually containing only 50 desiatini of land, rather than the accustomed 65 desiatini.<sup>40</sup> Like those of the Molotschna, Borosenko villages had prescribed farmyard, building, garden plot and arable plot sizes.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, the land around the village was organized as an open field, divided into regions with each region further divided into strips so that each "full" farmer received an equal allotment of poor and good land.<sup>42</sup> Part of each village's land was designated as commons for haying and pasturing.<sup>43</sup>

An agrarian lifestyle was guaranteed not only by the re-establishment of a familiar spatial environment, but by the continuation of a life closely in tune with seasonal changes and an ofttime harsh climate. While temperatures were less severe than they would be in prairie Canada, the seasons of Russia's continental climate were distinct and the temperatures extreme.<sup>44</sup> The records of Abram Reimer, an elderly Borosenko farmer who took the temperature at 6 A.M. and noon of each day between 1870 and 1873, indicate moderately cold winters and warm summers. The reports for 1870 establish a mean temperature for July of 29.5 degrees (Celsius) and for January of -9.3.<sup>45</sup> While the first frost for 1870 came on September 23 (September 11 Julian) and the first heavy snowfall arrived on November 18, the River Busuluk still flowed on December 17. It was only on December 30 that Reimer noticed "frost on the door window for the first time."<sup>46</sup>

If the temperature was more moderate than in the Canadian prairies, the winds and irregular precipitation made it a less desirable climate. Frequent hot dry east winds blew from central Asia in summer and fall, and in spring strong south winds whipped up mighty clouds of dust before bringing a deluge of rain from the Black Sea. "There was so much wind," wrote Abram Reimer in July 1873, "that it seemed as if the house would break apart and so much dust that one could not see five paces ahead." While Reimer made many entries reading "beautiful sunny day" this serene picture is inevitably interrupted by entries such as "east wind and very dismal" or "strong south wind with much rain and lightning." The sparse 30 centimeters of annual precipitation came in frequent violent thundershowers that often flooded parched land and sent creeks overflowing their banks. Muddy roads and submerged bridges could put a halt to all travel. The occasional snow storm could bring much snow; in one day in January 1874 it brought so much that Reimer's poor neighbour, Machlin, who lived in a sod hut, "was forced to climb out through the chimney." The unreliable precipitation, the short-lived snow cover, the strong winds and varying temperatures shaped agrarian life in Borosenko.

The diary of Abram Reimer offers a vivid picture of a farmer intricately affected by nature's rhythms. January's intermittent frost and thawing forced farmers to capitalize on the cold days. Sleighs came out, grain was hauled to market and household goods were purchased. By February, signs of spring were everywhere; cows and sheep gave birth, cattle were released onto pasture land and by the end of the month there was always the news of the first settler who had planted potatoes or ploughed his land. By the end of March the whole colony was a hum of activity as "there was ploughing everywhere" and the excitement of "the first grain . . . already sprouting" was contagious. During April more new life appeared on the Reimer farm as "the brown mare gave birth to a foal" and "our pig had six piglets" and "the grain has all germinated." In May the sheep were gathered and sheared and put out to summer pasture, the manure accumulated over the winter was spread onto the summerfallow, the schools of fish in the Busuluk were netted, and the hay harvest was begun. June was the "heavenly month" when the weather was perfect with "everything very green."

By the first of July the garden's potatoes, cucumbers, and beans were ready for consumption. More importantly, this was the time that reapers were hired and sent out to the fields with the scythes to cut and tie up the sheaves. By the end of the month much of the grain had been hauled home to threshing floors on the farmyard. During the hot windy days of August farmers threshed. Intermittent and often violent rain showers made this a stressful task, baiting some to carry this task into hot, sunny Sundays.<sup>47</sup> Once the wheat was harvested portions of it were sold to generate cash to pay debts, and other portions taken to the local miller, ground into flour and stored for winter consumption. The balance was bagged, carried to the second floor of the house, from where it was taken when market prices seemed right or when more flour was required. August was also the month that the watermelon ripened, a welcome reward for the farm labourers.

During September, if the right rains came to soften the earth, the stubble was ploughed to prepare for the fall seeding of rye and winter wheat. October and November were the months to fill the larder. Neighbours gathered on successive days to butcher pigs which had been "fatted" on grain since August. The fatter the pig the better was the slaughter; indeed a vital statistic associated with pig

slaughtering was the thickness of the fat on the pork belly; two and a half inches was a moderate kill, four inches a good one. The lard from the fat of the pig provided more work in December, especially for the women who mixed it with lye to produce the year's soap supply. The cold days of December signalled to farmers that the time had come for the settling of accounts in time for the holiday season of Christmas.

Not only did the whims of weather order the activity of the settler; it also toyed with his spirits. No land was richer than the black soils of southern Russia. Estate owners on the grey soils in the Moscow area could not hope to produce enough grain for export, and when they tried, bankruptcy was frequently the result.<sup>48</sup>

Yet the irregular and low amounts of precipitation kept the farm economy of New Russia in check. Indeed, precipitation fluctuations could cause grain yields to vary by as much as 500% from one year to the next. The bumper crop of 1874, for instance, brought Cornelius Jansen of Steinfeld 15 bushels of wheat per acre and 31 bushels barley; the crop failure of 1875 resulted in 3.3 bushels of wheat per acre and 7.2 bushels of barley.<sup>49</sup> According to the same source the average yield of wheat on the Molotschna colony during the 1860s ranged from 8 bushels an acre in one year to 22 bushels an acre in another.<sup>50</sup>

#### Section IV.

Despite this dependence on nature's cycles there were signs that Borosenko farmers were not resigned to the immutability of things or aloof from the general commercialization of agriculture in New Russia. The work of the Molotschna Agricultural Committee in an earlier generation was not lost on the KG farmers. Cattle breeding, sheep raising, silk worm farming, shelter belt planting, and loans to encourage change, continued in Borosenko.<sup>51</sup> The KG also continued practicing the Agricultural Society's innovative four-field system of rotating "black fallow, barley, wheat and rye," thus ensuring that fully 75% of land would be under cultivation in any given year.<sup>52</sup>

The small but marked increase in farm mechanization during the 1860s was another indicator of change. In Borosenko, as in other German speaking colonies, threshing for the most part was carried out without the use of threshing machines, available in Odessa in 1861 at prices from 550 to 1550 rubles.<sup>53</sup> So long as a farmer could contract to have his grain cut, bound and threshed by itinerant Russian workers for around six rubles a desiatina or simply cut, bound and transferred to the farmyard for 2.5 rubles a desiatina it was uneconomical for him to consider such a purchase.<sup>54</sup> Farmers, thus, continued to thresh their crop by driving stone threshing wheels over a threshing floor, a round-shaped spot of packed clay on the farm yard. The personal diaries of elderly Abram Reimer and schoolteacher Abram Friesen are filled with reports of "hauling the wheat home", "driving it out" with the threshing stone, and then bagging it and carrying it up to the attic for winter storage.<sup>55</sup> English steam engines costing up to 2400 rubles and mechanical reapers costing 260 rubles were similarly unpopular during the 1860s.<sup>56</sup>

Records indicate that the importation of farm machinery into Russia did not take off until the late 1870s. Between 1877 and 1880, 3.52 million rubles worth of implements were imported compared to .79 million between 1869 and 1872 - almost a five-fold increase within a decade.<sup>57</sup>

There were innovations, however, which Mennonites did accept. For fall and

spring ploughing there was the "Bukker," a three or four-share steel plough which improved the seed bed, preserved moisture and proved more time efficient than the single-furrow, wooden ploughs.<sup>58</sup> At least one KG blacksmith, Klaas R. Reimer, made a profit from manufacturing these ploughs. Reimer writes that between 1864 and 1868 he hired "two men [to] increase the activity in the smithy [because] at that time there was a great demand for three and four bottom ploughs."<sup>59</sup> Other pieces of equipment acquired by Borosenko farmers included harrows, wagons and even an occasional seeder.<sup>60</sup> Each was constructed by local craftsmen. The harrow was usually a wooden implement, although the increasing number of blacksmiths during this period would indicate that many were also made of steel. The wagons were heavy wooden vehicles, reinforced with steel plates with small wheels suited for the smooth, dry roads of southern Russia.<sup>61</sup> Larger covered wagons known as "Gedeckwagon" were also used.<sup>62</sup> Two-wheeled riding wagons, "Zweiraeder," once frowned on by the ascetic KG, were introduced in Borosenko, especially to make the long journey back to the Molotschna. Each farmer also possessed a cleaning mill, required to clean the grain invariably contaminated by pieces of earth and manure from the threshing floor.<sup>63</sup> But the most visible of the different technologies were the "large Holland-type windmills" that could be seen in Steinbach, Gruenfeld and Neuhalbstadt and which villagers used to grind their grains for domestic use.<sup>64</sup>

The more striking indicator of farm commercialization, however, was the degree to which KG farmers marketed surplus grain by the 1850s. During this decade Gemeinde members wrote about memorable trips from the Molotschna to the seaport of Berdyansk where they delivered grain, visited relatives en route and tried to withstand the temptations of the cities' public houses.<sup>65</sup> After the move to Borosenko, KG farmers began hauling a substantial portion of their grain to Nicopol, a river port located 250 kilometers upstream from the Black Sea port of Kherson. In 1870 Johann Reimer, a 32 year-old farmer from Steinbach, made the two day return voyage to Nicopol approximately once a month. Often he would go alone, taking with him three "chetvert" (24 bushels) of wheat or barley, and returning the next day with the 28 to 34 rubles or merchandise for that amount. Sometimes he would travel in convoy, accompanied by his brother Klaas or Peter or his brother-in-law Peter Toews or Abram Friesen. Once he went in with his wife, Anna Warkentin. Inevitably he returned with news of the latest Odessa price for wheat, fluctuating as it would from 7.20 rubles to 8.50 rubles per chetvert for most of these years.<sup>66</sup>

Marketing strategies became part of the farmer's everyday life. A growing demand for wheat to feed Europe's mushrooming cities sometimes sent prices as high as 12 rubles a chetvert (\$1.04 a bushel). The fact, however, that wheat prices were only about 10% higher in the months between April and August than during the remainder of the year suggests a continued demand for the product.<sup>67</sup> But it is also indicates that farmers were not practicing a pre-industrial "moral economy" as described by E.P. Thompson; rather, they were carefully watching the market, keeping enough wheat back to deliver it over the year, thus hedging their losses.<sup>68</sup>

Farmers also listened to the encouragement by grain traders to grow wheat. Johann Dueck, the son of a Borosenko farmer, wrote that "when one went to Nicopol with a load of wheat one would be met by wheat dealers in large numbers before one even was in the city. Each one of the wheat dealers wanted to buy the

wheat and had to try to outbid the other.<sup>69</sup> Sometimes these dealers even made their rounds in the villages pressing farmers to pre-sell their wheat and hedge on the futures market. Dueck writes that "on such occasions, once the parties had reached an agreement, a deposit was paid . . . to validate the transaction. Later the wheat . . . had [only] to be delivered to the purchaser [who would pay out the agreed upon price] without regard to [current] price . . ."<sup>70</sup> So prevalent was the practice of exporting wheat from the region that local demand sometimes sent prices within Borosenko 20% higher than the export market price. Peter Reimer's discovery on 7 April 1870 that wheat he had just sold in Nicopol for 7.20 rubles could have been sold for 9.20 in the neighbouring village of Heuboden was not an unusual event.<sup>71</sup>

Market demand for wheat affected cropping patterns in Borosenko. Diaries indicate that farmers were concentrating between 40% and 65% of their fields to wheat, the rest to a combination of barley, rye and oats.<sup>72</sup> The profits from wheat, no doubt, encouraged this concentration. Indeed, the gross revenue from Steinbach farmer Klaas Reimer's fields in 1873 was greater than the very price of the land when the KG first moved to Borosenko eight years earlier.<sup>73</sup>

The primacy of wheat as the cash crop for the Borosenko farmers was underlined by the relative insignificance of other products during the 1860s. Sheep farming in New Russia had been declining for some time. Only one KG farmer is known to have had a sizeable sheep herd numbering 300 animals in Borosenko. Farmers regularly sold a variety of products at regional fairs, the "Jahrmärkten," but incomes from this source paled in comparison to wheat sales. Farmer Cornelius Loewen sold 45.50 rubles of butter during the first six months of 1872, but this represented less than 12% of his grain income during a similar period. Other Mennonite farmers regularly sold wool, eggs, pork, mutton, beef and vegetables to the local market.<sup>74</sup> Each of these commodities, however, represented supplements to a wheat economy.

Wheat sales gave rise to a money economy that permeated every aspect of farming in Borosenko. Cash was required to purchase additional land. During the 1860s, for example, land prices in Borosenko rose from 20 to 53 rubles per desiatina and land rents increased from two to four rubles a desiatina.<sup>75</sup> Cash was also required to pay for draft horses, new stocks of cattle and sheep, and implements that were purchased from neighbours or at the annual fairs. And cash was increasingly required to purchase consumer goods. During the days of the Molotschna Agricultural Society's drive for modernization money had been required to purchase wood and bricks for housing, and the services of local millers, blacksmiths and carpenters. In the 1860s and early 1870s cash was also used to purchase merchandise in Nicopol, the grain depot, and from travelling merchants. Jewish peddlers, like young Johann Hushof of Nicopol often visited Borosenko where he demanded cash for his cotton, linen, boots, shoes, tools, pails, baskets, pots, candles and cutlery. For medicinal and the occasional social purposes brandy, wine, whiskey and beer were brought from Nicopol.<sup>76</sup> Sugar, apples, coffee and vinegar headed the list of foodstuffs that colonists sometimes purchased at the river port. Amenities such as a "bell clock," hats, aprons and other finished clothes were also bought.<sup>77</sup>

The presence of a money economy is also indicated by the frequency with which settlers loaned money to and borrowed from each other. In the absence of

prominent banking houses, well-to-do individuals lent money at interest rates of five and six percent, compounded annually. Farmer Cornelius Loewen, for example, borrowed more than 1800 rubles over 16 years from 10 different sources to help finance the purchase of land, stock and implements on his farm in the Molotschna and on his new operation in Borosenko. The lenders were a variety of people: they included Loewen's father and brothers, wealthy members from within the congregation and outsiders like non-KG village mayors and acquaintances from the Molotschna. Other farmers borrowed money from the church congregation which had first borrowed it from wealthier farmers in the community.<sup>78</sup> Ironically, the church's credit pool, maintained at low interest rates in keeping with ancestral teachings against usury, helped commercialize the Borosenko farms.

A final indication of a modernizing economy was the farmers' increasing dependence on wage labour. Hired labour had been a practice in the Molotschna where, in 1856, fully 8% of the population was comprised of common labourers who boarded with their employers. There is evidence that this practice increased in Borosenko, a less exclusively Mennonite colony. Indeed, diaries suggest that most Borosenko families, both poor and well-to-do, employed at least one male farmhand to help with the seeding and the harvest, and one maid to help with the caring of children and the milking of cows. One source of labour, of course, was the corps of teenaged Mennonite children whose labour at a particular point in their family's life cycle was not required. Another source were migrant German Lutherans seeking work.

The single largest body of non-Mennonite labour, however, was made up of Ukrainian and Russian workers. They were either the children of former state peasants, comprising 80% of the native population in Ekaterinoslav, or former serfs who, in 1858, had comprised 16% of the population in the province.<sup>79</sup> As early as 1856 Ukrainian and Russian workers had comprised more than 42%, 680 of 1600, of Molotschna Colony wage labour.<sup>80</sup> Evidence suggests that in Borosenko, this percentage increased. Indeed, diaries suggest that few KG farmers operated without hiring Ukrainian workers, at least during the busy seasons. Typical of diary entries by elderly Abram Reimer of Steinbach was the one for January 13, 1873 in which he noted that "Johann Reimer's 'Russ' has left them, also Peter Toews' 'Russische' maid . . . has finished her term of service."<sup>81</sup>

These entries reflect a highly paternalistic attitude toward these servants. Indeed, it was a common practice for Mennonites not only to provide room and board for their workers, but to negotiate a binding agreement stating the terms of the employment. It was expected that workers would not marry during their term of employment; stories abound of young couples having to wait until their employment contract had expired before marrying. When workers disobeyed, Mennonites readily resorted to the whip to punish offenders. Even the strictly pacifist KG resorted to the whip from time to time. During the 1860s at least three farmers were publicly admonished in their church congregations for having beaten either their farmhands or maids.<sup>82</sup> Settlers were expected to resort to wit, treats and cajoling to keep their servants in line. One Borosenko farmer gained a reputation for controlling his servant by publicly embarrassing him in challenges of physical strength; another attempted to establish rapport with his reapers by passing around a bottle of whiskey before sending the wagon full of "singing

Russians" to the field.<sup>83</sup> Farmers may have complained about the "inefficiency" of these workers, but low wages of 30 kopeks a day or 40 rubles a year (with board) tied them fast to this labour source.<sup>84</sup>

## Section V.

Mennonites who had come to Russia with the idea of establishing close-knit, sectarian communities were deeply affected by the economic and political changes in New Russia. The Guardianship Committee had, for some time, been refocusing the *raison d'être* of the Mennonite colonies. From self-sufficient, insular communities, the Mennonite settlements were thrust into the forefront of agricultural innovation. The international demand for foodstuffs and New Russia's ideal position to fill that demand had given the Mennonites an unprecedented economic opportunity. And, Russia's post-war political reforms served to catapult the Mennonites into the mainstream of an increasingly pluralistic, democratic and integrated society.

Historians of Mennonites agree that the third quarter of the nineteenth century was an unusually tumultuous time as Mennonites pursued different courses in their adjustment to a new socio-economic context. Some Mennonites embraced the more individualistic, differentiated and secular society, often with ideas borrowed from the Pietists; the majority sought to maintain conservative, congregational communities.<sup>85</sup> For the latter group "separation from the world" was best secured in a landed, agrarian existence.

Conservative Mennonites like the KG, thus, focused their energies in locating new sources of land; in the mid 1860s Borosenko Colony promised to secure this traditional aim. However, KG members could not separate themselves from the economic transformation around them. They sold commodities into an international market, acquired new farm technologies, hired wage labour, and borrowed money. These activities did not fundamentally disrupt the KG social structure and value system. Instead it strengthened their households and institutions, allowing them to secure land for the next generation, and put them in a position to exercise the option of emigration when political reforms began to threaten their communities in new ways in the 1870s.

## Endnotes: The Kleine Gemeinde as Sectarian Farmers 1850-75.

1. David G. Rempel, "The Mennonite Colonies in New Russia: A Study of their Settlement and Economic Development from 1789-1914," (Ph.D. Diss., Stanford University, 1933), 21 ff.

2. Delbert Plett, *The Golden Years: The Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde in Russia, 1812-1849* (Steinbach, Man., 1985), 6.

3. Delbert Plett, *Storm and Triumph: The Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde, 1850-1875* (Steinbach, Man., 1986), 334.

4. Until 1841 when the mystical and communalist Doukhobors were expelled and forcibly resettled in the Caucasus, they had lived in a colony, adjacent to the Molotschna Colony. In 1899 when the Mennonites in Canada once again encountered the Doukhobors in Winipeg, they discovered some who could still remember the Molotschna Mennonite villages of Lichtenau and Lindenau. *Mennonitische Rundschau*, March 15, 1899. For an indepth view of the relationship between Mennonite and Jewish farmers in one colony see, Harvey Dyck, ed. and trans., *A Mennonite in Russia: The Diaries of Jacob Epp, 1851-1880* (Toronto, Ont., 1991).

5. Adam Giesenger, *From Catherine to Khrushchev: The Story of Russia's Germans* (Winnipeg, Man., 1974).

6. *Unterhaltungsblatt*, June, 1855, 53-56.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Quoted in Urry, "The Closed and the Open: Social and Religious Changes Amongst the Mennonites in Russia" (Ph.D. Diss., Oxford University, 1978), 270.
9. E. J. Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire* (London, 1969), 1; Eric Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History* (Berkeley, CA, 1982), 265.
10. The result, according to Eric Wolf, was "a complex hierarchal system controlled by the capitalist mode of production, but including a vast array of subsidiary regions that exhibited different combinations of the capitalist mode with other modes." Wolf, *People Without History*, 396.
11. Jerome Blum, *The End of the Old Order in Rural Europe* (Princeton, 1978), 281.
12. Peter Liashchenko, *History of the National Economy of Russia to the 1917 Revolution* (New York, 1949), 451.
13. Lewis Siegelbaum, "The Odessa Grain Trade: A Case Study in Urban Growth and Development in Tsarist Russia," *Journal of European Economic History*, 9 (1980), 126. He notes that between 1865 and 1870 "American wheat comprised only 16.8% of Britain's imports compared to 33.7% from Russia."
14. Blum, *End of the Old Order*, 377.
15. Jesse D. Clarkson, *A History of Russia, 1961* (New York, 1969), 306.
16. E. J. Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire: An Economic History of Britain since 1750* (London, 1969).
17. Harriet Friedmann, "World Market, State and Family Farm: Social Bases of Household Production in the Era of Wage Labor," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 4 (1978), 545-586. Also see: *ibid.*, "Household Production and the National Economy: Concepts for the Analysis of Agrarian Formations," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 8 (1980), 158-184.
18. Friedmann, "World Market," 548.
19. Friedmann, "Household Production," 163.
20. Peter M. Friesen, *The Mennonite Brotherhood in Russia, 1789-1910*, 1911, trans., J.B. Toews, et. al. (Fresno, CA, 1980), 93.
21. *Unterhaltungsblatt*, January, 1852. It reported that Johann Warkentin, later of Hochfeld, Borosenko, owned the second most productive Molotschna herd; his three cows had an average milk production of more than 14 Russian quarts a day. It also noted that Johann Friesen of Neukirch, the newly elected KG Aeltester, and Johann Toews of Fischau, were the top silk worm producers in their respective villages. In addition, Isaak Loewen of Lindenau was described as a "Lehrmeister" in the field of silkworm farming by two agricultural students from Germany.
22. Delbert Plett, *Plett Picture Book: A Pictorial History of the Children and Grandchildren of Cornelius S. Plett (1820-1900) and Sarah Loewen (1822-1903)* (Steinbach, Man., 1981), 17.
23. Rempel, "Mennonite Colonies," 202, notes that only those farmers possessing 2000 rubles in cash were allowed to establish new farms on vacant land. Liashchenko, *National Economy*, notes that land prices in the western provinces of Russia rose from an average of 12.7 rubles per desiatina in 1860 to 20.4 rubles in 1870.
24. Franz Isaak, *Die Molotschnaer Mennoniten: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte Derselben* (Halbstadt, Taurida, Russia, 1908), 72 and 73.
25. Heinrich Balzer, *Verstand Und Vernunft: Einfaelüge und nach der Lehre des Evangeliums erlaeuertete Ansichten ueber den Unterschied des Verstandes und der Vernunft eines Menschen*, 1833 (Quakertown, PA, 1886), 27; see also Friesen, *The Mennonite Brotherhood*, 882, who noted in 1911 that the Mennonite still "questions the ethical standpoint of the merchant."
26. Johann K. Esau, "The Esau Family Tree: 1740-1933," in Plett, ed., *Profile of the Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde 1874* (Steinbach, Man., 1987), 194.
27. Klaas R. Reimer, "Denkschrift, 1857-1890," *Evangelical Mennonite Archives* (hereafter referred to as EMCA), Steinbach, MB; Isaac, *A Family Book*, 14 and 18; John B. Toews, *Memoirs*, 1961 (Rosenort, Man., 1978), 5.
28. Liashchenko, *National Economy*, 457.
29. Rempel, "Mennonite Colonies," 236.
30. J.J. Hildebrand, *Chronologische Zeittafel* (Winnipeg, Man., 1945), 222. The price was 30 rubles per desiatina.

31. Peter Toews, "Anhang Number One to Sammlung von Briefe und Schrifliche Nachrichten zur Historie der Kleinen Gemeinde der Mennoniten," in Plett, ed., *History and Events* (Steinbach, Man., 1982), 186.

32. Toews, *Memoirs*, 5.

33. See Esau, "Esau Family Tree," 194, in which Johann Esau notes that "when opportunity to buy land arose our parents moved to . . . Yekaterinaslav, District of Bersenko. . ."; Isaac, *Family Book*, 55, notes that Gerhard Goossen was a schoolteacher until the time of the move to Borosenko at which time he became a farmer for the first time in his life; Cornelius Friesen, "Family Register of Henry W. Toews," tr. J. Wohlgenuth (Greenland, Man., 1907), 14, notes that when Borosenko was founded in 1866 land renter Peter Penner joined other people who "moved here to improve their state by owning their own land."

34. H. van der Smissen, "Entwicklung und jetziger Stand der deutschen Mennonitenkolonien in Suedrussland," *Petermanns Geographische Mitteilungen*, 44 (1898), 169-173; Paul Langhans, "Der heutige Stand der Siedelungsthaetigkeit deutscher Mennoniten in Suedrussland," *ibid.*, 174-178.

35. Friesen, *The Mennonite Brotherhood*, 845; Plett, *Storm and Triumph*, 191.

36. At least two KG and three Chortitza villages could be found just to the north of Borosenko by 1870 and three Chortitza villages to its south. Langhaus, "Deutscher Mennoniten in Suedrussland," 175.

37. Abram F. Reimer, "Tagebuch, 1870-1873, 1879-1889," EMCA, Box 10, November 26, 1870.

38. *Ibid.*, January 15, 1870; March 6; March 11; November 10; June 22; October 6; November 12; December 24, 1873; January 12, 1874

39. Johann W. Ducek, "History and Events of Earlier Times, 1904," in Plett, ed., *History and Events*, 93-100.

40. Friesen, *The Mennonite Brotherhood*, 845.

41. Reimer, "Tagebuch," May 5, 1871.

42. Cornelius W. Loewen, "Tagebuch, 1867-1885," Mennonite Heritage Village Archives (hereafter MHVA), Steinbach, p. 87.

43. Rempel, "Mennonite Colonies," 233.

44. *Unterhaltungsblatt*, January, 1852. Weather charts for the Molotschna Colony in 1851 indicate that temperatures fluctuated from 38 degrees (Celsius) in July to -18 in January, that the mean temperature for July was 29.5 degrees in July, and -9.0 in January, and that there were 248 frost free days during the year.

45. These temperatures were recorded in Reaumur, the French and German thermometric scale, in which the freezing point is zero and the boiling point is 80 degrees.

46. Reimer, "Tagebuch," 1870.

47. Plett, *Storm and Triumph*, 304.

48. Liashchenko, *National Economy*, 452.

49. V. Postnikov, *Krestbjnskoe Foejstv* (Moscow, 1891), 382. These irregularities are also reflected in the crop reports of two KG teachers who farmed small acreages of land to supplement their wages. In 1872 Abram R. Friesen noted in his diary that he anticipated more than 30 bushels of barley per acre; in 1873 Dietrich Friesen reported that he had harvested only 8.3 bushels of barley per acre: see Dietrich S. Friesen, "Tagebuch," July 19, 1873; Abram R. Friesen, "Tagebuch," June 27, 1872, EMCA.

50. The same volatility of yields was reported in 1855 by the president of the Agricultural Society, Philip Wiebe; he noted that the Molotschna harvested a dismal crop of 63,000 chetvert that year, 100,000 units less than in the previous year. *Mennonitische Blaetter*, August, 1856.

51. See David H. Epp, *Johann Cornies: Zuege aus Seinem Leben und Wirken* (Rosthern, Sask., 1946).

52. Rempel, "Mennonite Colonies," 157, 161, 258 & 259.

53. *Unterhaltungsblatt*, October, 1861.

54. *Ibid.*, February 1861; A.R. Friesen, "Tagebuch," August 1871.

55. A. R. Friesen, "Tagebuch," August 20, 1871. If the weather cooperated, up to 10 layers of grain could be threshed in a day.

56. Rempel, "Mennonite Colonies," 250.

57. Liashchenko, *National Economy*, 465.
58. Rempel, "Mennonite Colonies," 248.
59. Klaas Reimer, "Memoirs," 19.
60. According to Reimer, "Tagebuch," March 13, 1873 blacksmith Abram S. Friesen of Gruenfeld built a "large seeding machine" for "Marte Jann."
61. Dueck, "History and Events," 102.
62. Reimer, "Tagebuch," 1970.
63. Loewen, "Tagebuch," August, 1871. Cleaning this grain was an important task for the farmer. Dry weather was required and so was a good set of arms. Abram Reimer of Steinbach writes in an entry of August 17, 1870 that "I was in bed till noon [resting up] from turning the cleaning mill [the previous day]": see Reimer, "Tagebuch," August 18, 1870.
64. Rempel, "Mennonite Colonies," 286; Reimer, "Tagebuch," August 22, 1873; October 23, 1873; *Steinbach Post*, January 31, 1917, p. 3. The list of custom mill owners among members of the Kleine Gemeinde was impressive; it included Peter Barkman of Rosenfeld, Abram Friesen of Gruenfeld, Peter Thiessen of Neuhalbstadt, and Peter Buller and Peter Ens of Steinbach. While most mills ground flour with grind stones, the Friesen mill was a steel roller mill.
65. Isaac, *Family Book*, 15; Plett, *Storm and Triumph*, 31.
66. Reimer, "Tagebuch," 1870.
67. Loewen, "Tagebuch"; Reimer, "Tagebuch."
68. E. P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," *Past and Present* 50 (1971), 76-136.
69. Dueck, "History and Events," 101.
70. *Ibid.*; see also Siegelbaum, "Odessa," who describes the activities of the Jewish grain merchants from their perspective.
71. Reimer, "Tagebuch," April 3, 1870. For other examples, see *ibid.*, October 27, 1870; Loewen, "Tagebuch," 96.
72. In 1873, for instance, Reimer's son, Klaas, seeded 86 acres of wheat, 27 acres of barley, 13.5 acres rye and 5 acres of oats on his farm. At least three of Reimer's poorer neighbours, Johann Reimer, Heinrich Brandt and Peter Toews each seeded at least 54 acres of their 135 acre farms to wheat in 1873 as well. See, Reimer, "Tagebuch."
73. Reimer "Tagebuch," February 1871; August 1873. For example, the gross income for Klaas's 49 desiatini in 1873, when wheat rose above 12 rubles a chetvert, came to 1526 rubles; the price of 49 desiatini in 1865 would have been 1470 rubles.
74. The diary of farmer Abram R. Friesen notes indicates that a slaughtered pig bearing three inches of fat could bring seven rubles; eggs in spring, seven kopeks a dozen; mutton, seven kopeks per Russian pound; beef, five kopeks; butter, 20 kopeks a pound in winter and 15 in summer; lambs, 1.75 rubles a piece; weanlings, 70 kopeks a piece. A.R. Friesen, "Tagebuch," 1870, *passim*.
75. Klaas Reimer purchased his land in Borosenko for 20 rubles per desiatina in 1865 and rented additional land for two rubles a desiatina. Cornelius Loewen, who purchased land in Borosenko in 1868 rented an additional 7.5 desiatini for 4.5 rubles per desiatina in 1872. A year later he increased his farm by 25 desiatini, paying 53 rubles a desiatina.
76. Loewen, "Tagebuch," 112.
77. See Dueck, "History and Events"; Loewen, "Tagebuch"; A.R. Friesen, "Tagebuch."
78. "Kleine Gemeinde Rechnungsbuch, 1850-1882," EMCA, Steinbach, MB.
79. Liashchenko, *National Economy*, 311 and 458.
80. They included 737 Mennonites, 180 Germans, and 681 Ukrainians. *Mennonitische Blaetter*, January 1856.
81. Reimer, "Tagebuch."
82. These included Abram Rempel, Heinrich Fast and Abraham Thiessen. See Heinrich Enns to Kleine Gemeinde, January 3, 1866, quoted in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 159 and 165.
83. Abram Unger, "Biography of Abram R. Reimer," *Familienregister der Nachkommen von Klaas und Helena Reimer*, ed. John C. Reimer (Steinbach, Man. 1958), 115; Plett, *Storm and Triumph*, 18. For references to common perceptions of the Russian worker see Blum, *End of the Old Order*, 399; *Odessaer Zeitung*, June 1864.

84. Male farmhands in the German colonies in 1861 could be hired for 40 rubles with board and 64 rubles without board; male day labourers could be employed for only 30 kopeks in summer and 20 kopeks in winter. Borosenko farmers paid similar wages. They could differ, depending on the labourer's experience, age, and the outcome of the grain yield. In 1871, for example, Cornelius Loewen of Gruenfeld paid his adult Polish Lutheran day worker 40 kopeks a day, Abram Friesen of Lichtenau paid his herdsboy 20 kopeks. This may be contrasted to the 150 to 190 rubles per year, plus grain and free land, that KG schoolteachers were paid during this time. *Odessaer Zeitung*, January 1861; Loewen, "Tagebuch;" A.R. Friesen, "Tagebuch."

85. Urry, "Closed and Open," 4. See also Harvey L. Dyck, "Russian Servitor and Mennonite Hero: Light and Shadow in Images of Johann Cornies," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 2 (1984), 9-28; William Schroeder, *The Berghal Colony* (Winnipeg, Man., 1986); James Urry, *None But Saints: The Transformation of Mennonite Life in Russia, 1789-1889* (Winnipeg, Man., 1989), 75ff, 127ff, 174ff; Plett, *The Golden Years; Storm and Triumph*.

# Chapter Seven

## Theology of the Kleine Gemeinde

---

**A Few Facets of Kleine Gemeinde Theological Thinking During Some Fifty Years of Pilgrimage, 1829-1882; based on Ten Sermons by both Aeltesten and Ministers.** By Dr. Archie Penner, Steinbach Bible College, Steinbach, Manitoba, ROA 2A0, 1993.

---

### Introduction.

There are a number of ways of determining the theological thought of a community of faith. However, one of the more significant ways to do this, is to examine the sermons which have been preached to its congregation. We must grant that such sermons may not always accurately reflect the thought of a community. Yet, when the ministry is held in high esteem, the congregation is closely knit, and is both relatively, but significantly isolated and therefore, quite insulated from a wide range of written, as well as oral, sources of thought, then the sermons which are delivered to a congregation, become much more important as a source for discovering that church's religious thinking and commitment.

That the latter conditions rather correctly describe the circumstances of the Kleine Gemeinde (KG), both in Russia and its early years in America, must be apparent from its history. It is with these assumptions in mind, that the available sermons will be examined for their theological content.

As already indicated, ten sermons will be surveyed.<sup>1</sup> These were preached over a period of fifty-three years; eight in Russia and two in America. Three of the ones delivered in Russia, significantly, were by Klaas Reimer, the founder and first Aeltester of the KG, the 1812-1814 secession from the mainstream of Mennonites in Russia. Two of the ten sermons in hand were preached in America, by Aeltester Abraham L. Friesen, of Jansen, Nebraska, in 1882. This was a year after John Holdeman occasioned a secession from the KG in Manitoba. It was the same year that the secessionist group, The Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, ordained its first ministers.

In view of the historical events mentioned, we must expect specific polemical reactions and overtones in some of the sermons. The nature of some of these polemics will be a conscious or unconscious justification of the existence of the KG.<sup>2</sup>

### Mechanics of the Sermons.

This is no a critical evaluation of the documents we are examining. Rather, it is meant to be descriptive and interpretive. Consequently, we will accept the sermons as from within the time period of their delivery. Still, some evaluations

will undoubtedly be offered. To have the German texts, would have been advantage in this exercise.

First, the sermons are long. If the German texts were approximately the same lengths as the translations, the congregations must have been listening from almost an hour, or an hour to an hour and a half, each time they were delivered. It should be remembered that sermons, at that time, had more importance in a church service, than in more recent times. Also, apart from some longer songs and silent prayer, not much more than preaching took place during their congregational worship.

Second, it is not difficult to identify some of the major sources for the contents of their proclamation. The primary source, as expected, is the Scriptures. Characteristically, the sermons are literally saturated with Scripture. It seems that there are times when the very wording of the Bible have almost become the speaker's own vocabulary. At times, the reader of these sermons may acquire the perception that the chief function of the minister of the Word is to so string Bible texts together that his message is packaged with these texts.

There is some resemblance in their use of the Bible to that of the Anabaptists of the sixteenth century. While they quote the Scriptures rather profusely, the exegeses of the quoted passages often does not follow. Rather, they have a tendency to assume the meaning, and that their content is clear to the hearers. And, as can be expected, even a cursory examination of the use of the Biblical materials, by the Aeltester and Lehrer of the KG, shows that their interpretations were not always the product of unblemished exegeses. This must not be considered strange. Rather, in view of their resources, and other factors, it would have been strange had it been otherwise.

The use of the Apocrypha, they did not see as improper. Neither did the Anabaptists of the sixteenth century. It seems that they gave no special thought to the question of propriety, or otherwise, of using them. Such approach to the Apocrypha was, of course, proper in their tradition, although the sermons carry only a smattering of quotations from this source.

The five other mentioned fountains of preaching materials, as used, are all of Dutch origin. Klaas Reimer seems specially pleased with the availability of Dutch books. Undoubtedly, these were books which had sprung from his spiritual heritage. Of this he writes (KR2W):

How many of our venerable Hollandisch books of the faith have not come to light recently? Hitherto they seemed to be lost. Even though we have the Word of the Lord and the teachings of the apostles, God has inspired these blessed writers to emphatically impress upon us once again, His Holy Word and Will. But now so many deceptive writings are coming forth in opposition thereto.

The major and primary source, apart from the Scriptures, were the writings of Menno Simons. The KG, apparently, valued these writings highly and this, it seems, in contrast to the interests in these writings by the larger Mennonite community in Prussia and Russia.<sup>3</sup> The other four are their particular edition of the *Martyrs' Mirror*, the writings of Dirk Philips,<sup>4</sup> who ordained Menno Simons, Peter Peters and J.B. Schabalie. The latter two authors were Waterlander church

members, in the Netherlands.

Structurally, the sermons are not alike. Some have fairly well laid out plans, which are then followed in the presentation of the sermons. Others largely lack clear organization. Most of the introductions are long, in comparison with the body of the sermon. The reader, at times, gets the feeling that he is carried along with what could be called "stream of consciousness" thinking. At other times, Dirk Philips seems to shine through, in thought patterns and concepts, even more than Menno Simons, although the latter is quoted more often.

### **The Theology of the Kleine Gemeinde Ministry.**

We are interested in basically three interlocking theological features of the sermons. One is, what did the writers and preachers of these sermons believe? A second is, were they still clinging to the faith of the early Anabaptists? Third, had their faith Biblical content? We shall not be confined, in our theological evaluation of the sermons, to the merely literal meaning of the theological statements made. We ask for permission to see also the doctrinal affirmations in terms of their implications. Quite evidently, the ministers themselves will often not be aware of the theological implications, which would naturally follow their own faith position. Only some major elements of faith will be examined.

### **Jesus Christ and His Work.**

The orthodox doctrine of the deity of Christ comes through clearly. Klaas Reimer make specific and concrete reference to this fundamental doctrine. First he says, "beloved, the Lord Jesus is such a gracious and merciful God" (KR1C). In the same sermon, when referring to our redemption, he writes:

Therefore Christ had to suffer as the one who was equal with God and bring redemption to us. His only begotten Son who was equal with the living Father. . . (KR1C).

The KG Lehrer never tire of extolling the sacrificial work or their loving Lord. First, it is a vicarious or substitutionary sacrifice which the divine Jesus made. We quote Klaas Reimer again:

. . . we are subject to temporal and eternal punishment, unless someone would come who was completely pure from sin and who was equal to God to carry our sin which we incurred. Who would thus qualify to reconcile us to God? Who was afflicted with our guilt? Who would thus qualify to reconcile us to God? . . . guilt has to be punished (KR1C).

Then he add further: "He entered the counsel of God and undertook to be our substitute in whatever we came too short" (*Ibid.*). Peter Toews, the Aeltester, who later joined the secessionist group of John Holdeman, with many of his KG brethren, in Manitoba, also comes out clearly with the concept of the substitutionary death of the Saviour. We briefly cite two passages:

This shepherd who sacrificed His life. . . Christ Jesus, has borne our

sins, the Righteous for the unrighteous, so that He might offer us to God; He was killed according to the flesh . . . (PT1E).

Later, Toews affirms again:

He died in our stead, voluntarily and of His own free will. Without Him the entire human race lay subjected to the bondage of death. . . . had He--as our substitute--remained therein; but He is risen (PT1E).

But the leading ministers of the recently instituted KG were not content with their understanding of Christ's death, without clearly affirming that the atonement was also propitiatory. It was a payment directed to God to satisfy His moral and holy demands. Reimer, KR1C, frames his concept of the atoning death of Christ as propitiation in the following words:

According to Revelation 5, He has satisfied the righteousness of God and reconciled us to Him. Now, if the Son of God was to redeem man from Satan and eternal death, He would have to become man. For this purpose God sent Him into the world, having been born of a woman (Gal. 4). He accepted all our sins and suffered and paid them with His blood, so as to make us acceptable to God. God's absolute righteousness must be meted out in regard to our guilt.

The language is plain and unmistakeable. God's righteous nature and character must be satisfied. God tolerates no outstanding debt.

Peter Toews writes in a similar vein. Christ, according to Toews:

. . . brought to Him [God] the ransom money, namely, He gave His blood as a payment for our sins whereby He eternally set us free from all our guilt and punishment. No other means was there to be found under heaven or on earth . . . The death of Christ or His blood is the only ransom which the righteousness of God would find acceptable as a payment for our sins.

No Evangelical, dedicated to orthodoxy, can find fault with this expression of the Biblical doctrine of the atonement.

But the sermons under consideration, not only see the atonement of Christ as substitution and propitiation, they also portray Christ as overcoming the Principalities and Powers, and thus redeeming man from slavery to Satan, by His atonement. This is known today as the Christus Victor view. Toews presents the matter in this way: ". . . His death 'destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil'. . ." (PT1E). Reimer, too, sees the work of Christ as victory over death, and therefore over Satanic power. He offers the following insight:

He wrestled so intensely with Satan, the prince of this world . . . There He took us out of the jaws of the devil and destroyed the

power of death . . . All this for our sake, because he sought to save us . . . out of the prison of hell and from Satan, who held us captive (KR1C).

### **Christ's Work and Aspects of Discipleship.**

Reimer brings a depth dimension, not often developed by Evangelical theologians, to his understanding of the sacrifice and saving work of Christ. This has to do with the question of Christ's involvement in man's sin. Reimer writes that Christ took "our guilt which His Father demanded of us upon Himself from His childhood to His death" (KR1C). This assertion brings a most interesting and, in our view, important perspective to the incarnation and atoning death of Jesus. Not often do theologians discuss, or emphasize the life of Christ as part of the atoning work of Jesus Christ. In fact, there seems to be a tendency to keep them theologically separate, by so concentrating on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, that our Lord's earthly life does not matter too much in the doctrine of salvation.

While, it is not clear what Reimer meant by his reference to Christ bearing man's sin in His own body throughout His lifespan on earth, yet we shall present two observations. First, this concept of Reimer is a logical deduction from the Biblical record of the life, death and resurrection of Christ. The tendency to separate Christ's life, leading up to the passion week, from His final sufferings and sacrificial death, as has at times been done to avoid making the actions of our Lord during the final week of His life examples for discipleship, creates a problem. The problem is this: By what criterion can a line separating the physical sufferings of Christ during the final week of His earthly experiences, and those of His life before these events, be drawn? Do not the Scriptures see Christ,<sup>5</sup> as bearing man's sins "in His own body," in the whole of His incarnate state? Has not tradition held the same view? Did not Christ identify Himself with fallen man in his sin, from the manger to the grave? It seems clear that such a separation cannot be found either in Scripture, nor can it be reasonably inferred.

Thus, secondly, this concept, that the whole of the incarnate life of our Lord Jesus is one of sin-bearing, so inseparably unifies the whole temporal lifetime of Christ with the closing of His life, in suffering and death, that a more solid foundation is laid for the kind of radical discipleship, which the early Anabaptist espoused. In order to understand this deduction, explanations are in order.

There have been those evangelical students of the Scriptures who have found it difficult to accept the entire span of Christ's actions as a man, as the supreme example for a Christian's life and ethics, as indicated. This difficulty is the discipleship which accepts every action of Christ, even those of His court case before Pilate, and His action of forgiveness without manifesting a moment of retaliation. Their difficulties, as must be emphasized, are not occasioned by the actions of Jesus as He went about showing love and compassion and doing good. These examples of Jesus, as patterns for a Christian's ethical lifestyle, are quite acceptable to these believers.

However, here comes the problem. When it is affirmed that also all of the actions and responses of Jesus in connection with His arrest, His trial, and finally His execution, are inseparable parts of the example of Christ to be followed,<sup>6</sup> in order to be His true disciple, then there are those who strongly object. No, they

argue, those are unique responses of our Lord, because they are an integral part of the unique historical event of procuring salvation, for a lost world. These responses, they contend, were never intended to be made into principles of Christian ethics and discipleship.

We must, by way of illustration and explanation, raise one case in point. When the political powers and the judicial structures united in the greatest possible miscarriage of justice of all history in executing Jesus, He forgave instead of calling for redress and counter violence. This response, it is asserted, must not be taken as an item of ethical response in discipleship.<sup>7</sup> Of this kind of discipleship, which forgives at all costs, Reimer admonishes, "Thus beloved I ask and counsel you. . . as Christ forgave you, so also do ye" (KR3L).

If Reimer has accepted this latter statement of Paul, literally and inclusively, as he surely did, then this depicted scheme of Christian discipleship, is unacceptable to Reimer. That the believer can select from the life and activity of Christ what is to be considered the ethical requirements of following his Lord, and what is not, must have had no meaning for him. There can be no doubt, both the early Anabaptists, and now the KG Lehrer, would have seen this selective method as destructive of the New Testament insistence on following Jesus. These radical believers were reckless enough to appropriate the whole content of the life of Jesus as their ethical lifestyle.

It is this latter dedication to the whole Christ, as the content of radical discipleship, which seems to find support in Reimer's notion that our Lord did not only bear the sin of the whole world when He suffered and died. Rather, the whole of the incarnation was, in essence, sin-bearing. This concept of an unbroken process of Jesus carrying man's sin and guilt, throughout the whole span of Christ's earthly existence, as presented by the founder of the KG, lends support to the idea of the solidarity of the entire sweep of the human actions of Christ as the design and substance of radical discipleship.<sup>8</sup>

#### **God Alone, in Christ, Initiates and Supplies Salvation.**

The KG teachers mince no words, when preaching about God's "precious salvation" wrought in Jesus Christ. Christ alone, and no other, saves. God, and no other, initiates the provision of redemption. Abraham L. Friesen, in 1882, preaches and says:

The apostles . . . did [not] . . . esteem their lives precious in comparison with the saving grace of God which they had accepted; and which--in love and mercy--they desired all mankind to have, as without, no man can be saved. (ALF2C).

Of the Lord, Christ, being the only Saviour, Peter Toews writes as follows (PT1E):

Oh, what a salvation and peace! Should these not entice us? Indeed, we should passionately long for and desire the same. No, nowhere else, but in the blood of Jesus are we able to wash this linen, this cloak of righteousness.

Klaas Reimer is as clear on the subject as the others. We must listen to Him. Describing the ineffectiveness of the Old Testament sacrifices, in the style of the writer to the Hebrews, he writes: "Through the natural sacrifice no one could be saved from eternal death, but only through the eternal sacrifice of Jesus . . . This is the only sacrifice upon which our hope of eternal salvation rests" (KR1C). We must hear him again: ". . . serve God only for he alone is our eternal salvation" (KR3L).

That it is God Who has taken the initiative to save man, also comes through clearly in the sermonic materials here investigated. Reimer writes, ". . . our Redeemer has sought us, though we were His enemies" (KR3L). Reimer further emphasizes God's initiative in saving man, when he quotes approvingly the words of Jesus: "No Man cometh unto the Father but by me" (*Ibid.*).

### **Salvation Alone by Grace, through Faith.**

Once again, the earlier leaders in the KG are clear and confident. Salvation is by grace, and it is received by personal faith in Christ. The last quote in the preceding paragraph could not be taken at face value, unless grace were the means by which alone man could come to Christ. With a personal touch, and thus experientially couched, Abraham Friesen writes simply, and to the point: "We are saved solely by grace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ" (ALF2C). Later in the same sermon, he expands on this theme:

We already know well that it is not within the power of mankind to be converted unto God and to live in the newness of life. Christ says, 'Without me you can do nothing . . .' And further, 'no man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him . . .' (*Ibid.*).

Warning against being boastful of spiritual attainment, the same Aeltester reminds his hearers, as a basis for his admonition, as follows:

. . . when we have done everything that has been asked of us, we shall--nonetheless--say, 'We are unworthy servants, we have done only what we should have done.' This statement clearly tells that we have not earned anything after all and that the promise of salvation, in spite of it, always remains a gift of grace (*Ibid.*).

Klaas Friesen (KF1G) adds these words to the discussion, combining the concept of discipleship with that receiving divine life, and therefore salvation: "If we follow Him, He will lead us into eternal bliss--the life which we cannot earn on our own . . ." That this is a clear reference to salvation by grace alone, is evident. However, it should be noted that Friesen is also, seemingly, posing conditional element--discipleship--for the obtaining of this eternal bliss. Is he introducing a contradiction? Or, is he submitting a paradoxical component into the concept of grace, which somehow will find its harmonious place in the theology of these elders of the KG? We must yet return to this question.

### **Faith as Both Condition and Divine Gift.**

He who reads these sermons must conclude that their authors were

controlled by the Biblical concept of grace. To them, apparently, God was in the endless business of giving grace. So much so, that even the faith, the divinely appointed human condition for appropriating the benefits of the atonement, is itself a gift of divine grace. They clearly saw saving faith, then, as both the required prerequisite act, or condition, which must be exercised in order that a sinner can come into right relationship with God, and a gift granted by God out of pure grace and benevolence.

Of this clear teaching of both the Scriptures<sup>9</sup> and the early Anabaptists,<sup>10</sup> Heinrich Balzer affirms:

Faith, however, is not a human gift nor a work of self-endeavour, which a person may give or earn for themselves [sic] by their own strengths according [to] whims and desires. . . . Rather faith is a precious gift of the grace of God, the heavenly Father (HB1C).

Again he preaches that:

It is evident, . . . that faith is a heavenly present, a free gift, a precious pearl, a noble treasure of divine grace of eminent worth, power, glory and salvation. For only alone [sic], through, and in and of faith, is eternal salvation assured and granted to all mankind (*Ibid.* 6).

But even faith has its prerequisite. This prerequisite is repentance, for the ". . . Father does not plant the same into . . . such persons who are still serving sin and clinging thereto" (*Ibid.*). Balzer continues to extol faith. It is given to all men. Through faith the Holy Spirit indwells the believer (*Ibid.*).

The view that the faith which is to be exercised is a gift granted to man, is a necessary deduction from the premise that in salvation God takes the initiative, and the fact that it is grace from beginning to end. The KG sermonizers must have been aware of this deduction.

#### **Faith and Works; Condition and Effect.**

Our final inquiry must centre in the concept of faith and works, and their relationship, as understood and taught by the ministers of the Word here considered. A superficial examination of this aspect of their theology, might result in charging them with contradiction, or even worse, with heresy. The grounds on which this charge would be levelled against them would be that they are making works a condition of salvation, while yet claiming that man can receive eternal life by grace and faith alone.

It would seem certain, that if these ministers would have been confronted with such charge, they would have denied it out of hand. They would surely have responded to the charge in this manner: No one saves but Christ; neither can the benefits of the atonement be realized, except by grace which is forever unmerited, because it is a gift, and only gift; nor can our Lord be our Saviour, except on the condition of faith, which is also a diving gift, and is not a work of human strength.

Does the charge have validity, when this is the response of these KG Prediger? All Evangelicals would surely pronounce this response, in itself, theologically sound. It is not in the answer they have given, which is a theological

problem, but what they add to this clear concepts they have expressed. it is because of the latter assertion that we must examine their theology of salvation a bit more closely.

First, it is not difficult to confirm their positive belief as already seen. Peter Toews writes, ". . . our Redeemer--who literally snatched us out of the mouth of hell . . . (PT1E). A bit later he continues, "Through . . . faith . . . we . . . claim His sacrificial work and become partakers thereof" (*Ibid.*). Klaas Reimer, the founding elder, had already made the same theology vibrant. He proclaimed: "We have been redeemed with more than silver and gold." Then he quickly adds, "Here is the only basis of our salvation and eternal glory" (KR1C).

Heinrich Balzer preached, and said without any reservation: "Faith, however, is not a human gift nor a work of self-endeavour . . . Rather, faith is the precious gift of the grace of God . . ." (HB1C). "We are saved solely by grace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ," said Abraham L. Friesen, from Nebraska, in one of his sermons (ALF2C). We quote him once more: ". . . we have not earned anything . . . and the promise of salvation . . . always remains a gift of grace" (*Ibid.*). Such was their commitment; such was their understanding. Grace was their means, faith was their instrument. And, as has been clearly shown, even the act of faith, is the gift of God's infinite grace. This is Pauline through and through. This was clearly also the theology and message of the sixteenth century evangelical Anabaptists.<sup>11</sup>

But, second, as their Anabaptist forefathers were not satisfied with the magisterial Reformers' concept of saving faith, so these KG leaders also found that concept seriously inadequate. They found, to their satisfaction, that when the Scriptures touched on the condition of salvation, it need not always use the term faith. There were other human actions which were, either directly or indirectly, accepted as conditions for receiving the benefits of the atonement.

We call on these ministers to present their view. Peter Toews states frankly (PT1E), "Nor should we think that the doing of good works alone is sufficient . . . ." The context from within the words are written may refer to more than personal salvation, but the latter is clearly the subject. And, it should be quickly noticed, that he begins with the concept of works, to which, apparently, faith must be added. Again, he announces, ". . . genuine faith must be preceded by a righteous-working repentance . . ." (*Ibid.*). This statement may not present the issue with clarity, but the direction of thought seems evident.

They add that without discipleship there is no salvation. So announces Abraham L. Friesen. His words are these: ". . . the discipleship which saves from eternal death follows and fashions itself only after our Redeemer. . ." (ALF2C). Klaas Friesen in Russia preached: "If we follow Him, He will lead us into eternal blissful life . . ." (KF1G). Does not this pronouncement make discipleship pre-condition, or condition of salvation?

Balzer, while surely seeing true works of love as the result of saving faith, yet this relationship of faith to works was not all that saving faith meant to him. To express his concept, he shared with his hearers, that ". . . our faith is of a righteous-working nature, and that all its essential God-pleasing fruits are within us, and that this faith inspires us and makes us active in love . . ." (HB1C). It would seem that Balzer is saying that a true faith is, indeed, fruit producing. However, before this can take place, this fruit already exists within that faith.

Klaas Reimer says the following on the subject of genuine faith: "let us seek

to follow Him. How else can we enter His glory and eternal rest" (KR3L). Further, Reimer argues that Christ does ". . . not enter the hearts which are under the dominion of sin, but only those who love and do what He bids them" (KR1C). The sermons which are being examined, do not only carry these statements on grace, faith and works, they also breath this kind of spirit.

Now the question arises: What do we make of their theology? Are they not aware that they can be charged with holding to contradictions? Or, are they so naive that they cannot really understand what they are proclaiming? Or, again, are they simply trying to restate what the Scriptures are saying? Were they present to answer our questions, they would surely answer the last query positively. If so, is it possible that their view is in harmony with the Scriptures, and is consistent within itself, with reference to the relation of faith and works, and therefore, no charge of either heresy or contradiction can be laid? We must take a brief, but careful look at this area of their theology.

First, there is the question of consistency. If man is truly a fully integrated organism and person, then every sentiment, every emotion, every intention, every thought and every action is that of the whole person. Can this not be psychologically, sociologically, and Biblically supported? Is this not a necessary concept, if Jesus is correct that the lustful glance is already the act of sin which lust has contemplated?<sup>12</sup> If we have argued correctly, does it finally make a difference which comes first, the thought or the action? In each case, are not both the act of the mind, and the act of the motion of the body coalesced in one?

In psychological and theological terms, does not the whole person so function, that thinking, acting, feeling, deciding, are of one woven fabric? If so, then it makes no difference whether love occasions the outward action of love, or the outward action of love is in essence that inward love. With reference to true faith and true, genuine good works, it can be said that the faith that works is the work which believes. Seeing faith, and works, and inward love and the outward action of love in this way, then genuine obedience is genuine faith and genuine obedience equals genuine faith.<sup>13</sup> Within this structure of existential thinking, it makes perfect sense that the Anabaptists of the sixteenth century, and the Lehrer of the KG, said what they said, and made discipleship into a condition of salvation. This kind of faith, then, can be called existential faith, for it is of the essence, and action of the whole being.<sup>14</sup>

But now, second, there remains a final question. Is this existential faith Biblical? We will let the reader decide. James say forcefully that Abraham was saved ". . . by works . . . you see that faith was active along with his works [not following] and faith as completed by works."<sup>15</sup> Does this statement of James not mean that it is at the moment of works that saving faith begins? Paul reminds the Galatians that only when faith begins to love is<sup>16</sup> Writing to the Corinthians, Paul informs that faith which does not love is useless.<sup>17</sup> This must mean that unless love is of the essence of faith, faith is not a condition of salvation. Does not Jesus invite people into eternal bliss, because they had visited the sick, and fed the hungry.<sup>18</sup> And not least, forgiveness is necessary in order to be saved and accepted by the Lord. And, to forgive is to do one of the finest action. That is what Jesus says: ". . . if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses."<sup>19</sup> It seems as though the KG leadership has read the Scriptures, believed them, and has shared them.

Within a somewhat different structure Heinrich Balzer minces no words, when he also defines this existential faith. He writes with strong language:

. . . there is a great misunderstanding in many people who have a false view of the work of grace in Christ Jesus. They believe that everything solely depends on faith [the demonic kind--notice James' text below]. If they can claim the work of redemption in Christ Jesus by faith, then they will already be justified; as God does not look upon nor recognize any works. But, beloved, this is nothing but pure deception by the prince of darkness and a mere confession of the mouth which has no power. For this reason the Apostle James also says, ". . . if faith does not have works, it is dead by itself . . ." (HB2G).

Then, immediately following this description of true faith, He seems to indicate *that either faith is the product of loving God, or at least is identified with it*. This seems to be what he means with "We find here [Gal. 5:6] the characteristics of a salvation-yielding faith" *Ibid*. This concept must result from Balzer' longer statement, above, and the quote from James, linked with the idea that the only faith that saves is the faith that loves. Bringing all these factors together, as well as whole of the teaching in these sermons on salvation, outlining the condition on the basis of which God freely grants it by grace alone, we may dare to formulate their concept of existential, saving faith. It can be expressed in three words, instead of only two, in any order, namely, love/obedience/faith, or faith/love/obedience, or obedience/faith/love.<sup>20</sup>

Consequently, could it be said, perhaps, that the KG preachers had a concept of faith, and works, which was more consistent with both life and the Scriptures, then some have thought.

### Conclusion.

A study of this kind can have a number of benefits. First, it helps to link the present with our past in an important way. Second, it kindles an appreciation for the leadership of the community of which one is a part. Third, there comes with study of this nature a greater realization of the meaning of the divine guidance for the Church of Jesus Christ.

### Endnotes: Theology of the Kleine Gemeinde.

1. Three of these sermons were preached by Klaas E. Reimer, the founder of the KG and its first Aeltester. There is first a communion message, dated 1829. Then we possess two sermons delivered in 1832, one on the Wheat and the Tares, and the other on Love and Brotherhood. Respectively, these sermons will be designated as KR1C, KR2W and KR3L in this brief survey. The Aeltester who followed Reimer was Abraham Friesen. One of his sermons, preached in preparation for baptism, is also part of this collection. It was apparently delivered in 1844. The reference label will be AF1PS (Delbert Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph* (Steinbach: D.F.P. Publications, 1986), 73-89.

In hand, are two sermons by Heinrich Balzer, one of the early ministers [Prediger] of the small fellowship. Balzer was a thinker of some stature, as his writings show. One of these sermons, which bears the title, "Preparatory sermon, 2 Corinthians 13:5" in the document used (from herein, HB1C), carries no date. However, it is clear that it was delivered before 1846, since that is the year of Balzer's death. Apparently, as the record shows, was read to the church a number of times, by

Klaas W. Friesen, at various services. The second Balzer sermon (HB2G), titled, "Sermon on Galatians 6:15, 16" was written in 1846.

We also include one sermon, written, according to the copy in hand, in 1863, by Klaas W. Friesen, a brother to the Aeltester Abraham Friesen, the second Aeltester of the KG in Russia. As indicated, it was this Prediger, or Lehrer, who used Balzer's sermon over and over in his ministering career. Mr. Friesen's own sermon, as reproduced, offers no title. A fitting one would be "Of Grace and True Righteousness" (henceforth KFIG).

Another preserved homily is that of Peter P. Toews. This was presented to the congregation in Russia, when he was about twenty-six years old, in 1867. It is an Easter sermon (PT1E). Toews also became an Aeltester, and it was he who was later, in Canada, involved in what has been called the John Holdeman secession.

Two more formal communications or messages, to KG congregations are examined. Both were delivered in America, by Aeltester Abraham L. Friesen, of Janzen, Nebraska. These will be designated, ALF1E and ALF2C. The former is dated February 1882, and the latter in Manitoba, December of the same year.

2. See AF1E and AF2C.

3. See Plett, ed., *The Golden Years* (Steinbach, Man.: D.F.P. Publications, 1985), 322ff.

4. See *ibid.* Also KR1C. Klaas Reimer is quoting Dirk Philip, *Enchiridion or Handbook*, Trans. A.B. Kolb (Alymer, Ont.: Pathway Publishing Corporation, 1978), 389, in this sermon.

5. See Romans 5:10; Isaiah 53; 1 Peter 2:21ff., and numerous other Scripture texts.

6. See 1 Peter 2:21-25.

7. See, among the different treatments of this concept in the sermons, also KR3L: "This is how we should love God and our Saviour Jesus, who first loved us and who suffered the most fearful death. . . . He interceded with His heavenly Father for His murderers and said, 'Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.'" It may be noticed that Reimer refers to the execution of Christ as murder. Whatever he meant with this assertion, at least we must grant that it was a judicial act, carried out within the framework of a duly instituted state. And, it is clear, it was highly politicized procedure.

8. Once more we must quote from KR3L, to affirm the concept of discipleship as deduced from the sermons in hand: "This is how we should love God and our Saviour Jesus, who first loved us and who suffered the most fearful death . . . He interceded with His heavenly Father for His murderers and said, 'Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.'" See also KFIG, PT1E, AF2C, HB1C, and others.

9. See Eph. 2:8-10; Phil. 1:29; 2:13.

10. See Menno Simon, *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons*, trans. Leonard Verduin, ed. John C. Wenger (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1956), 116, 130, 228, 240, 342.

11. See Dirk Philips, 15, 16, 17; see also Menno Simons, *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons*, trans. Leonard Verduin, ed. John C. Wenger (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1956), *passim*.

12. See Mt. 5:27-28.

13. See Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1962), 54, 57, 58, 60ff.

14. See Robert Friedmann, *The Theology of Anabaptism* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1973), 27ff, 50, 84, 89.

15. James 2:21, 22.

16. Gal. 5:6.

17. 1 Cor. 13:2.

18. Mt. 25:31-36.

19. Mt. 6:15.

20. Expressed philosophically, and theologically, can it not be argued that he who does not truly love the Lord, will not, and cannot believe Him? And, is it not also true, that only those who love Him can truly obey Him? Moreover, cannot only those truly love and obey Him, if they believe in Him?



# PART TWO

## KLAAS REIMER 1770-1837

### Chapter One

### Biographical Sketch

**Aeltester Klaas Reimer (1770-1837), Petershagen, Molotschna Colony, South Russia: Practical Visionary and Spiritual Leader. A Biographical Sketch. By Dr. Al Reimer, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1992.**

---

#### **Introduction.**

Dismissed by earlier historians as a fractious figure of minor importance in nineteenth-century Russian-Mennonite church history, Klaas Reimer, thanks to the diligent research and reevaluation of Delbert Plett and several other scholars, can now be seen as the dynamic and visionary spiritual leader he undoubtedly was in his own time. Reimer was an uncompromising advocate of the central Anabaptist tradition whose tireless efforts resulted in the founding of a renewal movement that, small as it was in its early years, represents an important thread in the continuing Mennonite story.

And yet, given the mass of new materials presented in this series of volumes on the *Kleine Gemeinde* (KG) as it has evolved since 1812, our knowledge of Klaas Reimer's career remains sketchy, and important details of his life are either missing entirely or remain ambiguous and obscure. What little we know of the man's life and activities comes mainly from his own memoir "A Short Exposition, 1836," which is restricted largely to his public career and which contains tantalizing hints and generalities left dangling in mid-memory, so to speak. Some of the gaps and obscurities have recently been filled in and cleared up, but by no means all of them. Moreover, a memoir or autobiography tends to be one-sided and highly selective and must be approached with caution by the historian. In this form of writing the recording subject always creates (often unwittingly) a persona, that is, a public mask fashioned out of his private perception of himself and presented to the reader as the perceived objective reality about himself and his life.

The first point to note about "A Short Exposition" is that it was written very late in Klaas Reimer's life, which means that memory had been shaping events of earlier years for a long time into a more or less final pattern. Secondly, except for a brief sketch of his early life in the opening pages (and even there he restricts himself to the spiritual side of his youth and young manhood), he is writing not as

a private individual but in his official capacity as founding elder of the KG. His account of his long struggle with Jacob Enns, the tyrannical elder of the Grosse Gemeinde (as the parent church came to be called), as well as his debilitating internal dispute with the "false humility" faction, can only be very partially corroborated from other sources, and we are obliged either to accept Reimer's account at face value or try to read between the lines as much as possible.

### **Early life and marriage.**

Although Reimer does not mention his parents in his memoir, we now know that they were Heinrich and Agatha (nee Epp: the Epp clan was quite affluent and prominent in Prussia) Reimer.<sup>1</sup> Klaas was born on October 16, 1770, in the village of Petershagen about 25 miles east of the city of Danzig. The boy received no formal education and grew up without having done much reading or committing to memory, even though learning came easily to him (p.122). As a youth, Reimer relates, he was much drawn to the freedom and pleasures around him. While working on road gangs and later as an apprentice carpenter he fell under the influence of pleasure-seeking fellow-workers. At the age of twenty, however, he was baptized and accepted into the Danzig Gemeinde, although he confesses that he still had personal problems and "far too light-heartedly took part in personal pleasures" at weddings and while serving on road gangs. He sums up his life at this time by admitting that he was "too deeply immersed in the works of creation, and had not sufficiently searched for the Creator Himself" (p.122).

In 1792 young Reimer moved to Neunhuben, a village just east of Danzig where he joined the conservative rural "Werder Gemeinde" that had split off from the pietist-influenced urban Mennonite church in Danzig the year before. Becoming a part of this newly established splinter church must have set a precedent in Klaas Reimer's mind for his own reform activities in Russia two decades later.

Six years later, at the age of 28, he married Maria Epp, the daughter of Elder Peter Epp, the highly influential Flemish church leader who had died in 1789. Ten years older than Klaas, Maria had been working as a housekeeper or steward for her elderly uncle Cornelius Epp, the assistant elder of the rural church Reimer had joined. It would seem to have been a prudent marriage on both sides. Reimer had married into one of the leading Mennonite families in the area, and Maria Epp, in her late thirties, had found a reliable young husband. The young couple were able to buy half of Cornelius Epp's farm and for the next several years prospered in a material sense. However, a young man in his twenties marrying a maiden of 38 could not realistically expect to establish what passed for a family of normal size in those days. In fact, only one child was born to the union--Aganetha, who was born in 1801 and who died as a child later in Russia.

### **Ministerial election and emigration.**

Reimer was also--quite unexpectedly, he says--elected to the ministry in 1801. He records that he felt unworthy and unprepared for a spiritual role in the church. But he was not the man to reject a call from God or to retreat into self-pity over it. If God had led him into the ministry then He would also grant him the necessary strength and the faculties to carry out his duties as Lehrer. Indeed, as a young minister just past thirty, Klaas Reimer already showed the dedication,

independence and firmness of character which would become so crucial to him later in Russia. He soon made up for his lack of education by immersing himself in the Bible, the *Martyrs' Mirror*, as well as in the writings of Menno Simons, Dirk Phillips, Peter Peters and other Anabaptist leaders. And he wrote his own sermons to read from the pulpit, a practise far from common at a time when most Lehrer simply read hand-me-down sermons in manuscript or printed in a book.<sup>2</sup>

From the beginning Reimer acted as a watchdog in his Gemeinde, shocked as he was by the immorality and lax church discipline he saw from his new ministerial perspective. Already he was shaping his vision of a church based firmly on Scripture and the teachings of the Anabaptist forefathers. He describes with strong disapproval several cases of immoral behavior and spiritual waywardness which went unpunished because of vacillation on the part of the senior ministers. His zealous concern for purity in the church turned to dismay when he found that his own church was not applying its teachings according to scriptural precepts and traditional precedents.

By 1804 Klaas Reimer had had enough of the "sinful Babylon," as he came to call West Prussia. Along with some thirty followers he emigrated to Russia, taking with him his vision of a pure church. With his wife's two brothers already leading members of the Khortitza colony, Reimer and his group were well received and showed every intention of settling down there. Reimer and several other immigrants negotiated for the large Volenko estate near Khortitza only to discover that it came complete with a distillery and numerous serfs, raising a moral consideration which stalled the negotiations. In any case, the government soon stepped in and ordered the new group to settle in the newly opened Molotschna settlement in the spring of 1805.

### **Conflict in the Molotschna.**

Soon after settling down in the village of Petershagen, Reimer found himself at loggerheads with Jacob Enns, the recently elected elder of the Molotschna congregation. Reimer's vision of a pure Anabaptist church in the new land was turning into a nightmare of controversy and bitter strife. Reimer makes it obvious that he considered Enns to be completely unsuited for his important office. However, the supposition that Reimer, as the most experienced minister in the new colony, was motivated by jealousy because he had coveted the office himself, has been challenged by Delbert Plett. At the time of Enns' election as elder in the spring of 1805 Reimer was indeed in the Molotschna and participated in it, but he was at that time still expecting to settle down in Khortitza and so would not have regarded Enns's election as affecting his own status in any way.<sup>3</sup>

There were, however, compelling issues which drove Klaas Reimer to cross spiritual swords with Elder Enns, who apparently, as confirmed by several other sources, was an irascible, quick-tempered tyrant whose high-handed actions were usually devoid of tact or tolerance.<sup>4</sup> The basic quarrel between the two churchmen was over who had the final authority in the community, the Gemeinde or the civil authorities (the Schulzen and the Oberschulz). Elder Enns, in his erratic manner, tried to play it both ways. In 1807, for example, he seemed to take a public church stand against the government's attempt to solicit financial support for its war against Napoleon, but then surreptitiously authorized the Gebietsamt authorities to circulate the government's pledge book among the Molotschna settlers after all.

Reimer managed to get the Elder's order rescinded by a vote of the brotherhood, a defeat for Enns which must have caused him acute embarrassment. A few years later the Elder used ruthless tactics, including brutal physical violence, to bring down the progressive-minded Oberschulz Klaas Wiens. At the same time, he routinely allowed wrongdoers to be given corporal punishment in the Gebietsamt rather than having the church impose the ban, the only punishment Reimer regarded as consonant with Anabaptist tenets.

The struggle between Reimer and Elder Enns finally came to a head in 1812 when Reimer and a handful of followers began to hold their own church meetings in private homes. Reimer's hopes for reform in the church were at an end. Enns's wrathful denunciation of all attempts at reform and his stubborn refusal to come to any compromise drove Reimer to take the drastic step of separation. Delbert Plett has argued that Reimer and his supporters were not inherently separatist, but under the circumstances they were left with no alternative but to withdraw from the parent church.<sup>5</sup>

The full wrath of Elder Enns now fell on the reformers, who were promptly banned from the mother church. Harassment and threats became the order of the day. Aided and abetted by the civil authorities and many church members, Elder Enns did everything he could to bring Reimer and his right-hand man Cornelius Janzen to heel. By withdrawing and holding their own services Reimer and his reform group had served notice that they had given up trying to reform the church from within. James Urry has suggested that by taking the action they did the reformers were "in a sense placing the rest of the community under the ban."<sup>6</sup> Whatever the case, there was now no turning back. Reimer was convinced that he was acting on scriptural grounds and that to give in to Enns now would be inexcusably hypocritical, even though the fiery elder was threatening dire consequences, including exile to Siberia. Still, the decision to leave the mother church caused Reimer much agony and soul-searching, and he confesses to his own weakness and ignorance, as well as to his fear of leaving the church without knowing what the consequences would be. "For I know," he writes, "what it cost me in Prussia, as well as here, to leave the Gemeinde" (p.135).

The new reform church had two ministers but as yet no formal leader or elder. In 1814 the Friesian elder Heinrich Janzen of Schoenwiese in the Old Colony agreed to supervise an election for elder. The lot fell to Klaas Reimer, but Janzen refused to ordain him and so, subsequently, did all the other elders in the Mennonite colonies. In 1816, having given up all hope for an official ordination by another elder, Reimer had Cornelius Janzen, his staunch supporter and fellow-minister, ordain him as elder.

Elder Enns died the following year, but the persecution of the KG did not die with him. The new elder, Jacob Fast of Halbstadt, was "very friendly and accomodating" (p.134), but by openly welcoming new religious influences, particularly the pietist movement emanating from Prussia, Fast, in Reimer's eyes, represented, if anything, an even greater threat to the orthodox teachings of the new church. Reimer remained vehemently opposed to these outside influences brought into the Molotschna by new Prussian immigrants like the elders Franz Goerz and Peter Wedel, particularly the tractarian activities they supported. The foreign-bred spiritual tolerance of these liberal Mennonites was anathema to Klaas Reimer and he was not afraid to say so (p.134). However, in accusing the pietist-

leaning elders of "self-righteous holiness," he displays more than a touch of self-righteousness himself (p.135). More seriously, these various opponents of the KG and Reimer now took the offensive by lodging a formal complaint with General Inzov, the head of the Guardian's Committee. As a consequence, Reimer was forced to appear before the Gebietsamt and threatened with banishment, but he still refused to submit.

All the persecution and outside pressures suffered by the KG, severe and prolonged though they were, failed to weaken or divide the movement. Rather, it was internal strife and rebellion that almost destroyed Reimer's vision and severely frustrated his attempts to build a viable Gemeinde. It began in 1819 when Cornelius Janzen, his loyal follower and co-worker, suddenly became, in Reimer's words, "proud and defiant" and no longer trustworthy (p.139). Janzen left the KG in 1822, taking a segment of the tiny church back with him to the parent church.<sup>7</sup> "This secession almost finished us," Reimer concedes, (p.139) although an even worse crisis was to come a few years later.

### The false-humility movement.

That crisis was brought about internally by the false humility movement in 1828-29, which almost destroyed the KG and for a time threatened the leadership of Klaas Reimer.<sup>8</sup> In his poetic eulogy of Klaas Reimer shortly after his death, Heinrich Balzer devotes several stanzas to the false humility crisis and describes how Elder Reimer was subjected to the scorn and mockery (*Hohn und Spott*) of the "self-elected lights of humility" (*Selbsterwählte-DEMUTHSSCHEINE*).<sup>9</sup> Delbert Plett has described this counter movement within the early KG as "a form of reverse pietism. . . developed in reaction to the teachings of the various pietist groups in the Molotschna at the time."<sup>10</sup> Reimer himself describes this terrible threat as "Satan now [coming] in amongst us as an angel of light, as a false spirit" (p.139).

The false humility faction morbidly dwelt on guilt and fear as the main elements of their fanatical beliefs and tried to follow a daily routine of extreme asceticism and self-inflicted punishment. At the table they tried to move themselves to penitential tears while saying grace, and left the table hungry if they failed. Several people, including children, got food poisoning as the result of eating tainted food left out in this way. Some of these people wanted members of the church to sell all their possessions, dress only in rags, shun others in the community and accept no community offices. Some resorted to lying in ditches all night, praying and lamenting their sins. At least one man died of exposure as a result. A certain Warkentin frightened many people with an exact prediction for the end of the world. Reimer himself remained sceptical but states, somewhat drily, that many were taken in because "Warkentin talked so frightfully of the Last Days, how it would burn, crackle and sizzle. It seemed as if he suddenly knew the entire Holy Scripture from memory, which he expounded at great length" (p.140).

It is characteristic of Klaas Reimer that he blames himself for not having opposed these various forms of spiritual excess strongly enough: "I do not think I was zealous enough at the time. Nor did I search the Word of God earnestly enough and pray for perception, enlightenment and strength. I was too complacent and too weak in spiritual zeal to punish the evil spirit" (p.140). He finally did deliver a powerful admonitory sermon against the fanaticism of the erring members, only to have much of the congregation walk out on him in disapproval.

At a special Bruderschaft his leadership was challenged on a vote of confidence he barely survived. It was the low point of his church stewardship. He expresses his despair over the situation with the words, "Oh God, how long can the world survive, when this sort of thing is so common among nonresistant Christians and everything has become so obscured"(p.142).

### Ohm Klaas, the preacher.

Having survived the threat to his leadership, Reimer was able to regain control of his Gemeinde and the false humility movement faded from the scene. Reimer sees this harrowing internal struggle, rather optimistically, at least in retrospect, as a "purification" process for his struggling Gemeinde (p.142).<sup>11</sup> Perhaps as a sign of the improved internal relations, the Gemeinde in 1829 reintroduced the ritual of footwashing which had been discarded by most Mennonite congregations after Anabaptist times. Reimer's intense, eloquent sermon inaugurating this communion practise in itself effectively refutes P. M. Friesen's pietistical judgment that "the religious disposition of Klaas Reimer, although a sincerely pious one, was devoid of any joyous knowledge of God's grace."<sup>12</sup> The deep, confident spirituality, the love and *Gelassenheit* that permeate this communion sermon are all the more remarkable when one considers that the turbulent period of the false humility movement was barely over. Not a hint of that violent crisis disturbs the mood of deep reverence and piety. Studded with rich jewels of biblical imagery, this sermon of love and reconciliation must have made a deep impression on Reimer's congregation.

Indeed, if the three sermons included in this volume, with their simple, sincere eloquence, are fair indicators Klaas Reimer has not received the credit he deserves as a preacher. The sermon he preached in 1832 on "The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares," besides having a fine clarity of exposition, is replete with a spirit of humble authority and compassion for his flock that is almost palpable. Apart from several quiet references to a time "three or four years ago" (p.131) when "we faced so much deception in our midst" (p.132), Reimer again betrays no sign of the cruel opposition and rejection he had faced so recently from his own brethren. In his elegy, however, Balzer upbraids Reimer's congregation for their treatment of him: "Consider how you wounded him/ For guiding you towards God."<sup>13</sup> According to Reimer in the 1832 sermon, "only one-third remain of those who first went out" (p.133); but those who remained, including the elder, were probably the stronger for the ordeal.<sup>14</sup>

The other 1832 sermon that has been preserved and is included in this volume, "A Sermon on Love and Brotherhood," contains only a few muted references to "what has happened in our midst," how "brotherly love has suffered in our midst for a period of time." This deeply felt and luminously expressed sermon on love, humility, repentance and forgiveness is devoid of any spirit of self-justification or vindictiveness and is suffused instead with a spirit of mature and comforting *Gelassenheit*. It captures in the purest form I know of, what is to my mind the essence of the traditional KG message of following Christ through a meek, loving and sanctified way of life.

## Conclusion.

In the closing pages of his memoir Klaas Reimer attempts a modest assessment of his life and work as a church reformer. "Through all this," he writes, "God has divided the woman's seed which he led from Prussia into three parts [three separate church groups] in order that through their protracted disputes they should search the Word to determine what He required of them" (p.145). As for his own modest role in helping to bring about a spiritual renewal in a new congregation, he comforts himself with Paul's words in 1 Corinthians that "God hath chosen the foolish things in this world to confound the wise" (p.146). Such was Klaas Reimer's humble self-judgment, and even if one allows for the possibility that a self-proclaimed humility may not be entirely free of a secret pride, there can be no doubt of the sincerity of the claim in this case.

Today we are in a position to make a more generous and balanced appraisal of the role played by the co-founder (along with Cornelius Janzen) and first elder of the KG reform movement in nineteenth-century Mennonite Russia. As Delbert Plett has pointed out, Klaas Reimer's "descendants and brethren regarded him as a giant man of God who had lived a life of earnest Christian discipleship."<sup>15</sup> There had to be something very special about a man who succeeded in bringing into reality a spiritual vision against such great odds, in such trying circumstances. While his critics through the years wrote him off as well-meaning and sincere but impossibly narrow and stubborn and far too lacking in knowledge or education for his role, we are now able to do justice to his name and memory without trying to cover up his defects and failings. We know that he was not always as meek and mild and submissive as some of his friends and defenders have claimed, but we also know that he was not a fanatic, nor the ignorant religious reactionary his enemies made him out to be. Neither meek submissiveness nor narrow fanaticism, nor any combination of the two qualities, would have resulted in the strength and wisdom he needed to survive the many tests and ordeals the Lord saw fit to put him through as a church reformer.

He was a truly loving and caring man, but he was also practical and tough-minded. He submitted gladly to the will of God, but often reluctantly and with a bad grace to the will of other men. Tact and diplomacy were hardly his strongest traits, and his many years of strife with Elder Jacob Enns, however well they reflect on Reimer's upright character and honest zeal, do not always reflect favorably on his methods and tactics, even as described by himself. We would be doing a disservice to Klaas Reimer's memory by claiming too much for him--to rescue him from the oblivion of history by claiming sainthood for him, so to speak. Rescuing a deserving figure from historical neglect or distortion can easily lead to special pleading. And special pleading is not the process by which balanced, objective history is written. Perhaps the model to follow in this case is the judicious summary of Klaas Reimer provided by Heinrich Balzer in his elegy:

He strove to lead a faithful life,  
And doing so he showed us  
That he shared the weaknesses  
Of all who wander in the strife.<sup>16</sup>

And what more can any of us do or lay claim to on this earth?

## Endnotes: Klaas Reimer, A Biographical Sketch.

1. The information about the parents was discovered by genealogist Dr. Glen Penner and is cited in Delbert Plett, ed., *The Golden Years* (Steinbach, Man.: D. F. P. Publications, 1985), 148.

2. *Ibid.*, 150.

3. See Delbert Plett, "All That Blisters: James Urry Attacks the Kleine Gemeinde Mennonites," in Plett, ed., *Profile of the Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde 1874* (Steinbach, Man.: DFP Publications, 1987), 300-301.

4. Even P. M. Friesen, by no means a partisan of Klaas Reimer, describes Enns as a man of "exceedingly violent character" frequently guilty of "hot-tempered outbursts." In *The Mennonite Brotherhood in Russia (1789-1911)* (Fresno, Cal.: Board of Christian Literature of the MB General Conference, 1978), 92,128.

5. See Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 169 and 171.

6. James Urry, *None But Saints: The Transformation of Mennonite Life in Russia 1789-1889* (Winnipeg, Man.: Hyperion Press, 1989), 79.

7. Although Reimer does not expressly say so, it is possible that C. Janzen had succumbed to pietist influences. Reimer notes that after Janzen had defected and rejoined the parent church he "started to preach . . . freely without a prepared text," a spontaneous style much favored by pietistical preachers. Janzen subsequently suffered complete disgrace by being defrocked over a sexual transgression (p. 19).

8. Until recently this internal strife was thought to have taken place a decade earlier, around the time of Janzen's defection. Delbert Plett, however, has determined from collateral sources, supported by internal evidence in Reimer's sermon on "The Wheat and the Tares" that the threat came during the later years of the 1820s. (See footnote #50, pp. 33-34, to "A Short Exposition" and Editor's Note to "The Wheat and the Tares," p. 13.)

9. Quoted in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 211.

10. *Ibid.*, 184.

11. Delbert Plett's contention in *The Golden Years*, 186, that the defeat of the false-humility cult literally saved the Russian Mennonite church from apostasy and heresy is interesting but conjectural. It seems unlikely that the tiny, despised KG could have had, no matter what it did, that kind of pervasive influence in the Molotschna, and even unlikelier in the Old Colony.

12. P. M. Friesen, 93.

13. Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 211.

14. As late as 1835 Reimer again found himself in hot water with his Gemeinde when one of his sons--Klaas F. Reimer of Tiege--invented a new type of wagon "powered by the motion of the driver" (p. 144), which might have been an early version of the bicycle, or even the horseless carriage. Such a newfangled contraption could not escape censure among the conservatives in the KG and both Reimer and his son were obliged to confess a "sin" that stemmed, to use Reimer's own phrase, from "too much . . . natural curiosity" (p.144).

15. Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 195.

16. *Ibid.*, 212.

## Chapter Two

### Ein Kleines Aufsatz, 1836

Ein Kleines Aufsatz or "A Short Exposition": The Autobiography of Aeltester Klaas E. Reimer (1770-1837), Petershagen, Molotschna Colony, South Russia, in 1836.

---

#### Prussian Roots.

God draws people unto Himself. Indeed, and often He persuades them to take on a particular endeavour for which he hath ordained them in ages past. In Romans 8 the Apostle Paul says, for whom God hath foreknown, he hath also chosen for the work for which they have been called.

Ever since my youth I was very much inclined toward a life of freedom in the world. At the same time such freedom came to be more and more acceptable according to the teachings of the Mennonites. Card playing at every opportunity came to be a common practice. On one occasion while on the road work [Scharwerk or statute labour], it occurred that my comrades and I, together with the teamsters, wanted to play cards at noon. An elderly man then approached and stood beside me saying that if I was still unfamiliar with the playing of cards, I should not bother to learn, because it was an evil practice. This struck my conscience and from that time forth I did not play cards again. This is the manner in which the gracious Lord convicted me on many occasions, although I remained full of impurity and sin continued to cling in me, in spite of His gracious leading.

When I was engaged with the carpenters one spring only a few years later, it again happened that nothing good was brought forward from the time that we awoke in the morning until we went to sleep at night. Only perishable vanity was evident. During the very same year I committed myself to the Gemeinde. Now the good and evil within me came into a tremendous spiritual conflict with each other. But what was the use? For I partook of many things which were an abomination to me, and I did not go back to the carpenters. It seemed hopeless for I remained very much full of impurity.

It was at this time that I allowed myself to be baptized, which occurred in 1790. During this time I frequently attended weddings and took part in roadwork [Scharwerk], where I far too light-heartedly took part in personal pleasures. Later in my solitude at home, the Spirit of God convicted my conscience that I had not done right in this or that. I became more penitent and desirous of bettering myself and of taking greater heed. Through all of this I did not search enough in the Word of God as to what He required of His people. Many things remained unclear to me, because of my indifference and the concerns of this world, which were too dear to my heart and in which I was too much involved. Indeed, I was too deeply immersed in the works of creation, and had not sufficiently searched for the Creator Himself. Nor had I honoured Him and sufficiently reflected upon what He

required of his people. Frequently I read the *Martyrs Mirror*, and I was always glad when I was able to listen to the elderly people discuss the Holy Scriptures, especially when they talked of the wonderful works of God. In spite of all this, much remained hidden from me, which I really should have known.

It came to pass that I married the daughter of the deceased Aeltester Peter Epp from Danzig.<sup>1</sup> This occurred in January of 1798 in the 28th year of my life. Thus I moved from my birthplace in Petershagen, near Tiegenhagen, to Neunhuben near Danzig, which was some 40 verst from the place of my birth.<sup>2</sup> My wife was the householder [steward] at the place of the aged Ohm Cornelius Epp, her father's brother. The aged widower sold us half of his Wirtschaft where we farmed together with him for over 6 years. Here God granted us much peace and grace.

My father-in-law, Peter Epp, was a God-fearing man who was gifted with great wisdom. He had pastored his Gemeinde and ministered to them diligently. He died three years before I came. After this a Jakob Defehr from the city became Aeltester. He had little oversight and allowed everyone freedom to do as they pleased. As a result the rural folk separated themselves from the Gemeinde in the city; but only to the extent that the Aeltester from the city still had to serve them with communion and baptism. But they were not associated with them in other respects. There were approximately a hundred souls eligible for communion among the rural group. The worship services were held in a room at our place every 14 days. In addition to the aged Ohm, there were 3 ministers [Lehrer] and 1 deacon. Then it occurred that a minister by the name of Barts, completely wrongfully, initiated legal process against a fellow brother. As a result, Barts was severely castigated verbally by my Ohm as the Vice-Aeltester, and consequently he went away from us.

After some time an election was held on February 1, 1801, to replace the minister who had left. As unskilled and untrained for the ministry as I was, the choice fell upon me. This was completely unexpected and I felt myself to be totally unsuited for the task. At the same time, I was only a novice and a newcomer in the Gemeinde. But what was the use? I could not refuse the election, even though I did not know how or what I was going to teach or preach. For the Holy Scriptures were unfamiliar to me as I had never attended school. Even though I was a fast learner, I had not read the Scripture very extensively; either my memory was too weak or I was simply too indifferent. But I decided that as God had led me thus far, I would carry out the undertaking in so far as God would grant me power for that cause. In as far as I knew how, I wanted to seek to cling steadfastly to the truth. It was a very heavy burden for me so that my courage frequently failed me. The words spoken by Paul were thereby fulfilled, "God has chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise." As I was so lowly, I could not but think that it was the will of God, and in addition, I was minded to cling firmly unto the truth in as far as I was capable.

I was not aware of the fact that in addition to the changes in teaching, falsehood had also crept in among the ministers. There was a young, prosperous and handsome man by the name of Franz Fast, who had an elderly wife and mature step-daughter. Soon it came to the point where her foolishness would come to light. When the step-daughter gave birth, the child was immediately brought to the orphanage in the city. We ministers then had two brethren summon the young

mother to us. We asked her to name the father of the child. With tears she replied that she did not know. The senior ministers were all satisfied with this. The aged Ohm was very sick and did not respond at all, nor could he hear our conversation. But I found it to be an abomination that the doer of the deed would remain unknown.

While they were speculating and talking that it might have been the step-father, I proceeded to admonish her that she should not heap one sin on top of the other. When it became very evident that she would soon confess, one of the other brethren started to speak against me in such a loud voice that they perceived nothing of my presentation. Consequently, I fell silent. It was clearly evident that she would soon confess if only the consequences of her sin could be explained to her. But this did not happen. Later I admonished the senior minister Johann Toews. He was not favourably inclined towards me, but I did not concede. Some of the other brethren later became upset that the matter was to remain concealed in this manner. Indeed, the brother of the adulteress almost lost his sanity on this account.

A short time later, another evil came up amongst us. Our neighbour Isaac Toews was a man over 60 years of age. When his wife became sick, he hired her sister as his housekeeper. After his wife had died, he wanted to marry his sister-in-law. As the aged Ohm was still very ill, Toews asked us three ministers if such a marriage would be allowed. The minister Toews replied that he had complete freedom to do so. Janzen did not prohibit him, nor did he give him the freedom to go ahead. But I completely prohibited him from such a marriage and presented to him what our forefathers had written and spoken about such a marriage.<sup>3</sup> On another day, Toews came to us and I read to him the teaching regarding such a marriage which had been practised since time immemorial; namely, that this amounted to incest. He returned to his home and proceeded with his plans, and the minister Toews performed the marriage for them without any further inquiries. When the wedding was over and I remained opposed to the same, Toews made a complaint against me with the Aeltester in the city.

Presently the Aeltester together with the ministers came to our place, and he asked me why I was so opposed to the marriage of Toews. I replied, "We need not even discuss the Scriptural grounds for my position, but I will ask you a question. My father-in-law [Aeltester Peter Epp] found this practice to be an abomination. Aeltester Regehr from Heuboden had said to a man who also wanted to marry his sister-in-law that, "If he did such a thing, they would be put of the Gemeinde and not be reaccepted as long as they both should live."<sup>4</sup> I pointed out that he himself was very well aware of the debate in this regard between Gerhard Wiebe of Ellerwalde and Peter Dyck. If the three Aeltesten were wrong, then I was also wrong. But if in accordance with the Holy Scripture they were correct, then I was unable to concede. I received no answer to this question and the subject was not discussed any further. The matter was left as it was.

Presently the King in Berlin issued the restrictive edicts regarding the Mennonites. As a result all the Aeltesten and ministers from East and West Prussia held a general conference in order to work for an improvement in the spiritual situation. I attended three of these conferences. But what was the use? It was clearly demonstrated that the temple would not be cleansed nor the portals closed. There was much freedom among the Danziger who then came into

disputation with the others who were not in agreement in these matters either. In the midst of all of this the pride, arrogance and unrighteousness, were increasing rapidly. Yes, the Mennonites for their part seemingly took full freedom in all matters which were not specifically prohibited by the government. Certainly no improvement in spiritual matters could be expected in Prussia and particularly not in the Danzig Gemeinde. This led to the decision to follow the brethren in the faith who had already emigrated to Russia. Consequently some 30 adults from our 'Kleine Gemeinde' on the land [Danzig Werder] departed for Russia on the 23rd of August, 1804.<sup>5</sup>

### Strife in the Molotschna.

On the 27th of November, 1804, we arrived in Chortitza the place of our brethren in Russia. The circumstances of our fellow brethren here appeared to be rather meagre, which I found to be a good sign. But the second emigration which had occurred during the years 1803-1804 had brought along much evil. After we had settled in our quarters, Aeltester Johann Wiebe unexpectedly received a notice from the Molotschna requesting his presence, as they were experiencing a great deal of strife.<sup>6</sup>

Immediately upon the arrival of spring, the four of us travelled there; namely, Aeltester Johann Wiebe, Jakob Enns,<sup>7</sup> Jakob Dueck<sup>8</sup> and myself. Upon our arrival in the Molotschna, we found that there was much disputing which had originated between the minister David Hiebert of Lindenau<sup>9</sup> and the Oberschulz Klaas Wiens of Altona.<sup>10</sup> The matter had arisen on account of a piece of disputed lumber with respect to which the minister Hiebert was to concede. Indeed, it was his responsibility, but he refused to do so. Nor was he admonished towards that end. We were called together three times on this account and discussed the matter from noon until midnight; but the matter was not resolved.

In the meantime a ministerial and Aeltester election was held. Oh, what wretchedness! For on such occasion they had every cause to commit themselves in earnest prayer unto the Lord of the Harvest that He would send true workers into the fields. Instead there was nothing but unadulterated disputation and strife. The lumber dispute between Hiebert and Wiens was again the subject of discussion during the last evening but no concession was made. Wiebe made a powerful presentation to Wiens, even though he did not have fault in the matter. Wiebe was unable to achieve a reconciliation because he did not persuade Hiebert to give in. Wiebe, Enns and Dueck then said their farewells, as we wanted to be on our way home. Wiens now wept bitterly. I had great fear to depart in this manner and to leave them in such a deplorable state. Consequently, I remained standing where I was. After the others had left, Wiens said to me, "Oh, what shall happen now?" I counselled him to give in even though he did not have fault in the matter, for it would not harm him even if he suffered wrongfully. Wiens agreed to this and the others were summoned back. The matter was finally conceded and we departed for home at daybreak.

After we, the second group of immigrants, had settled in our quarters in the Old Colony, and shortly after I myself had arrived there, we had discussed and also inspected the large estate of a nobleman which included a forest, a large kiln, and many Russians [serfs]. It was our intention to purchase this estate together, although we had only barely enough money for the down payment. The remainder

of the purchase price was to be generated by the kiln and we came to an agreement regarding this objective. We certainly did not wish to go to the Molotschna.

In December we travelled to see the authorities in Ekatherinoslav with respect to our proposition. Here we met with the Archduke and Lord of South Russia, the brother-in-law of the seller who had travelled to Petersburg. Johann Warkentin,<sup>11</sup> Jakob Schellenberg<sup>12</sup> and I discussed the matter with him. The Archduke inquired as to the manner in which we intended to purchase the estate; whether with people and everything included? Yes, was our reply. The Archduke then said to us, "But you are Mennonites. Surely, you are unable to purchase people." As a result I was very ashamed of myself. I thought that this lord of the world must have come to know us through our confession of faith. This is how the matter was left.

When we returned from the Molotschna that spring in 1805, they informed us that a writing issued by the Kontor [Kommettaet] had arrived which required that we settle in the Molotschna. This was a difficult matter for many. We were so blind and naive when we arrived in Russia; had the rulers of the land not been wiser than we, we would have blissfully sold ourselves to the Czar as his slaves. God, however, directs all our destiny, and has convicted us in so much and has sought to draw us nigh unto Himself.

In the meantime the votes for Aeltester had fallen upon Jakob Enns and he was ordained to that end.<sup>13</sup> According to all appearances, he wanted to institute good regulations for the Gemeinde but without much success. He was too rash and had tarnished his reputation. In the spring of 1806 he held a meeting with us ministers at the place of Jacob Dueck in Ohrloff in order to discuss certain matters.<sup>14</sup> After his presentation was completed, Enns asked if anyone else at the meeting had anything to present. In response the deacon Johann Hiebert from Halbstadt,<sup>15</sup> advised that people had come to blows and were fighting with each other in Muntau and that this could not be tolerated among us. To this Enns replied that he had already referred this matter to the Gebietsamt (local municipal office). I spoke out and stated that according to the Holy Scripture it was incumbent upon us to rectify the situation and not on the Gebietsamt. The others all remained silent. Notwithstanding my great weakness, I was firmly convinced, for Jesus so earnestly speaks, "Verily I say unto you, that ye resist not evil" (Matthew 5). I could not remain silent and talked with Enns at great length from the Holy Scriptures. This pierced the conscience of the Aeltester, which could be seen from his demeanour. After this incident, Enns frequently called us ministers together, and on most of these occasions we also discussed the secular regulation among us. But it seemed as if we became ever more divided.

From this time forth, the struggle among us became increasingly more difficult. The majority did not recognize the schism as beneficial, but neither did they earnestly work against it; seemingly they loved the honour of men more than the praise of God (John 12:43). Unfit as I was, God did not allow me to surrender to the situation, although the thought frequently came to me that it would be better to do so; for surely nothing could be changed. I should simply preach as well as I could and that was all I could do. When these anxieties came upon me, I turned to the study of the Holy Scriptures and the writings of Menno Simons, after which all thoughts of yielding left me. Instead the Spirit said, "Behold I come

quickly. Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Revelation 3:11).

It occurred in 1807 that the French arose against Russia with a mighty army in order to vanquish her. The Czar then issued an edict requesting voluntary contributions of war materials, such as rifles, swords, money and food. The village mayors [Schulzen] and the Aeltester, Jakob Enns, had to appear in Tokmak. Here the manifesto of the Czar was read to them after which they returned home. Aeltester Jakob Enns instructed the Schulzen to be careful in the matter as it was not appropriate for us to make voluntary contributions for this purpose. After a little while, the Inspector forwarded a record book [Schwurbuch], which he was to circulate among the villages. Everyone was to write into the book the amount which they were willing to contribute for the war.

Aeltester Enns had instructed the Schulzen that it was not appropriate for us to help in the war effort, and we ministers frequently came together to discuss the matter. Often the Oberschulz attended and asked us whether or not he should circulate the Schwurbuch. The majority of the ministers usually replied that it was not right for us to make voluntary contributions to the war. But the Aeltester remained silent, and the Oberschulz, Klaas Wiens, insisted that he hear this from the Aeltester. Finally Enns confided separately with the Oberschulz, asking him why he raised so many questions. If he wanted to circulate the book, he should just go ahead and do so. Wiens then sent the Schwurbuch around. By the time it came to our village, the book had been circulated nearly everywhere else. We were all summoned to appear before the Schulz where the same was read to us and inspected. It was evident that David Hiebert from Lindenau had subscribed for 10 ruble and that Jakob Fast from Halbstadt had subscribed for 25 kopek.<sup>16</sup>

This caused the neighbours here [in Petershagen] much concern. We were asked to travel to the Oberschulz and the Aeltester in this regard, with the result that a meeting was called. We were responsible to notify the ministers at our end of the colony and for this reason I found it necessary to call upon Jakob Fast in Halbstadt. I informed him that a meeting had been called in order to revoke what had been subscribed for the war. He started to weep and admitted that he was one of the signatories. The matter was put to rest at the meeting, and the Inspector advised accordingly. Behold, dear reader, this is what can happen when a spiritual house is built upon sand and is not firmly grounded on the Word of God. Such a one is like a reed which is bent to and fro by the wind.

Presently it occurred that a brother from Blumstein had severely beaten the Tschumaken [teamsters]. This was considered to be completely wrong by the brethren. Because of reminders from us that this was not right, Enns put the matter to a brotherhood meeting which was held at Hieberts' in Lindenau. Here he made some general inquires, but the brethren all disagreed with him. Enns appeared to be terrified by this reaction and replied loudly, "Brethren, are we making a correct judgment?" He added that such an incident should never happen again.

We had many subsequent discussions with Enns showing that the use of force was not a proper thing for a Christian. As a result, he became furious with me and prepared a sermon based on Matthew chapter 22 verses 19 to 22, which he presented at Hieberts' in Lindenau on both of the holidays [Feiertage]. He explained the inscription on the coin and the present problem in light of verses 12

and 13 of Jude, and severely derided me at some length. He concluded by asking, "And will we allow this menial foreign servant to stand?" All the while I was sitting right beside him. But by this time these statements no longer bothered me. This was not a matter where conceding could even be considered.

On another occasion after a worship service at Hieberts' in Lindenau, it occurred that there was much discussion about the use of physical force. Hiebert became offended against me and said, "That on one occasion he had also hit his servant after which the servant had behaved much better." When we departed, Enns accompanied us to the street. After much discussion he asked us to follow him as he wanted to show us the measuring stick which he had broken across the head of one of his brethren. All of this seemed to be quite acceptable to him and the others.<sup>17</sup> In this regard, Aeltester Peter Epp in Danzig had written to the Heuboden Gemeinde that such a one who struck another adult person was not only completely unqualified to remain as a minister, but should not be allowed to remain as a brother in the Gemeinde either.<sup>18</sup>

After this it occurred that one of the brethren from Ladekopp had committed an evil deed [crime]. The offender was taken to the Schulz and held by two men while another beat him. Because the majority considered the beating to be an offence, and as we ministers admonished and reproached the Aeltester about this, he stated, "We will hold a brotherhood meeting." But he did not tell us what he had in mind. When the brethren were all assembled, he presented the matter to them. After finishing his presentation, he closed his book and said to Janzen and me, "I now turn the matter over to you for discussion."<sup>19</sup>

We presented to the brethren the scriptural basis why this was unacceptable. A number of them became indignant, as they knew the position of the Aeltester regarding the matter. Several brethren became very upset and loudly talked about each other so that they were divided and the meeting was completely disrupted. They also talked offensively to Janzen and me. Now the Gemeinde was very much divided. As the matter could not be allowed to remain in this state, another brotherhood meeting was called shortly thereafter where somewhat of a reconciliation was achieved. That is how the matter was allowed to remain.

Subsequently, it occurred that Klaas Wiens from Altona had an argument with his neighbours regarding his cattle. Aeltester Enns drove to Altona and held a meeting with the parties involved. Enns had already become prejudiced against Wiens in Prussia due to a certain incident, where Wiens, because of his honesty, had refused to lead a mighty nobleman into temptation. Consequently, Enns had apparently been very severe with Wiens, so that he had left. Enns then sent four men after Wiens with instructions to bring him back regardless of what happened. The men apprehended Wiens forcibly and carried him through the doors so roughly that he was injured and confined to a sick bed as a result. Later we ministers talked to Enns that this was not right. On one occasion when we had referred to this at considerable length, he became angry and said, "If it ever occurred again and Wiens could not be carried by four men, then he would be carried by eight men."

In the meantime, the strife in Altona involving Wiens had not been solved by all of this as there was fault on both sides. After some time Enns presented the matter to the brotherhood, and because Wiens did not appear, he was given his leave and excommunicated. Wiens was given written notice of this action. The

dispute now intensified and spread throughout the entire Gemeinde. The majority sided with Wiens and believed that the four who had carried Wiens had earned the punishment much more than Wiens. As a result, the dispute among the ministers and brethren became more and more serious. Many of the ministers and brethren continued in full fellowship with Wiens, particularly in Lindenau where it included almost everybody, as Wiens was supposed to help them as their advocate before the rulers with respect to the land between Lindenau, Lichtenau and the Doukhobors. The uproar became ever more intense, and Enns was seemingly unable to do anything to resolve the situation. In the meantime, the bans were announced for two young couples in Lindenau. Although there was no hindrance, Enns forbade their marriage.

The situation had not improved through these measures, and so Enns called a general brotherhood meeting in the house of worship in Ohrloff regarding this matter. But Wiens also came to the meeting. While we were in the ministerial room [Stuebchen] in the morning, Enns became aware that Wiens had come to the meeting. He became dreadfully angry and said to all of us, "Ohms, do not allow that man into the church, or I will grab the first thing I can put my hands on, be it an axe or a spade, and strike him at once." In his rage, he grasped a cap from the table and threw it down on the floor with all his might. Enns then put a guard at the door without our knowledge. We only found out about this later. While we were inside the church, Wiens went around the building and in front of the windows during the entire period that Enns was preaching. Presently Enns wanted to question the brethren, whether they supported him or Wiens, so the ministerial again returned to the 'Stuebchen'. Each of the brethren came through the room individually and had to record their vote, whether they supported Wiens or Enns.

Because of this, the sentries had not given enough attention to their post, and Wiens entered the church seating himself in the assembly area. All this time, the brethren were proceeding with the electoral procedure, one after the other. When Enns became aware of the presence of Wiens, he angrily proceeded into the assembly area and screamed loudly, "Get this man out of here but do not harm him." Everyone at the meeting jumped up. There was such a frightful uproar that it looked as if a terrible fight would ensue. In view of this, Janzen and I took our caps and quickly made our exit. The aged minister, Christian Schmidt from Rueckenau, then went over and talked to Wiens. In a friendly manner he asked him to leave, after which Wiens went back outside. When we saw this, we returned into the church. Behold, my dearest reader, had God allowed the matter to progress to the point that Wiens had been forcefully ejected, I do not know which party would have won the battle. The situation looked ominous.

My beloved reader, God governs over all things. This certainly became evident in this situation. This was also manifestly apparent with the people of Israel, for when God perceived in Israel that they would change their ways and heed His will, He gave them judges who were to help them to remain free from the clutches of evil. But sometimes the situation was almost without hope, and then God gave them evil and despotic rulers, as we can see in the case of King Ahab. Although it was a horror for the majority of the people that the king was so ruthless, only a few took heed and truly turned unto God. Even these few were ridiculed, as was also the case with us here. For God directs everything and always does so in such a way that the people should become aware of their own sinfulness

and should direct themselves to Him.

During the time in question, there were still the two bridal couples who have already been mentioned. Permission for them to get married had not yet been granted by the Aeltester, even though there was no other impediment. With all of this it seemed as if Aeltester Enns had finally brought matters to the point where he no longer knew which way to turn. He summoned the Aeltester and ministers of the Old Colony to come to the Molotschna. They came and discussed the matter with many and tried to persuade Enns and Wiens to be reconciled. They also saw that it was important that the two bridal couples were married. In the meantime, these couples had become indignant and wanted to be married in Prischib, as they had already waited for two months. Now these couples were married and the Old Colonier left for home. Enns made sufficient concessions to Wiens, so that he was again accepted as a brother into the Gemeinde.

### Threats of Siberia and Excommunication.

So we were at the time a small group who were unable to conform ourselves to this dreadful Aeltester. We could not give up our faith so as to obey him. Presently a group of men from Muensterburg came and insisted that we accept them and that we should hold worship services in their village every fourteenth day. Consequently, we rotated the services. On one Sunday we held it in Muensterburg, and the other Sunday, here in Petershagen. All of this was done without the consent of Aeltester Enns.

We were threatened by some of the others in Muensterburg who said they would keep me away with physical blows if necessary. When these threats were unsuccessful, the village Schulz filed a complaint against us with the Oberschulz and the Gebietsamt. Cornelius Janzen and I were summoned to the Gebietsamt, and when we arrived, Hermann Neufeld, the Schulz in Muensterburg who had accused us, was also there.<sup>20</sup> They asked us, why we were having worship services contrary to the wishes of the Aeltester. We explained the whole situation by reference to the Word of God and His will. As a result they fell silent and the complainant Neufeld went to the door and wanted to leave.

As nothing had succeeded against us, Aeltester Enns wrote to us ministers appointing a day for a meeting with him at which time he was going to surrender his Aeltestership to us. This troubled me a great deal so that I was unable to eat. But when we came to him, and he started to speak, all my anxiety vanished. We immediately realized his deceit as he had wanted to bring us to him by this trickery. When this did not help, he sent two men to us here, namely, David Hiebert, Lindenau, and Abraham Wiebe, Muensterburg, the senior ministers.<sup>21</sup> They spoke to us in a friendly way and were soon in agreement with us. They suggested that we go to Enns as they believed that we would then achieve a reconciliation. We were not prepared to do this as we felt that Enns should call a brotherhood meeting for this purpose; they would not agree to this as they felt that we should go to Enns. After much discussion, we four ministers drove to Enns, as I had committed myself to make every effort to achieve a reconciliation. But by now we were far apart as it was not the will of God. When we arrived at the home of Enns and started to speak, he became dreadfully angry and lashed out with terrible words. He repeatedly hammered his fist on the table and grabbed his cap from his head and threw it on the floor with all his might, so that all thoughts

of reconciliation left me. I was not able to unite myself with such a spirit, but Hiebert and Wiebe remained completely silent. At approximately midnight we left for home.

Later Enns wrote us again that we should come to him as he wanted to surrender his office of Aeltester to us. By now this made no impression upon us, and this was of no interest, for it was not the will of God. Thereafter Aeltester Enns had another idea. He persuaded some brethren from several villages who were of one mind with him, to come to admonish us in the presence of the Schulz. One of them approached me without my knowing what they had in mind and notified Janzen and me to attend at the Schulz. When we arrived at the home of the Schulz, about 25 men were present there in order to discuss with me if I would not be able to support the Aeltester.

We presented the Word of God to them, whereupon they fell silent, except for three men. These were Klaas Rempel from Schoensee, Isaac Wall from Tiegenhagen and Hans Heide from Halbstadt. Heide sat in front and led the discussion.<sup>22</sup> I think that many will still remember what kind of man he was. For me it was a wonder that the Word of God was proven and discussed at the home of the Schulz by such careless people. Indeed, they addressed me earnestly to concede, or else I would be removed from my office. Rempel also stated how he would beat the evil doers. Then we went home. About a week later several of the brethren and two ministers again came to the Schulz. As a result, a minister came to see me and said that I should go there as the matter had not been properly dealt with at the previous meeting, and that they wanted to rectify the matter. To this I replied that everyone was welcome in my house, and that whoever wanted to talk to me could come to my place. I would not go to the Schulz again to discuss spiritual matters, as this was properly done with the Aeltester or at a meeting of the brotherhood. Then the minister left and the brethren dispersed.

After a long time it occurred that Enns had a serious dispute with the minister David Hiebert. In the meantime, Enns held communion services in Ohrloff without first being reconciled with Hiebert. On the following Sunday, communion was to be held in Petershagen. When we heard about this, we drove to Hiebert in Lindenau in order to discuss the matter. Hiebert told us that Enns had deeply offended him. Enns had not conveyed any apologies, nor had he stopped by in order to be reconciled, and was proceeding with communion in spite of this. Consequently, we refrained from attending the communion and as this made no difference to Enns, we held back completely from the Gemeinde and his ministry.

Now the time had come where God wanted to inspire us with power. So many deficiencies emanated from the Aeltester that it was necessary for us to leave their spiritual fellowship. It was impossible for us to acquiesce to the manifest evil works of the Aeltester and to be reconciled with the same. I could not even do so merely for the sake of good appearances for then my conscience would have condemned me and would have made me a hypocrite before God. I had to preserve what God had bestowed upon me and could not merely safeguard my talent in a handkerchief, for then I would be guilty of what Christ speaks in Luke, chapter 19 verses 20 to 23. I clung firmly to that which God had given unto me without false appearances. I did so only through the power of God, for I was otherwise a very weak person. Indeed, in many respects, I was completely

unknowledgeable and in error.

### **New Beginnings.**

My beloved reader, to leave the Gemeinde when there is yet no hint of refuge in another, is not within human power. In this regard the honour of men is sometimes held too highly. Menno Simons writes that there is nothing more unfortunate for the devil than when people leave a church, and then earnestly discipline themselves with the ban in accordance with the Scripture and profess the Word of God to the world. I know what it cost me, in Prussia as well as here, to leave the Gemeinde. What other choice is there for a teacher (minister) who seeks to save his soul from eternal punishment? It is impossible for such a one to be a hypocrite to the Gemeinde and his fellow brethren. You may refer to this in John chapter 12 verse 42.

We had stayed away completely from their fellowship. Jakob Enns now constituted another meeting for which he notified the Aeltester and ministers from the Old Colony. After we arrived, we were asked if we were already prepared to concede. When we did not consent, Aeltester Johann Wiebe called us aside by ourselves and admonished us in many things. When this presentation was unsuccessful, we went back inside where Wiebe spoke to us as follows, "Both of you men are completely correct according to the Holy Scriptures, but we are unable to practise these things. Aeltester Enns has asked me to tell you that if you continue to stand unyieldingly upon your principles, then it can also come about that the matter will not be resolved before you have been sent to Siberia. I am informing you of this in order that it will not be a surprise to you at that time."

Oh what a pity and sorrow! For such a thing to be stated by an Aeltester. Instead of saying to us, "According to the Holy Scripture you are completely correct. Hold firmly to your faith, so that no one will take your crown" (Revelation 3), he wanted to scare us with the threat of being exiled to Siberia. We now perceived that there was little hope left among the ministers of the nonresistant Christians, for these are the very means which false teachers have employed over the ages. First, they try to subvert right-thinking Christians through manifold representations. If this is not successful, they use chains and imprisonment; and finally, they torture them to death. The matter would have come to the same conclusion here if God had not intervened in a wonderful way. Oh, how great the grace of God has been toward me a miserable sinner! He hath looked upon my great weakness with love, for He wanted to mould me even further. When the presentation of Wiebe was finished, they decided to hold another brotherhood meeting in Ohrloff, where we were also to attend. We refused to participate and neither did we attend. Later we heard that Enns and Wiebe had completely denounced us and had excommunicated us.

After a time, Enns once again summoned us to Halbstadt, to Jakob Fast's place. He had also summoned the Gebietsamt. He asked of us whether we were ready to submit. If not, he had the officials of the Gebietsamt there in order to assist him. We remained steadfast to our principles and could not submit. After a further period, Enns again summoned us to him where he had two of his neighbours present. He then advised the two of us, "I have now waited for you a whole year to reconsider your position and as you have not done so, I will hold a ministerial election in order to replace you. Also an investigation has been held in

the Old Colony regarding the Waisenamt and soon we will do likewise here."<sup>23</sup>

I replied to Enns, "Ohm Jakob, do consider what you are doing before you have us all carried away in chains into bondage."

Now, my beloved reader, consider whether you believe our separation to have been only the work of men. Our situation was like the sheep who are without a shepherd. Indeed, it was comparable to Daniel who was thrown into the lions' den. We also relied completely, although in great weakness, on the One who says, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5).

At this time Aeltester Jakob Enns took action against us, although we had promised to live amongst them quietly and peacefully and to do and pay our share of the common necessities as was required of us.<sup>24</sup> Nonetheless, we were summoned to the office of the Schulz and advised that we ministers would no longer be entitled to the privileges of the office<sup>25</sup> to which we were also quite willing to submit ourselves.<sup>26</sup> In addition, Aeltester Enns laid a very severe charge against us with the Supervisory-Committee [Kontor] as rebels.<sup>27</sup> This accusation was subscribed to by four men, as Aeltester Johann Wiebe of the Old Colony later personally related to me.

After the complaint arrived at the Kontor, the aforementioned Klaas Wiens was summoned to Ekatherinoslav to explain the situation in the Molotschna. Wiens was a wise and experienced man who was quite knowledgeable regarding the origins and fundamentals of the Mennonite faith. From among all of us, Wiens was held in the highest regard by the government authorities. Wiens now made a full explanation of the situation as a result of which the Kontor sent a humiliating reply to Enns.<sup>28</sup> For what God has constituted cannot be cast down by human hands. We were unaware of this writing at the time, and so we few were in great anxiety and did not know how to deal with the situation.

Presently it came to pass, that an aged minister by the name of Peter Hildebrand from Schoenwiese, came here for a visit with my fellow servant Cornelius Janzen. Janzen related the entire situation to him. The Aeltester and the ministers from Schoenwiese were completely unfamiliar with our situation as they had never been in our colony, nor had they been summoned to any of the meetings, as they were Frisians. Hildebrand found the entire matter to be very disturbing and came to be very much inclined in our favour. He left for home and shortly thereafter also wrote us a letter of comfort, which very much strengthened us in our resolve.<sup>29</sup> We discussed the matter and decided that we would make a trip to Schoenwiese for we had heard that their Aeltester--by the name of Janzen from Schoenwiese, was a very peace-loving man. Although we were otherwise unacquainted with him, the three of us, namely, Jakob Friesen from Muensterberg,<sup>30</sup> Cornelius Janzen and I, travelled to the Old Colony. On October 10, 1814, we arrived at the home of Peter Penner and stayed there overnight.<sup>31</sup> Here we met Aeltester Johann Wiebe who was also staying for the night. By virtue of this coincidence we realized that it was essential that we talk to Aeltester Wiebe once more. After a lengthy discussion he acknowledged that we were right in our position but remained unwilling to constitute us as a separate Gemeinde.

We now directed ourselves to Heinrich Janzen, the Aeltester from Schoenwiese, whom we petitioned respecting our dilemma and whom we now asked for help.<sup>32</sup> In response Janzen became very quiet. However, the aged Hildebrand presented our situation favourably and finally Janzen accepted us.

Since travelling was difficult at that time of the year, the matter remained dormant until spring. There were a number of individuals among us who wished to be baptized, and we had decided with Aeltester Janzen, through our discussions and letter correspondence, that we would teach and examine the candidates. In the spring, we travelled to Schoenwiese with the three young people, where they were baptized, together with the Frisian baptismal candidates.<sup>33</sup>

After a while Aeltester Janzen came to the Molotschna and conducted communion with us in accordance with our Flemish customs and practices. We also prevailed upon him with regard to an Aeltester. He declined to do so at the time, as he planned to return to us in a short while. Some time later he returned and conducted the drawing of the lot between Cornelius Janzen and myself. The lot fell upon me. Yes, I was completely unworthy and unqualified, but what was I to do? In light of all my previous experiences, I could not regard this result to be anything other than the will of God. I dearly wished to be satisfied and at peace with my lot whatever God wanted of me.

We prevailed upon Janzen for an Aeltester ordination, but he only wanted to do so some time later and consequently we discussed this at great length. We perceived that he would not perform the ordination because of the great objections. This occurred in 1815, the same year in which Aeltester Enns instructed the Gebietsamt to issue a decree that revellers [dancers] and drunkards were to be punished with a fine or by the performance of compulsory labour. At the same time, a Profunck or prison, was added to the office of the Gebietsamt. Here they wanted to bring the offenders to obedience.

It was also forbidden for anyone in the colony to write to Prussia unless the letter had first been presented to the Gebietsamt. We wanted to write to Prussia the full details of what had happened, but we did not know how. The knowledgeable Wiens from Steinbach helped us to find a way, whereupon we were able to forward our writing. Letters soon arrived from Prussia in reply, one to me and one to Aeltester Jakob Enns. These letters had been signed by four Aeltesten and many ministers in Prussia. The conclusion of these letters was that if this was adopted as a fundamental principle, it would be contrary to our confession of faith. This would destroy discipleship to Christ. Aeltester Wiebe from Prussia also wrote us few in this regard, that those who have the most love are also able to be patient. Consequently we waited until 1816 for our ordination.

During this time we studied the Holy Scriptures and other writings and discovered that Menno Simons was apparently not [properly] ordained. According to what we were told, Aeltester Heinrich Janzen had only been ordained by the minister Cornelius Warkentin. Consequently, we adopted this position as well.<sup>34</sup> Our Kleine Gemeinde now accepted me as their Aeltester through an ordination sermon presented by the minister Cornelius Janzen. In my insignificance and great imperfection I served my Gemeinde with communion and baptism. Jakob Enns now held a meeting with his ministers and Johann Wiebe where they decided that anyone baptized by me would have to be rebaptized should they later wish to join his Gemeinde.<sup>35</sup>

### The Influences of Pietism.

In 1817 Jakob Enns died. According to what the people said of his last hours, he departed from this world in great fear and terror. Perhaps he also experienced the grace of God in his last hour like the thief on the cross.

Jakob Fast of Halbstadt now became the Aeltester. He had been nominated and ordained previously. When he came into office, Fast became proud and no longer considered it necessary to talk to me, although he had earlier been a sorrowful but friendly man. When he became Aeltester, this false spirit masqueraded as an angel of light. In the earlier years we had spent much time discussing the desolation of Christendom; many times the tears had flowed from his eyes. But now that he had come into office, he instituted a much greater desolation in the Gemeinde than the previous Aeltester. The leadership of Jakob Enns had often been evidenced in a terrible anger, but Fast was very friendly and accommodating. He initiated a terrible fall in the Gemeinde.

Presently a writing came to Fast from Prussia advising that fine books of spiritual instruction were available there. Fast was to make inquiries to determine how many copies would be needed in his Gemeinde and to notify the sellers who would forward the books. Fast sent notes to us requesting that those of us who were interested in these fine books, also allow our names to be added. But when these 'fine' books arrived, we noticed that they were copies of *Der Glaubens Und Hoffnungsblick* in which the author earnestly endorsed and propagated the teaching of chiliasm [the millennium]. Of this teaching the Apostle Paul writes, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." Certainly these teachings were contrary to the entire Word of God in which we find so much which teaches against such a belief. In this manner the false spirit had overtaken the remnant of the seed of woman.

When Aeltester Franz Goerz came in 1819, we made a trip to see him in order that we could have a discussion with him, to seek out the true faith in him. When we started talking, we quickly came around to the topic of 'the thousand year reign' and how at that time the spears would be made into scythes and the swords into ploughshares, and that this millennium would soon be instituted. As I could not understand the matter in this way, Goerz took his Bible and read to me the references in Isaiah chapter 2. When I perceived his error, my spirit became zealous, and I said to him, "Ohm Franz, are you familiar with the book, *Die Wandelnde Seele* [The Wandering Soul]?" To this he replied in the affirmative. Whereupon I stated, "Then you will know what it says about this." Goerz talked with us on two more occasions and tried to persuade us to accept his terrible error.

Presently Aeltester Peter Wedel arrived. It had already been decided in Prussia that he would be billeted in my home. When he arrived, he first went to the Gebietsamt, from where the Secretary directed him to our place. I found this to be rather strange, but I did not know what had been agreed to in Prussia. The Aeltester then moved into our place and his co-worker to my in-law Dueck.<sup>36</sup> However, I remained humble and friendly towards him. Three days later was Sunday, and when I returned from the worship services, I found the ministers gathered at my place in the 'Stuebchen' or small room. I entered the room whereupon they prevailed upon me to join their worship services. They wanted to help me fashion the services in any way I wanted them to be. I presented many teachings of the Mennonite faith, but it quickly came to the point where they asked

me if I then wanted to repudiate the other Christian confessions. They pressed me very hard in this regard until I finally said, "That I confessed that all those who believed in child baptism, the use of the oath and the sword, were not right-thinking Christians [Rechtdenkende], even though they were as pious as could be in other respects."

At this Aeltester Wedel jumped from his chair, and exclaimed, "Man! You have made a terrible statement which cannot stand!" And no presentation on my part from the Holy Scripture was of any assistance. In fact, I regretted having made such a strong statement until I had an opportunity to read to him from the writings of Peter Peters entitled "The Speech of Gerhard and the Kingdom of Peace."<sup>37</sup> Here the matter was stated even more categorically than what I had said. Consequently, I was satisfied with respect to these points and with regards to what the learned men had said about the same. My conscience was at peace. Nevertheless, they frequently talked at great length to us and did everything within their power to convert us to their terrible error.

In this time Aeltester Jakob Fast came to the end of life's journey and was called from this earth. Aeltester Wedel was present at the time of his death. Later when I inquired of Wedel, he replied that Fast had calmly and peacefully fallen asleep. Oh, what a horror! For it seems that a person who is worldly-minded can be inspired to reflection far easier than someone who has fallen into a state of false holiness. This was evident in the case of King David and the Manassites and may also be observed in the scribes and pharisees. The matter was so clearly to be understood in the writings of the prophets, and they were also able to see the testimony of the fullness of God in front of their very own eyes. And yet, they did not accept the truth because of empty selfish vanity. In their own self-righteous holiness, they preferred to believe that Christ would raise up an earthly kingdom for them. The situation is still the same even unto this day. It is impossible that those with such beliefs can be regenerated unto penitence. Oh God, how terrible it is that Satan has been loosed and is now free to mislead as an angel of light. I believe that he wields power over those whose spiritual eyes have been darkened, and who are no longer able to see the Sun of Righteousness.

Both of the Aeltesten, Goerz and Wedel, preached very earnestly and at great length; they spoke much about love and peace. They even taught against the strictness of the Gebietsamt so that the 'Profunck' was broken down. In the meantime, Bernhard Fast in Halbstadt, became Aeltester.<sup>38</sup> The Aeltesten and ministers then held a general assembly at the place of Jakob Dueck in Ohrloff where all of them together achieved a tremendous unity and peace. The news of these events was sent to Prussia from where an appropriate greeting of peace was written in reply.<sup>39</sup> In their mind everything was marching forward with great might to usher in the thousand year reign on earth. Everyone was caught up in this spirit, the nonresistant as well as the sword Christians [war-waging Christians], so that no one could have helped them to reject the same. They were like the ancient Egyptians in their darkness. All this occurred in the year of 1820.

Shortly thereafter certain books were received as a gift from the Committee [Bible Society] in Petersburg. These books stated how peaceable and abundantly loving it was that they from one land had a concern for the people in the other and of the earnest hunger which the Kalmukan, as well as the heathen the world over, had, to have the Gospel printed in their own language. These books

mentioned how the heathen had gathered together in their eagerness to determine what was required of them by the Gospel, just as Christ had spoken that it would be a witness over them. Unfortunately, through this the false spirit had also sent his servants, the truant messengers, throughout the entire world where they preached that Christ would come and remain here with them and reign for a thousand years.<sup>40</sup>

They also preached that all gifts and writings were to be directed to Petersburg. For this purpose, Aeltester Peter Wedel in Alexanderwohl became the President and everyone, whether leader or member, was to forward their gifts of money to him, and he in turn was to send it away to Petersburg. After all this had been instituted, we were once again invited to the place of Jakob Dueck in Ohrloff where all the Aeltesten and ministers were present. Here they demonstrated much love to us and especially to me. At one point after lengthy discussions, I said to Franz Goerz, that the apostles teach so and so. In reply he said to me, "If the apostles were alive and here today, they would teach differently than what they had taught."

Consequently, we left and they were ready to report to St. Petersburg that everyone was now united, except for us few. However, before this unity could be consummated, God sent a spirit of disunity among the united people so that they were instantaneously torn asunder. The leaders then beset my brother-in-law Johann Friesen from Rosenort at great length.<sup>41</sup> Friesen was the senior minister among the group which had broken away. But the right goal also remained distant to this group, as their reason was that they did not want the officials of the Bible Society from among us. The promoters of the Society now addressed themselves to my brother-in-law in such an extreme way that they came to him during the night and confronted him, after he and his wife had retired for the night; they tried to persuade him to remain steadfast together with them. By virtue of these tactics, Friesen fell very ill and also became dizzy, which condition remained permanent to some extent. The proponents of the Bible Society constituted themselves as a Gemeinde, and gathered together a sum of money to be sent to St. Petersburg, for which they accepted the honour for themselves.

### Struggle with the Grosse Gemeinde.

After this [the division of the Ohrloff Gemeinde in 1824] had settled down, they [the reconstituted Grosse Gemeinde] elected an Aeltester for themselves, namely, Jakob Warkentin from Altona.<sup>42</sup> After this had been accomplished, they started to dispute with the Gemeinde of Aeltester Bernhard Fast over the old stone churches. Aeltester Fast wanted to rotate the worship services, but Warkentin and his flock insisted that no one other than they should be able to attend. Eventually the strife was brought before the Supervisory Committee [Kommetaet] in Odessa, from where Aeltester Warkentin received a sharp reprimand. He and his supporters were being disputative and became enemies of the Gemeinde of Aeltester Bernhard Fast totally without grounds from the Holy Scriptures.<sup>43</sup>

The fury of the beast was great. At the same time that they so legalistically fought against the Word of God, they were altogether angry at those who were still remaining like "the cottage in the vineyard" (Isaiah 1). Their own actions punished their conscience far too much and therefore they were unable to allow their

revenge against us to remain at rest. Instead, they lodged a severe charge against us few with General Insov in Odessa. As a result I was sternly ordered to appear before the Gebietsamt, because I was to assist in apprehending thieves; if I would not do so, I was to be sent away. I replied to this by referring to the Holy Scriptures, but they continued to insist on banishment. Then I said to them, "I have covenanted on my bended knees before God and the Gemeinde that I would not exercise revenge against anyone and before I will do so, I prefer to be satisfied with that which God and the Czar would do with me."

The matter proceeded forward abruptly. Indeed, I was very severely accused in the presence of the Oberschulz. I understood from the General that Aeltester Goerz had also made a very serious accusation against us to him, namely, that we were to participate in the arresting and transporting of prisoners, which is how the matter remained. Our small flock was now summoned to appear before the Gebietsamt every eight days where we were again questioned, whether we wished to comply; the Oberschulz had prepared a written complaint which he would forward to the General, if we did not submit. The Oberschulz at this time was Johann Klassen who had founded the textile factory in Halbstadt.<sup>44</sup> After this the society became somewhat calmer regarding us. But there was no danger of yielding on my part, for what God establishes and maintains no one can tear asunder. God hath ordained that in the Mennonite world the situation shall be as we read in Zachariah 13.

Aeltester Jakob Warkentin became more and more provoked against us because according to their practice we were exercising the ban too soon. When the offenders wanted to go over to them, they did not know what to do. In accordance with all previously established precedent, they were obligated to recognize us as a Gemeinde.<sup>45</sup> They did, in fact, recognize our baptism as valid. But they refused to accept our discipline as valid as this offended their conscience. Since they did not want to practice the spiritual discipline, they became angry. They realized that they created a great disorder when they so readily accepted those whom we had punished.

Consequently Aeltester Warkentin summoned the other Aeltesten and all of them came to see me, including the Aeltesten Ratzlaff, Wedel, Lange, Fast and Warkentin. For a little while they talked to us about excommunication; they said to me that they were unable to recognize me as an Aeltester because I had never been ordained by another Aeltester. Warkentin was very angry that we had been so negligent and indignantly started to speak about the newly published Menno Simons books.<sup>46</sup> With great emphasis he stated that he had not yet had a copy in his hand and that he would see to it that he would never take one either. His excuse was that the book had not first been processed through the censor. This was not really the reason, for when the books had first been published, the Aeltesten in Prussia had summoned the publisher Peter von Riesen and commanded him that the Menno Simons books were to be gathered together and deposited with one of them. Peter von Riesen and the printer then took the original copy of the Menno Simons book to the censor where they were given permission to publish the same. From this it could be seen that the books punished their conscience too much and made their desolation manifest to their own brethren.

Since they were unable to determine the matter, the Aeltesten in Prussia became united in preparing and publishing another confession of faith which was

very foreign to me. This occurred in 1836. I read this publication and a great freedom was manifested therein as well as a deterioration in the teachings of nonresistant Christianity. In the introduction they wrote as follows: "Although the writings of the nonresistant Christians are founded on the Word of God and are to serve for the instruction of the youth." Then follows a pregnant dash. The article regarding the Godhead has been divided into many parts and many words stand out like Lucifer. In Article Two they declare the writings of the forefathers to be insignificant and frivolous no matter how correct they might be. In the Tenth Article they console the brethren that they should not become disheartened because of evil, since good and bad must be found one amongst the other, until the end of time. For this they take the example of the five foolish and five wise virgins. In Article 18, they write about separation, and in particular, about those who are considered by the Government as law breakers and evildoers. They state that such persons must be separated from the Gemeinde without further ado.

Aeltester Jakob Warkentin was very ill disposed towards us, partially because the Menno Simons' book had been taken to Prussia from here for publication, and also because we were too strict in the exercise of discipline. He made a trip to the Old Colony where he discussed this with Aeltester Jakob Dueck. They reached an agreement that they would forbid me the regulation in our Gemeinde. Warkentin then returned to the Molotschna and again called all the Aeltesten together where the deacon Gerhard Enns had also been present. Here Warkentin presented his decision to the gathering, whereupon Enns spoke out, saying, "You will not be able to achieve anything against them, nor will I consent to this." This has been related to me.<sup>47</sup>

Now I must declare with all thankfulness, honour and supplication, that the Lord has graciously and compassionately stood by me and helped me until now. He has cast all my misdeeds behind Him and has helped me in my travail. Yes, He hath torn away all the snares and bonds which were laid before me and disposed of them, which I only realized later. Indeed, His grace to me a sinner has been all abundant, in which many thousands of our forefathers were judged so harshly. Through the power of God they were able to overcome it all and now they rest in peace under the altar where no torment can disturb them. The poet says,

Je schwerer nun der Krieg,  
je herrlicher der Sieg.  
Der Streit geht vor der Krone,  
die Christus zgedacht.  
Dem, der den Lauf vollbracht,  
zum ew'gen Gnadenlohn."

Oh, how blessed are those who shall overcome.

#### **The False-Humility Movement circa 1828.**

Let us refer back for a moment and briefly consider our Gemeinde and how zealous Satan has been to cast it to the ground. Since he had been unable to tear us away from the hand of God by frightening us, he now sought to deceive us through other means. For when God wanted to separate us few from the spiritual fellowship of the others, he had also used powerful means. In 1813 when the

communion was being held in Ohrloff, Jakob Enns had a quarrel with David Hiebert. Enns then conducted the communion without having further discussed the matter with Hiebert. Communion service was held here in Petershagen the following Sunday. That Saturday we travelled to Hiebert's place and enquired about the matter. He informed us that Enns had deeply offended him. Consequently, we refrained from attending the communion service and likewise abstained from his fellowship.

Thus God in all His power separated us which was to have many consequences for me regarding the flesh. Observe, beloved reader! When I wanted to leave Prussia I was sometimes filled with fear and anguish as it was like a devastated Babel there in the area of Danzig. The fact that I was compelled to leave brought me many consequences. But it was even more difficult when I had to leave the Gemeinde here. I was driven out of Prussia by the Sodomite misdeeds and pride, and also because my father-in-law, Aeltester Peter Epp, had often said on his death bed, "Children you must go to Russia as it is finished here with the Mennonites." I thought that perhaps in Russia, God would make right His poor small flock. But alas! When I arrived here I found the people in complete disarray, and a frightful and an angry Aeltester.<sup>48</sup> We were separated from the church. We few then conducted worship services alternating between here [Petershagen] and Muensterburg. In 1816, God ordained us as a Gemeinde even though we were only few who had remained steadfast until then. There were approximately 18 to 20 brethren.

After God had constituted us as a Gemeinde, He commenced to purify us from the practices of the worldly-minded Babel. My co-worker Cornelius Janzen, who had faithfully stood by me until then, became proud and spiteful. God then chose my brother-in-law, Abraham Friesen from Ohrloff, in his place. He came to help me to purify our house to some extent. After the wife of Cornelius Janzen died, he married another whom he clothed according to the latest fashions. Abraham Friesen and I did not want this but Janzen became proud and defiant. My brother-in-law and I wanted to maintain a disposition of humility, whereupon Janzen and Jakob Friesen from Muensterburg, and a few more, went over to the others. This secession almost finished us, but it was not yet the will of God. Rather, he awoke one and another, here and there, and led them to join us, so that our numbers increased.

Satan obviously realized that he was unable to lead us to the others by erring ministers and also that he could not turn us completely from God through the confusions of Babel. Satan now came in amongst us as an angel of light, as a false spirit, and presented himself as a true brother. This occurred in the manner of which Menno Simons says that the angel of light locates himself in the midst of the saints, so that he partakes of the communion with them and washes the feet of the saints, and is an earnest and productive spirit in all his deeds. This danger was far more frightful than the first. Had God not worked powerfully amongst us, we would have fallen far deeper than had we remained where we were; for we were still in the confusion of Babel through which Satan has overwrought almost all of nonresistant Christendom. Satan seeks those who in their innocence earnestly wish to live in accordance with the Word of God. But God works in wondrous ways, making obvious the foolishness of the evil spirits; but this only for each in their own time.

When God wanted to chastise my former co-worker Cornelius Janzen and his shame, He allowed him to fall into pride. He started to preach among the others freely without a prepared text. After they accepted him again as their minister, God made manifest his disgrace. He convicted the young woman with whom Janzen had forcibly committed his shame on the open steppes giving her no peace of conscience. Instead she came to him during the night from a distance to discuss the matter with him. It was during the harvest time.

Janzen was very casual regarding the entire affair and simply advised her that he had committed the matter to God and that she should do likewise. All of this was related to my neighbour Johann Dueck. They had both decided to remain silent about the matter as, after all, Janzen had gone away from us. Thus it remained from the harvest until the spring, when Dueck decided he could no longer carry this burden within himself. He then related it to me, and I in turn, told my brother-in-law, Johann Friesen from Rosenort. The Grosse Gemeinde then removed Janzen from his office as a minister, as they did not know what else they could do. Later they also placed him under the ban for three or four days.

After this Satan came amongst us with many terrible sanctimonious matters through his servants, namely, Bernhard Rempel of Muntau,<sup>49</sup> Klaas Friesen of Lindenau,<sup>50</sup> Heinrich Wiebe of Ohrloff<sup>51</sup> and Martin Warkentin of Blumstein.<sup>52</sup> These carried out ostentatious displays of devotion to God. Rempel presented lengthy prayers which he had composed in advance and frequently lay poorly clad for extended periods in the streets and ditches at home as well as in other villages. In so doing he prayed very loudly and whimpered. When they were unable to cry during their prayers for a meal, they would leave the table without eating. They ate poor food and in addition they often went hungry. Through all of this, his brother Johann Rempel lost his life, principally because of the cold.<sup>53</sup>

Klaas Friesen believed that we should be very simple and distinguishable from the others, including the way we should dress. We should have no secular association with those who were outside our brotherhood, and that we should serve no public office, not even carry a letter for the Gebietsamt. We should sell all our possessions and divide them among us. Wiebe from Ohrloff agreed with Friesen and Rempel in certain points. He was also too fond of other women on account of which he was removed from his ministerial office.

Martin Warkentin became sick and after he had recovered, he said that a spirit had shown him that the world would perish that very same summer. He spoke powerfully from the Holy Scriptures through which many people were filled with fear and terror. Warkentin also announced the day. This was contrary to the Word of God. Jesus says that the hour and the day is not known by anyone, not even by the angels. If there is even one exposition among many words which is contrary to the Word of God, then it is not from God but rather from Satan. I do not think that I was zealous enough at the time. Nor did I search the Word of God earnestly enough and pray for perception, enlightenment and strength. I was too complacent and too weak in spiritual zeal to punish the evil spirit.

Through the prophecy of Satan many were filled with terror and fright. Indeed, many were deceived through this pharisaical holiness for Warkentin talked so frightfully of the Last Days, how it would burn, crack and sizzle. It seemed as if he suddenly knew the entire Holy Scripture by memory which he expounded at great length. As the falseness among us was forcibly taking the upper hand, Wiebe

came to me with a number of brethren and some others. They were very disheartened, especially Heinrich Warkentin. He wept pitifully, but as I did not accept the prophecy, he did not say anything to me in that regard.

The following Sunday, I travelled to Ohrloff for worship services. Warkentin was also there, and after dinner many came together at the place of my brother-in-law, Abraham Friesen. Martin Warkentin then started to speak about the last days and also from the Holy Scripture where Jesus spoke to the Pharisees saying that all the sins of mankind would be forgiven, except the sin of blaspheming the Holy Spirit. This sin would not be forgiven in this world nor in the realm to come.

This was heard by the sister of Bernhard Rempel. This spirit then spoke unto her, "You are the one who has slandered the Holy Spirit." She immediately burnt all her vain-glorious clothes and was filled with terror and fright. She came to our worship service and after the meeting she approached her brother Bernhard Rempel, and they held each other's hands and wept bitterly. Of course, we comforted them, but this was not right of us. We should have punished her instead, for her actions were not founded on the Word of God. We should have admonished her to submit this spirit to the scrutiny of the Scripture, in order that it could be punished in the light. They did not do so and consequently, they remained confined in darkness. It appeared as if they had only little respect for the Word of God and that they were ashamed to confess their matter openly before God and the Gemeinde. They did not make their matter right nor did they open their hearts before God, humbly and without shame. Therefore the false spirit held them in their pharisaical worship. They did not want to lose their honour among the people. Yet, they remained in their frightful and fanatical service (Hosea 7:6).

The pharisaical holiness then made great strides among us as has already been mentioned. Indeed, we were like the sheep who have been dispersed by a wolf. I was very opposed to this in many respects and prepared a sermon on a text from John chapter 13 verse 35 to stress the necessity of love, particularly the love of God. I also stressed that we should neither add to nor subtract from the Word of God (Revelation 22:18,19). Nor should we make anything a matter of conscience without a firm basis in the Holy Scriptures. Unfortunately my sermon created a lamentable dissatisfaction amongst us, so that one brother said to me, that he was nauseated when he thought of the ministers. Indeed, how terrible! Our blindness resulted in such unrighteousness. We had a strong aversion amongst us to exercise the ban. This was comparable to the days of Joshua and Aaron. Yes, of such 'adultery' the heathen would undoubtedly have much to say. In such a situation it was impossible that God could grant us victory over our enemies. Although the confusion was great, it was to increase even more.

In my great wretchedness, I instituted a brotherhood meeting and then prepared a sermon wherein I expounded on the writings of Menno Simons, Peter Peters and a number of the martyrs, and how they had viewed the life of a true Christian. I based the presentation on the teachings of the Lord and the apostles, and in my weakness, I presented the same to the brethren. While I was still speaking, Heinrich Wiebe from Ohrloff, who was also one of our ministers, seized his cap and said to me, "That is false." Then he made his exit, and almost all left with him. It seemed as if we were completely finished. God, however, continued to work among us for He is the Ruler of all our destiny. I could never surrender to such a self-elected holiness and if I would not surrender, they would reject me.

I often felt as if I myself should run away, for I was completely without further counsel. However, the help of God quickly accrues to those who submit themselves to Him.

The aforementioned Heinrich Wiebe now instituted a brotherhood meeting in Muntau.<sup>54</sup> I was also summoned to be present. I had to remain outside until he had discussed the matter with the brethren according to his wishes. Then I was told to come inside. He inquired of me whether I wanted to retain the former teaching or not. I replied, "Yes, I would gladly want to retain the former teaching." He then instructed me that I was to ask each one whether they wanted me to continue as Aeltester. This I did and they replied, "Yes." With this the matter was concluded.

Consequently I returned to my normal place before the brethren and spoke anew to them. God now performed mighty wonders among us. The foolish hearts were smitten so mightily that they were compelled to confess their great shame and not only one amongst a great multitude as in the days of Joshua. Instead, it was more than two or three amongst us few. Indeed, Paul says, ". . . of which the heathen know nothing to say." Now God gave us the power to punish according His Word. However, we were not completely able to root out the spirit of Achan from among us, for he kept himself hidden. Matters are and remain as stated by Paul when he says, "In a house there are vessels for honour and dishonour."

Oh God, for how is the world to subsist for any period of time when this is so common among the nonresistant Christians and everything has become so obscured! God would also reveal these teachings to others if they really sought for enlightenment. Although we few dearly desired to root out the false spirit of Achan, it did not seem possible, for Satan was very zealous. He realized that he had only a little time left, for God continued to purify us and wanted to extinguish the false spirit among us and this in accordance with His will.

During this purification my brother-in-law, Abraham Friesen, became aware of the false holiness. Then I prepared a sermon with a text from Romans, chapter 12, verses 9 to 10, in respect to which Klaas Friesen from Lindenau said that it nauseated him. The two of us travelled together to see the brethren who had formerly been so very opposed to me and tried to persuade them. My brother-in-law now stood by me and we were of one mind. When some perceived that Abraham Friesen was united with me, they departed from us in their misguided faith. When we came to Blumstein, and Martin Warkentin heard that Friesen was with me, he bowed his head between his hands and sorrowfully went away.<sup>55</sup>

### **The Evangelical Ordinances.**

In due time, God directed us more and more toward peace and commenced to purify us evermore. In 1816, our brother-in-law Peter [von] Friesen [Riesen] came from Danzig, and tried to direct us towards freedom and worldly usages. Through all of this, God purified us as we read in Zechariah 13, that we must exercise discipline. Amongst other things, some found forgiveness and worked repentance, while others remained proud, and went over to the others. Satan worked powerfully and zealously amongst us, seeking whom he might lead astray. Through all of this God directed us more and more towards evangelical humility, so that one after the other we became convinced that we were omitting to practice the washing of feet, a very important law and commandment of Christ. This

happened in 1829.<sup>56</sup>

This ordinance was demonstrated to us as an example by our Redeemer Jesus Christ in John chapter 13, and is also commanded very earnestly in four other references. We studied the question and found that the matter in fact was as described in the writings of Aeltester Dirk Philips of Danzig. According to him, the practice was discontinued when the hearts of believers became too filled with pride, so that they were unable to humble themselves in accordance with the commandment of Christ. They were too ashamed and considered the practice unnecessary, just as the world often considers the Godly wisdom as foolishness.

In 1832, our brother-in-law Peter Friesen came to us from Danzig for the second time.<sup>57</sup> At this time it came to pass that Heinrich Warkentin of Blumstein was punished with the ban because of his disobedience.<sup>58</sup> He then went over to the Gemeinde of Jacob Warkentin.<sup>59</sup> *My beloved brother-in-law Abraham Friesen then allowed himself to say that we should ban him [H. Warkentin] for so long as he lived. When this became known to Jacob Warkentin, he accepted Heinrich Warkentin, evidently without him even being present. It appeared from this that Jakob Warkentin and his followers were very upset about this.*

*Nor is the Word of God to be understood in this way regarding the ban. Neither do Menno Simons and Peter Peters consider this to be the function of the ban, for according to their writings, the exercise of the ban is to serve both the world and the punished one to the best. Therefore if they have accepted someone as a brother who has been placed under the ban, I am unable to hold myself any more distant from such a one in eating, drinking or extending the hand of fellowship, than anyone of the others. Otherwise the ban would only serve as a great mockery and it is not the will of God that this be the case. This is how I understand Menno Simons and Peter Peters. Menno Simons writes that we must see spiritually to understand the Scripture. At this time, my beloved brother-in-law, Abraham Friesen, was interpreting the Scriptures too literally.*

*In general, I have far more reason to be careful with someone who has gone over to another Gemeinde and has been willing to be accepted as a brother there, than for those who have not as yet done so, and do not intend to do so. In order not to anger the others without clear Scriptural grounds, I cannot shun those who have been accepted as a member in another Gemeinde any more than the others in that Gemeinde. We must be careful not to awaken anger among them, as there might still be some souls who could be led to seek God more earnestly. In so far as the ban is concerned I am far more responsible for the welfare of my flock than over those who have never been with us. In my weakness, I am convinced that we are to practice Scriptural abasement regarding those who have been separated and to withhold fellowship in eating, drinking and extending the hand, in order that they might be ashamed and thereby directed penitently back toward God and the Gemeinde. We are commanded to admonish such a one like a brother. But this only seldom has any application for those who have left us to join another Gemeinde.*

*So what was to be done? The few of us were only too little inspired regarding the ban and separation. It appeared that brother-in-law Peter Friesen from Danzig had done his share, since both brothers-in-law had unfavourable thoughts about me, as if I wanted to do violence to the ban.<sup>60</sup> God forbid! Next they both wanted to have a meeting with me. I replied to Abraham Friesen that only the three Ohms should come to me, in order that we could discuss the matter. I did not want Peter Friesen to be*

*present, for he apparently was the rock over which Abraham Friesen had fallen. Consequently, we discussed the matter and were able to achieve unity of mind* [The portion of the text in italics was struck out in the original manuscript, presumably by some later personage].<sup>61</sup>

My beloved reader, Jesus says that we are not to cast pearls before the swine, for they will tread them underfoot and tear them asunder. Paul says they have much to say, but not everything serves unto edification. If we do not have clear Scriptural grounds for our practice, it is better to leave the matter alone. I believe as Peter Peters has written that together with Job we should shun all sin from our hearts and that we should have a loathing for wickedness and backsliding. Then the Spirit will instruct us how we are to conduct ourselves in all our concerns. Since love is the foremost commandment, I am obliged to prove everything carefully and to institute what is best.

I will present something more. If one becomes too secure and not watchful enough, God sometimes allows us to fall in order that we shall pay heed to the false allurements of Satan. This also happened to me - a miserable sinner - in 1835. Through the enticement of others and his own curiosity, my son [Klaas F. Reimer of Tiege] had designed a new wagon.<sup>62</sup> I must confess that I also am too much afflicted with a natural curiosity, which is a hindrance to watching and praying. This wagon was powered by the motion of the driver. Although this wagon would not have been for wealthy people, it was nonetheless something new. Consequently, a number of the brethren, including fellow ministers, were sorely grieved; this was not good in any event. Since it had caused offense, we did not proceed and I made a humble presentation to the brethren which resolved the matter. Nevertheless, the affair overall had given some persons bad thoughts about me.

God now directed matters so that the great shame of Heinrich, the son of Abraham Friesen, was instantaneously brought to light through my son who had wanted to construct the wagon. This occurred through a marriage which was to occur with the daughter of Sawatzky, for he had slept with her. But when this was revealed, it came to light that he had slept with two women of whom he had taken one. When this became manifest, we ministers came together in order to discuss the matter. I asked them whether they could perceive the wonderful leading of God in this? They acknowledged everything and a great sorrow fell upon my brother-in-law Abraham Friesen. My beloved reader, would that each and everyone would guard against judging too frivolously as had occurred among us, so that some had become proud and inflated and no longer found room for repentance or humility.

This is exactly what happened here to my brother-in-law Sawatzky. We summoned his daughter before us two times and asked her whether or not she had consented to the shame. She replied, 'Yes.' But her father did not want her to acknowledge so much guilt and stated before all the brethren that his daughter was not supposed to be the scapegoat upon whom all the sin was to be cast. As a result, he went away from us. We waited for some time for him to come back in order to confess that this was not so. When he did not do so, we held a brotherhood meeting and he was separated from the Gemeinde.

If she had acted in this way, it would not have been so noteworthy, but it was not acceptable for the adultery to be protected in this manner by her father, who

otherwise allowed many misdeeds to be reported about him. For us it was a frightful thing for this adultery to be defended in this way. As a result, they were so provoked about us that there was no lack of insults and scorn. When someone is disciplined, it frequently occurs that they are drawn into deep inward remorse together with the prodigal son. Here the grace of God is immediately present. But if a person becomes proud and arrogant and does not allow himself to be convicted by his conscience then everything is lost. Even if such a person later seeks to find repentance in tears, like Esau, he will not satisfy his quest. Instead his own pride will prevent him from humbly directing himself unto the fountain of all grace. Oh God, what a calamity, for then everything is lost for eternity!

Therefore, beloved reader, do not be proud. For whoever believes that he stands would do very well to pay heed lest he fall. Consequently our brother-in-law Sawatzky earnestly opposed us, which has given us much occasion to look out for ourselves. And so we always have a good reason to watch and pray for ourselves and also for our small flock, for Satan seeks to draw us away from God with much cunning and deceptions.

### Conclusion.

Now my beloved reader, Menno Simons writes as follows, "One cannot understand otherwise from the Holy Scriptures, but that this is the last invitation to the wedding feast of the Lamb, which is to occur before the advent of the never-ending winter." He has certainly understood this correctly as this is apparent from Revelation chapter 6 verse 11. Consequently, the only alternative which we can anticipate in the future is the terrible day of judgment. God is doing so much for mankind, even in these last hours. In many ways and with every available power, He is seeking to inspire each and everyone to stop to reflect and to decide—for the hour is so nearly at hand.

This is firstly evident from the fact that in the end God is allowing the Gospel to go forth as He says, "That it shall serve as a witness over them." At the same time Satan is also zealously sending out his servants in order that they will falsely expound the Gospel. Yes, even the heathen desire the same in their own languages. But then what happens? The false prophets entice them away from the gospel with the teaching that there will first be an earthly kingdom in the world. In addition, many signs and wonders are occurring in the heavens and on earth. Foremost are the appendages to the stars [comets] which threaten to punish the world; likewise, the many fireballs in the sky. These attest to the end times as *Die Wandelnde Seele* [The Wandering Soul] teaches us with respect to the rainbow.

Through all of this, God has also divided into three parts the seed of woman which He has led here from Prussia, in order that through their protracted disputation they should search the Word to determine what He required of them. In addition, He has given each one the choice, without serious hindrances, whether they want to serve God and to keep His commandments, as they would want to if they only could surrender their pride and honour among men and would learn true humility from Jesus. My beloved reader, none of this is given any heed.

In spite of all the obstacles, the Menno Simons' writings have once more been brought to light in a miraculous manner. Through this many have obtained a new interest to read these teachings. These writings also serve as a witness for the nonresistant Christians who until this time have always entered into a covenant

with God through their confession of faith, whereupon they accepted baptism as a solemn seal. Oh God, what will finally become of those who are so truly and wilfully offending against the Word of God? The ways of God, my beloved reader, are a mystery. His regulation is incomprehensible and often times He teaches through a provident disposition in certain things. When the Menno Simons' book was published, it was not submitted to the secular government for the reason that the indifference of the Aeltesten in Prussia would thereby be made manifest. They rejected the book ostensibly on the grounds that the book had not been approved by the censor. But when Peter Friesen presented the book to the censor, he was not only given permission to publish these writings, he was also instructed that the printer should make sure that they were not diminished in any way. This is comparable with the words written in Luke chapter 23 verse 4 to 5. This is only a partial exposition.

Now, my beloved reader, with this I have committed something to paper as to how our gracious God has directed and regulated everything for me in this earthly realm. From this each one can come to their own conclusions as they see fit with respect to my sinfulness and insignificance regarding spiritual matters. God knows everything which is within a person; He knows the deepest precepts of the heart from afar. He knew also what an unworthy sinner I am. But He says, "I am gracious to whom I am gracious." We may conclude from this that it is God who has made me worthy and that He has cast all my sins behind Him. For this all thanksgiving, honour and supplication are due unto Him forever unto eternity.

I am unable to regard this in any other way than as spoken of by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians, chapter 1 verses 26 to 28, where he says, "God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise." Now then, I have stated various things from the time of my youth until I came to be among the ministers. I have also declared some matters from that time forth, how God led me - insignificant as I am - to cling firmly unto His will. The Aeltester Mathies Serwas said, "God is all powerful, but He sometimes also chooses to work through sinful and mortal people."

My beloved reader, do not think that I have written this in order to disparage the Aeltesten and ministers. God forbid! Rather, my intention is that God might use this as a lesson so that each one in his weakness might remain true to God. For whosoever is held in the hands of God cannot be cast down by the evil one. All that will be required of the steward when the master returns, is that he has remained true. I have also written a little about the commencement and separation of our Gemeinde and the terrible anger which Satan had against our little flock, and how he assaulted us as an angel of light when he realized he could not keep us in the desolation of Babel. He was only too zealous in this and has not yet given up in his attempt to mislead us. Consequently, he came from the other direction in order to lead us to the freedom of the world. But God in His time always made these efforts manifest, and granted us the power to stand steadfast. God forbid that I should have written this to anyone's woe. Rather, I have written the same only in love as a teaching for us so that we would not fall.

Behold, my beloved reader. I bid that each one might truly consider with spiritual eyes why God sends things among His people. We have sufficient reason to perceive this in the people of Israel. The same was also manifest here when the Aeltesten said to us that we were completely correct in accordance with the Holy

Scriptures but that they could not practise it in that way. This was also what the Gebietsamt said to us - which was the truth - but they did not want matters to be that way. The Aeltesten told to us that they could not practise this teaching, but this was not the truth. God says, "If my people want to be obedient, I will quickly extinguish their enemies." God will not forsake anyone; but when the book of life will be opened on that great day, we will be judged by the Scripture according to our works. Amen!

Now my beloved reader, I request that you take note. It is my humble wish, that no one should extend any recognition to me where I have written about various weaknesses; that is very far from my mind. Instead it is my intention that this writing is to be as a remembrance, so that we--myself as well as you--might carry our sins before ourselves, and that in humility and all together we might direct our paths towards God. For this reason the sword could not overlook the House of David so that he would always consider this, and contritely direct his way toward God; which he did, and also became a most worthy man of God. Amen!

Wer Dir, O Gott! gehorcht,  
erwaehlt das beste Theil;  
Wer Dir, O Gott, verlaeszt,  
verlaeszt sein eigen Heil.

Written in Petershagen, December, 1836.

*Klaas Reimer*

## Editor's Note

Numerous versions of Klaas Reimer's "Autobiography" are extant. It seems that almost every major manuscript collection of Kleine Gemeinde (KG) writings contains a copy. The above version of this document is based primarily upon a manuscript entitled simply "Ein Kleines Aufsatz," 52 pages. This appears to be the original document in Klaas Reimer's own handwriting. The document had been handed down to Aeltester David P. Reimer (1894-1963) of Blumenort, a great-grandson of Klaas Reimer (1770-1837), and is presently in the possession of the Archives of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference in Steinbach, Manitoba. The original document is written in the venerable Germanic script of 18th century Prussia which is difficult to decipher, even for those relatively expert in the Gothic script. Therefore it was an immeasurable help in the translation of the same to have at hand a typewritten transcription of the original which was prepared in 1961 by Steinbach historian Klaas J. B. Reimer, assisted by Caroline Reimer. This document was received courtesy of son, Stanley Reimer, Marchand, Manitoba, 1983.

The other transcription of considerable authority is the one contained in the history and document collection of Aeltester Peter P. Toews, *Sammlung . . . Zur Historie der Kleinen Gemeinde* (Blumenhoff, South Russia, 1873), pages 1-31. This transcription is entitled "Ereignisse und Begebenheiten so wie die Ursache wie und Wodurch die sogenannte Kleine Gemeinde Enstanden ist." In a number of instances the information in these "official" versions complemented each other so that the two were compiled into one composite and more descriptive report.

The translation of "Ein Kleines Aufsatz" was completed by Delbert F. Plett in 1983 and published in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1985), 149-193. Revised and annotated for publication in 1990. Transcribed for computer in 1990 by Rev. Ben Hoepfner, Steinbach, Manitoba. I acknowledge the assistance of Dr. Adolf Ens, CMBC, Winnipeg, Manitoba, in editing an earlier version of this document.

### Endnotes. A Short Exposition, 1836.

1. For a sketch of the family of Aeltester Peter Epp (1725-1789) and his various descendancies within the KG, see Plett, "The Peter Epp Family Tree," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims* (Steinbach, Man., 1990), 299-328.

2. Klaas Reimer (1770-1837) was the son of Heinrich Reimer and Agatha Epp of Petershagen, near Tiegenhagen. Source *Zweites Danziger Familienbuch*, Seite 300. Courtesy Dr. Glenn Penner, Guelph, Ontario, quoted in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years* (Steinbach, Man., 1985), 148-149 and 161.

3. For additional comments regarding the KG position on the marriage of a second sister, see Plett, *The Golden Years*, 151; cf. Aeltester Abraham Friesen, "Letter to a friend regarding the marriage of the second sister," in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 302-303.

4. The memory of Aeltester Cornelius Regehr (1743-1794) was long cherished among the KG. The editor has found a number of copies of his autobiography among the various collections of the Kleine Gemeinde *Schriftum*.

5. The party of immigrants was quite well-to-do. The 1848 "Gemeinde Berichte" for Petershagen contains additional detail regarding the material circumstances of the settlers; 12 were financially well-off and 8 were not. Johann Janzen was the leader of one party; he had considerable

wealth and a large family. The 12 propertied families had total assets of 15,500 ruble banko. The immigrants had brought along a respectable number of German cattle of which all except three died from the cattle disease which broke out the following year; see Wolkner, *Gemeindeberichte von 1848 die Deutschen Siedlungen am Schwarzen Meer* (Leipzig, 1941), 106-109. The Johann Janzen referred to was the father of Cornelius Janzen (born 1780), the co-founder of the Kleine Gemeinde. Benjamin H. Unruh, *Die niederländisch-niederdeutschen Hintergründe der mennonitischen Ostwanderungen im 16., 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Karlsruhe, 1955), 321, 350 and 354.

6. Aeltester Johann Wiebe (1766-1823) had immigrated to Russia in 1788. He served as Aeltester of the Flemish Gemeinde in the Chortitza Colony from 1791-1823. He was the son of Johann Wiebe listed in the 1776 Konsignation as resident in Schwartzdan, Prussia. Johann Wiebe Sr. was a brother to Gerhard Wiebe (1725-1796) who is listed as resident in Ellerwald, Prussia in the 1776 Konsignation. Gerhard Wiebe (1725-1796) served as Aeltester of the Ellerwald Gemeinde in Prussia from 1778-1796. Gerhard Wiebe in turn was the father-in-law of Peter Regier (1776-1814) who served as Aeltester of the Ladekopp Gemeinde from 1808-1814. I am indebted to Henry Schapansky, 914 Chilliwack St., New Westminster, B. C., V3L 4V5, for sharing this information with me. Schapansky to author October 23, 1990.

7. Jakob Enns (1768-1818) originated in Simonsdorff, Amt Marienburg, Prussia. He settled on Wirtschaft 15 in the village of Tiegenhagen, Molotschna in 1805 and is listed in the Revisions-Listen of 1808 as a relatively wealthy farmer. Benjamin H. Unruh, 323. For further information on the family and descendants of Aeltester Jakob Enns (1768-1818) see, J. G. Enns, *The Family History* (34 Birch Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario, K1K 3G6, 1974). Also letter to the author dated November 1, 1988, by great-great-grandson John J. Enns, 202-33 Pickwick Dr., Leamington, Ontario, N8H 4X5.

8. Jakob Dueck (born 1766) originated from Burwalde, Amt Tiegenhof, Prussia. He settled on Wirtschaft 13 and 14 in the village of Ohrloff, Molotschna in 1805. Unruh, 324 and 348. Jakob Dueck was obviously a well-to-do farmer and since he had only a small family it was natural that many of the meetings of the pioneer Molotschna community would be held at his place.

9. David Hiebert (1775-1852) originated in Herrenhagen, Amt Marienburg, Prussia. He settled on Wirtschaft 15 in the village of Lindenau, Molotschna in 1804. Unruh, 312. For additional information on David Hiebert and his family see Adam Mueller, *The Hiebert Genealogy* (604 North St., Halstead, Kansas, 67056)--courtesy of Mennonite Library and Archives, North Newton, Kansas, 1988. This family was honoured by a visit from the Czar on March 21, 1818. Woltner, 100. According to Henry Schapansky, David Hiebert was the son of a Jakob Hiebert from Lachenwald: Schapansky to author May 22, 1993.

10. Klaas Wiens (born 1767) originated from Herrenhagen, Amt Marienburg, Prussia. In 1804 he settled on Wirtschaft 3 in the village of Altona, Molotschna Colony where he is shown on the 1808 Revisions-Listen as a wealthy farmer. Klaas Wiens was the first Oberschulz of the Molotschna Colony and in 1812 he founded the Estate Steinbach. Unruh, 317 and 346.

11. It appears that the Johann Warkentin referred to here is Johann Warkentin (1760-1825) who settled on Wirtschaft 3 in the village of Blumenort, Molotschna in 1805. Unruh, 326. Additional information on Johann Warkentin (1760-1825) and his family, can be found in Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 184-188. Johann Warkentin (1760-1825) was a wealthy farmer who had a double Wirtschaft in Blumenort. The village was named Blumenort by Johann Warkentin in honour of the place of his birth in Prussia. Woltner, 128-129.

12. It appears that the Jakob Schellenberg referred to here is the Jakob Schellenberg (born 1772) who settled on Wirtschaft 6 in the village of Tiegenhagen in 1805. For additional information on Jakob Schellenberg (born 1772) and his family, see Plett, "Gerhard Schellenberg Genealogy 1725-1802," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 434-441.

13. In a letter of April 11, 1805, to the Gemeinden in Prussia. Jakob Wiens of the village of Rosenthal, Chortitza Colony includes a report of the organizational meeting of the Molotschna Flemish Gemeinde. "Ein Alter Brief," *Der Bote* (January 5, 1938). Jakob Wiens reports that Jakob Ens, Abraham Wiebe and David Huebert were elected as ministers in 1804. The following were elected in 1805: Jakob Vogt, Johann Friesen, Heinrich Ens, Cornelius Janzen and Johann Penner. I am indebted to Dr. James Urry for referring me to this document. This letter is also found in Kauenhaven, *Mitteillungen*, 6/3 (1940), 69. I acknowledge Dr. Adolf Ens for this reference. Jakob

Wiens, the author of the referenced letter, has been identified as Jakob Wiens (1761-1812) of the village of Rosenthal, Chortitz Colony, by Henry Schapansky in an article to be published in *Mennonite Family Life* in 1992. See family 32.

14. Jakob Dueck (born 1766) was married to the widow Heinrich Wiebe, nee Katharina Schierling (born 1751), who was originally from Neuteicherwald, Prussia. His wife had a daughter by her first marriage, namely, Katharina Wiebe (1781-1854) who was married to Abraham Friesen (1782-1849) of Wirtschaft 11 in Ohrloff. Friesen became the second Aeltester of the KG in 1838. Mrs. Jakob Dueck, nee Katharina Schierling, also had a son, Heinrich Wiebe (born 1773), by her first marriage, who is listed with the Jakob Dueck family in the 1808 Revisions-Listen. He became a deacon of the KG in 1823 and a minister in 1824. Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 267-268. He was deeply involved in the false-humility movement as is to be seen later in text. I am indebted to Henry Schapansky for researching the family background of Katharina Wiebe (1781-1854) and for making this information available to me.

15. Deacon Johann Hiebert (born 1760) originated in Schoensee, Amt Tiegenhoff, Prussia. He settled on Wirtschaft 17 in the village of Halbstadt, Molotschna Colony in 1804. Unruh, 306. He had a son Abraham Hiebert (born 1790) who appears to be the father of Johan Hiebert (1816-1890) later of Gruenfeld, Manitoba. Peter P. Toews, "Genealogy Register," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874* (Steinbach, Man., 1987), 48. This connection is based largely on the fact that the Johann Hiebert family of Halbstadt in the 1808 Revisions-Listen is the only one which fits the ancestral description provided by Albert H. Hiebert and John H. Toews, ed., *The Family of Johann Hiebert 1816-1975* (Hillsboro, 1975), 125 pages.

16. Jakob Fast (1772-1820) originated from Neuteicherhinterfelt, Am Neuteich, Prussia. He was listed in the immigration records with his father, Jakob Fast, widower from Neuteicherhinterfelt, and his brother-in-law, Jakob Fast, who was married to his sister, Anna Fast. Unruh, 305 and 339. Since Klaas Reimer refers to Jakob Fast as being from Halbstadt in 1807 this is taken to be a definite identification of Jakob Fast who would later become the second Aeltester of the Molotschna Gross Flemish Gemeinde. Jakob Fast (1772-1820) settled on Wirtschaft 2 in the village of Halbstadt in 1804 where he is listed as a wealthy farmer in the 1808 Revision-Listen.

17. For a slightly different version of this incident see; A. Braun, "Kleine Chronik der Mennoniten an der Molotschna seit ihrer Ansiedlung bis in mein 80 Jahr," *Mennonitische Jahrbuch* (n.p., 1907), 68-69; cf. Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 306.

18. The text of this letter by Aeltester Peter Epp, "Letter to the Worthy Ohm Peter Wall, March 30, 1782," is published in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 146.

19. Cornelius Janzen (born 1780) originated in Muensterberg, Amt Tiegenhoff, Prussia. His father Johann Janzen came from Schoensee, Amt Tiegenhoff, Prussia. His uncle Abraham Janzen came from the village of Petershagen, Amt Tiegenhoff, Prussia, and the Molotschna village was named Petershagen in his honour. Petershagen, Prussia, was also the birthplace of Klaas Reimer (1770-1837). Cornelius Janzen (born 1780) was the fellow minister of Klaas Reimer who joined with him in the founding of the KG. They were neighbours in the village of Petershagen, Molotschna, with Janzen living on Wirtschaft 7 and Reimer on Wirtschaft 3. Unruh, 321. For additional information on Rev. Cornelius Janzen (born 1780) and a listing of his family see, Katie Peters, *Genealogy of Johann Janzen 1752-1977* (Winnipeg, 1977), 408 pages; cf. Plett, "The Peter Epp Family Tree 1690," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 320, 323 and 328.

20. Hermann Neufeld (1760-1835) is listed on Wirtschaft 17 in the village of Muensterberg, Molotschna in the 1808 Revisions-Listen. Unruh, 316 and 343. Several of his siblings were closely connected with the KG. e.g. His sister Katharina Neufeld (1751-1811) was married to Daniel Fast of Tiegenhagen, Molotschna, see Plett, "Genealogy of Daniel Fast 1753-1929," Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 337-360. His son Heinrich Neufeld (1791-1865), was married to Regina von Riesen (1795-1852), a sister to Abraham Friesen (1782-1849), the second Aeltester of the KG; see Plett, "Peter Neufeld 1697-1769 Genealogy," unpublished family sketch, revised 1992, 28 pages.

21. Abraham Wiebe (born 1764) came from Koenigsdorf, Amt Marienburg, Prussia. He settled on Wirtschaft 4 in Muensterberg in 1804 where he is listed as a moderately wealthy farmer in the 1808 Revisions-Listen. Unruh, 316. Muensterberg was one of the two original Kleine Gemeinde strongholds in the Molotschna; 8 of the 21 families listed in the 1808 Revisions-Listen for Muensterberg have been identified with some descendants in the KG. Wiebe was elected as a minister in 1804 together with Jakob Enns and David Hiebert. Jakob Wiens, "Ein Alter Brief." I

acknowledge Dr. Adolf Ens for this reference.

22. Hans Heide (born 1764) is listed on Wirtschaft 14 in the village of Halbstadt, Molotschna. Unruh, 305. His daughter Maria Heide (born 1789) married Abraham Harder, and they were the parents of Bernhard Harder, the famous Russian Mennonite evangelist. Plett, "Johann Harder Genealogy 1764-1826," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 362-363. The Harder family was closely connected to the Kleine Gemeinde.

23. This is one of those curious statements which perks one's interest. Is Jakob Enns implying that there were improprieties regarding the Waisenamt with which he expected to threaten the KG membership? Maybe future research will bring forth additional documentation which will shed light on this remark.

24. In a footnote to his *Sammlung . . . zur Historie der Kleinen Gemeinde der Mennoniten* (Blumenhoff, South Russia, 1873), page 52, Aeltester Peter P. Toews has noted as follows, "In the beginning, the Colony Administration restricted the members of the KG from purchasing additional property or from settling in certain places. It has been said that the Chairman Johann Cornies dealt with this, so that they could settle wherever they wanted." This may explain why the KG adherents, who were spread out fairly evenly among most of the pioneer villages of the Molotschna, were concentrated in certain of the new villages founded in the subsequent decade, such as Neukirch.

25. Namely, exemption from Scharwerk or statutory labour and the payment of certain levies.

26. These exemptions were reinstated in 1843 whereupon Aeltester Abraham Friesen (1782-1849) wrote a letter of thanks to the Gebietsamt wherein he declined these exemptions on the basis that this created a hindrance for the Gospel of Christ. Friesen writes as follows; "If we were in poverty and indigence or suffering tribulation and persecution, there is a degree of freedom allowed in such instances. But we have our land and income like another, we live in good repose and freedom of conscience in such blessed times; we have our sufficiency so richly. For these reasons we do hereby completely decline this well intentioned offer for the present. At the same time we bid you not to take offense at us in this regard nor to think that we hereby mean to be disrespectful of the arrangements made during the difficult settlement years. Oh, no! For how very well I still recall the circumstances of some, and how they not only came to Russia without any property, but also emigrated with great debts and in addition had large families to nourish, and only little profitable work. Consequently this arrangement was very reasonable and correct for those in such circumstances who were simultaneously to take up a position in the Lehrdienst. But this is not the case with us at the present time. Quite possibly there would be a good number of farmers [Wirthen] to be found in the Colonies, for whom the statute labour [Reichendienst] would be more difficult than for ours. Accordingly we hereby express our wish to remain with the previous arrangement. Otherwise we recognize ourselves to be obligated for all our thanks. We subscribe hereto in the name of the Kleine Gemeinde by which we are known. Abraham Friesen (and the ministerial), August 22, 1843," in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 291.

27. Peter P. Toews has noted that this document remained unfamiliar to him. Toews, *Sammlung . . . zur Historie der Kleinen Gemeinde der Mennoniten*, 15.

28. *Ibid.*

29. *Ibid.*

30. Jakob Friesen (born 1775) originated from Tiegenhagen, Amt Tiegenhoff, Prussia. He is listed on Wirtschaft 16 in Muensterberg, Molotschna in the 1808 Revisions-Listen. Unruh, 316. His wife, Maria Thiessen, was the sister to Peter Thiessen (born 1776) listed on Wirtschaft 12 in Rosenort, Molotschna in the 1808 Revisions-Listen. Unruh, 328. Their son Peter Thiessen (1808-1872) was a minister of the KG for many years, and the father of Abraham F. Thiessen, the famous Molotschna land reformer. See Hermann Thiessen, *Martin Thiessen und seine Nachkommen 1737-1977* (Breslauer Str. 3, 3167 Burgdorf, Germany), 420 pages, for a listing of the family of Peter Thiessen (born 1776).

31. The Peter Penner whom the Kleine Gemeinde leaders visited in the Old Colony in 1814 has not yet been identified. There are two Peter Penner patriarchs in the KG of about the appropriate age and the question arises whether possibly the mysterious Peter Penner from the Old Colony in 1814 might be one of these. E.g. Peter Penner (1816-1884) who settled in Blumenort, Manitoba, in 1874 was born in Ohrloff, Molotschna, the son of a Peter Penner. The other Peter

Penner was a minister of the Kleine Gemeinde and lived in Prangenu. He was the father of Jakob Penner, the wealthy estate owner of Friedensfeld, Borosenko; see Johann W. Dueck, "Historie und Begebenheiten . . ." Plett, ed., *History and Events*, 85-86.

32. For a listing of the family of Aeltester Heinrich Janzen (1752-1824), see Katie Peters, *The Schoenwieser Janzens* (Winnipeg, Manitoba, n.d.), courtesy of Mennonite Genealogy, April 4, 1989.

33. Additional detail regarding this incident is provided in a copy of the *Namenverzeichnis der Mennonitische Gemeinden* published in 1857 and owned by Kornelius Hildebrand, Chortitza, dated 1860. Hildebrand has added the information that the first three KG baptismal candidates were baptised by Heinrich Janzen in Schoenwiese in 1815, and that the names of these three baptismal candidates were Heinrich Dick, Paul Wittenberg and Anna Kroeker. Paul Wittenberg appears to be the son of Abraham Wittenberg (born 1760) from Wirtschaft 14 in Muensterberg who had a son Paul born in 1793. Anna Kroeker may be the daughter of Franz Kroeker resident on Wirtschaft 2 in Muensterberg who had a daughter Anna Kroeker born in 1796. Unruh, 316-317. The Muensterberg settlers were all relatively well-to-do.

Kornelius Hildebrand has added another interesting detail to the journal page, namely, that Aeltester Janzen conducted a Communion Service for the KG on March 21, 1816, in the Molotschna village of Petershagen, with 33 participants. I am indebted to Dr. James Urry for referring this information to my attention. James Urry to author, June, 1990.

34. For additional comments in this regard, see Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 202-203.

35. This policy on the part of the Grosse Gemeinde was later changed as will be seen further in the text.

36. Klaas Reimer (1770-1837) refers to his neighbour and "in-law" Johann Dueck several times. This must be Johann Dueck (born 1779) from Stadfeld, Amt Marienburg, listed on Wirtschaft 3 in Petershagen on the 1808 Revisions-Listen. Unruh, 321. No exact family connection or blood relationship has been established to date. According to the research of Henry Schapansky, Dueck (born 1779) was the son of Jakob Dyck listed in Leske in the 1776 Konsignations. Johann Dyck (born 1779) married Maria Penner in Halbstadt in 1800--Schapansky to author March 25, 1993.

37. The reference here is to the characters in the book *Spiegel der Gierigkeit* by Peter Peters which was published in a new German edition by the KG in 1827. See Al Reimer, *Mennonite Literary Voices: Past and Present* (North Newton, Kan., 1993), 11.

38. Bernhard Fast (1783-1861) was the son of Daniel Fast (1753-1829) who lived on Wirtschaft 14 in Tiegenhagen, Molotschna. The Daniel Fast family originated from Neuteicherhinterfeld, Amt Neuteich, Prussia, the same place of origin as Jakob Fast (1772-1820) who was the second Aeltester. The Daniel Fast family was closely connected to the KG. The oldest son Peter Fast (1780-1852) lived in Schoenau and was the father of one-time KG school teacher and minister Bernhard Fast (1809-1878). Hermann Neufeld, the Schulz of the village of Muensterberg in 1812 was the uncle to Aeltester Bernhard Fast (1783-1861). The Fast family history is set forth in considerable detail by Plett, "Genealogy of Daniel Fast 1753-1829," 337-360.

39. Aeltester Peter P. Toews has noted that this "Friedenswunsch" from Prussia was received in 1820.

40. For an eloquent exposition of the same point, see Aeltester Abraham Friesen, "An epistle to Heinrich Balzer, 1831," in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 253-255.

41. Johann Friesen (1763-ca.1830) came from Reinland, Prussia, and settled on Wirtschaft 5 in the village of Schoenau, Molotschna, in 1804. Unruh, 308. He was married for the second time to Margaretha Friesen, the sister to Klaas Reimer's second wife. See Plett, "Abraham von Riesen 1756-1810 Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 270-272. From the reference by Klaas Reimer it appears that Johann Friesen moved to Rosenort, Molotschna, sometime by the early 1820s. He was the father of Johann F. Friesen (1808-1872) of Neukirch, Molotschna, who served as the third Aeltester of the KG; see Part Five, Chapter One.

42. The only Jakob Warkentin listed in Altona in the 1808 Revisions-Listen is Jakob Warkentin (born 1783) who originated from Mierau, Amt Marienburg, Prussia. Jakob Warkentin settled on Wirtschaft 13 in Altona in 1805. He was only 25 years old at the time of the 1808 Revisions-Listen and is already a prosperous farmer with 8 horses and 15 head of cattle. Unruh,

43. For Aeltester Jakob Warkentin's version of the issue, see Aeltester Jakob Warkentin, "Letter to the . . . Comptoirs der auslaendischen Ansiedler H. Fadeew und Ritter, May 7, 1827," in Franz Isaac, *Die Molotschnaer Mennoniten Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte derselben* (Halbstadt, Taurien, 1908), 102-107.

44. There were two Oberschulzen of the Molotschna Colony by the name of Johann Klassen, a fact which has already caused some confusion. James Urry, *None But Saints. The Transformation of Mennonite Life in Russia 1789-1889* (Winnipeg, 1990), 127-131. Johann Klassen (born 1781) of Rosenort, Molotschna, served as Oberschulz 1812-1814 and again from 1824-1826, although he is listed as being resident in the village of Ohrloff during the later term. Franz Isaac, *Die Molotschnaer Mennoniten* (Halbstadt, Taurien, 1908), 87, contains a list of Gebietsvorsteher. The reference by Klaas Reimer that the Johann Klassen who was serving as Oberschulz or Gebietsvorsteher in 1824 was the founder of the textile factory in Halbstadt, confirms that he is the same person who served in that capacity from 1812-1814. See Urry, 92.

This Johann Klassen (born 1781) of Rosenort, and later Ohrloff, was the brother-in-law to Jakob Warkentin (born 1783) Altona, Molotschna, who was elected as the Aeltester of the Molotschna Flemish Gemeinde, also known as the Grosse Gemeinde, in 1824. See Urry, 127. The other Johann Klassen (1785-1841), who served as Oberschulz from 1827-1832, was a Kleine Gemeinder who lived in Tiegerweide. He was a brother-in-law to Johann Regier (1802-1842) of Schoensee, who served as Oberschulz from 1833-1841; see Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 306 and 325. David A. Friesen (1807-1893) who served as the Oberschulz from 1848-1865 was married to Helena Klassen the daughter of Johann Klassen (1785-1841). Therefore it could be said that the office of Oberschulz stayed in this family line for over 30 years.

David A. Friesen (1807-1893) was the son of Abraham Friesen (born 1749) who settled in Halbstadt, Molotschna in 1808. I am indebted to Henry Schapansky for referring this information to me. Schapansky to author January 30, 1992. In it interesting, therefore, that the leading men on both sides of the 'landless dispute' of the 1860's were KG-related. David A. Friesen's opponent was Abraham F. Thiessen (1832-1889), the son of one-time KG minister Peter Thiessen of Schoenau, and the grandson of KG Aeltester Abraham Friesen (1782-1849) of Ohrloff--see Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 268; and Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph* (Steinbach, Man., 1986), 141-144 and 259-265.

45. This comment again disproves the common misconception that the KG was only recognized as an 'official' Gemeinde in 1843. Urry, 133. In fact, there has been some suggestion that recognition was granted in 1843 as some sort of pay off to the KG for supporting Johann Cornies and the work of the Agricultural Society. Dr. James Urry, "All that Glisters . . . : Delbert Plett and the Place of the KG in Russian-Mennonite History," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* Volume 4 (Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1986), 240 and 250. The point has already been made that the KG was recognized as a legally constituted Gemeinde from the time of its founding in 1816. Regulation 4501 (reproduced by Franz Isaac, 92, and Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 290-291), merely deals with and prohibits certain aspects of discrimination still being practised against the KG by a number of village Schulzen and other local government officials. These practices demonstrated the depth of ill-will felt by some members of the Molotschna colony against the KG. See also Aeltester Abraham Friesen, "A petition for Michael Makowski 1827," in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 272. It is noteworthy that the KG responded to Regulation 4501 by declining to accept the exemption from Reihedeinst and other duties normally accorded to members of the ministerial, ostensibly on the basis that their members were in a more fortunate position to be able to pay these dues and perform these duties than many other members of the community. Aeltester Abraham Friesen, "A letter of thanks, 1843," published in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 291. Some observers might detect a note of pride in this position.

46. For the story of the KG publication of Menno Simon's three volume *Foundation of Christian Doctrine*, see Aeltester Peter P. Toews, *Eine Seltsame Begebenheit* (Hochstadt, Manitoba, 1911), 27 pages; cf. Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 275-279 and 321-324.

47. The deacon Gerhard Enns referred to here has not yet been positively identified. Is he possibly the same person as the Gerhard Enns of Altona who served as Oberschulz of the Molotschna Colony from 1821-1823. Franz Isaac, 87. One possibility is Gerhard Enz (born 1789) the son of Johann Enz (born 1741) of Montau, Prussia, who immigrated to the Molotschna in 1804. Unfortunately the village destination is not given. Unruh, 348. Another possibility is Gerhard Enz

(1785-1842) who was the son of Gerhard Enns (1769?-1848). Another son Dietrich Ensz (1805-1879) was the father of Gerhard Ensz (1830-1898) who lived in Fischau from where he moved to Inman, Kansas, in 1876. Information courtesy of Katharina Enns, Box 131, Inman, Kansas, 67546, October, 7, 1991. See also Ken and Norma Reimer, *The Abraham G. Ensz Family Book 1867-1979* (Inman, Kansas, 1979), 1-6. No details are presently available as to place of residence, etc., nor is the family listed by Benjamin H. Unruh.

48. The statement confirms the view that Klaas Reimer had not yet arrived in the Molotschna in 1805 when the election of Aeltester Jakob Enns took place. See Plett, "All that Blisters: James Urry attacks the Kleine Gemeinde Mennonites," Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 300-301.

49. It appears that Bernhard and Johann Rempel involved in the false-humility movement were brothers to Peter Rempel (1792-1837), Muntau, and Abraham Rempel (1798-1878), Margenau; see Peter P. Toews, "Genealogy register," 15, and Plett, "Peter Rempel (1792-1837) Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 233-238. Their father was Bernhard Rempel of Reinland, Prussia. I am indebted to Henry Schapansky for researching the history of this family and graciously making the information available to me. Abraham Rempel (1798-1878) immigrated to Russia in 1818, together with three of his siblings and step-father Johann Janzen of Reinland, Prussia. Unruh, 363. Johann Janzen in turn was the father of Cornelius Janzen (1812-1864) of Neukirch, Molotschna--see Aeltester Peter Toews, "Genealogy Register," 9; cf. Plett, "Johann Janzen, Reinland," unpublished family sketch, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1992. Henry Schapansky has suggested that Peter Rempel (1792-1837) probably also immigrated to Russia in 1818. The fact that the Rempel's were later emigres might also explain the active involvement of several of the Rempel siblings in the pietist motivated false-humility movement, as many of the later Prussia immigrants were very much influenced by separatist pietism.

50. Klaas Friesen (1774-1839) is listed on Wirtschaft 13 in the village of Lindenau in the 1808 Revisions-Listen. Unruh, 312. For a detailed description of this family see, Helena Jahnke, "Lineage of my grandparents Klaas Friesens," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 209-212. See also "An Epistle to Klaas Friesen of Lindenau, 1836," by Aeltester Abraham Friesen (1782-1849) in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 278-279.

51. Heinrich Wiebe (born 1783) of Ohrloff is listed in the 1808 Revisions-Listen as a step-son of Jakob Dueck (born 1766). Jakob Dueck was a well-to-do farmer living on Wirtschaft 13 and 14 and is frequently referred to in the text. Heinrich Wiebe (born 1783) became a minister of the KG in 1824. He was the son of Heinrich Wiebe and Katharina Schierling (born 1751) originally of Neuteicherwalde, Prussia. Heinrich Wiebe Sr. died before 1804 and his wife married for the second time to Jakob Dueck (born 1766) referred to above. Her daughter Katharina Wiebe (1781-1854) was the wife of Abraham Friesen (1782-1849) of Ohrloff, the second Aeltester of the KG. I am indebted to Henry Schapansky for referring this information to me. Schapansky to author September 21, 1990.

Heinrich Wiebe (born 1783) was elected as a minister of the KG in 1824. The minister Johann Dueck (1801-1866), Muntau, writes about him as follows: "He [Wiebe] served in this office for only about 5 years. It came to pass that he was not of one mind and that differences with the Gemeinde arose. He also started to exercise the office which had been placed upon him for his own purposes and objectives." Rev. Johann Dueck (1801-1866), unpublished journal extracts, as recorded by Aron R. Reimer, Blumenort, Manitoba, who was married to Johann Dueck's granddaughter, courtesy of Emil Reimer, Box 3070, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1988. This document has subsequently been published; Johann Dueck, "Great-grandfather Johann Dueck's Experiences," in Emil Reimer and John A. Reimer, ed., *Aron R. Reimer 1885-1953 Margaretha L. Dueck 1885-1968* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1992), 312-347. From the foregoing one concludes that the pietist false-humility movement afflicted the KG in 1828 and 1829 and not in 1818/1819 as originally thought. Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 183-187. This correction in date is of major significance in understanding various events which affected the KG.

52. The writer at one time believed that the only appropriate Martin Warkentin listed in the Revisions-Listen who could be this person was Martin Warkentin (1764-1853) of Blumstein. Unruh, 314; Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 154. However, considerable additional information has come to light since, particularly as set forth in a historical sketch of the family of Martin Warkentin (1764-1853); see Plett, "Martin Warkentin 1764 Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 467-491. Peter P. Toews has added the margin note that this Martin Warkentin died of his own hand, a

number of years later. Peter P. Toews, *Sammlung . . . zur History der Kleinen Gemeinde der Mennoniten*, 27. This is inconsistent with the above theory that it was Martin Warkentin Sr. (1764-1853) who was involved in the false-humility movement, for the diary of Johann Dueck (1801-1866) refers to the death of "the aged Martin Warkentin" in 1853. Plett, "Martin Warkentin 1764 Genealogy," 467. Therefore the Martin Warkentin involved in the false-humility movement might have been his son Martin Warkentin born in 1806. This is consistent with the fact that the only information at hand about Martin Warkentin Jr. (born 1806) is that he is to have lived in Blumstein. Letter to the *Rundschau* by niece, Mrs. Johann Toews, 1898, courtesy of Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba. Martin Warkentin Jr. would have been 24 years of age in 1829 when the false-humility movement was in full bloom. Perhaps further information will come to light to allow a more definite conclusion to be made in this regard.

53. See footnote 49 above.

54. The transcription of this manuscript followed by Peter P. Toews in the *Sammlung . . .*, 26, refers to the place of this meeting as being at the home of Peter Fast in Muntau. Peter Fast, Muntau, evidently married the mother of Justina Bergen (1812-1840), since he is referred to as her step-father. Helena Jahnke, "Lineage of my grandparents, Klaas Friesens, born in West Prussia," 210. Helena Jahnke also writes that her step-mother, Justina Bergen, was born in Schoensee on October 12, 1812. Only one Baergen family is listed in the 1808 Revisions-Listen for Schoensee, namely, that of Gertruda Baergen, who had two sons, Johann Baergen - born 1787, and Abraham Baergen - born 1791, who are approximately the correct age to be the father of Justina Baergen (1812-1840). Genealogist Edward R. Brandt has provided the information that Johann Bergen (born 1787) was the father of Justina Bergen (1812-1840). This suggestion is problematic since the Verzeichnis 1812/1813 shows that "Einwohner Johann Baergen had a daughter Gertruda born October 4, 1812." Unruh, 334. Presumably it is possible that an error was made in the Verzeichnis, listing the daughter Justina as Gertrude by mistake. Edward R. Brandt also concludes that the wife of Johann Baergen (born 1787) was Justina W. Heidebrecht (born 1794), whose parents settled on Wirtschaft 10 in Muntau in 1804. The basis for this connection is not indicated. Edward R. Brandt. *Brandt Roots (1605-1988)* (13-27th Ave. S.E., Minneapolis, Minnesota, 55414); cf. Plett, "Baergen Families in the Kleine Gemeinde," unpublished sketch, Setinbach, Manitoba, 1989, 10 pages.

Peter Fast lived on Wirtschaft 19 in Muntau. Unruh, 308. Justina Baergen, the daughter of his wife by her first marriage to Baergen, married Cornelius F. Friesen (1810-1892), a KG school teacher. Their daughter Justina B. Friesen (1836-1905) married Peter H. Unger (1840-1896) of Rosenfeld, Borosenko, South Russia, and later Blumenhof, Manitoba. This is an interesting connection since in 1867 the family of Mrs. Peter H. Unger, nee Justina Friesen, received an ancient family Bible bearing the following inscription, "This Bible belongs to Peter Unger, 1870, received as a gift from Peter Fast in 1867." It seems quite possible that this Bible belonged to Peter Fast, Muntau, and was inherited by his step-daughter, Justina Baergen, and eventually by her daughter, Justina Unger. Jakob U. Klassen, et. al., *Peter H. Unger 1841-1896 Justina Friesen 1836-1905 Family Record 1765 to 1983 inclusive* (Steinbach, Man., 1984), 23-24.

55. In the *Sammlung . . . zur Historie der Kleinen Gemeinde der Mennoniten*, 27, Peter P. Toews has noted, "A number of years later, M. Warkentin took his own life in Blumstein."

56. Other sources place the date of the institution of footwashing as 1826. Susanna Penner, note written March 21, 1950, which she copied from the writings of Johann R. Dueck. Susanna and Abraham R. Penner, "Family records," unpublished journal and loose pages as photocopied by the editor in 1982, 3, courtesy of Mrs. Katherine Wiebe, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1982.

57. Unruh provides a detailed note of this trip to Russia by Peter von Riesen (1779-1847). Unruh, 372. Perhaps the most valuable piece of information provided here is the fact that Peter von Riesen was born in Tiegenhagen, Prussia, on November 11, 1779. The immigration records show that the family of Abraham von Riesen (1752-1810) came from Kalteherberge, Prussia, which has long been a red herring in obtaining further information regarding the parents of Abraham von Riesen (1752-1810) and his wife Margaretha Wiebe (1754-1810). The matter is further confused by the fact that another Abraham von Riesen family is listed as resident in Kalteherberge, Prussia, in 1793. E. Bahr, *Das Territorium der Stadt Danzig Zweiter Band* (Hamburg, 1987), 281. Therefore it appears that Abraham von Riesen (1752-1810) was resident in Tiegenhagen in 1779, and must have lived only temporarily in Kalteherberge for a few years just prior to the immigration to Russia in 1804.

58. The Heinrich Warkentin referred to here is presumably the Heinrich Warkentin (1798-1881) of Blumstein, the brother of Martin Warkentin referred to earlier.

59. The following comment by Peter P. Toews is found in the *Sammlung* . . . , 5, at the bottom of pages 28 and 29, "I make the comment here that for this transcription I had at hand three versions of this writing by Klaas Reimer. Of these, two corresponded quite closely, and had been brought into a somewhat better style, at least in part, than the copy which was in the own handwriting of the author. In one part of the same, a portion had also been deleted, possibly by friends of the same who were motivated by the disgrace. In some transcriptions the substance of the writing had also been overlooked. Therefore the reader can take notice so as not to become confused when reading other versions of this document. From page 27 and on, I have elected to follow the manuscript in the own handwriting and style of the author. [In fact, it is in accordance with the transcription of one of his own grandchildren by the name of Abraham R. Reimer (1841-1891), later a deacon in the Kleine Gemeinde in Manitoba. This a later note.]"

60. The reference here is to both brothers Abraham Friesen (1782-1849) of Ohrloff, and Klaas Friesen (1793-1870), Altona, and later of Rosenort, Molotschna.

61. This portion in italics is crossed out in the original handwritten manuscript of Klaas E. Reimer. The KG later adopted a stricter position on the ban, namely, that someone who was disciplined would be banned even though they transferred to another Gemeinde. Therefore one would presume that a later holder of the original manuscript must have crossed out this section, as it conflicted with the later policy. Naturally transcriptions which were made at a later date would not have included the offensive portion. It appears that this policy change took place in the early 1860s. See Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 194, footnote 29, for a further discussion of this point; cf. Aeltester Peter P. Toews, *By their fruits shall ye know them* (Roblin, 1983), 35.

62. Klaas F. Reimer (1812-1874) of Tiege, Molotschna, was materially in good circumstances. His descendants settled in Jansen, Nebraska, from where many later moved to Meade, Kansas. His brother, Abraham F. Reimer (1808-1892) of Rosenort, Molotschna, was the forefather of the Blumenort and Steinbach, Manitoba, Reimers, including Frank F. Reimer, the founder of Reimer Express Lines, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

# Chapter Three

## Letters of 1819 and 1830

**Letter One: A Letter To The Honourable Aeltester Jacob Fast, Halbstadt, February, 1819, by Klaas E. Reimer (1770-1837), Petershagen, Molotschna.**

---

May the God of peace and the infinite love, who will maintain and carry us with His great patience, lead us together on the right way with His power from on high, so that we would see that the gate is small and the way narrow which leadeth unto eternal life, and that we would exert power to overcome! This is my heartfelt prayer. I cannot but address you once more in writing, although in weakness, in view of our division which has separated us to the extent that we cannot discuss our spiritual problems any longer, although it is the paramount issue. It is like an echo and gossip which passeth away (Wisdom 5).

I would like to lament with Jeremiah, when I see and hear the elect people of God, who should be the salt of the earth (Matt. 5) err so entirely. Dearly beloved, if we do not exercise great force (Mt. 11) and consider how we have been taught, and how we have been received and are accepted (Rev. 3), then we should be greatly concerned about our salvation, as God still employs various means and ways to draw us unto Him. I exhort you for once to consider the entire matter as to how the Lord Jesus has convicted you and drawn you to Himself. Indeed, when we talked about the spiritual matters in times past, and the great degeneration, your tears flowed freely. I cannot forget you, and I desire and pray, that you all might be saved.

When the Gemeinde was started, it seemed as if we were to some extent successful. But very quickly our Aeltester Enns was stricken in his heart and conscience, through which the entire church was lead into confusion, although we five had worked unitedly in the Spirit. When it seemed that the conflict would be become exceedingly great, your courage and that of brother-in-law Friesen waned, in spite your and our efforts to maintain the truth. Because of fear, upon which many well-meaning brethren rested, you forsook the first love and accepted another.

Oh, how lamentable! I cannot but see that through this you have forsaken the commandments of Jesus, which convicted you, according to your understanding and confession. Consequently the three left us because we stood firm on the truth which you claimed was in harmony with the Holy Scriptures. And now you have no need nor desire to have any further discussions with us. Oh, God, how merciless and lamentable is this! What our Saviour said, "The stars shall fall from heaven" (Matt. 24:29), is coming to pass. My beloved, as we cling to the truth, can we no longer talk about this matter? Had you persuaded us by means of the Holy Scriptures that we were wrong, we would have obeyed you. You, as all the others before you, have always granted us that we acted according to the Holy Scriptures.

Give the word "right" consideration. It has a profound meaning. The one who does not do what is right is not of God (1 John 3: 10). When we last were gathered at Jacob Enns' in Tiegenhagen, Aeltester Johann Wiebe of the Old Colony answered us and said, "According to the Holy Scriptures you are completely in the right. We, however, cannot obey them. Let me tell you that in the long run you will not rejoice, because, if you continue to maintain your position, you could be sent to Siberia." This threat caused fear for our flesh, but also gave us joy in our spirits and assurance of faith. When we studied the Holy Scriptures regarding this, we clearly saw that if we followed Jesus, our Saviour, we would have to endure these things patiently. In view of our and your teaching, that we acted in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, we did not think that there would be any danger of this, as you all teach that we should love our enemies. In addition, we gladly want to carry out our God-given responsibilities.

It is lamentable, indeed, that we are being accused as being rebels before the government. If the government had not been wiser, what would have been our lot? God, however, led in a wonderful way, just as Jesus our Saviour says, ". . . the children of their generation are wiser than the children of light" (Lk. 16:8). God know exactly how much the individual is able to endure. He, accordingly, submits to everyone a cross. Under these circumstances we, in our weakness, studied *The Foundation of Christian Doctrine* by Menno Simons and the New Testament and diligently evaluated the issues. We found nothing but that we should accept the burdened and the worrying flock, as there were some who as yet had not yielded themselves to join the strangers (John 2; 1 Cor. 6). Hence, we could not do otherwise but follow Paul's teaching in 1 Timothy chapter 6, ". . . from such withdraw thyself" and in 2 Timothy chapter 3, ". . . from such turn away," and Revelation chapter 18, "Come out of her . . . that ye be not partakers of her sin . . ."

We cannot understand how this can be carried on successfully if we teach that we gather around the Communion table of the Lord and do not have the same faith, as faith consists not merely of words. On January 28, 1815, the authorities [Gebietsamt] sent forth a notice and thereby decreed that the dancers and the drinkers should be penalized with a fine or work the way Aeltester Enns had taught. This is entirely against our confession of faith and the teachings of Christ, who taught us urgently to the contrary in Matthew 5:39, ". . . But I say unto you that ye resist not evil." Also verse 44 abounds with this teaching, and we have promised before God and the Gemeinde to observe it, and to obey and faithfully practise the same in our lives. Through our baptism, we have made a covenant to accept these teachings. My beloved, you have also obligated yourselves with a covenant to shepherd the flock on the straight and narrow way. You maintain the old concept that you are the angel of the Church in Pergamus (Rev. 2 and 3). What does He speak to the angel?

Remember what happened to Eli, the priest, who was too lenient (1 Sam. 2). Remember King Jehoshaphat how he came to his fall, as he failed to destroy the high places (2 Chr. 20). Gideon could not gain the victory until he entirely destroyed the evil altar, although he was threatened with death (Jud. 6). It is a fearful thing what Hebrews 6:10 and many other references tell us. The acceptance of your teaching as a regulation is contrary to our confession of faith and destroys the obedience to Christ, as my writing above explains authoritatively.

If this is the situation, then where are we now, beloved? You can no longer depend upon your Aeltester Enns. You will have to account for yourselves as to how you have led the flock of Christ. Indeed, you have acknowledged to a great extent that we are in agreement with you. Why do you do this? It seems that your works contradict you? Yet, we will be rewarded according to our works (Rev. 2:23), as faith without works is dead (James 2). If you believe in the work of the Lord, as we also do, why then do you not give up the evil ways and recant of the man-made laws? Or do you have opposition? If so, do disregard it, because God says, that those who are led by evil are lost (Isa. 9 and Lk. 6).

Beloved, half-way measures will not succeed in this life. We cannot serve two masters at the same time. We will have to take a stand, otherwise the "the stones would . . . cry out" (Lk. 19). I beg you most sincerely, that if you still love the well-meaning flock of Christ and desire that they receive eternal peace, break down the evil altar like Gideon did, sweep out the old leaven (1 Cor. 5), and cut off the offending members (Matt. 18). Indeed, wash and cleanse yourselves and "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1:18). Remember what the Spirit says to the angel of the Gemeinde in Ephesus and to the one in Smyrna, "He that hath an ear, let him hear" (Rev. 2:7). Jesus sincerely teaches us to practise what He commands us to do and what we should abstain from. What is your response when Jesus our Saviour commands us and says, "And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee . . . for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell" (Matt. 5:30). Beloved, the way of life is so narrow that no two persons can walk abreast on it, and it is also very dangerous on both of its sides (4 Esra 7).

In view of the fact that you have always acknowledged that we did right according to the Scriptures, we were obliged to take the sword of the Spirit. Aeltester Cornelius Regier emphasized the importance of this in his exposition of the Lord's Prayer. He says that God's children gladly forgive everything, insofar as it is not against His word. It sounds as if it were better to have peace with God than to be too compromising. Through your anger you make yourselves guilty (Rev. 13), and in consequence destroy the Gemeinde as the body of Christ.

Beloved, we could work together so much in one spirit in serving the Lord. As the care and supervision of the Gemeinde is committed unto us alone, and as you love your Saviour and Redeemer, what do you think? Is it still possible for you to give up evil and rescind the man-made laws? If we do not seek to obey Jesus our Saviour, as we have promised, and still transgress even one of the laws, it will not help us anything if we do obey one of the others. Jesus says, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able" (Lk. 13:24). "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils and in thy name done many wonderful works?" (Matt. 7:22). They thought they were wise in not rendering to Jesus a complete obedience.

This invariably happens when we are not overcoming in peace, and when we disregard God's Word in order to have peace with man? If this is so, then thousands of our forefathers have erred. Jesus our Saviour clearly says, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth" (Matt. 10:34). It is clear, His own have to

fight unto their death. He who overcomes receives a crown and white raiment garments and shall be saved (Rev. 10). The dawn of eternity is at hand.

Should it not be possible after all, that we could again decide to walk the way of life together? Everything, however, must be given thorough consideration, for as circumstances stand now, we are not mutually together on that way, seeing that we are not united in one Spirit. If we do not completely do away with the self-made laws of man, there can be no unity as far as we are concerned, in spite of the fact that our Aeltesten in Prussia sincerely desire and pray about such unity. In no way can it take place, unless our confession is accepted and practised in its entirety. This is in accordance with what Aeltester Abraham Wiebe from Prussia wrote us. Although he very sincerely desires unity, he says, "The displeasure of God surely strikes the one who sinfully gives occasion for it. The one who hath love may rest in peace."

You do not want to give up your established system. But, beloved, I ask, should it not be possible according to our confession of faith to choose the right way while we still live on this side of eternity? Great effort would need to be exerted, otherwise it is impossible. Are you, together with your brethren, willing to exert this great effort? Then we could experience that which God says, "Oh that my people had harkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries" (Ps. 81:13,14).

And then all that which has happened could be forgiven and forgotten. Indeed, everything could be united in love and harmony. But as circumstances are now, it cannot be possible, unless we want to save our souls and not follow the counsel of our Aeltesten in Prussia. Beloved, I cannot do otherwise but declare without deception to you the Word of God, as you always told us that we had acted according to the Holy Scriptures. You confess the same and teach it as well, but you do not practise the same. Do you not remember what Jesus our Saviour taught us in Matthew 23? He says, that they teach it well, but do not practice it themselves; they mean to accomplish much. Since you consent that we have dealt scripturally, do you not think that you discredit yourselves, when you intentionally disregard God's Word? In consequence, it seems, you do not esteem us, although we waited a long time to draw up our own constitution. We have comforted the ones young in faith and petitioned our Aeltesten, but there was no other counsel to help us but that we should be brought back to the main flock. This, however, was impossible if we wanted to remain faithful to what we had pledged at the time of our baptism, and if we did not want to forsake the first love.

Thus our brethren pressured me to accept it, as they gladly wanted to observe the Lord's memorial. When we examined this in our weakness in light of the Scriptures we found that during the time of persecution the believers could not follow the teachings of the apostles in total. They had to help themselves according to their needs. Likewise, we read about Menno Simons. Six or eight brethren gave him a call to the Aeltestership, which he refused to accept for quite a time. Yet, eventually he did accept it. This has also been done here in Russia, and that according to necessities. After this we urgently entreated Aeltester Heinrich Jantzen of Schoenwiese. He came and drew the lot in respect to us brethren. He did, however, not confirm it, because he himself was not confirmed and because of opposition. Thus for a long time I could not serve my brethren. Did we do you

too much wrong? Abraham Wiebe handled the oil and wished and comforted us regarding the future, as you had always stated that we had dealt scripturally.

You also want to seek peace unto your souls. Is it not possible that the garden and the temple could be cleansed? Should it not be possible that we together choose the way, the right way? Indeed, should it not be possible to do the work of the Lord unitedly? In the end we will be rewarded according to our works and the difference between the unrighteous and the righteous will be very great. Indeed, should it not be possible that we could be united, the way our Aeltesten of Prussia write us? To do this a spiritual power is essential (Matt. 11). Let us be sincere for then we may say with Paul, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). Christ promises to be near us and with us, to withstand our enemies (Ps. 81), if we are obedient to Him. He is the head of the Gemeinde. Many of the well-meaning brethren wonder why we do not unite. They would like to convince us regarding spiritual matters, in order to be one with you. As for myself, I shall not be to blame in this. I would gladly prostrate myself before the holy feet of Jesus and commit the entire matter to Him and pray, if it be His will, to be duly united in Spirit, so that on that day, we could get to stand on His right hand and thus escape eternal woe.

Yes, beloved, as I am compelled by love to wish my fellow man eternal peace, I could not neglect to address you with this writing. It has been done in nothing but in love--the Holy Scriptures teach this. Wherefore, I wish and ask you to accept this in love. I could write much more to you and add numerous additional Scriptural references, but I believe, it is better not to do so, as I know you are quite capable of this yourselves.

I remain yours in love,

*Klaas Reimer, Petershagen.*

This was written after many disputes which we had in the beginning with Aeltester Enns. When death claimed him, this letter was written to Aeltester Jacob Fast, who died in November 1820. In view of extensive evil gossip concerning the Kleine Gemeinde, I wrote the following "Answer in reply" on the 10th of July, 1830. *K. R.*

---

**Letter Two: An Answer in Reply from Klaas E. Reimer (1770-1837), the Aeltester of the Kleine Gemeinde in Petershagen, Molotschna Colony, South Russia, July 10, 1830.**

---

I sincerely trust that every one who reads this would not conclude that in our discernment and opinion we have written in an attitude of malice and envy. Banish the thought, for Peter Peters writes, "Just as love is the highest commandment, even so, hatred is the greatest prohibition whereof much evil frequently arises." Therefore we have endeavoured to write in love, for we gladly wish a heavenly home for each and every one, and would dearly want to direct them onward thereto. The Word of God alone is "the way, the truth and the life" (John 14:6).

We ask that you receive this answer of explanation in love and that you study the Holy Scripture with an earnest spirit, for on that great Day it shall be

our judge (John 12:48). We cannot neglect to warn each and every one who may still treasure their souls, and who count the same to be worthy of eternal life; and that no one might so accuse us on the basis of the Word of God.

The divine answer was spoken from out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son... hear ye him" (Matt. 17:5). The Spirit says, ". . . If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Rev. 22:18,19).

At the present time, the nonresistant Christians appear to be neglecting and omitting certain things. In this regard I draw your attention, firstly, to the statement of the Spirit, "If any man have an ear to hear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints" (Rev. 13:9,10). And ever since that time, the right thinking Christians have been ridiculed and offended, which they have borne patiently in faith, of which so much is mentioned in Hebrews 11.

---

First of all, we are accused because we have separated. They say that we should help to teach them, as it is very essential. This is a good rationale, although not sufficient, for we should also practise and do what we teach, for we shall be rewarded according our works. The Spirit says, "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity." In a Christian sense we must understand the "captivity" to be hell. The sense of being taken captive or being led into captivity is accepted as literal truth by the nonresistant Christians.

Paul writes that God will send unto them powerful deceptions, for much of this is done out of fear. Oh, does anyone have ears, let him hear, for these statements are made together "He that leadeth into captivity" and "He that killeth with the sword." And in this wise, and others as well, much unrighteousness is gaining the upper hand, and is given a free reign. If such matters become paramount, then the Spirit says, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18:4). Paul adds, "Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?" (1 Cor. 10:18). We do likewise in a spiritual sense, if we continue to do evil works, from which God has commanded us to abstain; and if we attend the Lord's table together with those who do not heed these words, we become partakers of their sins. Paul says, ". . . Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven" (1 Cor. 5:6,7). It is likewise in our case. If we knowingly keep such among us, the entire lump becomes leavened.

If such a leavened lump is not swept out in accordance with the teaching of the apostles, then God says, "My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the Lord" (Jer. 51:45). For how else can a body remain faithful if such members are not cut off? Otherwise "thy whole body should be cast into hell," (Matt. 5:29). Paul also says, "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and

they shall be my people. Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing: and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:16,17,18). These are the words of the all-powerful God, and no further explanation is necessary. Paul writes that we are to take note of those who create divisions and hinder the teachings which they had received, and that we should reject such. This was also manifested during the times of the martyrs, when many thousands separated themselves from those who did not walk according to the Word of God, and departed from their spiritual fellowship. For they knew their God and served Him as well as they chose to. Nonetheless, they did not attempt to avoid the other Gemeinden.

Menno Simons writes that there is nothing more honourable than to avoid unspiritual fellowship and to exercise discipline according to the Scriptures. This is something which each and everyone of us should consider very carefully. During the time of baptism, the young people are usually instructed against the taking of revenge, and that according to the Confession of Faith they must renounce the same. In this wise they are commanded as to the teachings of the faith.

---

Secondly, we are accused that I have not been elected to the ministerial in a proper way. This, however, is not the case. In Prussia I was a member of the Gemeinde - a church which was not much larger than our Kleine Gemeinde here - and which was without an Aeltester, just as our church here is small and was without an Aeltester. Accordingly, the Aeltester from the city came and served us with Communion, and then he drew the ballots from among the brethren. The other candidate received ten votes. My name was chosen for the ministerial with 24 votes. This took place on February 1, 1801. Whoever does not believe this should come to my place, as I can show them the original papers which show the results of the ballots. At that time God directed matters in a wonderful way to show that this was His will. Were this not the case, I would have completely fallen and would not have been able to persist for any length of time. With David I say, "But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the Lord will hear when I call unto him" (Ps. 4:3).

---

Thirdly, I am being accused that I have taken up the office of an Aeltester without having been ordained for the same and that the ordination was withheld from me. The election, however, was conducted by Aeltester Heinrich Janzen, from Schoenwiese. At that time, God directed circumstances in such a way that we had to depart from the open harbour [the Grosze Gemeinde]. They then asked us to meet with them one final time. Aeltester Johan Wiebe from the Old Colony said to us, "You are completely correct according to Scriptures, but we cannot practise it in that way." With these words he clearly demonstrated that he did not seek to follow or to obey the teachings of the Word. God says, "Oh that my people had harkened unto me and Israel had walked in my ways . . . and turned my hand against their adversaries" (Ps. 81:13,14).

The Aeltester should have comforted us with what the Spirit says in Revelation chapter 3, verse 11, ". . . hold that fast which thou hast, that no man

take thy crown," and "lay hold of your souls with patience. God will give you rest." Instead, Aeltester Wiebe told us, "If you remain so firmly fixed upon your principles, it could come to pass that you will be sent to Siberia." Oh, what a lamentation for such a pitiful expression to come from an Aeltester! This banishment would also have come to pass had God not intervened in a wonderful way to prevent it. In this wise, they tried to turn us away from the truth. Because they were so strongly opposed to us, there was no way that they would have constituted us as a Gemeinde.

The subsequent events unfolded in a miraculous way. We directed ourselves to Aeltester Heinrich Janzen of Schoenwiese, who was completely unfamiliar to us, and who had no part in our dispute. He accepted us and served us with Baptism and Communion. Upon the entreaties of our small flock regarding an Aeltester, he drew the lot between Cornelius Janzen and myself. With respect to the ordination, he wanted to come again after some time. In spite of our continued requests, we were unable to persuade him to do so, because of the strong opposition. As there was no other counsel at hand, we consulted the writings of the nonresistant Christians. Here we found that our fore Aeltester Menno Simons had been summoned to his service by 6 to 8 brethren to be their minister. But nothing is said about his ordination, as there was no Aeltester available. It appears that many times, things had to be done in this manner, since a righteousness believing group might arise in one place, and then in another, just as we read regarding Peter Waldus of Lyons.

We do not agree that our position is contrary to the teachings of the apostles. Nowhere in the Bible do we find that, if need be, an Aeltestership cannot be validly constituted without an ordination, if an ordination is not possible. Quite to the contrary, we find the opposite to be true, we find that God treasures the election more than the ordination. From Numbers chapter 11, verses 24-29, we read as follows:

And Moses went out, and told the people the words of the Lord, and gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people, and set them round about the tabernacle. And the Lord came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied and did not cease. But there remained two of the men in the camp, the name of the one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad: and the spirit rested upon them; . . . and they went not out unto the tabernacle: and they prophesied in the camp. Then Joshua . . . the servant of Moses, said, ". . . My lord Moses forbid them, for they have not gone forth to the ordination as God hath commanded. (Luther translation). "And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them" (Num. 11:27,29).

Therefore the election through lot or vote is more important than the ordination. The same can also be observed in the teachings of Jesus in Matthew chapter 5, verse 28, where He says, "But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh

on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." How much more firmly are not those committed who have given their solemn covenant. Of course, we do not disregard the order of God, because God is a God of order.

Now some one might say, "Why then, do you not remain in the Gemeinde, seeing you were firmly joined to it?" To this we answer as follows: In Matthew chapter 19, verse 9, Christ says, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication." We understand this to mean that the husband should not to seek a divorce from his wife. Likewise, we also believe that the bride of Christ should not do so (Rev. 12:17). Satan fought against her and apparently overcame her (Rev. 11:17). In a spiritual sense she has broken her marriage vows just like Israel did (Jer. 39). Israel ran hither and thither to the strangers (Jer. 3:13). The bride of Christ says that she must have relationships with the strangers and run after them (Jer. 2:25).

Therefore it was of some necessity, that we needed to forsake your spiritual fellowship and establish a proper order amongst the few of us. Aeltester Janzen had elected one of us by lot as the Aeltester. Therefore it became a holy duty, I could not refuse it; rather I was compelled to accept the same.

---

Fourthly, we are being accused that we apply the ban too readily. Ironically, it is our view that in light of the Holy Scriptures, we find that we have not always exercised the ban strictly enough. When we first separated from you, a spirit of deception entered so strongly amongst us, that we would not use the ban for quite a time. We could not use it until God revealed the error to us and granted us renewed power to punish the rebelling ones, and this with fear and trembling, and only in accordance with the Word of God. We would sooner feel that, perhaps, we have been too lenient and not strict enough, as many false spirits have gone forth.

Hence my plea is "that he who hath ears to hear let him hear," for Paul says, "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries" (Heb. 10:26,27). And such we are commanded to put away from us, as we read in 2 Timothy chapter 3, verses 1-5, where Paul says, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

Paul also writes about the complacent and the disorderly in 1 Thessalonians chapter 3, verses 10-14, "And if any many man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed." We understand this to mean that if anyone has done these things, and does not take heed after being admonished two or three times, we shall put him from us. Beloved, this is how we are commanded by Paul. This is in keeping with the words of Christ in Matthew chapter 18. If we do not obey Him, then we, the teachers, are the first ones to reject the discipline of God's Word and that of the Spirit. According to our understanding of the Holy Scriptures, the purpose of the ban is

to lead the sinner unto everlasting blessedness and to preserve the Gemeinde unto eternal life.

Furthermore they object on the basis that certain issues are too trivial to be punished with the ban, seeing that the ban commits the offender unto Satan. In reply it must be stated that the failure to apply the ban in accordance with the Word of God also makes the teachers punishable. Oh, what will happen on that great Day! They will have to give an account for this and also for many other things, like striking others, exercising wrath, lying and deceiving, which at times are among the greatest evils. These sins are committed freely and openly amongst us (Revelation 21:8). How do you evaluate this blatant rejection of the Word of God? How can they excuse themselves? Oh, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (Rev. 3:13). If the ban is not exercised according to the Holy Scripture, the entire church may be destroyed. Paul says regarding this, "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient shall be spoken of you [Luther translation]: but rather giving of thanks" (Eph. 5:4), and again he says in verse 11, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."

---

Fifthly, we are being accused that we continually seek to draw others to ourselves. Let each one consider this correctly. In view of the fact that the ministers have consistently acknowledged our Biblical stance, and in view of the fact that we have a sincere love for our former brethren, then we may well say with Paul, "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom. 9:3). For we wish them eternal life, as much as we do for ourselves, particularly for those who are convicted and persuaded by God in their conscience. We cannot refrain from seeking these, for Paul says, "Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?" (Acts 11:17). And true faith is found in works (James 3:24). Christ teaches, ". . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:20).

As a result, we are highly obligated to direct and to draw people around us to the right way. Otherwise we would be like the wicked servant who buried his talent and then was condemned (Lk. 19:22). Together with Aeltester Mattheus Servaes we say, that we would gladly wish to leave those alone who do not want to know anything from us. Jesus says in Matthew chapter 10, verse 14, "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet."

When we see how rapidly everything in general is going unto ruination, then we should say with Jeremiah, "Therefore I am full of the fury of the Lord; I am weary with holding in: I will pour it out upon the children abroad, and upon the assembly of young men together: for even the husband with the wife shall be taken, the aged with him that is full of days . . . They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jer. 6:11-14). When we see and hear so frequently how people are going astray like sheep without a shepherd, then we must say with the Word of God as found in the prophets Micah and Ezekiel, that it cannot be well in this way (Ez. 34:5).

---

Sixthly, it is being said that the Kleine Gemeinde is no better than the others. We agree that in many respects the false spirit came along in a sham Christian way, so that we could not exercise true Christian discipline. But God led us out from those errors and in His good time, helped us and permitted the foolishness in our midst to be revealed (2 Tim. 3:9). But this must be done only according to the Word of God and through His discernment, so that the penetrations of the evil one cannot be granted. Without exercising spiritual discipline and the ban, according to the Word of God and the teachings of the apostles, no Gemeinde can prevail. We must take heed of our flock, for otherwise we shall be held accountable for her recompense and blood (Ez. 3:18); teaching alone is not sufficient. We must exercise discipline according to the Word of the Lord and separate such from us. Otherwise the blame will be required of us, as we read of Eli, the priest, that God exterminated his house, for he had not earnestly disciplined his children (1 Sam. 2).

The Aeltester Peter Peters says that in a visible church there are the good and the evil, the wise and the foolish, the genuine and the hypocritical. Paul says, "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (2 Tim. 2:20,21).

As concerning spiritual discipline and banning, we must be guided solely according to the Word of the Lord and teachings of the apostles. Paul says, "If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed" (2 Thes. 3:14). If this does not take place, then error spreads like a canker. Therefore we are told to excommunicate them and to withdraw from them. Those whom we excommunicate, we punish (Matt. 18; 2 Tim. 3).

---

Seventhly, We are being accused that we condemn the offender. Banish the thought! Jesus says, "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven" (Lk. 6:37). We consider ourselves as the least of these. Yet, we do not want to sin wilfully and remain therein. Therefore we must separate ourselves the way God and the apostles have taught and commanded us. We do not want to become fellow heirs with those who sin knowingly and consciously, and not merely out of weakness. If we have remorse, then we repent, and God will forgive us. But if we sin wilfully, then we forsake God and follow in the ways of Satan (1 Tim. 1). When the preachers accept unrighteousness as truth, and so many are allowed full freedom in their actions, then it is time to separate from them.

Menno Simons has written an epistle to a Gemeinde which lacked for nothing, other than that they were too strict with those whom they had excommunicated. They did not sell them any bread; servants and maids were dismissed, and husbands and wives had to be separated. He adds that if they did not give up this practice, then he did not want to be any brother of theirs. We do

not wish to condemn anyone hereby. Christ says, "I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world but to save the world . . . The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:47,48).

Thus, we are not the ones who will judge, rather, the Word of the Lord will be the judge. We are obligated to present the Word of God to you. And whosoever is convicted by the Word of the Lord and the teachings of the apostles, the same should take heed of that which has been spoken.

---

Eighthly, some of you say, "You understand the Scripture in one way, but we understand it differently." To this we reply, "Does Aeltester Matthaecus Servaes err when he maintains that no one accepts the Scripture in such a way that one reference conflicts with another or shows the other to be incorrect?" Unfortunately, this occurs all too often. How many Christians and sermons of the Gospel, are not already so very different one from the other. The entire Bible is in harmony within itself. Nowhere is there a contradiction. It is the very sure prophetic Word of God, which is unalterable in all eternity.

Although Moses came forth with the natural law, whereby offenses were punishable by death, and in view of which many erred, the Law was merely a figure symbolically pointing to Christ. Paul says, "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal. 3:24). Israel was redeemed and cleansed through blood sacrifices, and the wilful sin had to be punished with death. Consequently, the enemy had to persecute them and tried to eradicate them, as we read in Joshua chapter 7, verse 14 and Ezra chapter 7, verse 3. Likewise, we have to receive our salvation in a spiritual way through prayer and supplication to God. We must seek to wash the garments of our souls in the blood of the Lamb, and do away with our sins, through the ban.

We must hate and overcome the evil spirit, as our original enemy, but we must not hate mankind. We can consider this in Revelation chapter 2, verse 6, which says, "But this thou hast, that thou hatest the works of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate." When we consider this with spiritual eyes everything harmonizes, which we can observe in the words which the angel spoke to Ezras, that a city has been build upon a level plain, filled with all goodness, its entrance, however, is narrow and located upon a precipice, where the fires burn on the right side and a deep water to the left; but in between - that is to say, between the water and the fire, is a narrow path, so that no more than one person at a time may enter thereby. If this city is to be granted to us as our inheritance, how shall one enter it save than by accepting the prescribed conditions (4 Ezras).

Likewise Jesus says in Matthew chapter 7, verse 14, "Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Concerning the last days Jesus says, ". . . Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Lk. 18:8). We can also observe this from all the prophecies, and our present circumstances indicate this to be so, that the time is at hand; and these signs demonstrate for the believing Christian, that the prophecies have nearly all been fulfilled. But then what happens? Some comfort themselves together with the Muensterites that there shall be another time period. The angel says, however, that after this time period, "there shall be time no longer" (Rev. 10:6). Oh, that they had ears to hear! Israel, too, believed that Christ was

to come, as they firmly understood this from the prophecies which also come to pass. But they expected Him to redeem them from the Romans and to establish an earthly Jewish kingdom. And even so today. On the basis of Revelation chapter 20, they expect that Christ will first come and live and reign with them here on earth for a thousand years.

It is evident that the Sun of Righteousness has been darkened and does not shine spiritually any longer. The Bible clearly teaches that the day of judgment is coming. Christ has come once to redeem man. The second time He will come to judge. We may clearly observe this from the prophecies of the last days, and it can be seen through the signs and wonders, particularly so through the comet with its fiery tail which announces judgment upon the earth. Just as a comet appeared in Noah's time during the flood and also at the time of Jerusalem's destruction, so even now, some comets have appeared above the world. Alas, if only someone might want to take heed!

---

Ninthly, let us also consider what our Saviour has said about feet washing (John 13). According to the writings of Menno Simons, feetwashing was the common practice, during that time. He also writes that the false spirit at times also attends the Communion of the saints, touches the lives of God-fearing people, hears admonishments, gives alms, receives the poor, washes the feet of the saints; and even says that Jesus Christ is God's Son, and pretends to be a genuinely born again and repentant Christian.

Notwithstanding this danger, Jesus has commanded that the ordinance of feet washing shall be observed. Aeltester Dirk Phillips writes about this and says, "Are then those saved who know the truth, but do not practise it? How saved then are those who pride themselves to be the true elected Aeltesten and chosen of God and do not know this; or who know, but who do not observe this ordinance, nor do they earnestly teach this to be done. For their hearts are all too proud and inflated that they should humble themselves in accordance with the example and command of Jesus. They are either ashamed of this ordinance or deem it to be unnecessary, just as the Godly wisdom is frequently seen as foolishness by the world, for they rather have the glory among men, than the honour with God (John 12:48)."

For after the completion of the Last Supper, Jesus Himself washed the feet of the disciples in order that they would do so also. This He commanded them as follows, firstly; "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet." Secondly, He said, "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done unto you." Thirdly, He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither is he greater than he that sent him. Oh, what depth of humility is manifested upon earth by the King of kings of heaven. Fourthly, He said, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13:14-17). Should this ordinance be observed only by the ministerial messengers or also by each and every believer? Jesus says to His disciples, "What I tell you I say to all" (Lk. 1:37). In this regard we should also consider 1 Timothy chapter 5, verse 10, from which we may observe that the female gender shall practise it as well.

---

Tenthly, I also want to declare how the degeneration of the Mennonites has taken place, step by step, after the time that the travail or persecution of the righteous had ceased. Jesus says, "For then shall be a great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, nor ever shall be" (Matt. 24:21). Of which also Daniel prophesies (Daniel 12:21), and whereof much can be found in the Revelation. The same tribulation became very severe against the servants of truth during the later days of Menno Simons, since at that time so many of the worldly minded people went over to the regenerated. In approximately 1557, in spite of there being a very severe persecution of the nonresistant Christians, there were some 50 churches, with 500 to 600 members, established from the Islands up to the Moors. No one could eradicate them, as the people converted from the world, joined them in such large numbers.

Menno Simons writes about this as follows, "One cannot conclude otherwise from the Holy Scriptures but that this is the last festival of the year, even the very last invitation to the wedding of the Lamb, which precedes the great and fearful Day of the Lord. This must be preached" (Vol. I, p.3). This agrees with what the Spirit says in Revelation 6:11, where it was said to the souls which were killed for the sake of the Word of God, "that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." The foregoing occurred in the fifth time, hence, we are now in the sixth, for the Spirit says, "The voice of heaven filled all the earth, and the heavens opened like a book which had been sealed" (Rev. 6:12-14). Then the people cried, "It is come, it is come, the great day of his wrath, and who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. 16,17). Let everyone consider this well, lest he should die!

During the days of Menno Simons, the Lutherans and the Calvinists, the Muensterites also left the Roman Catholic Church and taught very earnestly that they should be converted and be baptized, and that Jesus Christ would come to live and reign with them a thousand years. They, however, were completely exterminated by the sword, and their spirit remained bound until another time. In the beginning Luther and Calvin were in fairly close agreement with Menno Simons. Presently, however, they took up again the sword, infant baptism and the swearing of oaths. Indeed, they built their reformation upon a very false belief regarding the flesh and blood of Christ, and the Lutherans and other reformers severely persecuted and tortured the Mennonites, and this, even unto the death. This gradually came to an end in the 17th century, so that they could live in peace.

Then the Mennonites, primarily the ministers, earnestly wrote many inspirational books regarding the faith. As a result, they became united amongst themselves and undertook self-examination as to why they had fallen. In this regard, Menno Simons and Peter Peters had warned and counselled us sincerely, not to adopt books of alien confessions, but rather to remain with those of the nonresistant Christians. Oh, what a tragedy! Through the reading of foreign doctrinal books, the Sun of Righteousness has been completely darkened, even as we read in Revelation chapter 11, verse 7. When the righteous had ended their witness, the beast waged war against them and in the end it overcame them. For when the Hollandisch writings were no longer available, the witness of the righteous was almost ended as well, through the fact, that so many of the new books and tracts were risen up against them. The beast has thereby overcome them, and the spirit of the teachings of the Muensterites has enveloped the

kingdom, and has flourished into full bloom.

As the persecution gradually ceased, Satan was ever more free, in order that he might lead astray as an angel of light. As a result the Mennonites began to quarrel regarding the use of the ban. It was argued that they could not buy bread, servants and maids had to be released from their employment, and husbands and wives had to depart from each other, so that Menno Simons wrote that if they did not desist, then he did not want to be their brother. Shortly after this, Aeltester Peter Peters wrote regarding many evils, like smoking which was carried around with pride. He compares this with that which is written in 2 Maccabees chapter 6, verse 7. Here Israel was forced to make sacrifices to the heathen God Bacchus, for which they had to enter the oak grove. This is how he compared the tobacco smokers with a burnt offering, who daily are around and about with such adornment, without giving thought that they are walking on the broad road unto destruction.

Nor can one but perceive the same to be a ceremony of smoke whereby they are making an offering to Satan. For we may well conclude that such a sacrifice can only be one which has arisen from the abyss, darkening the sun (Rev. 9:2). Instead of taking the Scriptures to hand to seek after the Sun of Righteousness, in order that they would not walk in the darkness (Joh. 8:12), they take the ceremony of smoking and make daily offerings to this idol from early until late. My father warned me strongly in this regard. He said, that at the place of his aunt (Meume), who were very rich people, they had on one occasion received a wealthy visitor of high standing. He wanted to go into another room with him to smoke tobacco. When they did so, they had found the table fully occupied, and it had smoked frightfully. Oh, what a terrible symbol, for on the day of judgment their works will follow them (Rev. 14:13). How do they anticipate to enter heaven with such offerings? For no uncleanness shall enter there (Rev. 21:27).

---

Following this, the Mennonites in Holland were thrown apart, and divided amongst themselves into many factions, through all of which the humble service of love was neglected, although a few did retain it. Through all of this, unrighteousness increased greatly. Even in Prussia there were Gemeinden, yes, Aeltesten and teachers, who did not practise the ordinance of love (feet washing) the way Jesus taught us by example and command. Nevertheless, they did not tolerate the deceitful temptations of Satan.

Later on there were some among them, who, although they had converted themselves to God in fear and trembling, they did so in a false way. They claimed that they had to be completely separated from their wives. Yet, they held them in common, as we read about the Nikolaitanes, who practised this in secret, so that no one should know of it, except through certain signals. Accordingly, they probably were of those of whom Jesus says, "That they say he is in the chamber. Believe them not." They have acknowledged these as their fellow brethren, which was an error of the ministers. For the Spirit says, "So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate" (Rev. 2:15).

Presently the unrighteousness commenced to triumph more and more. They began to build churches, and since the Catholics did not yet give the freedom to do this, they built a church for them as a gift in honour of their idol. Instead of

seeking to save souls out of the den of thieves, they built them a church as a present. Then they experienced what we read of the most wise King Solomon (1 Kings 11:7). When he began to take strange wives, he also built temples for them on the mount before Jerusalem, and from thenceforth, unrighteousness gained great momentum. Presently pride also started to take the upper hand, so that in a short time, they did not know how to give sufficient expression to their pride. Soon Satan himself appeared in the form of a beautiful woman, among some of whom, the greatest pride was evidenced. Oh, that the readers would consider the matter, and that they would deal with it.

---

Next it became fashionable that ministers who officiated during the funerals eulogized the dead with a sermon, wherein the eternal salvation was promised for the deceased. Then the listeners thought to themselves, our teachers cannot err in the law, those who are wise cannot be mistaken in their counsel, and the prophets cannot teach in error (Jer. 18:18). If you are in good standing with them, you will find your way aright with your souls, and so the people are comforted in their misfortunes, that they shall consider it for naught (Jer. 6:14). In addition, they prayed at the grave side and thereby the poor soul is ascribed with salvation before the blindness of the world. They do not consider what Jesus said that they should not set themselves up as their equals (Matt. 6:8 and also chapter 23).

---

Then God called many to come here to Russia, where God has sought to draw us to Himself through many sorrowful means. But, many did not pay heed to this. Of this Jesus says, ". . . And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matt. 24:39). Unrighteousness and false assurance had so very completely gained the upper hand, so that the foregoing was no longer heeded. It seemed as if no one would remain steadfast against the deceitful wiles of Satan, for so many false spirits had gone out. Paul says, "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders" (2 Thes. 2:9).

Therefore God has also divided us here into three parts, so that they would practise the salvation of God one against the other. He wishes to purify us in that manner (Zech. 13). But unrighteousness is gaining the upper hand with full power and might. From this it is clear what Jesus says, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come" (Matt. 24:14). "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (Rev. 3:13).

In my great weakness, and according to the limited faith which God has granted me, I have written and declared something about the origins and the very foundations of the Mennonites. I did not do so only according to my own understanding, but in accordance with the teachings of Menno Simons and the writings of the other Aeltesten, which are of the same faith. It is my prayer that everyone would accept this in love. For the Aeltesten, as well as I, have not given it in any other way, but in love, and according to the Holy Scriptures.

*Klaas Reimer, Petershagen, Anno 1830.*

The following has been taken from an Auswanderungslied [immigration ballad] - Melody: "Wer nur den lieben Gott laesst walten."

*Abraham R. Reimer (1841-1891)*

In tiefer Trauer, tiefen Schmerzen,  
Mit nassen Augen, truebem Blick,  
Gesenktem Haupt, gedrucktem Herzen  
lass ich mein Haus und Hof zurueck.

---

## Editor's Note

The only complete transcription of the "Letter in Reply, 1830" available prior to December 31, 1990, was found in the writings of deacon Abraham R. Reimer (1841-1891), Blumenort, Manitoba. Abraham R. Reimer was a grandson of Aeltester Klaas E. Reimer, and one of the more prosperous pioneer settlers in the Steinbach area. The copy at hand had been transcribed by his wife, nee Maria F. Reimer (1847-1916) and was made available to the editor, by her granddaughter Mrs. Peter Penner, nee Elizabeth F. Reimer, Steinbach, Manitoba, in 1983.

A document in the handwriting of Klaas Reimer, containing "An Answer in Reply 1830" as well as "A Letter to The Honourable Aeltester Jacob Fast, February, 1819," were received December 31, 1990, from Henry N. Fast, Box 387, Steinbach, Manitoba, R0A 2A0, courtesy of the John 'C' Reimer Estate. The original manuscript is presently in the possession of The Archives of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference, Steinbach, Manitoba. Primary translation of the writings in this chapter and transcription for computer by Rev. Ben Hoepfner, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1990.

# Chapter Four

## A Sermon for Communion 1829

A Sermon for Communion 1829. By Aeltester Klaas E. Reimer (1770-1837), Petershagen, Molotschna Colony, South Russia.

---

"Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (Rev. 1:4-6).

---

Beloved in Christ Jesus, we as those who are weary and heavy laden have gathered today in the most sacred name of Jesus to observe the holy Communion. We do so according to the command and instructions of God. We do this in sincere humility and with fear and trembling. I would ask that no one be here who does not have a wedding garment. Let us in this hour prepare ourselves spiritually with fear and humility, lest anyone of us be cast out. In the hope that the Lord will prepare us through His Spirit, I am officiating in this ordinance.

Beloved brethren and sisters in the Lord Jesus, we read concerning the prophet David when he showed Israel the spiritual blessings, how marvellously great God's love is to a depraved and sinful humanity. He exhorts us to meditate seriously on this so as to cling to Him. He says in Psalm chapter 111, verses 1-4, "Praise ye the Lord. I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation. The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. His work is honourable and glorious: and His righteousness endureth forever. He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the Lord is gracious and full of compassion."

Observe, beloved, how the prophet David calls Israel first of all to remember the passover as the Lord had commanded them. They should not forget the great power and miracles with which He had saved them from slavery. They should not forget how wisely and marvellously He dealt with Pharaoh. God did so in order that they would know and also obey Him, and so that they would give Him the opportunity to help them (Ex. 12). This passover was a type of the death of Jesus, a sacrifice which is valid once and for all. According to the command of God, Israel had to take a lamb from the flock. It had to be without defects and a year old. This was slaughtered towards evening on the 10th day of the first month. Its blood had to be applied to the side posts and the upper post of the door of their homes, so as to let the death angel see the blood and pass over and not kill the first born when judging the land.

Oh beloved, the blood here is a type of Jesus. The lamb they had to roast

with fire and eat it with bitter herbs. They had to have their loins girded, shoes on their feet, and a staff in their hand. Thus being ready, they should flee from the land of destruction and seek their place of rest. In a spiritual way we should now impress on our minds indelibly this symbol of salvation. David says through the Spirit that the works of the Lord are very great, and the redemption of man which He wrought for the forefathers is wonderfully precious. All of this was a natural type of the holy passover sacrifice of Jesus, who was slain for us. With His blood our heart's door has been marked and our soul washed, so that the death angel may pass over.

Beloved, the Easter-lamb had to be eaten by Israel, so that they would remember their physical redemption out of oppression and slavery and that they would honour and serve Him with all their hearts. The faithful in Israel observed this memorial as they were commanded. They prepared themselves and cleansed themselves, so as to be worthy. How sincerely I wish that we would draw near to our holy Lord, yea, thrice holy Easter-lamb, prepared and sanctified, so as not to partake of it unworthily! As Israel was faithful and did everything that Moses commanded, so they had the basis of eternal salvation. They had to put their trust in the eternal Saviour Jesus whom God had promised already to Adam. Through the law of Moses no one could be saved from eternal death. The passover lamb was only a type of the real salvation in Jesus who was the object of hope and expectation for those who sought to serve God in righteousness. Accordingly, the Scripture says, "Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel." Through the natural sacrifice no one could be saved from eternal death, but only through the eternal sacrifice of Jesus. As a result, He poured out His blood for the forgiveness of man. This is the only sacrifice upon which our hope of eternal salvation rests.

The only Easter-lamb, Jesus, has come and calls unto us, "Come, everything is ready." He has abounding love for mankind, so that He said to His disciples, ". . . with desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." Beloved, Jesus had such a great longing within His soul, to redeem us with His bitter death. The time came that He wrestled and defeated His enemies and took our punishment upon Himself to pay our debt with His blood. He had a great will to save the lost and to bring us to His Father. The Easter-lamb, which was the symbol which Israel was given to commemorate their salvation from the Hell of Egypt, became fulfilled in Christ Jesus. The Lord's Supper is a love and memorial feast to commemorate the exceedingly great redemption which Jesus has wrought for us.

Indeed, beloved, Communion is a memorial feast through which Jesus, our Redeemer, shows us how much He had to suffer on our behalf and to show us with what great sacrifice He bought us out of the world. We are redeemed not with perishable silver and gold, but with His holy body and blood which He freely sacrificed. In the garden of Gethsemane He wrestled so intensely with Satan, the prince of this world, that He perspired blood which dropped upon the earth. There He took us out of the jaws of the devil and destroyed the power of death. All this has happened for our good. Therefore Jesus says to His disciples, "Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of the world cometh, and hath nothing in me." (John 14:30). All this for our sake because He sought to save us, a lost humanity, out of the prison of hell and from Satan, who held us captive. It

required so much. Regarding this love He instituted a memorial commemorating His wonderfully great miracles. Therefore we can rightly say, "The merciful and gracious Lord instituted a memorial of His wonder."

Now, beloved, the Lord Jesus is such a gracious and merciful God. When we as the weary and the heavy laden come to Him in genuine repentance and open the door of our hearts for Him, He enters in to observe Communion (Rev. 3:20). Let us therefore open our heart's door wide. This involves that we direct our thinking completely to the eternal Redeemer, Jesus, and worship Him in spirit and in truth and ask Him for strength to prepare our house for the Saviour. We must yield our all to Him without keeping anything back in our hearts and minds.

Oh beloved, I wish most sincerely that we might thoroughly prepare ourselves for this love and memorial feast, so that no one would appear before Christ with a lamp without oil or without a wedding garment. What terrible results such a one will experience who retains uncleanness within the heart! The Bible says he will be cast away. Such a person does not have a wedding garment and their heart is filled with evil like strife, uncleanness, deceit, hypocrisy and the like things. In 2 Timothy chapter 3, Paul speaks of this when he says, "Having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away." Such evil imposes itself with great might. I trust we have cleansed ourselves and are continuing to be cleansed evermore. Should, however, someone still have sour dough in their hearts, they should cast it into the fire of love and be done with it (Ex. 12), so that this Communion will not lead them into judgment. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of God. Hence, I entreat you, beloved brethren and sisters, come to this Communion feast with clean, holy and loving hearts towards God and towards one another. Indeed, come one and all, brethren and sisters, mutually with purified love, united as with one accord in heart and soul (Acts 4:32), and know that Christ is the head of the church (Eph. 1:22). Come as instructed children of Jesus in sincere humility and esteem one another higher than yourselves. Remember how profoundly our Saviour Jesus humbled Himself among the people. Come in fear and love to this Communion and be seated like Mary at the feet of Jesus and wash them with your tears, as we have been and still are great sinners.

I believe sincerely, that He has washed us as He did Mary and that He has cleansed us with His blood. He will also wash us in the future with His blood. Beloved, I ask you to take these words and do not be ashamed to follow Jesus' example. He says, "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done unto you." And again He says, ". . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." "If ye do whatsoever I have commanded you, you are my disciples indeed." Thus He has commanded a humble service of love amongst us.

But first let us realize our unworthiness and then come to the table of the Lord with fear and trembling. At the same time let us expect that He has cleansed us and made us worthy through His grace. The Lord has commanded us to come to this table with preparation through His exceedingly great benevolence, and even so, the apostle exhorts us to proclaim the Lord's death with this Communion until He comes, so that we would be prepared and that He would not find us sleeping.

But before we draw near to His table, let us fall down before the throne of Jesus, even before His feet and earnestly and faithfully ask Him to grant us His

Spirit, to grant us genuine enlightenment and knowledge to know how much our Saviour has done to redeem us, and that through this very important memorial we would experience the saving power provided for us through His bitter suffering and death. May He grant us enlightenment, cleansing and worthiness! May He also grant me the proper knowledge to explain and apply these truths!

---

Beloved brethren and sisters, we have now prayed according to the will of the Lord Jesus, the way He taught us, that first of all we should seek His Kingdom and His righteousness, so that His will would be done on earth as it is done in heaven. In our spirit then we will have our conduct in heaven with the angels of God and His elect.

I now turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 11, verses 23-27: "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord."

In this most worthy Scripture we see three points:

1. Why the Lord Jesus has instituted the Communion.
2. What we proclaim with it: His suffering and death.
3. What blessing the Communion is for us when we observe it properly, namely, the power of God revealed through His suffering.

Now, beloved, regarding the first point. Jesus has commanded us to observe the Communion, because of His exceedingly great love and mercy. As we know, through Adam's fall we have become completely earthly minded, so that we cannot think any good thing, much less do any good (John 15:5). As a result, we are subject to temporal and eternal punishment, unless someone would come who was completely pure from sin and who was equal to God to carry our sin which we have incurred. Who would thus qualify to reconcile us with God? Who was afflicted with our guilt? The divinely given command stipulated that if man would violate it, then he would die. This command was irreversible. Guilt had to be punished.

But what does the exceedingly great love of God with which He has loved us say? In spite of man's waywardness he should receive help and salvation. God's all-powerful hand cannot neglect nor change. Could not a perfect one be found, who would take all guilt upon himself in order to satisfy the righteousness of God through love? For this, man was far too incompetent, as were also the angels who rejoice when sinners get converted (Lk. 15:10). Only God's begotten Son qualified. He was ready and willing to be that One. He entered the counsel of God and undertook to be our substitute in whatever matter we came too short. According to Revelation 5, He has satisfied the righteousness of God and reconciled us to Him. Now, if the Son of God was to redeem man from Satan and eternal death, He would have to become man. For this purpose God sent Him into the world,

having Him to be born of a woman (Gal. 4). He accepted all our sins and suffered and paid them with His blood, so as to make us acceptable to God. God's absolute righteousness had to be meted out in regard to our guilt.

Therefore Christ had to suffer as the One who was equal with God and bring redemption to us. His only begotten Son who was equal with the living Father was given for us who were in deep guilt. He came to us. He was the most rejected One as a result of our sin, full of sorrows and sickness. "He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief . . . But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:3-5). Indeed, beloved, Christ took all our guilt which His Father demanded of us upon Himself from His childhood to His death. When His agony began, particularly the spiritual struggle in the Garden of Gethsemane, when He wrestled with Satan who had no claim on Him, He suffered grievously on our behalf. He suffered so intensely that He perspired blood. Following this, He had to endure the severest suffering, and finally, He had to die the death of shame on the cross. All this, beloved, we had earned for our body and soul. He had to endure all this, before the wrath of God against us could be reconciled and before He could accept us as His own.

Beloved, Christ instituted Communion in order that we might remember this. But Communion does not earn salvation and credit for us. No! Jesus' sacrifice does so a thousand times more. His love and kindness are absolutely unique. Such love is incomprehensible. The prophet says, "He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted" (Isa. 53:4). Indeed, beloved, who has ever had more love and sympathy than this? He was willing to suffer such agony, and He had such an intense desire to bring salvation unto His church. When He says, ". . . with desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer," He has shown us incomprehensible love. If one has a little sympathy and conviction left, one is profoundly moved to tears. With the rest of the seed of the woman, however, the situation is pitiful. They are overcome by the dragon. Yet, beloved, let us as the remnant meditate deeply, so that our hearts will melt in love for Him. For this purpose Communion is given to us.

---

Let us therefore kneel humbly before His sceptre and obey Him in all things. He wants to prepare us and help us. Thus we will be doing the will of Him who is in heaven. He wants to accept us as His children, even as strangers and pilgrims when we come in a worthy manner to this Communion table. Beloved, we must also be one body with one accord, of whom He is the head. Furthermore, we should learn from Him humility and esteem one another higher than ourselves. We should also do everything that He commands us to do. Then He will want to take us into His wonderful heaven to sit with all His elect around His table. (This is the end of the first part).

---

Now let us go over to the second part. Paul says that with the Communion we should proclaim the death of Christ. His death is the consummation of all His

sufferings which He endured on our behalf. As a child He was sought by the blood-thirsty king Herod who seriously tried to kill Him (Mt. 2). Following this the Jews tried to kill Him and the Gentiles persecuted Him. In various ways they tried to apprehend and kill Him. They tried to stone Him and to throw Him off a cliff. They mocked Him blasphemously, in spite of His many good deeds, which revealed His divine and heavenly miracles. He was ridiculed and persecuted His entire life, from the birth to the cross. His enemies tried to kill Him, although He came to save the whole world from eternal death. The world did not recognize His objective but tried to exterminate Him.

But it was not to be that Jesus should die such a premature and swift death. Rather, He would have to die a slow and painful sacrificial death. Beloved, our sins merited both types of death. Therefore He suffered in our stead, for we had deserved both hell and eternal torment. As God's mighty Word demanded such a death, the Son of God took our guilt upon Himself. He loved us so much!

With His help we want to talk about His suffering. We are to proclaim this with our Communion. The Lord Jesus instituted the Communion with His disciples and revealed who would betray Him. This opened the way for His agonies, as the time was at hand and the Redeemer was ready to drink the cup of suffering. After Jesus had finished the Communion with His disciples as He had commanded them, He arose from the table. John tells us, He humbled Himself most profoundly and washed the feet of His disciples and commanded them urgently to do the same. After having given His farewell speech, He went with His disciples into the Garden of Gethsemane. During the night the Lord Jesus agonized intensely. This He had to suffer for us in order to redeem us. He began to be exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death, and prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."

He did this three times. But the cup could not be taken away if we were to be saved. In love He willingly suffered, for the will of the Father demanded it. He began to wrestle with death, namely, with the devil, who, however, had no claim upon Him. Satan held us captive. Satan withstood Him most tenaciously, and yet, He saved our souls from the evil one. This caused Him much anguish and agony, so that He perspired blood which dropped to the ground. Thus our sins tortured Him, even so, that an angel from heaven had to come to strengthen Him (Lk. 22).

When He had gained the victory in His agony, He arose fearlessly and went to meet His betrayer and murderer. Judas then betrayed Him with a kiss. With divine power He said, "I am He." Those that were with Judas fell backward to the ground. Having risen from the ground, they seized Jesus and led Him bound to Annas and Caiaphas, the high priest, where the Sanhedrin was meeting. Here the Jews accused Him and sought false witnesses against Him, although without success. Finally, they found two who claimed that He had said that He would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days. Jesus, however, remained silent until the high priest adjured Him by asking, "Art thou the Christ, the Son of God?" Jesus answered, "Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Mt. 26:64).

"Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy." They answered, "He is guilty of death." They spat Him in the face and

struck him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands, saying, "Prophecy unto us, thou Christ. Who is he that smote thee?" All this they did during the night. In the morning they led Him to Pilate, the Procurator, to accuse Him there. Pilate, however, realized that Jesus was guiltless and that the accusers were evil. He, therefore, was going to release Jesus. But they continued accusing Him, saying that He had led the people astray, from Jerusalem to Galilee.

When Pilate realized that Jesus was from Galilee, He sent Him to Herod, who had come to Jerusalem because of the passover. Herod was glad to see Jesus and wished that He would perform wonders in his presence. Jesus, however, did not perform any. Then Herod and his servants ridiculed Him and put a robe on Him to wear it as kings do. After this he sent Jesus back to Pilate who was sufficiently persuaded of Jesus' innocence. Then Pilate's wife warned him that he should have nothing to do with Jesus, the righteous One, because she had suffered a good deal in her dreams regarding Him. Pilate consequently tried to set Jesus free. But the Jews overcame him. They cried, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend"(John 19:12). Further they cried, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" When Pilate realized he could not prevail against the Jews, he had Jesus scourged and then gave Him over to be crucified. The evil soldiers took Him and His garments and put a purple robe on Him. They made a crown of thorns and placed it on His head, spat into His face, placed a sceptre into His hand, knelt before Him and worshipped in mockery. They also struck Him on the head with the crown of thorns on it. His blood now flowed down His face. They maltreated Him most wickedly. Following this they took Him to Golgatha and crucified Him between two thieves.

They laid Him on the cross and nailed His hands and feet to it. Then they raised the cross with Him on it and let it drop into the hole. His body tore out of shape and had to hang. Here was the greatest mockery of all. At the same time the two malefactors were crucified with Him. For six hours He suffered on the cross the mockery of man and the extreme agonies of the crucifixion. He cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" During this agony heaven and earth darkened and trembled under the sinfulness of man, which tormented the Saviour so grievously. When Jesus knew that the wrath of God upon man's sin was atoned, He said, "It is finished." He committed His soul into the hands of the Father and gave up the ghost. He died.

At this juncture the veil in the temple rent from top to bottom, so that the holiest of all was exposed, indicating that all people have access to the grace of God. The earth trembled and the rocks tore asunder and the graves of the saints opened, so that they could go forth at the time of His resurrection. Thus God attested to the deity of Jesus and His being the Son of God. He brought all this about through His power, so as to make salvation secure for mankind. Man was to realize that His salvation was wrought through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

This, beloved, is the prime object of meditation during our Communion. We should remember this at all times. We should not forget that we have been bought with a great price from the world and from eternal death. We have been redeemed with more than silver and gold, even with the blood of Christ. Here is the only basis of our salvation and eternal glory. Through His redemption we have been set free from sin and have been made the children of God, even fellow heirs with Him

of His eternal kingdom. We may comfort ourselves with this truth that some day we will share His eternal glory in His presence, namely, if we take note of His exhortation and His love (John 17). Let us seriously consider this, for we can be accepted by God only through His grace and redemption.

Oh how precious is the death of Christ for us and how precious is His name! We can never sufficiently thank Him for it. Let us do our best to love our eternal Redeemer, Jesus, to serve and worship Him, not only today, but at all times. Let us kneel in prayer at His feet in spirit-filled supplication. Then He will give us a greater understanding of His exceedingly great love and incomprehensible glory. Then we may surely trust His grace if we love Him and serve Him according to His Word. (This is the end of the second part.)

---

Now, beloved brethren and sisters in Jesus, let us go over to the third and last point to see what we may receive through this Communion. First, that what we physically eat and drink during this Communion is bread and wine. Our inner person, our soul, receives spiritual power from the suffering and death of Jesus. His sacrifice fulfills the salvation of our souls from eternal death. Thus Jesus calls the bread and the wine of the Communion, His body and blood. He says, "Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me" (1 Cor. 11:24). His body and soul have borne all our evil. Therefore we may have hope of eternal salvation. We, however, partake of it with true repentance - repentance which is absolutely essential.

Jesus, our Redeemer, compares His body with bread for our souls and His blood with drink for our spirit. As we eat, we remind ourselves of His great benevolence, and of the great price of our redemption through His body and blood. As He used precious figures of speech and comparisons in His teachings, so He made the Communion a symbol of His body and blood. This must be understood correctly. As our body needs natural bread and drink for nourishment, so also our soul, in order to be a fellow heir of Jesus, needs nourishment from His suffering and death (2 Pet. 3). No better comparison than bread and wine can be found. We want to be one even as the kernels in the bread and grapes in the wine are become one. For this purpose Jesus calls Himself the bread and says in John 6, "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (John 6:35), and "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Further He says, "This is the bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever" (John 6:58).

These references reveal what kind of bread and wine, Jesus is referring to when we partake of the Last Supper, namely, His power and victory over suffering and death. Our physical person should eat symbolically Christ's body and blood. When this is the case, we are to live forever, according to His Word. Our experience teaches us, that eating His body and drinking His blood must be understood spiritually. The elements are food for the soul. Jesus says in John 6 that it is through the Spirit that we shall live eternally in His grace.

Menno Simons understood these words in a similar way. He says, "When the

church of the Lord observes the Communion in the right faith and love and in obedience to Christ, the physical person eats natural bread and wine, but the immortal being, the soul, eats the flesh and blood of Christ spiritually. The natural man is nourished through visible food and the spiritual man through invisible food. Thus we understand Jesus' word in John 6."

Now, beloved, all who are united in the pure love of Jesus, and who are one in heart and soul, and who want to partake of Jesus as our Easter-lamb, will recognize Him as our sole salvation from sin. These may eat the true flesh of Jesus and drink the blood of Christ, not in a natural way, but in a spiritual sense. It is fortunate for us that we are offered such spiritual nourishment in the Communion. Thereby our souls can become strong and faithful to the end. The physical bread and wine, which we intend to partake of through God's grace, are to teach us the spiritual truths. Just as our mortal body is nourished through the natural elements, so our spirit is nourished through the precious benevolence of Jesus.

He made this sacrifice because He wants to enter into our hearts and observe His wedding meal of love together with us (Rev. 3). But, beloved, He does not enter hearts which are under the domination of sin, but only those who love and do what He bids them to. To such Jesus reveals His great power and redemption. Therefore we are His friends, children and fellow heirs, in the eternal kingdom. Before we partake of the elements, let each one of us examine our hearts to see whether there is something which could lead to judgment. Is there something that we should give up or something that we should forgive? Is there still some leaven within us? We should sweep it out and not let it enter again, so that we may partake of this holy meal with Jesus in a worthy way.

Let us not forget that Jesus is not merely a man, or an angel, or an archangel, but the One who created the heaven and the earth and who maintains the same (Col. 2). He is the One before Whom all will do homage and before Whose throne all saints in heaven fall down and worship, according to Revelation. He is the One who washed us from our sins, the One who suffered grievously to redeem us and to take us into heaven. Is this not an incomprehensible love, which is more than sufficient for us? Should we not thank Him with all our being, and serve and obey Him? If we do this, He will enter with His powerful redemption. We will have a sanctified longing and hunger and thirst for His righteousness, and He will bless us eternally.

---

Before we partake of this memorial meal as guests who are not deserving to receive of such nourishment unto our souls, let us first kneel humbly and with repentant hearts before the feet of Jesus. Let us ask that through His grace He would make us completely worthy, so that we can partake of this symbolical ceremony of the cleansing of our sins through the blood of Jesus, which saves our souls and transmits eternal salvation unto us.

---

As I am trusting that the Redeemer Jesus will answer our weak petitions and make us worthy, I want to take the elements and distribute them. Yet, let me first say with Paul, "Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the

communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?" (1 Cor. 10).

Not all who fled from the idolatry had fellowship with one another, as they were disobedient to God. Let us take heed that we do not sin wilfully in this partaking. Menno says, "As the bread is made of many kernels finely ground, mixed with water and baked with heat to be one loaf, even so the Church of Christ is to be finely ground together, mixed with the water, the Holy Spirit, and baked with the fire of pure love into one loaf." This agrees with what Pauls says. We should be one heart and soul in partaking of the bread and the wine in the Communion. We should be one in the pure love and live according to the precepts of the Word. Then, also, we who have a mutual hunger and thirst for the great love meal of Jesus should have a sincere longing for Communion. Still more, we who are objects of His great love and suffering should meditate and think and praise and honour Him. More, we should love Him with all our hearts and obey Him. Finally, let us at the same time look up to the throne of Jesus that He would make His residence in our hearts and souls. When we all pray mutually out of pure hearts, then He wants to enter into us with His great benevolence.

Upon these good intentions and steadfast trust in His help I want to distribute the bread. I trust that those who are not baptized or who have not renewed themselves, they will not stretch forth their hands to partake of the bread of the Lord. Solomon says, "Everything has its proper time." Take, therefore, my brethren and sisters, the sufferings and death of Jesus as the object of our meditation. While we hand out the elements, let us praise the Lord. The song composer says, "I want to praise the name of God with a song, and I want to honour and thank Him to please the Lord still more, and I want to honour Him greatly, because that will be better than an animal with horns and claws" (Ps. 69).

Thus, beloved brethren and sisters, eat as a memorial of our Lord Jesus and His sufferings and death as a basis of our redemption. May the Lord nourish our souls with His Spirit and keep them safe for eternal life! Likewise the beloved Lord Jesus also took the cup during the Communion and said, "Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." Now, beloved brethren and sisters in the Lord, again I say with the Apostle Paul to you all, "This cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." The apostle wishes to teach us several things here: 1) that the blood of Jesus Christ has cleansed us from all our sins; 2) that through the blood of Jesus, the great throne of grace before God in His holiness has been opened through which we are accepted; 3) that while we partake of the wine, we remind ourselves of His great love and submission and of the benefits of His blood for us; and 4) that, beloved, as the wine has been made out of many grapes pressed together, so we also should live together in pure love, being one heart and one soul in Jesus, and serving and worshipping Him.

During the Communion the beloved Lord Jesus gave the cup to His disciples and said, "Drink ye all of it. For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for the remission of sins. This do as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." Thus, my friends, drink in remembrance of our Lord Jesus Christ, He has

loved us and made a great sacrifice for our sins. Drink and be drunken, yet not with wine, but with the love of God which has been poured out on us in Jesus Christ, so that we may say with Solomon with a glad heart, "We rejoice and are glad. We think more about Thy love than wine." Thus drink, my beloved, in remembrance. This we do in accordance with the Word of Jesus. Let us praise God with a song!

We may comfort ourselves when we have partaken worthily of the table of the Lord. Solomon says, "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spices: I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunken wine with my milk (S.S. 5:1). We are called to the Lord's table by Jesus. We have built ourselves up in His love and grace, even in His great mercy. We are comforted. With our spirits we enter into the wedding feast of the Lamb, and we trust, as His elected bride and house companion, we have been made new (S.S. 4).

---

Therefore, beloved, hear and follow His holy Word gladly and do everything He asks of you. Beautify yourselves with a pure and white silk, which is the righteousness of the saints. Be faithful to Him until death (Rev. 2:10). Exercise yourselves in godliness (1 Tim. 4). Submit yourselves as His possession completely, so that He can control you with His Spirit and teach you to do His perfect work. He has called you through His grace to His service, as He has redeemed you through His blood and reconciled you with the Father and made you kings and priests and heirs of His kingdom through His grace. It is right and just that we have such a loving Lord. We should thank Him for the gifts of grace and benevolence. We should study carefully His Word to do His bidding. Indeed, such a King, Who hath all authority in heaven and on earth, and before Whom every knee shall bow, says to us, ". . . learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Oh, the eternal peace is assured the meek and lowly of heart.

In order to learn this from Him with gladness and to meditate upon it, the Lord has given us a very important exhortation to exercise true humility. Without this we will not enter His eternal rest. We should diligently learn of Him, because He as Lord of heaven and earth has humbled Himself. As such He even washed the feet of His disciples (John 13:2-17). John, His beloved disciple, says:

. . . having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered

him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit; and ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

Now, beloved brethren and sisters, John, the beloved disciple of Jesus, says, ". . . having loved His own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." The words "unto the end", I believe, refer to the end of the world, as Jesus says in Matthew chapter 28, verse 20, "I am with you until the end of the world." Hence, we may assure ourselves of that, if we do whatever He wants us to do and love Him above all, He will be with us all at all times. Therefore, we should love and serve one another in humility the way He has given us an example. We should be willing according to good logic to follow Him and do whatever He asks us to do, seeing He is the King of kings of heaven and earth and has condescended on our behalf. John says, "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God" (1 John 4:7). Paul adds, that we should esteem the other higher than ourselves, so that the love would be genuine. He says, ". . . in honour preferring one another" (Rom. 12:10). Indeed, beloved, the Lord practiced this humble service of love after instituting the Communion. He knew beforehand that the Father had committed everything into His hands; He loved Jesus after the Communion as much as before.

God bids us as He did of Jesus, and thus it behooves us to do as Jesus did. My beloved, what is our response to this? Without question it is best for us to follow Him. John says, "He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself." And when Jesus came to Peter, he objected saying, "Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." Oh, if the Lord Jesus had not revealed this to him and to us later, we would not know the truth. But He has revealed this to us. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." Oh, that everyone of us would do this in all eternity! After Jesus had spoken these things unto Peter, he responded by saying, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." This is a hard saying from the loving Peter. If the great Redeemer Jesus had not washed Peter and us with His blood, we would have remained eternally in the prison of hell. But He has washed him and us and cleansed us from our sins with His blood on the conditions of confession of sins and repentance and prayer for forgiveness.

Together with Peter we realize our sinfulness in that he said, "Thou shalt never wash my feet," But we should also say, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my

hands and my head." We may say with the prophet Isaiah, "From the soles of the feet even unto the head there is no soundness in it." Actually, beloved, we have more reasons to say this than Peter did, "Lord, not the feet only, but also my hands and my head." Jesus responded by saying, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." Beloved, Peter realized then that he could not be saved without the washing. Peter did not have any evil in mind when he at first refused to be washed. I believe he experienced what John the Baptist experienced when he foretold Jesus' coming. He said, ". . . whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose." Quite correctly, Peter saw Jesus as the Lord over all. Jesus should wash his feet? Peter considered himself too unworthy. The loving Peter experienced this several times. But as soon as he realized it, he submitted obediently to Jesus and bitterly repented his shortcoming.

Let us do likewise and confess our dire need. Such need is not obviated, beloved, if we do not completely submit to Jesus and trust alone His Word. It is a fearful thing if we are not anchored in the Holy Scripture the way Jesus teaches us to be. When Peter submitted himself completely to the obedience of Christ, Jesus then said to him, "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet." Beloved, do we not clearly see in this that the feet washing is commanded? Aeltester Dirk Philips, who lived during the days of Menno Simons, included the feet washing as the third article of faith. John gives us the threefold order in 1 John chapter 5, verse 8, and mentions the feet washing that they should be mindful of it. Firstly, the Lord Jesus Himself had to wash and cleanse our inner man to save us. Without Him we can do nothing. ". . . let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us . . ." (Heb. 12:1), so as to become evermore edified. It is Christ Who must wash us entirely from our sins with His blood. It is important that we wash one another's feet the way He has commanded and shown us by example. What I tell you I am telling one and all. Indeed, let us consider and let us mortify our earthly members, our mortal being, evermore fully and live in all humility.

The second reason why Jesus instituted the feet washing is, as Philips says, "that we should mutually humble ourselves and esteem our brethren in the faith." Paul says, "Be kindly affectionate one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another" (Rom. 12:10). Aeltester Dirk Philips agrees:

Jesus has emphasized the feet washing in view of the fact that they are the children of God and members of Jesus Christ, that the Holy Spirit lives in them and teaches them. Jesus says, 'Ye call me Master and Lord; and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; then ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.'

Jesus says blessed are those who know this and do it. How unhappy are those who pride themselves to be elected Aeltesten and messengers of God, who know this but do not teach it. Their hearts are altogether too proud and lifted up to humbly follow Jesus' command and example. They are ashamed or consider it unnecessary

just as the godly wisdom is considered foolishness by the world. They rather have the honour of man than the honour of God (John 12:43).

Thus far the words of Aeltester Philips. Now, beloved, we intend to observe the humble service of love the way our Lord and Master Himself did and commanded it. Let this not be a burden the way Israel found it to be in serving God. This was not pleasing unto God, according to Jeremiah chapter 23. Although this was many years ago, the washing should not a burden for the meditating Christian. Many have tried to explain away this example of Christ and provided excuses in doing so. They say, but do not do so (Matt. 23).

The ritual is against the flesh. This is clear, as the flesh lusts against the Holy Spirit. We have examples that we should not follow the flesh. When Israel was released from the Babylonian captivity, she was greatly hindered by the enemies. When Israel built the city and the temple, she diligently searched the Scripture and found that they had grievously sinned with her abominations of taking pagan wives whom they married in their blindness. But they separated themselves when they realized that it was an abomination. For the flesh this was painful, but they did it out of their obedience to God.

Oh, that we would not see this command of God as a burden, but as a joy and do like Israel did in Ezra chapters 8 and 9, and in Nehemiah chapter 8! When they realized that they should live in booths in celebrating the feast of Tabernacles, they did so obediently. God has said through Moses, "That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God." (Lev. 23:42).

Let us consider, beloved, that we have been delivered in a spiritual way from the hellish Egypt and from the Pharaoh of this world, i.e. the devil, even as Israel was delivered from their Pharaoh. When Israel sinned, she had to be cleansed through the blood of an animal, so as to have forgiveness of sin. Likewise, beloved, we cannot be righteous apart from the blood of Jesus, which cleanses us daily from our sins. As we know that we sin ever so often, therefore He has asked us to observe the feet washing. It is to remind us that He has cleansed us and is still cleansing us, if we follow sincerely.

---

My beloved brothers and sisters, before we observe this humble service of love which the Lord Jesus has exemplified and commanded us to observe, let us kneel before His exalted throne with our faces bent down, and worship and ask Him to give us a love that is sincere and that we would esteem one another higher than ourselves. Let us go to Him with reverence and leave our burdens there and sit at Jesus' feet the way Mary did, and wash our hearts with tears, so that He might wash our inner man; namely, our souls. Kneel with me!

---

Now, that we have prayed according to His most holy will, He will give us that what we are in need of. He, however, says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." He also teaches us to pray unto Him to forgive us our debts, ". . . as we forgive our debtors."

Let us in spirit sit at Jesus' feet like Mary and wash His feet with our tears and let us wash our souls from the daily shortcomings the way we have washed one another's feet. If we do both in sincere humility and genuine love, then Jesus washes us with His holy blood. Let us do as Jesus has commanded us. He says, "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." During this let us praise the Lord with a song and praise His holy name. Yes, sing a new song unto the Lord. The Church of the saints shall praise Him. Now let us go to this humble service of love and meditate how highly important it is.

---

Beloved, we have now done what the Lord Jesus commanded us to do and given us an example as we read, "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."

How are we to understand this? Should this be done only for those who are sent from one church to another? Oh no, beloved, because the Lord Jesus says to His disciples, "What I tell you, that I say to all." When He sent them forth into the world, He said, ". . . and teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you." From this it is clear that it pertains to all, women and men. Paul says that no widow should be elected who has not washed the feet of the saints. Therefore Peter says, "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (1 Pet. 2:21). Jesus, our Saviour, says, "The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him."

Oh, beloved, is this not sufficient for us to submit in profound humility and to the wash one another's feet, and at the same time consider that Christ has washed our souls, and continues to wash us from our sins with His blood? As a result, He can accept us. He says, "For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Matt. 12:50). Dearly beloved, if we have been loved so much, then this should be enough for us, so that we would want to follow Him in humility, and to obey Him alone, and to do what He bids us do. He has promised us everything. He has promised unto us eternal glory with God and all the elect in heaven with perfect salvation, even the wedding of the lamb around His glorious table.

Beloved brethren and sisters, if we have done this with genuine humility, then we, abiding in Him, may comfort ourselves with His grace. The apostle says, "Mind not high things, but condescend to those of low estate." He who humbles himself shall be exalted." God says, "Since thou was precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life" (Isa. 43:4). Beloved, if we do in love and humility what He asks us to do, we shall be taken up into heaven with all the elect (Rev. 19). There we receive His great reward for our little faithfulness" (2 John 8). "Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing" (Ps. 126:2).

My beloved, Peter says, ". . . be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Pet. 7:8). Then we shall shine with the brightness of heaven (Dan. 12:3). Then we will stand before His throne and serve Him in His holy temple (Rev. 7). There

we will behold His radiant face, which no man has seen and no man is able to see. He will wipe away all our tears which we have wept for His sake. With all the elect and angels we will praise God and the Lamb and honour Him with singing forever.

---

We come to the conclusion of our service. Let us not depart without being thankful. Let us especially praise our great and wonderful loving God. Let us honour and thank Him for the great benevolence which He continues to bestow upon us. Let us thank Him for being able to have our worship services and for His commandments, which we may observe in good health. Let us worship and thank Him in truth and in spirit. Let us ask Him to keep us in the genuine truth; namely, His Word. We do not know whether we will have another opportunity of gathering around His table.

Let us ask God that He would teach us to be ready for the last hour, and that we would demonstrate His teaching with our conduct. Let us also pray for the sick and the weak that they would endure patiently and accept the suffering for their souls's benefit. Let us also pray for our youth that they would accept the teaching of Jesus, the apostles and the prophets, and do what they should do.

Let us pray for the erring ones that they would realize their fallen state and would do genuine works of repentance. Let us pray for the Czar, his agents and princes, that they might rule well, so that peace would prevail and they would be blessed, and that we as well, might be blessed with peace and rest according to our faith. We ought to pray for all people and that all nations would hear the Gospel, so that many would come to the knowledge of the truth and come to Jesus.

If there are personal needs here, let us pray for the same, not only here, but also at home alone to God, the way our Saviour Jesus has taught us to pray. We should worship Him with few words in the Spirit without ceasing. In John 4 He says, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him."

Now in conclusion, let us throw ourselves down at His footstool and before His holy throne! Let us kneel down before God!

---

We now have nothing further to add to this Communion and the humble service of love, except to wish you with all sincerity what God said through Moses, "Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: The Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; and give thee peace."

I also bless you with David, saying, "The Lord bless you out of Zion, who made heaven and earth, that we would know His work on earth and among all nations His salvation" (Ps. 67). Also with 2 Peter chapter 3, verse 18, I bless you, "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever. AMEN."

## **Editor's note**

"A Communion Sermon - 1829" was published in German in the United States of America by the Nebraska Kleine Gemeinde, circa. 1900. 31 pages. Primary translation by Rev. Ben Hoepfner, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1990.

# Chapter Five

## The Wheat And The Tares

A Sermon Regarding The Parable Of The Wheat And The Tares (Matthew 13:14-20). By Aeltester Klaas E. Reimer (1770-1837), Petershagen, Molotschna, South Russia, written circa. 1832.

---

Grace, mercy and peace through the knowledge and love of God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ His Son. This is my desire for all who are assembled here; yes, all who with patience and good works aspire to eternal life. Indeed, that God might keep us in this last hour. He earnestly admonishes us to be alert, to watch and pray, and to trust in Him. His Word alone we should trust because He is the only faithful witness, the Sovereign and King of all kings here on earth. He deeply loves all those who labour in poverty, in humility, and who are heavy laden. These He wants to wash and make rich through His holy blood and also to make them kings and priests before God His Father. To this One, Who granted us unfathomable love and favour, and Who died for us, to Him be thanks, praise, honour and worship; indeed, might and thanks unto eternity! Amen! (Klaas Reimer).

---

Now, my most worthy brethren and sisters in the Lord, indeed, all who are assembled here, let us remember and in deepest humility ponder how each one of us may find our soul's rest for time and eternity. It is high time to rise from our sinful sleep, because everything - all elements including the spiritual - call us from the worldly ways. We conclude that the end of all things is close at hand. This is also manifest in the way that the unrighteousness is overwhelming us, and love in so many ways hath grows cold. I know my own weakness in this.

God gives us very good advice through Solomon in Proverbs chapter 23, verse 26, "My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways." Behold, my beloved, here we can clearly see that God woes everyone unto Himself. He wants everyone to submit his heart to Him so that He can dwell therein. He wants man to be submissive to His ways according to His perfect example. He is with us in this last hour in spite of the fact that we often brings Him into grievous distress.

Beloved, I implore you, from the depth of my heart, let us give our hearts wholly unto God for a temple and habitation, that He may dwell therein, and that we may work out our eternal soul's salvation. May we be fully perceptive as we see what Paul, out of great compassion, writes to the church in Philippians, "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as only in my presence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12).

Here Paul is writing to those who have always been obedient to the Gospel.

Yet, he tells them to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. What then should we think? Can it also be said of us that we have always been obedient to the Gospel of Christ and the teachings of the apostles? I think not! How few are there among us who have obeyed the most prominent commands and teachings of the apostles, like peace, love and unity in the spirit. These virtues are to be signs among us that the world may see that we are the children of God.

I beseech you, from the depths of my heart, that we would most sincerely take note of what He says, "Give me, my son, thy heart and let your eyes be pleased with my ways." May we, each and every one for ourselves, carry a great concern in this greivous time and sit before the mirror of the Holy Scripture to observe ourselves, how we stand inwardly before God. Beloved, I implore you with Paul, to give your bodies as a living sacrifice, well pleasing unto God. Because of the great love of God, open your hearts that He may dwell therein. God says so lovingly, "Give me, my son, thy heart." He pleads with us that we would wholly give ourselves to Him, not only half. Indeed, He wants our hearts for Himself that He may live and abide therein. The Spirit of Christ calls earnestly, "I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

If we rightly think of it, then we will, each one for ourselves, seek earnestly to serve Christ in true righteousness and holiness. Each one of us, should have a concern for our own soul and continually examine ourselves, in the light of the Lord's Word. We should continually seek to save our own soul, and this "with fear and trembling" as Paul says. Beloved, each one of us will have to give an account for ourselves as to how we have behaved in the body, whether good or bad. Oh, let us give our hearts as a temple and habitation wholly unto God that His teachings may live through us. Giving our hearts to God involves keeping what He tells and commands us. It also means avoiding what He disapproves. It means not making any laws which He has not commanded in the Holy Scripture. Our Lord Jesus says, "Every plant which the heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matt. 15:13).

Beloved, we serve Him in vain if we accept traditions and commandments which have no basis in the Holy Scripture. Jesus said to the Pharisees that they taught in vain if they taught what were but man's commandments. Oh, beloved, have not these also been among us who make for themselves commandments of God for which they have no grounds in Scripture? This is self-taught wisdom. God confounds the same. It seems that such self-effort is not yet ended. They still work among us. Some have departed from us. John writes, "They went out from us; but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us . . . (1 John 3:19).

So I ask of you, beloved, you who want to stay with us, do not permit yourselves to be guided to and fro by various strange teachings which cannot be found in the Holy Scriptures. Fearful contradictions have arisen, so that love and peace have been weakened. Stay away from ill-behaving people, and give God your hearts that He can live in them. He wants to have them for His habitation and temple. For when we have God in us, we can say with David, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever" (Ps. 73:25,26). So I request that each one of us might take heed, that we might

attain unto the goal set before us. Oh, beloved, what would it help us if we strive and desire to gain the whole world and yet, neglect the most important command?

Our Lord Jesus says that many will strive how to enter in and will not find it. The reason is that they do not completely yield their hearts unto God. This we perceive all too often. One will dress in all manner of fashionable clothes and apparel so as not to be despised by the worldly minded. Others dress in great outward humility, as if they want to be known to the world thereby. The third makes long prayers with many words, cries aloud in his prayer unto God, and thinks he will be heard in this way. The fourth presents himself as a faithful teacher, telling the people that they should remember the former days, but otherwise keeps his faith and hides his light under a bushel. This comes from the fact that his light does not come from the right source, God.

Oh, beloved souls, permit me to speak in this way because I, for my part, cannot do otherwise. It is given to me to reveal the deceptive wiles of the devil, who seeks to tear us down. Beloved brothers and sisters, I ask that those of you for whom my imperfect talk is not meant, do not apply it to yourselves. But for those to whom it applies let them be warned. Examine this teaching for yourselves in the light the Lord's Word, and the apostles' teaching, life and walk. Beloved brethren, let us consider this well, each one for their part, to work out their own salvation. We are much more constrained to do so with fear and trembling at the present time, than during the age of the apostles. For the prophecy of our Lord Jesus is now being fulfilled, that unrighteousness will increase more and more, and that the love of many shall grow cold. He says, "Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Lk. 18:8). This may be the time. I understand this as follows: we shall observe what He commands and abstain from what He forbids and not make commandments of that which we do not have grounds in the Scripture.

Furthermore I say, let your eyes be pleased with His ways. Beloved, the natural eyes are the body's light, but the soul's eyes are the spiritually enlightened eyes. Then we will also learn that His way is good and very useful for salvation. God deals with us always as He did in times past. Otherwise the words of Paul would not be correct when he says, ". . . that all things work together for good to them that love God." Or as the opening text says, "Give me, my son, thy heart and let thy eyes delight in my ways."

Beloved brethren, God knows far better than we what is best for our salvation, for He embodies love and mercy. His love to mankind is unsearchable and unfathomable. He reaches out His loving hands all day long, namely, for as long as the people practice and follow His teachings. The patience of God is without limitation, and He convicts people many times and in the most wonderful ways, often even into their elderly years. But if they will not harken, He permits them to walk in their own ways of darkness as they choose. Beloved souls, if we do still believe in God, we will also heed the words which our Lord Jesus says to us, that not a hair will fall from our heads without His will. And if we think that we are believing Christians, should it then be possible that God would deal with us in a way which would be damaging or hindering for our salvation? Far be it from us to think in such a way. God has dealt with us and still is working with us. There are some who have debated this.

Beloved, let us observe this with keen spiritual eyes and with heartfelt

introspection. The Lord's ways must be observed spiritually. The wonderful leading of God brings us to a spiritual examination. Beloved, let us not think that God would lead us in hurtful ways which are not beneficial. Far be it from us, for "all things work together for good for those who love God." God speaks through His servant David, saying that if my people would give heed to Him, He would quickly suppress their sins. According to the word of prophecy, God is always willing to seek and to save those who are lost, and to draw them unto Himself.

This is seen in the Pentateuch and in the books of the prophets. With spiritual eyes we can see the wonderful ways of God in dealing with His people. Often He permitted them to come into severe temptations and trials. Then, when they turned back to Him, pleading earnestly for aid in their plight, He always heard them and helped them. Consequently, the people became aware of the loving ways of God, and they trusted Him more firmly. This happened because they had been too careless and too self-secure, just as the deceptive teachers had taught them. They taught that there was neither want nor danger. My beloved, this is what has happened to us as well.

The Church of Laodicean claimed to be rich and in need of nothing and did not know that they were poor, blind and naked. So are we. Therefore God led us in a different way, so that some thought that He was not for us. But that was not the case. It is no different from what the Apostle Paul says that it is "unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

They will also readily permit themselves to be instructed with Osias, sovereign of Judea, and to pray earnestly to God that He will save us from our enemies, according to His will (Judith 8). They will also agree with Peter, and say to God, "All that You bring my way may serve for my best because You, Oh God, have sought me out of love, and I have found You through Your love. Therefore all you have or desire let it happen to me, as it serves for the best." Those who do not question God's leading will soon become aware that they have been good ways.

Dearly beloved, God's love is not deficient. On the other hand, it is our love that falls short, because it is not of the right kind. For this reason we could not see that the ways in which God led us were helpful for our salvation. From the depths of my heart, I request that you observe everything rightly with your spiritual eyes, and that you allow God's ways to be good for you. For then we will be prepared through His Spirit to become unanimously united with each other, like our Lord Jesus so earnestly prayed unto the Father, and said, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:20,21).

---

My beloved souls, we close our introductory remarks and proceed to the exposition of the text. This we find in Matthew chapter 13, verses 14-20, which read as follows:

Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man who soweth good seed in his field: But, while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the

wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him: Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? From where then, hath it tares? He said unto them, an enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then, that we go and gather them up? But he said, nay: lest while ye gather up the tares, ye both root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.

My beloved souls, our text consists of seven verses. Let us look at them one after the other in five parts, and apply them to ourselves. Our Lord Jesus is and remains the One Who sows the good seed, and He says, "The field is the world. The good seeds are the children of the kingdom, The weeds are the children of wickedness. The enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the world. The reapers are the angels." The harvest can be reaped perfectly in the whole world, because the Saviour has sown His seed that widely. Yet, there are some tares which multiply.

So, beloved, what shall we say? It is now being fulfilled what our Lord Jesus has said that the Gospel will go out for a witness among all people. But then the right light will no longer be able to shine because the spirit of the false prophet will go forth with great haste as an angel of light to blot out the Sun of Righteousness and to darken it, because he knows he has but little time. I believe we can all perceive that the time of the harvest is nigh at hand. The many signs and wonders demonstrate this to us. Of these we have heard and seen how unrighteousness is taking the upper hand, and how Satan is working in the guise of holiness. Menno Simons has told us how deceptively Satan sows his tares among the wheat.

---

Now, let us go to our text and consider the same in our weakness. Our Lord Jesus Christ says that the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man who sows good seed in his field. And when Jesus had spoken to the people in parables, He dismissed them. Then the disciples came to him and said, "Explain to us this parable." Jesus spoke to them, "The Son of man is the One Who sows the good seed."

My beloved souls, let us study this carefully. The Lord Jesus Himself has partly sown His seed through His powerful Word and His many signs and wonders. Thus He has sown the good seed in the hearts of man, so that many believed on Him. He has also sown the Word in all the world through His disciples. He said to them, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have told you." Then, when they had preached the Word of God, and the people had believed, they also received the gift of the Holy Spirit, as we see from the Scriptures. According to their desire the disciples baptized them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

See Acts chapter 2 and Acts chapter 11, verse 17. Peter says, "Since God gave them the like gift as He did unto us . . . , what was I that I could withstand God?"

Thus, we see that it is God alone Who sows the good seed. Now, beloved, let us consider this more closely. In the beginning God created man in His own image. He also breathed into him the living spirit, which does not die. But this living breath is suppressed by the evil spirit and our depraved nature so that it does not manifest itself in most people. Nevertheless, every man has a living soul, in which God works through His Spirit. This is understandable in light of what Jesus says, "And when I am lifted up, I will draw all men unto me" (Joh. 12:32). He does not want to see one soul perish, but that they shall all turn unto Him and live. God says, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live."

Through His disciples, Jesus had the Gospel preached throughout the entire world, so that at the end of time, the people have no excuse in their conscience. They will needs confess that they had not followed the invitation. And so it is with us. Through His disciples and all those sent by Him into all the world, the Gospel is preached. In this last hour He lets the Gospel go forth to all people as a witness unto them. For at the end of time they will have no excuse. God alone is the One Who sows the good seed in His field, which is the entire world. I do not believe that there will be a single human being, who at one time or another, did not believe that this or that teaching was worthy of following. But the planted seed was so throttled and choked by the thistles and thorns that only little good fruit was borne until the appointed time when the innermost councils and precepts of the heart will be revealed. My dearly beloved, let us consider this carefully so that the good seed does not fall unto stony hearts within us, where it soon sprouts but also perishes just as quickly.

---

Our text states further, ". . . when the people were sleeping, the enemy comes and sows tares amongst the wheat and then leaves." Let us reflect on this carefully, because our Lord Jesus says, that the enemy came while the people slept and sowed tares among the wheat.

Firstly, let us consider that our Lord meant all people and that we shall stay together in the world, till the time of the harvest. The plan of God for the universe does not contemplate that the children of wickedness should be destroyed in an unnatural way. Rather, that they shall stay until the time of the harvest. But the children of light are to be scattered among them and shall shine as the stars of the firmament, so that they see their good works and praise our Father in heaven. Through this the children of wickedness shall see God. However, so that mankind in its wickedness will not altogether perish till the time of the harvest, God has elected kings, sovereigns and higher powers, who are ordained to rule over the world, that it might remain.

My beloved, let us consider this text more earnestly, because the words of Jesus have immeasurable depth. We have to accept, first of all, that the field is our heart, wherein God sows His seed. He says that when people were sleeping, the enemy came and sowed the tares among the wheat. Oh, beloved, when we look at this more closely, has this not also happened with us? Because, when we, like Lot, went out of Sodom and came unto the mountain, we did not think that such an

adventure could happen to us, and did not turn back to the safety of the harbour, in spite of the fact that God carried such a concern for us. The angel said, "I can do nothing until you come in." But none of us wanted to be warned, although Jesus so earnestly teaches us that we should learn gentleness and humility from Him. Some were too proud. Together with Peter they wanted to go with the Lord into His death.

Oh, what a cunning deception on the part of the devil! Although well meaning, we also became self-confident and put our heads into the lap of Delilah, together with Samson. We did not recognize the falsehood, that she would take from us the power of the Holy Spirit. So we fell asleep in the gentle lap of the enemy. While we were sleeping, Satan sowed the weeds in our hearts, and they flourished therein--they grew to be like wheat. Fortunately, God revealed this unto us, that inwardly it was the fruit of the tares. Outwardly it had a good appearance, like the apples on the Sodomite sea, which had a fine appearance on the outside, but on the inside, they were full of ashes as if burned with fire. Indeed, the innards were full of stench and corpses.

Beloved, my heartfelt wish is that no one would think evil of me when I repeatedly remind you of the past. Paul does it as well and speaks in 1 Corinthians chapter 6, verse 11, where he says, "And such were some of you . . ." It seems to me that these were such before their enlightenment. Yet, Paul reminds them to think of it. How much more reason have we to remind ourselves, seeing that we have been once enlightened and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come (Heb. 6). Some fell into terrible things, but God, whose love and mercy are unfathomably great towards man, did not want to forsake us to lie in the eternal prison, but raised us up and even granted repentance to those through whom the frightful error came.

What do you think, beloved? Are we not duty bound to remind ourselves frequently in what a state we were, in order not to be uprooted? How lovingly God has released us from this peril? Indeed, I believe we are the more obligated to remind ourselves always of the sin of David, that we should all the more humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, so that He would raise us up in His time. My beloved, without humility, the soul cannot survive.

---

The Lord Jesus speaks further in our text that when the wheat grew and brought forth fruit, the tares appeared also. The poet in the *Martyrs' Mirror* book agrees with this when he says that where God builds a temple, Satan builds one in opposition. Oh, beloved, this contrast can be observed from the beginning of the world in the case of Cain and Abel. One was a child of the evil one and the other a child of God. Later God awakened many who sowed their good seed before mankind and earnestly sought to turn them away from the error of their ways. But the wicked seed had grown so rapidly that even Noah was fearful that his children would be deceived. And so it came to pass that the wicked seed has grown and multiplied in this world, even among the children of Noah.

We could cite many more references from the Old Testament, to show how wickedness has always grown among the good, and how evil finally took over, so that God eventually had to forsake His people Israel. Then God gathered a people through His own Son. He bought and redeemed them out of all mankind to be His

own. Yes, the very Son of God went before them with His life and walk and earnestly taught them that they should follow Him. For them He had overcome the world, and He redeemed His people and endowed them with power from on high and filled them with the right Comforter and Teacher, the Spirit, and taught them to practice the teachings which He had commanded them (Matt.28), and that they should not delete from it nor add anything thereto (Rev. 22:18,19).

We need to consider what the Apostle Paul taught regarding this. He said, "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work, only he who now hindereth will continue to hinder until he be taken out of the way." After the time of the apostles the tares increased rapidly as John says. "Many false prophets went out into the world" (1 John 4). Then came the downfall and the child of destruction was revealed because there they began to add and delete from God's commandments, which He had earnestly forbidden. See Deuteronomy 4:2; 13:1; Proverbs 30:6; and Revelation 22:18,19. Here the tares grew rapidly, so that if God had not wonderfully preserved the wheat through His Spirit, it would have been choked out altogether. But God knows how to preserve His own and to awaken those whom He has before ordained and called (Rom. 8).

It is evident that God has always had His own in the midst of a sinful and crooked generation, whose lights have shone in the world, because they did not fear those who could destroy the body. They feared Him who could destroy both the body and the soul in hell. Oh, from the prophets ". . . the stream of living water flowed," and in spite of that fact, from the time of the apostles and on, the tares have grown rapidly. Indeed, it seemed as if they would completely take the upper hand. But God still has His own, and will preserve His people until the end of the world. But, beloved, unrighteousness among the nonresistant Christians will get the upper hand, as we now can see so clearly. The tares are already there, so that nearly all the truth is darkened, and the teachers, who are to shine as the stars in the firmament, have become earthly minded. The end will come as Pauls says, ". . . whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders" (2 Thess. 2:9).

---

Then the people said, "Wilt thou, then that we go and gather them up? But he said, No, lest while we gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest."

Behold, it is manifest here that the Lord Jesus does not want that the tares or the wicked people be rooted up. He wants to take them all together and with great patience and longsuffering keep them as His people till the time of the harvest. During all that time, He, with His mighty Word and Spirit, draws them to be His very own. Therefore the merciful and loving Lord Jesus spared the tares until He could send out His two witnesses, who will prophesy 1260 days clad in sackcloth. Oh, now great and indeterminable is the patience of God with the children of evil! What will finally be the end of them? The Spirit says, "In one hour their destruction is come."

Now, beloved, when the people asked if they should uproot the tares, the Lord Jesus said, "Nay, lest at the same time ye uproot the wheat also." Even though Israel should totally destroy its enemies and the disobedient in their midst, they did not scatter the people among them, but they had to stay so that they

could be tested. Of this we can read enough in the Prophets, how wonderfully God rescued them from their power and great danger, for which Israel earnestly sought and prayed to Him in their distress. They received the joy of the Lord and served Him more faithfully.

So it should be with us as well - we who are less wise spiritually, in spite of the fact that through "Moses" we have been brought out of the "bondage of Pharaoh" through many wonderful means, and have been rescued and brought into a "holy land", wherein we do not lack any spiritual fruit. How many of our venerable Hollandisch books of the faith have not come to light recently? Hitherto they seemed to be lost. Even though we have the Word of the Lord and the teachings of the apostles, God has inspired these blessed writers to emphatically impress upon us once again, His Holy Word and will. But now so many deceptive writings are coming forth in opposition thereto!

How is it with us, beloved? Have we become too self-confident? We began in a spiritual way, like Israel, to serve strange gods of which we found nothing in the Holy Scriptures. Some became very zealous, so that it almost appeared that we would succumb to this disorder. So zealous is the false spirit that he wants to destroy all Scriptural teaching. He knows he has only little time left. But, my beloved, God permits him to do this, so that we will be proven and tested. The angel said to Tobias, "Because you love God, it must be so. Without temptation you could not persevere." And so the tares are to remain with the wheat. The wheat is tested with the tares and thereby becomes strengthened through Christ.

---

It is the will of our longsuffering and merciful Redeemer, Jesus Christ, that we all should remain together. As the chosen ones, we are to let our light to shine among the people of the world, so that they shall see our good works and praise our Father in heaven, so that many may yet be saved because of our light shining in the darkness. We are to be the salt of the world. Jesus said, "Salt is good: but if the salt has lost its savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill, but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Luke 14:34,35). Behold, beloved, it is of such little worth that man casts it upon the street and allows people to tread on it. "Therefore have salt in yourselves and have peace one with another" (Mk. 9:50).

Paul says, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." My beloved, let us walk wisely in the sight of all men. Let us allow our light to shine before those amongst whom we are scattered. The light we are to let shine among all people is that of which Paul says, "Walk as children of light, for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth." May we walk as children of light, so that through the light some might be won, and that they who are "on the way" may be aware that they are straying. For this reason our Lord Jesus Christ does not allow the tares to be uprooted.

But, if we are likened to the light which hath become darkness, and do not shine among the people, and if we have no salt within us, then we too, will be cast out, according to our conscience. Brethren and sisters in the Lord, for this reason our Lord Jesus says to His servants, that they are not to uproot the tares, but to let them grow together. At the time of the harvest everyone shall receive their

wages.

---

Dearly beloved, God has taught us that His people are to abstain from all vengeance and strife, either in word or in deed. He has earnestly warned us about this that we are to bless those who curse us and to do good to those who offend and persecute us. He says, "I say unto you, resist not evil." Paul says that we "shall show ourselves in all things as servants of God in much patience, in affliction, in necessities, in distresses, in longsuffering, in the Holy Spirit by love unfeigned, as poor, yet making many rich." The apostles, through their affliction, have also made many rich among whom likely are the two witnesses of whom John speaks in Revelation chapter 11 that ". . . they shall prophesy 1260 days clad in sackcloth."

Dearly beloved, what do we see around us today? We can clearly see from Scripture that the faithful have ended their witness. The beast who arises or has arisen out of the pit, and who makes war with the remnant of the woman's seed, will seemingly overcome most of them. This is why our Lord Jesus forbids the uprooting of the tares, so that through His two witnesses He could seek out His own from among the tares. We can read of this in numerous places, how the pure light has arisen here and there among the people. Through the two witnesses many have been awakened. How do things stand, beloved? We can observe from the Holy Scripture and all the signs and wonders of the times that the remnant of the seed of the woman has been overcome, of which we read in Revelation chapter 11, verse 7. If this is the present situation, beloved, what shall become of us few? How does our light shine among those who have been overcome, or how are we like the witnesses who shall prophesy being clad with sackcloth?

I understand this to mean that if we have learnt genuine meekness and humility from our Lord Jesus, we will also become poor in a spiritual sense. Yes, we will be as those that labour and are heavy laden. With much anxiety and sorrow, we will live here and try to please our only Redeemer Jesus. For then we can say with David, "Lord, if I have you. I ask not for heaven or earth. It is because of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed. His compassion fails not upon all who trust him and seek to serve him according to his Word." We also accept the words written in Matthew chapter 5, verses 43-44, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you."

Behold, my beloved, from these words we clearly see how we are to behave in word and deed toward all. Above all, we are to have humility and meekness and shall not offend nor annoy any one, so as not to slander our ministry. This I understand to be different from the zeal which is without clear Biblical grounds and which speaks or works against other Christians. But, beloved, of the brotherly love Paul writes, "Be ye kindly affectioned one toward another with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another" (Rom. 12:10).

How did these two teachings reveal themselves among us at that time? Did not the opposite appear among some of us? Did we remember that giving is better than receiving? Did we heed the teachings of Aeltester Peter Peters, who would rather be satisfied with dry bread than to take something from someone who had little, or who did not covet?

---

Beloved brethren and sisters, allow me to speak plainly. Three or four years ago I would hardly have dared to teach about such matters, for some brethren would have been very offended. But I speak only of some who had this attitude. I knew at that time, that we were still in error, when they said "that we should sell all our possessions and give them all away, which some in the church at Jerusalem did." But no, this is not the true meaning, for the Scripture says, that no one had need because those who had land sold it and laid the money at the apostles' feet, and then they distributed it according to every man's need. There they were all with one heart and mind. Nor did anyone neglect to feed himself. Every one was concerned about doing his part financially. Diligently they observed the teaching of the Apostle Paul, who said, "Day and night I worked so as not to be burdensome to anyone."

If it is the case that there are those who are weak, sick and destitute, then the deacons or overseers are commissioned to help the truly needy if they cannot earn and work for their own bread. If there are those in need, then the other one who can give, shall help and give freely in love and with a willing mind. But, if possible, let not the left hand know what the right hand doeth. And if it is thus among us, I hope that love and peace will flourish, and that we would be of one mind. For thereby the people shall see that we are the Lord's disciples. Those who are in need should be mindful that they must always seek to feed themselves. Paul has written that those who do not practise diligence, and who are busybodies, shall be put away, and not be in the church. And he who can give, should have a well disposed mind towards the poor so as to save his soul from destruction. Such a one should earnestly observe this commandment as James says, "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewn no mercy" (James 2:13).

Beloved brethren and sisters, take this from me in love when I thus speak, because I cannot neglect to remind you how deceptive it was among us, and how it is surfacing once again. Since God has had great mercy upon us and many of us are aware of the error, I cannot but warn everyone again that we beware of the deceptive enemy of the soul. We are living in a time of very great soul anguish. The witnesses have ended their testimony, and the enemy as an angel of light has almost conquered all. So let us heed only the Word of God and endure unto the end, that we might be saved. May we be mindful of the words of Paul when he says, "If there be fellowship of the Spirit with you, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded having the same love, being of one accord let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem the other better than themselves" (Phil. 2).

---

In conclusion, beloved souls, let us speak of the time of the harvest, and how we shall react, if it suddenly comes upon us. We know that when this time shall come everything will be revealed. Indeed, our innermost thoughts are not concealed from the Judge, and the time is near. The Lord Jesus says in conclusion, ". . . and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn" (Matt. 13:30).

The difference in the reward between the tares and the wheat will be very great, and from both sides it will everlasting and forever. With this parable from nature, our Redeemer Jesus wants to demonstrate the future to us very plainly. In the same chapter He explains it to His disciples as follows: "The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity. And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Matt. 13:41-43).

So I request that he who has spiritual ears to hear that he would receive this with all his heart. There will be a total difference between those who have done unrighteousness according to the Word of God, and those who sought to serve Him in love and peace here in this world. Indeed, beloved, the difference is frightening. Our Lord says that the righteous shall shine as the sun, but the godless shall burn within like the fire where the "worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." Oh, how will it be in the end with all those who live here so loosely and self-confidently in great unrighteousness, and who do not fear, with even the twinkling of an eye, the eternal fire of hell? They spend their time so indifferently, just as it was in the days of Noah.

---

My beloved, the prophecy and the witness, the last signs and wonders are past. The Gospel has gone out into all the world for a witness to all peoples. Jesus says, ". . . and then the end will come." He says further that "the sun and the moon will refuse to shine and the stars will fall from heaven and the powers of heaven will be shaken and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven with great power and glory." Then there will be no turning back. No calling of, "Lord, Lord," will avail. We do not know whether we will experience this with our mortal bodies, and yet, we know that we will all appear with immortal bodies before God's throne. It is my heartfelt wish that we would all be worthy to escape such a terrible misery.

Beloved, I must remind you once again of the time when we faced so much deception in our midst. We see and know that the enemy of our soul uses much deception and is very zealous to deceive with the appearance of holiness. But God brings him to shame. Now the enemy comes among us and claims that we punish too severely. The evil one wants to tear us down. Far be it from us, because we feel that we are not severe enough. Jesus says, "If your brother sins against you, punish him alone." I understand this to mean those who have not yet sinned unto death. But as Paul says in 2 Timothy chapter 3, verses 2-4, we are obliged to minister unto those who stray. We must counsel them and show them the way of truth. If they do not hear, we must put them from us. Paul says, "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed."

Further, he says, "Day and night we have worked that we be not burdensome to anyone, . . . For we hear that there are some who walk among you disorderly, working not at all but are busybodies." For them the door to the kingdom of God is closed. And I greatly desire that no one of us would stay behind at the end of the time of grace.

---

Beloved, we teach each other with the Word of the Lord and the apostles. Some, nevertheless, still lose heart and return again to the open harbour [Grosse Gemeinde]. Clearly God says in Zechariah chapter 13, verses 8 and 9, ". . . And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined and will try them as gold is tried." The truth of this is manifest here because from our small group only one-third remain of those who first went out, and who have not yet lost heart or who have not yet been swept out. We see and hear so much that among the other part everything is intentionally permitted against which the frightful judgment of Hebrews chapter 10, verses 26 and 27, is spoken.

So I plead with each one of you, do not lose sight of the goal, but cling fast to the Word of the Lord and to the teaching of the apostles, so that you may escape the eternal suffering. If we can yet see anything with our spiritual eyes, then we can also see the essence of the times. We are living in a very deceptive period, where nearly everyone is deceived and overcome. The stars already reveal this to us with their signs that the end of the world is here. We can learn from the first world and from the fall of the Jewish kingdom, that the people of that time did not heed the signs.

Beloved souls, I beg you, do not take this for an evil, that I always speak so much of the end of the world. Our Lord Jesus says, ". . . when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up you eyes, for your redemption draweth near." I wish from the depth of my heart that we would truthfully prove this and learn to see that the redemption of all rightly believing Christians is near. Let us earnestly watch and pray and trim our lamps with faith that is true, so that when the bridegroom cometh, we may go to bē with Him into the heavenly wedding, where there will be joy unto the fullest, and unbounding love, forever and evermore.

---

## Editor's Note

The primary translation of "The Sermon on the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares" was completed by Rev. David K. Schellenberg, Steinbach, Manitoba, in 1988. Transcribed for computer by Rev. Ben Hoepfner, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1990. This sermon was probably written circa 1832, since Klaas Reimer mentions in the text that "three or four years ago he would hardly have dared to teach about such matters." This appears to refer to the troubles of the false humility movement which were not resolved until just prior to the implementation of feetwashing in 1829. See the footnotes to "A Short Exposition" by Klaas Reimer, Part Two, Chapter Two, for further discussion of this point.

## Chapter Six

# A Sermon on Love and Brotherhood

A Sermon on Love and Brotherhood written by Aeltester Klaas Reimer (1770-1837), Petershagen, Molotschna Colony, South Russia, in 1832.

---

I wish you mercy and love, true knowledge and peace, yes, the peace which our Lord and Saviour Jesus urgently promises His own and says, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." This is my heart's desire.

Now, my beloved friends, yes, brothers and sisters in the Lord, in my weakness I intend to remind you of our most essential responsibility here in the world and ask you to consider this with great care. In respect to the eternal welfare of the soul, our Saviour Jesus says in Matthew 11:29, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Behold and consider this, beloved brethren and sisters, what our Redeemer Jesus expects of us: your lowliness and heart's humility, and this toward all people. Then, too, we should love those who hate us. Yes, we shall even bless them, and we should treat those well that curse, offend and persecute us. We should walk two miles with those who compel us to go one mile with them. If we consider this in the depths of our hearts, then I believe, we will find that we are not only obligated to work out our own salvation but also be free to help others and be an example, so as to win others. For God will use circumstances so that the people will see our sincerity and good words and praise our Father in heaven. All this we shall do in lowliness and with humbleness of heart.

Oh that we might properly consider the great love, patience and longsuffering with which our Redeemer Jesus has sought us, though we were His enemies. He has borne us in patience; He has sought to persuade us in a loving way that we should come to Him and learn patience from Him. And in all our speaking, learning and hearing we should demonstrate a genuine contriteness and meekness of heart; nor should we do anything contrary to His Word and teaching. [A line is indecipherable here].

Let us proceed in all of this as far as God's Word permits us to go and in all things that we do and speak let us pay heed to His Word and will. Yes, we should do as He has done for us and not do anything according to favour, nor in vain pride, esteem one another higher than ourselves. And beloved, if this is our sincere desire--the way our Saviour Jesus has very earnestly taught us--let us take His yoke upon ourselves at all times wherever He sends us; yes, and may we do that which He hath ordained and taught. Thus, I hope, He will now give us His peace and love and the right truth--edification and faithfulness through His Holy Word--and grace so that we might accept everything in love.

Indeed, He leads His own in mysterious ways so that it appears as if everything is ruined. Thus He seeks to praise those who mean well and draw them

to Himself. Paul says that for the righteous all things serve for the best. And all things serve for the best for the righteous, so that they would earnestly seek and serve Him. We are to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth, and so the world should see and hear our good works and praise our Father in heaven. Thus let us be prepared to do good works when we are called upon to do so. "For so it is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men" (1 Pet. 2:15). Our Saviour Jesus Christ says, "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (Matt. 10:16). We have to take care in everything that God teaches us that we do not go too far; and yet, that we go far enough to do what God teaches and commands us and to forsake that which He wants us to forsake and not to establish commandments which He has not made. We find a good example of this through the man Moses. In Numbers we read that someone gathered wood on a Sabbath day, which God had strictly prohibited. The ones who found the man doing so brought him to Moses and Aaron who took him captive, because it was not clear what should be done with him (Numbers 15).

Beloved brothers and sisters, to this P[eter] P[eters] says, "It is an essential example to be noted, that we would not do something according to our own thinking without having a good basis for it from the Holy Scriptures, against which the prophets and the Saviour warn us so strongly (Mal. 15 and Is. 29). We read of this also in Revelation 22, "If anyone will add to it, to that one God will add the plagues mentioned in this book, and if anyone will subtract from it, from that one will be subtracted his part from the book of life and the holy city." Oh beloved brethren and sisters, let us consider this well and in this our time of deception may we heed the Word of God even in its smallest prescriptions; yes, and may we search diligently with those of Berea to do the holy and well-pleasing will of God and to cast ourselves down in deep humility and earnestly pray for the true knowledge of His Holy Word. In this way we want to learn of Him lowliness and contriteness of heart and we will do everything in fear and humility and esteem one another higher than ourselves; and love will be active and we will consider our fellow person worthy to be asked as to how they would do this or how would they would do that.

Oh beloved souls, be careful and walk in the light, because God's Word is the true light, yes, "the way, the truth and the life." "No man cometh unto the Father but by me," says our Saviour Jesus. Let us therefore at this time give diligent heed to the doctrine of truth, because our time is most deceptive for the soul as the [The text not clear----] have ended and the false spirit is abroad to deceive many, for he knows his time is limited. Satan comes as an angel of light and with great force fights against the genuine truth. Therefore let us consider this and prove the Word of the Lord, for then we will soon know whether the spirit is of God or of the devil.

Beloved brethren and sisters, the Spirit of God does not live in souls who make laws for themselves which the Word of God does not teach. Nor is the Word of God found in a body which subjects itself unto sin. You may read about how the false spirit deceived the right-thinking Christians during the time of Menno Simons, when some gave in a little to disregard the Word of God and did not cling firmly to the same and to some extent omitted to practice love and humility. They did so because they made their own laws which were not founded on the Word of

God.

And beloved brethren and sisters, the false spirit most of all desires to promote strife in suffering. And this is such an evil that if God did not intervene miraculously, everything would be destroyed. But God knows how to protect His own wondrously and to manifest the evil of the deceiving spirit and how to deliver His own from such. Beloved brethren and sisters, Paul clearly declares that these spirits will not prevail in the long run, because their evil will be manifested to everyone (2 Tim. 3). Therefore let us learn of our Saviour Jesus lowliness and humility of heart toward one another and above all claim love which is the bond of perfection, and without which we will not see God. Let us also dig deeply into the Word of God in search of the hidden treasure which is well-pleasing to our Holy God, and also practice His commandments and walk with care in His way, and take heed of those who withstand the Word of Truth, and sincerely turn to our Saviour Jesus with prayer and supplication in spirit and in truth. Then, I hope, He will give us His peace, yes, His grace and mercy and that we will then take note of the deceptive lust of Satan.

But, beloved brothers and sisters, take note, if we will not seek to maintain unity in the Spirit and the Word of the Lord, our body--which is the Gemeinde--will not prevail. Therefore let us above all else love the peace of God, which is the most beautiful thing within Christianity. Paul exhorts us so sincerely as there is still some good among us, and says in Philippians 2:1-4, "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ." Observe, beloved brethren, I do not understand this to mean that we should at once punish ourselves if we do not exactly understand the Holy Scripture alike. I do not understand it in this way, but that we should remind each other, explain it and cause the other to meditate thereon and to consider it in love. And if, in addition, there is consolation of love amongst us--the way Paul explains further--we must also accept it from our brethren and meditate thereon and in love esteem our brethren higher than ourselves. Oh if everybody amongst us would do this, then we would have consolation of love in our midst. Beloved brethren, love does no evil, it is not puffed up regarding its conviction nor esteems itself higher than its enemy.

Then, beloved brethren and sisters, we will have consolation of love and rejoice and console ourselves so that we may profitably edify ourselves in the Holy Spirit. We will also realize what is the mind and thinking of the Holy Spirit. I have to agreed with Menno Simons that in the many years of strife for the truth, I have learned from others, and I want to continue to learn from others, that is, if the Scriptures teach the same. Otherwise I cannot accept it. And if consolation of love abides with us, then we will cause each other to rejoice, and we may be happy in the Lord and we will have fellowship of the Spirit in our midst. It will not be the way it has been among us for a time that we fear to speak about spiritual things one to another. If we have the fellowship of the Spirit among us, then there is mutual joy and we are united in a love that is genuine. There will be no fear that one will deceive the other, for we would trust one another and say with the poet;

In that they love one, they love themselves, motivated through hope of the eternal blessed kingdom. They do not need to fear any threats, as they are led on with care, they proceed to their year of jubilation. They journey together through the land of our time.

Along the way one explains to the other, from where he came and it is a joy to traverse mountain and valley. 'Tis a wondrous thing.

Oh what cordial love and mercy do such individuals have mutually. In the fellowship of the Spirit they are going about being filled with consolation and united in love. In so doing they fulfil the apostle's joy. These may then speak with Solomon, "I sleep, but my heart awakes and takes note of the voice of my friend, who knocks and says so kindly and so friendly, open unto me, my sister, my dove, my pure one, because your head is covered with dew and my curls are filled with drops of the night." Oh what an incomprehensible love our Saviour Jesus has demonstrated for us sinful people in that He has redeemed us with His precious holy blood. Solomon says, "My friend puts his hand through the portal and my body quivers." Who would not feel anxious and frightened in view of the great fear and hellish suffering which our Saviour Jesus endured for us. And as He suffered all this in love because of our guilt, we should in faithful love surrender all and say with Solomon, "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame" (Song, 8:6). And in all this our Saviour Jesus prays so earnestly to His heavenly Father for us and says, ". . . Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are" (John 17:11).

What do you think, beloved brethren, do we fulfil Paul's joy if we are thus of one mind? Oh my beloved brethren and sisters, there is also joy before the throne of God and His angels regarding our united love in the Holy Spirit, as well as before His own, because the voice of the Truth, Jesus Himself, has asked His heavenly Father to grant this to us. Hence Paul may speak with justification and with truth, because he was filled with the Holy Spirit, and says, "Thus fulfil ye my joy, that ye are of one mind." Furthermore he writes that we should "be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." Oh beloved friends, if this is our state, then there is fullness of joy and loving fellowship in our circle for time and eternity. Yes, then we may say with David, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore" (Ps. 133). This also is a good thing or as Sirach says, "There are three beautiful things which well please God and man, like when brethren are one, the neighbours love one another, and husband and wife desire their fellowship (Sirach 25).

Oh beloved, where is the humility to which our Saviour Jesus earnestly exhorts. He says, "Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Oh that eternal rest and peace for the soul! Is it not most acceptable? Yes, this rest we would all gladly want for our souls, but then we must have meekness and humility and esteem one another higher than ourselves. Let us all consider this well, lest we become unfaithful to our Saviour Jesus. Let us seek to follow Him. How else can we enter into His glory or eternal rest? He says, "Whosoever will not take his cross upon himself and follow me cannot be my disciple." Yes, most of all, let us take note of the main content of all laws, as Paul

says, "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." For if we accept that love is the greatest commandment, we will not be quick to judge. I understand this judging to be what Paul says that we are not to be a stumbling block or hindrance to our brother or fellowman through words or deed apart from the Word of Truth. For this purpose Paul says, ". . . but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way."

Thus, beloved friends, let us follow after peace and love toward all men if possible. Paul says, "As much as it is possible have peace with all men." Do they, however, ask for a reason, then we have to speak in accordance with the Word, as Paul tells us. God has called us in peace. "Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing."

Beloved brethren and sisters, it is high time that we watch and take heed as servants who wait for their Lord, for the time is at hand, yes, that day comes quickly when the Judge of the world will appear. Let us earnestly watch and pray that we may escape all the deceptive attacks of Satan, as he comes quickly to deceive like an angel of light and if possible even the elect. Thus beloved I ask and counsel you, "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful" (Col. 3).

Behold, beloved, our Saviour Jesus speaks so urgently and says, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." This is the teaching which we must follow. Beloved friends, we should remind ourselves that we ought to behave as the wise virgins who are enroute to the heavenly Jerusalem. We should also be mindful of the admonition which has been given unto us that we are to observe the most essential things while on route, namely, the genuine love, according to our text. Our Judge knows all our thoughts and will reveal the secret counsels of our heart. As a result no one will deceive Him with a false love, for He knows the very conceptions of our hearts even from afar; He is the Judge of our mind and thoughts.

Therefore, beloved, let us love, serve and obey God with all our heart, our soul and all our power, and may we love our neighbour as ourselves. How profoundly this humbles us, as the entire Law and prophets are herein summarized. And if this is observed on our part, then we will keep God's commandments, for He says, if ye love me, ye will also keep my commandments. And herein exists the love toward God that we do what He commands and forsake what He asks us to forsake. This is how we should love God and our Saviour Jesus, who first loved us and who suffered the most fearful death and thus purchased us from hell. He interceded with His heavenly Father for His murderers and said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

We ought to follow Him just as Stephen did and prayed for his murderers and said, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Our Saviour Jesus also teaches us and says, "But, I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do

good to them that hate you, and use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven . . . For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not the even the publicans the same?" Behold, my beloved, if we ought to love our enemies who mistreat us, how much more should we love those who seek to do their best for us, who have done us no evil? We ought to pray for them in humility and lowliness, and as much as is possible, not to be a stumbling block or a hindrance for them. Paul says we are to judge this much more. Oh beloved, what love the Apostle Paul had for the Jews who were his blood relations. Yes, he wished to be banned if he in that way could bring them to believe in Jesus. A martyr also speaks in this way concerning his murderers saying that if I could help you before your Judge, and if I had to suffer again what you have done to me, if it were God's will, I would do it gladly.

Beloved, our love is to be a genuine love and it shall not be false. But false love is what many of us have; we forgive but do not mean it within our hearts. Therefore God says that He does not punish them because of the sacrifices, but because they do not do them genuinely with their hearts. Such worship does not subsist before God, for He wants our heart for His dwelling place alone. Therefore we should do everything out of a faithful heart and genuine love. For this reason Paul speaks in our text that love is not to be false.

Beloved, let us consider this well, for of what value is it for us before God if we are not sincere? This has been demonstrated by some and is still being done so, and what is the outcome of this? Oh, beloved, let us love the Gemeinde and be sincere with all people that they would see our genuine love and our good works and praise our Father in heaven. Yes, that they would be purified thereby and be moved to seek God and to serve Him, for our Saviour Jesus has called us to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth, that through genuine love and humility and good works we would seek to win them and thereby direct many unto righteousness. It is the will of God that we might shut the mouths of the ignorant and foolish people with good deeds. Therefore let us do good and not grow weary, for in due season we shall reap without ceasing, if we faint not. Daniel praises as happy those who lead others unto righteousness, for they shall shine as the brightness of the firmament and as the sun in their Father's kingdom (Daniel 12). But, beloved, this should not occur with a false love, but only with a genuine love, whereby we are clever as the serpent but harmless as the dove. At the same time we should consider how best to give evidence of our conscience. Therefore, our Saviour Jesus spoke to His disciples when He called them unto Himself, saying I will make you fishers and seekers of men. Beloved friends, always consider how He sought the fish in the best possible way and drew them unto Himself; we must be wise and without error so as not to scatter them. We should seek to be honourable and to prefer one another in love; our goodness should extend to all people, for the Lord is near (Phil. 4).

Moreover Paul says in Ephesians 4, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love," for love is the greatest commandment. Peter says, "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and

abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

And if we do these things, then we will in a similar way help our fellowman, and this in fear and love so as not to be a stumbling block nor a hinderance. But those who do not live this way but speak many perverse and hurtful things, such a one is blind groping with his hand in darkness. They forget that they were purified from their former sins (2 Peter 1). For Paul speaks in our text, "Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits . . . If possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. . . Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him: if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head" (Romans 12:16-20).

Beloved, thus we ought to speak and do in all things, so as to convict the people around us and to win them, which is the holy and well-pleasing will of God. Oh beloved friends, our Saviour Jesus provides us with a beautiful and clear teaching when He says in Matthew 5, "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Therefore let us love all people with the right love. For this reason Paul says in our text, "Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil." Now, beloved, if I rightly understand Paul's words, he does not mean that we should hate all people, Oh no, oh no. Here we can clearly evaluate what we read in Revelation 2:6 when the Spirit of God says to the Church of Ephesians, "But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate." Therefore, beloved friends, Paul says in a certain place, ". . . and ye have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you." My beloved, I understand Paul's words as follow: We ought to have remorse regarding this man, but for the sake of the evil deed it is essential to put him out of our midst [A few words not decipherable] and give evidence that they are not in accord with the deed.

The Spirit says further in Revelation 2:15 in addressing the angel of the Church of Pergamos, "So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate." Thus the Spirit desires that we put such evil away but the person we ought to love. This is also how I understand the words of our Saviour Jesus when He says that if a man has a hundred sheep and if one goes astray, He leaves the ninety-nine on the mountain and goes and seeks the lost one. And when He finds it, He rejoices more for that one than for the ninety-nine who did not go astray. He also says that there is joy before the angels in heaven whenever a sinner repents of his evil deeds.

Therefore we ought not to eat or have much fellowship with such a one, so that they might be ashamed and consider their deeds. But we ought not to consider them as evil, but admonish them as a brother and do whatever will lead them back. But, beloved friends, those that are without [Something missing here].

I refer you to the teaching which is described in Romans 12:9,10, which reads as follows; "Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another." Hence, beloved friends, let us consider these words one after the other, for Paul writes Timothy and says, "As I besought

thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine." For at that time they came up with all kinds of teachings which were not commanded by Christ or the apostles. Just as it has been in our own times. Some in our midst have been protected from this. [A clause not clear].

Yet, beloved friends, but the one that means well and is grounded upon the prophetic word and upon the solid Rock, Jesus Christ, and is depending upon His Word and the teaching of the apostles' teaching, and remains steadfast, that one is not meant. But beloved friends, you know what has happened in our midst. They made themselves laws which were but man-made through which they wanted to deceive us. Our Saviour Jesus laments this fact and says that they serve me in vain because they teach but man-made laws. Such serve the flesh cleaving tenaciously to their laws. But note the words of the Saviour Jesus who said, "they serve me in vain," according to Matthew 15:9.

Lamentably they mean to serve God. Thus beloved friends, do evaluate all this carefully in light of the fundamental Stone the teaching of Jesus and the apostles. Yes, beloved, John says, "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1). My beloved, if during the time of the apostles the false spirit has gone out into the world, what do you think of our own times--yes, of these last times of which our Saviour tells us in Matthew 24 and says, "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect." Beloved friends, this describes very aptly the circumstances of our present time. How much more dangerous is it now than then, as the unique righteousness of Christ and the apostles has been effaced. Thus fall also the stars from heaven which are the teachers.

Satan comes into this darkness as an angel of light and performs great signs and wonders, of which we have heard and seen enough, and which destroy almost everything. Thus also our Saviour says, "Except those days would be shortened, there should no flesh be saved." But He has shortened those days so that some should remain. He says further that on that great day of judgment, "Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left." Yes, some shall be in bed and one will be taken and the other left. Beloved, that judgement will be precise and completely thorough; of two married people--where both of them have not sought to serve the Kingdom of God with all sincerity--one will be taken and the other left. Oh beloved friends, what a great responsibility each one has to take care, for we will all have to give an account for ourselves. And then we will receive our reward according to our works, after we have served God.

Oh beloved friends, my thoughts are mindful of that great day of judgment, which may already be near at hand. Oh that the great Judge might be gracious unto me. Oh what would I have most dearly but that I and my family could stand at His right hand; yes, and many more would wish the same. I trust that His angels will gather His own that are scattered far and wide. Now, beloved friends, I must again turn to my text which states that we must be ready to serve in that which has not been prohibited. But we read that we must hate, reject and avoid that which is contrary to the Word of God. For in other respects our Saviour Jesus says, if someone takes your cloak, let him also have your coat, if someone asks you to go

with them a mile, then go with them two. From this I gather that we should help those that are in need, wherever it is possible and not contrary to the Word of God. The evil in their midst, however, we must hate, reject and avoid.

But beloved friends, we are to be ready for every good work and be obedient to human authority in as far as it is not against God's Word. If something is prohibited, then we must stop, for we must obey God first and not man. But in things which are not against God's Word, Paul says concerning those who in his time probably did not want to submit to authority, that they should fear, submit and obey the authorities in all good works. And Peter says, "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may by your good words, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For it is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men."

Beloved friends, we must exercise good care in this that we do not work along with the strange yoke. At the same time we should not withstand their rule nor their government, nor should we rebel. We should be passive and obedient in everything in so far as it is not against the Word of God. Nor should we participate with word or deed in something that is unclean. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 6, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing: and I will receive you." If I understand correctly, this includes the manifold spiritual fellowship, for those who practice these teachings will have fellowship one with the other. In natural things also we must be separated from evil deeds, and reject and avoid them, even as our text says, "Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good."

Oh, beloved friends, our Saviour Jesus says that none is good "but the only God our Saviour Jesus, the good Shepherd, who gave His life for His own sheep." He is the true Prince of Peace and Intercessor before His heavenly Father. He is also our Sustainer and Ruler, who wants to be with us every day until the end of the world. He will also be our Judge.

Oh let us cling and hold fast unto Him. Let us truly trust His Word and let us cling to it so securely that nothing may separate us from it. Yes, may we fully trust Him in spirit and in truth, and worship Him in spirit and in truth without ceasing and embrace Him with love and say with Jacob, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." And let us walk solely in the truth, as His Word alone is the truth, even as He prayed so sincerely unto His heavenly Father and said;

I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name; those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture

might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth . . . That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:9-21).

Dearly beloved friends, serve God only for He alone is our eternal salvation. We should cling to Him alone and we should serve and obey Him alone. We should practice everything He teaches us for this is good. God calls so sincerely through the Prophet Isaiah and says, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness" (Isaiah 55:1-2). Jesus spoke in like manner on the last day of the great feast saying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:37,38).

Oh beloved friends, let us cling alone to that which is good, yes, to that which is good in essence, for none is good save only God alone. Hence we are not good, we are sick in the soul. His Word alone is holy and inspired and written by the Holy Spirit. Therefore let us eat with our spiritual mouth that which is good, namely, by searching in the scriptures and seeking to live thereby. Let us cling firmly thereto and we will find salvation in the Lord. Then our souls will be satisfied and we will say with David, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is nothing upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever" (Ps. 73). We should consider this and see how they went to the Father with peace, for they were satisfied like a stream. From such shall flow streams of living water. Yes, that their words [A line is blotted out] have flowed like a creek towards Zion and have taught the people in lowliness and humility and have said, "Be converted while His hand is still stretched out over you, for why do ye want to die, ye who are from the House of the Lord."

Behold, beloved friends, in this way the streams of living water have flowed from Him, and so much love toward their enemies. [A few lines struck out.] This is the eternal good of which we are to partake. This is the water of life which we are to drink out of the living fountain Jesus. When we do so, then we shall nevermore thirst and then we shall learn of Him lowliness and humility of heart. If we learn this of our Saviour Jesus, then we will be filled with love, which no stream can exhaust and no fire burn, for it is stronger than death and deeper than hell, so that you cannot overthrow it. Beloved friends, this is the good to which we should cling and of which our text speaks. Hence, let us cling to this good, for apart from the Word of God there is no good. Whatever we accept apart from it

is not of God but from the world, "and the world passes and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

Hence let us seek to do His will, yes, cling to and do what He has commanded us and forsake what He forbids and do nothing apart from His will. God spoke to Israel through His servant Joshua who should conquer and divide the land, yes, who with Israel should fight against such a fearful enemy--which according to the spies were people like the giant Enoch children, whose cities were fortified nearly unto heaven--so that nearly all Israel became discouraged. But Joshua remained courageous and faithful unto God. To him God said;

Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee; turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest (Joshua 1:7-9).

Note, beloved friends, God instructed Joshua that he should not to be afraid. He was to be courageous and of good cheer. He was not to depart from the law, neither to the left nor to the right. Revelation 22 teaches us in like manner, we are not to take away nor to add to the Scripture in any way. Paul says that we are to rejoice in the Lord. Thus consider rightly how wonderfully God guided \_\_ [Word not clear], for so many years wonderfully guided and protected from so many enemies.

Even now, beloved, when I was cast down by my enemies for a long time, how wonderfully God has guided. Should I not rejoice in the Lord and say with David that the Lord has done great things for us that we should rejoice. Should we not rejoice that the Lord has made manifest our enemies. He will also help us to overcome them. Thus be courageous and of good comfort; God--I trust--will again grant peace. He does not want to forsake us nor leave us. He wants to remain with us until the end of the world. But we must cling to Him, namely, to His holy Word and not depart therefrom, neither to the left nor to the right. This is the good to which we should cling according to our text. Let us consider it, as God says, day and night. Let us consider the life and conduct of the holy men. I cannot name them all here like Paul does in Hebrews 11. And so many have come after him out of many tribulations and have washed their robes white in the blood of the Lamb. These stand before us with their teaching as lights in the world. Oh beloved friends, they have taught us nothing but to keep the peace and the truth of the greatest commandment. Yes, that is the foremost commandment of which our text speaks and tells us to obey. Paul says, "Cleave to that what is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love."

Oh how the brotherly love has suffered in our midst for a period of time, and that on the part of some through fear, whether they would also be deceived

through us [A clause not clear]. Without it we will not see God. Hence I ask of you that, like those of Berea, you would search the Holy Scripture and pray together with us in lowliness and love for true knowledge. I hope--through the help of God--that what is the holy and well-pleasing will of God will thus come to pass. But, beloved friends, let us always do so in love and not through lust [A few words not clear] that some maintain certain laws so strictly that they break other laws thereby; by so doing they violate the teaching of love.

Behold, beloved friends, Paul speaks so earnestly regarding love in I Corinthians 13 and says, "And though, I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up." Beloved friends, love is not puffed up as if it knew something, but is humble and esteems the other higher than itself, does not behave itself unseemly, accepts correction and does not seek to hurt another, so as not to disturb peace. Love is willing to be longsuffering; yes, our Saviour Jesus exhorts us earnestly to do so and says, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." Concerning love Jesus says, "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you." In Mark 12, Jesus our Saviour says, when He was asked which was the greatest commandment of all, "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."

Beloved friends, this is based on the words of Jesus Himself; let us therefore most of all strive to keep this commandment. For of what benefit are the other commandments if we do not keep the foremost one. Oh for then all of our efforts would be futile. But, beloved, if brotherly love rules our hearts, then we will seek peace with all our energy. We will sincerely seek to be together in one accord in Spirit and in faith. If one of us views something somewhat differently than another, without Biblical grounds, we will still maintain peace and love, the greatest of all commandments. To breach this commandment and violate this love without a Biblical basis should be considered to be a great sin. Indeed, beloved friends, we should remember that it is a serious sin to destroy the great and foremost commandment in our midst. We see this in Matthew 18:6, where Jesus speaks about offending the least of us.

Dearly beloved, take note of what Menno Simons writes that the deceitful spirit works in a seemingly earnest, righteous and humble way. In this way he watches if he can destroy peace and love amongst the well-meaning brethren, for then he has gained so much. Oh, beloved friends, let us strive henceforth with all our might to gain the brotherly love which is cordial, because we clearly see that the enemy would have destroyed us otherwise and the truth made known. I ask you cordially, beloved friends, that you heed Paul's word when he teaches and says, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity" (I Cor. 16). To the Ephesians he says;

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with preparation of the gospel of peace" (Eph. 6:10-15).

Oh, beloved friends, we have a great need to proclaim the gospel of peace, so that brotherly love would be genuine in our midst. Then we will esteem one another higher than ourselves and deal honourably with one another. Paul says in our text, "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another." Oh, beloved friends, we are greatly in need of this preferring of one another. Beloved friends, I do not understand this to mean that we should address one another with high titles or by name, because our Saviour has forbidden this. This is what the Pharisees and the scribes sought for, and our Saviour Jesus says concerning them, "But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garment, And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi."

We, however, do not find that we are forbidden to honour those who are without if they demand it from us. Rather we are asked to do so. The Scripture says that we are to fear God and honour the king. In addition the apostle says that no one should be a stumbling block to the Jews nor Greeks. Our Saviour says, "But be ye not called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon earth: for one is your Father which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your master. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."

If we observe this in our own life in all things, then we may honour people and thus I stimulate them to honour. If, however, I approach them in an unfriendly way and not with honour, I stimulate them to unfriendliness and dishonour, if not openly than at least inwardly. In this regard I agree with Menno Simons. He says that love, politeness, friendliness and respect should characterize all Christian behaviour. I say with the Apostle Paul, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love" (Eph. 4:1,2).

Yes, beloved friends, with Paul I ask you, "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling." In Colossians 4 he says, "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." Remember at all times what speech is profitable and what deeds will promote love, peace and edification.

Further Paul says, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt." I understand this to mean that in humility and lowliness we would consider and know according to the Word of God what to answer any individual. Beloved friends, I cannot understand the Holy Scripture otherwise but that we ought to be lowly, humble, friendly, loving and respectful toward all people and towards one another. This I desire from the depths of my heart and that we would do accordingly, for then, I trust, that the God of peace and love will grant us His peace and love. Through this I hope that we as the elect would gain eternal rest and peace in heaven with all the saints.

Now, beloved friends, I want to conclude my explanation of the text and introduction. Yet I cannot neglect to remind you again to do everything in love, so as to apprehend the Holy Spirit aright. I reminded you first of all of how our Saviour Jesus says, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Beloved, this is a very essential teaching for us sinful beings, as we are always prone to divide, although we speak the truth. For if we at all times had our hearts filled with humility and respect one another more than ourselves, then beloved, the results would often be different from what they are. Beloved, the Scriptures are filled with this important teaching. Paul says that what is highly esteemed by man is foolishness before God, for everything that exalts itself will be debased and what is debased and humbled will be exalted. This is what our Saviour Jesus teaches in Matthew 23, and because it is such an important teaching, we accept it.

For this purpose Paul exhorts us so urgently unto a love and humility which understands this. In Philippians 2 the Apostle Paul says, "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies." Beloved friends, these are four very important points, and as Paul hopes that the Philippians still have them, he says, "Fulfil ye my joy." Beloved friends, the evil enemy often wants to take this away from us that we can be of one mind. But most beloved brethren, I have this expectation regarding you, even as Paul had for the Philippians. I trust that you will pursue this, as Paul says, "Ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." And all this according to the Word of the Lord and teachings of the apostles.

And if it happens that we do not exactly agree in all aspects, then let us behave properly, for this is how it is meant to be. Beloved friends, the kingdom of heaven, says Jesus in the Holy Scripture, is as a treasure hidden in an acre which we have to seek and dig up. As Menno Simons says further on, to understand the spiritual we must have an understanding of the Scripture. As a result it is very essential that we are led by the Holy Spirit. He says, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, . . . and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see" (Rev. 3:18).

Thus, beloved friends, I want to admonish all of you sincerely that we permit the Holy Spirit to counsel us and buy of Him gold, yes, also eyesalve to anoint our spiritual eyes of the heart, so that we would see spiritually; then the light which is in us will not be darkness. Beloved friends, there are now many evil spirits abroad in the world working with much power under the pretence of holiness in order to darken the light of righteousness. As a result we have a need to have spiritual discernment to discern the spirits whether they be from God or from Satan.

Now, beloved friends, upon the basis of our text, I have explained the love

of which Paul speaks. In the first place, I understand, it is not to be false. Furthermore the love of God for us sinful people is so great that He gave His beloved Son as a fearful sacrifice. He taught the people in a loving and humble way and called them, but they responded in a fearful way; they crucified and killed Him. In love He, in the midst of pain, prayed for His murderers and said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And Stephen did likewise. Beloved friends, this is the example we should follow. Jesus said to His disciples when He called them, "I will make you fishers of men." Thus God has called His own at all times, so that they would be a light onto the world. We should seek others in this manner so as to win them. We ought to take note, as Paul says, that we are not to be a stumbling block to anyone, so that our calling will not be blasphemed (2 Cor. 6). Take good note, beloved friends, of what Peter meant, for he addressed them tactfully and exhorted them to listen. But those who were in the church, but went astray, he has rebuked at times very sharply. Of this we may read a good deal more.

Thus, beloved friends, accept this in love from me, because I know that we are not all of the same mind and do not have the same love, the one which is of God. If we have this, then we will learn of Him humility. Beloved friends, if we love God with a pure heart and with all our soul and power, and if we are thereby born again spiritually, then it is not essential to write much of the other love, for we have thereby become partakers of the first resurrection. We are taught of God, but not according to pure reason and logic, but according to God's Word. Peter said, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawns, and the day star arises in your hearts."

Beloved friends, if only we might say with David, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Now, beloved friends, I have explained to you what Paul says in our text, "Abhor that which is evil." Beloved, we are to hate every kind of evil, not only what is outward, but also that which is inward; because, beloved, I think others too have had experiences like me where we had disputation threatening constantly. You have read what Paul says of this in Romans 7. Thus, beloved, we must crucify our flesh daily, with all its lusts and desires. Therefore our Saviour Jesus says that the one who hates his life, that one will retain it unto eternal life. Beloved, in our flesh there dwells no good, and therefore, beloved, let us take heed and stand on our watch, because the Bridegroom is at hand. Let us have our lamps filled with the oil of sincere faith and the fire of pure love for Jesus, as He is coming for judgment. His messengers indicate this. There are the many fine angels [?] which have fallen from heaven. Beloved, no one should have to receive the reward of the godless.

Now, beloved friends, Paul says that we are to hate the evil, even as love hates the evil. And beloved friends, if we love Jesus in truth and have our spiritual eyes anointed, then I trust we will detect evil and also hate it, although not the people, but their works. But the one whose heart is filled with evil and does not forsake it, that one--if we cling to the truth--we will have to shun and separate; we will have to hate the evil, and that in such a way so as not to become a stumbling block or hinderance to those that are without.

\*[Asterisk refers to two comments and quotations from Menno Simons added by reference at the end of the sermon which are inserted here] Menno

Simons, in explaining to his brethren the right basis of the ban, says; ". . . 5) The ban is ordained for the love of the church, because by complete fellowship with the backsliders those who are without will think evil of us believing that we constitute one church with those that are without. This disobedience would put the Word of God and His Church in a very bad light." In another place Menno writes that, "... therefore, it is very essential that we shun the backsliders, so that the world and they may know that we do not acknowledge such evil members as brethren, and so that the Word of the Lord and His Church for their sakes would not be despised. From this we may conclude that the people of the world are not their brethren until they have become such.

Menno Simons in writing to his Gemeinde says the following concerning the ban and the church; "that such dealings are completely contrary to and against the teaching of love for the following reasons: 1) they are against the love of God and Jesus Christ, because they neglect His Holy Word and administration, and its injunctions. 2) against the love of the brethren, because their rebellion and despising leads to overwhelming anger and disappointment. 3) against the love of their own souls, seeing that they deliberately resist and give themselves over unto destruction. 4) against the love for those who are banned, because they mock the counsel of the Holy Spirit and do not lead the separated one unto remorse and repentance, so that they would turn back to God. 5) they are also against the love of the Gemeinde, because through such fellowship with backsliders we cause the ones who are without to think that we and the backsliders constitute one people and one church, whereby the Holy Word of God and His church are put to shame and are blasphemed through their disobedience."

Also in another place--page 344--Menno Simons writes thus; "2) We say that many of the worldly also consider themselves to be as brethren, and many would like to be greeted as such. Therefore it is very important that we shun such backsliders, so that both the world and they would know and confess that we do not regard them as brethren who are unclean and blameable in their life, so that the Word of the Lord and His Church would not be despised by the perverse world." [Back to page 28 of the sermon]. In prison Menno Simons writes to the church that they should take heed regarding those who depart from us. In another place he writes that they should "take heed in exercising the ban that you do not become proud so as to engender hatred like the others. Therefore, take care when you seek to remedy a small evil, that you do not create a bigger one. The shunning is good if done in the right way, i.e. to avoid stumbling. I would gladly see you to take care, and to warn and caution people not to apply one Scripture reference too strictly and thus violate others. Some use the ban too readily without proper consideration. Therefore let us properly consider all things, heeding patience and longsuffering; and let us also deal that way with our fellow servants, so as not to be a stumbling block to anyone, whether the world or the Church of God." Thus far from Menno Simons.

I understand the beloved Menno Simons to say that he did not want to use the ban too readily and that we ought not to deal high-mindedly, lest we create a greater evil and we come to a fall thereby. Regarding eating and drinking, I understand Paul to say that the sinner should not be totally shunned and pushed to the others, so that he is led to realize his shame and be converted. The spiritual shunning is commanded regarding every evil of those who leave us in a friendly

way, and not only regarding the spiritual Communion. If we have love, we will hate whatever is evil. Consider, beloved, what Paul says in Ephesians 6:5-10;

Be not ye therefore partakers with them, for ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light. (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. . . . But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise. Redeeming the time, because the days are evil (Ephesians 5:7-16).

Now, beloved friends, I have reminded you about what Paul commands us, that we should most earnestly cling to the good. I desire from the depths of my heart that we would cling to the good sincerely. But there is really no good but God alone. We should cling unto God in the Spirit, so that nothing will separate or force us to depart from Him. In this regard we have to say with Jacob, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." I trust He will do this and bless us also with all spiritual blessings, and that He will also anoint our spiritual eyes, so that we might learn to have spiritual discernment in as much as is essential for us.

Beloved friends, it is essential—even very essential—that we cling to the only good, yes to the only good, yes to His Word, because evil constantly seeks to tear us apart. Hence, "quit you like men, be strong" to withstand the evil in the last hour. Beloved friends, nearly everything is encompassed by evil, as the enemy has conquered nearly everything. This, I believe, we may conclude through what I have told you. If we will not cling as firmly to God's Word and the teachings of the apostles as He commanded Joshua, then, I doubt, whether we will prevail very long, for one goes this way and the other that. The result is that they become discouraged under the light and lowly yoke; and it becomes a burden. But why? Because the love is not truly sincere and the humility and lowliness of Jesus' command is not accepted. Paul likewise teaches that love is to be cordial and that we are to respect one another.

Beloved brethren and sisters in the Lord, accept my very imperfect teaching which I have given in great weakness but in love, because today I have explained to you in part my understanding. Once more I beg of you to accept the faithful love and learn of the Lord genuine humility. For herein we shall find peace unto our souls. I say again to all, brethren and sisters, please accept all this from me--an aged man--in love, for God wills it and is my witness that I gladly accept correction but it must be based on true knowledge of His holy Word. I am obligated to preach it to you the way God has given it to me. Should I have failed, then please help me aright, though with the Word of the Lord and the Apostles.

I have taught for over 31 years and during this time I have had to wrestle much against the deceitful wiles of Satan and the false holiness of the spirits. But to the great and merciful God be eternal praise and honour and thanks for having led and kept me so wonderfully up to this hour. During this time I have been

taught and furthermore I want to be taught, for I know before long I will have to forsake my body--my mortal tabernacle--and then appear before the judgment seat and give an account of how I have utilized my talent. Therefore it is my sincere desire and supplication to God that through His great grace we could all be taken up to meet the Lord in the air and thus be with the Him forever. Amen!

## **Translator's Comments.**

August 4, 1992

1) The grammar and the spelling in the German copy has not been corrected or changed, except in a few instances.

2) Of all of Klaas Reimer's writings this sermon was the most difficult to transcribe. It was not possible to decipher some words and phrases and in a few instances the sentences were not clear.

3) In translating I have tried to stick close to the text. As a result the English is stilted in many instances.

4) The division into paragraphs is my doing and has not been made all too correctly.

5) Towards the end of the sermon Klaas Reimer has incorporated two comments and quotations from the writings of Menno Simons by reference to an asterisk. These comments were found at the end of the sermon and have been inserted in the appropriate place in the text of the sermon.

6) Throughout the sermon Klaas Reimer expresses a deep concern for the correctness of interpretation of scripture and for the sanctification of the Church. Klaas Reimer correctly believed in the Bible as the Word of God, in God's holiness and goodness, in salvation through Jesus Christ, in genuine repentance and sincere faith in Christ. As a result the sermon has a great message even for our time.

7) Most Biblical quotations have been placed between quotations marks and copied directly from the Bible.

8) The original of this sermon is in the Archives of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference, 440 Main Street, Steinbach, Manitoba, R0A 2A0.

*Rev. Ben Hoepfner, 20-411 Valhalla Dr, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R2G OY1*



# PART THREE

## ABRAHAM FRIESEN 1782-1849

### Chapter One

### A Biography

**A Biography of Aeltester Abraham Friesen (1782-1849), Ohrloff, Molotschna Colony, South Russia: Evangelical Missioner.** By Delbert F. Plett. Based on a paper presented at a History Symposium of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference at the Steinbach Bible College, Steinbach, Manitoba, on March 13, 1987.

---

#### **Introduction.**

Abraham Friesen (1782-1849) was a man with a vision. In the words of Martin Luther King, we might say he had a dream, a dream of a Christian fellowship or Gemeinde restored to its apostolic foundations. The Spirit would speak to the world round about wherever believers gathered to articulate their lives according to the teachings of Jesus. Such a vision was unique in an age often characterized by rationalism on the one hand and fanatical separatism on the other.

This biography will consider the life and work of Abraham Friesen relative to this dream. Who was he? and what was the significance of his life to the greater Christian community. Such an examination must be anchored in a spirit of charity. Although Abraham Friesen was a great man of God, he too had feet of clay and was subject to all the foibles and follies of humankind. The same spirit must also apply relative to those individuals and movements which were opposed to the Kleine Gemeinde (KG) and its interpretation of the Gospel. With the hindsight of history, their zeal often seems fanatical and their beliefs rooted in fantasy. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that they too were human beings who sought to serve their faith to the best of their abilities.

#### **Family Background.**

Abraham Friesen was born on July 13, 1782, in West Prussia. His father was Abraham von Riesen (or Friesen), born on September 28, 1756,<sup>1</sup> and his mother was Margaretha Wiebe, born in October of 1754. His parents were married in January of 1779. It appears that the senior Abraham von Riesen were living in Tiegenhagen at the time of their marriage and thereafter, as their oldest son Peter von Riesen was born in that village on November 11, 1779.<sup>2</sup> The emigration records for 1804 indicate that the Abraham von Riesen family originated from

Kalteherberge, Prussia.<sup>3</sup> This was a village located on the Elbinger Weichsel, about half way between the village of Tiegenhof and the Baltic Sea. The information that Abraham von Riesen (1756-1810) came from Kalteherberge has long been a red herring in the search for the ancestry of this family. A census record of 1793 shows that this family was not resident in Kalteherberge. The matter is further confused by the fact that there was a different Abraham von Riesen family living in that village at the time.<sup>4</sup> It appears that Abraham von Riesen (1756-1810) moved from Tiegenhagen to Kalteherberge sometime between 1793 and 1798, as son Peter von Riesen (1779-1847) is shown as being from Kalteherberge at the time of his baptism in 1798. Abraham von Riesen (1782-1849) is shown as being from Kalteherberge at the time of his baptism in 1801.<sup>5</sup>

A widow Friesen is listed in Tiegenhagen in the 1776 Konsignation, ". . . 2 sons, mm, Orloffelfelde Gemeinde." It has been suggested that Abraham von Riesen was one of the two sons listed. Henry Schapansky has questioned this proposition, writing as follows,

This is certainly possible--I have located one son Nickolas--although I rather doubt it, on the basis that Abraham was probably of conservative views and this would not fit in with an Orloffelfelde Gemeinde connection (Frisian). Also, as far as I know, no Wiebes married into the Frisian Church before 1820 (approximately).<sup>6</sup>

The village of Tiegenhagen was located more or less in the middle of the Grosswerder, a low-lying triangle of land situated between the city of Danzig (today known as Gedansk) on the Baltic Sea to the west, the town of Elbing to the east, and the city of Marienburg at the south tip. The Mennonites living in the Grosswerder were mainly of the Flemish branch and belonged to the Tiegenhagen Gemeinde whose house of worship was in the centrally located village of the same name. It has been noted that almost one-half of the "core" group of KG families came from the Tiegenhagen congregation (see Part One, Chapter Five).

The villages of Tiegenhagen and Kalteherberge, where Abraham Friesen presumably grew up, were located only several miles from Petershagen, where Heinrich and Agatha Reimer, the parents of Klaas E. Reimer (1770-1837) lived. Accordingly, there is little doubt that Abraham Friesen and Klaas Reimer, as well as many other future members of the KG, were already well acquainted with each other as young children. Further research of the Prussian roots of the KG will undoubtedly continue to flesh out the story as to who these people were and why they made the decisions they did. It appears that the Tiegenhagen congregation played a very significant role in the formation of the KG, a factor which was not emphasized sufficiently in *The Golden Years*.<sup>7</sup>

The possible family connections of Mrs. Abraham von Riesen, nee Margaretha Wiebe, should not be overlooked in this context as the Wiebe family was prominent among the Mennonites in Prussia. Gerhard Wiebe, for instance, was the Aeltester of the Elbing Gemeinde from 1778 to 1798, a period which coincided with the formative years of the KG founders. Aeltester Wiebe had considerable influence on this group particularly through his twenty article *Confession of Faith* which they regarded as an authoritative exposition of evangelical doctrine.<sup>8</sup>

Shortly after the emigration of the Abraham von Riesen family to Russia in 1803, son Abraham Friesen (1782-1849) married Katharina Wiebe who was born on October 30, 1781.<sup>9</sup> Henry Schapansky has provided the following data regarding her family:

Katharina Friesen was the daughter of Heinrich Wiebe and Katharina Schierling (born 1751), originally from Neiteichterwald. Heinrich Wiebe died before 1804. Katharina Schierling is listed in the emigration records of 1804, as follows: 'Family No. 31. Jakob Dyck, Berwalde, Hakenbuedner, to the Molotschna, married Catharina Schierling, Berwalde, to the Molotschna. Step-children, Heinrich Wiebe, Catharina and Elizabeth. Paul Schellenberg.<sup>10</sup>

Herny Schapansky has written further that in 1805 Jakob Dueck settled in the village of Ohrloff, Molotschna, where he owned Wirtschaft 13 and 14. The family is shown as follows in the 1808 Revisions-Listen:

Jakob Dueck [sic] 42 from Berwalde, Amt Tiegenhof, landowner, wife Catarina 57, sons Heinrich 25 and Paul 19. Property, 3 wagons, 1 plow, 2 harrows, 7 horses, 8 cattle, 1 sheep, 30 loads of hay.<sup>11</sup>

Additional information on this family is provided by the Verzeichnis of 1812/1813 to the effect that Mrs. Jakob Dueck, nee Katharina Schierling, died October 6, 1812, and that on December 17, 1812, Jakob Dueck remarried to Justina Wiens, the daughter of Wilhelm Wiens from Wirtschaft 2 in Ohrloff.<sup>12</sup> Jakob Dueck played a prominent role in the development of the ecclesiastical structures of the Molotschna Flemish Gemeinde and a number of the early brotherhood meetings were held at his place. His step-son Heinrich Wiebe became a minister of the KG in 1824 and one of the leaders of the false humility movement in 1828. Accordingly, these connections are of considerable interest.<sup>13</sup>

The family of Abraham von Riesen (1756-1810) and Margaretha Wiebe (1754-1810) could be considered normative for the parents of early KG adherents. They were moderately wealthy and well connected in their community. Abraham von Riesen (1756-1810) is listed as a grain miller (Gruetz-Mueller) in the emigration records of 1803.<sup>14</sup> The Revisions-Listen of 1808 show Abraham von Riesen Sr. as a wealthy Landwirt or landowner.<sup>15</sup> It is evident that the family belonged to the upper middle class among the Prussian Mennonites. An important characteristic of the Abraham von Riesen home was the high regard for the classical writings of the Anabaptist-Mennonite faith.<sup>16</sup> This included Reformation leaders such as Menno Simons and Dirk Philips, as well as later writers such as Thielmann von Bracht, Pieter Peters and Pieter Jans Twisck, in Holland, and George Hansen and Hans von Steen in Prussia. The strong family ties among the children and grandchildren of Abraham Friesen (1752-1810) and Katharina Wiebe (1754-1810) indicate that the atmosphere in their household was one of love and caring.

Another factor common to those who would later be attracted to the KG reform movement was a deep anxiety about spiritual developments in the Mennonite Church in Prussia. There was a manifest concern regarding the inroads

of separatist pietism as well as increasing secularization. Aeltester Peter Epp, the father-in-law of Klaas Reimer, for example, stated this view very strongly.<sup>17</sup> Hope was expressed that a renewed peoplehood could be constituted on the steppes of Russia.

#### **Russia, New Beginnings, 1805.**

The Abraham von Riesen family joined the emigration movement departing from Prussia in 1803 and settling in the village of Ohrloff, Molotschna, on June 15, 1805. Father Abraham von Riesen settled on Wirtschaft 10 together with his three unmarried sons—Johann, David and Klaas, and one daughter—Regina, still at home. He was one of the more prosperous Molotschna pioneers, owning 4 wagons, 7 horses and 24 cattle. Son Abraham Friesen settled next door to his parents on Wirtschaft 11. As already mentioned, he married Catharina Wiebe (1781-1854), shortly after the emigration.

It should be noted that Ohrloff was destined to become one of the important village communities in the Molotschna Colony. Settling next door on Wirtschaft 7 was the Cornies family whose son was none other than the great Johann Cornies, Chairman of the Agricultural Society. Ohrloff also became the home of early pietist influences in the Molotschna. It was here that the first Zentral Schule was started in 1821, complete with a school teacher by the name of Tobias Voth. Voth was fanatically committed to the teachings of Jung-Stilling and used the classroom to instill these teachings in the tender hearts of his pupils. The only problem was that this was at complete odds with the majority of the people in the community. One can well sympathize with the parents in such a situation; this was one of the major causes of the ensuing cultural battles between the "conservative" Grosse Gemeinde and the "progressive" Ohrloff Gemeinde.

Friesen was well liked within this community and seemingly enjoyed an active social life as a young married man. In his 1820 "Letter to the Brothers and Sisters" he talks of dressing fashionably and even of smoking, which was common among Christians at the time. The social life included "singing, laughing, playing and vain empty, sinful gossip was carried on."<sup>18</sup> These activities seemingly caused little concern to the ministerial of the Grosse Gemeinde. In fact, the popular young vollwirt from Ohrloff was himself elected as a deacon in the village church in 1817, a sure sign of social advancement and popularity. Friesen describes the conviction of his heart and how he frequently shed tears over the lack of earnestness in his own spiritual life. Over a period of time he started anew to study the Holy Scriptures and the writings of the faith, such as already referred to. His spirit was vexed by the lack of firm theological direction in the Gemeinde. His thoughts often turned to the expressed concerns of his brother-in-law Klaas Reimer, who had established his little flock as an independent KG only short years ago in 1816. At this point Friesen was lead by the Spirit to commit his life and being to a more arduous spiritual pilgrimage. In 1818 he made one of the most difficult decisions of his life and joined the KG. Friesen did not condemn his former brethren and asked that they would not attribute such a view to him. He wrote ". . . [I] myself am full of sin and wretchedness and that I have nothing righteous to present to my God. Therefore I must continually pray to God for grace and forgiveness."<sup>19</sup>

### Personal Life.

Until recently only little was known about the personal life of Abraham Friesen and his family. A number of documents written by him between 1821 and 1843 (See Part Three, Chapter Four) have since come to hand which provide fresh insight in this regard. An interesting introspective into his character is provided by his high view of the role of women in Mennonite society. In his "Answer regarding spousal property rights", Friesen passionately defended the traditional Mennonite inheritance laws whereby women were accorded equal rights with men. Using the allegory of Christ relating to the church like a bridegroom to his bride and the fact that there will be full participation by both genders in the spiritual and heavenly realm, Friesen felt that there must likewise be full community of sharing in the material realm. If a man and woman were to be one when they are married surely they must share their property as well. The wife was placed besides her man as a helper and was entitled to her due reward, namely, equal property rights. Canadian poet Patrick Friesen has expressed the view that there was a strong matriarchal culture within the KG even a century later in Canada.<sup>20</sup> One speculates whether such cultural characteristics had their roots in conservative intellectuals like Friesen or whether the restitutional vision of the KG facilitated the preservation of such attitudes from earlier times. By comparison the majority of the Russian Mennonites, and especially those who remained there until the 1920s were much more influenced by the patriarchal society within which they lived.

Another personal view of Abraham Friesen is provided by his correspondence with his older brother Peter von Riesen who had remained in Prussia in 1804 when the rest of the family emigrated. Peter was very sympathetic to the decision which his siblings in Russia had made relative to the KG and its vision of Christianity. He was so impressed that he himself completed the enormous task of translating Menno Simons' *Foundation of Christian Doctrine* from Dutch to German and then publishing the same together with his brothers Abraham and Klaas in Russia. Although Peter went there twice to visit, he vacillated when it came to moving there and also regarding the practice of the faith which he shared with his brethren. At the time of Abraham Friesen's letter of 1824, Peter was supporting pietist missionary societies such as the *Berliner Verein*.<sup>21</sup> Abraham tried to explain that there was not much benefit to the kingdom of God from supporting such organizations which were spreading false teachings such as Jung-Stilling's premillennialism in Russia and elsewhere (See below). In 1825--possibly as a result of Abraham's letter--Peter went on a long trip to Russia to visit Abraham and his other siblings.<sup>22</sup>

In his poem of 1828 Abraham provided more detail regarding his relationship with his brother and their personal lives. He mentions that he is well but his wife is not. It seems that Peter's wife has suffered from depression and Abraham and Katharina respond with encouragement. According to stanza 9 Peter had provided some pecuniary aid to his brethren in Russia. Abraham also reports on the malaise within the KG which has recently come to light and the fact that two ministers have been released. This is an unmistakable reference to the false-humility movement and the two ministers would be Cornelius Janzen of Petershagen--Klaas Reimer's co-founder of the KG, and Heinrich Wiebe of Ohrloff--Abraham's brother-in-law. In stanza 14 Abraham refers to four men who have been excommunicated and reaccepted into the Gemeinde, which probably

refers to Klaas Friesen of Lindenau, Martin Warkentin of Blumstein, Heinrich Wiebe of Ohrloff and Bernhard Rempel of Muntau.<sup>23</sup> On a more positive note, a couple has been accepted into the Gemeinde by transfer and six by baptism. Evidently the publication of the Menno Simons' books was already in the planning stages as stanza 19 refers to printing of books. This could also refer to the printing of Peter Peters' *Mirror of Greed* which was published by the KG in 1827. In stanzas 20 to 27 reference is made to the plague of locusts which stripped the fields in the Molotschna bare in less than a month so that only half the rye and a little barley could be harvested. Stanza 28 to 34 provide a description of a Molotschna sheep farming enterprise. It appears that Peter either funded the purchase of a herd by Abraham or else bought a herd which Abraham was looking after for him. Conditions in 1828 were obviously not profitable for sheep farming and Abraham mentions that his children had not taken any sheep because it would only have resulted in losses for Peter. Abraham closes by encouraging his brother spiritually and regarding his contemplated move to Russia.

Four years later, in 1832, Peter visited his siblings in Russia for a second time. At the time of this visit he seems to have been an arch-conservative who argued for strict shunning within the KG in which matter he was successfully opposed by his brother-in-law Klaas Reimer.<sup>24</sup> However, by the time of Abraham's letter of 1833, things seem to have changed considerably. He makes reference to the printer's proofs for the Menno Simons' books, a sign that the two brothers are collaborating closely, notwithstanding some theological differences. Abraham was upset at the content of two letters from Prussia (probably pietist tracts) which Peter has forwarded to him. He queried why Peter was distancing himself spiritually and emotionally from his brethren in Russia and suggested that this may have been because of the adverse economic times which they had experienced. The drought had wreaked havoc and rye and wheat screenings have already been sold for as much as 30 ruble per tshwert. Fodder was expensive and difficult to come by so that horses were being quartered 200 verst away at great cost.

By comparison Peter had done very well during this period. He had recently moved to Rosenort and taken over a large estate. Abraham encouraged him to maintain a disposition of humility and esteem for people of low estate—including his maids and men servants. Abraham regarded this as a Biblical directive. He closed his letter by lamenting the change in attitude which this comparative wealth has brought to his older brother. Peter's wife has apparently not written at all so that Abraham's wife and siblings ". . . feel as if death has separated us [them] spiritually as well as physically." In spite of the harsh tone of the letter, the relationship between the two men remained very close. Peter always missed his family on the steppes of Russia and shortly after his death in 1847 his daughter, and son-in-law Cornelius Janzen made the move which he had dreamt of but never seen in reality. The letters reveal two brothers who loved each other dearly and who were bonded closely so that they could discuss openly their deepest spiritual convictions and exchange admonishment and encouragement. Abraham's relationship with Peter reveals a man who was deeply concerned regarding the spiritual and material well-being of his brother and his fellow human beings.

## Faith and Practice.

The story of Abraham Friesen's ministerial career is relatively well known; he quickly became one of the prominent leaders in the KG. In 1823 he was elected as minister and in 1838 as Aeltester to replace Klaas Reimer, who had died the previous year. He served this office until 1847 when his nephew Johann F. Friesen (1808-1872) of Neukirch was elected as Aeltester. Abraham died two years later on July 1, 1849. The details of Abraham Friesen's ministry, the letters he wrote and the actions he took are well documented in *The Golden Years* and are readily available for further reading. A full length preparatory sermon for baptism by Abraham Friesen has been translated and published in 1986.<sup>25</sup>

An examination of some of the major issues and events which Abraham Friesen (1782-1848) encountered and dealt with will serve to illustrate his character and beliefs. One of the interesting impressions of Aeltester Friesen is his involvement in the case of Anna Thiessen. She had been arrested and imprisoned in 1821 for the crime of incest with her father. The imprisonment had apparently occurred with the tacit approval of the Grosse Gemeinde, at that time under the leadership of Aeltester Bernhard Fast (1783-1861). Fast's thinking evidently was that such a sinner must be banned from the Gemeinde and then delivered over to the civil authorities for punishment. Here the blending of Church and State to which the KG reformers had objected right from the start, is again evident.

In his 1821 "Petition to Aeltester Fast," Friesen describes the deplorable conditions which Anna Thiessen and her father experienced in their incarceration. They were cold and miserable, lacking proper clothing, facing starvation and eaten savagely by lice. To compound matters the father, Franz Thiessen died in prison and Anna wept day and night because of her heartfelt sorrow. Friesen was indignant that this situation was allowed to continue, and writes as follows,

Oh, how can you continue to be so loveless towards your fellow being? . . . In the evening you and your loved ones proceed to your warm beds in peaceful repose, but she must go to sleep on a cold floor and is separated from her loved ones . . . By comparison this woman must lie outside together with the poor Lazarus and has had her body afflicted by insects. Oh, beloved, where is the fulfilment of the commandment 'Love thy neighbour as yourself.'<sup>26</sup>

Unfortunately, Friesen's appeal was unsuccessful. In 1824 Anna was banished to Siberia where she remained until her death. It should not be forgotten that the KG itself had faced the threat of deportation to Siberia at the time of its formation in 1812 and again in 1824. The young inexperienced deacon standing up against the powerful establishment under Aeltester Fast, provides a compelling portrait of spiritual courage and fortitude.

Another highlight of Abraham Friesen's ministry was his 1832 "Epistle to Heinrich Balzer." In *The Golden Years*, Friesen is characterized as the evangelical missionary, meaning that he was a man with a Biblical mission, and this letter is typical of his philosophy. Heinrich Balzer (1800-1846) was a brilliant writer and minister of the pietistical Ohrloff Gemeinde. Over the years Balzer had come under the conviction that matters were amiss in the Mennonite world. He eventually recognized that the KG was one group which had sought to rediscover

the vision of the early forefathers in the faith. Balzer corresponded with Friesen seeking out or proving their teachings. The 1832 "Epistle to Heinrich Balzer" is Friesen's reply.<sup>27</sup>

One of the matters which evidently concerned Balzer was the untruths being spread about the KG--that they considered themselves to be the only true church. Friesen aggressively refuted this aspersion. He acknowledged that there are those who "have not continued in the salvation giving words of Jesus Christ" and they "cannot do otherwise than as the apostle says, 'from such withdraw thyself.' But this is done not in the sense of a superior piety, perfection or having seized hold of all truth, rather "that I can well and truly say that we are 'pressing towards the mark' together with Paul. (Philippians 3:13)."<sup>28</sup>

Another point of interest in this letter is Friesen's response to Balzer's accusation that the KG was not on Biblical ground in its unequivocal denial of the teaching of premillennialism, which was a major issue among the Russian Mennonites at this time. This teaching was being spread in the Molotschna Colony in the 1820s by separatist-pietist missionaries from Germany, as well as by the later, and often poorer, Prussian Mennonite immigrants. Especially influential were the interpretations of a certain professor Jung-Stilling from the University of Wuerttemberg, who taught that Russia would be the safe haven of the persecuted believers during the tribulation and that the Czar was the protector of the church against the evil enemy, Satan, represented by France and Rationalism. This teaching was accepted as gospel truth by many pietists and inspired the emigration of thousands of devout believers from Germany to Russia, including many Mennonites who had been converted to these teachings in the Old Country.<sup>29</sup>

Thus a rather unfortunate scenario was developing. The fanatical separatist-pietists prepared to give their all for the Saviour coming to save the poor ignorant Mennonites in Russia and to impart the truths of the Gospel to them. On the other side, there was the earnest Aeltester and shepherd of his flock, Abraham Friesen, who humbly allowed himself to be led by the Spirit of God to stand against the popular wisdom of his time. In his letter Friesen states that this spirit has never been understood in such a way by the nonresistant Christians.

Therefore we delineate against this teaching as something frightful, and we do so out of love for our fellowman . . . I will take no part in such a rejection [of the gospel]. I cannot consider myself very intelligent, but nevertheless, I do have knowledge within my heart that Christ's reign of grace has already commenced and that the time of His first coming has already brought the Gospel to life in full might and clarity.<sup>30</sup>

With the hindsight of history these millennial teachings can be recognized for what they were, little more than fanciful superstitions. Yet, the KG was ridiculed for its stand on what would be widely accepted today as sound gospel teaching. Happily Friesen was able to dissuade Balzer from this view, adding one of the most powerful defenders of the faith to the church in the process. In my mind this exemplifies the ministry of Friesen as the evangelical missionary.<sup>31</sup>

As already seen in the case of Anna Thiessen, Friesen was a man of spiritual compassion who did not allow the "hard" teachings of Scripture to inhibit his care

and concern for his fellowman. In his "Ein Kleines Aufsatz", Klaas Reimer refers to an 1835 incident where Friesen's brother-in-law, Cornelius Sawatzky, became indisposed to the KG because of certain disciplinary action which had been taken against his daughter. The result was the Sawatzky was eventually separated from the KG. At this time, Ohm Abraham wrote a lengthy letter to his brother-in-law in which he admonished him for rejecting his former brethren and the bad example he was leaving for his family. But Friesen also expressed his love for his brother-in-law, comparing the situation of an erring one in the Gemeinde to the parable of the prodigal son:

. . . that when the Father heard that he [the son] was grieving, he ran out to greet him. And since I have not yet heard that you are desirous of coming to us, I must remain standing at a distance and lament and say together with Jesus that if you only realized what would serve to give you peace you would reconsider the matter.<sup>32</sup>

Friesen's compassionate entreaties were successful for Sawatzky's widow remained in the KG as did most of their children.<sup>33</sup>

Another major concern in Abraham Friesen's ministry was the issue of discipline in the church, which, if the Anabaptist-Mennonite millennial views were accepted, was to be the bride of Christ, without spot and wrinkle. In the view of Friesen, discipline was the corollary of discipleship. The Gemeinden, which were the action groups of the church, in their collective wisdom had the scriptural obligation to establish a communal piety for those who were drawn to the banner of the cross, just as the early Gemeinden had done during the time of the apostles. Friesen was called upon to address this issue a number of times, which also indicates that he was tireless leader, counselling his parishioners and encouraging them in their spiritual lives before problems could get too deeply rooted. In his 1845 *Eine Einfache Erklärung* he defends the KG against the charge that their discipline is too harsh. Friesen gently asks the question, "Who are the more compassionate Christians, those who overlook the mistakes where the Word of God commands a punishment, or those who humbly try to practise the teachings of the New Testament . . . so that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus?"<sup>34</sup> He saw discipline as an instrument of love to be employed for the spiritual betterment of the transgressor and the uplifting of the Gemeinde.

Obviously the standards of communal piety which various Gemeinden have employed over the years have not always stood the test of time, and naturally, these standards will vary from one Gemeinde to another, and from one time period to another. Friesen himself criticized the application of these principles by other Gemeinden, as in the case of the banning and shunning of Klaas Reimer by the Grosse Gemeinde in 1812 or of Anna Thiessen in 1821. Nevertheless, the incident of the false-humility pietists in approximately 1828 clearly convinced the KG leadership that they could no longer omit to practise this holy ordinance. Abraham Friesen made no apologies for this position and sought in grace to practise the same in true Christian charity.

#### **Books and Publications.**

When all the dust has settled and the KG source material has been

incorporated into Russian Mennonite historiography, nothing will stand out more dramatically regarding Abraham Friesen, than his popularizing of the teachings of the faith through his threefold ministry of writing, translating and publication. This subject has been dealt with at some length in the chapter on "Books and Publications" in *The Golden Years*.<sup>35</sup> Friesen was responsible for the translation from Dutch and publication in German of the Pieter Peters book *The Mirror of Greed*.<sup>36</sup> The publication of this book in 1827 was a first for the Russian Mennonites.<sup>37</sup> Friesen was a major contributor to the 1834 publication of the three volume *Foundation of Christian Doctrine* by Menno Simons, which has already been referred to. It was a major disappointment for the brother's Friesen, Peter, Abraham and Klaas, the principal sponsors of this production, that the books were not only impounded by their fellow ecclesiastical leaders in Prussia, but that they were also rejected by the Aeltesten of the larger Mennonite groups in the Molotschna.<sup>38</sup> The last publication was the 1845 treatise *Eine Einfache Erklärung* already referred to (See Part Three, Chapter Five).

The KG undertook this publication work in an effort to stem the inroads of separatist pietism and other false teachings among the Russian Mennonites. They were serious in their commitment to propagate the writings of Menno Simons and other classical writers of the faith. In his 1845 treatise *Eine Einfache Erklärung*, Friesen expresses his heartfelt wish that the people should ". . . allow the many books of foreign faiths to remain in their place and instead, as Solomon says, to take heed against such writing . . . and rather to become familiar with the writings whose authors have sealed their faith with their own blood just as the Lord Jesus himself did."<sup>39</sup> In another transcription of *Eine Einfache Erklärung*--perhaps an earlier draft--Friesen refers to the Menno Simons books (referring to the three volume set which was a good quality, fairly expensive edition) ". . . that they could be picked up on credit and for a very cheap price; and if anyone was interested but had no money, they were given these books for free."<sup>40</sup> The writing and publication effort of the KG also reveals the profound sense of historical consciousness usually found within the conservative Mennonite tradition.

### Community of Sharing.

One further aspect of the ministry of Abraham Friesen which should be considered is the teaching of community of sharing. If the members of the Gemeinde were truly one in a spiritual sense, as the miracle of the communion bread and wine teaches, then their socio-economic fortunes must be intertwined as well. Those who joined themselves to the fellowship as the body of Christ, henceforth held their property in trust for the Gemeinde, as stewards for their Saviour. This teaching was probably very much taken for granted among the Anabaptist-Mennonites in the 19th century and is not developed very extensively in Friesen's writings. It appears that the main reason for the KG publication of the Peter Peters' *Mirror of Greed* was to underscore the same, especially in view of more individualistic separatist pietist beliefs which were impacting in the Molotschna during the 1820s and 30s.

Friesen also deals with this subject in his 1848 "Letter to the Hutterian Brethren" in which he counsels them to resolve their differences over the reestablishment of community of property, which they had temporarily abandoned. He states his view that the practice of the Gemeinde at Jerusalem could not be

taken as normative for the entire Church of God, as this would not be consistent with the practice of the other New Testament Gemeinden and the teachings of the Apostle Paul. Instead he refers the Hutterian Brethren to the teaching of community of sharing, namely, that believers "are obligated for the necessities of the saints. These are the following: to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty . . . and so on . . ." He refers to the words of Jesus, "and in as much as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."<sup>41</sup>

This teaching had manifold practical implications for the KG. The church lent money to indigent members without interest on the terms that when they were able they should return the money to the treasury, to help others in need. Many a young KG farmer was thereby enabled to purchase a *Wirtschaft* at a time when only one in four families was so fortunate. Well established farmers were asked to give of their means rather than to continue to expand their enterprises. In times of need, levies were made against the properties of the membership, as in the case of the 1874 emigration, so that the Gemeinde was able to take all elderly, widowed and indigent people to America without any difficulty. This subject is dealt with at some length in chapter 18 of *The Golden Years*.<sup>42</sup>

### Conclusion.

The foregoing has provided a portrait of Abraham Friesen as a man of courage and principle, a sensitive spiritual leader and evangelical missionary. In his writing and publication work, Abraham Friesen can be seen as an early forerunner of John F. Funk of the Swiss-American "old" Mennonite Church.<sup>43</sup> From the viewpoint of the Anabaptist-Mennonites, he was one of the most prominent and influential 19th century churchmen in Russia. This view is contrary to the traditional interpretations of Russian Mennonite history. Peter M. Friesen believed that true spirituality was not found among the Mennonites prior to the adoption of pietist forms of religious discourse and therefore he saw the KG and Abraham Friesen as being narrow minded, ultra-reactionary and unchristian.<sup>44</sup> Dr. Frank H. Epp believed that the KG was the vanguard of a dying Old Order seeking in vain to continue their legalistic religious culture in the face of what he regarded as superior small "l" liberal Western European philosophy and ideas.<sup>45</sup>

Although these interpretations may have some validity, there is no need to be apologetic regarding the spiritual legacy which has been bequeathed to the Russian Mennonites and—more importantly—Christendom in general, by leaders such as Abraham Friesen. In this day and age of liberation theology and equal rights movements, when every faith and ideology has its conservative, fundamentalist and reformed branches, it is quite acceptable to acknowledge these conservative intellectual leaders and to be proud of their accomplishments and wisdom in not compromising their beliefs. Whether or not the reader accepts the theology of Abraham Friesen, the Christian example which he provided stands very well against his contemporaries and the passing religious fantasies of the day. Historical hindsight has very clearly vindicated the man and his vision. The time has come when there is again a wider appreciation for the responsible wholistic Christianity which Ohm Abraham represented. A selection from his writings was recently chosen for inclusion in an anthology of writings regarding Mennonite spirituality.<sup>46</sup>

Abraham Friesen (1782-1849) and Katharina Wiebe (1781-1854) have also

left a tremendous legacy in a different sense, through the host of their descendants, which probably number in excess of 10,000 souls. This includes many prominent personalities: son Jakob W. Friesen (1808-1889)--KG minister; son Peter W. Friesen (1815-1892)--KG deacon; grandson Abraham L. Friesen (1831-1917)--pioneer Aeltester and publisher in Nebraska; grandson Abraham F. Thiessen (1832-1889)--fearless advocate of the landless Mennonites in Russia; and grandson John P. Thiessen (1852-1920)--Nebraska State Senator, to name a few. At least four grandsons settled in Manitoba, namely; Peter B. Friesen Sr. (1838-1900) in Neuanlage; Johann F. Reimer (1860-1941) in Blumenort; Heinrich L. Friesen (1851-1910) in Rosenort; and Isaac D. Friesen, (1865-1951) in Rosenort.<sup>47</sup>

In closing, reference is made to an incident which occurred in 1986 when the writer had the opportunity to visit St. Joseph's Oratory in Montreal. It was a very moving experience for all the members of our group, which included Jews and Christians of all persuasions. Here, in 1904, on a hill overlooking the City, the humble brother Andre established a magnificent cathedral, a place of worship for the poor and of miracle healing for the sick. This story provides a fitting image for Abraham Friesen. Here was a man who had chosen to walk humbly with his God. He served his people, providing both continuity and renewal. He did not build a large shrine where millions would come for spiritual healing like brother Andre, but he did have a vital role in the building of a spiritual community, his own small KG in the immediate sense; but also in a deeper sense, impacting on the wider Mennonite community and the world beyond.

Perhaps nothing summarizes Friesen's love, vision, passion and spiritual life better than the following statement which he made as a farewell address to his beloved Gemeinde when he retired from his position as Aeltester in 1847 shortly before his death:

I will then for this time make a short presentation for my listeners by way of closing with the purpose of Godly salvation. And not in this alone--rather everything which you have heard from me in the twenty-three years of my service has been done toward that end. It has laid a good foundation in me for my hope--looking forward in grace to my eminent departure to receive eternal life; for which I am longing with all my heart. . . . I must go the way of all flesh, just like my fathers before me. Therefore do receive earnestly to your hearts the good which I have taught you. At all times see to it that you live in such a way as you would wish to have lived when you draw your last breath; so that you might also enter there with all the blessed, where there will be fullness of joy and beautiful love at His right hand eternally and for evermore. Amen.

#### **Endnotes: Abraham Friesen 1782-1849. A Biography.**

1. The reader is asked to correct the birth year of Abraham von Riesen Sr. given as 1752 in Plett, "The Abraham von Riesen (1752-1818) Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Profile of the Kleine Gemeinde 1874* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1987), 265. The correct birth year is 1756. See Johann I. Friesen, "Anhang," published by Peter P. Isaac, *Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern* (Stern, Alberta, 1915), 90; see also Benjamin H. Unruh, *Die Niederländisch-niederdeutschen Hintergründe der mennonitischen Ostwanderungen im 16., 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Karlsruhe, 1955), 324. 1

acknowledge with thanks Henry Schapansky, 914 Chilliwack Street, New Westminster, B.C., V3L 4V5, for drawing this error to my attention.

2. The immigration records for 1825 document the second journey which Peter von Riesen (1779-1847) made to Russia to visit his kindred there. These records specifically state that Peter von Riesen was born on November 11, 1779, in Tiegenhagen. Unruh, 373.

3. Unruh, 324 and 339.

4. E. Bahr, *Das Territorium der Stadt Danzig Zweiter Band* (Hamburg, 1987), 281. I am indebted to Dr. Adelbert Goertz, 12934 Buchanan Tr. E., Waynesboro, Pa., 17268, for referring me to this information. Henry Schapansky has prepared a brief genealogical sketch of the non-emigrant Abraham von Riesen (1757-1829) of Kalteherberge. Schapansky to author August 31, 1990.

5. This information is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to author January 20, 1991. He has also provided dates of baptism for the following children of Abraham von Riesen (1756-1810): Margaretha (1784-1835) baptised in 1801; Anna (1785-1857) baptised in 1803; all shown as resident at Kalteherberge. Schapansky writes that this data is from the "Tiegenhagen Baptismal Records."

6. Henry Schapansky, letter to author August 22, 1992. Of course it is always possible that Abraham von Riesen left the Frisian Church in order to marry a Flemish girl. This might even explain the paucity of information regarding his ancestry. The fact that he had a son Klaas would fit with the fact that the widow Friesen listed in Tiegenhagen in 1776 had a son Nickolas.

7. Plett, ed., *The Golden Years* (Steinbach, Man., 1985), 156.

8. In fact this became the standard Confession of Faith of the KG. For the complete text as used by Aeltester Abraham Friesen in 1844, see Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph* (Steinbach, Man., 1986), 77-85. There are still some questions regarding the origin of this Confession of Faith; cf. *ibid.*, 90, for a reference to this point.

9. Unfortunately the exact marriage date of Abraham Friesen (1782-1849) and Katharina Wiebe (1781-1855) is not available.

10. Schapansky to author of August 21 and September 21, 1990; cf. Unruh, 348.

11. Unruh, 324.

12. Unruh, 334. The family of Wilhelm Wiens has been suggested at least once as the parents of Margaretha Wiens (1790-1861), wife of Isaac Loewen (1787-1873), the well-known KG deacon and vollwirt from Lindenau. Plett, "Wiens Families in the Kleine Gemeinde," Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims* (Steinbach, Man., 1990), 496 and 523. See also Dr. Sol Loewen, *History and Genealogy of Jakob Loewen Family* (Hillsboro, Kansas, 1983), 16.

13. See Klaas Reimer, "Ein Kleines Aufsatz," Part Two, Chapter Two, footnotes 14 and 51.

14. Unruh, 339.

15. *Ibid.*, 324.

16. For a definition of the term "Anabaptist-Mennonite" as used in *The Kleine Gemeinde Historical Series*, see Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 6-7.

17. *Ibid.*, 152.

18. *Ibid.*, 249. This letter was published in its entirety in *Eine Kurze Beschreibung* (Beatrice, Nebraska, 1901); see Part Three, Chapter Two.

19. Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 251.

20. Discussion with Patrick Friesen, Winnipeg, Manitoba, August, 1992.

21. Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 268-272.

22. Unruh, 372.

23. Klaas Reimer, "Ein Kleines Aufsatz," in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 184-185.

24. *Ibid.*, 190.

25. Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 73-89.

26. Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 179-181.

27. *Ibid.*, 253-155.

28. *Ibid.*, 254.

29. James Urry, *None But Saints: The Transformation of Mennonite Life in Russia 1789-1889* (Winnipeg, 1990), 97-99; Giesinger, *From Catharine to Khrushchev* (Battleford, Sask, 1974), 39-41; K. Stumpff, *The Emigration from Germany to Russia in the Years 1763 to 1862* (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1978), 27-28.

30. Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 255.
31. James Urry, "Heinrich Balzer," see Part Four, Chapter One.
32. See Abraham Friesen, "An Schwager Cornelius Sawatzki in Ohrloff, 1835, Oktober," unpublished letter in the Johann P. Friesen Document Collection, courtesy of Jake P. Friesen, Blumenort, Manitoba, 1983, presently in the possession of the Archives of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference, 440 Main St., Steinbach, Manitoba. Only a partial copy of this letter is available and is extremely difficult and at places impossible to decipher. For this reason this document has not published at this time. A partial transcription has been completed by Rev. Ben Hoepfner, Winnipeg, Manitoba, June 12, 1993.
33. See Friesen, "Letter to Isaac Friesen," in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 305-6, in which Ohm Abraham refers to the grief of his sister Anna (1785-1857) when her son-in-law, Isaac Friesen, left the KG.
34. Abraham Friesen, *Eine Einfache Erklärung* (Danzig, 1845), 40 pages. See Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 260; see Part Three, Chapter Five.
35. *Ibid.*, 318-324.
36. Peter Peters, *Spiegel der Gierigkeit in gestalt eines Gesprächs, Aus dem Holländisch uebersetzt: Anno 1827 von A.F.* (n.p., 1827), 131 pages. No other publishing details are provided in the booklet which appears to be an imprint of a number of KG publications. For a further discussion of this point, see Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 320-321.
37. Al Reimer, "The Print Culture of the Russian Mennonites 1870-1930," in John Friesen, ed., *Mennonites in Russia 1788-1988. Essays in Honour of Gerhard Lohrenz* (Winnipeg, 1989), 222.
38. Peter P. Toews, *Eine Seltsame Begebenheit* (Hochstadt, Manitoba, 1911), 22 pages, provides a detailed account of the publication of the Menno Simons, *Foundation of Christian Doctrine*, 1834, in a three volume set, and the difficulties encountered with other Mennonite leaders in that regard.
39. Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 319.
40. I read this statement some time ago and made a note, but failed to record the source.
41. *Ibid.*, 340-341.
42. *Ibid.*, 336-353.
43. H. Gates, *Bless The Lord O My Soul. A Biography of John Fretz Funk* (Scottsdale, Pa., 1964), 261 pages. Of particular interest are the parallels between "The Valedictory Sermon" of John F. Funk, published by H. Gates, 266, and "The Closing Admonition" of Abraham Friesen published in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 264-266; see also Part Three, Chapter Three.
44. For a discussion of some of these views see, Plett, "Emigration for Principle or Profit? Socio-economic Considerations of the 1870s Russian Mennonite Emigration to Manitoba," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 261-268.
45. Dr. Frank H. Epp, *Mennonites in Canada 1782-1920* (Toronto, 1974), 161-166 and 195; cf. James Urry, *The Closed and the Open: Social and Religious Change Amongst the Mennonites in Russia 1789-1889* (Doctoral Thesis, University of Oxford, 1978), pages 160-170. See also James Urry, "All that Glisters. . . : Delbert Plett and the Place of the Kleine Gemeinde in Russian-Mennonite History," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* (Volume 4, Winnipeg, 1986), 228-250; and a rebuttal by Plett, "All that Blisters: James Urry attacks the Kleine Gemeinde Mennonites," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 299-308. It seems that Dr. Urry's views regarding the KG in Russia have changed somewhat with more and more source material coming to light; see James Urry, *None But Saints* (Winnipeg, Man., 1989), where the KG are frequently presented as a mainstream group of conservative intellectuals who in their own simple way made valuable contributions to the Mennonite faith and culture of the day.
46. J. Haas, ed., *Readings from Mennonite Writings New & Old* (Intercourse, Pa.: Good Books, 1992), 89-90. Also published in this work are two selections by Klaas Reimer (1770-1837) and three selections from the Peter Peters works which had been translated and published by the KG.
47. For a more complete listing of the children and grandchildren of Abraham Friesen (1782-1849) and Katharina Wiebe (1781-1854), see Plett, "The Abraham von Riesen (1756-1810) Genealogy," 267-270.

# Chapter Two

## Two Letters, 1820 and 1849

Two Letters by Aeltester Abraham Friesen (1782-1849), Ohrloff, South Russia, published in 1901 under the title "Eine Kurze Beschreibung."

Letter One: "An Epistle to the Brothers and Sisters, 1820," being a short declaration explaining why he had left the Molotschna Flemish or Grosse Gemeinde and joined the Kleine Gemeinde, 1820; and Letter Two: "A Closing Admonition," whereby he took leave of his beloved Gemeinde, presented shortly before his death in 1849.

---

### **Publisher's Preface.**

With respect to his [Abraham Friesen's] deep consciousness of sin, and how he found his way aright through the Word of God and His gracious support, and how he took comfort and courage therefrom, and how according to the teachings of Jesus, he received peace unto his soul (Matthew 11:28). To which has been added a true teaching and admonition as to how necessary it is to be made free of worldly vanity and conformity with the world, while there is still grace.

Secondly, a profound admonition to the Gemeinde as a heartfelt farewell and friendly adieu which he added at the close of a sermon, which is very comforting and edifying to read. "See to it therefore that you bring forth fruits meet for repentance" (Matthew 3:8). "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). "Ask, and it shall be given you, seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matthew 7:7). If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). AMEN.

---

### **Letter One: An Epistle to the Brothers and Sisters, 1820.**

Beloved friends, those of us who call ourselves brothers and sisters in Christ, I frequently become very concerned when I consider our circumstances, and how we shall subsist when it will be necessary for us to give an account for our housekeeping. Now beloved friends, I do not mean to refer to you alone, for I often become anxious with respect to myself. Yet I despair that I am not able to love, honour, fear, and serve the Lord earnestly enough. Without question, I have good intentions aplenty, but I am deficient in the doing.

It occurs to me just now that when Paul came to Ephesus, he found certain disciples there to whom he said, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" And they said unto him, "We have not so much as heard whether there

be any Holy Ghost." And he said unto them, "Unto what then were ye baptized?" And they said, "Unto John's baptism . . ." And when they heard from Paul that they should believe in Jesus, "they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came upon them." When I reflect regarding the foregoing, I hardly know how to help myself. I have not been baptized unto John's baptism, for then I could also do what these disciples at Ephesus did. Indeed, I confessed that I believed in Christ, and I was baptized thereupon. But that the Holy Spirit came upon me then, I cannot confirm with confidence. I was far too wicked at the time, so that the Spirit, which teaches righteousness, had to turn away from me.

Beloved friends, I frequently think that if the Aeltester and the ministers [Lehrer] and also the Gemeinde would not have believed my verbal testimony and had not baptized me before I had denounced the world and all its ways, they would thereby have advanced the salvation of their own souls as well as mine. For my life and conduct were not hidden from the people. I clothed myself according to the fashions exactly like the children of the world, which is an abomination before God. I smoked the pipe of tobacco, so that the fumes sometimes ascended from the nose and mouth, which to me symbolizes those who are damned in hell. The Apostle John says, "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever" (Rev. 15). As a penitent sinner I associated with people who carried on nothing but singing, laughing, playing, and vain empty sinful gossip, and notwithstanding, I was able to remain a member in the Gemeinde, which was supposedly also the Church of God.

Oh beloved, what a tragedy to have such an experience! The thought has often pressed tears from my eyes. Oh, that it might have occurred with such great sorrow as is written concerning Peter (Matt. 26:75). And if the individual commits himself to the Gemeinde so carelessly and so uncircumcised in heart, mind and thought (Acts 9), one can easily imagine how Satan will minimize all sin as being only very trivial. If only the evil does not become too gross for the world. In reflecting on this, one senses how loveless and uncovered each and every sin and each and every thought must seem to God, who searches our innermost being. In this respect, Satan can hinder the individual very much. Nevertheless, the compassion of God for me was well sufficient. I firmly believe, He has compassion for all, even for those who heed His entreaties and promptings in the eleventh hour. Of course in no case is it the meaning here, that one should live in the world in joy, pride, and luxury, until the last hour. This has deceived the rich man, the corn grower whose fields yielded abundantly, and also many others. Quite to the contrary, it is said that "today when you hear my voice harden not your heart."

Oh beloved friends, do believe that it is very hard to be freed from the world after one has served it for a long time. It is then much harder to obtain the assurance of salvation. My anxiety was very great when our Lord God allowed me to be shocked by a threatening criminal judgment against me, yet all the time my heart was so hardened, that I was not so readily able to weep bitterly together with David and Peter. As a result, I had to go through many a day without comfort as to whether I would still be able to receive grace from God. The thought often occurred to me that perhaps I had strayed away too far.

Thereupon I commenced to search the Holy Scriptures, and I also read many a book by our forefathers such as the large *Martyrs' Mirror*, the *Confession of Faith*

by George Hansen, the sermons by Jakob Denner, and finally also the *Foundation of Christian Doctrine* by Menno Simons. Whereby grace now and again returned to me so that I came to understand that the beloved Saviour wishes to receive the sinners if only we truly turn unto Him. I can safely say that the Lord Jesus allowed me to perceive how gladly He wishes to redeem us sinners from the power of Satan, if only we desire to be obedient to Him. This has frequently softened my heart so that I was able to bemoan my misdeeds and mistakes before Him in sorrow. Hereupon I received comfort in my soul.

At one time I had a dream that I had prepared myself to ascend up unto a high mountain. After I had proceeded for a short distance, the mountain became very steep, so that it seemed impossible for me to climb any higher. But when I turned about and wanted to go back, I quickly had to cling to the ground, lest, as it seemed, I would plummet down into the precipice. When I looked upwards, it was as steep as a straight wall. I can hardly express how anxious and fearful this made me. Nevertheless, I clung firmly, so as not to fall down. After a tremendous battle, I was able to descend from the mountain. Then the joy was exceedingly great. Usually I do not care much for dreams, but this one did not leave my thoughts. It always seems to me that one must work for salvation with a similar earnestness and firm clinging. Yet, I will not conclude this from my dream, rather I have based this upon what Pauls says, ". . . work out your salvation with fear and trembling." And Peter says, ". . . govern your life in fear during the time of your sojourn here." For this reason I am also concerned for myself and my fellow brethren. If only we could change ourselves about and live according to the will of God and not according to the desires of man. Indeed, I have much to be concerned of for myself.

Beloved friends, if we stand in true communion with each other, then we are many in the body and must protect each other. So do forgive me and know that I write you in this way for no other reason but that I feel a great responsibility and love toward you. My conscience convinces me that matters are in a sorry state with us if we cannot abandon the magnificent refinements in clothing and in our residences, and the worldly associations in feasting, as if we were in agreement with them in drinking and smoking tobacco. For, in fact, we have gone out of our former association for the reason that we did not wish to partake together with those who repaid evil with evil contrary to the teachings of Peter and Paul, and who work against evil with evil contrary to the commandments of Christ, and who do not overcome evil with good (Rom. 12).

But beloved, why did we leave our former association? I do hope that we did not do so for any other reason but that it was the commandment of Christ (Matt. 10 and Mk. 6). Since the Lord has considered us to be of such worth that He has separated us, are we then not also responsible to conduct ourselves in humility and in a contrite spirit toward Him. We know that God resisteth the proud, and what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination to Him, and that He avoids the wicked. Therefore if matters with us should devolve to the point that God would resist us, and that the Spirit, which teaches the truth, would seek to avoid us, and that God would have an abomination for us, what would we want to do then? For without Him we are nothing.

Oh, we would be most miserable indeed! For then we would have become a shame and disgrace for the world, and we would be separated from God, and

would have to await the return of His Son with fear and terror. But on the other hand, if we have conducted ourselves as meek, humble, and lowly before the Lord while we still find grace, and patiently carry all the disgrace and reviling which we must bear therefore from those who are worldly minded, then we can raise up our heads and rejoice "for your redemption draweth nigh" (Lk. 21:28). Beloved friends, I imagine that there will be those who will wonder and think that there really is not such a great danger, for the Holy Scriptures nowhere forbids us to wear this or that article of clothing, nor do we find anywhere that the smoking of tobacco is forbidden. How can I invent such a great danger out of this? They also say that this has already been the practice in the church for a long time, among the ministers as well as the lay membership.

I would bid these critics to search the New Testament truly and thoroughly with deep earnestness. For here it is found what the beloved Saviour has prophesied about the end times. Not that things may be so and so, but that matters will be so, in order that His true followers will be forewarned, and that they would not be deceived by the world. Great trials shall come upon us which will lead many astray, including the very elect, if possible, saith the Lord Jesus. From such words we can readily perceive that the danger in which we live is very great. Yes, the danger is so great that it is completely impossible to save our souls without the gracious help and support of God. This is my most ardent longing and desire, that we might live and walk in such a way that the Lord and His Spirit might be amongst us, with us and in us, for as long as we live. And I might add the words of Paul in Hebrews, "Let us therefore fear, that we do not neglect to heed the invitation to come unto his rest, so that no one of us would fall behind" (Heb. 4).

Now, beloved friends, I bid that anyone who reads this, would not consider it as an evil on my part. My intention is certainly not that anyone should have to give up anything for my sake, nor to abstain from anything. Oh no, and I do hope that you will be able to perceive from this writing how I myself am full of sin and wretchedness, and that I have no righteousness to present to my God. Because of this sin, I must continually pray to God for grace and forgiveness. We should and must do everything for the sake of Jesus alone. It must be done out of faith, as Paul says, "For without faith it is impossible to please him" (Heb. 11:6; Col. 3:17). If we do something or abstain from something out of true faith, then we know that we have done that which was our duty to do, and that at the same time we are and continue to be unprofitable servants (Lk. 17:10).

It might be beneficial to refer to what the Holy Apostles mention with respect to vanity as expressed regarding clothes, the smoking of tobacco, and other similar embellishments. For James says, ". . . know ye not that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever wishes to be the friend of the world will be the enemy of God." John says, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life, is not of the father, but is of the world." Peter says, ". . . abstain from the fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." Paul says, "Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us therefore put on the armour of light," and more of the same in numerous additional verses. I am of the view that this encompasses everything which is unnecessary for the sustenance of the physical body, and that which is a hindrance or damaging to the edification of my neighbour and the furtherance of the

salvation of my soul.

Now we might consider if the tobacco pipe might not be the first example of that which the Apostle Paul admonishes. In any event the pipe is an emblem by which one shows friendship with the world. For surely, a born again child of God would always be deeply grieved to observe such practices among the brethren. The same would seem to be the case with the new stylish clothes. If a God-loving person perceives that a fellow believer has something about him which is still pleasing to the world then this must be a cause of concern for him, as to whether his brother or sister is always awake. For such a person thereby gives evidence that he is not quite ready to renounce the world completely.

I bid that you interpret this writing in the manner of love. Thus far from me, a most unworthy servant.

Ohrloff, the 18th day of October, 1820.

*Abraham Friesen*

---

#### Letter Two: A Closing Admonition, 1849.

A short admonition from Aeltester Abraham Friesen to his beloved brothers and sisters, presented for his beloved Gemeinde and appended to a sermon shortly before his departure from this earth, as follows:

I will then for this time make a short presentation for my listeners by way of closing, with the purpose of Godly salvation. And not in this alone—rather everything which you have heard from me in the twenty-three years of my service has been done toward that end. It has laid a good foundation in me for my hope--looking forward in grace to my eminent departure to receive eternal life, for which I am longing with all my heart. Just like the beloved apostle Paul when he noted that he was about to present his sacrifice and that his departure from this world was near. Whereupon he openly confessed how he had previously conducted himself, and said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4).

I, insignificant mortal dust, have also had a longing within myself for this coming, and in accordance with my limited strength I have battled against sin and against my own lusts and carnal desires. In so far as I was able, I have worked to admonish and inspire my fellow man unto that end. This I have done for the reason that I so dearly wanted to fight a good fight in order that I might also receive the victory of the soul, so that through grace I might ultimately be found worthy of eternal life. See now, my beloved, this has been my entire outlook during the term of my ministry. I hope that on the judgement day, my God will not accuse me of any legalism or self-righteousness during the period of my service. Of this I have already been accused far too much. I have felt within myself a great weakness, rashness, and shortcoming. In addition, I have recognized a great deficiency of the wisdom required to teach a Gemeinde, and even more so, to regulate a Gemeinde, so that you must ascribe everything which I--a useless servant--have effected and accomplished unto God and to His grace, and not to me.

Nevertheless I would wish to leave this much with you prior to my departure,

as a good remembrance and in the hope that there might still be one or another who might be awakened and inspired to make their way toward the salvation of God; and that for the little while which we have left to live, we might walk on the narrow way with true diligence and good courage. Therefore I admonish you with the words of the Godly hero Joshua, "Take heed for your souls with the greatest of diligence, that you love the Lord your God" (Joshua 23:11). Yes, exert yourselves at all times that you might remain in humility and learn to shun all pride. For one can readily perceive the tremendous might with which pride and the way of ruination attempts to enter into man. If we wish to continue even somewhat in humility, we must be forceful to that end. "For the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and those who do violence, take it by force" (Matt. 11:12). Not everyone that saith unto me, 'Lord, Lord' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven (Matt. 7). Behold! For the Lord Jesus Christ has perfectly taught us the will of the Father through His words as well as by His example, and has said, "I am the way, the truth and the life, no one cometh unto the Father but through me" (John 14).

Oh do understand! He who would be assured of entry into the kingdom of heaven should follow the teachings and example of Jesus, for He is the only way and the truth, and we must believe in His words. Jesus is also the life which must live within us, in the way in which Paul says, "Nevertheless, I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20). For that which I now live in the flesh, I live in the faith of the Son of God, who has loved me and who has sacrificed himself for me. What a sought for life such a one has, who can in truth speak as one with Paul, for such is a righteous Christian being. Oh! This is my wish for my beloved brethren and sisters in Christ, that they would all live in Christ so that together with Paul they might say, ". . . for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." How blessed and above blessedness are those who can see such a gain in their death with a good confidence! Indeed such a one need have no fear of this mortal death, since for him, dying is only a secure entry unto rest.

Oh, do see my most beloved! All the twenty-three years of my groaning, entreaties, searching, and yearning after the truth, have been directed to this end, namely, towards the goal of salvation; likewise, all of my reading in the German and Dutch books, all of my translating, publishing and bringing to the light, together with all my good admonitions--through the spoken word as well as in writing--which are modelled on the word of God. I repeat, that all this occurred for the end that no one would fail to heed the promise to enter unto their rest, and that no one of us would come short of it (Heb. 4).

This I wish to leave behind for you, my beloved, as a friendly adieu and farewell. I am not hereby declaring that I am dying right away. Oh indeed not! For the hour of death is hidden from us. But we do know very well that I will soon have finished my course, and that it is well to set the house in order before one dies (2 Kings 20). The king Hezekiel received fifteen years before his departure. I would do the same in so far as I can give expression to my spirit, to set in order the beloved Gemeinde which has been entrusted to me, while I still have a little strength left. I bid you once more, beloved brothers and sisters, that you would maintain a good watch over yourselves. As I have said before, that you might heed your souls most diligently, so that you would love the Lord your God with your whole heart. Also see to it that you remain steadfast in humility, flee away from

all grandeur, and shun all evil pretence. Live peaceably and then the Lord of peace and love will be with you, and if He is with you, then no one can do you harm.

I must go the way of all flesh, just like my fathers before me. Therefore do receive earnestly to your hearts the good which I have taught you. At all times see to it that you live in such a way as you would wish to have lived when you draw your last breath; so that you might also enter there with all the blessed, where there will be fullness of joy and beautiful love at His right hand eternally and for evermore. Amen.

Abraham Friesen

---

## Editor's Note

The above letters by Aeltester Abraham Friesen (1782-1849) were published in 1901 by the Nebraska Kleine Gemeinde under the leadership of Aeltester Abraham L. Friesen (1831-1917) under the title *Eine Kurze Beschreibung* (Beatrice, Nebraska: Paul Springer, 1901), 12 pages. These letters translated and published in English in 1985 in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1985), 249-252 and 264-266. Transcription for computer by Rev. Ben Hoepfner, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1990. It is believed that the publisher's preface was written by Abraham L. Friesen (1831-1917), Aeltester of the Nebraska Kleine Gemeinde who was a grandson of Abraham Friesen (1782-1849). See Henry N. Fast, "The Kleine Gemeinde in the United States of America," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874* (Steinbach, Man., 1987), page 128.

According to Peter P. Toews, *Sammlung . . . zur historie der Kleinen Gemeinde* (Blumenhoff, South Russia, 1874), 310, "Eine Kurze Beschreibung" was recorded by Klaas Friesen (1793-1870) of Rosenort, Molotschna, the younger brother of the Aeltester.

## Chapter Three

### The Franz Thiessen Incident, 1821

---

Two Letters written in 1821 by Abraham Friesen (1782-1849), Ohrloff, Molotschna, regarding the imprisonment of Franz Thiessen; and a third letter written by Anna Thiessen from exile in Siberia in 1829.

---

#### Section One. Introduction.

The theological differences between the Molotschna Flemish or 'Grosse' Gemeinde in the Molotschna--under the leadership of Aeltester Bernhard Fast, and the Kleine Gemeinde (KG)--under the leadership of Aeltester Klaas Reimer, are starkly illustrated by the Franz Thiessen incident of 1821. Franz Thiessen of Schoensee, Molotschna, had been accused of incest with his daughter Anna. The ministerial of the Grosse Gemeinde had seen fit to lay a complaint with the authorities in Ekatherinoslav, with the result that Thiessen and his daughter were placed into prison in Orechov where they languished in miserable conditions.

In a letter of June, 1820, Abraham Friesen (1782-1849)--at that time a minister of the KG--wrote that as follows regarding this incident;

. . . it was very clear that the punishment accorded to Franz Thiessen of Schoensee served only for his destruction and not for his redemption since he was held being in chains and under constant guard; and they [the Grosse Gemeinde] could not allow him to be released for fear that he [Thiessen] would come under conviction and take his own life.<sup>1</sup>

On October 23, 1821, Ohm Abraham wrote a letter to Aeltester Bernhard Fast and the ministerial of the Grosse Gemeinde pleading for mercy on behalf of Thiessen and his daughter.<sup>2</sup> This letter is published in Section Two of this paper. The plea was not successful and Franz Thiessen died in prison. On December 27, 1821, Abraham Friesen wrote another letter, this time to the Gebietsamt or District Government, now asking for clemency for Anna who was living in the horrible conditions prevailing in Russian prisons at the time.<sup>3</sup> This letter is published in Section Three of this paper. In his *Sammlung . . . zur Historie der Kleinen Gemeinde der Mennoniten*, Aeltester Peter P. Toews summarizes the situation as follows:

. . . and in the year 1821 two letters were written . . . regarding a certain Franz Thiessen and his daughter who had both been reported to the government authorities through the ministers

because of the sin of incest in which they had been living. In consequence of the same they were sentenced to prison by their former brethren—with the approval of the ministerial and at the command of the Gebietsamts . . .<sup>4</sup>

As the reader will see from the content of the following correspondence, the appeals were unsuccessful. Rev. Gerhard Schellenberg (1827-1908), Rosenfeld, Manitoba has recorded in his journal that he had heard from his parents that Franz Thiessen died in prison in Berdjansk before his daughter was exiled.<sup>5</sup> In 1824 Anna Thiessen was exiled to a labour camp in Siberia where she lived in miserable circumstances. Peter P. Toews writes that "the referenced Franz Thiessen had apparently died in prison, and his daughter was apparently not released either. Instead she was sent to Siberia as soon as she was discharged by the authorities."<sup>6</sup> Eventually in 1830 a letter from Anna found its way to her friends in the Molotschna Colony and the Kleine Gemeinde, wherein she pleaded for compassion from her relatives to send her the money owing from her inheritance and not to forget and forsake her. This letter is published in Section Four. The following comment by Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884), Muntau, Molotschna, describes the situation;

It is evident that this presentation and request [A. Friesen's letter of December 27, 1821] did not resolve or improve the condition of the condemned; they had to resign themselves to the verdict—only that they were set free for a time and their woeful prison conditions were ameliorated a little. But on the 4th of October, 1824, Anna Thiessen was sent off to Siberia; the trek took over one year. The government there, meaning well, married her to a man as the following letter shows which she sent to the aforementioned friends.<sup>7</sup>

The Franz Thiessen incident and the letters appurtenant thereto are a stark reminder that injustice is found in every community. They also illustrate that the leaders of the KG and, particularly, Abraham Friesen, were willing to risk their lives and reputations to come to the aid of the underprivileged in their society at a time when they themselves had stood under the threat of banishment only short years previous.

#### **Section Two. Letter by Abraham Friesen, October 23, 1821.**

Beloved Ministers,

Do allow me to address myself to you by this letter in order that I may make supplication on behalf of Franz Thiessen and his daughter who must languish in prison in Orechov. One of my co-workers has encouraged me to take up the cause on behalf of their release. Sympathy for the plight of the condemned ones has moved me to venture a few words on their behalf in the hope that these words might somewhere find a favourable hearing. I bid you that you consider the lamentable circumstances regarding the body and the soul in which these two find themselves.

For behold! Are these not truly the lost sheep which the Saviour has commanded us to seek in Luke chapter 15? Or do you believe that imprisonment

is what the Saviour means by seeking for His own? Indeed no! For such imprisonment and punishment of the physical body is of the spirit of these times which has its work in the children of unbelief. That these people are forced to languish in confinement and to endure your judgement [punishment] completely divorced from all compassion gives me a very disquieted spirit and conscience. Accordingly, I am compelled to plead on their behalf. Would it not be possible that they could once more be freed from their imprisonment and thereby also from the impending punishment. After all, the commandment to stone has been revoked by the beloved Saviour according to John 8. Although this form of adultery is not as common as the other, it is nevertheless my view that we have no commandment from the Word of the Lord to punish in any way other than by excommunication and avoidance.

How then can such a one be delivered over to the authorities apparently for them to eradicate them from the earth? The Lord Jesus wants to forgive all the sins of mankind except the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit according to Matthew 12:31. And how can we deal so harshly with our fellow man, as if we ourselves are without sin? Oh that while there is still time we might pay heed to what has been said to us! We shall be dealt with in the same way we have treated others. We should not judge in order that we ourselves would not be judged. But as this punishment is being continued for such an extended period, I pray that through the forbearance of God, the matter could be disposed in such a way that at least someone of you would pay heed to their plight. Therefore I bid you, beloved ministers, for the sake of the love of Jesus do allow yourselves to be moved. For behold, He has given His own life for the sinner and allowed Himself to be martyred even though He Himself was without sin. Yet we ourselves are so headstrong that we, so to speak, throttle and choke our fellow servant who in fact does not owe us anything. Alas, for the wicked servant was thrown unto the most severe tormentors until he too had paid all that was due. And how much more are not all of us indebted in this case?

Therefore, beloved ministers, I have no doubts but that you could once more lead these people out of their confinement just as you were able to find means to imprison them in the first place. I understand this judgement first had to be subscribed to by yourselves. Therefore I plead that you deal compassionately with these people whose plight is worthy of lamentation. Behold, the most High is kind even unto the unthankful and to the evil (Luke 6:35). Therefore do also be compassionate as also your Father is compassionate and allow them to experience the acceptable message that the Saviour has come to preach deliverance to the captives and that they are to be set free (Luke 4), and that they might thereby receive the freedom of choice which God has bestowed on mankind from the beginning. He hath set fire and water before them, in order that they may stretch forth their hand unto whichever they will (Sirach 15:16).

Ohrloff, on October 23, 1821,

A. F.

### Section Three. Letter by Abraham Friesen, December 27, 1821.

To the Members of the Gebietsamt [District Council] of this Colony:

I cannot do otherwise but to address you once more. Without a doubt you will have read my letter to Bernhard Fast in Halbstadt and you will already be familiar with my concerns from the contents of that letter. As I have understood from

Johann Friesen in Rosenort, it seems that my petition to the ministerial has been completely in vain. For they do not wish to demonstrate compassion to their fellow man, namely, Franz Thiessen and rather have allowed his blood to come upon their conscience. Oh, what a sorrowful situation! But the daughter continues to languish in prison. Earlier I understood that you intended to release her and had experienced a heartfelt joy at the hearing of this news. Unfortunately, I have received such lamentable information in this regard today. Not a single one of you has personally travelled to visit her. From this it is evident that there is no serious effort among you to obtain her release. I have taken the liberty to place her plight before your eyes, as it seemed to me that like Belial you are unable to see.

Therefore I request that you consider these words from Matthew 22:37-39; "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart . . . and your neighbour as yourself." In John chapter 14 Jesus says, "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." Now I will allow you to judge for yourselves as to whether you have kept the commandment of the Lord in this matter. For at that time you not only walked right past the people who had fallen among the murderers of the soul, but actually personally delivered them into their imprisonment. Tell me, where has the love of God or to your neighbour been present in this case?

Through the people of Blumstein I have already perceived that Anna, the sinner, is almost overcome in her terrible misery. On the one hand because of her heartfelt remorse over her past sin and on the other hand she languishes away because of starvation and lack of clothing. In addition, she has been terribly savaged by lice. Yes, so that she is weeping night and day and has no hope of any compassion. Oh how can you continue to be so loveless towards your fellowman? She is also only flesh and blood just like you are. In the evening you peacefully proceed to recline in your beds in your homes with your own, but she must go to sleep on the cold floor and is separated from all her blood relations. She has no one with whom she can talk during her sleepless nights, of which she no doubt has many. Nor does she have anyone to give her comfort. In the morning you arise and dress in clean and elegant clothes. Some of you attire yourselves expensively and live a glorious life and in peace like the rich man (Luke 16). By comparison, this woman must lie outside together with the poor 'Lazarus' and her body is afflicted with insects. Oh beloved, how do you honestly feel about this? Where is the fulfilment of the commandment, 'Love your neighbour as yourself?'

Ah, if only I knew the words with which to articulate this plea in order that I might be able to move your hearts to compassion, I would gladly do so from my heart. Great concern must be expressed here for those who take people into arrest that they themselves do not simultaneously lead their own souls into that eternal imprisonment (Revelation 13). Oh, what a dangerous matter! Consider this well! Ohrloff, the 27th of December, 1821. *A. Friesen*

#### **Section Four. Letter by Anna Thiessen, December 9, 1829.**

Honoured father Jakob Gosen,

First of all, I send you my greetings and report that I am physically well, namely, your unhappy daughter Anna Thiessen. I bid you, do not forsake me—miserable wretch. I live here in sadness in an alien place. I have forsaken my religion; my dire circumstances forced me to do so since I am the only one here

of our confession and, therefore, I have accepted the anointing and have entered into a marriage.

My beloved brothers Heinrich and Jakob Thiessen and my beloved sister Helen Thiessen, I am sending my sisterly greeting--and to my parents, blessings. My beloved brothers and sisters and all of my beloved friends and acquaintances, I ask you not to forget me in this foreign place, and that you would send me the inheritance from my parents which belongs to me. In the oversight of God, do not deceive me; send me my share! When you send me parcels or letters, do write the address in Russian: Krasujewskische Government, City of Korsk, to the brother and settler Jakob Saweljew--which is the name of my husband.

Now father Jakob Gosen, I would ask you to retrieve the 31 rubles from Johann Toews and to take the same into your possession; for it is commonly known that he holds my inheritance from my father's estate as guardian on my behalf. Also I bid of you that Martin Gosen and Abraham Regehr would ask for and send to me the part of my deceased brother Franz Thiessen's estate which belongs to me. Also I ask Schulz Jakob Esau, who was present when I was sent away, to sell certain of my things which were in my chest and which are known to you; you will know the price. I also ask that in remembrance of me you would give the embroidered aprons which are not yet sewn to my sister, the yellow kerchief to Heinrich, and the red kerchief to Jakob. Also I ask of Heinrich Gosen--if he is still God-fearing--to send me the part that belongs to me regarding my cow. To the best of my knowledge Heinrich Janzen sold my cow for 35 rubles. What I have used of it, you may retain and send me the remainder.

I told them how much money I had with me. I was sick three times and the journey nearly consumed me. My last clothes and monies were stolen from me. I arrived here with only the shirt on my back; over a year I went that way. Then the government married me to man who wrote you completely on his own. There is no money to be earned here. We have our bread, but cannot sell anything.

Farewell, my beloved friends. Time does not permit me to write any more. In my absence I kiss all my friends. I send you 15 kopek in silver to ensure that this will arrive there. At the time of sending this letter, I am well--thanks to God--and sufficiently provided for. With a greeting, your children Jakob Saweljew, son Gorschov and Anna Thiessen. December 9, 1829, City of Korsk. The letter arrived in the Molotschna in the month of February, 1830.

#### Section Five. Editor's Comment.

In a letter of June, 1820, Aeltester Abraham Friesen refers to Franz Thiessen of Schoensee, Molotschna, being held in chains.<sup>8</sup> Based on the information presently available it would appear that the Franz Thiessen referred to is Franz Thiessen (born 1776) from Lakendorf, Prussia, who settled on Wirtschaft 3 in Schoensee in 1805. The family is listed as follows in the 1808 Revisions-Listen:

Franz Thiessen 36, from Lackendorff, Amt Elbing, Landwirt, wife  
Helena 36, children Anna 9, Heinrich 8, Franz 2. Property: 1 wagon,  
3 horses and 4 cattle. . . .<sup>9</sup>

In her letter of 1829, daughter Anna refers to a brother Heinrich--probably the Heinrich born in 1800, and a sister Helen--who was presumably named after her

mother. Anna also refers to her father Jakob Gosen, from which one concludes that her mother, Helena Thiessen, remarried--probably to neighbour Jakob Goossen (born 1780) listed on Wirtschaft 7 in the village of Schoensee. The names Martin Gosen, Abraham Regier and Jakob Esau are also found in the listing of the villagers in Schoensee in 1808.<sup>10</sup>

### Endnotes: The Franz Thiessen Incident, 1821.

1. Peter P. Toews, *Sammlung . . . zur Historie der Kleinen Gemeinde der Mennoniten* (Blumenhoff, South Russia, 1874), 35.
  2. Published in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years* (Steinbach, Man., 1985), 179-80.
  3. *Ibid.*, 180-81.
  4. Peter P. Toews, *Sammlung*, 45.
  5. Gerhard Schellenberg (1827-1901) "Journal," unpublished document collection, pages 1-8, courtesy Rev. David K. Schellenberg, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1986.
  6. Peter P. Toews, *Sammlung*, 48.
  7. Heinrich Reimer, "Familienbuch," unpublished journal, pages 259-262, courtesy of Milton and Margaret Toews, Abbotsford, B. C., November 9, 1992.
  8. Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 252. The reader is asked to note that the letter as reproduced refers to Franz Thiessen of the village of Schoensee and not "Schoenau" as published in *The Golden Years*.
  9. Benjamin H. Unruh, *Die Niederländisch-neiderdeutschen Hintergründe der Mennonitischen Ostwanderungen im 16., 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Karlsruhe, 1955), 320 and 328.
  10. Reference to the Franz Thiessen incident and the letters pertaining thereto are found in many document collections within the KG *Schrifttum*. The two letters written in 1821 by Abraham Friesen (1782-1849) are reproduced the most frequently. E. g. Peter P. Toews, *Sammlung von Briefen und schriftliche Nachrichten zur Historie der Kleinen Gemeinde der Mennoniten* (Blumenhoff, South Russia, 1874), pages 45-49, contains the two letters by Abraham Friesen and a lengthy extract from the Anna Thiessen letter of 1829. A number of collections also include the complete text of the letter written by Anna Thiessen in 1829. E.g. Gerhard Schellenberg (1827-1901) "Journal," unpublished document collection, pages 1-8, courtesy Rev. David K. Schellenberg, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1986.
- The Heinrich Reimer, "Familienbuch," unpublished journal, pages 259-262, contains the complete Anna Thiessen letter, the two 1821 letters by Abraham Friesen, as well as a short note explaining that Anna Thiessen was exiled in 1824. This note is quoted in its entirety in Section One. The Heinrich Reimer, "Familienbuch" is courtesy of Milton and Margaret Toews, Abbotsford, B. C., November 9, 1992. Transcription and primary translation of the Anna Thiessen letter is courtesy of Rev. Ben Hoepfner, 20-411 Valhalla Drive, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1993.

# Chapter Four

## Documents 1820-1843

Miscellaneous letters and documents written between 1820 and 1843 by Aeltester Abraham Friesen (1782-1849), Ohrloff, Molotschna, South Russia.

---

### Document One: An Epistle Regarding My Secession, 1820.

Ohrloff, June, 1820

Beloved friends,

Because of the stirring of my spirit through the grace of the Lord, I--a completely insignificant person--will compose this little writing to my beloved friends. And I would say with Paul, "If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh" (Rom. 11); Further he says, ". . . quench not the Spirit" (1 Thes. 5:19). Beloved friends, on the occasions when I speak of the things of which I will now write and of which I frequently talk, it often occurs to me that our association and your approval of me would be much greater if I did not refer to these matters. But if I did not do so, then I would have to quench the Spirit. Our Saviour says, "For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." And should we be silent when He wishes to speak through us, the words of Jesus would come into fulfilment that ". . . the very rocks would have to cry out?"

Oh yes, beloved! In Matthew chapter 10, verse 27, the Saviour clearly says, "What I tell you in the darkness, that speak ye in the light." For this reason I have been disparaged, as I admonished the Aeltesten and ministers that many aspects in the Gemeinde were not being conducted according to the commandments of the Lord Jesus. I have been very concerned in this regard that I had not done my part if I did not unequivocally declare myself to that effect. In Malachi, chapter 2, we read that as they were departed from the ways of truth, it was commanded that ". . . the Lord will cut off the man that doeth this out of the tabernacles of Jakob, both the master and the scholar together with him that offereth an offering unto the Lord Sabaoth." Therefore the Holy Scriptures and the conviction of my conscience compel me to join battle with the spiritual enemy.

It has also been my frequent experience that I have been told as was Judas in I Maccabees 9:9, "That we shall never be able to achieve anything, therefore let us abide for this time . . ." etc. According to those from whom I derived comfort for my spiritual sustenance, it always seemed as if it were not yet quite the time. When so and so will no longer be here, then matters will again change. But sad to say, how have things changed? One must truly bemoan from the heart that so much that is new and temporal must still be established. At the same time there is so little concern for the true salvation of the soul. Nearly all the proposals and endeavour which one sees and of which one hears in the present time originate from the new teachings and are effected according to human reason. No

consideration is given to the words which the Saviour says, "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up."

If this was truly considered and believed many would dismiss their blind leaders, in order that they not fall by the wayside. It is truly sorrowful for the poor souls who so thoughtlessly give out an impression which has a good appearance and yet which has no power. Paul says ". . . that we are to avoid these", namely, those who put on an appearance but who deny the power thereof. And what the apostle means by avoidance you may determine from what he has written in 1 Corinthians 5:10. Beloved reader, if you have given true consideration to that which Paul has said to Timothy and in many other places, then you would not have partaken in this. You would rather have remained in that which you have learnt and of which you have been assured (2 Tim. 3:14).

And should anything arise which is contrary to the Gospel, and if someone does not want to be obedient to the Word, you should remember that power has also been given to admonish and to punish the gainsayers (the rebellious ones). The power which Christ the Lord has given to His own is for betterment and not the ruination of the offender (2 Cor. 10:8). But according to the punishment which you mete out to the disobedient and the fallen brethren it is crystal clear that it serves for ruination and not for the betterment. Just as your own conscience also convicts you in the case of the fallen Franz Thiessen in Schoenau or else you would not have him bound in chains and under guard. According to what I have been told you are afraid that through all the punishment and threats the fallen brother might come into doubts and shorten his own life.

Oh, beloved teachers [ministers], I cannot find any understanding in the entire New Testament that the Lord has taught his own such might nor given them such power. This is one of the most important reasons which has separated me from you even though many individuals including my close friends say that we have separated ourselves without good reason and that it would be better if we again joined together. But, beloved brothers and sisters—yes, all of you who read this, do tell me: by reason of what authority can you give us such advice? In fact, some of you admit for yourselves that you have no hope that any aspect of the regulations which have been adopted may be broken away. Others approve of the same. They say, what other counsel is there to deal with people? Therefore it is hard to believe that these practices will be done away with. From this we are well able to note that we are coming into the time of which Paul speaks in 2 Thessalonians 2:3,4.

Now beloved friends, a number of people have said to me that they do not agree with the things which are contrary to the teachings of the Lord Jesus, but are tolerated in their Gemeinde. At the same time they remain in their association and also partake of holy Communion together with them. Here again they must be reminded that the Gemeinde or the fellowship which is conducting the Communion must also be united in spirit; yes, like one bread which has been ground together out of many kernels. At the same time they suppose that they are not partakers of that which has been implemented in the Gemeinde contrary to the commandments of Christ.

I was unable to comfort myself in this manner as otherwise I would not have had to depart from you. I say this only for myself and do not want to judge anyone else in so doing. But from the bottom of my heart and out of brotherly love, I would advise that you earnestly search the Scriptures in this regard and that you

consider everything, for then this reason will also be made manifest unto you, if you are earnest in this. A venerable teacher [minister] by the name of Dirk Philips has written of this matter as follows;

What many put forward in this regard that one may have outwardly association with the false service of God if the heart does not believe in the same is not valid here. No one should allow himself to be deceived with such words . . . . Everything which the Scripture teaches with respect to the separation, namely, that one is to separate himself from all false worship of God, just as we read in 2 Corinthians 6:17; Ephesians 5:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:11, is to be understood that one is to do so inwardly with the heart which is shown on the outside through weeping. This is the light which cannot be hidden under a bushel, but which must be placed on a candlestick, so that it giveth light unto all that are in the house. This is the city which is placed on a hill which cannot be hid, etc.

This true witness for Jesus, who was scolded and slandered for the reason that he had also separated himself from those who were minded of the world, says further, "It has been commanded with ordinances and teachings, etc." (See the Dirk Philips *Handbook*.) Thus far from Dirk Philips.

Now I will close for this time, and I bid all who may read this: do not accept my word as sufficient in this regard. Rather at your pleasure refer to all the passages of Scriptures which have been cited here. Take to heart for yourself with a meditative spirit, the grounds from which this simple writing has come. I bid that you prove the same with nothing but the Holy Scriptures, and that you do not accept grounds which are to the contrary, no matter how good the appearances may be. Accept only that which can be shown from the Holy Scriptures. For then I hope that you will realize that I have not addressed you falsely, rather, that I have addressed you in the truth.

"Grace be with you" according to Colossians 4:18. Amen. With a heartfelt greeting I remain your friend.

Ohrloff, June, 1820.

*Abraham Friesen*

## **Document Two: A Letter to Abraham Isaak, 1821.**

Beloved friend, Abraham Isaak!

I cannot get it out of my mind what you told me yesterday regarding the presentation which the missionaries made on the Island. As I understand it, you are giving credence to the same and that you consider their work to be necessary and Christian. Oh, what a horrible circumstance; when I think of it that Christians are to be able to kill somebody, and you say that these Christians have murdered many.

Oh, what a terrible error, for had they been true Christians, they would much rather have allowed their own lives to be ended, for they know that they would thereby find it, in accordance with Matthew 10:39. Instead, these people murdered the likeness of God in order to spare their own lives. Oh, beloved friend, for once do consider it correctly; God has created one man equally as good as the

other. He has furthered their lives and manners and dealt with them in patience; and now those who call themselves Christians and enlightened have so quickly killed the creation of God. I bid you--do reflect on this; from whom will God require such blood.

Beloved friend, since you expressed yourself to me as if you did not clearly understand that the Lord Jesus has completely forbidden the carrying of the sword or the waging of war, I, therefore, consider myself obligated to refer you to the Lord's own words, which we understand in this manner and which we ask you to refer to: John 18:36; Matthew 20:25,26; Mark 10:43, and Luke 22:26. We are also to note in this regard that Jesus did not only give this teaching to his twelve apostles. Oh No! For He himself said, "And what I say to you, I say unto all" (Mark 13:37).

Now, my beloved friends, if the forgoing views should appear harsh to you, then do consider correctly whether, perhaps, they appear harsh only to those who seek to darken the eyes of your understanding in this manner, so that--for example--you would place the same worth upon the signs of Pharaoh's magicians as upon those which Moses had to do pursuant to the commandment of God (Exodus 7). My beloved friend, let us consider this in light of what our Saviour says;

Ye are the salt of the earth, but if the salt have lost its savour, with what shall it be salted? It is thereafter good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under the foot of men. Ye are the light of the world" (Matt 5:13-14).

At the present time, however, many are starting to look up to those who would maintain and build the kingdom of God by force. How is this different from when the salt loses its savour and when the light that is within you becomes dim. Alas, for how great would not the very darkness then be. Together, with a heartfelt greeting, I remain your faithful servant;

*Abraham Friesen*

### **Document Three: An Answer Regarding Spousal Property Rights.**

Question: Why are half of all temporal possessions to be distributed among the female gender? My beloved honourable Mr. Friesen! Prepare an answer for me--from your fellow church leaders, and if possible, with the appropriate references for the same--and an explanation as to why married couples among the Mennonites are fully equal in the law regarding inheritances and acquired property, in respect of which equality in the law, the devolution of half of the estate to the surviving spouse must take place. I seek to support the eighth point of [Czar] Paul's Privilegium through the provision guaranteeing the highest measure of religious freedom, if possible, for it is necessary!

Answer to the forgoing question:

Although according to the Word of our Saviour in Luke 12: 13,14, it was not His intention to implement civil laws, I believe nonetheless that our traditional equal rights for wives regarding temporal possessions has its foundation in the

official pronouncement found in Matthew chapter 19, verse 6. He who wishes to be a disciple and follower of Christ must also seek to bring into reality within his marriage the full and definitive community of property of Christ, which He has with His bride—the church—which is a partaker of all heavenly property. If the wife, according to 1 Peter 3:7, is fully a heir of grace and the promises of life, then the promises just as equally apply to the provision of these as well as to the eternal and future inheritance.

And just as a wife, according to Genesis 2:18, is placed beside her man as a helper, she is, according to 1 Timothy 3:18, also worthy of her due remuneration as a labourer. In view of the oneness of a man and wife, this remuneration can be no less than full equality with respect to the possessions which are entrusted to our care by the Lord.

*Abraham Friesen*

Copied by Peter Friesen, Hierschau.

**Document Four: A Poem Addressed to Brother Peter von Riesen and the Brethren in Prussia, 1828.**

Ohrloff, September 28, Old Style, 1828

1. Ein Brief nach Preussen  
An sein Bruder geschrieben.  
Von ein Bruder und Schwaegerin.  
Ich wuensch euch beid der Liebe fein  
Nach Christi Lehr und Pauli Wort,  
Die nimmer, nimmer mehr aufhoert (1 Kor. 13:8).

A letter to Prussia  
written to a brother.  
From a brother and sister-in-law,  
I wish you both the blessed love, according  
to Christ's teaching and Paul's word,  
Which never, never endeth (1 Cor. 13:8).

2. Da zu die Gesundheit aller meist,  
Vornehmlich an der Seel und Geist (1 Pet. 2:3),  
Der Tod loest alle Krankheit auf,  
Folgt fromme Seelenruh darauf.

First of all our well-being and health,  
soul and spirit above all else,  
death releases us from all sickness,  
followed by the soul's peaceful repose.

3. Was mich und meine Frau betrifft  
Ich bin gesund, sie aber nicht.  
Doch Gott sei Dank, der's uns beschert

Und haelt uns noch der Zuecht'gung wert (Heb. 12:16).

As regards me and my wife,  
I am well but she is not,  
thanks be to God who sanctifies,  
and counts us worthy of discipline (Heb. 12:16).

4. Die Krankheit ist nicht gar zu schwer,  
Sie hat's nur oft an husten sehr,  
Da von wird sie so mued und matt,  
Und oftmals ohne Speise satt.

The sickness is not all too bad,  
with much coughing she has trouble had,  
this wearies and tires her, oh dear,  
and often causes loss of appetite.

5. Was Freund und Kinder anbetrifft  
Kann ich veraenderlichs sagen nicht,  
Seit dem ihr von uns abgereist  
Ach dass der Herr genug ward gepreist!

Regarding friends and children  
I cannot report of any changes,  
since the time you left us here,  
Might the Lord receive due praise therefore!

6. Doch Schwester Regina ihr Tochterlein,  
Ist in die Poken geschlafen ein,  
Die Krankheit wird jetzt allgemein  
Sie moegen auch geimpft sein.

But sister Regina's little girl,  
from the measles has fallen asleep,  
the disease is spreading all around,  
and there may well be inoculations.

7. Ein Brief dies Jahr von ersten Mai,  
Von euch hat uns allzumal erfreut,  
Zu erfahren die Gesundheit edler Art,  
Jedoch ist nicht die Gegenwart.

A letter this year, the first of May,  
from you, gladdened all our hearts,  
for the best of health we are inclined,  
but it is not the case at the present time.

8. Zum Ersten was ihr mit geschickt,

Mit Jantzen ist uns zugegruendt,  
Wie auch das kleine Briefelein,  
Von euch geliebte Schwaegerin.

First of all what you sent along,  
with Jantzen found its way to us,  
as well as the letter small,  
from you, beloved sister-in-law.

9. Habt Dank fuer das, was ihr getahn,  
Wir nehmen es zum Denkmahl an,  
Sonst Noth und Kummer drueckt uns nicht,  
Darum von euch zu viel geschickt.

Thank you for all that you have done,  
we accepted it as a memorial,  
but pain and woe do not afflict,  
and so for us, you have sent too much.

10. Den Schwermuths Geist so ihr bespuert  
Wie ihr Frau Schwaegerin beruehrt  
Damit eilt doch zu Jesus hin (Matt. 11:28),  
Der uns erquicket Herz und Sinn.

The spirit of which you speak,  
which you have experienced, sister-in-law,  
with this depression flee to Jesus (Matt. 11:28),  
who refreshes heart and soul.

11. Unausforschlich sein Verstand,  
Kraft, Staerke wird dem zugesandt,  
Die da harren auf den grossen Herrn,  
Dass sie wandlen und nicht muede werd'n.

Incomprehensible is His wisdom,  
strength, power, might to them bestowed,  
who wait upon the Lord so great,  
for they run and grow not weary.

12. Euer Wunsch ist, dass ihr wissen moecht,  
Wie's Gott mit die Gemeinde fuegt,  
Die ist zwar klein doch Gottes Hand,  
Ist noch nicht von sie abgewand.

You desire that you might know,  
What God is doing with the church,  
Although it's small, yet the hand of God,  
is abiding with them still.

13. Was sich Hader zeigte klarr,  
Das ist worden offenbar (1 Pet. 5:5),  
Denn Gott ist allen Hochmut feind,  
Drum zwei ihr Amt entledigt sind.

The disputation is now manifested clear,  
and is now known far and near (1 Pet. 5:5),  
for to all pride God is averse,  
Hence two [ministers] from office were dispersed.

14. Zudem hat Gottes Allmachtshand  
Den allen Greuel und Schand bekannt,  
Noch vier allhier gebracht ans Licht,  
Dass sie ihr Tat verschwiegen nicht (Ps. 39:3).

There too the almighty hand of God,  
Who knows all evil and knows our shame,  
to the light exposed four from here,  
and they could not deny their deed (Ps. 39:3).

15. Dies hat uns kleine Brueder schar,  
Beschmerzt bis an die Seele gar,  
Dass wir vier Glieder von dem Leib,  
Abhauen mussten. Ach leid, Ach leid!

This has sorely grieved our small brotherhood,  
ev'n to the very depth of our souls,  
four members of the body,  
we had to release. Oh woe, oh woe.

16. Doch weil Gott nimmt die Suender an (Hez. 33:14),  
Die da rechtschaffen Buss gethan,  
Und da man dies erst hat verspuert  
Sind sie der Herd wieder zu gefuehrt.

But God receiveth sinners (Hez. 33:14),  
upon righteousness-working repentance,  
the presence of which we sincerely felt,  
and the brotherhood accepted them again.

17. Auch sind in Eure Abwesenheit,  
Noch zu gekommen ein Paar Leut,  
Auch sechs sind durch die Wassertauf,  
In unsre Gemeinde genommen auf.

Also during your absence,  
one pair of folks were added,  
and six through water baptism,

received into the Gemeinde.

18. Gott steh mit seinem Geist uns bei  
Dass wir stets auf und wacher sein,  
Dass uns nicht mehr solch Weh beruehr,  
Behuet uns doch. Ach Herr! ach Herr!

God, stand by us with Your Spirit,  
that we might constantly be alert,  
and that woe no more assail us,  
from this protect, oh Lord! oh Lord!

19. Noch eins, geliebter Bruder, mein,  
Wie machs doch mit dem Druck wohl sein  
Was wir verhasst, laut dein Bericht,  
Das ist bis jetzt erfolgt noch nicht.

One more thing, beloved brother, mine,  
how are things with the printing,  
that which was obnoxious, according to your report,  
has of yet not come to pass.

20. Noch etwas von Begebenheit  
Nachdem ihr abgereiset seid  
Da hat uns die Aegypter-Plag (2 Moses 4),  
Gott zu geschuecket von Tag zu Tag.

Another thing of current news,  
which happened since you drove away,  
The plagues of Egypt,  
God has sent us day by day.

21. Doch aber nicht so viel und gross,  
Gott hat seine Macht gezeigt bloss,  
Durch Heuschrecken die Hertzen,  
So gross als Frucht verzehrten.

Though not too many nor too big,  
God clearly demonstrated His power,  
through the hosts of locust,  
as big as fruit, destroying.

22. Es dauert kaum ein Monat lang  
Da war der Aker kahl und blaenk,  
Als wenn nie was gewesen waer,  
So zeuchst du deine Macht, O Herr.

It hardly even took a month,

and the fields were cold and bare,  
as if nothing ever had been there,  
and thus You use your might, O Lord,

23. Doch haben wir nicht Not gehabt,  
Weil Gott uns die Gesundheit gab,  
So haben wir gearbeit frueh und spaet,  
Und etwas noch gemaeht ab.

Yet we did not suffer need,  
because God granted us well-being,  
we worked from early until late,  
and of the harvest we did reap.

24. Das Gras die Haelfte, vom Rogen auch,  
Ein wenig Gaerst, nicht sehr zum brauch  
Dieweil es fast ganz gruene waer,  
Aber Weitzen nicht eine Aehr.

Half of the grass, and the rye too,  
a little barley, but not much good,  
because it was as green as grass,  
But wheat, we did not reap an ear.

25. Der Vater, der die Voegel naehrt.  
Und der uns all'zeit Brot bescher't.  
Der tut es auch an jetzt so naeh,  
Er zeucht die Straft und hilft uns doch.

Our Father who provides for the birds,  
at all times also gives us our bread,  
He has nurtured us until today,  
He metes out punishment and aid.

26. Ach wie ist Gottes Lieb so gross  
Fuer dem all unsere Suend ist bloss  
Und dennoch uebt Barmherzigkeit  
Bedenk es doch. Ach Leut, ach Leut.

Oh, how great the love of God,  
before whom all our sins are known,  
but also mercy and compassion,  
remember this. Alas people, alas people.

27. Dass wir auch so barmherzigkeit sein,  
Ueber die Fehler gross und klein,  
So unser Naechster an uns thut,  
Vergebt es ihm so geht's euch gut.

May we be merciful like that,  
regarding mistakes - great and small,  
which neighbours commit against each other,  
forgive him thus and all is well.

28. Die Schaf wo von du angefiert,  
Die haben bis jetzt noch nicht verliert,  
Sind zwei und dreiszig and der Zahl,  
Jung, alt, gerechnet alzumal.

The sheep to which you have referred,  
have not lost us until now,  
are two and thirty in their number,  
Young, old, included altogether.

29. Der feste Stamm war 14 Stueck,  
Dir verschoenken 4, rechne zurueck,  
Und eins ist noch verlohren gegangen,  
So sind davon nur 10 zu erlangen.

The main flock consisted of fourteen,  
you gave us four, subtract the same,  
and one has gone astray,  
so that only 10 are left.

30. Von voriges Jahr sind 13 Stueck,  
Wo von die Haelft doch geht zugrund,  
Und 9 sind nur von dieses Jahr,  
So bleibt 10 ein halbes Paar

From the year before there are thirteen,  
of which the half went to the ground,  
and only 9 came during this year,  
leaving 10 and one-half a pair.

31. Auch 38 Rubel Geld,  
Und 8 Capike wird gemeld,  
Fuer Wolle ist genommen ein  
Wobei auch fuer ein Buch wird sein.

Regarding the money, 38 ruble,  
and 8 kopek have been recorded,  
For the wool we have received,  
for which a book will be provided.

32. Doch hab ich davon ausgezahlt,  
Wozu du mir hast angemant,  
All ziebzehn Rubel, 12 Capike

Die werden abgerechnet hin.

I have dispersed from these monies,  
as your did admonish me,  
the entire seventeen ruble, 12 kopek,  
which are debited as aforesaid.

33. Die Schaf sind jetzt nicht teuer mehr,  
Fuer 6 Rubel kauft man sie sehr,  
Die Woll ist vor 11 Rubel verkauft,  
Darum die Geldsumme nicht auflaut.

The sheep no longer are very dear,  
for 6 ruble everyone buys them here,  
the wool is sold for 11 ruble,  
hence the account has not increased.

34. Dass ich vor meinen Kindern nicht,  
Die Schaf genommen, wo von du sprichst,  
Das macht das sie so wohlteil sind,  
Und denn vor dir vorlust sich find.

For my children I did not take,  
the sheep of which you spoke,  
this is because they are so cheap,  
and they would only suffer loss you know.

35. Adje nun bleibet Gott befohlen,  
Der uns erhaelt und hilft auch allen,  
So wir nur bleiben treu an ihm,  
Und folgen seinem Ruf und Stimm.

Adieu, to God remain committed,  
who keeps us and who helps us all,  
if only we remain true to Him,  
and heed His voice and call.

36. Auch melde denn noch zum Beschluss,  
Von mich und meiner Frau ein Gruss,  
Von Kindern und mehr ins gemein,  
Sollt ihr herzlich gegruesst sein.

In conclusion I announce,  
a greeting from my wife and me,  
from our children and all the brotherhood,  
we greet you most cordially.

37. Ach das ihr es Gott noch also fuegt

Weil ihr uns doch am Herzen liegt  
Dass ihr nicht achtet Gut und Standt  
Und bei uns kommet nach Russland.

Oh that God would direct in such a way,  
because to our heart you are so dear,  
that you do not heed good advice,  
and come to visit us in Russia.

38. Doch steht des Menschen Tugerecht,  
In sein gewalt und Will gebricht (Jer. 10:23),  
Dass er sein Gang und Wandel fuehr  
Mein Herr, das kommt allein von dir.

But the deeds of mankind before Him stand,  
overwhich His power and will hold sway (Jer. 10:23),  
they will your manner and conduct lead,  
my Lord, that solely comes from Thee.

39. Doch sucht der Mensch, so findet Er,  
Was seine Seel alhier beharrt,  
Klopft an, so wird euch aufgetan,  
Dass ihr moecht ins Reich Gottes gehen.

If man will seek, he shall find,  
that which his soul desires here,  
knock, and it shall open unto you,  
and into His kingdom you may enter.

40. Allwo wir uns einander dann,  
Umarmen werden und schauen an,  
Drum fuerchtet hier kein Ach und Weh,  
Seid Gott getreu! Adje! Adje!

For then we finally shall embrace,  
and see each other face to face,  
so do not fear the present woe nor pain,  
Be true to God! Good-bye, good-bye!

**Document Five: A Letter to Brother Peter von Riesen in Prussia, 1833.**

A cordial greeting from me, my wife and children to you, beloved brother, P. von Riesen together with your wife and children. We extend all our best wishes for your well-being in body and soul from henceforth until eternity. Amen.

Dear brother, we have received your letter plus the printer's proofs for the Menno Simons books. We also received the writing from friend Suderman from Elbing, and today also one by Johann Neufeld from Ohrloff. Neither one of these writings occasioned much joy for us in our spirits. We can conclude from both that

their principle influence and foundation was not according to Revelation 3:20, upon which your faith was based for many years and which now seems to have been repressed and cast off. Forgive me for reminding you of this but you will well remember what your resolutions and convictions were some 10 to 12 years ago, and as to what inspired you to return to Russia time and again. Was it not this that you wanted to free yourself, and primarily your children? What did you experience on your last trip that you should have developed such a dreadful aversion for Russia? I would like to ask you with the words of Paul in Galatians 4:16, "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?"

If I have conducted myself improperly toward you in any way in material matters, I sincerely ask you for forgiveness. Knowingly or unknowingly something must have happened. Or is your distaste for Russia simply that your siblings and friends are not educated well enough? Or do they clothe themselves too poorly and humbly and are they lacking cultured and elevated manners? If this is the case, we cannot help it, for Paul says in Roman 12:16, ". . . Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate." Our Lord Jesus says, ". . . for that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15). If none of the foregoing have created your aversion for Russia would it have been the small incomes here which come in such times? Or would it be the periods of drought and the crop failures which you are opposed to? Oh beloved brother, these are not things which frighten souls who are searching for God. But it is frightening for those who seek money and the world; for those who seek their well-being here in this world (Luke 16:25). But a God-seeking soul is not deterred by such, but humbles himself under the mighty hand of God and casts all his cares upon Him, because He careth for them (1 Peter 5:7).

In your first and second letters you write about the times of plenty in Prussia and refer us to a man who has sold so many loads of grain from such a small field and that everything can be had there, fresh and beautiful potatoes and all manner of garden vegetables. Through these one can readily be tempted to start murmuring against Russia and like the children of Israel to think back to the time when they too were able to sit before their flesh pots and have their fill of bread (Exodus 16:3).

Last year fodder and grain was expensive and in short supply here among us, as you know from your own experience. This year there is, so to say, hardly any cutting of hay or grain in this area, only some kind of weed is available for fodder which is called \_\_\_\_ [?]. Rye and wheat screenings are already being bought for 30 ruble per tschwert. Barley and oatmeal are no longer available. Oats cost 12-15 ruble and potatoes 12-16 ruble. Whoever wants to buy hay has to travel 10- 15 verst. The horses are very weak and undernourished. Each one has only 2 or 3 horses at home. The rest of the horses in the village have been placed in board some 200 verst away at great expense, and likewise the sheep.

Already a year ago, beloved brother, you tended to lose courage regarding Russia. And now you had such a great wealth. What then is your view at the present time? Or what do you think of your siblings and friends who in comparison have no property and yet gladly desire to have bread together with their children? Maybe you would say that if they were here, I would help them with bread and to some extent feed their cattle with chaff. But as you say in your letter even this desire is in vain. We would gladly want to seek out another refuge and want to

accept the same as being a chastening for us.

The Lord Jesus points us to the birds under heaven which do not "reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them" (Matt. 6:26). Nor will we perish without His will, although we have not harvested anything. I can say with truth that Russia does not thereby become unacceptable for me. Rather it becomes more acceptable because God has counted us here worthy to discipline us mildly for the sake of humility and that he has counted us worthy of the same. You could also have experienced this together with us if you would have had the conviction and heard the knocking on your heart and had wanted to follow the same. You could also have experienced this if you and your children had wanted to depart from the great city and to let go of the inclination for the world--as has always been your intention in years gone by.

Oh, my beloved brother, why did your turn about--so to speak--and cause your wife so much suffering, and your children, by going back again to Babel? We marvel greatly that you consider yourself now so happy and speak only of pure joy, even as we read in Thessalonians 5:3. Would it not have been better to have changed your high state for a more humble one? Instead of a ruling attitude regarding your maids and men servants you should exercise sympathy and a compassionate disposition--for God is no respecter of persons (Matt. 6:9). Would it not have been better if you had stopped gathering wealth regarding which thieves break through and steal? In your aged and greying years you could have gathered wealth in heaven (Matt. 6:19). You could have proven to your children and others what in deed your motives are; yes, what the mighty hand of God has done for you, and that the seed of God's Word has fallen into a good soil, and would have brought forth fruit in patience (8:15). But to the contrary, when you go forth with your cares to gather riches and pleasures of this life, then the fruit will be choked and be extinguished.

Beloved brother, this is what I had to tell you and I have done so with few words as you requested in your writing. I had something more to say, but I fear that your love would not endure it. My wife and my siblings think frequently of your wife, because she has not as much as written one word. In short, we feel as if death has separated us physically as well as spiritually. It seems as if all your efforts, expenses and difficult journeys are going to waste and our joys will be in vain. You seem to have become foreign to us since you left and moved to Rosenort. How much more so now that you have again taken over the large extended estate?

1833 in October

*Abraham Friesen, Ohrloff.*

#### **Document Six: A Letter regarding J.B.**

Blumstein, March 16, 1843

Beloved friends and brother in the Lord,

After extending a warm greeting and wishing you the experience of the fullness of the grace of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, I wish to share my opinion with you regarding the letters for admonishment and instruction which may be written from within and also from beyond the Gemeinde. Like the writing which was recently received from J.B. which contained a sharp admonishment and punishment, and also the one from you which came into my hands through H.E.

It is not my intention in any way to dampen the spirit, not that I wish to contradict any prophecy (Thess. 5:19,20). But I would earnestly concur with the Apostle James when he says, "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive a greater condemnation. For in many things we offend all . . . He, however, who is wise and smart among you will demonstrate his piety and wisdom through his good walk and his works" (James 3:1,13). Christ said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and praise your Father which is in heaven" (Matt 5:16), and the same shall serve the others as a good teaching and a punishment in their conscience.

Therefore, you should not interpret it too harshly from me, or actually believe, that it is again contradicting the Word of God. For I am speaking only of the teachings and understandings of which one has no scripture (Leviticus 10:1,2), nor commandment, or rule from anyone, or when no opinion or position is called for (1 Cor 7:24). It is a much different matter when Christ says, "Does your brother sin against you, then you go unto him and punish him between you and him alone" (Matt. 18:15). Or when Paul says, "If someone is overcome by a misdeed, then help him aright again with a spirit of compassion, you who are spiritual." Or the way Peter writes, "Who is it, that can affect you. If you pursue the goal, be ready at all times to give answer to anyone of the hope that is within you, and that with fear and compassion, and be of good conscience" (1 Peter 3:13,15).

This is not to say that one should not write, not answer, not speak and not instruct (1 Tim. 3:5). It applies in particular to every household father in his own house who is also the master of his wife (Hebrews 5:23), but not in the way that comes naturally for our bitter flesh so that the wife must be subjected to the man in such a way that she hardly finds it within herself to speak to her husband about this or that. (Ecclesiasticus 4:33,36 and 9:1, says do not be zealous against your wife and spouse for such a harsh disposition does not bring forth good consequences. Ecclesiasticus 3:25.) Rather, it must be according to the new and born again nature, the way we are commanded and taught by Peter, 1 Peter 3:7, and by Paul, Colossians 3:19. In Ephesians Chapter 5, verses 25 to 33, Paul speaks upon very deep reflection regarding the manner in which the man is the head of the wife, and the mystery is great; behold, in all these references and others more, we are instructed, called and commanded by the Holy Scriptures. I know that I should not give directions in anything beyond the same (Acts 15:24).

In Hebrews chapter 5 verse 4 the apostle says, "But no man takes this honour unto himself, but he that was called of God, as was Aaron." And if we look to the experience of the ancients we find horrible examples there (Ecclesiasticus 2:10). Not alone in the case of Uzziah who paid no heed to the eighty high priests who were after all reputable people (2 Chronicles 26:16), but also in the case of Saul and Uzzah who one can surmise had not lived as wantonly as Uzziah. For when the children had gone to the side, Uzziah put forth his hand to the ark of God and was smitten. Weary upon waiting for Samuel, Saul waded to sacrifice out of fear for the Philistines threatened to fall upon him and he did so foolishly (1 Samuel 13). But neither of them was consumed by their punishment. More of the like could readily be presented.

The forgoing, however, has not been written as if you and J. B. have fallen deeply by your writing. Oh, No! I would hope not! Rather in the sense that one

should nor admonish the other in matters where we are not called upon to do so (Hebrews 5,7), for otherwise much would be prescribed and taught—but only the letter would be put into practise. Furthermore one might take offense against the other, namely, if anyone teaches that which is not commanded (Romans 14:13). Errors can also be readily created thereby just like among the Galatians (Gal. 5:7), and just like our own Gemeinde has also experienced a number of years ago.

I bid that you would refer to the scripture passages which have been cited. Otherwise, I ask that you receive this from me in love, for it is written by me with fear and love,

*Abraham Friesen*

Copied on January 20, 1887, by Peter W. Friesen, Rosenort, Jansen, Nebraska.

## **Editor's Comment**

The purpose of Chapter Four is to make available previously unpublished writings by Abraham Friesen (1782-1849). Document One was published in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1985), 252-253, but is included here as valuable background to his biography in that it explains the reasons for his leaving the Grosse Gemeinde in Ohrloff where he had been elected as a deacon in 1817. Documents Two and Three were found in the Small Archives, Mennonite Library and Archives, Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas, 67117, courtesy of Dr. John Thiessen, letter to the editor September 16, 1992. The Abraham Isaak referred to in Document Two would appear to be Abraham Isaak (1795-1864) of

Tiege and later Schoenau who was a minister of the Ohrloff Gemeinde. Abraham Isaak was closely related to the Kleine Gemeinde and was a cousin to Franz Isaak, the Ohrloff Gemeinde minister and historian, and also to Johann W. Isaak, Schoenau, whose sons settled near the village of Gruenfeld, Manitoba, in 1874. Document Three, although undated, appears in the same journal as number two and likely dates from the 1820s. It is very similar to the interrogatories from Johann Cornies that Abraham Friesen was frequently called upon to answer during his time as Aeltester of the Kleine Gemeinde many of which are published in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*. Similar documentation is also found in the *Kleine Gemeinde Protocolbuch 1841-43*. Peter Friesen, Hirschau, the transcriber of Documents Two and Three has not been identified. Several documents in the Johann P. Friesen collection were also transcribed by him. Delegate Cornelius P. Toews is said to have married the widow Peter Friesen from Hirschau, which may be the same person. Documents Four and Five were contained in the Heinrich Reimer, *Familienbuch*, unpublished journal, courtesy of Milton and Margaret Toews, Abbotsford, B. C., November 9, 1992. Transcription and primary translation of Documents Four and Five was completed by Rev. Ben Hoepfner, Winnipeg, Manitoba, in 1993.

Document Six was found in the "Miscellaneous Kleine Gemeinde Collection," Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas, 67117, received courtesy of John Schmidt, 1980. The letter refers to letters of admonishment and correction which were being written within and beyond the Gemeinde by J. B. and others. It is possible that the reference to J. B. is to Jakob Barkman of Rueckenau to whom Abraham Friesen also wrote a letter in 1845 and another to his wife in the same year. These letters dealt with a discipline problem regarding the said Jakob Barkman (1794-1875). See Plett, "Jakob Barkman Genealogy 1765," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1990), 280 and 292. The two letters referred to were published in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1985), 299-302, where they were erroneously described as a "Letter to I. B." because of a transcription error. However, the transcription of these letters contained in the "Journal" of Peter W. Friesen, Tiege, Molotschna, and later Jansen, Nebraska, clearly identifies the recipient as Jakob Barkman (1794-1875), Rueckenau, Molotschna.

The foregoing collection of documents illustrates the thoroughness of Peter P. Toews as a historian and archivist since only one document in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, (A Letter to Peter von Riesen, 1824, page 268), and Documents Two to Six contained in this chapter were not included in his *Sammlung . . . zur Historie der Kleinen Gemeinde der Mennoniten* (Blumenhoff, South Russia, 1874). According to the comments of Peter P. Toews in the *Sammlung . . .*, page 311, there are a number of documents and writings of Abraham Friesen (1782-1849) which have not yet come to light.

# Chapter Five

## A Simple Declaration, 1845

Eine Einfache Erklärung einiger Glaubenssätze der sogenannten Kleinen Gemeinde. Wohlmeinend aufgesetzt von einem treuen Diener am Worte des Herrn im Jahre 1845. A Simple Declaration Regarding Certain Articles of Faith of the so-called Kleinen Gemeinde, sincerely composed in love by a faithful servant of the Word of the Lord in the year 1845. By Aeltester Abraham Friesen (1782-1849), Ohrloff, Molotschna Colony, South Russia.

---

Eine Einfache Erklärung or "A Simple Declaration" 1845.

Jesus, du Brunn aller Gnaden,  
Der du niemand von dir stoesz'st,  
Der mit Schwachheit ist beladen,  
Sondern Deine Juenger toest'st.  
Sollt' ihr Glaube auch so klein,  
Wie ein kleines Senfkorn sein,  
Wollt'st Du sie doch wuerdig schaeetzen,  
Grosze Berge zu versetzen.

Lasz mich Gnade vor Dir finden,  
Denn ich bin voll Traurigkeit.  
Hilf Du selbst mir ueberwinden,  
Wenn ich fuehren musz den Streit.  
Meinen Glauben taeglich mehr',  
Und des Geistes Schwert verehr',  
Damit ich den Feind kann schlagen,  
Alle Pfeile von mir jagen.

[English Translation]

Jesus, fountain of all grace,  
Thou wilt ne'er cast away, any  
who are weak and heavy laden,  
Thou comfortest Thy disciples.  
Should their faith be e'er so small  
like a seed of mustard grain,  
thou would'st enable all,  
to move the highest mountain.

For grace I plea, before Thy throne

weighed down with grief, am I.  
Help me to overcome, victorious  
onward to the fight we go.  
Each day uplift my wavering faith  
your grace and spirit, I might embrace  
that I may banish and defeat the foe  
And ward off each and every woe.

### **Treasured Reader,**

You and I are aware of the many prejudices and accusations which are made against the so-called Kleine Gemeinde. In my opinion, these come from the opponents who have not thoroughly examined the issues. They were too easily satisfied with the gossip which claims that the Kleine Gemeinde dealt so and so wrongly, punishes and judges so and so strictly, despises and condemns this and that, and much other negative and groundless talk. I suspect such criticisms come from adversarial teachers (Matt. 5:11; 1 Pet. 4:14; and Isa. 51:7). They consider us as factious and hypocritical and the like. As a result, any truth-seeking person is led to abhor us.

This is the reason why I come to greet the good-hearted reader with this small explanation. This exposition clarifies some points, especially those with which we are heavily accused. I hope and wish that the well-meaning reader might read this declaration with an unbiased heart and with care, and that he might search the Scriptures like the Bereans did. They examined these things in the light of the Holy Word whether they were true (Acts 17:11). Judge only with good understanding and allow the Word of God, the Lord Jesus and His apostles, to guide you. Then you will "know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John 7:17).

### **Separation of the Kleine Gemeinde.**

Firstly, with respect to our going out of the Grosze Gemeinde, which is offensive to so many people, and for which only the smallest number had any desire. In fact, many deemed it to have been not merely harmful but completely wrong.

Behold, my beloved reader, notwithstanding that the people regard the same to have been harmful, the Apostle Paul directs us in this manner with very clear words when he says, "Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you . . ." In the eminent Revelation, the Spirit says further, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18:4). Beloved reader, will you now object and say that matters were not yet that serious with the Mennonites? That therefore it was better to have remained together in order to help the fallen to come once more aright? Not only did I think so, but so did many others, including the deceased Aeltester Klaas Reimer. With complete dedication we sought to bring this into fulfilment. There are still enough eye and ear witnesses who saw and heard of these endeavours and can testify to them.

Jacob Enns, the Aeltester at the time, together with his ministers, preferred to direct the disobedient and rebellious members to the Gebietsamt for punishment. In fact, they stated in the presence of the entire brotherhood that

these were police matters, over which they as a brotherhood did not have jurisdiction, and that they deemed it to be good to refer the same to the Gebietsamt. In consequence, the Gebietsamt considered it necessary to commence the construction of a prison in which they brought to obedience the unruly and the perverse.

The spiritual discipline, to which we have been directed, was practised only a little (Matt. 18:6,9,15-21). Klaas Reimer and many others were very concerned in this regard and also sought to convince the Aeltester Jacob Enns by means of the Holy Word of God, how such dealings were entirely and completely contrary to the teachings of Jesus and our confession of faith. Whereupon the Aeltester Johann Wiebe from Koslitz [Chortitz Colony] was summoned to come here. Accordingly, there were many dealings and discussions regarding this matter, as to whether the physical punishment could be discontinued and the righteousness-working spiritual discipline instituted once more. That is to say, pursuant to the teachings of Jesus and His apostles, to punish the disobedient in accordance with the Word of God and the teachings of the apostles, for ". . . the Word is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). Alas, these Aeltesten and ministers could not be persuaded any further in this regard except to the extent that they conceded that Klaas Reimer was correct according to the Holy Scripture. They, however, demanded that he desist from his designs, and that he should concede. They stated that if he did not do so, he could be sent to Siberia for that reason (Matt. 24:9,10).

Take heed, my beloved reader. Since this time, which occurred in the year 1812 or 1813, the spiritual and Christian discipline has been almost completely put aside in favour of the physical and worldly punishment, which has been instituted among the Mennonites in the Molatzan [Molotschna], and whereby this burden has been imposed upon the Gebietsamt. Behold, for this was the first and the most important reason that our separation occurred. This secession was highly necessary if some remnant of nonresistant Christendom was to remain.

Since that time, the evil and godless practices such as debauchery, fighting, lying, cheating, and the like, have taken the upper hand, when once it was noted that the spiritual discipline was more and more neglected. Alas, my beloved reader, enough tears cannot be shed to lament sufficiently the fact that thieves and drunkards are not even put under the ban. Quite to the contrary, if the drunkard in his stupor has indulged in infamous acts and vices, he is being excused, even though drunkenness by itself constitutes a mortal sin and is cause for the ban (1 Cor. 5:11; Gal. 5:21). Do consider for yourselves what options were left open to us so as not to become partakers of your sins. You yourselves know "that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (1 Cor. 5:6). Behold, amongst such a fellowship you are as little able to guard yourself against their sins, as is a lump into which a little leaven has been mixed, since you will then actually be in the same fellowship as the drunkards and others, who will not be partakers in the kingdom of God, and who are to be excluded from the fellowship of the believers. "For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" (Rev. 22:15; 1 Cor. 5:9; Gal. 5:19-21; Rev. 21:8).

Alas, do weigh carefully what Paul writes to the Corinthians. Upon so doing, there is no way that in good conscience toward God, you will be able to go to the table of the Lord to fellowship with those who are openly living in the works of the flesh (1 Cor.10:18f). Rather, you will have to admit that no other alternative remained open to us but that we departed from the same and commenced to walk in the light and to purify ourselves from all unrighteousness (1 Thess. 5:4f; 1 John 1:7). Alas, alas, the downfall has penetrated to such an extent that many a sincere and righteous thinking person sighs and laments in that regard, and does not know how we are ever to come out of all this godless living and conduct, which is being practised so boldly and freely. Yet, such persons cannot bring themselves to the point that they go out from among them and to cleanse themselves from these in order to become a sanctified vessel (2 Cor. 6:17; 2 Tim. 2:21).

One is truly disturbed with respect to the downfall and apparent desolation of the Mennonite faith. Many have no inkling of the means by which they themselves may flee from this confusion. They do not take note of the direction provided by our Lord Jesus in the Gospel of Luke, when He says, "Let them which are in the midst of it depart, and let not them that are in the country enter thereinto" (Lk. 21:21); or when Paul says, "For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:14-18).

Now, my true und good-hearted friends, note well what the holy apostle has prophesied even from long ago, namely: "This know also that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof; and the same avoid" (2 Tim. 3:1-5). Indeed, for some time already the ministers have not given heed to such Scriptures. Because of this a bitter root has grown up causing much trouble, and thereby very many have been defiled (Heb. 12:15). My beloved reader, do realize that not we, but they, must accept responsibility for our separation. For they were the ones who tolerated all the godless and fleshly customs in their midst, and thereby occasioned so much division and anger. In addition, Paul unequivocally states that ". . . we should avoid the same." He also added, "For they that are such serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Rom. 16:18).

My beloved reader, from this you can well perceive that our going out was not superficial and unfounded, or due solely to a party spirit, as has been accusingly alleged. Rather, we had strong reasons and also a firm foundation in the Holy Scriptures for doing what we did. In addition to everything else, we have a truly wonderful promise from the Lord, namely; ". . . if thou return, then I will

bring thee again, and thou shalt stand before me; and if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth; let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them. And I will make thee unto this people a fortified bronze wall. . . they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee to save thee and to deliver thee, saith the Lord" (Jer. 15:19,20; 30:10,11).

**Song no. 242.**

Der Ausgang, der geschehen,  
Ist uns fuerwahr nicht leid.  
Es soll noch besser gehen  
Zur Abgeschiedenheit.  
Nein, Kinder, seid nicht bang!  
Verachtet tausend Welten,  
Ihr Locken und ihr Schelten,  
Und geht nur euren Gang.

[English translation]

The emptiness we suffered  
much pain for us has proffered.  
The good for which we sought,  
a painful separation, brought  
Oh, children, be not grieved!  
forfeit a thousand worlds  
for its earthly lure of gold,  
leads away, from God's fold.

**Spiritual Discipline.**

Secondly, our separation is made the subject of reproach because we allegedly punish too harshly, without compassion, too quickly, and for mistakes which are too minor. Gentle reader, give a little heed to the words of the New Testament, particularly to the teachings and order of the Apostle Paul. He is the foundation and master builder of all ordinances in the Gemeinde of our Lord. We, as well as all the others, are to set our foundation and build on that (1 Cor. 3:10). Accordingly, I hope that you will readily find that our discipline is neither too harsh, nor too uncompassionate, nor too quick, and that we do not punish trivial mistakes.

As soon as one brother sins against the other, we follow the teachings of Jesus, Paul and John. We endeavour to assist such a person to get right in a gentle spirit. Similarly, we try to help if someone is unwarily overtaken by a mistake. If it is a sin unto death, we also punish the way John directs us, so that no intercession is made without a preceding admonishment (1 Cor. 3:10; Matt. 18:15-17; Gal. 6:1; and 1 John 5:16). Therefore I do not believe that we punish mistakes which are trivial. To illuminate this matter, we refer to the words of Paul in 2 Timothy 3:1-5. In these five verses we find sixteen punishable matters. Regarding these Paul unequivocally writes, "And these shun."

However, those who give little heed to such teachings of the apostles say of

us that we punish trivial mistakes. Ah, my reader, sixteen punishable matters are prescribed for us in these five verses. How many more would one not find if all relevant references were enumerated. I will refrain to do so at this time, as I hope that this example will be sufficient to persuade you, and that you, dear reader, will be able to conclude that we punish neither too quickly, nor that we punish offenses which are too trivial. Indeed, it is amazing, how our opponents deem us to be uncompassionate, even though we only punish when we are commanded to do so by the Word of God. Perhaps in comparison, they are able to delude themselves that they act lovingly and kindly toward their brethren when they overlook mistakes which the Word of God commands to be punished (1 Cor. 5:6). In this, all who are required to punish, as well as those who should be punished, are in grave error.

Separation is a great act of love and a very necessary measure for the salvation of man. The Apostle Paul writes to the Corinthian Gemeinde, "For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Cor. 5:3-5). Here I will allow the kindly hearted reader to judge for himself. Who is acting more benevolently and kindly in this? Would it be those who because of fleshly love do not cut off the offending member and indirectly cause them, together with other offending members, to be cast into the fire of hell (Matt. 18:8-9); or are we the compassionate and gentle ones, who discipline the offending member, and who, together with Paul, deliver such a person unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus? I hope that you will agree without any doubts with the latter.

Oh, my beloved reader, the present prospect for the many souls is very dangerous and lamentable, so that it is indeed high time to awaken. The apostle says, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light" (Eph. 5:14; Rom. 12:11; and 1 Thess. 5:6). Furthermore, we see that this neglect of disciplining has also brought great disorder in temporal matters. What stubborn and godless living has arisen therefrom, so that in fact, our government authorities were required to take measures in order to prevent a thorough degeneration in secular matters! There are daring and proud people who no longer wish to humble themselves under the civil government, even though the sovereign Lord, the Highest Authority, constituted this institution for the administration of His kingdom (Wisdom 6:4,5).

Oh, how good and correct is the advice of Paul when he says, "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed" (2 Thes. 3:14). And again he says, "... instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will" (2 Tim. 2:25,26). The most entangled and godless people must be the most thankful to their minister (Lehrer), and prefer that they be exiled and led to repentance and betterment while there is yet time, and eventually not be punished by the government. This they should do over and above that, so that they would not remain exposed to the

unspeakable danger (Romans 13:4; 2:8,9).

What a sorrowful situation! Wretchedness upon wretchedness! And then certain ministers are so arrogant that they are not satisfied with their own miseries. They involve themselves in our excommunications by comforting those who have been separated, claiming the expulsion was done for a trivial deed (Jer. 6:14). They even receive them as such into their membership who have been wrongly punished and promise them freedom. For, they themselves are, as the apostle says, the servants of corruption. Unwittingly, ". . . the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of man, who hold the truth in unrighteousness" (Rom. 1:18; 2 Peter 2:17-19). Many of these rejoice that our discipline does not bear much fruit in some instances. For this our opponents will have to accept the responsibility and not we. Many of them make it their great concern, that they might find an opportunity somehow to convince the members of our Gemeinde that they have been wrongfully punished. This, indeed, makes us sad, as they are led astray. Yet, we can see no other solution than that which the apostle says, "Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate. . . and then I will receive you, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:17).

Only few pay more heed to the Word of the Lord (Ps. 81:12) than to the earnest original intention of our monarch, which was conveyed to us through the director and Lord Trapp, who was appointed by His Majesty himself. This eminent writing contains the following three points:

First, that in as much as it is possible, the Mennonites shall be concerned that they have good teachers and shepherds ruling over them, who shall see to it that they are saved and lead righteous lives. All this they should do that their light would shine before the people in Russia, so that they could see our good works and "praise our Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

Second, that we should be on guard that no scabbed sheep nor evil one would come among the flock, who would live in gross, manifest vices. For example, no drunkards should be accepted into our fellowship, through which the good name of the Mennonites in Russia might be brought into disgrace.

Third, that at all times we should continue to cherish our most honoured protector in love and trust, with the firm assurance that until his death, he would be a good friend and promoter of the well-being of all righteous Mennonites.

Take note, beloved reader, of how the gracious God has directed the love and good-favour of such an eminent and powerful man. For, among other things, Lord Trapp also testified that his Majesty had been moved to weep when he had to take leave from one who had earlier shown his love with tears in his eyes. Dear reader, you may well imagine that many glorious monarchs long since deceased, as well as those who are still living, have sought to further our temporal providence, as well as our spiritual well-being, here in Russia.

But one must stand disgraced when such a licentious, arrogant, proud and fleshly life is practised on our part (1 John 2:16). What is even worse is that so many scabbed sheep have sneaked in amongst the Mennonites, such as those given

to drunkenness, gluttony and boasting. Some guzzle, bicker, exercise spite, and beat one another in road houses and those of other religious confessions. I will repeat once more that one must truly be ashamed before God and our well-meaning authorities, who have dealt so lovingly and patiently with us in all matters. We had promised a completely different life.

May the all-knowing God prepare a secure refuge for each innocent and blameless soul, in which they may work out their well-being and righteousness with fear and trembling, and thereafter find eternal rest together with all the blessed in eternity (Phil. 2:12; 1 Peter 11:17; Matt. 11:29). I add the well-known words of the poet in song number 197:

Man kann so manche Suend'  
Unwissentlich begehen,  
Vor Gott kommt der Gedank'  
Gleich einem Werk zu stehen.  
Ein einzig raeudg'es Schaf  
Verdirbt den ganzen Stall.  
Wer steht, der sehe zu,  
Dass er nicht ploetzlich fall'.

Des Richters Zukunft wird  
Gleich einem Blitz geschehen;  
Was unrein und gemein,  
Darf nicht in'n Himmel gehen.  
Es fuehlt die letzte Plag'  
Aegyptens erstes Kind.  
Es wird kein Haus fast sein,  
Da nicht verdammte sind.

Herr Gott! so oft ich dies  
Nach aller Laeng' bedenke,  
So schneidet Angst and Furcht  
Durch Adern und Gelenke;  
So schauert mir die Haut,  
So gellt und klingt das Ohr,  
So lebet Mund und Herz  
Und hebet sich empor.

Ich lebe zwar getrost  
Durch Glauben, Lieb' und Hoffen,  
Und weiss, dass deine Gnad'  
Noch allen Menschen offen,  
Und deine Lieb' und Treu'  
Mich troestet und erhaelt,  
Doch fleh' ich desto mehr  
Fuer mich und alle Welt.

Senk' deine wahre Furcht

In aller Menschen Herzen,  
Lass niemand mit der Buss'  
Und wahrem Glauben scherzen;  
Thu allen Kitzel weg,  
Traegheit, Vermessenheit,  
Verstockung, Heuchelei,  
Bosheit, Unheiligkeit.

Hilf siegen ueber das,  
Was du schon ueberwunden;  
Zerstoer' des Teufels Reich,  
Lass ihn bald sein gebunden,  
Dass wir mit Fleiss und Sorg'  
Verleugnen, widerstehen,  
Anhalten mit Gebet,  
Entfliehen und entgehen. Amen.

[English Translation]

So oft one falls deep in sin  
without knowing it or heed.  
before God the thought  
is equal with the deed.  
One single wayward lamb  
the flock, so fair, condemns.  
May He who stands, beware,  
lest he should fall.

The coming of the Judge  
like lightning will descend-  
what is unclean and common  
will not enter heav'n; and  
the fulfilment of the plagues  
of Egypt's first-born sons-  
for n'er a home will be-  
without some who are dammed.

Lord God, as oft as I  
reflect, in due repose  
fear and dread impales,  
the sinews of my soul.  
I shiver through and through,  
fearful ringing in my ears,  
my heart is caused to tremble  
and look to Thee above.

I hope to live in peace  
through faith and love,

and prayer; Thy grace, I know  
is there for everyone.  
Thy love and faithfulness  
shall comfort and sustain  
I pray yet all the more  
for myself and everyone.

Implant Thy genuine fear  
into the hearts of all.  
may no one jest with faith  
and deep repentance, true.  
Remove all insincerity,  
slothfulness and greed,  
hardness, and hypocrisy,  
all evil, and impunity.

Grant victory to all  
where Thou hast overcome.  
Destroy the realm of Satan.  
Bind him ere too long  
through grace and diligence  
may we withstand the evil one,  
and by prayer continually  
escape his evil wiles. Amen!

### **The Authority of Government.**

We also face a third accusation--years ago more so than now--that we have an erroneous understanding of the power of the government and that we had been accused before the higher authorities and summoned to give an answer for this reason. This occurred approximately in the year 1821. The result of the matter was far different. Our opponents at that time would gladly have ruined us, but our good-minded district government [Gebietsamt] for the greatest part acknowledged that we were correct (Act 18:12-16).

My beloved reader, even though we are unable to resist evil, nevertheless, we confess that there is a government which is ordained of God for that purpose (Matt. 5:39; Wisdom 6:4; Rom. 13:1-7), which we are equally unable to resist. For the government is the servant of God and a revenger to execute wrath upon those who do evil. Pauls says that if we do not wish to be afraid before them, we should do that which is good, so that we would thereby win their praise (Titus 3:1,2). We are not only obligated to be obedient and subject to the same because of the punishment, but also for the sake of our conscience and all good works--for which we should be ready at all times. But should the government require anything of us which is contrary to the teachings of Jesus and the Word of God, then we must obey God rather than man (Acts 5:29).

Therefore, my beloved reader, beware that we do not oppose the government out of a party spirit, nor out of spite or envy, nor of a riotous or similar spirit. Nor is this our reason for refusing to arrest suspicious and evil people, to transport prisoners, or to accuse anyone before the government, or to

aid anyone in imposing physical or pecuniary punishment and the like. We refrain from this only and alone out of the fear of God (Phil. 4:9; Eph. 4:28). Nowhere do we find in the New Testament that the Lord Jesus or His apostles have done these things themselves or that they taught their own to do them. Instead, they have always committed these matters to the government and the mighty (Luke 22:24). The believers have always submitted themselves in voluntary obedience and loyalty unto the government, for we know very well that they are opposing the order of God, and that they will receive a judgment against themselves (Rom. 13:2), just as it was the experience of the Aeltester H. W. and others who were with him.

As already mentioned, we refrain from such physical punishment which God, in fact, has instituted over evil and godless people, and which instrument He has entrusted to the government. For this reason, gracious reader, we would rightfully, although earnestly, excuse ourselves, for neither the Lord Jesus nor His apostles have demonstrated or allowed such physical discipline or punishment against the contrary people (Matt. 5:38,45). Instead, we are to instruct and to admonish the offenders with the Word of God, and we are commanded that this alone is to be our method of punishment, in order that God would thereby grant repentance and truth to the offenders, so that they once more may be freed from the devil's chains and captivity (2 Tim. 4:2, 24).

The above briefly sets forth our basis regarding the punishment instituted by God. The same has been instituted so that good order, fear, honour, obedience, loyalty, peace, and acceptable submissiveness to the government might exist within the world as well as among the pious (Rom. 13:7; 1 Pet. 2:17). To this I would add that this authority to punish originates with the apostles and has been recognized ever since then by the nonresistant Christians. The many sacrifices and blood offerings recorded in the *Martyrs' Mirror* by T. J. von Braght bear witness to this. Although the pious have been persecuted, harshly dispersed and martyred, because of such a Christlike foundation and belief, they have also been tolerated by a number of Christian-minded regents. It even occurred that there have been rulers who have interceded with other governments for the nonresistant Christians, which can be read in pages 815-819 of the unabridged [large] *Martyrs' Mirror* and in the small [abridged] *Martyrs' Mirror* pages 156-159. Here the reader will find further that the teaching of the time not to accuse evildoers before the authorities and more of the like, is in complete agreement with our present beliefs.

It is also recorded here that the General Parliament of Holland submitted a petition to the government in Bern and Zurich in which they interceded for toleration of our brethren in the faith. Next to God, we are unable to thank enough our district government and superior state officials for the same good favour and love for their people, nor can we sufficiently repay this favour and love with our most obedient fealty. Therefore I pray to God in the spirit and the words of the well-known poet from the song number 455.

Dir befehl' ich all das Mein,  
Oberherren und Verwandte;  
Auch lasz Dir befohlen sein,  
Freunde, Feinde, und Bekannte.  
Gib auch Brot und Trost den Armen.  
Lasz dich ihr' Not erbarmen.

[English Translation]

To Thee I entrust all my family,  
my relatives and acquaintances:  
friends, enemies and authorities,  
are committed unto Thee.  
Give bread and comfort to the poor;  
be merciful unto their needs!

#### Attendance at Licentious Weddings.

Fourthly, it is for many a strange offence that we seldom attend their weddings and that we warn our own thereof, especially when someone leaves our church to join theirs for the sake of marriage. We do not permit our members to attend their engagements and weddings.

Observe, beloved reader, the first reason for not attending their weddings is based on the fact that we, and foremostly our youth, may suffer spiritually. By nature man is prone to do evil. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit" (Gal. 5:17). You know very well, beloved reader, that most of the weddings are not conducted according to the example of Tobia (Tob. 12). On the contrary, ". . . the lust of the flesh" is practised (1 John 2:16). As such practices tend to disturb our own, we think it is better to refrain from attending such weddings. Of course, we have no direct proscription in Scripture that we shall abstain from such weddings. Ephesians 5:11 says, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but, rather, reprove them." 1 John 2:15 adds, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Further James 4:4 says, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."

Now, judge for yourself, beloved reader, should we do otherwise than we have done? You yourself see how these poor benighted people come to these festivals. One is filled with pride; the other even more so. One has a smoking pipe in one hand and the *Gesangbuch* under his arm, as if the all-knowing God and the suffering and dying Lord Jesus are honoured and served thereby. Paul says, "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body" (2 Cor. 4:10).

Through them only a sinful life is carried on. The women, likewise, are included. One comes clothed in all fashionable apparel; the other even more so (Isaiah 3:16-24). They do not heed the apostles' exhortations, ". . . but let it be the hidden man of the heart in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" and "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with godly fear and sobriety, not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array, but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works" (1 Pet. 3:4; 1 Tim. 2:9,10). Only a few obey this. You may read of these in Revelation 17:4.

When these guests have gathered in their beautiful apparel, and the wedding and funeral officiations have ended, smoking is the first thing that follows. Thereby they manifest their lust of the flesh openly before everyone (Rom. 8:5) and tread their godly service under foot. It is exactly as Peter Peters has written in his leaflet

*The Way To The City Of Peace*, page 138. He calls smoking a sacrifice unto Bacchus (2 Macc. 6:7). The minister also, makes this offering. The indifferent souls are not convicted by this as a result. Rather, they are supported through this Bacchus sacrifice. Many a God-loving person and well-meaning person is saddened and enraged thereby (Matt. 18:16).

During such festivities sinful habits are practised. The Wisdom of Solomon says, "Come and let us really live while it lasts, and let us use our bodies while we are young. We want to fill us with the best wine and ointments. Let us not neglect the May flowers. . . ." In chapter two you may read more about this. There is foolish jesting, laughing and sensual inciting. There is foolishness, singing, drinking and at times even music and dancing. Such is no longer a godly and righteous life, but pagan (Eph. 4:17-19). We have good reasons to keep our youth away from such a life as much as possible. Peter says, "For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, carousing, and abominable idolatries" (1 Pet. 4:3,4).

---

A second reason why we stay away from their engagements and weddings--which is even a greater consternation for our opponents--is that our separation is not our work, but that of the grace of God. He has called us unto holiness (2 Tim. 1:9). We believe that those who separate themselves during these evil times receive much grace and mercy from God. The greater the grace and mercy which one receives, the greater and more severe is one's accountability not to sin wilfully and not to reject God's grace at any price. Peter clearly teaches this. He says, "For if, after they have escaped the pollution of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in it, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them" (2 Pet. 2:20,21). In Hebrews 6:4-8 and 10:19f we read of similar things.

When the Scriptures warn the backslider so seriously, let us not be led into such tragedy. Let us therefore stay away from such dubious weddings and not become the occasion for others to backslide. Rather, we would like to have them know how much it hurts us when our members leave our church, which is the body of Christ, for we suffer great loss thereby (Eph. 4:12). Solomon says, "The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead" (Prov. 21:16). Observe, my good reader, we feel obligated to stay at home and mourn and not attend their festivities conducted in pagan fashion, even though they desire us to attend (1 Pet. 4:4). They extend generously their welcome to their sinful ways. Solomon says, "They become competitive gluttonous in unnatural ways and have henceforth no clean conduct nor marriage" (Wisdom 14:23).

Oh no, beloved reader, we rather turn to the commandment of the Lord Who says, "Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (2 Cor. 6:17). Again He says, "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you; on their part he is evil spoken of, but on

your part he is glorified" (1 Pet. 4:14).

Oh, my reader, even if we are hated and ridiculed, evaluate thoroughly what the apostle writes to Timothy. He says, "If a man, therefore, purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and fit for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (2 Tim. 2:21). Note, this refers to those who do not retain the teachings of Christ. It is clear, that those who again keep company with such people defile themselves. They become unholy vessels and dishonour our Lord Jesus Christ. They are unusable. Christ says, ". . . no man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Lk. 9:62).

Note, here you have the reason why we fear to attend such marriages and prevent our members from attending. Our Fore-Aeltesten also prohibited such. You may read of this in George Hansen's *Confession Of Faith*, page 140, as well as in Hans v. Steen's *Confession*, pages 24 and 83.

Let me quote the poet from song number 303:

Auf Hochzeit und auf Festen  
Herrscht Prass und ueberfluss,  
Der Erden Lust zu maesten,  
Gott's Geiste zum Verdross.  
Gleich reichen Mann's Verkehren,  
Dabei man oft vergisst,  
dass Lazarus voll Schweren  
An ihren Thueren ist.

Es ist so weit gekommen,  
Dass Hirten, die vorgehn,  
Sich wohl gar unternommen,  
Nach hoher Pracht zu sehn.  
Um eit'le Ehr' bewerben,  
Nach Geld und Wollust ziehn,  
Und schnell den Weg zum Sterben,  
Zu wandeln sich bemuehn.

Was Rath? Verlassne Schafe!  
Den besten Weg zu gehn?  
Erwacht vom Suendenschlafe,  
Ihr muesst zuruecke stehn.  
Sind Hirten Erden-Buhlen,  
Folgt ja nicht ihrem Bild,  
Eilt hin nach Christi Schulen,  
Da wird der Schmerz gestillt.

[English Translation]

At weddings and festivities  
gluttony and excess hold sway  
the carnal lusts do swell  
and quench the Holy Spirit's will.

Like the rich man in his greed  
how easy to forget  
the pain of Lazarus, poor wretch  
lying naked at the door.

The church indeed hath fallen  
the ministers who lead  
have undertaken more  
to strive for fame and honour  
to gain in praise and pleasure,  
their great wealth to store.  
No heed they give, for on  
the road to ruin they go.  
as if, they did not know.

Is there any counsel?  
the erring sheep, are lost,  
to walk the way, of Christ?  
Awaken from your sleep,  
standup, from sin retreat!  
Are your shepherds mortal fools?  
then follow not their walk;  
rather learn the way of Christ,  
whereby your thirst is quenched.

### **Prayers.**

Fifth, let me share with the beloved reader a few words regarding prayers conducted at the cemeteries and the funeral services. We do not practise such. Take heed that you shun them as well. Jesus our Saviour says, "How is it that ye do not understand that I spoke not to you concerning bread, but that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? Then understood they that he bade them not to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees" (Matt. 16:11,12). Again Jesus says, "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and at the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest enter into thy room and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to the Father, who is in secret; and thy Father, who seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly . . . Be not ye, therefore, like unto them; for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him" (Matt. 6:5-8). Furthermore, Jesus says in John 4:24, "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

My beloved reader, who of us would want to boast with their own prayers? Paul says, "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part . . . For now we see in a mirror darkly, but then, face to face; now I know in part, but then, shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Cor. 13:9,12). Our work is filled with deficiencies and falls short of the praise which we should rightfully give to God. We have reasons to pray like the tax collector. He "would not lift up his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me a sinner" (Lk. 18:13). Let us not

be like the Pharisees of whom Jesus said, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers; therefore, ye shall receive the greater damnation" (Matt. 23:14). This much regarding prayer.

### **Funeral Eulogies.**

Now something regarding funeral officiations which have recently come into use, and which are practised extensively. Formerly this was not done among the Mennonites, although it was done among the Lutherans and the Catholics. These had a habit of giving the deceased a funeral oration. With the eulogy they praised the deceased in spite of his evil works which, according to Revelation 14:13, will follow him. This was done on behalf of the bereaved to give them assurance of salvation of the deceased. The Mennonites adopted this method to an extent, although not as extensively as the above mentioned churches. In our opinion, it is better to follow the practice of the early Christians. They did not hold any sermon, as God's Word does not exhort the church to do so.

By nature man is strongly inclined to be self-righteous and self-holy, which is also evident in these self-elected worship services (Matt. 5:20; Col. 2:18). Man is too careless and negligent to keep the commandments of the Lord. He is, however, ever ready to keep his own statutes of the world. The funeral eulogies show this (Col. 2:20). Many well-meaning people are involved herein, so that they may be impugned. As they are given over to their own righteousness, they do not realize the righteousness which God demands (Rom. 10:3). Although the funeral ceremony was a ritual of the Romans, who utilized the same for obnoxious and evil purposes, now the Mennonites have also adopted this practice. It seems that the Mennonites are eager to accept the evil which was practised by Rome. This gives the impression that a person can thereby be saved. My faithful reader, do not err. Paul says, "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. 6:8).

No amount of prayer and funeral eulogies will ever change Paul's word. In Romans 8:6,13 he says, "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. . . For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die, but if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Observe, it is expressly stated that if a person does not deny sin, they are and remain lost forever and must suffer eternal death and this in spite of all their worship services, singing and prayers. Even if their faces are aglow with joy like a bake oven, they are not acceptable unto God. He says, "For they have made ready their hearts like an oven, while they lie in wait; their baker sleepeth all the night; in the morning it burneth like a flaming fire" (Hos. 7:6).

I would like to inform the interested reader of the origin of the funeral services, the way the writings of P. Jantz Twisk, page 736, explain it:

Valerius Publicula, a Roman Catholic clergyman, is said to be the first man to have conducted a funeral service, and this for Brutum. As this pleased the Romans very well, they readily accepted it. Subsequently, the senate conducted funerals and eulogies for those who had bravely died in battle. Later the senate stipulated that women of honour should also be given such funeral services. In this

way the funeral eulogy of praise and the extolling of the virtues of the deceased gradually were adopted by the church.

Thus far from P. J. Twisk. The poet says in song number 423:

Der Tod, ein schrecklich bitt'res Joch,  
Fuer die, so weltlich leben;  
Zwar mancher denkt beim Sterben noch,  
Sich Gott zu uebergeben;  
Doch ist's zu spaet, wenn Satan stuermt,  
Und Hoell' die Schwefelfluthen thuermt,  
Die Suend' erst zu bereuen.

Denkt nicht bei hochgestiegnem Glueck  
Blindlings das Heil zu fassen;  
Ihr muesst beim letzten Augenblick  
Stand, Ehr' und Welt verlassen.  
Welthoheit lindert nicht den Spruch  
Im streng verfassten Urtheilsbuch;  
Gott wird kein Ansehn achten.

Ihr, die ihr Gottes treuen Rath  
Nur haltet fuer Beschwerden,  
Denkt, dass das Urtheil nach der That  
Recht wird vollzogen werden,  
Wenn auch sein Mund zum Fluch verdammt  
Und schickt zum Pfuhl von Rauch entflammt  
Die Schuld ohn' End' zu buessen.

Oft wird das Herz dem Froemmsten schwer  
Im blassen Todesblicke;  
Und denkt: Wie, liebt dich Gott nicht mehr?  
Steht sein Gnad' zuruecke? --  
Doch fasst er wied'rum glaeubig Muth  
Und spricht: "Dir sind durch Christi Blut  
All' Suend' als Straf vergeben.

[English Translation]

Death! O dreadful, bitter cup  
for those living in the flesh.  
Many think to turn to God  
their evil sins, to confess  
only after death they see,  
'tis too late, for by then  
the wars of Satan, and hell  
have spewed their sulphury fire.  
Though you are bless't with good fortune,

do not think, salvation's yours.  
You must in proper time forsake  
self, honour and the world.  
For wealth and fame does not excuse  
the verdict of justice, divine  
before the throne, each one  
must come forth alone.

You may consider God's good Word  
a grievous burden and heavy load,  
whereby the consequences match the deed,  
for judgement will be meted out,  
which His mouth shall pronounce  
and send you to the lake of fire  
and the curse of sin endure.  
When the righteous heart grows weary  
in view of death's pale grip,  
remember God doth love you.  
Doth He salvation from you withhold?  
He offers grace and peace untold  
and says, "Your sins now are forgiven  
through Christ's atoning blood".

### **Conclusion.**

I have written the foregoing for the open-minded readers in the hope that they will receive it graciously, and that I will not have expressed myself too strongly. Certainly, I will have said too much for those who are always offended and angered by the truth, and who revile and scoff the godly and say, "He creates much displeasure for us, and establishes himself completely contrary to our doings. He admonishes us that we are sinning against the law and makes our sinful lives infamous" (Wisdom of Solomon 2:12). Of myself I am incapable, for the Apostle Paul also preached what was "unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are chosen, both Jews and Greeks, the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:23,24).

Beloved reader, I must admit that during this writing I have frequently had the feeling inside of me that if only I would not indicate thereby that I of myself was wise. However, the words of Paul, which he stated, "Quench not the Spirit" (1 Thes. 5:19), overpowered me. Oh, how good would it be if in the breakneck racing of this earth, a number of people might still be saved from the prince of this world, from the spirit "which now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lust of our flesh . . . , and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2:2,3). But it is, indeed, the will of God "who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4). Accordingly, I hereby intend to lend with interest the talents which God has entrusted unto me, so that they might gain something more for my Lord (Luke 19:18).

Nevertheless, my beloved reader, I will refer you to the writings of other men, who are blessed with greater gifts of the Spirit than I am, who in comparison

with me, were entrusted with ten talents. The writings by Menno Simons, the unabridged or large *Martyrs Mirror* book by T. J. von Braght, the writing of the *Confession of Faith* by George Hansen, another *Confession of Faith* by Hans von Steen, *The Way to The Heavenly City of Peace* and the *Mirror of Greed* by Peter Peters, and the wonderful *Handbook* of 1578 by Aeltester Dirk Phillips in the Dutch language, and which with the support and gracious help of our Lord will hopefully also come to light in the German language.

It is to be wished that everyone who loves the truth would pursue and exert themselves to obtain such writings. I would venture that such readers would obtain no small benefit therefrom. But, in fact, I most gladly declare that the New Testament is the foundation, the solid basis of all truth and the underlying doctrine of all other books, upon the supremacy of which each and everyone must lay their cornerstone and building. As Paul says, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11). Many today are building on nothing but wood, hay and stubble, which as the apostle says, will also burn away on that day. But the men mentioned above have apparently built upon this foundation with gold which was pure and fine, for their teachings stood up very well during the persecutions, as they shall also stand before God in eternity.

Therefore I do bid everyone who loves his own salvation, to read these books, to study them, and to take them to heart. I trust that these writings will help many to come out of their dreams. The way matters have been here for some time, many are discontented, unsettled, and disquieted. Many a one might find it easier to receive these truths through these writings. Indeed, it is to be hoped that these venerable writings would be put to use instead of the new ones, which are spreading over the entire land like a flying letter, so to say, and in which all thieves and all perjurers are spoken of as being godly. Zechariah therefore considers them a curse. I believe that this is the manner in which one would understand John 10:1. Oh, if only one could allow the numerous books by the advocates of foreign faiths to remain in their place. Solomon says, ". . . by these, my son, be admonished" (Eccl. 12:12). Rather, one should become familiar with the writings of those whose authors have sealed their faith with their own blood, just as the Lord Jesus Himself also sealed His teachings with His blood. Oh, how easy it is for a person - as soon as he means it from the heart - to come to "the way, the truth, and the life", which is Jesus Himself (John 14:6).

Ah, my beloved reader, I have no doubts that if it were your earnest desire, these books would quickly lead you unto edification, comfort, and a revival of your soul. You will also discover therein, what goes on and what should go on in the Gemeinde of God, how every sin, different as it may be, must be confessed and forgiven in love, or how it must also be earnestly punished according to the Word of God. Here you will find how these who are punished should and must be avoided, and how the discipline should induce them unto a true repentance and regeneration (1 Cor. 5:11; 2 Thes. 3:6-14).

In his writings Menno Simons also provides very fine and righteous teaching with respect to the raising and rearing of children, and with respect to how one should live and conduct oneself here in this life, so as to inherit heaven and to receive eternal rest for the soul. The writings deal also with rewards and many other topics. Overall these books have excellent teachings in accordance with the Holy Scriptures.

With this I will now conclude. But I ask that you, my beloved and gracious reader, would lovingly excuse and goodheartedly forgive my mistakes in this writing, as well as in all my relationships. Consider me as a weak and frail human being. You should certainly not believe that I have now attained the truth, or that I am already perfect - ah, but no! But even in my very great imperfection I am prepared and anxious to pursue after Him so that "I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:12).

"Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen"  
(Eph. 6:24). A. F.

### Concluding Song

Ihr, die Ihr unterwiesen werd't,  
Um Eure Fehl' und Suenden,  
Mit Zorn Euch nicht dawiderkehrt;  
Nur Bess'rung sollt d'rin finden.  
Eu'r Mund sei stets zur Wahrheit,  
Eu'r Herz zur Buss' bereit,  
So werd't Ihr Gott gefallen.

Die hier vor der Bestrafung fliehn  
Die muessen, wenn sie sterben,  
Da sie hartnaeckig war'n und kuehn,  
Einst kommen in's Verderben.  
Ohn' alle Hilf', ganz unvermuth't,  
Wer hier nicht wahre Busse thut,  
Kann Gottes Reich nicht erben.

Ein schweres Kreuz ist's offenbar,  
Wenn, man durch das Vergehen  
Der Fleischeslust kommt in Gefahr,  
Sein'n Untergang muss sehen.  
Nur der nach Sirachs Lehren  
Das Gute haelt in Ehren,  
Ist Gott stets angenehm.

Doch wer noch ungestraft will sein,  
Ein Thor hinfort nicht bleiben,  
Der lebe mit der Schrift gemein,  
Die Welt lass ihn nicht taeben.  
Denn wer des Weisen Rath veracht't,  
Ist nicht auf's wahre Heil bedacht,  
Muss leider darob leiden!

So viele Unlust, Hass und Neid,  
Wie manche blicken lassen,  
Ist's nicht verkehrt und ungescheidt,  
Wenn man die sucht zu hassen,

Die uns aus Lieb' und Guetigkeit  
Ermuntern stets zur Seligkeit,  
Zu unserm Wohl und Besten.

Apostel Paulus, ohne Scheu,  
Hat seine Pflicht gekannt;  
Er sprach zu den Galatern treu,  
War nie von Zorn entbrannt;  
Die Freundschaft wurd' bei ihm nie alt  
Er liebte stets mit Allgewalt  
Jedweden, der ihm folgte.

Manch Einer fuer 'nen Graeuel haelt,  
Was fromme Maenner lehren;  
Man ueber sie ein Urtheil faellt,  
Sucht Bess're zu bethoeren.  
Dem Fleische wohl es sehr behagt,  
Doch an der Seel' der Wurm stets nagt,  
Kann nimmermehr gut enden.

Sie stellen fuer uns Netze fein,  
Und Stricke unsern Fuessen,  
Drum seht Euch vor und lauft nicht d'rein,  
Sonst ist's nicht abzubuessen.  
Fliedt stets vor and'rer Schmeichelei'n  
Und liebt die, so Euch aergern.

Legt Eure Fehl' von Herzen gern  
Von ganzer Seele nieder;  
Lass jedes Laster von Euch fern.  
Zeigt: Ihr seid Christi Glieder.  
Folgt immer gutem Untwerweis',  
Vor allem sucht des Herrn Preis,  
So thut ihr weise Schritte.

---

[English Translation]

You, who have been instructed  
regards your deeds and sins,  
do not resist in anger, for  
improvement you shall find.  
May your words be true, always  
and your heart repentant too.  
and God will be pleased anew.

Those who flee from discipline  
must know that when they die,

they go into eternal pain,  
without any hope or gain.  
Seeing they were disobedient  
those who do not now repent  
cannot enter into heaven.

A heavy cross is obvious  
for those giving way to sin,  
lust leads always to danger  
of eternal misery and woe.  
Only those who follow Sirach  
and strive for the good alone  
are pleasing unto God.

They who fear punishment,  
henceforth will not be foolish,  
according to the Word, will live,  
nor the world, will they deceive.  
They who reject His counsel wise  
no hope of grace can realize.  
but suffer misery and pain.

Where there's unrest, strife and jealousy,  
as it so often seems,  
it's wise and diligent, indeed  
these matters to avoid;  
to treasure love and godliness,  
which leads unto eternal rest,  
and serves one for the very best.

The Apostle Paul without fear  
has done his duty well.  
The Galatians he did truly tell,  
he was not moved by enmity,  
maintained a friendship, true.  
He always loved with fervour  
the Saviour whom he served.

Many think it for an evil  
that which good men teach.  
There are some who judge them  
seeking to pervert the good,  
which pleases well the flesh.  
But the worm attacks the soul,  
and causes grievous pain untold.

The trap is set so subtly  
across our paths and ways.

Hence, take good care, my friend  
or else be lead astray.  
Flee the hypocrisy of others  
a mere pretence, it is;  
love well the ones you hate.

Forsake all bitterness in your soul,  
sincerely confess each wrong,  
reject all evil habits,  
for you are Christ's disciples.  
Follow His teachings true, always  
above all seek the Godly praise,  
so as to walk in wisdom.

---

# Appendix

**Two Letters Regarding the 1838 Aeltester Election. A Letter by Aeltester Bernhard Fast (1783-1861), and an Answer in Reply by Aeltester Abraham Friesen (1782-1849).**

---

**To the Honourable Aeltester Abraham Friesen.**

In response to your request to formally ordain an Aeltester for you and thereby to establish a formally organized Gemeinde, we impart to you the following information:

We have recently perceived from you that in your outlook you are not committed to helping us in the regulation of our Gemeinden and in the establishment of the same. We note that you are in fact committed to working against the same which can only bring disorder in its wake. In such a case we ourselves would have to take the blame, if we had allowed ourselves to be vehicles to strengthen you in your outlook and thereby to weaken the being of our Gemeinden.

No, we cannot wish for this nor can we do so. Instead, we wish and counsel you with total sincerity to abandon your partisan spirit and join one of the official Gemeinden and together with the same to build the Gemeinde with the help of your advice. This remains our hopeful outlook for the near future. Then we would be able to pray in one spirit to the Father in heaven for the blessing which He has promised to bestow upon us.

Our hope is that you might accept our wish and this advice from us. With friendly greetings, I remain in the name of my co-workers.

Halbstadt, February 23, 1838.

*Aeltester Bernhard Fast*

---

**To the Honourable Aeltester Bernhard Fast and Your Fellow Servants.**

Grace, salvation and blessings to you from the infinite grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen!

We received your writing of the 23rd of February with the deepest anticipation. We perceive, however, that you reject our wishes and heart's desires. This greatly humbles and saddens us in our circumstances, because all of you, beloved, have considered our matter so suspiciously, and deny our request without even trying to convince us that in some way we are incorrect according to the Holy Scripture.

We, however, comfort ourselves with the words spoken by the King and Prophet David when he says, "For the Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance. But judgment shall return unto righteousness; and all the upright in heart shall follow it." Hereupon we can await the direct and indirect leading of God with unceasing hope.

But that you should in some way have understood from us that we are not committed to assist you in the regulation of your Gemeinden and in the establishment of the same, and that to the contrary, we are committed to work

against the same? This we deny, and freely state that you err in your belief, insofar as such regulations are in accordance with the teachings of Jesus and His apostles, on which after all, our entire confession of faith is grounded pursuant to Matthew 5:39; Luke 22:26; John 18:36; Romans 12:19; 1 Corinthians 6; as well as contrary to Matthew 5:39; 15:17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Timothy 3:2-5, and many other similar verses. We are obligated with all our hearts to fulfil, assist and establish the foregoing, and with the help of God, to cling firmly to the same, and not to waver neither to the right nor to the left, until our final end.

We declare, however, that under the current circumstances the certificates of church membership and transfer are unnecessary for our part. This is not to say that we would consider them for naught in all circumstances. No, indeed. We would rather consider the same to be good and beneficial in cases where fellow members from a distance, but from a fellowship which is likeminded, transfer from one Gemeinde to the other. In fact, we consider it to be our necessary duty in accordance with the example of Paul, who gave us a good testimony along with Onesimus, who had accepted the faith when he sent him to his fellow labourer Philemon (Phile. 18-21).

But of what benefit will the certificates be for us? As we live in the same community, our virtues and misdeeds are well known to all, and a changing of church membership occurs only because of differing beliefs and not because of a transfer of membership. Therefore we can foresee neither danger nor disorder between us and you, even if a certificate of transference is not required. Obstacles and fetters will be laid in the way of the seekers of the truth if they are not allowed to change to another Gemeinde without a certificate.

We currently consider it to be sufficient if the individual is persuaded by the Holy Word of God as to which is the truest way unto salvation. They hear the word spoken to them, ". . . saying, this is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left" (Isa. 30:21). We, however, should not open the door to the stubborn and disobedient and allow the same to withdraw with a certificate proportional to the circumstances so that they would then find opportunity to diminish their guilt, or in fact, to completely belie their deeds. We are not led to do this by the Word of God; for the Word everywhere states that such members are to be dismissed and that we are "to have no company with them, in order that they may be ashamed" (2 Thes. 3:14).

And finally, you wish and advise us in complete earnestness that we should depart from our party spirit, and that we should join one of the official Gemeinden. Oh, my beloved, what shall we say to this? How can you accuse us so directly of a party spirit? Oh, do consider, that even though it is only in our imperfection, we have also studied and searched the Holy Scriptures, and that we have gone out because of the dictates of our conscience and not by virtue of a party spirit. We do not ground ourselves in anything, nor do we stand firm in any matter which is not taught by the Word of God. At the same time, we also readily admit that at times false spirits have come our way. But we have not followed the same but rather, far more, have put them from us, which the other 'official' Gemeinden have neither done nor recognized, and rather, have accepted them in their Gemeinden as good members. However, until the present day we must carry the stinking name thereof, and be declared as being partisan by you. O Lord!

But how is it possible, beloved, that you so earnestly advise us to join one

of the official Gemeinden? Do you not know that much uncleanness and disgrace lies hidden in the official Gemeinden and "that a little leaven will leaven the whole lump?" (1 Cor. 5:6). Do you not notice a far greater spirit of partisanship in the official Gemeinden than in ours? And where, in such a setting, would there be the united building together of which you advise us? On the contrary, do you not experience a violent sense of indignation and antipathy toward all the human ordinances of these formal Gemeinden, for which, according to your statement, you have neither help nor solution?

Be assured, my beloved, we would no longer submit ourselves to all of these, nor will we have "fellowship with the unproductive works of darkness" (Eph. 5:11), since God at one time has persuaded us to something else. And even though we should never become an 'official' Gemeinde here on earth, it shall be sufficient for us to live in the grace of God and His fellowship, in order that through grace we might attain unto eternal salvation in the future. And since you have so completely denied our request, we find ourselves compelled to submit ourselves to our brethren, and as God wills and we live, await an opportune time and allow the election to proceed among us. We leave, however, the ordination to you and your good judgment.

Otherwise, with friendly greetings, we remain your lowly fellow servants. Ohrloff, the 12th of March, 1838.

Abraham Friesen, Heinrich Balzer  
Peter Penner, Klaas Friesen  
Isaac Loewen

---

## Editor's note

This treatise was originally published by the Kleine Gemeinde in Russia in 1845, but printed in Prussia. The forty page booklet bears the imprint "Druck der Gerhardschin Officin, Danzig, 1845." Plett, ed., *The Golden Years* (Steinbach, 1985), pages 318-335, provides a review of the various books published by this group in Russia between 1827 and 1875. *Eine Einfache Erklärung* was published again in 1901 by the Nebraska Kleine Gemeinde under the leadership of Aeltester Abraham L. Friesen (1831-1917) as follows: Abraham Friesen, *Eine Einfache Erklärung einiger Glaubenssätze der sogenannten Kleinen Gemeinde: Wohlmeinend aufgesetzt von einem treuen Diener am Worte des Herrn im Jahre 1845* (Quakertown, Pennsylvania: Himmels Manna Druckerei, 1901), 40 pages.

The original treatise also contained an appendix consisting of an exchange of letters by Aeltester Abraham Friesen with Aeltester Bernhard Fast of the Orloff Gemeinde, regarding the ordination of an Aeltester for the Kleine Gemeinde in 1838. These letters are reproduced here as well. *Eine Einfache Erklärung* was partially translated by D. Plett in 1983 and published in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 259-262 and 303-304. The primary translation of the other parts of *Eine Einfache Erklärung* was completed by Rev. Ben Hoepfner, Steinbach, Manitoba, in 1990.



# PART FOUR

## HEINRICH BALZER 1800-1846

### Chapter One

## A Biography and Interpretation

**Heinrich Balzer (1800-1846): Kleine Gemeinde minister and conservative Mennonite philosopher, by Dr. James Urry, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, New Zealand.**

---

#### Introduction.

Heinrich Balzer was undoubtedly one of the outstanding "thinkers" of the nineteenth century Kleine Gemeinde (KG), a religious movement whose importance as the guardian of conservative thought in the first half century of the Russian Mennonite experience has been revealed only recently.<sup>1</sup> But very little is known about Balzer's life and the wider context of his ideas. The KG which emigrated to North America obviously prized his writings, circulating them in manuscript and publishing some as separate tracts or in religious journals.<sup>2</sup> But other Mennonites neglected his work until Robert Friedmann discovered and published Balzer's remarkable exposition "Faith and Reason."<sup>3</sup> Friedmann, however, was a scholar of early Anabaptism, unversed in the complexities of Russian Mennonite history and he failed to enlighten his readers as to Balzer's identity or to place his writings in the broader context of Russian Mennonite religious thought. The pioneering researches and writings of Delbert F. Plett have at last provided us with more detail on the KG, its membership, aims, ideas, writings and history.<sup>4</sup> In the process, more light has been shed on Heinrich Balzer, his family connections and his ideas. These new sources help to confirm Friedmann's percipience in recognising that Balzer was drawing on a long tradition of Anabaptist thought as well as on more recent ideas and concepts and reinforce his opinion that Balzer truly contributed to a "philosophy of Mennonitism."<sup>5</sup>

#### Heinrich Balzer's Life.

Heinrich Balzer was born in 1800, probably in Schweingrube, in the Stuhm district of West Prussia, the son of Heinrich Balzer senior (1773-1842) by his wife, Anna Goerz (nee Ewert) (1768-1812).<sup>6</sup> His father apparently came from Montau, another area of Mennonite settlement in Prussia and had moved to the Stuhm area following his first marriage. Heinrich Balzer junior was one of possibly fifteen children, seven full brothers and sisters, three of whom died in childhood, and possible eight by his father's later marriage to another Anna Ewert in 1815. In

1800 Heinrich senior was elected a minister of the Stuhm Lowlands or Schweingrube (later Tragheimwerder) Frisian congregation<sup>7</sup> and young Heinrich was baptised with his elder brother David (1799-1844) in 1816. In 1819 he emigrated with his family and other members of their congregation to the Molochnaia colony in New Russia. His father, who had been elected a minister in Prussia in 1816, here became one of the leading ministers of the new Frisian congregation based in the village of Rudnerweide.<sup>8</sup> Heinrich senior settled in Grossweide, a newly established village in the New Plan (*Neuplaner/Nieplona*) area in the eastern part of the colony. But Heinrich junior probably married, although there are no details concerning his wife or any children,<sup>9</sup> and purchased a farm lot (*Wirtschaft*) in the village of Tiege, close to Ohrloff in the more established western area of the colony.

Some time during the 1820s he was elected a minister in the Frisian congregation and father and son served together as ministers until 1833. This may have been a continuation of a family tradition and also reflect possible ties through his mother's line to ministers and elders of the Frisian congregation in Prussia. Two Ewerts (Hans and Jakob) served as elders of the congregation in the eighteenth century (1750-76 and 1788-1800) and either Frantz Goerz (1779-1834), the first elder in Russia who came from the same area of Prussia, or his wife, Maria (nee Goerz 1781-?), who emigrated with the Balzer family and also initially settled in Grossweide, may have been distantly related to Heinrich junior's mother's first husband, Jacob Goerz (1748-1795).<sup>10</sup> Such kinship links among members of the ministry were not uncommon in Prussia and Russia.

### Joining the Kleine Gemeinde.

In 1833 Balzer left his congregation and joined the small group known as the KG. His departure from the Frisian congregation must have caused some debate as his father remained a minister in the Frisian congregation and at least three new ministers were elected that year to the congregation. Long after the event his actions were cited as precedence for other ordained ministers wishing to join other congregations.<sup>11</sup>

The reason for this extremely radical course of action, as articulated by Balzer himself in poems and addresses, was a matter of conscience. Balzer was concerned with the direction life was taking in the Mennonite colonies and the failure of the congregations, including his own, to uphold basic principles of the faith. It also should be remembered that the early years of the 1830s witnessed great changes and tensions in the Russian Mennonite world. Alternatives to government policy seemed to indicate an end to emigration, economic difficulties were apparent and worse drought and famine stalked the land.<sup>12</sup> There were also calls for reform to the economy, to the system of local administration and schooling. These reforms were part of a wider set of changes which were to result, after a period of considerable struggle, in Johann Cornies' control of the colony.<sup>13</sup>

Balzer appears to have undergone a crisis of conscience sometime in 1832 and entered into correspondence with a minister, later an important elder of the KG, Abraham Friesen (1782-1849).<sup>14</sup> Friesen lived in the next village of Ohrloff and thus was Balzer's neighbour; like Balzer he was an important "thinker" in matters of faith, writing a number of important religious statements. In 1818 Friesen had abandoned his position as a deacon in the Ohrloff Flemish

congregation to join the KG.<sup>15</sup> But it was the circulation of a booklet suggesting radical reform for all European Mennonites that appears to have been the catalyst for Balzer to leave his congregation and join the KG.

The booklet in question was written by a South German Mennonite, Abraham Hunzinger (1792-1859), who called for little more than the total rational reform of the Mennonite faith to meet the challenge of the modern world and thus to "improve" the Mennonites. His proposals included the abandonment of outmoded practices: rules against marriage with outsiders, the use of the ban, non-involvement with civil government and objections to military service. He also suggested broad reforms to education with a recommendation that higher education be encouraged and a salaried, professionally trained ministry be established.<sup>16</sup>

These suggestions appear to have "awakened" in Balzer "a particular inspiration and impulse . . . which I [was] unable to extinguish." In an epistle<sup>17</sup> to the elders of the Ohrloff Flemish, Alexanderwohl Groningen Old Flemish and Frisian Rudnerwiede congregations, Balzer described how he was "shocked" by the booklet and that it constituted "a departure and turning away from our beloved God" to the "ruination of all flesh." The threat of reform was that its followers were tempted away from the true path of faith. Balzer acknowledges how Hunzinger's

booklet was the key to much which I had not previously perceived and which I had unknowingly promoted myself. Because this pitiable man so clearly demonstrated that he is obviously very distant from the right way, we all naturally confess that he is on the dangerous road of error . . . We, nearly all of us, find ourselves on this false course, and Hunzinger is a concern to us merely because he has progressed such a good distance ahead of us.

The problem was that in the name of doing good and by attempting to improve life, reformers became "worldly minded and finally entirely worldly." Balzer warned his fellow religious leaders that a "surreptitious transformation from Christendom to the world" was occurring in their congregational communities through "great wealth," a "disposition unto worldly knowledge [i.e. higher education]," and a taste for fashion, theatre and display. All this ultimately would lead to the abandonment of basic Mennonite principles just as Hunzinger had openly advocated: involvement in "big business", civil government and "finally the military and service in war." Balzer's call to his fellow ministers was to "cling firmly to the fundamentals of our fellowship and do not risk any departure from them."

Balzer's reference to Hunzinger's work hints that the booklet may have been promoting reform. It is perhaps significant that Balzer addressed his epistle to the three leading "reform" congregations in Molochnaia, leaving aside the Large Flemish Congregation which, like the KG, was noted for its conservatism.<sup>18</sup> How widely Hunzinger's booklet was circulated in the Russian colonies is unclear as only Prussian subscribers are listed in the single published version I have examined. But a Russian government report on the colonies does refer to the book, giving Riga as the place of publication indicating that it had been imported into Russia with the censor's permission. The fact that reference to the booklet

appears in a journal of the Ministry of State Domains, whose reform-minded Russian bureaucrats were involved in planning major reforms for the Mennonite and other state peasants under their control, suggests official approval for Hunzinger's opinions.<sup>19</sup>

As Balzer's epistle and other writings all include appeals to conservatism, and stress the continuity and conservation of faith and practice, it is not surprising that only the KG appeared to offer separation from the "world" combined with a clearly articulated set of ideas associated with the maintenance of well established ways.<sup>20</sup> Many, if not most, Russian Mennonites were at this time deeply conservative and suspicious of innovations. The Large Flemish Congregation, which included the majority of colonists, supported such sentiments. But such conservatism, unlike that of the KG, was not deeply grounded in the established Mennonite principles of faith. Their members were conservative because, like most rural people, they were suspicious of any change, but few could articulate the bases of their conservatism. In time, many proved quite willing to accept change if it was to their personal or financial advantage, with barely a thought as to its consistency with Mennonite teachings or principles of faith. What is remarkable about Balzer's and much other KG writing, is its clarity of vision and appeal to the basic foundations of Mennonite faith. But in Balzer's case there are distinctive features to his approach which probably reflect his broad intellectual experience before he joined the KG.

#### **Balzer's intellectual background.**

While it is obvious from his writings that Balzer was skilled in articulating his thoughts in High German, it is unclear whether this was a result of his early schooling or later self-education. There are reasons to believe it was a consequence of both. Balzer had emigrated to Russia as a young adult and although his childhood must have been disturbed by the Napoleonic invasions of Prussia, he may well have received a good basic education in the new, "reformed" Prussian schools.<sup>21</sup> The Tiege-Ohrloff area of Molochnaia was also a centre of intellectual life in the colony. It was the centre of the most liberal and progressive congregational community, the Ohrloff Flemish congregation, whose members provided many of the leaders in the colony-community. It also contained the offices of Cornies' Agricultural Union, the first high school in the colony and a private lending library.<sup>22</sup> Balzer was a friend of Cornies and was later remembered as a "knowledgeable preacher" and as a "liberal and intelligent" man.<sup>23</sup> So any education that Balzer had received in Prussia was no doubt enhanced by his involvement in the religious and intellectual activities of Mennonites in and around his home village.

After joining the KG, however, Balzer warned against the dangers of higher education and the reading of "alien books published by other confessions." Such books were "false coinage through which one can easily be overwhelmed and deceived and accept base metal of little worth instead of gold and silver." He also warned against being "tossed to and fro by the winds of all manner of foreign teaching,"<sup>24</sup> and exhorted Mennonites to be "on guard in the selection of one's reading material, particularly if the book is nicely made up, and makes a strong appeal to both the converted and the unconverted, be it true or false."<sup>25</sup> These writings seem to hint that Balzer believed he had been once lead astray by such

literature and an interest in worldly affairs.<sup>26</sup> The contribution of his earlier knowledge of philosophical approaches to the problems of faith is reflected in his writing and statements on human nature, thought and faith which are quite distinctive in comparison with the writings of the nineteenth century Mennonites which are currently available for study. His sermons reveal an extremely logical manner of thought and a clear presentation of ideas. He also seems to have relied heavily on the Bible as the source of his ideas. Unlike many KG ministers of Flemish background, he does not seem to have made much use of the books of the Mennonite tradition, those sixteenth and seventeenth century writings of Mennonites, including Menno, whose interpretations of the Bible, of life and faith were lovingly cherished, quoted and promoted in the KG community.

#### **Balzer's views on human nature and faith.**

Balzer's major work known as "Faith and Reason", whose full title is *Understanding and reason, simple opinions regarding the differences between understanding and reason, discussed according to the teachings of the Gospel*, was produced at the time he joined the KG. It is a major philosophical statement and obviously was intended to be circulated among those in the colonies, KG and non-KG, interested in religious ideas and concerned with the direction of Mennonite life.

Human life Balzer argued, had a "threefold character."<sup>27</sup> Firstly there was the mortal flesh, the physical life subject to the trials of this earthly existence and, like all living creatures, ultimately death. Secondly there was "the life of the soul or [rather] of the senses," a "psychic or sensual life" which "through thinking [reasoning] . . . governs and directs the physical life by way of the five senses." Again this is an aspect of existence humans shared with other creatures "with this great difference that the bountiful Creator has endowed the human soul with reason, the natural light by which man can reasonably consider the affairs of this world, judge his own actions, and make a good and rational choice between right and wrong." The third characteristic Balzer called "the mental or spiritual life" was also a gift from God. This was God's special gift to humankind and to them alone. But it was a precious gift which, through Adam and Eve's disobedience, had been placed at risk: "it was through the fall of man that his *understanding* was darkened." Reason, in humankind's fall, was not lost, but "corrupted in body, soul and mind." However, through an acceptance of Jesus Christ and "a simple obedience to the Gospel, "this aspect of human life was redeemable":

The true knowledge, or the 'reason of the heart' [*Verstand des Herzens*] is revealed though the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to those who genuinely repent from their sins, deny them [*ihnen absterben*], and conduct their lives in accordance with the word of Christ . . . Out of grace the Father of Light will give them the right wisdom and *understanding* . . . [;] the more a man opens his heart to the working of the Spirit of God, the more the mind will be illuminated and inspired . . . [I]n a reborn and faithful heart, animated by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit alone, this reason must be subordinated to the faith, and brought under its obedience [*Kindschaft des Verstandes*].

Understanding was opposed to reason. The New Testament clearly indicated that understanding, "or knowledge of the heart illuminated thought the Holy Spirit," could be "grasped only through faith." It was not to be confused with reason and should be recognised as superior to reason. "Natural" reason, "restricted exclusively to activities of this world," had to "be tamed" for a person to achieve salvation.

Balzer acknowledged that reason could be "developed to a high degree" through "secular learning," but this only tempted people away from salvation because whatever goes beyond its concepts and judgements, reason puts to doubt." Reason had been greatly enhanced by "worldly scholarship" in "universities and schools of higher learning" and the development of science which tempted people to search into the mysteries of nature" through methods of "observation, analysis, experimentation, and logical deduction." But such developments of the faculties of reason threatened true understanding. Worse, developed reason promoted "pride, conceit, and complacency" and led to "conformity with this world." But by accepting Christ and the teachings of the Gospel, instead of the philosophical teachings of reason, understanding will soon spread from man's heart to all his actions and make him fit to carry on a divine (or sanctified) life in simplicity and truth."<sup>28</sup>

Balzer then went on to condemn contemporary Mennonite life in Russia and to warn of future consequences if there was not a return to established ways. His warnings included a catalogue of sinful practices well rehearsed in Mennonite religious writings, including those of other KG writers: "[p]ride, ostentation, vanity, greed for money and lust for wealth, avarice, drunkenness, luxury, vicious life, masquerades, obscene songs, gambling, and above all the miserable smoking of tobacco." These faults need to be corrected through the application of understanding, Christian discipline and a return to a simple way of life, that of "the lowest estate, that of the husbandman" which was "the most conducive . . . for the preservation of genuine simplicity in Christ."

But Balzer also warned of the dangers of policies aimed at that reform of Mennonite life where they were based on reason and not on understanding. In this he singled out higher educational reform in the colonies. The "new secularism" which had occurred through greater contact with the world in business and through Mennonite's reading books and newspapers, had "produced a desire for a better, that is a more refined education for their children." But in planning to improve "the school system" Mennonites had to be:

on the alert lest the young flowers of our church become biased against our principles which later on would make it difficult for them loyally to follow our tenets. In particular one should be on guard not to expand the necessary instruction beyond such subjects as reading, writing, arithmetic, singing and anything else useful and handy for the simple practice of a husbandman. Whatever belongs to higher learning brings forth nothing but sophistry, unbelief, and corruption of the church; for "knowledge puffeth up" (1 Cor. 8:1). Reason gets its strength and sustenance from this learning, and soon simplicity is bound to be abandoned. Therefore I counsel and implore each member of our church to make it not too difficult for his own child to find his salvation in innocence.

This was written at time when a number of new Prussian school teachers had begun to teach in the colony and within a decade Cornies had wrested control of the village schools away from the local communities and congregations and brought them under control of his Agricultural Union. From 1842 onwards Cornies and his son-in-law, Philip Wiebe, forced a more regular and secularised educational system on the Mennonites.<sup>29</sup>

### Balzer's Dualism and Two Kingdom Theology.

Balzer's contrast between understanding and reason, although his own, was built upon, and thoroughly integrated into, a well established Mennonite view of the world which Robert Friedmann called "the doctrine of two worlds."<sup>30</sup> Its roots lay in ancient thought, could be justified by Biblical reference, the teachings of the Early Church and was particularly favoured by Anabaptist and later Mennonite writers.

A close consideration of Balzer's terms reveals a number of dualisms, binary oppositions, which connect his view on human nature with these other teachings. In terms of his basic view of human nature and "thought," the following opposites appear in his writings:

understanding	reason
heart	mind/head
soul/spirit	flesh/senses
spiritual light	natural light
illuminated knowledge	darkness
innocence	learning
truth	fiction

In terms of the nature of the two worlds this corresponded to a well-established set of oppositions in Mennonite thought which Balzer also mentions in his writings:

non-worldly community	worldly community
nonconformity	conformity
purity	corruption
non-resistance/peace	violence/war
salvation	damnation

In terms of human action this implied to Balzer a number of further oppositions:

simplicity	complexity
obedience	disobedience
submission	domination
humbleness	pride
brotherly love/selflessness	hate/selfishness

In terms of the proper pursuits of a committed Christian this contrast in actions then involved another set of oppositions:

farming	commerce
---------	----------

husbandman  
self-sustenance  
plainness  
material poverty  
spiritual wealth

businessman  
accumulated wealth  
ostentation  
material wealth  
spiritual poverty

Thus Balzer's theological position, if it may indeed be called this, fitted easily into well established Mennonite ideas, concepts and practices dating back to Anabaptist and earlier Christian writers, and also KG thought and action as is apparent in their writings produced in the first half of the nineteenth century. His distinctive contribution was to add a new dimension built on a reaction to post-Reformation developments in theology and secular philosophy which debated the role of reason in human affairs. In this sense, although Balzer exhorted his readers to "cling firmly to fundamentals" and to firmly unite in love, because "firmness protects [against] decline,"<sup>31</sup> his appeal to continuity and maintenance was based upon a critique of the modern world through an understanding of recent developments in ideas and their application to human affairs. Balzer was thus an informed, intellectual conservative by choice, rather than a conservative holding onto perceived traditions out of ignorance or stubborn narrow mindedness.

#### Balzer's legacy.

It is clear from Delbert Plett's extensive researches that kinship has always played an important part in KG life. In the early nineteenth century the majority of its members were of Flemish background some with close ties to members of the Ohrloff Flemish congregation, including Ohrloff's religious leaders.<sup>32</sup> There were few converts from the non-Flemish congregations, especially those who emigrated to Russia after 1818. By leaving the Frisian congregation, Balzer must have broken with not only his congregation but also his family and kin entering a very different social and religious world. This occurred after he had achieved adulthood and probably after he married, so he had few, if any kinship links with the KG. No doubt by living in Tiege<sup>33</sup> he had made friends with members of the congregation who lived in the neighbourhood and these undoubtedly were strengthened after his joining their congregation, but there were few other bonds to link him with the network of KG families which was well established by the 1830s. Even if any of his children married into the KG families<sup>34</sup> this probably occurred too late to be of any social significance as Balzer died on January 1, 1846. His joining the KG was a matter of faith; he was joined in spiritual kinship not in social kinship with the KG. His legacy for the KG was therefore not sealed by continuity of blood and his descendants apparently vanish from KG history.

But it is obvious that his memory, and particularly his writings lived on for some time. The high esteem in which his writings were held is apparent from their inclusion in the manuscript *Collected History* of Peter Toews and the fact that an effort was made to publish some of his texts in North America before and after 1900.<sup>35</sup> But by this date the KG community was itself under strain, as Plett has noted from "American fundamentalism (dispensationalism)" and the "writings of the forefathers were largely forgotten and relegated to dust bins."<sup>36</sup> It took an Anabaptist scholar to rediscover and to recognise the value of Balzer's writing, and another twenty years before Balzer's work could be placed in a broader context.

## Endnotes. Heinrich Balzer (1800-1846).

1. Delbert Plett, ed., *The Golden Years: the Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde in Russia (1812-1849)* (Steinbach, Man.: D.F.P. Publications, 1985), and other volumes in this series; cf. James Urry, "All that glistens . . ." Delbert Plett and the place of the Kleine Gemeinde in Russian-Mennonite history," in *Journal of Mennonite Studies*, 4 (1986), 228-50.

2. Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 221, 233-4.

3. Robert Friedmann (translator and editor), [Heinrich Balzer's] Faith and reason: the principles of Mennonitism reconsidered, in a treatise of 1833. *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, 22 (1948), 75-93 reprinted in Plett, ed., *Golden Years*, 237-47 - all quotations from now on are taken from the reprint in Plett.

4. Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, and related volumes.

5. Friedmann in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 237.

6. Much of the genealogical information used here and below was supplied by H. Schapansky of British Columbia to Delbert Plett who kindly provided me with copies of Mr. Schapansky's research and direct correspondence with Mr. Schapansky who kindly answered other queries. Additional information was located in the genealogical notes of the John Balzer family in SA.I.106 in the Mennonite Library and Archives, Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas; I am most grateful to the archivist, John D. Thiesen, for supplying me with a copy of this manuscript.

7. See Horst Penner, "Tragheimweide," *ME* 4, 741-42; the congregation was formed in an area settled only after 1724 by Mennonite refugees from Hohenzollern Prussia and Lithuania.

8. See "Ein paar Blaetter aus der Geschichte der Rudnerwiede Gemeinde," *Mennonitisches Jahrbuch*, 10, (1913), 31 and reports of various village officials founded in this migration in M. Woltner ed., *Die Gemeindeberichte von 1848 der deutschen Siedlungen am Schwarzen Meer* (Leipzig, 1941), 139, 142. On the migration of new congregations at this period see James Urry, *None but saints: the transformation of Mennonite life in Russia, 1789-1889* (Winnipeg, Man.: Hyperion Press, 1989), Chapter 5.

9. Delbert Plett suggested in his *Pioneers and Pilgrims: the Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde in Manitoba, Nebraska and Kansas, 1874 to 1882* (Steinbach, Man.: D.F.P. Publications, 1990), 477, 488, that Heinrich Balzer (1821-1895) of Hierschan, Molochnaia and later Mountain Lake, Minnesota, might be Balzer's son. He now informs me that he has since uncovered evidence that this is not so.

10. See Benjamin H. Unruh, *Die niederländisch-niederdeutschen Hintergrunde der mennonitischen Ostwanderungen im 16., 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Karlsruhe: the author, 1955), 367; "Ein paar Blaetter . . .," 29-33. Details supplied to me by Henry Schapansky indicate, however, that any relationship must have been distant, i.e. over three generations apart.

11. For a listing of the Rudnerwiede ministry in 1843 see *Namenverzeichnis der Aeltesten und Lehrer der mennonitischen Gemeinden* (Danzig, 1843), 54 and compare its new elections with the ministry listed in the earlier 1835 edition republished by Adalbert Goertz, "Die Mennonitengemeinden Altpreussens und Osteuropas in Jahre 1835," *Ostdeutsche Familienkunde*, 13, (1965), 112. One of the leaders of the Templars cited Balzer's transfer as precedence for his leaving the Gnadefeld congregation in the 1860s, see Nikolai Schmidt in Franz Isaak, *Die Molotschnaer Mennoniten: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte derselben* (Halbstadt: H.J. Braun, 1908), 240.

12. James Urry, editor and introduction, "Immigration and Famine in Russia, 1833. Two letters of Johann Cornies," *Mennonite Life* 46 (3), (1991), 18-20.

13. Urry, *None but saints*, Chapters 6 and 7.

14. Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 253-256; in his epistle to the other elder (see below) written in January 1833, Balzer spoke of "circumstances which came together in my life's history about a year or somewhat more ago," *ibid.*, 219.

15. Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 248-50; 262-64.

16. Abraham Hunzinger, *Das Religions-, Kirchen- und Schulwesen der Mennoniten oder Taufgesinnter; wahr und unpartheilich dargestellt und mit besondern Betrachtungen ueber einige dogmen, mit Verbesserungs-Vorschlaegen versehen* (Speyer: Kob'schen, 1830); cf. Christian Neff, "Hunzinger, Abraham," *ME* 2, 845.

17. Heinrich Balzer, "Epistle to the Aeltesten," 1833 in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 219-20 all quotations in the next few paragraphs are from this source.

18. See Urry, *None but saints*, 99-106.

19. Opisaniie mennonitiskikh koloni v Rossii, *Zhurnal Ministerstva Gosudarstvennykh Imushchestv*, 4, (1842), 34, where the author is incorrectly given as Heinriger. On the Ministry's reform programmes in the 1830s and 40s see Urry, *None but saints*, 117-22, 136-37.

20. On these ideas see Urry, "All that glistens . . ." 241-44.

21. Urry, *None but saints*, 155-56.

22. *Ibid.*, 105, 112-18, 156, 165.

23. Abraham Braun, "Kleine Chronik der Mennoniten an der Molotschna seit ihrer Ansiedlungen bis mein 80. Jahr," *Mennonitisches Jahrbuch* (1906-07), 69.

24. Balzer to the school teacher Heinrich Rempel of Altonau, February 1834 in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 225.

25. Balzer in "Faith and Reason" in Plett, ed., *Golden Years*, 245.

26. In "Faith and Reason", Balzer wrote that "The big trading connections made it absolutely necessary to study business administration, geography and political science. Reading daily newspapers became a necessary and tempting habit, and made people familiar with the great politics of this world. They thoroughly enjoyed observing revolutions and the overthrow of kings and states" in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 244. Again this sounds like a confession of his earlier actions and interests.

27. All the quotations which follow are from Balzer's "Faith and Reason" in Plett ed., *Golden Years*, 224-45.

28. On the wider context of these changes in attitude towards "knowledge" and "learning" among Mennonites in nineteenth century Russia, see James Urry, "The snares of reason: changing Mennonite attitudes to "knowledge" in nineteenth century Russia," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 25(1983), 306-22.

29. Urry, *None but saints*, 132, 160-63.

30. Robert Friedmann, "The doctrine of two worlds," in G. F. Herschberger, ed., *The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1957); cf. Robert Friedmann, *The Theology of Anabaptism* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1973).

31. Balzer quoted in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 220, 244.

32. Delbert Plett, *Profile of the Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde 1874* (Steinbach, Man.: D.F.P. Publications, 1987); Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*.

33. It is interesting that Balzer lived in Tiege as all the other Frisian ministers whose places of residence are noted in the listings at this period lived in the eastern villages. Was it perhaps the intellectual atmosphere of the Ohrloff/Tiege community which had attracted him to settle there before he joined the Kleine Gemeinde? Editor's note: There was a significant KG community in Tiege, including the prominent Isaac family. The KG community here also included the two brothers-in-law: Klaas F. Reimer--the son of Aeltester Klaas Reimer; and Peter W. Friesen--the son of Aeltester Abraham Friesen; see Part Four, Chapter Five.

34. See above note 9.

35. Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 221, 233-34.

36. *Ibid.*, 233.

## Chapter Two

### An Epic Poem

An Epic Poem about the Good Shepherd and His Sheep, by Rev. Heinrich Balzer (1800-1846), Tiege, Molotschna Colony, South Russia.

---

In einer Gegend, wo man angenehm im Ueberflusse schwebte  
Gesundes Brot zur Speis dem Hungrigen nicht Mangel fuehlen liess  
In dessen Naeh jedoch manch Duerftiger schmachtend lebte  
Und lechzend sehnte sich nach einem Trunk und Biss  
Erkannte billig man, des Himmels Wohlthats Segen  
Nahm freudig dankbar da, wo andere blieben leer.  
Man fuehlte andrer Not und liess geruehrt darueber sich bewegen  
Aus Mitleid, drang der Liebe wohl gar versteckter Ehr,  
Ihr mitzuteilen diese schoene Kost und Speise  
Und wartete nicht nur, bis wo ein Armer kam;  
Man trug es ihn selbst hin, und hatte Mueh und Reise  
Und freute sich, wenn er dies Lebensbrot nur nahm.  
Ein jeder konnte sich an dieser Kost nach Wohlgeschmack froh und  
zufrieden laben,  
Wer dieses Lebens-Manna, nur aus Gewohnheit nicht, sich ekeln  
Dies Lebensbrot konnt eben auch, wie jene Himmelsgaben und  
verdrriessen liess  
Die einstens Gott der Herr Israels-Volk so vaeterlich zur Speis anwies  
Auf gleiche Art nach Wohlgefallen zugerichtet werden  
Und teilt es so aus, wie man es wuenschte gern;  
Das scharfe Salz und was sonst noch auf Gottes weiter Erde  
In andern Gegenden geschaffen war, und das von einem Herrn  
Herruehrte, und zum Preise seiner vaeterlichen Grade  
Die Manigfaltigkeit gleich der Verschiedenheit den Kindern Gottes zeigte  
Bediente man es sich zur Wuerzung dieser Kost, ohne eingen Schaden  
Wodurch der Appetit zum Lebensbrot sich desto staerker neigte  
Man dachte darauf Anleitung die zu geben,  
Die dieses Brot zu theilen schuldig sind, und man sich selbst erkohr  
Damit Unwissenheit nicht, oder Vorurtheil in dem gemeinen Leben.  
Den Kern der Speise selbst beraubte und verlor.  
Man muehte sich und traf Anstalt und Kosten die bedeutend waren,  
und ordnete den Unterricht dort fuer die Jugend an,  
Nicht ganz zwecklos, denn zahlreich in grossen Schaaren,  
Liess man die Kunst sich lehren dort von einem Mann;  
Den man zu dem Behuf aus einer feinern Welt sich hat verschrieben

Und der als Koch Geschmack, verwoehnten Gaumen kennt:  
Wozu doch nur ein Theil der friedlichen Bewohner sich fand angetrieben  
Und knuepfte zu dem Ende unter sich ein enges Band  
Ein ander Theil und zwar der groesste von den beiden  
Trug ueber diesen Schritt gleich Anfangs Kuemmerniss  
Es kam das unter sie die Lieb dadurch erlosch, und brachte Mueh und  
Leiden,

Und eine kleine Zeit, bedeckte dieser Flor, die truebe Finsterniss  
Ein jeder Theil stand fest auf sein gefasstes Meinen,  
Und uebertrieb dadurch den noetgen Mittelstrich,  
Was noethig war und nuetzte jeden einen,  
Damit man weder hie noch da vom rechten Ziele wich.  
Ein dritter kleiner Theil die Biedern Alten, Lieben  
Sie sahen zu und mischten sich in diesen Streit nicht ein,  
Doch auch in ihn bewirkte jene Sache redliches Betrieben,  
Und schmolz dadurch mit jenen groessern Theil, ihr Sinn in sich gemein.  
Doch selten wenn der Mensch im regen Eifer stehet,  
Ergiebt es sich dass er die Mittelstrass nicht haelt,  
Links oder rechts, entweder, oder, er sehr gerne gehet,  
Wenn nicht auf dieser Seit, er doch auf jene faellt.  
So gings auch diesen Guten und vorsichtgen lieber Treuen,  
Blos Brot nur mit Salz, ohn einiger fremder Wuerze sonst dazu  
Begehrten sie, und zaehlten selber sich, nur zu der Zahl der Laien,  
Doch Wuerze fremder Art von Alters her, behielten unbemerkt sie bei in  
guter Ruh.

Wie die Vorfahren, biedere Deutsche, sich im Alterthume staerkten,  
Forschten fleissig sie der Speise herb und salziger Art.  
Und auf Beschaffenheit der spaetern Nachzeit sie nicht merkten,  
Verglichen nicht behutsam recht Vergangenheit mit ihrer Gegenwart,  
Kuehn und Stolz verachteten sie jede fremde Waare,  
Und prueften nicht ob auch verwerfen billig sei  
Erzeugnisse von fremder Art und Boden, wo sich deutlich offenbare,  
Dass sie nahrhaft, gesund, wohlschmeckend, staerkend und sonst  
mancherlei

Dem Menschen Dienliches und Nuetzliches gewaehrten,  
Und gleich wie Gottes Brot bei ihr, es dorten wuchs und war,  
Es alles nur ein Gott und Vater ihr bescherte.  
Dass freudig anzunehmen man verpflichtet sei dankbar.  
Man ueberschreitet sonst zu weit auf dieser Seite,  
Und geht so weit vom Ziel als man sichs gar nicht denkt.  
Dass man zuletzt sich nicht gesunde Kost bereite,  
Noch will und kann und wuenscht: sich selbst ins Elend senkt.  
Doch Redliche! bei diesem Schattenriss, werschwindet euer Gute,  
Und das betruebet mich, denn ich kenn es bei euch,  
In euch wirkt Gottes Geist zum Segen das Gegenmuth;e;  
Und ueberzeuget euch, von eurem Nichts zugleich  
Der erste Theil der jenen Mangel drueckend fuehlte,  
Und selbigen zu steuern sich bemuehte sehr;

Dem unverkennbar auch ein Geist der Liebe Treu beseelte,  
 Das Wohl des Ganzen zu befoerdern mehr und mehr,  
 Muss man, dass was fuer sich in sein Bestreben Gutes lieget,  
 Nicht so verkennen, all's fort gleich ohne Unterschied verachtet,  
 In dieser Welt, wo gut und schlecht mit einander kaempft und sieget,  
 Sei man behutsam und im Urtheil wohl bedacht.  
 Doch ganz ohn Grund um irgend etwas zu besorgen standen  
 Die Lieben, Treuen in der grossen Anzahl nicht;  
 Zuvor fuerchteten sie damals mehr als wirklich war vorhanden  
 Tief blickten sie jedoch, durchs Einfalts Fernrohr in ein richtiges Licht,  
 Der arme Mensch, durch eigne Lust gezogen, ueberschreitet  
 So gerne die Schranken, dringender Nothwendigkeit;  
 Dies kommt, wenn man vom wuerdigen Zubereiten guter Speisen sich  
 ausbreitet:  
 Zur Uebermuth, Verschwendung, Geilwerden und Ueppigkeit  
 Die Jugend dort in jener Koch und Zubereitungsanstalt lernte gluecklich  
 die Zubereitung schoener und wohlschmackender Genuesse aus.  
 Doch in diesem Grade blieb man nicht sehr lange stehen, ging dann  
 endlich  
 Von dem bloss Noetigen zu dem Unterfluessigen langsam und behande  
 mit hinaus;  
 Hier ward nun der Grund gelegt zu theure Sachen,  
 Kostbarkeiten, Seltenheiten, die man frueher nicht gekannt;  
 Wollte man sich nun, verwoehnt, zu *Delicaten* machen,  
 Und ward auch selbst durch fremde Gaeste hiezu dringend angemahnt.  
 Unter diesen ganz unnoetgen Kosten-aufwand musste billig leiden,  
 Diese schoene Gegend welche stand in einer Art von Flor.  
 Armuth war endlich eine bittere Folge dieser Gleichheits Freunde  
 Die man statt der nuechtern sich jetzt erkor.  
 Doch auf diese Weise jene ganze Gegend zu verderben,  
 War dem Feind der Menschen, noch zu langsam nur;  
 Er, der sich nur freut, wenn sie im grossten Elend jammervoll ersterben,  
 Brachte sie durch die geheime Kunst, zu einer Krankheits-kur.  
 Wenge nur zuerst, doch spaeter einge mehr befiel dies schwache Fieber,  
 Und zeugte in der Folge dass es war von schlimmer Art.  
 Wen es erst ergriff, der hielt es, und bei wengen gings wieder ueber;  
 War dabei mit viel Verschiedenheit ganz sonderbar verpaart,  
 Jeder dens ergriff der glaubte sich gesund und fuehlte keinen Schaden;  
 Er ging umher, war nicht bettlaebrig so wie andre sonst wohl sind:  
 Sein Magen nur der ward zu weil von einer Unlust stark beladen;  
 Und ihm ekelte und graute fuer sonst gut gesundes Brot und Speise wie  
 gelind  
 Es frueher auch auf seinen ganzen Stand sich schickte.  
 Immer luestern etwas Neues zu geniessen trieb ihn  
 Bald dies, bald jenes sich zu schaffen, wenns gleich den Magen stark  
 beklohm und drueckte:  
 Armer Kranker! doch auch dies verkannte er, in seinem schwachen  
 Fiebersinn.

Diese Sucht griff mehr gemein in beiden vorbenannten ersten Theilen  
Schien das zu eingen, was der erste Eifer einst bevor zu schnell zerriss,  
Im Anfange, doch die Krankheit war auch frueher schon seit eingen  
Weilen

Offenbarte jetzt nur ihre Wirkung deutlich und fuer mehr gewiss.  
Sie zeigten sich anfaenglich durch geringe Lust zu kernhafter Speise,  
Und immermehr nahm ab der Appetit zum kraeftgen Lebensbrot,  
Denn der schwach geworden Magen, konnte dadurch endlich gleicherweise  
Starke und nahrhaft gesunde Kost nicht recht verdauen und gerieth in  
Hungersnoth

Leckerbissen, Naschwerk, fremde und ganz fein gemahlte *delikate* Sachen  
Zung und Gaumen kitzelnd und recht reisend, das verlangten sie  
Dies benutzte nun der Feind zu seinem Vortheil, und liess irgendwo fuer  
sie zurechte machen

Schoen gezierte und von mancherlei Gestalt, *Confekten*, mit viel Fleiss und  
Mueh.

In demselben streute er sein Gift so fein als moeglich;  
Griff dadurch die Lebenskraft im Innern unbemerkt an,  
Und zerstoerte die Gesundheit nur so ganz almaehlig,  
Selbst die Nerven litten, und der Mensch geriet in Wahn.  
Damit man dies eingestreute Gift nicht schmecken sollt koennen,  
Muessten diese Sachen Zucker-honig suess und stark gewuerzet sein.  
Elende! sie kosteten mit Lust und glaubten noch an Kraft sehr zu  
gewinnen,

Verblichen aber ganz und lebten nur zum Schein.  
Fuer dieses Gift, und dies betruergliche krank werden  
Ist in des grossen Schoepfers weite Schoepfung blos ein Mittel nur.  
Nichts noch sonst auf Gottes grosser weiter Erden,  
Besiegt die Kraft, der Krankheit dieser Todeskur.  
Ein Mittel das gottlob auf vielen Stellen bluehet;  
Und das man haeufig hat und haeufig noch genieusst:  
Es ist das schoene Brot, dass man so oft nach sehnt;  
Doch von dem sehen bloss, die Kraft nicht her entspriesset:  
Nein! wer genieusst und auch den Magen sich durch anders nicht verdirbet,  
Damit die Kraft vom Lebensbrot, die Wirkung leisten kann;  
Dem giebt es Kraft und solchen Lebensduft, dass er nie einstens stirbet  
Und von der Krankheit ihn befreit, vom Augenblicke an.  
Wer dieser Seuche nicht will fallen in die Klauen:  
Der staerke sich dadurch nur immerfort ohn eingen Unterlass;  
So lang der Mensch noch fest allein sein ganz Vertrauen  
Auf diese Manna setzt, so lang bleibt er beschuetzt, vor Feindes List und  
Hass.

Ein Freund der selber auch von dieser Kur befallen,  
Und aus Erfahrung jene schlimme Krankheit kennt.  
Der herzlich gern so lang er ferner hier muss wallen,  
Befreit sein will davon durch jene Kraft, die ich dir dort genennt.  
Er sah mit tiefer Wehmuth und beklommenen Herzens  
Wie Alt und Jung dem Naschwerk so begierig schlang.

Er sahe mit fast unnenbaren grossen Schmerzen,  
 Wie man nach sein Verderben mit so vielem Eifer rang.  
 Ihm stellte sich im Geiste oft die Menge dieser Lieben vor die Augen;  
 Wobei ihm war als saehe Haeuflein Schaefchen er  
 Die man nicht gerne laesst auf Stellen die nicht taugen,  
 Und die Gefahr enthalten fuer dies stille liebe Heer.  
 Man hat fuer sie bestimmte Sammelplaetze auserkohren;  
 Da liess man sie hingehen und saettigte sie dort.  
 Damit nich eins von allen sollte gehn verlohren,  
 Bestellte man fuer sie an ein und jeden Ort:  
 Aufseher, Waechter, Hirten nach des grossen Eigentuemers Will und  
 Wunsch von ganzen Herzen  
 Treu erfuellten diese Knechte ihre Pflicht, so viel in ihren Kraeften stand,  
 Fleissig streueten sie gesundes Heu zur Nahrung fuer die Schaefchen und  
 mit Schmerzen  
 Mussten sie gar bald eins und das andre, wenn es sich im Haeuflein nicht  
 befand  
 Herber Winter, manche Stuerme, Regen, Schnee und Eis begleiteten  
 Ihre Tritte und Arbeiten fuer das Wohlergehen dieser Zahl  
 Futter, Wasser, Weide und was mehr sie reichten und erweiterten  
 Auch zum Nutzen fuer das theure Heer den Stall;  
 Doch die Schaeflein von der Art beschaffen,  
 Das sie gerne nach was Neues gehn;  
 Wenn sie kosten, stets nach Neuem gaffen  
 Nicht sehr willig lang auf einer Stelle stehn:  
 Muessen dennoch fest umschlungen und bewahret werden  
 Wenn man sie dem Elende und der Irrung nicht preis geben will;  
 Dies erwecket fuer die treue Hirten manigfaltige Beschwerden,  
 Denn manch Schaeflein sucht sich zu entreissen in der Still.  
 Jener Freund der dort im Geiste die Haeuflein Schaefchen sahe stehen,  
 Und die Hirten mit viel Muehe und Besorgniss um sie her,  
 Ueberfiel ein banger Schrecken, da er so ganz in der Naehе konnte sehen  
 Einen grossen weit und breiten Wald, besetzt mit Gestraeuch und  
 Baeumen dicht und sehr  
 In demselben waren wilde, zahme, wie auch gute mancherlei Geschoepfe,  
 Und vorzueglich Woelfe reissender und moerderischer Art,  
 Voegel, bunt und schoen, laut sangen und in tiefen Suempfen  
 Lagen Otter, Schlangen, Kroeten, schaedlich mit geheimen Gift verparrt  
 Gemsen gab es dort in Mengen, die den Schaefchen an Gestalt ganz  
 aehnlich waren  
 Nur viel wilder und viel frecher blitzten ihre Augen stolz und kuehn,  
 Diese gingen einzeln so wie auch in grossen Schaaren;  
 Wussten weder was von Leiden selber, noch um anderer Bemuehn.  
 Diese feine schoen gestalten Wesen waren schlaue und listig bis zum  
 hoechsten Grade,  
 Wo dagegen jenen stillen Haeuflein; Einfaltskraft ohn Argwohn zierte  
 schoen,  
 Sie bemerkten diese Schaeflein dort so eingeschraenket, und es daeuchte

ihnen Schade

Konnten aber nicht dass man ihr Glueck dadurch recht suchte zu erhoehn,  
Listig suchten sie die Sanften und Einfaeltn zu beruecken,  
Spiegelten die Freiheit ihr, im Walde, mit gefaerbter Schoenheit vor,  
Alles Schoene konnten sie ausmahlen zum Entzuecken,  
Prachtvoll suess und anghem, im Reiz und schoensten Flor.

Diese feine Gaeste kommen aus Neugierde erst zu diesen Stellen,  
Wo den Schaefchen Nahrung Futter und was sonst gereicht ward,  
Fueglich konnten sie sich in die Weise diesen Guten mitgesellen  
Und zum Unglueck wurde eins und bald das Andre mit ihr treu verparret.

Ihre Hirten und die Waechter dieser frommen Heerden glaubten  
Dass sie mit der Heerde werden weiden eins und ganz gemein,  
Aber hierin irrten sie, denn schmeichelnd nahmen und beraubten  
Sie behende Schaefleins Frohsinn, Ruh und Seligsein.

Gluecklich glaubte man sich schaaetzen muessen koennen

Wenn man diese schoene Wesen in der Naech betracht,

Und man glaubte durch sie zu gewinnen;

Deshalb war man nicht recht auf der Hut bedacht.

Scharfes Auge, steiler Gang und muthges hohes Traben,

Schnell und heiter, witzig schlau und fein,

Hielte man fuer so besondre noetge Gaben,

Dasz man glaubte; Schaefchens-Unschuld muesst dadurch veredelt sein,

Deshalb liess man sie zum Spiele mit den Gemen laufen,

Warnte sie jedoch fuer alzu nah am Wald;

Dies nahm sachte zu und bald in ganzen Haufen,

Rannt fast alles mit ohn eingen Aufenthalt

Bald merkten ihre fromme Hirten diesen Schaden,

Riefen sie und sprachen: Schaeflein! kehret um

Ihr Gewissen deutete auf ihres grossen Herrn Ungnade,

Wenn sie was verlieren sollten von der ihnen so theuer anvertrauten

Summ.

Diesen mitgelaufenen Schaefchen schreckte zwar oft heftig

Dass Geheul der Woelfe boeser und schrecklicker Art;

Und recht freudig ueber diese neue Gaest im Walde waren sie  
geschaeftigt

Eine Beute sich zu fangen ohn Verlust der Zeit und Gegenwart,

Einge leider! wenn die Schaefchen auf den Platz zusammen kamen,

Wo man ihnen reiches Futter, Wasser und das noetge mehr

waren Weg: und andre schmaechlich, einige wild und drunter gab auch  
Lahmen,

Die im Laufen sich erhitzt und ihre Fuesse sich verwundet sehr;

Doch dies trocken Heu und Stroh blos zu geniessen

Schien als wenn es Schaefchens Lust nicht mehr recht stillen wollt.

Jene Gemen hatten ihnen im Walde das Erspruessen,

Gruener Kraeuter auch im Winter dort im Walde als sehr nahrhaft  
vorgemahlt.

Diese hatten sie mit jenen dort gemeinschaftlich gekostet und erfreuten  
Herzlich sich an dieser suessen Kost und Lust;

Wenn die lieben Hirten ihr denn jetzo blos verstreuten,  
Das was ihr von vielen Zeiten her schon war bewusst,  
Ekelte es ihnen und mit Freuden liefen sie zum Suesskraut in dem Walde  
ueber;

Assen dort mit vielem Apetit: Kraut, Laub und sonst Naschwerk sehr viel;  
Und je mehr sie assen, um so mehr gewannen sie es lieber  
Dasz beinahe endlich nur auf Wenge nach, von dem Alten liess und fiel.  
Eine Stimme durch ein Sprachrohr von des Eigenthuemers Hof erschallte:  
Waechter meiner Herde steht auf eurer Hut!

Diese Stimme drang in allen Theilen und durch fielte

Alles was nur hoeren konnte und bewirkte Muth,  
Einge Hirten welche recht erkannten die Gefahren,  
Wohin jetzt viel Schaefflein liefen schnell und stark,  
Da beinahe alle ihre ganze Schaaren

Luesternd worden waren, geil und karg:

Sparten keine Muehe um die nachgebliebenen Treuen bei sich zu  
behalten,

Fuehlten tiefen Schmerz und innige Bangigkeit,

Wenn die Wichtigkeit: die theuren Heerden zu verwalten

Sie erwogen, und dagegen fuehlten ihre Nichtigkeit.

Rastlos gingen sie und scheuten weder Mueh noch Plagen.

Suchten die verirrtten Schaefflein mit viel Sorgen auf.

Fanden gluecklich sie, Eins und das Andere, wollten sie es gern zur  
Heerde tragen,

Wenn es nur ermuedet war auf seinen irrigen Lauf.

Viele trafen sie die rannten von den guten Hirten,

Als wemns ihre Feinde worden waeren

Andre standen, liessen sich von ihren alten Wirthen

Die Gefahren nennen und sichs offenbaren;

Doch nach dem sies stille angehoeret hatten

Folgten Wenge wohl, doch viele liefen weg;

Denn Freiheit in dem Walde winkte schaefer, als die Hirten die so  
treulich baten,

Da der grosse Reitz und ihre eigne Lust sie fuehrten ihren Steg.

Tief gebeugt, und bis im Herzen wund geschlagen fuehlten

Sich die treuen Knechte um die grosse Noth.

Worin so viele ihrer Schaefflein lagen und sich wuehlten.

Immer Tiefer, tiefer bis zum schwersten Tod.

Schaefflein reifen sie mit tiefbewegter Stimme

Schaefflein! lieber Schaefflein lauft doch nicht stets wieder!

Theure, o uns theure Pfaender! werdt doch inne

Das ihr seid des grossen Herrn werthes Eigenthum

Schaefflein! Schaefflein! lauft doch nicht stets weiter!

Tiefer in den finstern Wald hinein!

O! bedenkt doch, wie waeret ihr so froh und heiter!

Da ihr ginet in den Schafstall ein!

Schaefflein! Schaefflein! rennt doch nach dem Naschwerk nicht so eilig!

Dieses suesse Gruen enthaelt das feinste Gift!

O! ihr seid, wenn ihr es kostet nicht so treu und selig  
 Als ihr dabei freudig springt und huepft!  
 Dieses Gift, dass toetet eure Kraefte, wenn dagegen  
 Euer Blut auch doppelt fliesen wird.  
 Euer Frohsein wird sich eilend und im grossten Elend legen.  
 O, ihr Schaefflein folgt doch eurem Hirt!  
 Schaefflein! Schaefflein! o hoert ihr nicht dort das schreckensvolle Heulen,  
 Woelfenrachen sparen furchtbar schnaubend gegen euch sich auf!  
 Schaefflein! Schaefflein! koennt ihr hier mit Lust noch laenger weilen?  
 O, ihr lieben Schaefflein endet doch euren Lauf!  
 Schaefflein! Schaefflein, lasst die euch verfuehren, fahren!  
 Sie betruegen euch, und luegen falsch euch vor!  
 Schaefflein! kehrt doch um zu euren vorgehen Schaaren!  
 Und geht wieder ein, zum grossen Schafstallsthor.  
 O ihr treuen Hirten, werd nicht muede! so zu rufen eure Schaeffchen,  
 O! verdoppelt euren Fleiss und schwere Mueh!  
 Wenn nicht alle, o es wird doch noch manch Laemmchen,  
 Tief geruehrt, bewegt, mit Dank erkennen sie.  
 Eure Arbeit wird mit tausend Freuden euch belohnet werden,  
 Von dem Herrn dem ihr hier treulich habt gedient  
 Er ist Jesus, als der Oberhirte, Schoepfer Himmels und der Erden,  
 der euch und die Schaeffchen alle, alle mit Gott hat versoeht.

---

Mein Freund, der du dies liesest oder lesen hoerest!  
 Vielleicht ist dir die Deutung dieser Schilderung nicht ganz hell und klar;  
 Und sollt es sein, dass du Verlangen traegest und begehrest,  
 Zu wissen wen ich dort in jener Zahl und Schaar  
 Verstanden und gemeinet habe, o so wisse:  
 Dass du es bist, und allen denen mit dir  
 Aus Gottes theuren Wort zum Segen her entspriessen  
 Trost, Leben, Heil und Glueck, ohn Ende fuer und fuer.  
 Wenn du in Einfalt dich am Lebensworte weidest,  
 Und von demselben nicht ablaesst noch davon gehst;  
 Wenn du nach Christi-Lehr hier leben tust und leidest,  
 Und felsenfest auf ihn, den eingen Grund bestehst.  
 Halt dich an Gottes Wort, es ist die rechte Speise  
 Dass deiner Seele nur allein saettgen kann;  
 Es ist das Lebensbrot, dass dich auf deiner Reise,  
 Stets staerket mehr und mehr, und fuehrt dich himmelan.  
 Dass du dies Gottes Wort, auch lernest recht verstehen  
 Dazu benutz die Zeit und lerne fleissig dich,  
 Wenn du im Worte willst, die Gottes Kraft ersehen.  
 Unwissenheit ist dir hiezu sehr hinderlich  
 Sie hat schon manche Seel in Irrthumsnacht verhuellet  
 Mit Aberglauben dicht verwahrt und beschart;  
 Drum strebe du das dich der Geist des Herrn erfuellet  
 Er schuetzt vor Irthum dich und du bleibst fest bewahrt,

Erlerne willig was dir hiezu kann behuelflich werden:  
Gut, und auch richtig lesen und auch schreiben, schadet nicht;  
Nur huete dich dass es anstatt zu nuetzen dir nicht bring Beschwerden  
Und setze nicht zu hohen Werth auf dein selbst eigen Licht,  
Verleugne alles eigne Wesen und lern kindlich dich gering betrachten  
Gottes theures Wort, dass suesse Lebensbrot, halt ueber alles werth.  
Flieh du die Welt mit aller ihrer Kunst, und lerne kuehn verachten  
Was die verderben Lust und die Natur so gerne hat und sehnlich stets  
begehrt,

Flieh nicht nur Fleischeslust und thierisch Wollustleben,  
Dass selbst auch mancher Heid ungoettlich schon genannt,  
Es giebt auch feinre Lust, wenn die dich ganz umgeben  
Ein Sklawe worden bist, der selber sich verbannt.  
Lass die Vernunft, die Fuehrerin der Natur, dich dann nicht leiten und  
regieren

Wenn du nach Gottes Wort den Weg zum Himmel gehst;  
Sie leitet davon ab, und wird dich endlich fuehren  
Auf eine breite Bahn wo du gefaehrlich stehst;  
Gleich wie in einer Kur, wirst du an Kraft ermatten,  
Die Lust zu Gottes Wort wird dir beraubt sein,  
Dein inner Mensch wird dann nur gleichen einem Schatten  
Als Christi Juenger lebst du dann nur blos zum Schein.  
Im Gegenteil wirst du auf manches andre fallen,  
Und deine Lust wird sich auf Sachen lenken hin,  
Die lieblich reizend schoen in deine Ohren schallen.  
Damit ergoetzet sich dein Fleischestrieb und Sinn,  
Fuer Buecher lesen, die den Geist aus Gott betrueben,  
Dafuer nimm dich in acht, denn sie enthalten Gift;  
Was nicht aus Gott geboren, das sollst auch du nicht lieben:  
Dies lehrt dich Gottes Wort, sein Geist in heilger Schrift.  
Betrachte doch die Welt, sie liegt im argen falschen Wesen,  
Ein finstrer Wald sie ist, darin viel Boeses wohnt.  
Sorgfaeltig huete dich vor ihrer Eitelkeit, die sie sich hat erlesen,  
Der Fuerste dieser Welt, als Gott im selben thront.  
Entlaufe liebe Seel, doch nicht aus Christi Stalle;  
Halt dich an seiner Lehr in Einfalt immerhin.  
Die Welt bringt dich mit ihr zugleich in eine Falle:  
Der Gott in dieser Welt verblendet deinen Sinn.  
Folg Christi Bothen gern, wenn sie dich treulich rufen  
Und merk auf ihre Stimm, die staat an Christo schallt.  
Sein Gnadenwort fuehrt dich zu hoehern Gnadenstufen,  
Du steigst mit ihm einst auf, dort wo sein Ruhm erhallt  
O! gluecklich liebe Seele wirst du werden,  
Wenn du dem Worte Gottes treu verbleibst;  
Du wirst schon gluecklich sein auf dieser Erden.  
Doch gluecklicher erst dort, wo du dich einst enthuellst.

ENDE

"Heinrich Balzer"

## Editor's Note

The above poem appears to have been written sometime prior to 1833 when Heinrich Balzer (1800-1846), Tiege, Molotschna, left the Ohrloff Gemeinde and joined the Kleine Gemeinde. The work seems to contain many of the elements of Balzer's later - passionately expressed - theology of Mennonitism. See Dr. Robert Friedmann, "Faith and Reason: The Principles of Mennonitism Reconsidered in a Treatise of 1833", *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, Volume XXLL, April 1948, Number 2, 75-93, and republished in Plett ed, *The Golden Years*, 237-247.

The Balzer poem published in this chapter was recorded in the journal of Peter Fast (1831-1916), "Wiederhaltes Tagebuch und sonstige wichtige Chroniken und Ereignisse angefangen den 8 Januar 1907", Jansen, Nebraska and later Escandido, California, unpublished journal, 116-124. This journal is in the possession of Tabor College Archives, Hillsboro, Kansas, 1989. Transcription for computer by Rev. Ben Hoepfner, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1991. Another version of Heinrich Balzer's epic poem is found in the Document Collection of Johann P. Friesen, courtesy of Jake P. Friesen, Blumenort, Manitoba, presently in the possession of the Archives of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference, 440 Main Street, Steinbach, Manitoba. The latter version seems to be more refined and better written and is probably closer to the original in style. I am indebted to Professor Harry Loewen, Chair in Mennonite Studies, University of Winnipeg, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3B 2E9, for his assistance in editing and proofreading this poem. March 4, 1993.

## Chapter Three

### Preparatory Sermon, 2 Cor. 13:5

A Preparatory Sermon on 2 Corinthians 13:15. By Reverend Heinrich Balzer (1800-1846), Tiege, Molotschna Colony, South Russia.

---

"May the grace, mercy and peace from God our heavenly Father through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and the accompanying power of the Holy Spirit be with you all! This is my heartfelt wish. Amen!"

---

**Text. 2 Corinthians 13:5. Preparatory Sermon for Communion.**

Copied in March 1850, by Rev. Klaas Friesen (1793-1870), Rosenort, Molotschna, from a sermon by Ohm H. B. This sermon was presented by Rev. Klaas W. Friesen at the following times and places: 1850 - 18th of June in T., 25th in N., 2nd. of July in S., 9th in Margenau, 16th of October in Tiege; 1851 - 10th of June in Margenau, 17th in T., 24th in N., 16th of July in S.; 1852 - 25th of March in Margenau, 1st of June in T., 8th of July in N., 15th in S.; 1853 - 14th of June in Schoenau, 1rst in Margenau, 8th in Tiege, 5th of July in Neukirch; 1860 - 29th of May in Ru., 5th of July in N., and the 12th of July in Fischau.

---

**Song No. 222, Gesangbuch.**

1. Ach! Komm du suesser Herzensgast,  
Du Labsal meiner Seel!  
Bei der du deine Wohnung hast  
In dieser Leibeshoele.
2. Tu' aus des Herzens Glaubenspfad  
Was nicht dein eigen heisset.  
Ach, boet dem Willen doch die Hand,  
Der sich der Welt entreisset.
3. Es schaut dein holder Gnadensblick  
Die Suenden Gruft im Herzen  
Und zieht sich dennoch nicht zurueck.  
Er sieht auf Jesu Schmerzen.
4. Ich oeffene dir Herr, Seel' und Sinn  
Mit bruenstigem Verlangen,

Dich, meine Ruh' und mein Gewinn,  
Recht freudig zu empfangen.

5. Komm, komm und halt dein Abendmahl  
Mit deinem schwachen Kinde,  
Auf dass dein wundersuesses Mahl  
Mich inniglich entzuende.
6. Dein Manna schmeck nach Himmelsluft  
Dein Brunnquell gibt uns Leben,  
Davon lass, was uns nicht bewusst  
Zu schenken wird gegeben.
7. Es ist wohl ein verborgener Schatz,  
Doch bringt er Geist und Leben.  
Und laesst der Suende keinen Platz  
Die Andacht zu erheben.
8. So kehrt Gott zu der Seele ein  
Mit all seinen Guetern,  
Und machet sie unkraft gemein  
Den himmlischen Gemuethern.

[English Translation]

1. Oh, come Thou great provider,  
and comforter of my soul,  
where Thou Thy dwelling hast,  
in this home, my mortal rest.
2. From my life of faith, remove  
what'er is not Thine own.  
Thy helping hand in mine embrace,  
the world's allure I do disown.
3. In noble grace Thine eyes behold,  
the decadence within my soul.  
Yet, Thy love doth not withhold,  
but reveals the pain of Christ.
4. For Thee I open heart and mind  
with steadfast longing I repine.  
For Thee, my peace and earthly gain,  
with great gladness, I do decline.
5. Come, come, observe Thy Supper  
with Your weak believing child,  
that Thy blessed meal of love,

would uplift my heart to thee above.

6. Thy manna, a foretaste of heaven is,  
Your fountain does with life ov'rflow,  
bestowing blessings beyond compare,  
in measures full and free.
  7. A hidden treasure we find in Thee,  
that brings us hope and life,  
denying sin the smallest measure  
us in our daily strife to hinder.
  8. Come into our hearts, Oh Lord  
with Your noble grace, divine,  
enrich us all, most lovingly  
with joys and pleasures, fine.
- 

### **The Significance of the Lord's Supper.**

Beloved brethren and sisters redeemed in Christ. The saintly Apostle Paul writes to the Corinthians with the following significant words, "Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body" (1 Cor. 11:27-29). The holy apostle here speaks of the Communion of the Lord, which He instituted during the night prior to His sufferings that it should be observed by all His disciples according to the above mentioned scripture. In verse 23 and on, he also states, "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread. And when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me" (1 Cor. 11:23,24).

Accordingly, beloved friends, the Communion divinely instituted by Jesus Himself is a very important meal and differs entirely from the ordinary feast meals of mankind. The followers of Christ gather together in one place to eat and drink with each other in loving fellowship. Therefore it has a much higher value and authority for the following reasons: Firstly, due to its historical origins. Secondly, because of its inherent significance. And thirdly, because of the consequences which flow therefrom. Beloved friends, a Communion Service is comparable to the last will and testament of a mortal being which is intended to bestow a benefit - although not necessarily according to the right kind of love - for the inheritors. The same differs greatly from other letters and papers which the testator, the person making the will, has left behind. Such a will and last testament is highly esteemed and of great authority in the eyes of the world for the following reasons: Firstly, because it is the final and irrevocable will of the testator which is grounded on the legal authority of the civil laws of the land which it fulfils. Secondly, as to its significance. For it is not only true that the executed document shall serve as

a remembrance of past friendship for the one who is named therein, but the beneficiary thereby also inherits everything or at least a significant part of the estate of the deceased. Thirdly, as to the subsequent results thereof. On the one hand, it makes the one lawfully designated as the heir and sole possessor of the bequeathed property, happy and carefree in this mortal life. On the other hand, the receipt of these earthly properties can also serve for the destruction and harm of the body and soul.

Even so it is with the holy Communion of the Lord which has been instituted for us by the great lover and fount of our salvation, Jesus Christ, as a testament of the new covenant. The same was established during the night that He began with His suffering, and was fulfilled when He shed His own blood. This new covenant contains the following elements: It is the last will and irrevocable testament of our faithful High Priest and mediator, Jesus Christ, which is founded upon the righteousness of the heavenly Father. It stipulates specifically that all who believe in Him receive the forgiveness of sins and thereby shall become the children of God in accordance with John 3:16 and Romans 8:15,16.

Secondly, the holy Communion has a noble and important significance. First of all, the believing souls partake physically with the mouth of the literal bread and wine in remembrance of our Saviour who died for us. But in the spirit through faith, they also experience the fellowship with the body and the blood of Christ (1 Cor. 10:16,17). The spiritual being is thereby united with Christ through faith just as intimately as the mortal body is united with the physical food. In John 6:47, and thereafter, our Lord Jesus says as follows,

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread that cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat of it, and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world (John 6:47-51).

Beloved friends, we do well to note that the high significance and esteemed value of the holy Communion does not lie in the physical elements of the bread and wine. According to the literal meaning of the Scriptures it would be Christ's physical body and blood which has been given unto us to eat and drink (Matt. 26:26-28). Through this misinterpretation a false security and damaging superstition and idol worship has arisen among the great majority of those who carry the name of Christians. For this purpose the apostle says, "Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. 10:14-16). Indeed, this is comparable to a secular will, which in and of itself does not constitute the inherited property with which it deals, and cannot be of any benefit to the heirs and beneficiaries of the will, unless and until, they actually obtain possession of the inheritance which was bequeathed to them!

It is similar with the benefits of the Holy Communion. The visible elements of the bread and wine do not constitute the actual inheritance. Rather, they only

constitute for us a symbol of the body which was crucified, and the blood of Christ, which was shed as a memorial for us. Faith claims the fellowship of the body and the blood of Christ to work the forgiveness of our sins, and effects the assurance of eternal salvation. The same in essence constitutes the true and actual inheritance which our faithful and beloved Executor of the New Testament, Jesus Christ, has instituted within the Holy Communion, and secured unto us with His death.

Thirdly, the observance of holy Communion is of great importance because of the consequences that flow therefrom. For if anyone partakes thereof worthily and with a contrite heart, he shall receive such a great treasure and joy of salvation that it is beyond human expression. Here in this earthly dimension they immediately receive forgiveness of sins (Matt. 26:28) and peace with God (Rom. 5:1), the witness in their hearts that they are the children of God through the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:), the experience of the fullness of grace (John 1), fellowship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (John 14; and 1 Cor. 6), the faithful intercession of the Lord Jesus with the Father (1 John 2) and many other similar blessings of grace more; and into eternity an everlasting salvation which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Cor. 2:9).

#### **Those Who Partake Of Communion Must Be Worthy.**

But the one who partakes of the Last Supper unworthily becomes guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. Such a one eats and drinks it, as the apostle says, unto his own judgment, and thereby becomes subjected to an ever greater condemnation. For whosoever seeks to put the wine of the new evangelical grace into the old sinful bottles of the former life, thereby comes under a greater judgment than before. The new wine bursts the old bottles so that both are destroyed, according to Matthew chapter 9, verse 17.

Therefore beloved friends, it will be more tolerable for such persons who in their innocence knew nothing of the new foundation of faith which has been instituted through the Gospel of the Lord, than for the one, who under the influence of the preaching of the Word, has committed himself unto a discipleship of faith through the holy baptism, attends at the table of sanctification with the faithful, and yet remains the servant and slave of sin, lives according to the old nature and deliberately works against the Word of the Lord. The three reasons above referred to clearly and manifestly demonstrate that the observance of the holy Communion is of great worth and importance. Consequently, the matter requires a sincere self-examination of all who are called through faith, in accordance with the words of the apostle when he says, "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup" (1 Cor. 11:28).

Beloved friends, we too intend to observe this holy supper and meal of love at a convenient time through the grace of God. For this reason, I find myself obligated, as a poor and humble menial servant of the Lord, to exhort all of us as one fellowship who have been baptized and united into one body through one spirit, to focus our attention on the importance of these matters in accordance with the Holy Scriptures. Oh that all of us would be truly worthy to partake of this great feast and that we might see to it that we would be apparelled in the proper wedding garments in order that our King could have pleasure in our beauty (Ps.

45:12).

Beloved friends, in the parable of the royal wedding we see the great earnestness of God in this regard. Of this our Lord says, "And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment. And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in here not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen" (Matt. 22:11-14). For this reason also the Apostle Peter says, "And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear" (1 Pet. 1:17).

Whoever is truly articulated by the fear of God, will have a sanctified concern regarding himself, whether he is coming short of the will of the Lord in any particulars. Such a one will conduct himself carefully and will examine himself diligently with regard to his spiritual status. This is the true self-examination and the Word of God is the only correct standard whereby one can prove one's actions, words, and thoughts. The fear of the Lord will make one holy and competent for this self-examination. On the other hand, if there is no fear of God, there is self-satisfaction and indifference. Such a person sees no danger, is not conscious of any evil dwelling within himself, is indifferent regards to himself and his circumstances, and is, therefore, completely incapable of conducting such a proving and self-examination.

For this reason, and in accordance with the Word of God, I have decided to provide a humble exposition regarding certain sins whereby and whereof we have prominent grounds to take heed for and of ourselves, if we endeavour to examine and prove ourselves worthily, for which the words of our text provide us with further guidance.

---

However, before we direct ourselves to this exposition, we need to recognize our own deficiency and great weakness. We must turn to the One who says in John chapter 12, "Without me ye can do nothing," namely, to Jesus our Saviour. We pray that He would nonetheless be with us and truly make our hearts attentive, so that we would examine and prepare ourselves not only for this particular hour, and so that we might experience the benefits of the Holy Communion worthily not only for this particular time, but during every day and moment of our lives.

Oh, that it need not be said of us, that the wedding was prepared and that the guests were not worthy of it. Rather, let us give Him the honour, so that in due time we might rejoice and be glad, for the wedding of the Lamb hath come and His bride has prepared herself. Therefore it behooves us to be arrayed accordingly in clean and beautiful linen. For linen signifies the righteousness of the saints, (Rev. 19). Then the King will have delight in your beauty. "For He is your Lord, and worship thou Him" (Ps. 45:11). Therefore, my friends, let us pray at all times and not grow weary.

At this time let us pause so that we might kneel for prayer, and may we worship Him in the Spirit and in truth.

---

### **Examine Yourselves Whether Ye Are In The Faith.**

We have now prayed according to the will of the Lord, and He has heard us again. Next we turn to the text, which the Apostle Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 13:5, "Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith; prove yourselves." (Thus far).

Dearly beloved friends, in the world among many nominal Christians there is an established practice to prepare themselves diligently before attending Communion, in part by fasting and prayer and to some extent by seeking reconciliation with their neighbours. In and of itself this is very good and essential, and if done in the proper spirit, the same quite properly belongs to a true examination and to the required wedding garments. But this is only the case if it is done without hypocrisy and in power and in truth. But sadly the actual experience reveals that this sanctification and reconciliation, as well as the entire preliminary preparations, often lasts no longer than the completion of the observance of the Communion. Thereafter the people consider themselves free again and live in sin according to their old ways and gleefully immerse themselves in all unrighteousness. It follows then that the same was but an evil facade and a vile hypocrisy before God. It is as the Lord says, "This people draweth near unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me" (Matt. 15:8).

For my beloved, there is no way in which we can serve God when the substance is only hypocrisy, even though it may outwardly be what it will, whether a misguided or even a correct service of God. If a person is satisfied to continue in such a state of mere outwardly appearance, so that the heart or the inward man remains cold and devoid of spirit, then their entire service of God has no power and is not valid. It does not prevail before God, "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23).

Therefore, beloved friends, our preparation to conduct Communion, as well as all our other divine services, if they are to be accepted by God as worthy and pleasing, must be offered from a heartfelt striving without any hypocrisy or mere outward appearance. We should serve God in holiness and righteousness all the days of our lives (1 Pet. 1:15), otherwise all our efforts and work are in vain. Our mutual self-examination before we observe Communion will serve to answer the question whether we stand and live in true righteousness and faith of the Gospel. We must truly prove ourselves according to the words of our text, whether we are in the faith. For faith, my dear friends, is the cornerstone and foundation of our salvation. We need to establish that the same is laid and grounded in the proper way. For then we may seek to serve the Lord with joy and hope. He will accept us in His mercy and endow us with His power and strength, just as the divine voice said to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9). In Hebrews 11:6, Paul testifies as follows: "But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." And in verse one, he says, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1).

Behold, here we see firstly the necessity of faith, and secondly, the form and essence thereof. For no person will prevail and subsist before God without experiencing and possessing the true faith. It is evident that it is absolutely

essential, above all else, to examine ourselves in accordance with the admonition of the apostle in our text, to see whether we have faith or not, and whether we find within ourselves the correct form, nature and substance thereof. This is important since anyone who is possessed of such a sincere self-examination and thereby determines that he is still living without the power of faith, may take timely measures to acquire the same, in order not to be found like the foolish virgins who were too late in seeking to provision themselves with the same (Matt. 25).

Faith, however, is not a human gift nor a work of self-endeavour, which a person may give or earn for themselves by their own strengths according their own whims and desires. Paul gives testimony in this regard and says, "Not all men have faith" (2 Thes. 3:2). Rather faith is the precious gift of the grace of God, the heavenly Father. Of which the Lord Jesus Himself attests in John chapter 6, verse 44 and says, "No man can come to me, except the Father who hath sent me, draw him." The Lord also questioned the disciples as to how they might come unto Him, "He saith unto them, But who say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father, who is in heaven" (Matt. 16:15-17). It is clearly revealed hereby that faith is a gift of God, which is given through the preaching of the Gospel and the simultaneous working of the power of the Holy Spirit, which is bestowed upon mankind. Paul writes in Romans chapter 10, verse 17, "So, then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

That faith is wrought through the Holy Spirit in the hearts of man is attested by our Lord Jesus in John chapter 16, verse 13, where He says, "Nevertheless, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth, . . . but whatever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come." In Romans chapter 5, verse 5, Paul writes, ". . . because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given unto us." It is evident, therefore, that faith is a heavenly present, a free gift, a precious pearl, a noble treasure of divine grace of eminent worth, power, glory and salvation. For only alone, through, in and of faith, is eternal salvation assured and granted unto all mankind. This is in accordance with John chapter 3, verse 15, where the Lord Jesus says, "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

### **The Attributes Of Faith.**

Certainly the nature of creation and our own experiences teach us that no one places a precious treasure, which is of great value and held in high esteem, into an unclean container or a defective vessel so as to despoil it or, in fact, that the same is thereby lost completely. On the contrary, one preserves each possession according to its worth in a container which is appropriate to its intrinsic value. Even so, beloved friends, it is uniquely the case with the great worth of our precious faith. As with a treasured pearl, our beloved heavenly Father does not want to implant the same into the hearts of such persons who are still serving sin and clinging thereto.

In the Wisdom of Solomon, chapter one, verse four, the Spirit of God teaches us as follows, "For into a malicious soul wisdom shall not enter, nor dwell

in a body that is subject unto sin. For the Holy Spirit of discipline also rightly teaches us to flee from the ungodly and to abstain from those who are without understanding, which will be punished according to the sins whereof they are overcome." The Lord also says, ". . . Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:16).

Paul addresses the Corinthians in the first book, chapter 3, verses 16 and 17, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." In 1 Corinthians chapter 6, verse 19, he adds, "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"

Behold, beloved friends, our loving God desires to have as His own all such holy, cleansed and genuine vessels, unto whom he also bestows His glorious gifts. Wherefore, Paul says to the Ephesians, ". . . Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:25-27). At this point each and everyone might want to examine himself according to our text, whether he is in the faith, or whether the faith can be found within him. For only too dearly, our loving God would wish to bestow this precious treasure unto each and every soul and to endow them with it. In this manner God has already spoken through the prophet Isaiah in chapter 55, verses 1-3,

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come to the waters, and he that hath no money; come, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do ye spend money for that which is not bread? And your labour for that which satisfieth not? Harken diligently unto me, and eat that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.

In this respect absolutely nothing is lacking on the part of God. He will not fail to bestow upon everyone the glorious inheritance of salvation, to all those who desire to partake thereof, if only they ask for it. Just as our Lord Jesus says, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matt. 7:7). According to this, if anyone has a genuine longing to receive these heavenly blessings, then, without any doubt, our great God with all His blessings will appear to them. As it is stated in Luke chapter 11, verse 10, and thereafter, "For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him" (Luke 11:10-13).

#### **A Penitent Heart.**

Behold, beloved friends, when the Holy Spirit is granted or poured out upon

a person, so that the working of the same indwells a person through faith, it comes to pass that such a soul is shattered and the heart becomes penitent regarding his sins. The foregoing is manifest in David's Thirty-eighth Psalm, when he writes in verse three and thereafter, "There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin. For mine iniquities are gone over mine head; like an heavy burden they are too heavy for me. My wounds are repulsive and corrupt because of my foolishness. I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long. For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease, and there is no soundness in my flesh. I am feeble and very broken; I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart" (Psalm 38:3-8).

These feelings of great sinfulness are comparable to those of someone who sees himself as evil and who feels great remorse in that regard. Even as the prodigal son, according to Luke 15, who felt himself unworthy of the grace of God and plead for mercy and forgiveness of his sins. Such a person may speak together with David and say, "Turn unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted. The troubles of my heart are enlarged. Oh, bring thou me out of my distresses. Look upon mine affliction and my pain, and forgive all my sins" (Psalm 25:16-18).

In His graciousness, our loving God desires to dwell in such a contrite and sorrowful heart which is concerned and conscious of its sinfulness. As He says through the prophet Isaiah, chapter 57, verse 15, "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity whose name is Holy, . . . I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also who is of a contrite and humble spirit, . . . to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Isa. 57:15). Yes, to all these our Lord Jesus lovingly calls and says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). In chapter 5, verses 3 and 4, He says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted."

These words are seen to come to fulfilment in practice with the sinful woman who came to the Lord Jesus, fell at His feet weeping, and begged Him to forgive her sins. He said, "Thy sins are forgiven." (Lk. 7:48). It is apparent that the words of David are appropriate when he says, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. When I kept silence, my bones became old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me; my moisture is turned into the drought of summer, Selah. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hidden. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah" (Ps. 32:1-5).

Behold, beloved friends, such persons who are troubled because of their sin will acquire an ever stronger relationship with the Lord Jesus, so that with a steadfast faith and complete confidence, they may cling to their eternal High Priest, Redeemer and Saviour. Even so Paul writes to the Hebrews in chapter 10, "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath

consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh, and having an high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (Hebrews 10:16-22).

### **The Fruits Of The Spirit.**

Such a soul which has been washed from sin, cleansed and sanctified through the blood of Jesus, experiences, together with the Apostle John, the indwelling and empowering faith, the great love of God as regards us humankind in giving His only begotten Son for the world, so that we might live through Him. The love of God is not manifest therein that we loved God, rather that He loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins (1 John 4:9-10).

Such love promotes a genuine reciprocal love, even as John declares further, "We loved him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). This love also inspires such a person with a genuine obedience to live according to the will of God as He requires of us by His commandments. John testifies of this when he says, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not burdensome" (1 John 5:3). In the Gospel of John, chapter 15, the Lord Jesus says, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatever I command you" (John 15:10,12,14).

From the foregoing one can readily conclude that faith through love inspires and bringeth forth fruit that has been planted in the heart of man in a righteousness-working way. As the saintly Apostle Peter writes, "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; And to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, patience; and to patience, godliness; And to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:5-8).

If faith, then, is of the righteousness-working kind, it is active in love, according to Galatians chapter 5, verse 6. This is confirmed by the Apostle James when he says, "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" (James 2:17). The Apostle Paul informs us as to the nature of the fruits of the spirit in Galatians chapter 5, verse 22, and thereafter, where he says, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith. Meekness, self control; against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another. Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye who are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. 5:22-26 and 6:1-2).

Dearly beloved, it is evident that the fruit of the Spirit reveals itself particularly in love, even as Paul writes to the Colossians in chapter 3, "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, tender mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ

forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another, in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 3:12-17).

### **The Unity And Fellowship Of The Gemeinde.**

Just as the fruit of faith reveals itself particularly in love, so it also manifests itself in the fellowship and unity of the Spirit, as it is written in Ephesians chapter four, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation to which ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love, Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. 4:1-6).

In chapter two, Paul also writes to the Philippians, "If there be, therefore, any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender mercies and compassion, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Phil. 2:1-4). Indeed, the unified and amiable dwelling together of the believers, is symbolized for us by the bread and the wine of the Last Supper, by virtue of the fact that the elements thereof are joined together out of many parts into a unified whole. Even so are the believers. Through a unified faith and knowledge of the Son of God, they are bound together in love and live in peace and the unity of the Spirit. As the Lord Jesus says in the Gospel of John, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). Isaiah has also prophesied about this peace in chapter thirty-two, "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places" (Isaiah 32:17-18).

In order to maintain this wonderful fellowship of peace of the believers, the ability to forbear and to forgive one another is very essential. Even as our Lord Jesus says in Matthew chapter five, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old, Thou shalt not kill and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of judgment; But I say unto you that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire, Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath anything against thee, Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him, lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no

means come out from there, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing" (Matt. 5:21-26).

### **Humility.**

Humility is one of the most prominent features of the wedding garments with which all believers must be apparelled. Peter speaks of this in the first book, chapter five, "In like manner, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be ye clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time" (1 Peter 5:5-6). The prophet Zephaniah speaks likewise in chapter two, "Seek the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, who have kept his ordinances; seek righteousness, seek meekness; it may be ye shall be hidden in the day of the Lord's anger" (Zeph 2:3). Indeed, our beloved Saviour also says, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and humble in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matt. 11:29). All inflated pride, boasting and vanity is obnoxious to the Lord, as is also all self-esteem, self-glory, bragging, as the Lord dwells only in those who are contrite and humble in spirit.

The living faith also inspires and produces self-control and sober thinking, even as Paul writes in Colossians, "Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil desire, and covetousness (which is idolatry), For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the sons of disobedience; In the which ye also once walked, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds, And have put on the new man, that is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Coloss. 3:5-10).

And to the Thessalonians the apostle writes as follows, "Furthermore, then, we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication; That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour, Not in the lust of sensuality, even as the Gentiles who know not God, That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. He, therefore, that despiseth, despiseth not man but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit. But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another" (1 Thess 4:1-9).

In chapter six of the first epistle to the Corinthians, Paul writes as follows, "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I, then, take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? Know ye not that he who is joined to an harlot is one body? For the two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is outside the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body" (1 Cor. 6:15-18).

### **Support For The Poor And Needy.**

Where faith is of a genuine nature it also produces gentleness and support for the poor and needy. Regarding which Paul admonishes the Hebrews, "But to do good and to share forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Hebrews 13:16). And Sirach says, "Bountifulness is as a most fruitful garden and mercifulness endureth forever" (Ecclesiasticus 40:17).

In chapter 4, it is stated, "My son defraud not the poor of his living, and make not the needy eyes to wait long. Make not an hungry soul sorrowful; neither provoke a man in his distress. Add not more trouble to an heart that is vexed; and defer not to give unto him that is in need. Reject not the supplication of the afflicted; neither turn away thy face from a poor man. Turn not away thine eye from the needy, and give him none occasion to curse thee: For if he curse thee in the bitterness of his soul, his prayer shall be heard of him that made him" (Ecclesiasticus 4:1-6). And in chapter 14, it is stated further, "Do good unto your friend before thou die, and according to thy ability stretch out thy hand and give to him. Defraud not thyself of the good day, and let not the part of a good desire overpass thee" (Ecclesiasticus 14:13-14).

Furthermore, faith produces a glad obedience to the Gospel and submission to the teachers. Paul says, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you." (Heb. 13:17). And to the Philippians he writes, "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them who walk even as ye have us for an example" (Phil 3:17). And to the Corinthians he writes, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1). In this way a good social order is established if everything is done in peace. Paul testifies in Colossians chapter 2, verses 5-7, "For though I am absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. As ye have, therefore, received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him, Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding with thanksgiving." In another epistle, Paul also speaks to the Corinthians and says, "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14:40).

Behold, beloved friends, those souls, who are striving in the faith in this manner and who are continuously clothing and adorning themselves with the fruits thereof during the time of their lives, are therefore worthy and qualified, through the grace of God, to observe the holy Communion of the Lord in the fellowship of the righteous. Such persons are also worthy of observing the humble love-service of the feetwashing of their fellow believers, as commanded and practised by the Lord Jesus as an example for us. As we are taught in the Gospel of John, "Jesus answered, and said unto him, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13:17).

If our Lord and Master so humbled Himself before His disciples so as to wash their feet, how much more so is it essential for us, deficient and sinful humans that we are, to humble ourselves as to each other, and to follow the example of our Lord Jesus and to wash each other's feet. In so doing, we show that we have a steadfast faith and that our sins have been washed away with the blood of Jesus. As John says, ". . . the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). Paul adds to this, "Having, therefore, these promises,

dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1).

### **Conclusion. The Invitation To 'Come'.**

Behold, beloved friends, these are the purposes served by the repeated commemoration of the holy Communion, as does also footwashing, to remind us time and again that we have been redeemed and saved through the precious blood of Jesus. Oh, that we might never let go of this priceless grace, and far rather strengthen our inner man at all times in the mighty power of the salve. Out of deep obligation and love, I therefore plead that all of us might observe this feast worthily, that we might appear before the Lord and call upon Him in deepest humility, that He would robe us with the garments of salvation and the cloak of righteousness.

He does not want to look upon our unworthiness, shame and nakedness, as He says in the parable, "So that servant came, and showed his lord these things. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor, and the maimed, and the lame, and the blind" (Lk. 14:21). There are, as I understand, those who are bankrupt with their own righteousness. They feel poor, blind, and naked and they have their sinfulness constantly in view and greatly desire to be redeemed therefrom. Indeed, if our self-examination and proving, according to the words of the text, demonstrate that our faith is of a righteousness-working nature, and that all its essential God-pleasing fruits are within us, and that this faith inspires us and makes us active in love, although in great weakness and imperfection, then let us partake of the table of the Lord with full confidence and joy. He will not cast us away, nor turn us aside, because He Himself says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28).

To these souls He personally calls out the invitation to come. He says, "Come to the marriage, because everything is ready." To those who remain steadfast unto the end as His own, He will bestow joy, glory and everlasting peace, when He invites them to celebrate that great Communion of the Lamb. Even as the Spirit says in Revelation chapter 19, verse 9, ". . . Write, Blessed are they who are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." For there, indeed, will dwell the true essence and spirit of that which we observe and witness figuratively in the holy Communion. May our gracious and all-loving Father, for the sake of His beloved Son and by the power of the Holy Spirit, make us worthy for this, so that we would partake of this holy memorial meal to the praise and honour of His name here in this world! Amen! In the name of Jesus, Amen!

Now, beloved friends, I would like to say to the believers, all the invited ones, "Come, for all things are now ready." Therefore let no one excuse himself, for it is written, "blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Rev. 19:9). These are those who are also chosen; they are arrayed with the correct wedding garments. Yes, those who are clothed with pure and beautiful linen, for linen is the righteousness of the saints (Rev. 19:8).

Though we may find ourselves to be only as the poor, the cripple, the lame and the blind, we are not to absent ourselves like those who purported to excuse themselves because of an acre of land, or a yoke of oxen, or a wife. Although these are otherwise important matters in themselves, yet they cannot serve as a

legitimate exoneration. Jesus says, "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2). For the Lord would so gladly wish to draw all of us unto Him. He says, ". . . Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore, with loving-kindness have I drawn thee" (Jer. 31:3). Consequently, we should love Him in like manner for He first loved us. In the Gospel of John 14:23, Christ says, ". . . If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, . . . and make our abode with him" (John 14:23).

For this purpose also the Apostle Paul says, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of the living God" (1 Cor. 3:16). Of whom God says, I want to dwell in you and to walk with you, and to be your God, and ye shall be my people. "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple are ye" (1 Cor. 3:17). "Let us, therefore, fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it" (Heb. 4:1). For Christ said, "In my Father's house are many mansions." He goes on to say, "And if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2). This is an unequivocal promise. However, we are to rid ourselves of the sinful passions which Satan places before us in order to hinder the fruits of our love, and whereby the house of the Lord remains empty and does not become full.

Wherefore I would venture to say with the words of a certain servant, "Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room." And then it is stated further, "And the Lord said unto the servant, go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you," and these are the words of the Lord, "That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper" (Luke 14). Oh, my beloved friends. This is a serious warning indeed, whereby we have an ever greater reason and obligation to invite others and not to spare ourselves in the least. For our duty at all times is to win each and everyone--yes, both the good and the bad--for the Lord. Those who excused themselves did not profit at all. Therefore we say, "Come; for all things are now ready" (Lk. 14:17). He will richly bless them with rest and joy.

AMEN!

---

## Editor's Note

This sermon was contained among the collected papers of genealogist Johann P. Friesen (1847-1920) of Rosenort and Blumenort, Manitoba. He evidently collected the writings of his father Klaas Friesen (1793-1870) of Rosenort, Molotschna, who in turn had copied this particular sermon from Ohm H. B. The initials "H. B." are assumed to refer to Heinrich Balzer (1800-1846), Tiede, since he is the only Kleine Gemeinde minister to have those initials. The content of the sermon also supports the view that Heinrich Balzer of Tiede was the author of the same. The Johann P. Friesen Document Collection is courtesy of grandson Rev. Jake P. Friesen, Blumenort, Manitoba, and is presently in the possession of the E.M.C. Archives, Steinbach, Manitoba. The primary translation of the 'Preparatory Sermon' by Heinrich Balzer was completed by Rev. Ben Hoepfner, Steinbach, Manitoba in January of 1991.

# Chapter Four

## Sermon on Galatians 6:15,16

---

A Sermon on Galatians 6:15,16, written in 1836 by Rev. Heinrich Balzer (1800-1846) of Tiege, Molotschna Colony, South Russia.

---

### Introduction.

Much treasured friends; yes, sisters and brethren in the Lord Jesus Christ!

When our beloved Saviour and Redeemer walked here on earth and introduced the people to the mysteries of the Holy Gospel and instructed them in the way of eternal life, He frequently--indeed, probably most of the time--spoke to them figuratively and in parables. Soon He would compare the kingdom of heaven with a field and the preaching of the Gospel with the sower and the seed; at other times He compared it with the leaven which was mixed with a measure of flour; and again with a great royal wedding. At another place He compared the kingdom of heaven with ten virgins. He compared and interpreted the mysteries of the Gospel in many different ways for the natural person, who is incapable of comprehending and understanding the spiritual truths.

The holy apostles also presented their teachings and exhortations in this manner, as we see in Ephesians 5, where the Apostle Paul compares the mystery of the believing Gemeinde [church] and Christ with the marriage of two believers. Just like the two are one according to the flesh, the believing church is also one with the Lord through faith in the Spirit. Yes, this oneness and unity of the believer with Jesus and one another is portrayed and made comprehensible in 1 Corinthian 10 through the allegory of the many kernels in the loaf and the many grapes in the wine. Similarly the resurrection from the dead is compared to the kernel of wheat which dies and brings forth fruit the firstfruits, 1. Corinthians 15. Thus and in many ways more they have portrayed the preaching of the Gospel through means of everyday examples, so that the believers would better understand and comprehend the same--and the unbelievers would understand less and comprehend less--even as our suffering Saviour says to His disciples in Mark 4:11,12;

And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.

This though, my worthy friends, must not be understood in such a way as to

mean that people are so blinded and hardened through God's holy will that they cannot receive salvation. The Holy Scriptures testify in all places that it is the expressed will of God that all people are to be saved and helped. In Ezekiel 33:11, the Lord declares, "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God. I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Peter and the Apostle Paul testify to the same truth in 2 Peter 3:9 and 1 Thessalonians 2.

Our loving God does not want that anyone would perish, but that every one should repent and come to the knowledge of the truth. Therefore, the unbeliever himself is to blame if he is finally removed from the righteousness of God and given over to such blindness and hardness that he himself can no longer understand, see and comprehend the extent of the hardness and darkness of his own heart, after he has disdained and ridiculed all previous solicitations, admonitions, and invitations unto his soul. We have an illustration of this in Acts 28 where the Apostle Paul preached and made known the Gospel to the Jews and some did not believe, but disdained and rejected it and disagreed one with another. Paul told them what the Spirit of God had said through the Prophet Isaiah;

Saying, God unto this people and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

From these words it can clearly be understood that the person himself is to blame for his hardening and blindness of heart, because he did not want to accept any of the exhortations, admonitions and chastisements and to become converted; but remained unsympathetic thereto, disdained the admonitions and remained proud in his self-righteousness. The unbeliever has thereby given himself over to the righteous wrath of God, so that the punitive judgment of the zealous and righteous God becomes applicable to him, whereby he is given over unto his own stubbornness and hardness of heart.

Oh the love of God exercises infinite patience with man. He waits from time to another time; He pleads, He calls and exhorts once with pleasant words and consoling admonitions, and then with serious lamentations and fearful circumstances. He draws one person in one way and the other in another; in whichever way He can best persuade and draw one person or another unto Himself. Our Lord Jesus testifies of this in Luke 19:41,42; "And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." Indeed, the Evangelist Matthew writes that the Lord has said; "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children, together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matt. 23:37). The Apostle Paul has the same meaning when he says in Romans 11:22; "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt

be cut off."

How the goodness and the severity of God have revealed themselves unto man from the very beginning, can clearly be seen and demonstrated in a number of places in the Holy Scripture. During the time of the first world, when evil was evermore increasing, God in His compassion continued to disclose His love and goodness through Noah, the preacher of righteousness, for 120 years. He exercised infinite patience with the sinful households and allowed them to be warned and constantly pleaded and begged them. But, as no repentance was forth coming after a long time, yes, in contrast evil was increasing continually, the Lord permitted His righteous wrath to go out over the people through a terrible deluge, whereby they all died a natural death and perished.

This was the experience also of the Jewish people during the time of the Babylonian captivity. Previous to this, the Lord faithfully allowed them to be warned; through the holy prophets He pleaded with them and begged of them saying, ". . . Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever" (Jeremiah 3:12). But all these solicitations, exhortations and threats were of no help and the Lord permitted that fearful judgment of desolation and destruction to come upon them. His wrath was as fearful as His love, patience and longsuffering had been earlier.

The same experience is evident with the people of the Old Testament during the time of the Lord Jesus. He Himself spoke through His own person of the fearful future of the lost souls and invited them to accept the grace of God with the most glorious signs and wonders. Yes, tirelessly He followed them for three and one-half years; He begged, supplicated and exhorted them in the most friendly ways and told them of the love of God towards mankind. And yet, the majority remained without feeling toward the limitless love of God, and ridiculed, shamed and blasphemed the Son of God; yes, even killed Him by way of a most dreadful death on the cross. Therefore the righteous wrath of God committed them to blindness and hardness of heart, so that with hearing ears they heard not, and with seeing eyes they could not see--so that they would not be converted; and thus they became subject to the fearful judgment and to be cast out of their kingdom and into the sad world-wide dispersion, wherein they are still standing.

This is also confirmed by the Apostle Paul in 2 Thessalonians, where he says;

Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

My beloved friends, God has allowed His pure will to be made known to man through His holy apostles. He had His Gospel proclaimed unto them and ". . . as many as received him, unto them gave He the power to become the sons of God" (Joh. 1:12). But those, however, who again turned away from the truth and returned to the lies, are fallen fearfully from the faith in Jesus, so that they have

only ". . . a form of godliness but deny the power there of" (2 Thes. 3:5). They live in all unrighteousness: "For men shall be lovers of their own selves,, covetous, boaster, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to their parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (2 Tim. 3:2-4).

From all these many examples and illustrations, most beloved, we can see clearly enough that man in himself is to blame for his fearful fall and destruction, because he has rejected with hands and feet, so to say, all the love so abundantly demonstrated by God. For which reason, our loving and righteous God releases them unto their own stubbornness and permits them to walk in the way of darkness and in the blindness of their hearts, so that they can no longer recognize what serves unto their peace. Which our daily experiences also teach us in this dangerous time of the soul; yes, if we would only prove ourselves. The Lord knocks on our hearts, awakens us, draws us through His Spirit and speaks to us through our conscience, whereby we are convicted when we have not done right in this or that. And through His Word He draws us unto Himself, and exhorts and calls us, without ceasing. Even more than this, through the brotherly fellowship in the Spirit and through the oneness of faith which we as brethren and sisters in the Lord have received through grace, He allows us to admonish ourselves and exhort each other unto love and good works ". . . and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:25). Thus we are led by His Spirit and warned to take heed that no one would delay or receive the grace of God in vain ". . . lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled" (Heb. 12:15).

He who maintains his soul's salvation in the fear of God, and who sincerely seeks to continue on the way of life, will remain steadfast and arrive safely into the heavenly Jerusalem in spite of all the dangerous temptations and tribulations in the wilderness of this world. But the one who rejects, ridicules and disdains all these overtures of love and mercy--yes, even blasphemes the same, and does not treasure the new life in the Lord, and rejects all prompting toward love and unto good works, that one stands in the greatest of all dangers, for the axe is already laid to the roots of the trees. The tree which does not bear good fruit, is cut down and cast into the fire (Luke 3)

Therefore, my most beloved friends, take heed for it is not insignificant what the love of God enables and does for us. We should not intentionally misuse the grace of God, lest the jealousy of the God of Sabaoth should unfold itself against us and His wrath flare up, whereby we might be brought before judgment together with those who are hardened and darkened. Let us rather ". . . work out our salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12). For after this time there will be no more time. He who now despises and neglects the time of grace, that one has furthermore no sacrifice for sins, but only a fearful impending judgment and a fiery indignation of God (Heb. 10:27). "Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it" (Heb. 4:1).

Amen!

### **The Text: Galatians 6:15,16.**

Now furthermore let us consider the words of our text for a further edification and confirmation:

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God (Galatians 6:15,16).

### **The New Covenant and the New Birth.**

Beloved Friends;

In the tenth chapter, verse one, the Apostle Paul writes as follows to the Hebrews; "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, . . ." (Heb. 10:1). All ordinances which God instituted in the Old Testament for the people of Israel have been fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the true essence. Therefore the covenant of circumcision, which the Lord God commanded and spoke unto Abraham, provides;

And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: any my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the circumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant (Gen. 17:12-14).

This [covenant] has been fulfilled in Christ Jesus and made obsolete. The apostle testifies to this in the fifth chapter of his Epistle to the Galatians, "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." The law of the Old Testament was in force until Christ, when the true Moses came and fulfilled the law and the prophecies.

The Lord Himself says, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matt. 6:17). Now the power of the covenant of the Old Testament, just like a Last Will and Testament of earthly goods, only becomes operational and in force after the death of the testator has occurred and the content thereof has been proven and declared to be valid. Likewise also the Old Testament became valid after the death of the Lord and was revealed through the power of the Holy Spirit. Of which Paul also testifies in the second chapter to the Romans; "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: For he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Romans 2:28,29).

From these words of the apostle, beloved, we have a firm foundation to see what the significance of circumcision in the old covenant was; namely, the true renewal of the inward man. For the old man or the former, old life must perish and diminish and be put to death, so that the new man, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, may have life anew and grow. Thus Paul says to the Ephesians;

"That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts: And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

This also means having made a new covenant through baptism, as Paul testifies in Romans 6:3 and says;

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Romans 6:3-13).

From all the foregoing, my beloved friends, it is clear to see that the true essence of the new covenant in Christ Jesus does not consist of any outwardly deed, even as Paul also says in our text, "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."

It will not help us at all, beloved, if we only associate ourselves outwardly with the Gemeinde [church] of Christ. Even if we have been baptized and enter into the Communion service of the Lord Jesus and partake of the feetwashing; yes, even if we observe all the outward ordinances of the Gemeinde, but have not been renewed in our inner being, no outwardly boasting can help us; nor will it help us to say; "This the temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, are these" (Jer. 7:4); nor it is of any value to depend on the reputation of our venerable fathers in the faith and on their holy life and conduct, or on our worthy forefather, Menno Simons. There is even far less value in any outwardly separation, or in outwardly deeds, or in our own self-righteousness. All of the foregoing are in vain and useless if the true essence of Christ Jesus is absent. It is just like a dead corpse which is outwardly beautified and very well decorated, but what does it help? The deceased has no benefit thereby and must be submitted to decay. Thus it is also, beloved, with a mere outward show, when the true essence is lacking and when there is no Spirit and life therein.

Of which the apostle speaks in Galatians 5:6, "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision: but faith which worketh by

love." It is faith which bringeth about the new birth. To be a new creation it is absolutely essential that the person be born anew, as the our beloved Saviour said to Nicodemus in John 3:3, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Through the sad fall into sin, the first nature in which man was created has gone lost, for man was originally created in the image of God. He had the intrinsic characteristics of the good Shepherd and his soul was created as noble and pure. But through the jealousy of Satan sin entered the world, according to Genesis 2:24. Man thereby became godless and base by nature and inclined toward evil; all his activities from his youth on were directed toward evil and his whole nature was fallen. As a result, he became separated from God and His grace and salvation, the way the Prophet Isaiah says, "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isa. 59:2).

If now the deeply fallen man again wants to--and ought to--become a friend of God, yes, to be reconciled and united with God, this can only take place through Jesus Christ, because He reconciled us with the Father substitutionally and in our stead. He has become the righteousness for our sins and has paid for our debts with His blood; yes, He has provided for our eternal salvation, according to Hebrews 9:12. Wherefore all who believe on Him shall not perish, but shall be made partakers of the power of the Holy Spirit by the Father Who gives them a new birth, and unites, cleanses and sanctifies them, and makes them unto a new creation.

Beloved friends, the new birth is not the work of man, but it is through the free grace of God, which is wrought in the hearts of believers through the living Word of the Gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus says in John 16:13, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." We see this also in the lives of the holy apostles after they had received the Holy Spirit; they became very different people and were changed within the very depths of their being. Such a faith which actually changes a person internally and creates him anew, is not and cannot be of any dead or foul faith. Rather it works and motivates the heart, where it receives new power and brings forth fruit. It is just like a tree which can only be recognized as good if it actually bears good fruit, according to Matthew 7:17. In which regard the Apostle Paul also writes; "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

According to this, beloved friends, there is a great misunderstanding in many people who have a false view of the work of grace in Christ Jesus. They believe that everything solely depends on faith. If they can claim the work of redemption in Christ Jesus by faith, then they will already be justified; as God does not look upon nor recognize any works. But, beloved, this is nothing but a pure deception by the prince of darkness and a mere confession of the mouth which has no power. For this reason the Apostle James also says, "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?" Can such a faith save? Hence if faith does not have works, it is dead by itself" (James 14).

## **The Fruits of Love.**

We find here a description of the characteristics of a salvation-yielding faith and that the same must be active in love. Firstly, a burning love for God and our Lord Jesus Christ must be wrought within the heart. Our beloved Saviour says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matt. 22:37). This love toward God our heavenly Father manifests itself above all else in the keeping of His commandments; as the Apostle John speaks, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3). The very nature of the matter itself demonstrates this, for if we truly love someone, our desires will change accordingly and we will be articulated thereby; for otherwise it would merely be a hypocritical act of deception for one of those who loves Him to confess such a teaching. No love for God can be seen in those who work contrary to the will and commandments of God, nor is there any love for God in man before God if he does not in all earnestness seek to fulfil the will of God in all things and to practice His commandments. This is what our beloved Saviour meant by keeping His word, when He says, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23). And in the 15th chapter the apostle says, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. . . . Ye are my friends, if ye do, whatsoever I command you."

Beloved friends, the love of God inspires the true believer to search diligently in the Word of God and to carry-out and fulfil the will of the Lord; to give up and do that which He would have him do in as much as is revealed by the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit--whereby the love of God is truly revealed.

Secondly, if this love of God is properly grounded in a born-again heart, then another holy fruit of love comes to the fore; namely, the love for fellowman. Our Saviour says, "This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matt. 22:37-39). Therefore the Apostle John says thus: "If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" For this reason also our beloved Saviour in John 15:12 says thus: "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you." In a another place He says, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34,35).

In chapter two, the Apostle Paul also writes to the Philippians of this brotherly love one for the other:

If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender mercies and compassions, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others (Phil. 2:1-4).

This love one for another will also reveals itself in rebuking and exhorting each other in a brotherly way, the way the Lord says in the Second Book of the Pentateuch, chapter 19, verse 17, "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him" (Leviticus 19:17). This is also affirmed by Solomon in Proverbs 24:25 where he says, "But to them that rebuke him shall be delight, and a good blessing shall come upon them."

Sirach says, "It is better to rebuke openly than to by angry secretly" (Ecclesiasticus 20:2). Sirach also teaches us how we need to deal wisely in this regard, so that it will work for the betterment of the neighbour;

Admonish a friend, it may be that he hath not done it: and if he have done it, that he do it no more. Admonish thy friend, it may be that he hath not said it: and if he have, that he speak it not again. Admonish a friend: for many times it is a slander, and believe not every tale. There is one that slippeth in his speech, but not from his heart; and who is he that hath not offended with his tongue? Admonish thy neighbour before thou threaten him; and not being angry, give place to the law of the most high. The fear of the Lord is the first step to be accepted of him, and wisdom obtaineth his love (Ecclesiasticus 19:13-18).

Our beloved Saviour teaches us likewise in Matthew 18:15-17 and says:

Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican (Matt. 18:15-17).

Yet, beloved friends, we understand that this applies only to wrongdoing through weakness which the believer has done in error or against his will, and in respect of which he accepts counsel and submits to correction and exhortation. If someone sins wilfully in open deeds of the flesh, then the holy Scriptures teach us to punish the same without any prior words of admonition and counsel, as we see in the case of the fornicators in Corinth whom the apostle without exception commanded to be separated from the Gemeinde [church] (1 Corinthians 5:13).

Thirdly, the love of a born-again person also manifests and reveals itself in the love of the Gemeinde [community]. The Apostle Peter says, "And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity" (Peter 1:7). To this also belongs the teaching that the believer in as much as possible ". . . live peaceably with all men" (Romans 12:18), and also "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Colossians 4:5,6), and also, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10), and also, "Submit

yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do right. For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men" (1 Peter 2:13,14), and "Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved" (1 Cor. 10:38), and "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you" (1 Thes. 3:12).

Fourthly, the fruit of a person who is born again and sanctified by God is the love for the enemy, even as our beloved Saviour says in Matthew 5:44-48:

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you. That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect (Matt. 5:44-48).

Paul also exhorts us and says:

Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. . . . Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. . . . Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:14-17).

The believing Christian must suffer wrong willingly: "Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" (1 Cor. 6:7). He must not withstand evil with evil: "That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matt. 5:39). Peter says, "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing: knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing" (1 Peter 3:9).

Behold, beloved friends, if the faith of a person demonstrates these characteristics and is active in love and produces such fruits, then it must be genuine and valid, and will give rise to a joyful knowledge of salvation, even as the Apostle Peter says, "For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, ye shall never fall" (2 Peter 1:8,10). And in verse 9, "But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins" (2 Pet. 1:9).

Therefore, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any significance in Christ Jesus, nor anything outward without a new creation or new birth. It must be a faith that is active in love and which bears fruit that extends unto eternal life.

### "Walk According to this Rule."

How many live according to this regulation in respect to peace and mercy and as regards the Israel of God. In the third chapter to the Philippians, Paul writes, "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same things" (Phil. 3:15-16). And in chapter 4 to the Ephesians, Paul writes, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called. With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Ephesians 4:1-6). And in Colossians Paul writes, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye also in him" (Col. 2:6).

Accordingly, beloved friends, we must cling to the Word of truth and not depart from it neither to the right nor the left, nor from the rule. We must abide to the teachings which has once been committed to us and remain steadfast therein until the end, and to hold fast to the ". . . hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly" (2 Cor. 10:15,16). If we, my beloved friends, walk according to the teachings of all the holy apostles and fathers of the faith--yes, if we live according to the doctrine and confession of faith which our forefathers have entrusted to us, then the Divine favour and blessing shall rest upon our humble efforts, even as the apostle says in our text, "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16). This means that, above all, the heavenly Father will look with favour upon the truly born-again Christians who have been made a new creation through grace from above and the Holy Spirit, and who earnestly endeavour to live according to the example of Jesus. He gives them a precious and infinitely-valuable peace, even as our beloved Saviour says in John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

Peter testified likewise to Cornelius the centurion in Acts 10:36, "The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all)." Paul testifies concerning this in Romans 5:1 as follows: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," and also in chapter 15, verse 13, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."

The Lord reveals in what way this divine peace is obtained through the Prophet Isaiah in chapter 48, verse 18, "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." David says, "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them" (Ps. 119:165). With great earnestness, the Apostle

James describes how this peace is to be obtained within the believing Gemeinde [church] of the Lord and how the Gemeinde is to be spared and protected from all quarrelling, strife and disunity;

Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace" (James 3:8-13).

King David rejoiced in his spirit when he saw this spiritual people of peace and he prophesied of them in the spirit;

I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together: Wither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord. For there are thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee, Because of the house of the Lord of God I will seek thy good" (Psalm 122).

Unto those who walk according to these teachings--on them and the Israel of God, be peace and mercy. All who articulate themselves by the Word of the Lord and who walk according to his Word, may comfort themselves with the goodness and mercy of God, even as David says in the 103rd Psalm:

The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him" (Psalm 103:1-9).

If he seeks to follow the commandments of God, the believer may comfort himself in His mercy and compassion, even as the Lord has said, "And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments" (Ex. 20:6). Moses likewise assures the people of this and says, "Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy

with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations" (Deut. 7:9). And, therefore, we may speak with Peter in 1 Peter 1:3-4; "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you."

### **The Israel of God.**

Behold, my worthy brethren and sisters in the Lord, these glorious promises and assurances are given to all those who live according to the teachings of Gospel. These teachings should articulate the life of a Christian in a constant conflict and warfare with sin until the end of his days--even as the apostles says in the conclusion of our text, ". . . and upon the Israel of God."

Israel signifies as much as a constant warfare, for Jakob, the patriarch, received that name from the Lord during the night when he wrestled with God; we may read about this in the First Book of the Pentateuch, chapter 32, verse 28. Its significance is that the descendants of Jakob according to the flesh would as yet have to face much strife and conflict with many pagan nations. This is even more the case with the spiritual Israel--the children of the new covenant, who stand in constant conflict and war with the lusts of the flesh, and against the world and Satan, even as the Apostle Paul says,

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (Eph. 6:10-13).

In 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, Paul describes how valiantly this spiritual conflict must be pursued if we are to attain the prize:

Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly: so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Cor. 9:24-27).

And in the second book of Timothy he says, "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully" (2 Tim 2:3-5).

Those, then who can strive and battle in this manner as the spiritual Israel with the apostle, shall also be assured at the end of their lives and say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:7,8).

May the great God grant this to us all for the sake of His beloved Son, and give us eternal life and salvation through grace and through the working of the Holy Spirit! Amen!

In the name of Jesus. AMEN!

---

## Translator's Comments

March 25, 1993.

A few terms I failed to decipher and I was unsure of the meaning of a few words. This is a very sound sermon as to content, hermeneutics, and homiletics. It is one of the best sermons in this publication.

*Rev. Ben Hooppner*

## Editor's Comment

The Sermon on Galatians 6:15,16 is the only document presently extant which appears to be in the handwriting of Heinrich Balzer, Tieg. Primary translation and entry onto computer was completed by Rev. Ben Hooppner in 1993. The original of the sermon is in the possession of Mennonite Library and Archives, Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas, 67117, courtesy of Dr. John D. Thiesen, Archivist, letter to the editor March 17, 1993.

# Chapter Five

## Balzer Genealogies

**Genealogical Sketches of Three Molotschna Balzer Families including the Ancestry and Family of Rev. Heinrich Balzer (1800-1846), Tiege, Molotschna Colony, South Russia. By Delbert F. Plett, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1992.**

---

### Introduction.

Heinrich Balzer (1800-1846) of Tiege in the Molotschna Colony, South Russia, was one of the leading poets, thinkers and intellectuals among the Russian Mennonites of the 19th Century. Dr. Robert Friedmann has referred to Balzer's treatise "Faith and Reason" as "one of the most stimulating statements in Mennonite literature."<sup>1</sup> Until recently, however, almost nothing was known about Balzer's ancestry and family background other than that he was the son of Heinrich Balzer, a minister of the Rudnerweide Gemeinde, who immigrated to Russia in 1819 and settled in the Molotschna Colony.<sup>2</sup>

Fortunately the recent research of Henry Schapansky has brought forward additional information which sheds a good deal of light on the question.<sup>3</sup> Additional information was obtained by Dr. James Urry from the genealogical notes of the Johann Balzer family in Kansas.<sup>4</sup> The purpose of this genealogical sketch is to compile this information and thereby to make it available to researchers and family members. But first of all, it is important to distinguish this family from two other Balzer families among the Molotschna Mennonites who are also descended from a Heinrich Balzer but are of no apparent relationship to the famous Kleine Gemeinde (KG) theologian.

### Heinrich Balzer (1820-1896) Alexanderkrone/Mountain Lake.

1 Firstly, the family of Heinrich Balzer (1820-1896) of Hierschau.<sup>5</sup> Family historian, Alvin Balzer, has written that Heinrich Balzer (1820-1896) is the Heinrich Balzer listed as coming to the Molotschna in 1838 from Kommerau in West Prussia.<sup>6</sup> According to the family history he was the son of Heinrich Balzer Sr. (1769-1808/1828) who was a farmer in Kommerau, West Prussia. He married Elisabeth Kopper whose first husband was Gerhard Dirks. She had five children by her first husband and two children by her second. Heinrich Balzer Sr. married for the second time to Elisabeth Goertz and had three more children by her.<sup>7</sup>

2 Alvin Balzer writes as follows regarding son Heinrich Balzer (1820-1896):

Civil and Church records indicate that there was only one Balzer living in Kommerau at that time and his birth date recorded at the Montau, West Prussia church coincides with the date that my aunt had recorded from the family history. Heinrich had been an orphan for ten years when he arrived in the Molotschna settlement at the

age of 18 in 1838. He left behind him (in Prussia) two half sisters and no brothers. I have no other information as to what happened next; but I can imagine a scenerio of what happened between his arrival in the Molotschna and his marriage to Catharina Reimer in Muntau where his first children were born. At the age of 18 he may have worked for the Reimer family or maybe others in the same village . . .

Heinrich Balzer (1820-1896) married Katharina Reimer (1824-1901) the daughter of Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884), a member of the KG and the owner of a vollwirtschaft in the village of Muntau.<sup>8</sup> According to one family record, Heinrich Balzer is listed as being of Hierschau at the time of the marriage.<sup>9</sup> The couple announced their marriage bans on January 11, 1846. The family lived in Muntau where their son Heinrich was born in 1852. Later they moved to Alexanderkrone where their younger children were born. They settled on a farm in the Delft area north of Mountain Lake, Minnesota in 1878.<sup>10</sup>

3 Son **Heinrich H. Balzer** married Sarah Klassen from Alexanderkrone. The family lived on a farm in the Delft area near Mountain Lake, Minnesota. The funeral of Heinrich H. Balzer was held in the Carson M.B. church. Heinrich Balzer's widow married for the second time to Abraham A. Buhler, a minister orginally from Canada. After her second marriage the family moved to Reedley, California.

3 Son **Jakob H. Balzer** (1861-1948) married Maria Klassen from Alexanderkrone. The family farmed in the Delft area near Mountain Lake, Minnesota. Daughter **Susanna Balzer** married Abram D. Ewert from Sparrau. The family farmed in the Bingham Lake area, later moving to Wolf Point, Montana. Abram Ewert died in St. Louis, Missouri. Son **Peter H. Balzer** married Sara Wiebe from Gnadenfeld, Molotschna. The family lived in Bingham Lake where Peter H. Balzer was active in the church as Sunday School Superintendent and in other similiar offices. They are the parents of Abram P. Balzer (1902-1982) the founder of Balzer Manufacturing Co. in Mountain Lake, Minnesota.<sup>11</sup>

Gen.	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
1	<b>Heinrich Balzer</b>	1769		Dec 26,1808/28
m	Elisabeth Kopper	1774		Mar 4,1808/17
2	Elisabeth Balzer	Mar 30,1811		Apr 16,1830
m	Claus Ewert			Apr 16,1830
2	Catharina Balzer	Aug 7,1840		
1	<b>Heinrich Balzer</b>	1769		Dec 26,1808/28
2m	Elisabeth Goertz	1794	Dec 11,1818	Oct 5,1829
2	Hein Balzer	Aug 17,1820		Jun 25,1896
m	Kath Reimer	Sep 23,1824	Jan 24,1846	Apr 4,1901
3	girl Balzer	Oct 11,1846		Oct 11,1846
3	Kath Balzer	Jan 11,1848		Jun 30,1853
3	Elis Balzer	Jan 17,1850		Dec 8,1851
3	Hein Balzer	Aug 28,1852		Jan 30,1898
m	Sarah Klassen	May 2,1854	Nov 14,1874	Jun 3,1919
3	Jakob Balzer	Jan 5,1855		Sep 30,1858
3	Susan Balzer	Jun 17,1857		Jun 21,1857

3	Kath Balzer	Jan 24,1859		Sep 4,1880
3	Jakob Balzer	Jun 23,1861		Aug 25,1948
m	Maria Klassen	Jul 6,1860	Dec 26,1883	Jan 24,1901
2m	Helena Fast	Jan 30,1866	Jan 31,1909	Jun 25,1933
3	Susan Balzer	Nov 19,1863		Jun 23,1948
m	Abram D. Ewert	Aug 5,1862	Jan 22,1884	Oct 7,1935
3	Peter Balzer	Feb 9,1866		Sep 30,1938
m	Sara Wiebe	Mar 28,1870	Dec 9,1885	Oct 3,1948
2	Anna Balzer	Sep 26,1822		Apr 14,1826
2	Peter Balzer	Aug 12,1827		Prior to 1830

### Heinrich Balzer (1810-1885), Alexanderwohl/Goessel, Kansas.

1 Heinrich Balzer (born 1775) was the Stammvater of a second line of Balzers originating in the Molotschna Colony, South Russia. Information regarding this family is obtained from the family book, *The Heinrich Balzer Genealogy 1775-1959*, by V. Voth.<sup>12</sup> Heinrich Balzer (born 1775) lived in Grosz Lubin, West Prussia, 3 miles north of Graudenz and 4 miles south of Montau. In 1806 he married Maria Neumann who was born in Schulwiese, West Prussia, and belonged to the sister Mennonite Church at Tragheimerweide about 2 miles north of his home. "It is believed that Heinrich Balzer I lived in the village of Gross Lubin until they immigrated about 1820 to the Molotschna colony in South Russia, where they affiliated with the Frisian Church in Rudnerweide."<sup>13</sup>

2 There is record only of one son of the marriage, namely, **Heinrich Balzer**, born in 1810. In 1837 he married Helena Schroeder from Podwitz, West Prussia. V. Voth writes as follows regarding this family:

Apparently, the young couple also made their home in Alexanderwohl where all of the children of this union were born. After his first wife, Helena Schroeder, died in 1845, Heinrich Balzer II married his maid, Maria Unrau from the village of Liebenau. Years later they moved to the village of Liebenau to live. The parents of Maria Unrau were Heinrich Unrau and Anna Jantz. She was a sister to Rev. Peter Unrau, who was a minister for many years in the Rudnerweide church in Russia and in the Alexanderwohl church in Kansas.<sup>14</sup>

Only little is known about the family of Heinrich Balzer (1810-1885). In a letter he refers to "a David Balzer in Marienthal, whom he calls a brother."<sup>15</sup> V. Voth describes Heinrich Balzer as follows:

He had a friendly and generous disposition. It is known that he helped his friends out financially by making loans to them. He bought eighty acres of land adjoining their children's farm; starting out with planting an orchard, evidently planning on building their own home. These plans were never realized. Great-grandfather died in 1885 and is buried in a private burial plot on the Peter Unrau's former farm. Of his eight children five, four daughters and one son, grew up to maturity.

In 1878, Heinrich and Maria Balzer left their home in Alexanderwohl and immigrated to the United States in the company of his daughter Aganetha and her husband, Johann Duerksen. Heinrich and Maria Balzer settled in the village of Blumenort, about 3 miles north of Goessel in the Summerstube of his daughter, Helena Unrau. A Heinrich Balzer age 70 is listed in the 1880 census records for Marion County, Kansas.

3 The Heinrich Balzer (1810-1885) family all came to America during the 1870s. Son Peter Balzer and his family immigrated in late summer of 1874 and settled in the village of Gruenfeld, about 3 miles southeast of Goessel, Kansas. Daughter Katharina Balzer and her husband, Franz Heinrichs, came over in the following summer and also settled in Gruenfeld, near the home of her brother Peter Balzer. Daughter Maria Balzer and her husband Peter Funk immigrated in 1877 and settled in Gnadenfeld about 1 mile east of Goessel. Daughter Helena Balzer and her husband, Peter Unrau, came to America together with the Peter Funk family and settled in Blumenort about 3 miles north of Goessel. Daughter Aganetha Balzer and her husband, Johann Duerksen, immigrated in 1878, in the company of her parents. The Johann Duerksen family settled on a farm about 9 miles northeast of Goessel.<sup>16</sup>

Gen.	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
1	Heinrich Balzer	Jun 4,1775	Feb 12,1806	
m	Maria Neuman	Dec 30,1781		
2	Heinrich Balzer	Jan 21,1810	Jan 21,1837	Apr 8,1885
m	Helena Schroeder	c.1816		Feb 10,1845
3	Aganetha Balzer	Oct 12,1837		Apr 18,1903
m	Johann Duerksen	Jul 6,1838		Apr 27,1891
2m	Jakob Krause			
3	Maria Balzer	Dec 10,1838		Sep 17,1916
m	Ludwig Dalke			
2m	Peter Funk			
3	Heinrich Balzer	Feb 7,1840		Jan 8,1843
3	David Balzer	Feb 27,1841		Feb 11,1842
3	Peter Balzer <sup>17</sup>	Aug 28,1842		Oct 1,1900
m	Maria Schimdt	Jan 20,1846	May 3,1866	
3	Katharina Balzer	Dec 24,1843		Jan 26,1924
m	Franz Heinrichs			
3	Heinrich Balzer	Jan 28,1845		Nov 9,1848
3	Helena Balzer	Jan 28,1845		Mar 17,1927
m	Peter Unrau			
2	Heinrich Balzer	Jan 21,1810		Apr 8,1885
m	Maria Unrau	Apr 11,1823	Mar 13,1845	Feb 1,1893

#### Heinrich Balzer (1800-1846) Tiege, Philosopher and Theologian.

1 According to the research of Henry Schapansky, Heinrich Balzer (1800-1846) was the son of Heinrich Balzer (1773-1842). Henry Balzer Sr. "apparently came from Muntau, West Prussia, and moved to the Stuhm area following his first marriage."<sup>18</sup> He was elected as a minister of the Tragheimwerder Frisian Gemeinde in 1810 and in 1819 the family moved to Russia together with other members of the Gemeinde. The family settled in the village of Grossweide,

Molotschna.<sup>19</sup>

From his extensive study of the Prussian Mennonite *Gemeindebücher*, Mr. Schapansky compiled a list of two marriages and ten children born of the same. Recently the research of Dr. James Urry has brought to light the genealogical records of the John Balzer family who lived in Superior Township in McPherson County, near Inman, Kansas. These family records not only confirm the data compiled by Henry Schapansky but add the birth of five additional children and other additional details.<sup>20</sup>

Gen.	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
1	Heinrich Balzer	Aug 18,1773		Sep 3,1842
m	Anna Ewert	1768	Apr 14,1796	Jun 11,1812
2	Aganetha Balzer	Mar 10,1797		
m	? Ediger			
2	David Balzer	Feb 2,1799		Jan 24,1844
2	Heinrich Balzer	Jul 10,1800		Jan 1,1846
2	Anna Balzer	1801		Feb 16,1808
2	Eva Balzer	Mar 15,1802	Mar 25,1819	
m	Andreas Fleming	1793		
2	Peter Balzer	Dec 21,1803		Apr 25,1804
2	Kornelius Balzer	Jul 28,1805		Oct 7,1805
1	Heinrich Balzer	Aug 18,1773		Sep 3,1842
2m	Anna Ewert	Oct 28,1794	May 9,1815	Nov 6,1866
2	Jakob Balzer	Jun 25,1816		
2	Peter Balzer	Feb 11,1818		Jul 24,1818
2	Anna Balzer	Jul 8,1819		Sep 10,1819
2	Wilhelm Balzer	Nov 20,1820		1822
2	Johann Balzer	Mar 23,1823		Sep 24,1824
2	Anna Balzer	May 21,1825		Mar 10,1848
m	Heinrich Unruh		Mar 20,1845	Mar 10,1848
2	Peter Balzer	Aug 11,1827		Jan 10,1902
2	Katharina Balzer	Jun 21,1835		Jan 24,1870
m	Jakob Kaetheler			

2 Son Heinrich Balzer (1800-1846) lived in the village of Tiege. It is not definitely known whether he married and had a family. In his *Sammlung . . . zur Historie der Kleinen Gemeinde der Mennoniten* Peter P. Toews writes that ". . . it appears that this good man [Heinrich Balzer] had left no descendants in the Kleine Gemeinde."<sup>21</sup> This may imply that Balzer was married and that he had a family but that none of his children remained in the KG. Heinrich Balzer was a minister of the Ohrloff Gemeinde. In 1833 he joined the KG for reasons which he explained in a lengthy letter written to Aeltester Bernhard Fast of the Ohrloff Gemeinde.<sup>22</sup> The KG-related families in Tiege in 1808 included the following: Gerhard Kroeker, Wirtschaft 1;<sup>23</sup> Claasz Wiebe, Wirtschaft 2;<sup>24</sup> Johann Klassen, Wirtschaft 3;<sup>25</sup> Peter Ginter, Wirtschaft 5;<sup>26</sup> Abraham Kroeker, Wirtschaft 6;<sup>27</sup> Philip Isaac, Wirtschaft 9;<sup>28</sup> Peter Isaac, Wirtschaft 10;<sup>29</sup> Abraham Fast, Wirtschaft 12;<sup>30</sup> Franz Isaac, Wirtschaft 13;<sup>31</sup> Jakob Reimer, Wirtschaft 14;<sup>32</sup> Johann Wiens, Wirtschaft 17;<sup>33</sup> and Abraham Klassen, Wirtschaft 18.<sup>34</sup> KG-related families who lived in Tiege later included the following: Klaas F. Reimer

(1812-1874),<sup>35</sup> Peter W. Friesen (1815-1892);<sup>36</sup> and Heinrich Wiebe, "who had joined the Gemeinde [KG] as a minister" who died in March, 1838.<sup>37</sup> It is interesting to note, therefore, that for a time during the 1830s the term "Tiegeische Ohms" in the KG would have referred to as many as four members of the Lehrdienst or ministerial.

Other KG-related people who lived in Tiege during this period and later included; Abraham R. Schellenberg (1839-1924);<sup>38</sup> Wilhelm Fehdrau<sup>39</sup> and Aeltester Abraham L. Friesen (1831-1917).<sup>40</sup> Many of the writings of Heinrich Balzer were collected by Aeltester Peter P. Toews in his *Sammlung . . . zur Historie der Kleinen Gemeinde der Mennoniten* in 1874 and published in *The Golden Years* in 1985.<sup>41</sup> Aeltester Peter P. Toews also refers to a certain record book maintained by Ohm Heinrich in which he had recorded the proceedings at brotherhood meetings and other occurrences in the Gemeinde, and that, regrettably, he had been unable to locate this journal.<sup>42</sup>

Gen.	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
2	Heinrich Balzer	Jul 10,1800		Jan 1,1846

2 Son Peter Balzer (1827-1902) married Anna Peters the daughter of Johann Peters (1800-1872) and Anna Dueck.<sup>43</sup> The Peter Balzer family lived in the village of Paulsheim, Molotschna, and belonged to the Alexanderwohl Gemeinde. *The Peter Balzer Genealogy 1827-1975* by Hilda Neufeld Janzen states as follows in this regard;

Peter Balzer held a prominent role in the migration of the Alexanderwohl group to the U. S. in 1874. The congregation formed a corporation and elected Peter Balzer and Dietrich Gaeddert to provide passports for the entire congregation. Balzer and Gaeddert's acquaintance likely dates back to the years when the latter taught school at Paulsheim, the home of the Balzers."<sup>44</sup>

In 1874 the Balzer family together with 130 other families left Russia arriving in Topeka, Kansas, September 10. In 1874 lived in Superior Township, McPherson County, near Inman, Kansas. They belonged to the Hoffnungsau Gemeinde where Peter served as a senior minister. After his third marriage Peter Balzer transferred his membership to the Hebron Church.<sup>45</sup>

3 Son Johann Balzer (1851-1930) settled on a farm three miles south and two and one-half miles east of Inman, Kansas, and the family attended the Hebron Church seven miles away.<sup>46</sup> He was the author of the genealogical records referred to in this section. In 1913 Balzer went on an extensive trip to visit relatives in Russia which he described in a letter to the *Mennonitische Rundschau* published in the issues dated March 25, April 1 and April 8, 1914.<sup>47</sup>

Gen.	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
2	Peter Balzer	Aug 11,1827		Jan 10,1902
m	Anna Peters	Feb 7,1831	Feb 27,1851	Sep 5,1876
3	Johann Balzer	Dec 25,1851		Jul 18,1930
m	Sarah Penner	Nov 26,1852	May 28,1872	Jan 11,1911
3	Peter Balzer	Jan 30,1854		Nov 9,1923
m	Katharina Penner	Jan 23,1856		Aug 24,1943

3	Jakob Balzer	May 5, 1856		Mar 3, 1857
3	Anna Balzer	Dec 28, 1857	Nov 8, 1877	Mar 1, 1939
m	Johann Martens	Nov 26, 1853		Dec 3, 1921
3	Heinrich Balzer	Dec 27, 1859	Dec 9, 1883	Mar 10, 1953
m	Elisabeth Voth	Jul 3, 1863		Dec 14, 1930
3	Jakob Balzer	Feb 11, 1862	Jan 28, 1886	Jan 18, 1924
m	Gertrude Penner	Jul 30, 1866		Aug 31, 1943
3	Abraham Balzer	Aug 2, 1864	Nov 27, 1892	Dec 8, 1935
m	Maria Funk	Mar 12, 1867		Jul 16, 1950
3	Katharina Balzer	Dec 11, 1866	Dec 11, 1885	Aug 2, 1943
m	Johann P. Wall	Jan 1, 1863		May 17, 1956
3	Maria Balzer	Mar 14, 1869		May 12, 1869
3	Gerhard Balzer	May 13, 1870	Aug 24, 1894	Aug 7, 1935
m	Anna Penner	Dec 2, 1868		Aug 20, 1970
3	David Balzer	Mar 27, 1872		Jun 20, 1874
2	Peter Balzer	Aug 11, 1827		Jan 10, 1902
2m	Maria Janzen	1830		Feb 19, 1892
2m	Mrs. Maria Rempel			Dec 7, 1902

### Endnotes. Balzer Genealogies.

1. Robert Friedmann, *Mennonite Piety Through the Centuries* (Sugar Creek, Ohio, 1980), 259.
2. James Urry, *None But Saints* (Winnipeg, 1989), 99. Unruh, 366 and 378.
3. Henry Schapansky, 914 Chilliwack St., New Westminster, B.C., V3L 4V5, letter to the author September 21, 1990. Mr. Schapansky is presently one of the foremost experts on the Prussian Mennonite Gemeindebücher and related records. The information provided by him has been gleaned from these records. I am indebted to him for sharing this material with me.
4. S.A.I.106, Mennonite Library and Archives, Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas. Courtesy of Dr. James Urry, Department of Anthropology, Victoria University of Wellington, Box 600, Wellington, New Zealand, letter to the author of September 2, 1992. I am indebted to Dr. Urry for sharing this information with me.
5. Waldo Balzer and Alvin Balzer, *Our Heritage Balzer: The Wonderful Story of the Balzers* (Portland, Oregon, 1989), 123 pages, courtesy of Susie Balzer, Eventide Home, Mountain Lake, Minnesota, 1990.
6. Alvin Balzer, 19515 Rinaldi St., No. 52, Northridge, California, 91326, letter to the author July 25, 1990.
7. Waldon Balzer and Alvin Balzer, 22-23.
8. For a listing of his family see, Plett, "Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) Genealogy," in Plett, ed., ed., *Profile 1874*, 239-245.
9. Heinrich Rempel, "Seelenliste," unpublished family record, 1, courtesy of Dr. Abram P. Toews, Ferguson, Missouri, 1981.
10. Waldo Balzer and Alvin Balzer, 65-123, provide a listing of the descendants of Katharina Reimer and Heinrich Balzer.
11. Gary Richter, ed., *Mountain Lake 1886-1986 Minnesota* (Mountain Lake, Minnesota, 1986), 138-139, has additional information regarding the "Balzer Manufacturing Co." of Mountain Lake, Minnesota.
12. V. Voth, *The Heinrich Balzer Genealogy 1775-1959* (North Newton, Ks., 1959), 180 pages.
13. V. Voth, 17. I am indebted to Frank G. Friesen for his assistance in sending me pages 10, 11, 16-18, 28, 30, 90, 138, 118 and 170, of this genealogy. Frank G. Friesen, 6705 Glen Dale Dr., Arlington, Texas, 76017, letter to the author November 14, 1992.
14. V. Voth, 17.
15. *Ibid.*, 9-10.

16. *Ibid.*, 17-18.

17. See Entries No. 503 and 626, *Church Book of the Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church in the Molotschna Colony of South Russia* (Goessel Ks.: Mennonite Immigrant Historical Society, 1987), 58 and 65. See also Pat van Nes, *Willms - Schmidt Family Record* (Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1982), 9.

18. James Urry, "Henrich Balzer (1800-1846): Kleine Gemeinde minister and conservative Mennonite philosopher," see Part Four, Chapter One, cf.

19. Henry Schapansky, "Heinrich Balzer Genealogy Chart," courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author September 1, 1990.

20. Johann Balzer Family Records, SA.I.106, Mennonite Library and Archives, Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas, courtesy of Dr. James Urry, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, New Zealand.

21. Peter P. Toews, *Sammlung . . . zur Historie der Kleinen Gemeinde der Mennoniten* (Blumenhoff, South Russia, 1874), 54.

22. Heinrich Balzer, "An epistle to the Aeltesten," in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 219-20.

23. He was married to Justina Isaac (1774-1831), a sister to Philip, Peter and Franz. Only two of her sons came to Russia, namely, Franz who lived in the Crimea and Gerhard who lived in Mariapol. See Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims* (Steinbach, Man., 1990), 182.

24. His sister Maria Wiebe (1784-1845) married Cornelius Enns (1782-1834), who settled on Wirtschaft 13 in Fischau in 1804; see Part Six, Chapter One, for additional information regarding the Wiebe family.

25. Johann Klassen (1758-1863) was married to Aganetha Rogier, the granddaughter of Aeltester Peter Epp (1725-1789) of Danzig. Their son Johann Klassen (1785-1841) was one of the founders of the village of Tiegerweide, and served as Oberschulz of the Molotschna Colony from 1827-1833. Their son Abraham Klassen (1828-1906) was a KG minister and later settled in Alexanderfeld, near Hillsboro, Kansas. See Plett, "The Peter Epp Family Tree 1690," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims* (Steinbach, Man., 1990), 306-7.

26. He was a brother to Margaretha Ginter who married Jakob Reimer, who settled on Wirtschaft 14 in 1805.

27. He was a brother to Gerhard Kroecker, Wirtschaft 1. The Kroeckers originated from Neunhuben, the place of residence of Klaas Reimer, the founder of the KG. See Benjamin H. Unruh, *Die niederländisch-niederdeutschen Hintergründe der mennonitischen Ostwanderungen im 16., 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Karlsruhe, 1955), 342.

28. Philip Isaac (1769-1813) died a terrible death when he was bitten by a mad dog. His son Abraham Isaac (1795-1864) was minister of the Ohrloff Gemeinde and moved from Tiede to Schoenau in 1855. For the full story of the Isaac family, see Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," 179-211.

29. Peter Isaac (1780-1857) was the father of Franz Isaac (1816-1900) the well-known minister of the Ohrloff Gemeinde and author of *Die Molotschnaer Mennoniten*, a collection of historical documents published after his death by his son. Daughter Justina Isaac (born 1809) was married to Bernhard Fast, of Rosenort, one-time KG minister. Daughter Anna Isaac (1807-1873) was married for the second time to Johann Friesen of Neukirch, the third Aeltester of the KG.

30. He is believed to be the father of Maria Fast (1795-1859) who married Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884), a wealthy KG Vollwirt of Muntau.

31. Franz Isaac was the father of Johann Isaac 1809-1864) whose sons settled in Gruenfeld, Manitoba, in the 1870s.

32. He was a half-brother to Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) of Muntau. Their daughter Helena Reimer married Jakob Schellenberg. They were the parents of Abraham Schellenberg (1839-1924) who settled in Gruenfeld, Manitoba, in 1875.

33. His daughter Elisabeth married Klaas Thiessen and they were the parents of Johann W. Thiessen (1813-1888) of Contentiusfeld, Molotschna, and later of Jansen, Nebraska; see Plett, "Wiens Families in the Kleine Gemeinde," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 498-502.

34. He was the son of Johann Klassen on Wirtschaft 3.

35. He was the son of Klaas Reimer, the founder of the KG. He was a wealthy Vollwirt, able to lend money to the less fortunate.

36. He was the son of Abraham Friesen (1782-1849), the second Aeltester of the KG. Peter W. Friesen was married to the sister of Klaas F. Reimer (1812-1874). He also served as a minister of the KG.

37. Peter P. Toews, *Sammlung*, 169.

38. He was the grandson of Jakob Reimer of Wirtschaft 14.

39. Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 187.

40. He was the Aeltester of the Heuboden and later Jansen, Nebraska, KG.

41. Plett, ed., *The Golden Years* (Steinbach, Man., 1985), 210-12 and 214-47.

42. Peter P. Toews, *Sammlung*, 54.

43. Harold Buck Balzer, "Johann Peters Family Group Chart," courtesy of Harold 'Buck' Balzer, Box 59, Buhler, Kansas, 67522, March 23, 1993.

44. Hilda Neufeldt Janzen, *The Peter Balzer Genealogy 1827-1975* (Inman, Kansas, 1975), 7-8, courtesy of Harold 'Buck' Balzer, Box 59, Buhler, Kansas, 67522.

45. *Ibid*, 7-8.

46. Johann Balzer (1851-1930) was the grandfather of Harold "Buck" Balzer, Box 59, Buhler, Kansas, 67522, who has gathered a considerable amount of information regarding this family. Harold "Buck" Balzer, letter to the author February 19, 1993.

47. I am indebted to Harold 'Buck' Balzer for referring this information to me. Harold Balzer to author March 23, 1993.



## PART FIVE

# JOHANN F. FRIESEN 1808-1872

## Chapter One

### Biography

A Biography of Aeltester Johann F. Friesen (1808-1872), Neunkirch, Molotschna Colony, South Russia. By Delbert F. Plett, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1992.

---

#### Section One. Background of the Friesen Family.

1 The matriarchal side of the family of Johann F. Friesen (1808-1872) is relatively well-known.<sup>1</sup> His mother was Margaretha von Riesen or Friesen who was the sister to Abraham Friesen (1782-1849) Ohrloff, Molotschna, the second Aeltester of the Kleine Gemeinde (KG). Her younger sister, Helena Friesen, was married to Klaas E. Reimer (1770-1837) the first Aeltester of the KG.<sup>2</sup> Another sister, Regina von Riesen (1795-1852) was married for the second time to Heinrich Neufeld (1790-1864) of Rosenort, Molotschna, who was elected as a minister of the Molotschna Grosse Gemeinde in 1830.<sup>3</sup>

Considerably less is known about the paternal side of Johann Friesen's family. The recent research of Henry Schapansky has revealed that the grandfather of Johann F. Friesen (1808-1872) was **Jakob Friesen** of Reinland, West Prussia, who belonged to the Tiegenhagen Gemeinde. Jakob Friesen is listed in the Konsignation of 1776 with 2 sons and 2 daughters. Jakob Friesen died before 1782. His wife, whose name is unknown at the present time, was born in 1738 and died in 1803.<sup>4</sup> Jakob Friesen had two daughters, **Helena Friesen** born circa 1773 and baptised in 1791, and **Sara Friesen** who was baptised in 1793. Daughter Sara Friesen was living with her brother Johann Friesen in Schoenau, Molotschna, at the time of the 1808 Revisions-Listen.

2 Son **Peter Friesen** was baptised in 1787. He was married to Anna Neufeld, the daughter of Johann Neufeld of Klein Maudorferweide who is listed in the 1776 Konsignation with 1 son and 4 daughters.<sup>5</sup> Peter Friesen was married for the second time to Maria Friesen (born 1751), the widow of Martin Born and Klassen. The couple immigrated to Russia in 1803 where they settled on Wirtschaft 1 in the village of Lindenau. They are listed as follows in the 1808 Revisions-Listen:

Peter Friesen age 40, from Neulanghorst, Amt Elbing, wife Maria 58, children, Isaac 24, Maria 16, Peter 15. Property, 1 wagon, 1/2 plow, 1 harrow, 5 horses, 12 cattle, 4 sheep.<sup>6</sup>

Peter Friesen born in 1794 was a child of the first marriage.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
1	Jakob Friesen			
m	?	1738		
2	Johann Friesen	1763		ca.1830
m	Maria Thiessen			
2m	Margaretha Friesen	Mar 15,1784		Aug 5,1835
2	Peter Friesen	1768		
m	Anna Neufeld			
3	Peter Friesen	1794		
2	Peter Friesen	1768		
2m	Maria Friesen	1751		
2	Helena Friesen	c1773		
2	Sara Friesen	1776		

### Section Two. Johann Friesen 1763-ca.1830 and Family.

2 Son Johann Friesen (1763-ca.1830) was married for the first time to Maria Thiessen. The couple lived in Reinland, West Prussia from where they immigrated to Russia in 1804. They settled on Wirtschaft 5 in the village of Schoenau were they joined 10 other KG-related families. The family is listed as follows in the 1808 Revisions-Listen:

Johann Friesen age 45, from Reinland, Amt Tiegenhof, landowning farmer, wife Margaretha age 24, children, Helena 15, Catarina 12, Sara 10, Elisabeth 8, Abraham 1, Johann 1/4, his sister Sara age 32. Property, 1 wagon, 1 plow, 2 harrows, 8 horses and 18 cattle.<sup>7</sup>

By 1821 the Johann Friesen family had moved to Rosenort.<sup>8</sup> As several of the sons lived in Neukirch they were sometimes referred to as the "Neukircher Friesens".<sup>9</sup>

Johann Friesen (1763-ca.1830) was elected as a minister of the Molotschna Flemish or Grosse Gemeinde in 1805. It is evident from Klaas Reimer's autobiography that Johann Friesen was sympathetic to his brethren and sisters in the KG and that he frequently acted as a go-between. Friesen was the senior minister of the Grosse Gemeinde in 1824 at the time of the separation of what became known as the Ohrloff Gemeinde under Aeltester Bernhard Fast. In his autobiography Klaas Reimer describes the pressure that was put to bear on Ohm Johann at the time:

... The leaders then beset my brother-in-law, Johann Friesen, from Rosenort at great length. Friesen was the senior minister among the group which had broken away. But the right goal also remained distant to this group, as their reason was that they did not want the officials of the Bible Society from among us. The promoters of the Society now addressed themselves to my brother-in-law in such an extreme way that they came to him during the night and confronted him, after he and his wife had retired for the night. They tried to persuade him to remain steadfast together with them. By virtue of

these tactics Friesen fell very ill and also became dizzy, which conditions remained permanent at least to some extent. .<sup>10</sup>

3 Nothing further is presently known about the children of Johann Friesen by his first wife. All the children of Johann and his second wife were prominent members of the KG. Son Peter F. Friesen (born 1812) Marianthal, Molotschna, eventually left the KG and became a minister of the Grosse Gemeinde.<sup>11</sup> He immigrated to the United States in 1875 and settled in Carson Township near Mountain Lake, Minnesota.<sup>12</sup> Like three of his brothers, son Martin F. Friesen, lived in Neukirch, Molotschna. He later joined the K. M. B. and settled in Gnadenu, Kansas. The oldest son Abram F. Friesen was a minister of the KG.<sup>13</sup> Son Klaas F. Friesen served as a deacon. A listing of the children and grandchildren of Johann Friesen (1763-ca.1830) and Margaretha Friesen (1784-1835) was published in 1987 and therefore no further detail will be provided here; see Delbert F. Plett, "Abraham von Riesen (1756-1810) Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1987), pages 270-274.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
2	Johann Friesen	1763		ca.1830
m	Maria Thiessen			
3	Johann Friesen	Nov 6,1790		before 1802
3	Maria Friesen	Sep 16,1791		
3	Helena Friesen	Sep 5,1793		
3	Sara Friesen	Sep 9,1794		
3	Kath Friesen	1796		
3	Eliesabeth Friesen	Mar 8,1800		
3	Anna Friesen	Feb 4,1802		
3	Johann Friesen	Dec 28,1802		before 1808
2	Johann Friesen	1763		c1830
2m	Marg W. Friesen	Mar 15,1784		Aug 5,1835
3	Abraham Friesen	May 15,1807		May 20,1891
3	Johann Friesen	Jun 28,1808		Mar 31,1872
3	Marg F. Friesen	Jun 10,1811		Apr 3,1831
3	Peter Friesen	Nov 27,1812		
3	Anna F. Friesen	Apr 15,1814		May 20,1843
3	Klaas F. Friesen	Feb 15,1818		May 8,1871
3	Jakob F. Friesen	Sep 10,1820		May 14,1888
3	Martin Friesen	Jul 15,1823		187_
3	Helena Friesen	1823		Sep 27,1853

### Section Three. Biography of Johann F. Friesen 1808-1872.

3 Johann F. Friesen (1808-1872) was married four times. His second marriage was to Maria Enns, the daughter of his fellow minister, Heinrich Enns (1807-1881). His third marriage was to Elisabeth Klassen, the daughter of David Klassen (1813-1900) who served in 1873 as the delegate to America for the Heubodner branch of the KG. Friesen lived in Neukirch which was also the home of over twenty KG-related families at various times during the first half of the 18th century.<sup>14</sup> Friesen was a successful Vollwirt.<sup>15</sup> He active in silkworm farming and in 1850 the Odessa-based *Unterhaltungs Blatt* listed him as being the top silk producer in

Neukirch.<sup>16</sup> He was also listed as being among the Molotschna's leaders in dairy production.<sup>17</sup>

Sometime in the late 1860s Ohm Johann moved to the village of Rosenfeld in the Borosenko settlement northwest of Nikolopol. The Vollwirtschaft in Neukirch was sold to Nikolai Isaac from Schoenau, a relative of his fourth wife.<sup>18</sup> A tragic accident occurred in the Johann F. Friesen family in February of 1871. Historian Peter J. B. Reimer describes this event as follows; "Their sleigh upset, and [Mrs. Friesen] . . . being pregnant, was seriously injured and died some weeks later."<sup>19</sup> The children of Johann F. Friesen (1808-1872) and his third wife, Elisabeth Klassen, were raised by their grandparents, David and Aganetha Klassen, who settled in Rosenhof, Manitoba in 1874.

Shortly after the accident, Johann Friesen (1808-1872) married for the fourth time to the widow Anna Wiebe, nee Isaac. She was a sister to Franz Isaac (1816-1900), a minister of the Ohrloff Gemeinde and a widely known historian.<sup>20</sup> The marriage caused considerable controversy because he had married a widow from the Ohrloff Gemeinde without her coming to the KG. This was aggravated by the fact that the couple was married by his brother Peter F. Friesen, Marienthal, who had previously left the KG and had become a minister of the Grosse Gemeinde.<sup>21</sup>

Johann F. Friesen was ill for the last year of his life. Peter I. Fast (1831-1916) later of Jansen, Nebraska, writes of him as follows:

[He] . . . got sick shortly after the . . . marriage and required much nursing. After his death the widow was taken back to Muntau to live with her foster children Sawatzkys. Thereafter she married for a third time to Peter Dueck from Muntau. She was financially well off from her first marriage and substantially improved her monetary position from her second marriage. When she died her heirs disputed for years over her estate.<sup>22</sup>

Johann F. Friesen (1808-1872) was elected as a minister of the KG in 1840 and as Aeltester in 1847. In this office Ohm Johann played a prominent role in the resolution of the "church building" and "barley" disputes. He was frequently called upon by Colony officials to intercede and mediate between the disputing factions. Aeltester Friesen also played an important role during the secession of the infant Mennonite Brethren movement and together with Johann Harder (1811-1875), the Aeltester of the Ohrloff Gemeinde, can largely be credited for the fact that the over-enthusiastic secessionists were not all deported by the Gebietsamt and the Russian government. His low-keyed role of mediation and his conciliatory work as a community leader in the turbulent events which affected the Molotschna Colony during the 1850s and early 1860s has been overlooked by most historians to date.

Johann F. Friesen (1808-1872) led the KG through a period of solid growth and considerable influence as the senior Gemeinde in the Molotschna. He has been accused of leading his parishioners into compromises with pietistical influences, which led up to the tragic division of 1866. He was faulted by those who broke away from the KG congregation in the Crimea in 1869 for not having rebaptised them as they had requested, although it is debatable whether this would have actually made any difference in the long run. Friesen came to a rather unfortunate end when most of the families which had originally sided with him, left

to form a new Gemeinde under Abraham L. Friesen. Eventually only some 10 families remained under his leadership and in the end even these left. Friesen was ministered to on his deathbed by Aeltester Peter P. Toews and the ministers of the Blumenhoff congregation of the KG.<sup>23</sup>

#### Section Four. Descendants of Johann F. Friesen 1808-1872.

4 Son Johann K. Friesen (1857-1934) lived in Rosenort, Manitoba where he served as a minister of the KG.<sup>24</sup> Son David K. Friesen (1861-1928) married Anna Friesen from Winkler and lived at the south end of the village of Rosenhof.<sup>25</sup> Daughter Maria Friesen (1869-1933) married Johann R. Dueck (1863-1937), the son of Aeltester Abraham L. Dueck of Kleefeld, Manitoba. Johann R. Dueck farmed at Rosenhof, Manitoba, where he also served as a deacon of the KG.<sup>26</sup> Daughter Aganetha K. Friesen (born 1863) married Johann E. Warkentin, the son of Heinrich Warkentin (1833-1888) who settled in Rosenort, Manitoba, in 1875.<sup>27</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
3	Johann F. Friesen	Jun 28,1808		Mar 31,1872
m	Anna Wiebe			
2m	Maria Enns	Jan 11,1837	1855	1855
3m	Elis Klassen	Jun 13,1837		Mar 17,1871
4	Johann K. Friesen	Jul 19,1857	Jul 2,1876	Jan 21,1934
m	Just Warkentin	Feb 4,1856		Jun 7,1943
4	David K. Friesen	Jan 18,1861		Jul 13,1928
m	Anna Friesen	Aug 28,1850		Sep 10,1912
4	Agan K. Friesen	Apr 28,1863	Jul 3,1880	
m	Joh E. Warkentin	Jun 11,1859		Oct 19,1929
4	Maria Friesen	Feb 28,1869	Jan 1,1890	Jun 1933
m	Johann R. Dueck	Dec 1,1863		Feb 1,1937
3	Johann Friesen	Jun 28,1808		Mar 31,1872
4m	Anna Isaac	Jan 24,1807		Nov 1,1873

#### Section Five. Writings of Aeltester Johann F. Friesen 1808-1872.

Many of the writings of Johann F. Friesen pertaining to his role in the resolution of various disputations within the Molotschna church community have already been published by his brother-in-law, Franz Isaac, in the documentary historical work, *Die Molotschnaer Mennoniten*.<sup>28</sup> Additional documents regarding his public role in these matters, as well as the basic documents issued during the contentious 1866 KG division, were collected by Aeltester Peter P. Toews in his *Sammlung . . . zur Historie der Kleinen Gemeinde*.<sup>29</sup> Three additional writings by Johann F. Friesen (1808-1872) have come to light and are published here for the first time.<sup>30</sup> These documents portray a devout and earnest church leader who had served his God and Gemeinde without stint for many years.

## Endnotes: Johann F. Friesen 1808-1872.

1. Actually this prominence of the female line or matriline is not as surprising as it may seem at first. Patriarchal networks were highly valued within conservative Mennonite groups such as the KG, Berghaler and Reinländer. In many cases, especially where the family line connected with prominent individuals, it was the female side of the kinship circle through which families ties and kin were articulated. It was the Russländer, more influenced as they were by the patronymic and male dominated society of Imperial Russia, where the female influence was less evident.

2. Plett, "Abraham von Riesen (1756-1810) Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874* (Steinbach, Man., 1987), 270-277, contains a listing of the children and grandchildren of these families.

3. Plett, "Peter Neufeld 1697-1796 Genealogy," unpublished family sketch, Steinbach, Manitoba, revised 1992, 28 pages, provides additional information regarding Rev. Heinrich Neufeld (1791-1865) of Rosenort and his family.

4. Henry Schapansky, letter to the author January 20, 1991.

5. *Ibid.* Two of Anna Neufeld's sisters also came to the Molotschna. Sister Elisabeth Neufeld (born 1763) was married to Jakob Wiebe (born 1764) who settled on Wirtschaft 8 in the village of Ohrloff, Molotschna Colony, in 1806. Unruh, 324. Sister Eleonora Neufeld (1762-1817) was married to Gerhard Neufeld (1758-1817) the son of Peter Neufeld (1697-1769) of Hegewald, West Prussia. See Plett, "Peter Neufeld 1696-1769 Genealogy," unpublished family history, for more information on this family. Much of the information on the family of Johann Neufeld of Klein Mausdorferweide, West Prussia is found in a 1838 Vollmacht regarding the estate of daughter Judith Neufeld who died in West Prussia--Vollmacht courtesy of Ken Reddig, M. B. Archives, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1988.

6. It appears that at least some of the children listed were step-children of Peter Friesen. The Verzeichnis of 1812 shows a daughter Catarina born to Einwohner Isaac Born on August 21, 1813, Benjamin H. Unruh, *Die niederländisch-niederdeutschen Hintergründe der mennonitischen Ostwanderungen im 16., 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Karlsruhe, 1955), 332.

7. Unruh, 308.

8. Abraham Friesen, "A letter to the members of the Gebietsamt of this colony, December 27, 1821," in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years* (Steinbach, Man., 1985), 180, refers to his brother-in-law Johann Friesen as being from Rosenort; cf. Franz Isaac, *Die Molotschnaer Mennoniten* (Halbstadt, Taurien, 1908), 94.

9. Johann P. Friesen, "Genealogical records," untitled journal, Rosenort, Manitoba. These records provided the basic information required to compile the "Abraham von Riesen (1756-1810) Genealogy," 265-93, including a complete listing of the children of Johann Friesen (1763-ca.1830) by his second marriage.

10. Klaas Reimer, "A Short Exposition," Part Two, Chapter Two.

11. Peter P. Toews, "Anhang number one," in Plett, ed., *History and Events* (Steinbach, Man., 1982), 53.

12. It has been established that Peter Friesen (1846-1931) who lived in Nikolaidorf and who settled in Mountain Lake, Minnesota, in 1875 was the son of Peter F. Friesen (born November 12, 1812), Marienthal, Molotschna. No author cited, "The History of the late Peter Friesen Family" (Mountain Lake, Minnesota, n. d.). The death certificate of Peter Friesen (1846-1931) states that his father was a Peter Friesen and that his mother was a Goertzen. See Plett, "Abraham von Riesen (1756-1810) Genealogy," 272, which states that Peter Friesen was born on January 11, 1846 and that he was married to a Baerg. In fact, Peter Friesen (born 1812) himself immigrated to America, settling in Mountain Lake, Minnesota. See Plett, "Abraham von Riesen Genealogy," unpublished paper, Steinbach, Manitoba, revised 1992, which discusses the various sources considered to come to this conclusion.

13. His son, Abram S. Friesen, was a prominent pioneer entrepreneur in Steinbach, Manitoba.

14. For a listing of the KG fellowship in Neukirch, see Plett, "Peter Ensz 1791-1857," unpublished paper, 1991, 5 pages.

15. Peter I. Fast, quoted in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims* (Steinbach, Man., 1990), 499.

16. Royden K. Loewen, *Family Church and Market: A Case Study of the Kleine Gemeinde Mennonites* (Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Manitoba, 1991), 33-34.
17. Royden K. Loewen, "The Kleine Gemeinde as Sectarian Farmers 1850-75," Part One, Chapter Seven.
18. Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 208.
19. Peter J. B. Reimer, "The David K. Friesen Family," in Lenore Eidse, ed., *Furrows in the Valley, Rural Municipality of Morris 1880-1980* (Morris, Manitoba, 1980), 388.
20. Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," 183, has a listing of her siblings. Anna Isaac certainly had significant roots in the KG, at least genetically. Plett, "Wiens Families in the Kleine Gemeinde," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 498-502.
21. Aeltester Peter P. Toews, "Anhang number one," 53.
22. Peter I. Fast quoted in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 499.
23. For a further discussion of this point, see Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph* (Steinbach, Man., 1986), 163-164, and Plett, ed., *History and Events*, 53-54.
24. Lenore Eidse, ed., 330. Johann K. Friesen (1857-1934) was the grandfather to Ben F. Eidse, former President of Steinbach Bible College, Steinbach, Manitoba.
25. Lenore Eidse, ed., 388. David K. Friesen's son David F. Friesen (born 1890) became a prosperous farmer in Rosenhof, Manitoba. His son, Peter L. Friesen, became the leading minister of the Rosenort E. M. C. in 1955.
26. Johana R. Dueck was also a writer. A report he wrote for the 60th anniversary of the Mennonite immigration to Manitoba was translated and published in 1987: Johann R. Dueck, "Historical Report," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 203-212.
27. Plett, "Martin Warkentin 1764 Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 481.
28. Franz Isaac, 354 pages.
29. These letters were published in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 104-175.
30. I am indebted to Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba for referring these documents to my attention.

## Chapter Two

# The 1866 Division, Three Documents

Three letters regarding the 1866 division of the Kleine Gemeinde written by Aeltester Johann F. Friesen (1808-1872), Neukirch, Molotschna, 1866.

---

**Document One: A Declaration by Aeltester Johann F. Friesen (1808-1872), Neukirch, Molotschna Colony, South Russia, in the year 1866.**

The grace of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ and the consoling fellowship of the Holy Spirit be now and in all eternity with the beloved brethren and the elect saints and all who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen! Beloved brethren, when I consider the sad and depressing situation to which our Gemeinde has now come, and the distrust and great suspicion which now exists in a number of the brethren, then I could well be silenced and not speak about the matter. Yet, my trust in you gives me courage, so that I cannot keep silent. I feel compelled to briefly declare the basis for my position regarding the brethren. In so doing, I hope to be able to remove more and more from many of the brethren, even if not from all, this mistrust; so that hopefully they can again grant me their confidence.

I confess with the Apostle Paul "that other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." On this rock and corner stone Paul, as a wise master builder, laid the foundation upon which we must build. On his foundation I stand firm and without compromise and with the help of God, as well as the counsel and support of the faithful brethren, thereupon to lead, establish and build the Gemeinde, to raise up again that which is fallen, to minister to the weak and the sick, and to seek to strengthen the confidence between and among the brethren, and more and more to truly unite them anew with the bond of love and peace and to anchor them firmly in the faith; even though this can only be done by me in great weakness and imperfection.

Indeed I can truly say with the Apostle Paul, "And I was with you, in weakness and in fear, and in much trembling" (1 Cor. 2:2). Yet I have faith in the Lord that his strength in my weakness will empower me. "Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of God may rest upon me" (2 Cor. 12:9). Accordingly I want to place my trust and confidence, although in great weakness, solely upon the Lord and His word, and to once again cast out the net of the gospel, and with the help of God to venture once more to make a successful draught.

Frequently we can say with Peter, "Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing" (Lk. 5:5). We, too, have worked long, set forth much labour with many concerns and fears. We have had little success and gained few blessings

and only a little fruit by our difficult and spoiled endeavours and teachings. As a result, I have great concern whether my simple work and effort will be accepted for the good and as a blessing for our souls. For I see that I stand in great distrust in the minds of a number of brethren to the extent that they believe that I am like a false prophet teaching in the name of the Lord, and claiming that the Lord has spoken through me, when he in fact has not spoken, and that I have preached false sightings. Jeremiah 14 and Ezekiel 13.

In which regard each and everyone has reason to examine and prove themselves; however, we must be judicious in this regard in order that no one would fall into the judgement and condemnation of God in so doing since we cannot see into the hearts of man nor can we know what lies therein. God, however, knows the hearts of all humankind. He can also search the innermost conceptions of my heart and ascertain and prove my thoughts and intentions (Ps. 139:23); whereby I stand in His sight full of broken misdeeds and sins. If the Lord would wish to deal with me and judge me according to my transgressions and sins, and not deal with me according to His grace and great mercy, I would blush with shame and have to be sent away.

Consequently I have great reason at all times, even hourly, to pray with David;

Lord, enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified. For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those who have been long dead. Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate. I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands. I stretch forth my hands unto thee; my soul thirsteth after thee, like a thirsty land. Selah. Hear me speedily, O Lord; my spirit faileth. Hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit. Cause me to hear thy loving-kindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust. Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee. Deliver me, O Lord, from mine enemies; I flee unto thee to hide me. Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God. Thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness. Revive me, O Lord, for thy name's sake; for thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble. And of thy mercy cut off mine enemies, and destroy all them that afflict my soul; for I am thy servant (Psalm 143:2-12).

Behold, beloved brethren, that I must concede all of this to you; "If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" (Ps. 130:3). Yet, within myself I am convinced that there is no falsehood in my heart nor shall any false motives dwell therein. "Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry. The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. The Lord is near unto those who are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous;

but the Lord delivereth him out of them all" (Psalm 34:14-19). I do not think I have taught incorrectly or falsely in my public sermons and admonitions, other than by virtue of my own mortal imperfections and mistakes; I find within myself that I am permeated thereby so that over and over again I find it necessary to pray together with David; "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults" (Ps. 19:12).

That which I have previously spoken and testified regarding Thiessen's matter is no secret which cannot be discerned. It later became evident with respect to the former dealings in Marienthal that I should not have pressed the issue as hard as I did. For I knew the best what information I had given him; namely, that he was notified to come to Tiede within eight days and that he should first be reconciled with the village authorities and the Gebietsamt and to bring us written statements from both offices that they were satisfied with him. For this reason I assume the greatest fault in this matter. Perhaps Ohm Ens and possibly Ohm Dueck read the statement as well. Ohm Ens even personally submitted the same to the Gebietsamt that this requirement was imposed upon Thiessen; which is also what I had stated at the brotherhood meeting. It is manifest, therefore, from these transactions that we have dealt incorrectly.

The foremost reason why this situation has gone awry may well be that we have not given serious enough heed to the proper exercise of the ban with respect to the present as well as in previous matters. We may read more regarding this in Deuteronomy chapter 13 verses 6 to 9 and chapter 17 verse 5, and other similar references. We can refer also to Menno Simons who writes in his third volume, page 373, that a manifest fornicator and adulterer shall be given over to the Gemeinde by two or three witnesses and that the Gemeinde is directed by the word of the gospel to separate such a one.

How shall this be when no sin punishable by death has occurred and when the behaviour only consists of deviations. Give thought to this; whether in actuality, lovelessness and factiousness had not infiltrated herein. For the fact that we were no longer dealing with each other solely in love and confidence, even back then already, was unequivocally brought into the open through Ohm Ens when he was no longer able to grant confidence to the Ohms from Tiede [Peter and Abraham Friesen]. For if the Tiede'sche Ohms at that time had expressed such one-mindedness in their views as did Ohm Ens, and if they had not demonstrated more love and forbearance regarding the Gemeinde than Ohm Ens, this division would already have taken place then; for even until now they have not been able to concede and concur with our one-sided dealings. Nevertheless, they have submitted themselves thereto in order to spare the Gemeinde. In my opinion it would have been better if Ohm Ens had also adjusted himself to the situation. For then the evil result would not have become as severe as it is at the present time.

Even to this very hour I was not able to believe that this separation would actually take place; and for my part it would not need to occur even now. At all times I would want to present myself as the very least of these, in order that everything could be forgiven and reconciled; if only this could be done in love and confidence. Nor do I perceive why a separation or a secession would be necessary at all in this instance seeing that the fault was not dependent on me alone and that the oversights occurred on the part of more than a few people. Even if we have sinned so seriously before God that this must be our punishment, surely the sin

cannot be rectified by virtue of our separation. It has always been my hope that the fracture could once again be healed. Alas I shall have to weep and lament together with Jeremiah, "We looked for peace, and there is no good; and for the time of healing, and behold there is only more trouble! Hast thou utterly rejected Judah? Hath thy soul loathed Zion? Why hast thou smitten us, and there is no healing for us?" (Jer.14:19).

Oh my most beloved brethren, let us all humble ourselves one unto the other and before God and petition Him in prayer. "Draw nigh unto God, and he will draw nigh unto you" (James 4:8). Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near; Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God; for he will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah 55:6,7). Accordingly if we will humble ourselves before the Lord our God, and seek His grace with implicit faith, then He will also hear us and allow Himself to be found of us; even as the Lord Himself says in Luke, chapter 11, verses 9, 10, 12 and 13:

And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. . . . Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

In this respect, however, we should not fail to give heed to what the Lord says in Mark, chapter 11, verses 25 and 26; "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have anything against any, that your Father also, who is in heaven, may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father, who is in heaven, forgive your trespasses."

Behold, beloved brethren, in view of the foregoing let us direct ourselves unto the Lord and let us thereby seek to restore everything anew.

Wherefore, lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord (Hebrews 12:12-14).

Indeed, beloved brethren, let us seek anew to strengthen each other with all sincerity and brotherly love and to bestow evermore confidence one toward another. This trust could not have been better restored then if all of us ministers would have partaken therein and worked together toward this goal with one mind; and thereby to once again start afresh. I have always believed that this was what all of us wanted; to forget that which is past, like all the loveless reproaches and accusations which have been cast before us for many years already and for which we hardly know how to help or to council ourselves; to forget all of this and everything else which is not acceptable to you - that which has occurred and the

causes thereof, and to strive for that which lies before us. Philippians 3:13. We must begin to love one another anew and to edify and strengthen each other in love and sincerity; even now I know of no other advice and also consider the same to be absolutely essential.

But alas! How sad and what a great hinderness it is that Ohm Ens and many of the brethren together with him do not wish to take part in this renewal; rather they wish to remain blameless in all of this. I would find it very difficult to believe and agree that all of Ohm Ens' dealings in this regard occurred in the manner of love; he worked with such zeal that perhaps he himself will not have sufficiently considered the words that he spoke and wrote. I was also very sorry about the way that everything happened at that time with the writing submitted to the Gebietsamt and with the writing from the Bürgeramt [resident assembly]. I have tried hard to fathom the same! But I have not found this to be a good thing. I would otherwise not mention this were it not for the many judgements and accusations which are being spread against me among the brethren; these accusations are not in accordance with love. Similarly the reproaches and accusations which Ohm Ens presented at the brotherhood meeting were not free of factiousness nor were they noted in the manner of love. Especially what he mentioned regarding the debt of K. F. since many of the brethren find themselves in the same dilemma as Kl. F. Certainly it is not at all good that so many brethren have fallen into such great debt; and in respect of which we have advised all the brethren to rid themselves of these debts if at all possible. I also know personally of Kl. F. and many other brethren that they would gladly wish to be rid of their debt.

Nor can the situation be improved by casting aspersions on each other. Rather, time and favourable opportunity will have to proffer themselves regarding the situation. What Ohm Ens mentions about Kl. F.'s business dealings, that one unrighteous act absolves the other, seems very loveless to me. We have no grounds in the Holy Scripture to forbid anyone if someone out of necessity wishes to carry on a small business and when unrighteousness cannot be found in them. To warn and to advise is our responsibility, even as Sirach states in chapter 27 verses 1 to 3;

A merchant shall hardly keep himself from doing wrong; and a retailer shall not be freed from sin. Many have sinned for a small gain; and he that seeketh to be rich will turn his eyes away. As a nail sticketh fast between the joinings of the stones; so doth sin stick close between a buyer and a seller. Unless a man hold himself diligently in the fear of the Lord, his household shall soon suffer destruction.

The Apostle Paul says, "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition" (1 Tim. 6:9).

I am also being accused for having brought an exhortatory message at the funeral in Margenau. I will not respond to this except to say that I do not perceive any difference between Ohm Ens exhorting the people in the church assembly and admonishing them to do good, and when I speak to people in a hay barn. If, however, I have overstepped my bounds and failed in this, then Ohm Abraham,

our previous Aeltester, made a similar mistake with me. I have personally been present at funerals where Ohm Abram gave an eulogy. Nor was Ohm Heinrich Wiebe known in any other way than that he always obliged when he was notified to do so. To my knowledge the other ministers have always done likewise.

I have perceived that I stand under suspicion in the eyes of some brethren with respect to the situation if anyone would wish to marry the sister of his deceased wife; namely, that I supposedly would wish to permit this. I hardly know how to respond to this. Some sort of misunderstanding must have crept in somewhere. I remain completely decided on this issue as I always have been; namely, that I would not consent to this for my part. I already detected this misunderstanding during the brotherhood meeting. My mind is so totally decided regarding this matter that I simply treated these as idle accusations; I was tired and I did not reply thereto. If I should have given occasion for such accusations through this lack of speaking, I ask to be forgiven. I do not want to regard those that spoke about the matter too severely.

But oh, my beloved brethren in Christ, I beg and beseech you from the bottom of my heart, do cease in bringing these accusations and do desist from interpreting everything in an evil way. For truly, my most beloved brethren, do believe me that not a single brother or sister - and certainly not the Gemeinde - will be improved, edified, strengthened or reestablished in the full power of love and peace though such loveless accusations and constant negative interpretations. If we are unable to focus our attention on anything other than to see each other's failings and misdeeds, I can surely see our dissolution before my very eyes.

Wherefore, I sincerely counsel, beg and admonish you, my beloved brethren, that in the future we should not have any interaction, brother to brother, other than what the Lord Jesus teaches us in Matthew chapter 18 verse 15; "Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother," and so on. And should we hear something regarding any of our brothers or sisters which is not good or praiseworthy then let us take to heart and follow the teaching of Sirach in chapter 19 verses 13 to 19, when he says;

Admonish a friend, it may be that he hath not done it: and if he have done it, that he would do it no more. Admonish thy friend, it may be he hath not said it: and if he have, that he speak it not again. Admonish a friend: for many times it is a slander, and believe not every tale. There is one that slippeth in his speech, but not from his heart: and who is he that hath not offended with his tongue? Admonish thy neighbour before thou threaten him; and not being angry, give place to the law of the most High. The knowledge and fear of the commandments of the Lord is the doctrine of life: and they that do things that please him shall receive the fruit of the tree of immortality" (Sirach 19:13-19).

If, beloved brethren, we seek to do these things with a sincere love for our brother and striving for that which is the best for him, and if we take heed one for another with such a mind out of a pure and upright love and give each other an impetus towards love and good works, then there might also be a good prospect

that peace, love, unity and a good confidence one for the other might once again be established in the Gemeinde. In this regard everyone should pay particular heed to himself; that he would not expect more from another than from himself; nor should he esteem himself higher than anyone else. We should not be remiss and fail to examine ourselves truthfully so that we see the sliver in our neighbour and not be able to see or feel the beam in our own eyes. Through this much harm, distrust and lovelessness are created.

If a person is motivated by accusations and reproaches instead of love and good will for his neighbour, he will surely not have peace or contentment in his heart. "And above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness" (Colossians 3:14). "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). Thus far from me, your weak and insignificant servant of the word of God who wishes only for your best. It is written by me out of a childlike fear of the Lord, and out of brotherly love for all the brethren and with a hope for their well-being.

In conclusion, I say with the God-fearing woman Lydia, who having been baptized, exhorted the apostles and the disciples of the Lord to come into her home. She spoke, "In as much as you take heed that I believe in the Lord, come into my house and remain here." She persuades us, and I would that I might also persuade you in like manner, in so far as you accept that I believe in God and that I have written these words through the inspiration of the Spirit. Come into my house, that is to say, into the Gemeinde. Now, most beloved brethren, I commend you unto God and unto the word of His grace. He is mighty to edify you and to give you an inheritance with all the saints who are sanctified.

Written by your most insignificant servant of the word of the Lord.

*"Johann Friesen"*

Copied the 15th of February 1866 by A. F., Blumstein.

---

**Document Two: A Letter by Aeltester Johann F. Friesen (1808-1872), Neukirch, Molotschna Colony, South Russia, to Isaak Friesen, Blumenhoff, Borosenko, South Russia, the 10th of February, 1866.**

Most dearly beloved ministers and fellow brethren;

I am sending you together with the rest of the brethren, a declaration in which I have briefly explained my understanding regarding our present circumstances. To the best of my knowledge this declaration is quite impartial and I wrote the same in the hope and belief that everything could once more be restored in good confidence and that perhaps everyone could again be reconciled. But after I finished writing the declaration I realized ever more clearly that Ohm Ens and many brethren with him were unequivocally decided to secede. As a result, I will probably have to give up my hope for a reconciliation and a restoration in one mind and spirit.

I now consider the activities and lobbying of the ministers who are seceding among the brethren, both by word and writing, and compare the same with the Apostle James chapter 3 verse 1, where he says, "My brethren, be not many

teachers, knowing that we shall receive the greater judgment." In doing so, I hardly know what to say to this, and all the more so, because they are strengthened therein by Ohm Ens. They do not respect honour nor shame nor evil nor good reports (2 Cor. 6:8). Rather they travel about everywhere seeking nothing but to create division and hatred regarding the teaching which you have been taught.

Of which the apostle says, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them who cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ but their own body, and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the innocent" (Romans 16:17,18).

They do not consider that a good conduct is of the foremost necessity. Nor do they take note of Hebrews chapter 3 verse 4 where the apostles says, "And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God . . ." James says;

Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, demoniacal. For where envying and strife are, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by them that make peace (Jam. 3:13-18).

The apostle exhorts, "Let us, therefore, follow after the things which make for peace, and things with which one may edify another" (Rom.14:19). It seems, however, that heed is no longer taken in this regard; rather it seems as if they pursue mainly that which serves to create unrest, mistrust, division and offense. They seem to delight in creating strife, disputes and unrest. Ohm Ens maintains that, even though I cannot presently concede that he is right, I will eventually have to agree with him. I think this is hardly likely, because I do not ever expect to concede or acquiesce to such unfounded accusations as are presently being brought forward and such loveless accusing and judging of one another. Accusations can never improve matters, and certainly not in this. Nor do I hesitate to regard them as rogues as portrayed in Sirach (Sirach 1:19-22). They should give consideration to this in the fear of God and examine themselves herein. For then, "They would not have peace, but a wounded conscience towards God and man (Acts 24:16).

Ohm Ens has contributed not the least with respect to our mistreatment of Thiessen. Even back then already he displayed a great deal of mistrust toward the Ohms through his zealous solicitations, which distrust is now manifesting itself in actual fact. This had also broken forth one time in fall at Friedrichstahl, when A. F. was there, when everything among the brethren was in a spirit of factiousness. This is verified by the fact that the same failings had already occurred previously even before this; that the hand of mistrust was present among the brethren and was also directed against us ministers; and in respect of which Ohm Ens will surely have contributed his part to bringing everything among us into suspicion. Now he wants to wash his hands of this responsibility and to escape from this misery and

great harm which our Gemeinde presently experiences and must endure; he would rather depart from us than to take part in healing our sickness and our wounded souls.

The same has threatened the destruction of our Gemeinde just as Jonah once preached the destruction of the city of Nineveh; for he preached that the city would be destroyed within 40 days. They, both old and young, believed in God and repented in sack cloth and ashes. We do, however, not find that anyone sought to escape or to secede from the danger, by seeking to remain blameless and wanting to leave the city. Oh no! Rather they took part in the responsibility and acknowledged their guilt before God. In accordance with the commandment of the king and his associates, they all repented, including the beasts, oxen, and sheep; they should forego food and water as an act of fasting. The people clothed themselves in sack cloth and called unto God, both man and beast, and everyone turned from their evil ways. God then turned from His threatened judgment and did not destroy them. When God saw their works of repentance and turning to Him, He withheld His judgment (Jonah 3).

I have thought that it is in this state of mind that we should mutually direct ourselves unto God to be healed of our diseased and wounded souls, which sickness is so extensive and widespread that we should well lament together with Isaiah, "... the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it, but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores. They have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment" (Isaiah 1:5,6). We must bring our prayers before the Lord with hearts which are free of sin and with the pure fruits of repentance.

But, most beloved brethren, let us not imagine that this great harm and injury has come about through Thiessen. Oh no! It has occurred for no other reason than that the love, which only and alone can keep us together and in one mind and spirit, had grown very cold and was deficient. Distrust and suspicion gained the upper hand. Just as love does not think any evil but interprets everything for the good, even so, the one who stands in distrust sees everything in an evil way. This is the reason that our circumstances have become so serious. Thiessen's matter merely brought this condition into the open. Nor can I perceive it to be right when all the fault for this shall supposedly be laid upon me and a few other brethren. It would seem much more reasonable to me if all of us would feel somewhat at fault in this, including those who would gladly refuse all responsibility and who would rather like to walk away from the situation.

How often has it not been taught and counselled that one brother should not disparage the other and bring them into distrust and suspicion - which is not acceptable, nor does it bring forth fruit; at the same time the encouragement for this continues so lovelessly and seems to be increasing in our midst, walking sadly about; and yet there does not seem to be any compassion and sorrow regarding this sad state of affairs within the Gemeinde. It seems that the casting of reproaches and accusations cannot become great enough, and this even on the part of elderly brethren who have formerly worked and counselled in many matters in the Gemeinde in a peaceful and confident way. Presently, however, they are working in the midst of a division and this with the belief that they are thereby gaining something better for themselves. In my opinion they are hereby making a great mistake and deceiving themselves. It occasions great harm for the Gemeinde,

and they themselves will thereby be greatly weakened, even though they are presently strong.

In respect to which I have little to add or to present apart from the word of God. Most certainly I do not think to build on any other ground in the future than that which the apostle has laid as a wise master builder. But it is hardly credible to suggest that only pure gold, silver and precious stones are presently being built upon this foundation. Rather it is more plausible to believe that nothing but wood, hay and straw are now being built which will not stand against the fire of judgment. This is evidenced and brought into the light by their manifest deeds; wherefore it is also essential to start upon something new and better; and in respect of which I must refer again to my previously presented declaration. It could not have gone better for us than if all of us had been able to remain together and unitedly had worked toward this goal. But I am also resigned to the fact, if there is no other option, that I will work together with the Ohms and brethren who still continue to want to give me their confidence in the future and to seek to build upon this foundation, and firmly to work against the spirit which seeks to disturb and create distrust and suspicion, and, in as much as possible, once again to promote peace, love and unity within the Gemeinde. In my opinion this is essential above all else, for if this occurs, then everything will fall into its proper place. Love is and remains the foremost commandment.

I could well have written much more, but I do not know whether everything would have been accepted from me in love. I hope to work towards the goal of which the apostle speaks, "Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved" (1 Cor. 10:33). Please accept this all for the good and interpret it in love. If there are any portions of my presentation wherein you cannot agree, please explain it to me in love. Do not completely discard your confidence in me and raise the fence so high so that we cannot come together any longer in love and trust.

This is the way that Ohm Ens and many of the brethren apparently see things, as if I am completely condemned by God. This would indeed be the ultimate catastrophe if the Lord were such a serious judge over me, the way that men would presently judge and condemn me. I hope this is not the case, for the Lord is merciful with exceeding great love. He has compassion unto all who call upon Him, and He permits His grace to be found by all those who seek Him in genuine faith. I would gladly have spoken to you in person, for which opportunity also presented itself. Jacob Fast and Bartel offered that they wanted to take me along. However, the time was inconvenient for me as I could not be ready that soon. And so I have postponed the same for a more convenient occasion. I ask you to accept in love my visit to you by means of this writing.

Best greetings from me and my wife.

*"J. Friesen", Neukirch*

**Document Three: A Declaration by our Aeltester Johann F. Friesen (1808-1872), during the time of the division in our Kleine Gemeinde in the year of our Lord, 1866, read after the sermon on three Sundays to all the sisters and brethren.**

Firstly I wish you much grace and mercy and the all abundant peace of a living faith in our Lord Jesus Christ from God the heavenly Father and in the dynamic empowerment of the Holy Spirit! This is my heartfelt desire!

Sollte uns die Noth nicht dringen  
jetzt in dieser letzten zeit  
von der reinen Lieb zu Singen  
Die schon sehr gesetzt bei seit  
da doch Gottes Wort uns lehret  
wer sich von der Liebe kehret  
und nicht Gott und Naechsten liebt  
bleibet ewiglich betrübt.

Should not the need compel us,  
now in these our last times,  
to sing about the love refined,  
which we are taught in His Word?  
The one who turns away from love,  
and does not love God and man,  
remains without joy forever.

Behold, beloved brethren and sisters. This is how the people of old sang about the glorious power of love which flowed though their hearts. They realized in truth that there was nothing stronger, more comforting and inspiring in the world than the inward love toward God and one's fellowman. Wherefore the Apostle Peter exhorts all believers with the words, "And above all things have fervent love among yourselves; for love shall cover a multitude of sins" (1 Pet.4:8).

Of what meaning is life in this world where love is lacking? We may deal as much as we wish with unity, peace, tranquillity and well-being and we may institute ever so many laws, statutes and privileges to serve as rules and standards of all people; yet without love everything is nothing but an inheritance of coercion, accusations, oppression, hurting, subduing, mocking, evil suspicions, and a miserable life of sadness with moaning, discomfort, plagues, rebelling, worrying, concern and depression. My beloved brethren and sisters, if there is a lack of genuine love for God and our fellowman, all the dealings in the Gemeinde will be deficient and will not be a blessing, nor will they bring forth any good fruits. Rather it will awaken and bring to life blatant accusations and distrust, even as the present situation sufficiently attests. For man experiences blessedness and steadfast joy only when love accompanies all his deeds.

My dear friends, our beloved Saviour Jesus Christ has so frequently and urgently encouraged His disciples unto love. He desires nothing else so passionately and earnestly but that the fire of love which He came to ignite would burn brightly within us (Lk.12:49). For this reason He later spoke so clearly, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you,

that ye also love one another" (John 13:34).

Beloved friends, no true church of Christ will exist and endure in eternity which is not ruled and articulated by a true love of God and His word. For without the divine virtues which are born within us only and alone through love, such as lowliness, humility, friendliness, denial of one's will - that is to say, denial of self and the world, clinging to the word of God, practical love, faithfulness to truth, loving the other more than one's self, and more of the like; without such love, unity, contentment and salvation, will not for long continue to imbue the body of Christ with life. Rather strife, unrest, stubbornness, self-justification, suspicion, distrust and lovelessness will infect the Gemeinde of the Lord like a disease and bring it to the ground. Which - unfortunately - and to all our heartfelt sorrow, is now sadly evidenced and plainly manifested for all of us to see with our own eyes and to hear with our own ears. Surely we must recognize in our hearts that all of the foregoing has come to fulfilment in our Gemeinde even though we had believed until now that we were the people and Gemeinde of God.

For now we see and realize how biting and cruel we are one towards the other if everything is not reconciled and fully forgiven among us. For which reason the Apostle Paul urgently admonishes the Galatians with the following words, "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another" (Galatians 5:13-15). In 1 Corinthians chapter 13 verses 4 to 8, the apostle has very clearly described the essence of love for believing Christians. He said;

Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away."

Beloved, love makes everything easy, even that which was otherwise thought to be impossible. For example, if a vain-glorious person is hurt through criticism and slander, his inflated ego becomes very angry and his feelings are deeply hurt; he seeks to justify himself and possibly even to obtain revenge. However, if the love of Christ articulates such a person then all this evil can be endured with patience. In fact, one may esteem it as joy when people speak all manner of evil falsely. The Saviour says, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake" (Matt. 5:11). This must be understood correctly for the Saviour quite clearly says "if they speak falsely."

But nothing saddens and humbles a genuine loving Christian more than when the evils which people talk about them are not merely lies and untruths, and when there is element of truth in the same, even if not in actual fact then at least in their hearts and thoughts. In this manner accusations punish, discipline and chasten

such a person. On the other hand, if the same words were spoken about a vain person he would be outraged and self-righteous. But true righteousness can only come about through a love of God and His holy word.

Oh precious love, oh bond of peace! What could have been better for us than if all, all of us together could once again be bound together and girded about with the true and embracing bond of love and of peace! For then of all creatures in the world we would be above all the happiest; we would love and treasure God and His Word above all else; we would certainly be willing and would not have to be coerced, rather we would be moved and inspired from our most inwardly being to present ourselves as "the least of these" and to come before one another with honour and respect (Rom. 12:10); we would cherish our fellowman and not disparage him; we would love the Gemeinde and not sadden it; we would not criticize the other while overlooking and disregarding ourselves; rather we would examine and prove ourselves first.

We should heed the admonition of Paul when he says:

Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye who are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden" Galatians 6:1-5.

Beloved, if we were to begin in this way that each and everyone would first look upon themselves, and if everyone would first prove and examine his own heart as to how he stood with his Creator, and realize that we are what we are solely through grace, then I do believe that we would not always judge and condemn each other so lovelessly, the way it has been done among us at the present time. I myself have nothing to boast in this regard. I should also have been wiser and dealt more carefully in this regard. My beloved brethren, I ask all of you whom I have offended to forgive me and not to harbour grudges against me. I ask this not alone in our present circumstances but also from previous occasions where anyone has been hurt or offended for aught. For this I ask all of you brethren to forgive me. I also bid of you that you would not allow your trust in me to diminish too much. In trust and confidence I ask this of you again, my beloved brethren.

In so far as it affects or impacts upon our present circumstances, I ask you to consider the matter more carefully and to reflect thereon without party spirit. We may see this chastening as a providence of the Lord in that during the time of grace I have had to present Thiessen to you; for eight days the Lord could dig around and prepare him whether he might not bring forth fruit; and if not, that he would be hewn down (Lk. 13:8,9).

However, we have not allowed grace to come to fruition regarding him. Rather we have already cut him off before the time, whereby we erred grievously. When I came to this realization through much moaning, prayer and supplication, this humbled and saddened me profoundly. I lost nearly all hope of forgiveness so that I thought for myself that the Lord would surely cast my candlestick away from its place. I felt myself to be very indifferent, slothful, cold and weary in my work

and had to believe that I had lost the first love (Rev. 2:5), until I read what the Spirit, the Lord of eternal love, had written to the seven Gemeinden in Asia, and what He had against them and what did not please the Spirit in these Gemeinden.

When I placed everything under a genuine repentance, I recognized that I had not done these things intentionally nor had I set out to work against God's word or against His will. Rather I believed that I had gone too fast, not realizing all of the consequences. Together with David, I gave my concerns over to the Lord so that He would lead and direct the same according to His will. Together with David I say; "Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence. When I said, My foot slippeth, thy mercy, O Lord, held me up. In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul" (Psalm 94:17-19).

Such and other similar references gave me comfort and restored me again after I had judged myself in this way with the word of God regarding my shortcomings. For I believe, according to the teaching of Paul, that these my sins shall nevermore appear before the judgment seat of God. Paul says, "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" (1 Cor. 11:31). In Ezekiel chapter 18 verses 31 to 32, the Lord says, "Cast away from you all your transgressions, by which ye have transgressed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God; wherefore, turn yourselves, and live." And somewhat further the same prophet says as follows; "But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath that shall he live" (Ezekiel 18:21,22). Wherefore, beloved brethren, turn to the Lord. He says, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God; for he will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55:7). For then the Lord will again be merciful unto us. The Lord our God says; "For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord, thy Redeemer" (Isaiah 54:7,8).

Finally, my beloved brethren, I ask you, all of you together, let us again seek to envelope our hearts as if anew and to extend to each other the hand of fellowship and to bind ourselves together with the bond of pure love and peace. "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful" (Col. 3:13-15). Amen! Amen!

The hour has come when we must part from each other. Let us first kneel before the throne of God and bend low upon His footstool and unitedly supplicate and entreat Him that He would give and work in us a true and genuine love towards God and our fellowman and that He might wish to grant us a full and child-like trust toward each other and amongst ourselves, and that we would not become faint and discouraged. The Lord looketh down from heaven "... to behold the things that are ... in the earth! He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifeth the needy out of the dunghill" (Ps. 113:6,7).

Therefore, Thou most beloved Lord Jesus Christ, we come to Thee in prayer and supplication. Thou our Saviour and Redeemer, Thou who art a friend and consolation of all the saints; before Thy holy name all knees in heaven, on earth and under the earth will have to bend. We entreat Thee, oh, Thou conqueror of all, Thou who art ascended unto heaven and art seated at the right hand of the Father, and art there our intercessor and reconciliator for our sins, and the helper in all our needs. We bow down before Thee in great fear. We seek Thee with humility of heart.

Wouldst Thou graciously stand by us with Thy help; Thou who hast helped and healed all the sick, the poor and the needy who came unto Thee with believing and contrite hearts in ages past. Wouldst Thou now help us also who come before Thee with a sick and deficient faith, with a weak love and discouraged hearts. Oh, Thou physician and helper of our souls, heal us from our sickness, those whom You are calling so tenderly, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, I will give you rest."

We come now, oh most beloved Jesus, to Thee and bring before Thee our great concerns which weigh so heavily upon our hearts, as a great burden under which we struggle during our journey through life, laden with weariness and indifference. Thy pure love and that of our fellowman exposes our nakedness before Thee, and all that which makes us anxious and sad. Wouldst Thou cleanse all the evil from our hearts and make us a house of prayer. Yes, Lord, we unlock the doors of our hearts, and with all our power we call unto Thee with heartfelt longing, "Do come indeed, oh, Thou King of glory, come indeed. Thou mighty conqueror, take the evil from our hearts and place therein the blessed altar of the holy cross with Thy precious wounded and blood-stained body."

Grant that we at all times would have Thy great love in our hearts and constantly retain in our thoughts, the love which Thou has shown to us in order to bind and to heal our great wounds; so that through Thy death we may go unto the Father there to enjoy His grace for eternity and evermore; refresh our souls from Thy fountain of living waters so that we may thereby be inspired and restored.

Oh, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, grant that we would thank Thee at all times now and forever in eternity! Amen!

Now, beloved, kneel with me for a silent prayer. Let us pray unto God our heavenly Father in spirit and in truth. Let us pray that He would give comfort and help us through His Spirit, that He may wish to lead and guide us in His ways, I now ask you to kneel with me in prayer!

*"Johann Friesen"*

---

## Editor's Comments

Documents One and Two in this chapter were contained in a journal belonging to Cornelius Friesen, Blumstein, February 15, 1866. This would appear to be Cornelius L. Friesen (1841-1923). He was the son of Jakob W. Friesen (1808-1889) who lived in Blumstein and who served as schulz or mayor of the village during the 1840's. Cornelius L. Friesen was a minister of the Kleine Gemeinde in Nebraska. The Journal also bears the notation, "I have not copied the contents hereof at this time. Perhaps you can forward the same to me again if convenient occasion should present itself. A. L. F." The initials must refer to Abraham L. Friesen (1833-1917), the brother to Cornelius L. Friesen, who would later become the Aeltester of the Kleine Gemeinde in Nebraska.

Document Three was contained in a separate journal bearing the following memorial, "Transcribed on the 5th of November 1866. Copied by Abraham Friesen. Tiede." Both journals were last in the possession of Mr. Alvin Isaac, Hillsboro, Kansas, the son of the late Jakob F. Isaac, the former Aeltester of the Kleine Gemeinde at Meade, Kansas. The journals were received by the editor courtesy of Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1990. Preliminary translation and transcription onto computer by Rev. Ben Hoepfner, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1990.

Aeltester Johann F. Friesen (1808-1872) also wrote a letter to Rev. Peter Baerg in Schwesterthal, Crimea, dated February 17, 1866. This letter was similar to the letter written to Rev. Isaak Friesen, Blumenhoff, Borosenko, and, therefore, the same has not been included here. The letter to Peter Baerg is included in the Johann P. Friesen Collection, courtesy of Rev. Jake P. Friesen, Blumenort, Manitoba, presently in the possession of the Archives of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference, 440 Main Street, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1982.



# PART SIX

## HEINRICH W. ENNS 1807-1881

### Chapter One

### Biography

A Biography of Aeltester Heinrich W. Enns (1807-1881), Fischau, Molotschna Colony, South Russia. By Delbert F. Plett, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1992.

---

#### Section One. Background of the Enns Family.

1 The paternal grandfather of Heinrich W. Enns (1807-1881) was **Cornelius Enns** (1743-ca.1806). According to B. H. Unruh, Cornelius Enns (born 1743) originated in the village Lakendorf, Amt Elbing, West Prussia.<sup>1</sup> The Konsignation of 1776 identifies a Cornelius Enns living in Lakendorf whose family is described as follows, "Corn Ens, Lakendorf, Labourer-employee. 1 male, 1 female, 3 sons and 1 daughter, poor."<sup>2</sup> Although the village of Lakendorf was located only 10 miles from Tiegenhagen where the Heinrich Reimer and Abraham von Riesen families went to church, the Lakendorf families belonged to the Elbing Gemeinde which was also Flemish.<sup>3</sup>

In 1803 the Cornelius Enns family emigrated to Russia settling on Wirtschaft 13 in the village of Fischau in the Molotschna on June 20, 1804. Cornelius Enns (born 1743) must have died some time before 1808 as he is not listed on the Revisions-Listen of that year. The Wirtschaft is now shown in the name of his son Cornelius Enns (1782-1834) and the family is listed as follows: "Cornelius Enns, 26 from Lakendorf, Amt Elbing, weaver, wife Maria 25, son Heinrich 1, brother Johann 15, mother Catarina, brother-in-law Jakob Krause, wife Catarina. Property, 1 wagon, 1/2 plow, 1 harrow, 5 horses, 45 tschwert unthreshed grain, 18 loads of hay."<sup>4</sup> Nothing further is presently known about any of the brothers and sisters of Cornelius Enns (1782-1834).

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
1	Cornelius Enns	1743		ca.1806
m	Catrina Friesen	1761		
2	Susanna Enns	1781		
2	Cornelius Enns	1783		
2	Catrina Enns	1788		
2	Johann Enns	1794		

**Section Two. The Heinrich Wiebe Family, Blumenort, West Prussia.**

1 Son **Cornelius Enns** (1782-1834) was married to **Maria Wiebe** who appears to be the daughter of **Heinrich Wiebe** (born 1746).<sup>5</sup> The information for the family of **Heinrich Wiebe** is based on the research of **Henry Schapansky**. **Heinrich Wiebe** (born 1743) married for the first time to **Judith Dyck** and for the second time to **Maria Dyck** born 1774.<sup>6</sup> It appears that the family moved several times. **Henry Schapansky** provides the information that daughter **Katharina** and son **Heinrich** were born in **Tiegenort, West Prussia**. By 1776 the family was resident in the village of **Blumenort** which was located 2 miles northeast of **Lakendorf** where **Cornelius Enns** (1782-1834) grew up.

The villagers in **Blumenort, West Prussia** would have belonged to the **Rosenort-Orhloff Gemeinde**.<sup>7</sup> The family of **Heinrich Wiebe** is listed as follows in the 1776 **Konsignation**, "Heinrich Wiebe, worker, 1 male, 1 female, 1 son, 2 daughters, employee, poor."<sup>8</sup> The family must have moved to **Zeyersniederkampen** by 1782 since this is shown as the place of residence for the family at the time of the baptism of daughter **Katharina** in 1782, son **Heinrich** in 1784, son **Johann** in 1768 and son **Peter** in 1798.<sup>9</sup>

In 1803 the **Heinrich Wiebe** family moved to **Russia** where they settled in the village of **Blumenort, Molotschna**. They are listed as follows in the 1803 immigration records:

**Heinrich Wiebe, Zeyersniederkampen, age 56, landowning farmer, firstly to Blumenort, Molotschna, and secondly to Einlage, Chortitza in 1816. Married for the second time to Maria Dyck, Zeyersniederkampen, 28, immigrating firstly to Blumenort and secondly to Einlage, Chortitza. Children of the first marriage, Nikolaus 22 and Maria 19. Children of the second marriage, Jakob 7, Anna 5, Gerhard 3. Jakob Kroeker, Zeyersniederkampen 18, nephew, to Blumenort.**<sup>10</sup>

**Heinrich Wiebe** and several of his younger children moved to the village of **Einlage** in the **Chortitza Colony** in 1816.

2 Daughter **Katharina Wiebe** and her husband moved to **Danzig/Weiszhof**. Son **Heinrich Wiebe** moved to **Danzig, West Prussia**. Son **Johann Wiebe** moved to **Russia** where he settled in the village of **Rosenthal, Chortitza Colony**.

2 Son **Peter Wiebe** immigrated to **Russia** in 1803 where he settled on **Wirtschaft 7** in the village of **Lichtenau, Molotschna Colony**. The family is listed as follows in the 1808 **Revisions-Listen**, "Peter Wiebe 29, from **Krebsfeld, Amt Elbing, linenweaver, wife Anna 34, children Anna 5, Peter 2, Helena 1/4, and friend Jakob Kroeker 25.**"<sup>11</sup>

2 Son **Nickolas Wiebe** immigrated to **Russia** in 1804 settling on **Wirtschaft 2** in the village of **Tiege, Molotschna Colony**. The family is listed as follows in the 1808 **Revisions-Listen**, "**Claasz Wiebe 27, from Zeuerschekampf, Amt Elbing, landowning farmer. wife Anna 22. Property, 1/2 plow, 1 harrow, 3 horses, 5 cattle.**"<sup>12</sup>

2 Son **Gerhard Wiebe** (1800-1858) married **Agatha Dyck**. They were the parents of **Gerhard Wiebe** (1827-1900) the **Aeltester** of the **Bergthal Colony** at the time of the immigration to **Canada** in 1874.<sup>13</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
1	Heinrich Wiebe	1746		
m	Judith Dyck			
2	Kath Wiebe	Nov 23,1765	Mar 16,1784	Nov 4,1794
m	Franz Kroecker	Feb 2,1731		Feb 12,1796
2	Hein Wiebe	Dec 6,1765	Aug,1788	
m	Kath Bourmeister	Mar 8,1771		
2	Johann Wiebe	1768		
2	Peter Wiebe	1779		
m	Anna Kroecker	1774		
2	Nickolas Wiebe	1781		
m	Anna ?	1786		
3	Nickolas Wiebe	Jan 26,1813		May 30,1813
2	Maria Wiebe	Dec 1,1784		1845
m	Cornelius Enns	Jun1,1782		Mar 16,1834
1	Heinrich Wiebe	1746		
m	Maria Dyck	1774		
2	Helena Wiebe			
2	Gerhard Wiebe	1800		
m	Agatha Dyck	1804		1858
2	Anna Wiebe	1797		
2	Jakob Wiebe	1796		

### Section Three. Cornelius Enns 1782-1834 and Family.

2 Son **Cornelius Enns** (1782-1834) took over the family *Wirtschaft* in the village of Fischau after his father's death. According to the Revisions-Listen of 1808 the family was moderately well-to-do. Cornelius Enns evidently farmed in Fischau for the rest of his days. It appears that Cornelius Enns was one of the charter members of the *Kleine Gemeinde* (KG) when it was founded in 1812 since all the children except *Catrina* are known to have been supporters of this movement.

The KG fellowship included the following who pioneered in Fischau in 1804-5: Daniel Loewen (born 1780) - *Wirtschaft* 8 - and his wife's son-in-law Bernhard Doerksen (1797-1874);<sup>14</sup> Cornelius Edsen (born 1770) - *Wirtschaft* 10;<sup>15</sup> Cornelius Enns (1743-c.1806) - *Wirtschaft* 13; Cornelius Esau (born 1772) - *Wirtschaft* 19.<sup>16</sup> A number of KG-related families are identified in the village in later years: Cornelius Toews (1802-1831) and his son, Cornelius Toews (1829-1884);<sup>17</sup> Johann Toews (1793-1873) who was the nephew of Cornelius Toews (1802-1831) bought *Wirtschaft* 9 in 1838.<sup>18</sup> Heinrich Boschmann immigrated to Russia and settled in Fischau in 1838.<sup>19</sup> Heinrich Warkentin (1833-1888) had a treadmill in Fischau.<sup>20</sup> Dietrich Isaac (1831-1902),<sup>21</sup> Gerhard P. Goossen (1836-1872) - a teacher in the Fischau prior to 1864;<sup>22</sup> and Gerhard Warkentin (1848-1900).<sup>23</sup> It is noteworthy that several of the above families are connected to Fischau through their wives' families which illustrates the strength of matrilineal networks in culturally conservative groups such as the KG.

3 Five daughters were born to Maria Wiebe and Cornelius Enns after the birth of their oldest child Heinrich in 1807: Daughter **Catrina Enns** (born 1810) married Abram Isaac who was known as "Schulz" Isaac. This family stayed in Russia.<sup>24</sup>

Daughter **Anna Enns** (1817-1864) married Abraham Eidse, the son of neighbour Cornelius Eidse. Daughter **Maria Enns** (1821-1871) married Gerhard S. Kornelsen (1816-1894) school teacher of Lichtenau, Molotschna, and author of the regulations for the KG pioneer school system in Manitoba.<sup>25</sup> Daughter **Susanna Enns** (1824-1857) married Peter Loewen and the family lived in Hierschau. Daughter **Justina Enns** (1828-1895) married Heinrich Warkentin and the family lived in Lichtenau. See Delbert F. Plett, "Cornelius Enns Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874* (Steinbach, Man., 1987), pages 247-252, for additional information on the children and grandchildren of Cornelius Enns (1782-1834).

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
2	<b>Cornelius Enns</b>	Jun 1,1782	1805	Mar 16,1834
m	Maria Wiebe	Jan 5,1784		1845
3	<b>Heinrich Enns</b>	Jul 19,1807		May 9,1881
3	Catrina Enns	Aug 17,1810		
m	Abram Isaac			
3	Maria Enns	Sep 3,1813		Mar 29,1817
3	Anna Enns	Mar 23,1817		Dec 24,1864
m	Abraham Eidse	Aug 26,1811		Apr 24,1893
3	Cornelius Enns	Jan 27,1820		Mar 23,1820
3	Maria Enns	May 18,1821		Mar 29,1871
m	Gerh S. Kornelsen	Feb 28,1816		Aug 14,1894
3	Susanna Enns	Jul 1,1824		Apr 28,1857
m	Peter Loewen	Jul 17,1825		Aug 26,1887
3	Justina Enns	Aug 16,1828		Apr 9,1895
m	Hein Warkentin	Dec 31,1833		Apr 8,1888

#### Section Four. Biography of Heinrich W. Enns 1807-1881.

3 Heinrich W. Enns (1807-1881) married three times. The identity of his first wife is presently unknown. His second wife was the daughter of Cornelius Toews (1802-1831) of Fischau, who was the uncle of Aeltester Peter P. Toews (1841-1922). Heinrich Enns married for the third time to Wilhelmina Plett, the widow of school teacher Gerhard Goossen (1811-1854) of Blumstein.<sup>26</sup>

Heinrich W. Enns (1807-1881) eventually took over his father's Wirtschaft in Fischau. He was an earnest Christain who tried to use his manifold talents for the work of Christ's kingdom. He was known as a good neighbour who was available to consul and assist those in need. In a letter to Peter P. Toews of August 21, 1876, Jakob Woelk of Fischau and a former neighbour, mentions that Enns had always been willing to assist him when he had needed advice as a young inexperience school teacher.<sup>27</sup>

Heinrich Enns was elected as a deacon in the KG in 1849 and as a minister in 1851. He quickly became the leading minister responsible for some of the official correspondence of the Gemeinde. Heinrich Enns was a strong willed man whose determination and one-mindedness sometimes hindered his effectiveness. In 1866 Heinrich W. Enns (1807-1881) led a movement which was dissatisfied with the spiritual situation in the Gemeinde under the leadership of Johann F. Friesen (1808-1882), his one-time son-in-law. At this point the KG separated into two factions and Heinrich Enns was elected as the Aeltester of the reform faction. Thus Enns became the fourth person to hold this office in the KG and the first

who was not a descendant or in-law of Abraham von Riesen (1756-1810) of Ohrloff. Enns resigned from this office in 1868 amid considerable controversy.<sup>28</sup>

Enns was a strong advocate of the writings of the faith and is credited with having spearheaded the KG publication program of the 1860s. In 1875 he emigrated from Fischau, Molotschna Colony, Russia, and settled in Rosenort, Manitoba. Later Ohm Heinrich planned to move to Kansas. In a letter of August 21, 1876, Jakob Woelk of Fischau, inquires whether Enns is still living in Manitoba, or whether he has moved to Kansas as he had intended.<sup>29</sup> According to two letters written by Enns in 1877, he did live in Gnadenau, Kansas for a time where he presumably lived at the home of his son Cornelius Enns.<sup>30</sup> This indicates that Ohm Heinrich was able to reconcile with son Cornelius who was one of the leaders in the group that seceded from the Crimean KG in 1869. Heinrich Enns died in Rosenort, Manitoba, in 1881.<sup>31</sup>

#### Section Five. Descendants of Heinrich W. Enns 1807-1881.

4 Son **Cornelius Enns** married for the first time to **Agatha Klassen** who may have been the widow of **Klaas Friesen** (1825-1852) of Rosenort.<sup>32</sup> The **Cornelius Enns** family lived in **Blumstein**, Molotschna, at the west side of the village close to **Aeltester Johann Harder**.<sup>33</sup> Enns moved to the Crimea in the early 1860s to the village of **Annenfeld**. On April 3, 1867, he wrote a letter to **Peter P. Toews**, **Blumenhoff**, **Borosenko**, in which he described some of the spiritual conditions in the KG congregation in the Crimea. Enns wrote another letter to **Toews** on April 28, 1868, in which he wrote about the difficulties of a trip from the Molotschna to the Crimea.<sup>34</sup> He was very involved with the secession of the K. M. B. from the KG in 1869 being the individual who baptised **Aeltester Jakob A. Wiebe**. On August 15, 1869, he wrote a lengthy letter to his father and former KG brethren in the Molotschna and **Borosenko** wherein he passionately defended the move to a immersion baptism and a separation from the KG.<sup>35</sup> In 1874 **Cornelius Enns** moved to Kansas where he settled in the village of **Gnadenau**. **Cornelius Enns** married for the second time to **Katharina Klassen**.<sup>36</sup>

4 Daughter **Maria Enns** married **Johann F. Friesen** (1808-1872), the third **Aeltester** of the KG. Daughter **Sara T. Enns** married **Cornelius L. Plett**, who later settled in **Blumenhof**, Manitoba. **Plett** became a minister of the KG in 1891. Son **Johann T. Enns** moved to **Rosenort**, Manitoba and became a minister of the KG in 1875. Son **Jakob P. Enns** moved to **Rosenort**, Manitoba, and became a deacon of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite. Son **Heinrich P. Enns** settled in **Rosenort** and served for many years as a school teacher.<sup>37</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
3	<b>Heinrich Enns</b>	Jul 19,1807		May 9,1881
m	<b>Marg Friesen</b>	Oct 16,1811	Oct 28,1831	Sep 18,1847
4	<b>Cornelius Enns</b>	Feb 7,1832		Jan 23,1879
m	<b>Agatha Klassen</b>			
2m	<b>Kath Klassen</b>	Mar 28,1819		Mar,1899
4	<b>Maria Enns</b>	Jan 11,1837	1855	1855
m	<b>Joh F. Friesen</b>	Jun 28,1808		May 31,1872
4	<b>Just Enns</b>	Mar 23,1842		Mar 23,1842
4	<b>Hein Enns</b>	Jul 27,1840		Dec 1,1845
4	<b>Hein Enns</b>	Sep 13,1846		Feb 6,1847

3	Heinrich Enns	Jul 19,1807		May 9,1881
2m	Sarah Toews	Jun 10,1829	May 27,1848	Jan 7,1855
4	Sarah Enns	Jun 6,1849	Sep 21,1869	Nov 9,1872
m	Corn L. Plett	Oct 17,1846		Jan 3,1836
4	Johann T. Enns	Nov 3,1850		Sep 4,1917
m	Maria Hiebert	Dec 25,1850		Aug 15,1900
4	Anna T. Enns	Apr 28,1852		Mar,1874
m	Gerh Warkentin	Dec,1848		Jul 31,1900
3	Heinrich Enns	Jul 19,1807		May 9,1881
3m	Minna Plett	Apr 13,1815	Apr 13,1855	Jun 25,1864
4	Jakob P. Enns	Jul 19,1856		Jun 11,1917
m	Catrina Rempel	Sep 24,1854	Dec 9,1876	Jul 31,1904
4	Heinrich P. Enns	Oct 17,1858		May 14,1935
m	Maria Thiessen	Dec 10,1862		Jun 10,1933

### Section Six. The Writings of Heinrich W. Enns 1807-1881.

No specific collection of writings such as sermons or letters of Aeltester Heinrich W. Enns (1807-1881) have surfaced to date. However a number of letters written by him have been preserved in the letter collections of his successor Aeltester Peter P. Toews.<sup>38</sup> These letters provide an insight into the mind of a talented and active individual. Very few matters in the Gemeinde escaped his attention. Some of these letters have already been published in 1987<sup>39</sup> and 1990.<sup>40</sup> Of particular interest are two epistles written by Enns from Gnadenu, Kansas in 1877 wherein he sets forth his observations regarding the status of the Gemeinde at that time and his reflections regarding its religiosity in earlier times in Russia.<sup>41</sup> These writings provide an appropriate farewell to a man who had served his God and Gemeinde with great fervour.

### Endnotes: Heinrich W. Enns 1807-1881 Biography.

1. Benjamin H. Unruh, *Die Niederländisch-neiderdeutschen Hintergrunde der Mennonitischen Ostwanderungen im 16., 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Karlsruhe, 1955), 310 and 338.

2. Horst Penner, *Die Ost und West Pruzsische Mennoniten* (Weierhof, Deutschland, 1978), 508-510.

3. Dr. Glenn Penner, "West Prussian Villages 1540-1820," unpublished paper presented for the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1979.

4. Unruh, 310.

5. This is based largely on the premise that this is the only family immigrating to the Molotschna prior to 1808 which had a daughter Maria Wiebe of appropriate age. I am indebted to Dr. Edward R. Brandt for this connection. Dr. Edward R. Brandt, *Brandt Roots 1605-1988* (13-27th Ave. S. E., Minneapolis, Min., 55414-3101, 1988), 23.

6. Henry Schapansky, 914 Chilliwack St., New Westminster, B. C., V3L 4V5, letter to the author October 1, 1990.

7. Dr. Glenn Penner, 5.

8. Horst Penner, 464.

9. Courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to author October 1, 1990.

10. Unruh, 345.

11. *Ibid.*, 313.

12. *Ibid.*, 325.

13. Schapansky to author October 1, 1990.

14. Gerhard B. Doerksen and Yvonne Lupky, editors, *Doerksen The Genealogy of Gerhard and Helena Doerksen 1767-1984* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1984), 93 pages.

15. For a listing of this family see Plett, "Cornelius Eidse Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1987), 253-259.

16. Plett, "Cornelius Esau Genealogy 1772," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims* (Steinbach, Man., 1990), 329-335. Cornelius Esau (born 1772) was the forefather of several Kleine Gemeinde related families including Johann Esau (1832-1904) who settled in Rosenfeld and served as the Brandaeltester of the East Reserve KG in Manitoba.

17. Cornelius Toews (1802-1831) was to have committed suicide. He was the younger brother of Johann Toews (1793-1873); see Plett, "Cornelius Toews Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 225. His son Cornelius Toews (1829-1884) emigrated from Russia during the 1870s and settled in Gnadenu, Kansas.

18. Part 10, Chapter 1, has further information regarding this family.

19. Plett, "Boschmanns in the Kleine Gemeinde," unpublished paper, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1991, 4. Heinrich Boschmann was the father of Gerhard Boschmann (1827-1895), Heinrich Boschmann (1828-1907) and Cornelia Boschmann (1837-1915), who married the neighbour boy, Cornelius Toews (1829-1884). All three of the Boschmann siblings emigrated from Russia during the 1870s and settled in Gnadenu, Kansas.

20. Plett, "Martin Warkentin 1764 Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 481. Heinrich Warkentin was married to Justina Enns, the sister of Aeltester Heinrich Enns. The Heinrich Warkentin family later bought a Wirtschaft in Lichtenau. In 1875 the family settled in Rosenort, Manitoba.

21. Peter P. Toews, "Genealogy Register," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 51. Dietrich Isaak married Anna Esau (1840-1919), the daughter of Johann Esau (1805-1855) who was the son of neighbour Cornelius Esau (born 1771). Additional information regarding the family of Dietrich Isaak (1831-1902) is found in the family and church register of Rev. Jakob R. Dueck of Kleefeld, a son-in-law of Dietrich Isaak, who writes as follows; "... great-grandfather - maternal - was called Peter Isaak. The maiden name of the great-grandmother was Justina Doerksen in Fischau, South Russia. The grandfather's name was Dietrich Isaak. He had two brothers and three sisters by the names of Peter and Gerhard, Katharina, Maria and Justina." Rev. Jakob R. Dueck, "Family and Church Register," unpublished journal, courtesy of Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba, July 26, 1992. The Dietrich Isaak referred to is Dietrich Isaak (1831-1902). It is quite likely that he was the son of Duerk Isaac (born 1771) who settled in Wirtschaft 11 in Fischau in 1804 since the entire family is so closely connected with this village and he is the only one of the two Isaacs' to have settled there with the appropriate name. Unruh, 310.

22. Mrs. Martin Barkman, nee Anna Doerksen, writes that Gerhard P. Goossen was a teacher in Fischau until 1864 when he was released by the village assembly. Anna Barkman, "Memoirs," unpublished journal, courtesy of Sidney F. Barkman, Blumenort, Manitoba, 1991. Gerhard P. Goossen was the step-son of Aeltester Heinrich Enns.

23. Peter P. Toews, "Genealogy Register," 46. Gerhard Warkentin married the daughter of Aeltester Heinrich Enns (1807-1881).

24. They had a daughter, Maria, who married David Penner, who had the following children, David, Maria and Catrina. Any information on this family would be very welcome.

25. Their daughter Maria Kornelsen (1844-1913) was married to Jakob Enns, and lived in Jansen, Nebraska. Between 1880 and 1910 she wrote some 50 letters to her parents in Lichtenau, near Steinbach, Manitoba. These letters provide a fascinating bird's-eye view of life in the settlement. They have been preserved and are one of the most important letter collections regarding the Jansen, Nebraska, settlement extant at this time. Four of these letters were published in 1990 in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrim*, 84-92.

26. She was the sister of Cornelius S. Plett (1820-1900) of Kleefeld, Molotschna, who settled in Blumenhof, Manitoba, in 1875. Wilhelmina Plett was also the aunt to Johann Harder (1811-1875), well-known as the Aeltester of the Ohrloff Gemeinde; see Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 214-221, for additional information on the Plett family.

27. Jakob Woelk, letter to Peter P. Toews, Gruenfeld, Manitoba, August 21, 1876, in Peter P. Toews, Document Collection, courtesy of Mennonite Library and Archives, Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas, 1982.

28. This matter is explained in a short note by Aeltester Peter P. Toews in his "Anhang Number One" to the *Sammlung von Briefe und Schriftliche Nachrichten zur Historie der Kleinen Gemeinden der Mennoniten* (Blumenhoff, South Russia, 1874), quoted in Plett ed., *History and Events* (Steinbach, Man., 1982), 41-42.

29. Jakob Woelk, letter to Toews, 3.

30. Heinrich W. Enns, "An epistle from Kansas," and "A short explanation of my own condition and that of the Gemeinde," published in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 533-540.

31. Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," 218.

32. This connection is speculative at this point; cf. Plett, "Klaas Friesen (1793-1870), Biography," Part Seven, Chapter One.

33. Heinrich P. Enns, letter to the *Rundschau* June 4, 1934, courtesy of Ken Reddig, M. B. Archives, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1990. In this letter Heinrich P. Enns refers to a time when he had to return an ancient *Martyrs' Mirror* to Aeltester Johann Harder in Blumstein which his father had borrowed. He also states that he and Harder were cousins, since their mothers were half-sisters.

34. Cornelius Enns, letter to Peter Toews April 28, 1868, in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph* (Steinbach, Man., 1986), 33-34.

35. Kornelius Enns, letter to Heinrich Enns August 15, 1869, in Peter P. Toews Document Collection, courtesy of Milton and Margaret Toews, Neilberg, Saskatchewan, 1981. This letter has been translated by Rev. Ben Hoepfner, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1992.

36. Katharina Klassen was born in Tiegenhof, Prussia in 1819. In 1842 she came to Russia with her parents, and on November 10, 1847, she married Heinrich Friesen of Ohrloff. They were married for 4 years. After being widowed for 8 1/2 months she married again to Klaas Friesen, Rosenort. She was widowed again after 2 years and 3 months. She then married Cornelius Enns from Fischau. Johann Harder, letter to the *Rundschau* April 5, 1899--courtesy of Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1989.

37. Lenore Eidse, ed., *Furrows in the Valley: Rural Municipality of Morris 1880-1980* (Morris, Manitoba, 1980), 404-405 and 476, contains information regarding the sons of Heinrich W. Enns (1807-1881) who settled in Rosenort, Manitoba.

38. Peter P. Toews was also the nephew of Heinrich W. Enns. Enns married for the third time to Minna Plett, who was the aunt of Aeltester Toews. Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," 216-218.

39. Heinrich Enns, letter to Peter P. Toews, March 22, 1867, in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 48.

40. Six letters by Heinrich Enns are published in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 5-76.

41. Heinrich W. Enns, "An epistle from Kansas," and "A short explanation of my own condition and that of the Gemeinde," published in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 533-540.

# Chapter Two

## Letters 1866-1869

Letters written in 1866-1869 by Heinrich Enns (1807-1881), Fischau, Molotschna Colony, South Russia, to Rev. Peter P. Toews (1841-1922) in Andreasfeld, Markuslandt, and later Blumenhoff, Borosenko, South Russia.

---

### Letter One.

A friendly greeting to open. I have just come home from my neighbour Thun where I had gone on business. Coincidentally I ran into Ohm Isaak Friesen there. I asked him when he was planning to leave and he replied, "Tomorrow; early Tuesday morning." For this reason, my beloved in-law and brother in the Lord - and the other brethren also, I am hurrying to write a few lines to inform you to some extent regarding our circumstances; particularly, regarding our brotherhood meeting which took place last Sunday. I trust that you are already aware of the fact that for sometime already - although only in our weakness, we have endeavoured to prepare ourselves and have prayed to the Lord for workers in the vineyard.

We trust that you will reflect together with us regarding our lamentable circumstances. And for this reason I bid you beloved, even though you have humbled yourselves already, that we may humble ourselves even more. For we - all of us - have directed our endeavour far too much toward the matters of the mortal realm and not enough toward that which is heavenly--in which respect Paul admonishes us so lovingly. Alas, there are far too many false Christians in the present time who inform us that we should walk in the abomination of desolation. Many believe and go along according to the appearances of the spirits without proving them whether they are from God; they destroy their path so that they cannot find their way back to the previous one. And then our Saviour speaks with persuasive words, "Behold, I have told you before" (Matthew 24:14-25).

Alas, beloved, it was discussed at our meeting, for which Joh. Toews, Cor. Toews, Cor. Goossen and Cor. Friesen's son Abr. Friesen from Friedrichsthal were also present, that we wanted to notify Ohm Baerg from the Crimea to come here, and if it suited him, that he would notify us of the time in order that we could summon you to come here as well. With deep longing in our hearts we would dearly wish to have all the brethren together. Oh, if only it would be possible, even if we would have to wait for a considerable time, in order that we might prove and examine ourselves more earnestly.

But even if this is not possible that we could all be together, we are in great need to seek God's direction. For it seems to me that the entire brotherhood is of one mind in this regard, to elect two ministers and one deacon here and one deacon in the Crimea; and that without exception, all the brethren who are eligible to vote, whether from here or from the outlying areas - provided the time is suitable for them, are equally obligated to take part in our illness and to help in

the healing process.

During the past week, Schulz [mayor] Harder came by to see me and read me a letter by Johann Friesen, that they had removed me from my office; he informed me that from the part of the Gebietsamt I would again have to perform the statutory labour. I replied to Harder that in the end everything had turned out correctly and let him read from the previous declarations of our Gemeinde in which it was stated that we did not want to be excluded from the statutory labour; and that I would want to dispose myself to the same.

We talked at some length. My impression was that he was unpartisan. He said that he had already perceived that we were going further than he would in some respects which were negative. He referred to the matter of pride regarding buggies with springs and that it was the same spirit which inspires them whether they are made of wood or iron; and in this respect I had to concede that he was right. Indeed he is well aware that our flesh seeks for comfort and well-being and for power and esteem. We also talked of the funeral orations, which he otherwise favoured. But when I presented many matters to him it appeared that he did not agree; our separation did not appear to him to have been necessary. But he remained favourably inclined toward us.

Alas, my beloved and worthy brethren. Let us at all times present ourselves as the least and the most lowly, and provide no one with occasion for anger. Indeed, much more, let us take stock of ourselves and be inspired by love, so that our light - and it is possible that it may only exist for a short time - may shine brightly. For some time this light has only shone dimly and was almost extinguished. I spoke with Ohm Johann Friesen with a very grieved and sorrowful heart and I was astonished; I do not wish to elevate myself in this respect but it pained me deeply to perceive the change in his disposition. Yes, when I come there to visit it will be beneficial for me to detail his accusations. I said that he should not think that we were already perfect; he should remember that we remained full of imperfections and misdeeds. He replied again, "That the matter had been settled correctly, since it remained as long as it was wide."

And yet my beloved, let us truly take to heart the admonition of Paul when he says that we shall look firstly upon ourselves that we do not fall into condemnation. Paul also says that each and everyone will have to carry his own burdens. I do not know yet when I will be able to come to visit you there. Nor do I know how all these matters will come out in the end. Man thinks, but God directs. Nevertheless beloved, I have much concern in my heart, so that I must lament and pray together with David, "When I am sorrowed I direct my eyes towards God; when my heart is troubled I speak. (Selah). . . . And I spoke: I must endure the suffering; the right hand of the most High can change all things" (Psalm 77).

Greet each other with the kiss of love, and peace be with all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen. From your brother who loves you.

*Heinrich Ensz August, 1866*

Please overlook the mistakes in this writing for it was written in great haste.

## Letter Two.

To be delivered to Peter Toews, Blumenhoff.

December 12, 1866

Grace be with you and the peace of God, our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. I wish this for all of you beloved brethren and sisters in the Lord.

On Saturday night--that is, on the tenth--we received via both of the brethren, your last letter which you directed toward us, and have also read the same in the presence of many of the brethren who were visiting here at the time. That same evening we also received a letter from Baergs in the Crimea; I also read the more important parts at the brotherhood meeting. In our view we have inquired into Klassen's matter, although it is still not quite clear to us. We must expect a better witness to those outside of us and from the brethren also. They talk too much about him, but he also gives them grounds in many matters. I advised him that if he has not yet paid out the money - since he was to have taken a considerable sum along - he could pay it here if those who were to pay it did not keep their word. But we know we cannot demand it of anyone.

If God wills and we live, we are planning to come there, since we want to discuss this more fully. Our plans are to leave here on the middle holiday. The way we have discussed it, Klaas Friesen's Johann and Isaac's Peter will each provide a horse, and I the wagon. Gerhard Goossen will leave for Friedrichsthal on Christmas Eve. From there he will also come to Blumenhof. And then - if it is God's will and we are able to clear away the obstacles, we are minded that we will seat ourselves at the Lord's table.

Alas, beloved. What could I wish for more than that the will of the Lord would be present among us, which we can also ask of the Lord in accordance with his comforting promises. The two brethren also informed us that Klassen's daughter wanted to join the Gemeinde; in which respect I also asked for her testimony, and they gave her a good reference. I said that if this was indeed her earnest endeavour, that she might want to sit down together with us at the Lord's table. I presented this at the brotherhood meeting, but the brethren were not favourably inclined. Wherefore I bid of you, my most beloved fellow servant - as well as all the brethren, to seek out this young daughter in the way of fellowship and to exercise the duties of our office toward her in true Christian love; in which all the brethren are partakers. And if she remains steadfast and confesses her previous sins and repents for the same, what shall hinder us, that we would not baptise her; if she believes. For no time period is prescribed for us as to how long she must be tried and proven. We are also planning to instruct our young people here in like fashion.

From your place we are planing to travel altogether to Friedrichsthal and to undertake the same there. And when we come home, it is my present intention to immediately leave for the Crimea. And then it would be my heartfelt wish that you, my beloved brother and fellow servant - and many of the beloved brethren, would also want to come to the Crimea; for a number of the brethren from here wish to travel along.

Now beloved. Since my time is very short, do accept these insignificant lines in love. I am also sending along with brother Harms my imperfect work, namely, a preparatory sermon. Yes, beloved, let us reflect earnestly in this regard and take it to heart, as we brethren have sought to do until now. In his letter to the

Philippians, Paul admonishes us when he says, "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel." And in 1 Peter 1 we read, "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts of your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy . . ."

A greeting unto each one of you from everyone who is with me. A greeting to all who love us in faith. The grace be with you all. Amen. According to our small numbers, we had a large gathering yesterday. A number of visitors were present: Peter Esaus, Toews' and Wiebes. Indeed, we had four tables full of guests and they were all my dearly beloved friends. Our in-law from Rosenort [Klaas Friesen] was also here together with one of his sons and one of his daughters. His wife and her daughter have driven somewhere, but if it is possible they want to visit us during the holidays. They are all well.

Yes, beloved, often I think and hope - and not without tears - that all of us, although in great weakness, might be gathered together in the eternal realm. From your faithful brother.

*Heinrich Ensz*

Note: Gerhard Goossen served us here with the Word of the Lord on the past Sunday with a most appropriate sermon.

### Letter Three.

To be handed to Peter Toews, Blumenhof.

March 22, 1867

A friendly greeting to you to start. Beloved fellow servant and brother in the Lord. Paul said, "My beloved Timothy." Likewise, I join with him in my weakness to wish to you, further, that the grace, compassion and peace from God the Father, and Jesus would be with you. I thank God whom I have served with a true conscience since ages past, that I am mindful of you in my prayers both night and day.

Yes, beloved. In my weakness I will shed out a few words to you from my sick and sorrowful heart. For it seems that the strife is becoming ever more difficult and harder, as you will perceive from the letter enclosed to Dueck and Penner in Prangenau. With the help of God I also hope to keep up the fight without yielding. For at the last brotherhood meeting, where Johann Goossen and your father were also present, I was made aware of many matters which transactions later awakened much sorrow within me, whereupon I also wrote to them. And if it should be the will of God we again hope to commence to deal with the same at the brotherhood meeting to be held on the following Sunday in Alexanderwohl.

Ah, yes, my beloved brothers and sisters. A heartfelt love inspires me to refer to Paul's Epistle to the Colossians, which might serve for our consideration and strengthening, when he says, "Continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving: Withal praying for us, that God open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: That I may make it

manifest as I ought to speak, Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Colossians 4).

May the Lord of peace, grant you peace in every way and for all seasons. May the Lord be with you all. If convenient season arises send those parts of this letter which you consider beneficial to Friedrichsthal. Or, if you, beloved fellow servant, or possibly even one of the other beloved ministers, could travel there personally, it would be even better.

Your brother in the Lord who loves you dearly.

*Heinrich Ensz*

Fischau, March 22, 1867

I also send you a letter from the Crimean Wiebes. Have you not yourself recently had a similar visit from him? Actually it just occurred to me that I do not have the letter at home, and therefore, I cannot enclose it. Since I cannot send it along, I will write you a short summary.

He writes first of all that he will have to beg our pardon, but that he did what he did out of the deepest love, and that he will not teach the same and that instead he will have to hold his hand over his mouth. It has become a deep concern for him that he has had to hear that we have not been of one mind and soul. He writes that he is in complete agreement with me regarding the head covering of the women folk. He has also given many references with respect to baptism, that it is completely unnecessary to be rebaptised. He has written a complete page. The spirit had inspired him and was unable to stifle him. We are only to retain the good which he has written. He also wrote that we are to send the letter to his beloved brother in Tiege, which I sent there yesterday along with Johann Esau. I will see to it that it gets to you later. Or possibly your own which is presently possibly in Hierschau or Waldheim. As I have written so quickly, I - so very lowly - beg you to receive everything from me in love.

#### Letter Four.

August 1, 1867

With a friendly greeting. Beloved colleague; yes, beloved brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, and to all those who have overcome together with us unto righteousness in our precious faith, which God bestows through our Lord Jesus Christ. May God grant you much grace and peace through the knowledge of God, and Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Peter 1).

We held our worship service in Landskrone last Sunday; at the same time we also held our brotherhood meeting. We were concerned as to how we would get the news to you and notify all of you to come here for an all-congregational brotherhood meeting. For necessity compels us, there is no other way; you must come here. It is probably the most suitable if you simply let us know the time when it would be convenient for you to come here. If it would be convenient for you to inform those in the Crimea of the time and summon them to attend here as well, do not spare the opportunity. Our circumstances require this action, and should it not be convenient for you to send advance notice, then we shall attend to this when you arrive here, and speedily summon everyone together, since it may not be quite as urgent for you as it is for us.

As many as possible of you should come, even if it does not suit all of you. Do not allow any endeavour to be too much exertion or too difficult for you, beloved brethren, for perhaps the end of all things may be near. The Lord Jesus says, ". . . and upon the earth [there shall be] distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken" (Luke 21:25-26).

Oh, yes, beloved fellow servant; yes, all my beloved brethren. The hour of tribulation may be at hand. I must confess in truth that I am anxious and fearful regarding the present circumstances in our Gemeinde. Alas, the sea is foaming and the breakers roar. This must be the time during which the devil shall be loosed and raging about for a season, but not like in the past. Oh, no! For now the devil goeth about in the form of an angel so that he can hardly be recognized. At this time I am especially in need of enlightenment in a nonpartisan way, to prove the spirits whether they be from God. Do help me in the battle and pray for me that I would not be vanquished.

I would gladly write more but the time is very short. I hope that we could soon be together to discuss this. I commit you unto God and the Word of His grace. From your most imperfect and weak brother who loves you until the death. Please greet all the brothers and sisters from me.

*Heinrich Ensz August 1, 1867*

#### **Letter Five.**

A friendly greeting; yes, brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, love and duty inspires me to write you. I also hope to come there personally, but firstly my intention is to travel to the Crimea to visit all the brethren there. Because of my sincere love, I have an earnest longing to see all the brethren and to speak with them; so that I may say together with Paul, "For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgement; That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ." For which reason I say together with Peter, "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance" (2 Peter 1:12,13).

I have heard something unsavoury here which originates from Peter Rempel, Paulsheim, who had related it to our fellow-brother, Abraham Rempel. Apparently Bernhard Rempel had been doing carpentry work there and had personally told these offensive things to Peter Rempel. I asked my fellow-servant, your son-in-law, Peter Toews, what he knew of these matters, but he knew nothing about this and accordingly I will not believe it either. Does this not illustrate the righteousness-working love among the disciples of Christ, that we are to guide and remind each other, so that we do not lose the crown of life. And should we as individuals, who are burdened with so many manifest sins, be overcome by one mistake, the apostle says that we are to help each other out of love to come aright.

And yes, beloved brethren, should something be required or requested of us

in excess of what we consider ourselves to be obligated, be it in what it may, including also our temporal possessions, let us not be unwilling or bashful in that regard. The Lord seeks for nothing more thereby than to prove our faith whether it be righteousness-working and whether we shall also respond with patience and in love. We will not very likely suffer loss in temporal matters, provided we have otherwise not rejected the trust. For I believe that the blessing which we will receive will be double, even if this is considered only from the mortal realm.

This is also what happened to the beloved and plagued Job, for the Lord did not only allow his possessions to be taken away but even his very skin. Later, however, the Lord blessed him even more than before. In which regard Paul also directs us and speaks, "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job . . ." (James 5). But our nature and flesh finds these things so difficult; for example, to give or lend something where we have no hope of a return, possibly even to our enemies or to our fellow entrepreneur. For which reason our Lord Jesus clearly and unequivocally admonishes us and says, "But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil."

Although I do not understand from His teaching that we must, without exception, help and extend credit to everyone who wishes to borrow and to lend from us. But according to the Holy Scripture, if we become involved in difficult transactions through carelessness, or even through good intentions, we are to concede in everything and to do good to those who do evil to us and to pray for those who offend us. But I know very well the fleshly weaknesses by which we are afflicted and articulated. Indeed, we are hardly able to think anything good and even less so able to do good. For which reason Paul admonishes us that in all our circumstances we should persevere with prayer and supplication in the spirit, and with all our might to seize hold of the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Oh, yes! What could I wish more than that all of us might withstand in the evil day. Paul says, "For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong; and this also we wish, even your perfection."

Wherefore, beloved. I commit you unto God and His grace, for He is mighty to uplift you and to grant you the inheritance among all the saints; unto Him be honour and praise from eternity unto eternity. Amen.

Your faithful servant, friend and brother in the Lord.

H. E.

#### Letter Six.

Fischau, March 8, 1868

Firstly, a friendly greeting unto all of you beloved brethren. I would wish to say together with Paul the words which he spoke to the Philippians, "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, in any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercy, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife

or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem the other better than themselves." This is my most heartfelt wish. Therefore I also pray unto God the way Paul prayed for the Corinthians, that they would not do evil: not that we are seen to be sufficient of ourselves, but instead that we would rather do the good, since we are among those who are deficient.

I believe and gladly acknowledge that we, and especially myself, also are among those who are insufficient. Yet, I am not ready to give up completely nor to concede. Yes, I have not yet achieved the mark but I pursue the prize, although in very great weakness, as if I can attain to the same. Indeed beloved, as you well know, matters still continue here in a very sorrowful way regarding the election. I must truly sigh and lament with the poet, "Oh, if only one could soon go home. O what mountains and heights I see before me, there is no path to be seen where I am headed, I am going further backwards than forwards, I am frightened, there is nothing for me here in this world, there is scarcely a false beacon to deceive, my God oh Lord; Oh if only we were already home."

We might very well ask each other and ourselves, why is it that the mistrust always seems to be getting stronger amongst us. We have every good reason to reflect carefully on the words of James, who says as follows, "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" He also gave us good advise, "Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."

The prophet Zephaniah also says, "Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired. Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff . . ." He says further, "Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgement; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be that ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger." Yes, beloved, if we among ourselves would also be as lowly and as abased as James describes, we would surely receive an answer to our prayers. And all the scriptures admonish us to pray; yes, He wants to be prayed to, if He is to give us anything; He requires our cries. Beloved brethren, I can reason it through whichever way I want, but I always come back to the same conclusion, that if we allow the election to be revoked the way I talked to you while you were here, perhaps we could be helped.

I do not mean to say hereby that it was a matter of conscience for you. If the Lord had perceived it in this way, He can also make things well later. If only we have honest intentions and rely upon Him in complete confidence. For how many unequivocal examples has Paul not placed before us: We are to carry those who are weak, not into doubtful disputations, but to strengthen them in the faith the way we can read in Romans chapter 14. Yes, the Lord Jesus admonishes and warns us so convincingly not to offend even the least among those who believe on Him; I mean if it cannot be avoided.

In closing I say together with Paul, "And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words." Pray for us. Our comfort is that we have a good conscience, and are desirous to walk uprightly before everyone. May the God of peace grant unto you salvation in all good works and that you might do His will, and to work in you that which is pleasing unto Him through Jesus Christ, unto whom be glory through all eternity. Amen.

From your well-meaning brother.

*Heinrich Ens*

Also receive a heartfelt greeting from all of us in Fischau. We are well physically and wish you the same. I bid of you that you would report back to me in this regard as soon as possible.

#### Letter Seven.

To be delivered to Peter Toews, Blumenhoff.

We are gathered together today here at my place and are talking about holding a brotherhood meeting to discuss our lamentable circumstances. We came to an agreement that we would ask you, not only you and Abraham Friesen, rather many of the brethren, to here for the coming Sunday, the 28th day of April, if it suits you. Perhaps you will have an opportunity to notify us as to which days you would be coming. We do not want to hold a brotherhood meeting before you can also be in attendance.

Your brother who loves you.

*Heinrich Ens*

Fischau, the 21st day of April, 1868

#### Letter Eight.

A friendly greeting. I have received your letter of November 15 via David Loewen and perceive therefrom that you are doing well with the exception that you are not in the best of health. I and all the Fischauer are doing fine with respect to the physical, but things should be much better regarding the soul than they are at present. I am striving and working daily for personal renewal in this regard. Receive also my most heartfelt wish for your well-being in body and soul; and that you also have love for me as I have had for you, although only in great weakness and imperfection. I ask you for forgiveness if any matters remain in which I should have failed. For I have forgiven all of you and wish to love you from the heart.

Oh, it is a small matter for me that you did not send the money earlier. You wrote about the account, or perhaps David Loewen referred to it, that I should forward the same. That which you have sent and that which is still required - the 47 kopek - is totally correct. And now I have again paid out 1400 ruble cash, namely, 13 kopek for every 100, head tax (Seelengeld).

For Cornelius Toews	
who is registered here by me for 200	82
In-law Toews	26
Peter Toews, dito	42
Johann Goossen	84
Cornelius Toews	<u>84</u>
Total	402

Since Cornelius Toews' fire insurance premium is 294 and he has paid me 3 silver ruble, 6 kopek remain to be returned to him.

There are important matters to be considered by the beloved sister-in-law,

Mrs. Johann Isaac, and I bid of you to inform her of this. I had written to the beloved sister-in-law in fall, and trust that you will have received the same. We wish that you would advise us of your views in this regard as we had requested; and if you would have had opportunity, we are wondering why you have not done so already. Therefore we bid you once again that you let us know your views in this matter. Wiebe has been at our place again and has asked about this. Just tell us what you think and feel, whatever it may be.

With a greeting to you and Mrs. Johann Isaac; indeed to all our friends; I remain your loving brother.

December 10, 1868.

*Heinrich Ensz*

I bid that you greet all the brethren there for me. I also ask of you, beloved Toews, that you would pass the following lines on to your father.

I cannot omit to extend my heartfelt and friendly greetings to you, beloved friends, in-law and sister. Especially when I consider the former fellowship that we have had with each other. Indeed, I can hardly do so without tears, even if I am only sending you a heartfelt greeting together with a wish of peace from God our Father.

You have not written for a very long time. I have received news about you verbally, but your letters have always been very precious to me. I hope that you have also been receiving news about me, and also about our circumstances here which will certainly be of concern to you. Even though we have not talked personally, I hope that you will have forgiven me if we are of differing views. For when I last drove away from your place I was filled with an untarnished brotherly love for you, and I hope you for me. Wherefore I also have hope that you will have forgiven me if I have been deficient in anything, for we have never yet been in conflict with each other.

Together with another greeting to your wife's parents, Joh. Warkentins and Joh. Goossens; yes, a wish for the very best and the necessities of life to all our friends including Gruenfeld. I remain a friend to all of you.

*Heinrich Ensz Fischau*

#### Letter Nine.

Fischau, November 3, 1869

Beloved brethren in Christ, Toews and Loewen.

The most lamentable disputations in our Gemeinde, which seemingly can still not be put to rest, gives us cause to humbly ask for your advise and counsel. We had notified Penner and Klassen to come to the brotherhood meeting, but Penner did not come. So father [H. Ensz] and myself drove to Penners' in order that we could talk with him. Penner continued to make accusations even though father already took the blame and acknowledged that he had not dealt carefully enough in the matter of Martin Friesen and that he had trusted too much in his apparently well-fashioned speech; father also wanted to act more prudently in the future.

We offered Penner that he would surely want to come to Landskrone on the next following Sunday, but he did not come. We hardly knew what to do next. It almost seemed to us as if the confessions and acknowledgements of fault would never be enough for Penner; he was never satisfied. When we were at his place he

even wanted us to concede that all our deeds and actions, and all our dealings and also the separation which had occurred were of our own doing and only of human origin and consequently of no validity. He has now gone away from us because of one of these dealings with the Gemeinde. Tielmann from Alexanderwohl and Jakob Loewen also seem to be in agreement with him in many respects.

We have talked this over with the brethren here in Fischau today. We came to the conclusion on this matter that the two of you, Toews and Loewen, or also some of the other brethren there, should talk to them, namely, Penner and Loewen, in order to determine their views and intentions. And if they do not declare unequivocally that they would henceforth want to be and remain our brethren, you may then also summon them to come to an all-congregational brotherhood meeting which we plan to hold when you come through here on your way to the Crimea.

Therefore, you over there can set an approximate date, or if possible even a time certain, and then come here together with the brethren, that is to say, with both of the brothers Penner, Jakob and Peter, and Jakob Klassen. Also some of the other brethren should come also if they can and so wish. We will be ready here at any time even if we do not have advance notice.

Now, my beloved. I know you will do as much as the Lord will grant you strength. May the Lord be with you and with all those who have an unblemished love of our Lord Jesus. Together with a heartfelt greeting from all of your fellow servants who love you dearly.

*Heinrich Ensz  
Gerhard Goossen*

#### **Letter Ten.**

Fischau, December 2, 1869

Firstly a friendly greeting and may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you and with all lovers of the truth. Amen. I have received your letter together with the 12 ruble for the books and 7 ruble for the Seelengeld [head tax or poll tax] via Peter Isaac. You have also requested an accounting. This is a very simple matter since you settled everything while you were here last. I have only paid out a few kopek cash thereafter: for your father 60 kopek, for you 23 1/2 kopek, for Joh. Goossen 27 1/2 kopek, and for Cornelius Toews 2 1/2 kopek. The money for the land acquisition--in which you are also involved--is now being demanded without fail by the Gebietsamt. This would amount to 4 ruble from your 8 souls. It seems to me that it hardly pays to send this money back to you since the first half of the Seelengeld is due again in the month of February, 1870.

Since this opportunity presents itself I will write something else. When I reflect and look back on everything, it seems that I find myself in the same frame of mind as the prophet Jonah in the body of the whale. I can certainly understand how he must have felt. In like manner a martyr by the name of Martens lamented about the misery of his suffering. Indeed he prayed that the Lord might allow His compassion to overpower His justice because he knew that his weakness was so great. Indeed, Martens felt that he was the most sinful among all those who loved the Lord, and that no one was as far from perfect as he was. He saw that his miserable weakness was so all pervasive that he frequently had to lament in tears. He says further that his faith was so weak, he often felt as if the door was closed.

Yes, this is the way that I feel also when I give consideration to everything, especially when I must answer those who mock us and if I want to do so from a sincere heart. Also the Ohm Johann Toews from Prussia, whom I had written a letter some time ago, was here. He will come back again and visit me for a longer period later. I must lament further with the martyr already referred to, "Oh, Lord God, my Saviour, I call upon You night and day; allow my prayers to ascend before You, open your ears that you may hear my calling, for I am like the man who is without counsel, I lie among the dead, in the grave just like the vanquished of whom You, Lord, are no longer mindful; Oh Lord I am cast off, I cry unto the Lord with my voice, I beseech You oh Lord with my cries; I pour out my soul before God and reveal to Him all my needs" (Psalm 42).

And the prophet laments in likewise, "O Lord, though our iniquities testify against us, do thou it for thy name's sake: for our backslidings are many: we have sinned against thee" (Jeremiah 14:7). Wherefore I pray that the Lord will hear my lamenting voice. Yes, my beloved I cannot keep myself from crying. When I think of the former times when I came before the congregation of brethren and sisters, and especially when we came together. Oh, what a burning love inspired me then to be among them. And for this reason I also honestly believe what David writes about the imprisoned Jews in Psalm 137, that they cried when they thought of Zion and that they hung their harps on the willows in the midst thereof. He writes further that even their captors commended them to song and they that wasted them required of them mirth, saying sing us a song of Zion.

Oh, beloved. I must truly lament together with the beloved David even though things with him stood much better than with me. Even so, he was exceedingly anxious for help and comfort. Oh, then how much more for me, if the Lord would not help me, my soul would surely perish in the silence. I spoke, my foot hath wavered, but Your grace O Lord hath held me. I am overcome with sorrow in my heart and must concur with the poet in song number 282. The long evenings and nights seem endless; indeed, I must repeat again the proverb, "If the Lord did not keep me, my soul should surely be vanquished in the silence."

Just like the prophet Jeremiah speaks of Baruch, "Thou didst say, Woe is me now! for the Lord hath added grief to my sorrow: I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest. This shalt thou say unto him, The Lord saith thus: Behold, that which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up, even this whole land. And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not: for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the Lord; but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest" (Jeremiah 45:3-5).

I close my writing with the first verse of the song number 449. Remain committed unto the Lord and the rich words of His grace. Your well-wishing friend unto all of you.

*Heinrich Ensz*

#### **Letter Eleven.**

A friendly greeting to you. I cannot omit to report to you at this excellent opportunity; firstly, that we are well physically and materially. With respect to the spiritual I must truthfully lament together with the poet in the words of the last verse of song number 513,

Der Leib wird matt, die Seel wird schwach,  
die Augen stehn'n voll Thraenen;  
der Mund erblaszt, ruft: ach und ach!  
das Herz ist voller Sehnen.  
O Jesulein! mein Freudenschein,  
du kannst mich ja erquicken;  
verzeuch doch nich mit deinem Licht,  
mich gnaedig anzublicken.

Secondly, I report that the first half of the land money is already being levied, 1 ruble silver per capita. The 3 silver ruble which remain from the land tax will not be sufficient for this Crown tax. Otherwise I wish you and all our other friends, all well-being in body and soul. Remain committed unto God and the rich words of His grace.

Your brother who loves you dearly,

*Heinrich Ensz*

Fischau, January 29, 1870.

I also bid you not to forget to greet your parents on both sides, my friends Johann Warkentins, and all Goossens.

#### **Letter Twelve.**

Please deliver to Peter Toews, Blumenhoff.

Fischau, November 25, 1870

With a friendly greeting I advise you that I have received from Johann Warkentin the letter from you together with the 6 ruble. I also report that on October 1 of this year I paid again 34 1/2 kopek per capita for each of you eight souls; namely, for you and your wife, for your parents, Corn. Toews' and Johann Goossens. You had also talked to Johann Friesen about some approximately 30 Peter Peters books. And since you have also written something in this regard, I will send 30 copies along. There is a total of 64 books here which leaves 34 remaining.

Otherwise I do not know of much to write for this time except that we are quite well physically and materially. But with respect to the soul I must cry together with the poet in 514 and confess my circumstances and lament to the Lord. In closing, I greet you together with your wife and all our other friends who are in your area. I wish you all the peace of God which is mightier than all reason to preserve you unto eternity.

*Hein Ensz*

#### **Letter Thirteen.**

Received November 3

Deliver to Peter Toews, Blumenhoff.

A friendly greeting to you and I wish for you and all of yours the peace of God and the comfort-rich fellowship of the Holy Ghost.

Since I am to remain inside because of my tiredness, I feel compelled by love to let you know about my views on the present dealings regarding the conscription issue, as we had already talked at your place. For I continue to feel

the same way I told you at the time, that we should not proceed too hastily. Firstly, we do not even know for sure if it will be applied universally. Furthermore, we could place the others completely in the background and judge the matter before the time and still not know what service would be required of us.

And should it come to the worst case scenario, it might even be better since there are and always have been people, who—perhaps through the grace of God—would endure, carry and stand by us. Wherefore it is highly necessary to have patience in order that we might fulfil the will of God and so that we would not be afraid. For some are counselling haste before the law is even drafted. Let us not be moved by the same for they are not familiar with our circumstances. For who has moved them to render powerless our once mighty *Privilegium*, and if it will be beneficial, the Lord will also find ways and means for those who are worthy. Indeed, He will know where to awaken a Daniel. Esau already had a blessing coming to him and yet there was a blessing left over for Jakob. There will also be a blessing left for those who are deserving even though the people wish to hinder the same. For He changed the arrogant heart of Pharaoh into a heart of compassion overnight. For this reason we must have much patience with our neighbour and be compassionate just as our Lord is compassionate. He allows it to rain on the just and on the unjust. And since we have frequently been a bad example we must also bear a large part of the blame ourselves.

But I would not be against submitting a 'Petition of Thanks' if we would thereby be mindful of the proverb that we should treat other people the way we want to be treated. I am also hopeful that the Lord will not exact a burden beyond what the right-minded can bear; when the need is greatest God is the closest. But you know all this better than I can write. Therefore I bid of you to forgive me for this, and consider it from the most favourable standpoint.

Remain committed unto God and the word of His grace. From your beloved,  
*Hein Ensz*

Fischau, October 31, 1871.

Another greeting to all of you. Greet also your parents on both sides and Johann Goossens.

---

### Editor's Note

The letters by Aeltester Heinrich Enns (1807-1881) to Aeltester Peter P. Toews (1841-1922) are from the "Peter P. Toews Document Collection." Courtesy of Milton and Margaret Toews, Neilburg, Saskatchewan, 1981, presently Abbotsford, British Columbia. A letter of encouragement to the brothers and sisters by Heinrich Enns dated March 6, 1866, is found in the Johann P. Friesen Document Collection, courtesy of Rev. Jake P. Friesen, Blumenort, Manitoba, 1982, presently in the possession of the Archives of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference, 440 Main St., Steinbach, Manitoba. Two letters by Heinrich Enns, one dated October 15, 1866, and the other undated but from the same time period, are found in the Letter Collection of Peter P. Toews—courtesy of Mennonite Library and Archives, Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas, 1982. These letters are reports regarding various matters discussed at brotherhood meetings, including the issue of headcovering for women during baptism.

# PART SEVEN

## KLAAS FRIESEN 1793-1870

### Chapter One

### Biography

A Biography of Rev. Klaas W. Friesen (1793-1870), Rosenort, Molotschna Colony, South Russia. By Delbert F. Plett.

---

#### Section One. Introduction - Abraham von Riesen 1756-1810.

1 Klaas Friesen was born in Prussia, and grew up in the northern part of the Vistula Delta. He was the son of **Margaretha Wiebe** (1754-1810) and **Abraham von Riesen** (1756-1810) who had done well financially with their farm and mill operations. Unfortunately no information is presently available regarding the parents and family of **Margaretha Wiebe**. **Klaas Friesen's** older brother, **Peter von Riesen**, had been born in **Tiegenhagen, Prussia** in 1779.<sup>1</sup> Some time later the **Abraham von Riesen** family moved to **Kalteherberge** which is listed as the place of residence for the family in the 1804 immigration records. **Klaas Friesen** was the youngest brother of **Abraham Friesen** (1782-1849), the second Aeltester of the **Kleine Gemeinde (KG)**. In 1805 the **Abraham von Riesen** family settled in the village of **Ohrloff, Molotschna Colony, South Russia**. Here young **Klaas** farmed with his parents until 1818 when he married **Margaretha Matthies** of the village of **Altonau**. In the same year, his older brother **Abraham Friesen** (1782-1849) joined the **KG**, an event which was to have great impact on **Klaas** for the rest of his life.

A history of the **Abraham von Riesen** (1756-1810) family was published in 1987.<sup>2</sup> A biography of brother, **Abraham Friesen**--which contains certain updated data--is published in Part Three, Chapter One of this work. Accordingly, no further information will be included here regarding the parents of **Klaas Friesen** or his siblings.

#### Section Two. The Johann Matthies Family.

1 **Margaretha Matthies**--the first wife of **Klaas Friesen**--was the daughter of **Jakob Matthies** (1760-before 1808) who immigrated to **Altonau, Molotschna** in 1804.<sup>3</sup> **Henry Schapansky, New Westminster, British Columbia**, has recently provided additional genealogical information regarding the **Matthies** family.<sup>4</sup> Since it is of considerable interest to the **Klaas Friesen** descendants, the same is included here. **Jakob Matthies** was the son of **Johann Matthies** who lived in **Heuboden** and who died on **October 25, 1774**. He was married to the widow **Kristina Loewen** (1736-1785) who also died in **Heuboden** in 1785. She had married for the second time to **Jakob Braun** (1748-1803) who served as the Aeltester of the **Heuboden**

Gemeinde in Prussia from 1795-1803. The Braun family is listed in the village of Heuboden in the 1776 Konsignation.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
1	Johann Matthies			Oct 25, 1774
m	Khristina Loewen	1736		Mar 24, 1785
2	Peter Matthies			
2	Jakob Matthies	1760		before 1808

2 Son Peter Matthies was baptised in the Heuboden Gemeinde in 1777. He was married to Eva Fast and the family moved to Muensterberg, Prussia. They had six children of whom only two married and had families. The Peter Matthies family remained in Prussia.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
2	Peter Matthies			
m	Eva Fast			
3	Peter Matthies	Jul 19,1784	Aug 25,1811	
m	Maria Reinke			
3	Johann Matthies			Dec 28,1787
3	Khristina Matthies	May 6,1787		Nov 15,1831
m	Johann Fast	1769		May 4,1809
2m	Johann Reinke			
3	Susanna Matthies	Jun 18,1789		Sep 20,1789
3	Abraham Matthies	Aug 6,1790		Sep 9,1790
3	Helena Matthies	Nov 11,1793		

2 Son Jakob Matthies was baptised in 1780 in Heuboden. The family lived in Leske, Prussia, from where they immigrated to Russia. The family is listed as follows in the 1804 immigration records:

Family 80. Matthies, Jakob, Landwirt, to Altona, married Catharina, Leske, to Altona, children Susanna 17, Elisabeth born January 16, 1790, Margaretha born March 27, 1792, Abraham born January 9, 1796, Cornelius born August 17, 1798, Anna born June 13, 1800, Franz age 3 and Peter 8 days old. Family 80a. Relative Johann Matthies, Leske, 21, servant.<sup>5</sup>

Jakob Matthies probably died shortly after the immigration, and his widow, Katharina, remarried to Franz Thiessen. Thiessen--15 years junior to his wife--came from Vorwerke, West Prussia, and also immigrated to Russia in 1804.<sup>6</sup> The Franz Thiessen family settled on Wirtschaft 4 in Rosenort, Molotschna, in 1805. The family is listed as follows in the 1808 Revisions-Listen:

Franz Tiessen age 29, from Laescky, Amt Marienburg, farmer, wife Catarina 44, children Catarina 20, Abraham 19, Elisabeth 19, Margaretha 16, Jakob 15, Cornelius 10, Anna 8, Franz 7 and Maria 2. Property, 2 wagons, 1 plow, 2 harrows, 9 horses, 16 cattle and 8 sheep.<sup>7</sup>

It is obvious that the Franz Thiessen family was well-to-do. Whether this represents the property inherited from her husband by the widow Matthies, or the wealth of the young bridegroom, is hard to say--probably the former.

The village of Rosenort was founded by Johann Warkentin (1760-1825)--a KG patriarch, who had settled in Wirtschaft 3 and 18 in Blumenort, Molotschna, in 1805.<sup>8</sup> The KG fellowship in Rosenort included the following pioneers who are listed in the 1808 Revisions-Listen: Franz Thiessen - Wirtschaft 4;<sup>9</sup> Philip Warkentin (born 1780) - Wirtschaft 8 - was the nephew of Johann Warkentin (1760-1825), the village founder;<sup>10</sup> David Boschmann (1767-1850) - Wirtschaft 10;<sup>11</sup> Peter Thiessen (born 1776) - Wirtschaft 12;<sup>12</sup> Claasz Siemens (born 1758) - Wirtschaft 15;<sup>13</sup> and Jakob Baerg (born 1771) - Wirtschaft 19.<sup>14</sup>

The following families lived in Rosenort at various times after 1808: Peter Warkentin settled on Wirtschaft 1 where a son Jakob was born in 1812;<sup>15</sup> Heinrich Neufeld (1791-1865) was a senior Grosse Gemeinde minister and brother-in-law to Klaas Friesen;<sup>16</sup> Johann Friesen (1763-ca.1830)--a brother-in-law to Klaas Friesen and a senior minister of the Petershagen (Grosse) Gemeinde--moved to Rosenort before 1821;<sup>17</sup> his son, Abraham F. Friesen (1807-1891), lived in Rosenort where their daughter Katherina S. Friesen was born in 1831;<sup>18</sup> Klaas Thiessen (born 1790)--father of Johann W. Thiessen (later of Jansen, Nebraska) was resident on Wirtschaft 6 in 1835;<sup>19</sup> Abraham F. Reimer (1808-1892) moved to Rosenort in 1836;<sup>20</sup> Peter Wiebe is listed in Rosenort in the KG ministerial election lists of 1838;<sup>21</sup> Rev. Klaas Friesen (1793-1870) moved to Rosenort shortly after his second marriage in 1843; Bernhard B. Fast (1823-1898) bought a Wirtschaft in Rosenort in 1844;<sup>22</sup> and Bernhard Fast (1809-1878)--school teacher and one-time KG minister--sold his Wirtschaft in Rosenort in 1866;<sup>23</sup>

Henry Schapansky has listed the family of Jakob Matthies as follows:

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
2	Jakob Matthies	1760		before 1808
m	Katharina	1764		
3	Susanna Matthies	Jul 9, 1786	Jun 14, 1803	
3	Kath Matthies	Aug 30, 1788		
3	Eliesabeth Matthies	Jan 1, 1790		
3	Marg Matthies	Mar 14, 1792		Jan 6, 1843
3	Abraham Matthies	Jan 1, 1796		
3	Korn Matthies	Jul 17, 1798		
3	Anna Matthies	Jun 13, 1800		
3	Franz Matthies	May 20, 1801		
3	Peter Matthies	1803		

3 Daughter Susanna Matthies married Heinrich Ensz who had been baptised in 1798 in Kalthof, Prussia. The couple lived in Stadtfeld, Prussia, from where they immigrated to Russia in 1804. They settled on Wirtschaft 9 in the village of Lindenau on July 15, 1805. They are listed as follows in the 1808 Revisions-Listen:

Heinrich Ensz age 30, from Heuboden, Amt Marienburg, wife Susanna 21, son Johann 4. Property, 1 wagon, 1/2 plow, 4 horses and 7 cattle.<sup>24</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
3	Susanna Matthies	Jul 9, 1786	Jun 14, 1803	
m	Heinrich Ensz	1778		
4	Johann Ensz	1804		

3 Daughter **Margaretha Matthies** married for the first time to **Johann Friesen** (1783-1816) of Altonau, the son of Isaac Friesen, from Tiegenhagen, Prussia, who had settled on Wirtschaft 10 in Altona in 1804.<sup>25</sup> They had one son together, Isaac Friesen (1816-1886) who married Susanna Reimer (1823-1895) the daughter of Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884), Muntau.<sup>26</sup> The couple made their home in Waldheim, Molotschna.<sup>27</sup> The Isaac Friesen family had a daughter Susanna Friesen (1850-1934) who married Isaac Neufeld (1849-1922) and they also lived in Waldheim.<sup>28</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
3	Margaretha Matthies	Mar 14, 1792		Jan 6, 1843
m	Johann Friesen			1816
4	Isaak Friesen	Aug 28, 1816	Mar 29, 1839	1886
m	Susanna Reimer	Mar 23, 1820		1895

3 Son **Abraham Matthies** married **Anna Braun** who was probably the daughter of Jakob Braun (born 1769) who settled on Wirtschaft 2 in Schoenau on July 5, 1804.<sup>29</sup> The family apparently lived in Pordenau where their son **Aron Matthies** was born in 1818.<sup>30</sup> Daughter **Susanna Matthies** married **Jakob Dueck**, the son of Martin Dueck and Maria Huebert of Muensterberg. Dueck was a carpenter/contractor by trade. The family lived in the village of Kleefeld from where they moved to the Brasol settlement.<sup>31</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
3	Abraham Matthies	Jan 4, 1797	Nov 12, 1877	Apr 10, 1860
m	Anna Braun	Sep 23, 1797		Jun 11, 1863
4	Aron Matthies	Aug 9, 1818		
4	Franz Matthies			
4	Anna Matthies			
4	Abram Matthies	Sep 29, 1824		Apr 10, 1898
4	David Matthies	Feb 24, 1826	Oct 29, 1850	Jul 26, 1907
m	Elis Klassen			
4	Corn Matthies	Mar 29, 1828		
4	Kath Matthies	Oct 20, 1831	Nov 29, 1851	Sep 28, 1917
m	Johann Janzen			
4	Agatha Matthies	Nov 23, 1833		Jan 2, 1924
m	Epp			
2m	Aron Klassen		Mar 2, 1882	
4	Susanna Matthies	May 16, 1836	Feb 25, 1860	Feb 17, 1922
m	Jakob Dueck	Jun 16, 1830		May 15, 1907
4	Jakob Matthies	Apr 26, 1843		18__
4	Elisabeth Matthies	1841		1846
4	Margaretha Matthies	1841		May 20, 1857
4	Elisabeth Matthies			
m	Johann Wiens			Rosenort

### Section Three. Biography of Klaas Friesen 1793-1870.

2 As already mentioned, son Klaas Friesen married for the first time to Margaretha Matthies. Since Margaretha was a widow when they married it is possible that she and her first husband already had a *Wirtschaft* in Altonau and that Klaas and his bride chose to continue farming in her parental village instead of starting over again somewhere else. In any case, they made their home in Altona where Klaas was a farmer. He married for the second time in 1843 to Karolina Plett, the daughter of Johann Plett (1765-1833) of Blumstein, Molotschna. The history of the Plett family is relatively well-known and therefore no additional information will be provided here.<sup>32</sup> Carolina's mother, nee Esther Smit, stayed with the family during her sickness and died there in 1855. It is reported that Mrs. Klaas R. Brandt (nee Margaretha Friesen) was employed with the family during this time as a maid.<sup>33</sup> The Klaas Friesen family moved to Rosenort shortly after the second marriage in 1843.<sup>34</sup>

#### Ministerial Career.

Klaas Friesen (1793-1870) was elected as a deacon of the KG in 1824 and as a minister in 1838. He assisted his older brothers Peter and Abraham in the 1833 publication of Menno Simons' *Die Fundamente der seligmachenden Lehre unsers Herrn Jesu Christi, aus Gottes Wort kurz zusammengefasst* as a three volume work.<sup>35</sup> In what must be one of the most bizarre events of Mennonite history, the Prussian Mennonite leaders confiscated these books after the printing was completed. Aeltester Peter P. Toews refers to Ohm Klaas' role in this publication effort as follows:

The key players in this occurrence . . . are Peter von Riesen and his brother Abraham; but there was a third brother by the name of Klaas who was also involved. For the printing of the books was approved by the latter two brothers in their capacity as ministers of the so-called *Kleine Gemeinde*. I remember the latter very well. He was known as uncle to a large family circle and as 'Ohm Klaas' to the writer of this article. Since his brother Abraham had died long before then, he was a co-heir, together with Kornelius Jansen - at that time resident in Berdjansk - as the son-in-law of P. v. Riesen, of these exiled books when they were finally released and allowed to come to Russia. At this time the present writer was fortunate enough to also come into possession of a set of these *Fundamentebücher* of Menno Simon's which had become so rare. And in regard to this exile - and otherwise in general as well - I hold him in the highest regard.<sup>36</sup>

The "Ministerial Journal" (see Part Eight, Chapter Two) of fellow minister Johann Dueck (1801-1866), Muntau, Molotschna, shows that Ohm Klaas was an active minister often responsible for presenting the preparatory sermon for communion or to instruct the young people who were preparing for baptism. A number of Klaas Friesen's sermons are still extant.<sup>37</sup> Klaas Friesen was historically inclined and recorded various events and occurrences for posterity. Aeltester Peter P. Toews has credited him as the source for a number the documents and writings

which he included in his history of the KG compiled in 1874.<sup>38</sup> For example after the death of Klaas Reimer the KG requested an Aeltester ordination from the Ohrloff Gemeinde. Toews quotes Ohm Klaas who assessed the position as follows; "Here we were given to understand that if they were to establish an Aeltester for us we would have to accomodate them: namely, that we should no longer consider infant baptism, the swearing of oaths, and the bearing of arms to be quite so unchristian--as one member from our Gemeinde allowed himself to express this position. In addition, we were no longer to receive members from other Gemeinden without proper certicates. As we were unable to accept these stipulations, the ordination was completely denied to us."<sup>39</sup> Another example of his important historical contribution is "Eine Kurze Beschreibung" or a "Closing admonition, 1849"--a short meditation by older brother Abraham--which Ohm Claas recorded and preserved for posterity (see Part Three, Chapter Two).<sup>40</sup>

Klaas Friesen was well read in the writings of the faith and his library included various works, including Dutch writers such as Claas Ganglofs. This book had great influence on his nephew, Aeltester Peter P. Toews, after Friesen's death. Aeltester Toews described this event as follows:

I found among the filed away papers and books of an aged minister, which his widow, my aunt, did not want to take along to their new home [in Manitoba], a Dutch booklet regarding the *United Undivided Church of God* written by Claas Ganglofs. This book contained truths which I had never before observed in such a manner . . .<sup>41</sup>

Klaas Friesen's exemplary ministerial career came to an end amidst a number of unfortunate controversies which afflicted the KG in the mid-1860s. In his "Sammlung . . . zur Historie der Kleinen Gemeinde," Peter Toews has noted only that "by a majority of votes on the 16th and 23rd of February, 1864, the minister Klaas Friesen of Rosenort, was removed from his position. He fell into a distrust of the minister Johann Dueck--perhaps without even being the cause--and became unreconcilable and loveless, and therefore unworthy of the office."<sup>42</sup>

Although the matter was complicated and influenced by a number of factors, singing by Ziffern or numerals was one of the issues involved. In 1860 Heinrich Franz of the village of Gnadenfeld, Molotschna Colony, had published his *Choralbuch* which used a system of numeral notes or Ziffern. It quickly became popular among Mennonite congregations all over Russia. It also became a big issue between conservatives and progressives in most congregations as can be seen from the diary of Rev. Jakob D. Epp from the Chortitza or "old" colony congregation.<sup>43</sup>

The "numbered" melodies also became popular in the KG and had become the standard by 1866. In fact, in December of 1866, Rev. Peter P. Toews--as he then was--ordered a considerable quantity of *Choralbücher* from his cousin, Gerhard P. Goossen, Liebenau, Molotschna Colony.<sup>44</sup> The older ministers such as Ohm Klaas felt that this was too big a departure from the established ways and voiced their opposition. These events are described by Aeltester Heinrich Enns in a letter which he presented to the brotherhood on January 3, 1866:

You also accuse me of having the greatest fault in the matter

of Ohm Klaas Friesen of Rosenort. We shall have to leave this up to the Lord. If the spirit of God had not given us a completely greater inspiration I would have unknowingly and unwillingly collaborated in doing wrong. For when we sat in judgement for the first time regarding Ohm Klaas, I said, "We will have to consider carefully whether or not we should abandon singing by numerals, because it was like a thorn in the eye of Ohm Klaas." Whereupon Jakob Friesen from Blumstein said, "The numeral melodies by now are favoured," and the matter was not discussed any further. Jakob Friesen, Blumstein, at one time said; "The matter with Ohm Klaas could be tolerated no longer." When we again sat in council with regard to removing him from his office, I said as follows, "Let us overlook this for him once more." But because I saw that the matter was destined to end this way I also voted for removing him from his office. Before and after the vote mostly numeral melodies were being sung. Because Ohm Klaas was offended by this, I talked very earnestly with the song leaders; but, by and large, it was quite fruitless. Not that I thought that we should sing no numeral melodies but rather that we could have refrained from using them for a time.

In so far as the matter between Johann Dueck and Ohm Klaas is concerned, I will not say very much. But Ohm Dueck and I know very well how I advised him. I also drove with him to the home of Ohm Klaas and from a true heart I counselled him that he should help in the matter by conceding as much as he knew how and as much as he was able. In my opinion he could possibly have done more and been more accommodating. But I left this up to him, as he said that he had done as much as he knew how. In which regard I am also satisfied with Dueck, because everyone knows best the status of their relationship with God.<sup>45</sup>

It seems that a conservative retrenchment took place in both branches of the KG after the 1866 division so that the views of conservatives such as Ohm Klaas were vindicated to a certain extent.

Klaas Friesen was totally blind for the last seven years of his life, losing his eyesight in about 1863. Consequently he was no longer able to read and write and to carry on his daily farming operations. This disability apparently was the cause for his rather strong opposition to the use of numbered melodies as well as his apparent bitterness towards the ministerial regarding other matters such as insufficient admonition against pride in the Gemeinde. Friesen seems to have held a particular grudge against his colleague and fellow-minister Johann Dueck. The background to this unfortunate situation is explained in a letter by his friend Heinrich Reimer (1971-1884), Muntau, Molotschna, who encourages Ohm Klaas to forgive Dueck and to put the matter behind him. He blames Ohm Klaas' troubles totally on his blindness. Reimer also provides a tremendous tribute to the integrity and value Klaas Friesen's service since his election as a deacon in 1824 and as a minister in 1838:

Alas, my dearly beloved friend, how is this even possible? I must repeat it again, I have never known you to be thus from former times even until this very hour. Nor have I come to know you that way although we frequently came together and have always stood in good harmony, and as far as I know, always had a good confidence in each another. During the brotherhood meetings I sensed many small agitations and also different things which occurred and were dealt with during your time, or evil intention against the neighbour which you did not want to or could not forgive if anyone had offended you. But I have never heard such things about you nor perceived the same. Thus I, for my part, cannot but attribute all of this in love to your weakness. I cannot think any evil of you, even if you do not come to the Last Supper and Love Service of the Lord, which I conclude according to your accusation that you probably will not come. For my part I would in mercy also gladly forgive you for this as well because of your weakness--which would otherwise not be sufficient nor be tolerated. (see Part Eleven, Chapter Two, Document Three).

According to a letter of nephew Peter P. Toews, Klaas Friesen came under a deep conviction and remorse regarding these difficulties just prior to his death.<sup>46</sup>

Another issue which became a concern for Klaas Friesen in the twilight of his ministry was that of the landless amongst the members of his congregation. A number of older members of the KG such as his niece's husband, Isaac Harms (1811-1891), Alexanderkron, were actively involved in the process of renting and purchasing land for daughter colonies where the landless could be resettled.<sup>47</sup> Some of these purchases were made by the Gemeinde as a community which required the signatures of the membership. Heinrich Enns writes of one such occasion where the documents were at the home of Klaas Friesen where the others were to sign them:

Another matter which I wish to put to you for your consideration is the great tumult and unrest respecting the leasing and purchasing of land. Who will have the most fault in this regard? It first started with Ohm Klaas in Rosenort, where the writing lay unexecuted. When I came there I earnestly declared that I did not see good results in this . . .<sup>48</sup>

The foregoing would indicate that Ohm Klaas favoured and supported the renting and purchasing of land which was taking place. The primary purpose of this activity was to assist the landless and young people in the Gemeinde to be able to obtain their own farms. This was something which only one-quarter of Russian Mennonite families were able to aspire to at the time.

The esteem in which Ohm Klaas Friesen was held by the extensive von Riesen/Friesen family circle is seen after the death of his oldest brother Peter von Riesen in Prussia in 1847 when Peter's family sent his fur coat (Stadtpelez) to Russia as a gift for their dear uncle Klaas.<sup>49</sup> The Klaas Friesen family lived in Rosenort, Molotschna, until his death in 1870.<sup>50</sup> Shortly thereafter his family

moved to Blumenhoff, Borosenko, settling next door to the Wirtschaft of Aeltester Peter Toews. Their farm at this point consisted of 140 acres.<sup>51</sup> In 1874 the widow Karolina Friesen emigrated to Blumenort, Manitoba, where she homesteaded together with her family. She married for the second time to Isaac Harms (1811-1891) of Jansen, Nebraska, where she died in 1887. Son Heinrich P. Friesen suffered from epilepsy and never married. He died of his illness in Jansen, Nebraska, in 1889.

#### Section Four. Family of Klaas Friesen 1793-1870.

The sons of Klaas Friesen all received a good education. According to one source, son Abraham M. Friesen was one of the better educated men in the East Reserve in Manitoba.<sup>52</sup> Another son, Cornelius P. Friesen, served all his life as a school teacher in Blumenort and Blumenhof, Manitoba, and was known for his *Fraktur* and cutwork. Son Johann P. Friesen was an avid genealogist who collected many of his father's sermons and writings.<sup>53</sup>

Biographies of the children of Klaas Friesen (1793-1870) and a listing of their children were published in 1987 and therefore will not be repeated here; see Delbert F. Plett, "Abraham von Riesen (1756-1810) Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Profile of the Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde 1874* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1987), 282-288. A listing of the children of Klaas Friesen is as follows:

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
2	Klaas Friesen	Oct 6,1793	Nov 2,1818	Oct 12,1870
m	Margaretha Matthies	Mar 14,1792		Jan 6,1843
3	Katharina Friesen	Feb 8,1818		Feb,1818
3	Klaas Friesen	Feb 8,1819		1824
3	Katherina Friesen	Nov 1,1820	Jun 19,1843	Nov 12,1884
m	Johann W. Thiessen <sup>54</sup>	Dec 19,1813		Aug 20,1888
3	Margaretha Friesen	Jan 5,1823		Jan 5,1823
3	Klaas Friesen	Feb 18,1825		1852
m	widow Thielmann			
2m	Agatha Klassen	1828		1852
3	Peter M. Friesen	May 11,1827	1851	Apr 4,1892
m	Kath Penner	Jun 7,1830		Apr 4,1868
2m	Kath Schapansky	May 18,1827		Mar 17,1882
3	Susanna Friesen	Feb 18,1829		1861
m	Peter F. Reimer	1826		Apr 26,1854
2m	Franz M. Kroeker	Aug 6,1827		Aug 8,1905
3	Margaretha Friesen	Jun 14,1831	Feb 11,1858	Feb 11,1926
m	Jakob Fast	1831		May 7,1885
3	Elizabeth Friesen	Mar 27,1833		1836
3	Abraham M. Friesen <sup>55</sup>	Dec 6,1834	Jun 28,1856	Oct 10,1908
m	Margaretha Isaac	Dec 24,1833		1920
2	Klaas Friesen	Oct 6,1793	Jun 10,1843	Oct 12,1870
2m	Carolina Plett	Mar 7,1823		Feb 11,1887
3	Corn P. Friesen <sup>56</sup>	Mar 18,1844		Aug 8,1899
m	Agatha Klassen	May 10,1848		Apr 12,1902
3	Johann Friesen	Dec 18,1845		Dec,1845
3	Johann Friesen	Oct 20,1846		Oct 20,1846

3	Johann P. Friesen	Oct 20,1847	Dec 21,1869	Dec 18,1920
m	Maria Eidse	Sep 15,1848		Mar 4,1934
3	Anna Friesen	Dec 23,1849		Oct 27,1912
m	Klaas Koop	Aug 8,1825		c. 1915
3	Klaas P. Friesen	Feb 2,1954	Feb 5,1878	Dec 18,1926
m	Maria Rempel	Jan, 1852		Mar 17,1907
3	Heinrich P. Friesen	Aug 14,1857	single	1889
3	David P. Friesen	Nov 4,1860		Feb 23,1902
m	Elisabeth Klassen			
3	Maria Friesen	Aug 12,1866	Mar 11,1894	Nov 5,1906
m	Corn J. Classen	Feb 8,1863		Apr 4,1931

### Endnotes: Klaas Friesen (1793-1870) Biography.

1. Unruh, *Die Niederländisch-neiderdeutschen Hintergrunde der Mennonitischen Ostwanderungen im 16., 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Karlsruhe, 1955), 373.

2. Plett, "Abraham von Riesen (1756-1810) Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874* (Steinbach, Man., 1985), 265-293.

3. Unruh, 351.

4. Henry Schapansky, 914 Chilliwack St., New Westminster, B. C., V3L 4V5, letter to the author November 28, 1992.

5. Unruh, 351.

6. Henry Schapansky has identified Franz Thiessen (born 1779) as bachelor Franz Thiessen from Vorwerke, listed in the immigration records as family no. 116. Schapansky to author November 28, 1992; see also Unruh, 352.

7. Unruh, 328.

8. Woltner, *Die Gemeinde Berichte von 1848 die Deutsche Seidlungen am Schwarzen Meer* (Leipzig, 1941), 126 and 128. A listing of the family of Johann Warkentin (1760-1825) is given by his grandson, Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims* (Steinbach, Man., 1990), 186-188.

9. Franz Thiessen was married to the widow of Jakob Matthies, who was the mother of Margaretha Matthies (1792-1843), the first wife of Klaas Friesen (1793-1870).

10. Philip Warkentin (born 1780) was the son of Jakob Warkentin, the son of Martin Warkentin (1705-1782) of Tiegenhoff, Prussia. Martin Warkentin (1705-1782) had another son, Martin Warkentin (1764-1853), who settled in Blumstein, Molotschna in 1804. Plett, "Martin Warkentin 1764 Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 467-91. This information is courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author, March 15, 1991.

11. David Boschmann (1767-1850) was the son of Albrecht Boschmann (died 1779-1782). Courtesy of Dr. Glenn Penner, 201-33 Caridan St., Guelph, Ontario, N1H 3Z5, letter to the author, April 22, 1989. David Boschmann (1767-1850) was a brother to Susanna Boschmann (1763-1841) who married Hermann Neufeld (1760-1835) of Muensterberg; see Plett, "Boschmanns in the Kleine Gemeinde," unpublished paper, 1991, page 2.

12. He was the father of KG minister Peter Thiessen (1808-1873), who married Margaretha Friesen. She was the daughter of Abraham Friesen (1782-1849), the second Aeltester of the KG. The Peter Thiessen family later lived in Schoenau, Molotschna. Herman Thiessen, *Martin Thiessen und seine Nachkommen 1737-1977* (Burgdorf, 1977), 420 pages, has additional information regarding this family.

13. They were the parents of the KG-related Siemens families; see Plett, "Genealogy of Daniel Fast 1753-1829," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 354.

14. His step-son Klaas Thiessen (born 1790) married Elisabeth Wiens (born 1793). They were the parents of Johann W. Thiessen (1813-1888) of Contentiusfeld who later settled in Jansen, Nebraska. Plett, "Wiens Families in the Kleine Gemeinde," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 501. In 1811, Jakob Baerg also served as Beisitzer of the Gebietsamt. One night in 1811 Baerg and

several others went on the steppe regarding surveying matters where they were murdered by Tartars. Woltner, 126.

15. Peter Warkentin was a brother to Philip Warkentin (born 1780) on Wirtschaft 8. Schapansky to author March 15, 1991.

16. Heinrich Neufeld (1791-1865) was married to Regina Friesen (1795-1852). The family was well-to-do and had a lumber yard in Rosenort. Heinrich Neufeld was a nephew to David Boschmann of Wirtschaft 10. In 1838 the Heinrich Neufeld family travelled to Prussia. A number of the Neufeld children also made their home in Rosenort; cf. Plett, "Peter Neufeld 1697-1769," unpublished paper, revised 1992, page 18.

17. Abraham Friesen (1782-1849), "Letter to the members of the Gebietsamt of this colony December 27, 1821," in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1985), 180-181; cf. Franz Isaac, *Die Molotschnaer Mennoniten* (Halbstadt, Taurien, 1908), 94. Johann Friesen (1763-ca.1830)—who originally settled in Schoenau—was the father of Johann F. Friesen (1808-1872), the third Aeltester of the KG. For a listing of this family, see Plett, "Abraham von Riesen (1756-1810) Genealogy," 270-274.

18. Henry W. Toews, "Family Record," unpublished family record, 3, courtesy of Ted de Veer, 1050-63rd St. S. E., Salmon Arm, B.C., V1E 4M3, 1988. Abraham F. Friesen (1807-1891) was married to Helena Siemens (1812-1888) the daughter to Claasz Siemens of Wirtschaft 15. The Abraham F. Friesen family later moved to Neulkirch where he became a senior KG minister. Plett, "Abraham von Riesen (1756-1810) Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 271. Abraham F. Friesen (1807-1891) was a nephew of Rev. Klaas Friesen (1793-1870).

19. As listed in the 1835 census; courtesy of Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba, August 25, 1993.

20. Abraham F. Reimer was the son of Klaas Reimer (1770-1837), the founding Aeltester of the KG. He was also a nephew of Rev. Klaas Friesen (1793-1879).

21. Aeltester Abraham L. Friesen, quoted in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 279.

22. He was married to Helena Neufeld (1823-1900), a niece of Rev. Heinrich Neufeld (1791-1865); see Plett, "Peter Neufeld 1697-1769 Genealogy," 18. This family was known as the "farmer" Fast to distinguish them from the teacher Bernhard Fast; see Peter P. Isaac, "Stambuch Meiner Voreltern," 187.

23. Plett, "Genealogy of Daniel Fast 1753-1829," 340. Bernhard Fast (1809-1878) was a nephew to Bernhard Fast (1783-1861) who served as Aeltester of the Ohrloff Gemeinde from 1824 until his death.

24. Unruh, 321.

25. Unruh, 317; cf. Cornelius P. Janzen, "Family Records," unpublished journal. Courtesy of Mennonite Village Museum, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1987.

26. Plett, "Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 239-245, as updated in Plett, "Heinrich Reimer 1791-1884 Genealogy," Part Eleven, Chapter One.

27. Abram P. Friesen et. al., *The Von Riesen-Friesen 1756-1966 Genealogy* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1966), 6-7, contains a listing of the descendants of step-son Isaac Friesen.

28. They were the great-grandparents of The Honourable Harold Neufeld, appointed as Energy Minister of the Province of Manitoba in 1988. I am indebted to Helmut Pankratz, Steinbach, Manitoba, for drawing this connection to my attention.

29. I am indebted to Arnold Neufeldt-Fast, 3-109 Marlborough Ave., Kitchener, Ontario, N2M 1H7, for drawing this connection to my attention. Arnold Neufeldt-Fast to author November 8, 1992. Mr. Fast has also drawn my attention to the work of John P. Braun, "Family chronicle: Braun/Wiebe," unpublished family study, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1989.

30. See also "Abraham Matthies family listing," (n.p., n.d.), no author given, courtesy of Mennonite Genealogy Inc., Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1986, which provides a listing of the children of Abraham and Anna Matthies. Also available from Mennonites Genealogy Inc., is a listing of the family of Peter Matthies whose son Abraham Matthies immigrated to Russia in 1803 and settled on Wirtschaft 21 in Altona. These records bear the inscription simply that the information was transcribed from David Enns born June 21, 1886; cf. Unruh, 318. It is not known whether there is any relationship between the two Matthies families.

31. J. P. Dick, *Holland-Germany-Russia-U.S.A-Canada 1632-1978: The Dueck Family genealogy* (185 Marshall St., Waterloo, Ont., N2J 2T8, 1979), 1-10.

32. The best source is Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," 211-24, who was a grandson of Johann Plett (1765-1833). Isaac provides considerable biographical data regarding Plett and his children; see Delbert F. Plett, *Plett Picnure Book* (Steinbach, Man., 1981), 161 pages; also Gerhard J. Thielmann, *Plettentag am 2. Juli 1945* (Blumenort, Man., 1945), 52 pages.

33. *Ibid.*, 215.

34. *Ibid.*, 220.

35. (Danzig, 1833), Volume I - 335 pages, Volume II - 278 pages, and Volume III - 414 pages. The title would be translated as 'the foundation of Christian doctrine.' The work was usually referred to in Low German simply as 'daut Fundamenteböck'.

36. Peter P. Toews, *Eine Seltsame Begebenheit* (Hochstadt, Man., 1911), 4.

37. The Johanna P. Friesen Document Collection, courtesy of Evangelical Mennonite Conference Archives, 440 Main St., Steinbach, Manitoba, contains approximately 12 sermons. Although most of these sermons do not bear the name of the author, about half of them can be identified as the sermons of Rev. Klaas Friesen (1793-1870) by comparing the dates on which they were presented or preached with the "Ministerial Journal" of Johann Dueck (1801-1866), Muntau, Molotschna, with the names of the minister preaching that day.

38. Peter P. Toews, *Sammlung von Briefen und Schriftliche Nachrichten zur Historie der Kleinen Gemeinde der Mennoniten* (Blumenhoff, South Russia, 1874), ii.

39. Peter P. Toews, *Sammlung*, 170, as published in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 280.

40. Published in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 364-366.

41. Peter P. Toews, "Anhang No. 2," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 559.

42. Peter P. Toews, "Sammlung," 360.

43. Harvey Dyck, ed., *A Mennonite in Russia: The Diaries of Jakob D. Epp 1851-1880* (Toronto, Ont.: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 67, 134-6; cf. James Urry, *None but Saints*, Winnipeg, 1989), 216.

44. Gerhard P. Goossen, "Letter to Peter Toews, Blumenhof, December 17, 1866," Peter Toews Letter Collection, courtesy of Mennonite Library and Archives, North Newton, Kansas, 1981.

45. Rev. Heinrich Enns, Letter read to the assembly January 6, 1866, as quoted in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph* (Steinbach, Man., 1986), 166.

46. Peter P. Toews, Letter to Peter Baerg, Annenfeld, March 23, 1871, in Peter P. Toews, Document Collection--courtesy of Mennonite Library and Archives, North Newton, Kansas, 1982.

47. Isaac Harms (1811-1891) was married for the first time to Anna Sawatzky, the daughter of Klaas Friesen's sister; see Plett, "Abraham von Riesen (1756-1810) Genealogy," 275-276.

48. Heinrich Enns, "Letter read to the assembly January 6, 1866," 167.

49. Gustav E. Reimer and G. R. Gaeddert, *Exiled by the Czar* (Newton, Kansas, 1956), 12.

50. Peter P. Isaac, 220.

51. Johann Toews, "Das Wachsame Auge Gottes," unpublished manuscript, as recorded and edited by son Peter P. Toews, Gruenfeld, Manitoba (1841-1922), quoted in Plett, ed., *History and Events* (Steinbach, Man., 1982), 125.

52. Royden K. Loewen, *Blumenort, A Mennonite Community in Transition* (Blumenort, Manitoba, 1983), 272.

53. Johann P. Friesen Collection.

54. He was the great-grandfather of Dr. Arden Thiessen, presently the senior minister of the Evangelical Mennonite Church, Steinbach, Manitoba.

55. He was the great-grandfather of Frank F. Reimer, founder of Reimer Express Lines Ltd of Winnipeg, Manitoba, and also of Cornie F. Loewen, the founder of Loewen Millwork, Steinbach, Manitoba.

56. He was the great-grandfather of Patrick Friesen, Winnipeg, Manitoba, a widely-recognized Canadian poet.

## Chapter Two

### A Sermon on Luke 18:9-14

A Sermon on Luke chapter 18, verses 9-14, written in 1863. By Reverend Klaas W. Friesen (1793-1870), Rosenort, Molotschna Colony, South Russia.

---

Oh, my dear friends, when we think back and consider that a good many of our fellow pilgrims have ended their mortal sojourn here and have been transported from this earthly time into eternity, we see that their remuneration has already been pronounced, be it unto everlasting joy, or unto shame and woe. We who continue to abide here on the earth and who were strong and fresh 10 to 20 years ago, and who now already show some grey hair and are become weak and ailing, have ample evidence that our stay here will no longer be of extensive duration. Therefore, my beloved, let us consider and truly reflect how we have expended the days of our lives which we have lived. I also exhort those who are in their youth and middle years, whether they have demonstrated their faithfulness and truthfulness. By this I mean, faithfulness in withstanding evil, and truthfulness in doing that which is good.

I refer to a passage from the Epistle of Paul to the Romans, chapter one, with which the apostle encourages and admonishes us. I say again, have we also demonstrated our sincerity? Do we pay heed to our inner voice when we have done things whereby our conscience is convicted? ". . . Their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another" (Rom. 2:15). Our conscience and thoughts testify as to whether or not we have done that which is right. The transgressors whom the apostle enumerates here also include these who are proud, for pride is a burdensome curse which leads unto all sin. He who desires it creates much evil (Sirach 10:15). Oh, that the proud and haughty would take to heart the warning which the Lord extends to the daughter of Zion! They who are proud shall grieve and lament, and will sit miserably on the ground. For the Lord says, "And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sack cloth; and burning instead of beauty" (Isaiah 3:24).

Oh! how wonderful it would be if only all parents would train their young children from the earliest days of their youth to be humble and lowly! Indeed, should we not honour and obey the commandments of our fathers the way the children of Jonadab, the son of Rechab once did? "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Because ye obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and had done according unto all that he hath commanded you: Therefore, thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Jonadab, the son of Rechab, shall not want a man to stand before me for ever" (Jeremiah 35:18,19).

Indeed, it is the responsibility of the parents to nurture and raise their children without ceasing. Menno Simons admonishes parents, ". . . to teach the children and their other dependants in all aspects, and to raise them up with due diligence, in order that thereby the souls of the children, as well as their own, might be saved." Should we not keep the commandments of our forefathers and be obedient to them the way the ancient Rechabites obeyed their father's commandments in order that it would be pleasing unto God? This is the reason that the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel proclaims the following words of promise, ". . . Jonadab, the son of Rechab, shall not want a man to stand before me for ever" (Jeremiah 35:19). Therefore, my beloved listeners, we have good reason to pray together with David repeating the words of the verse, "Keep me through thy word that I might live and let me not be ashamed in respect to my hope." David refers not only to the life here on earth, which we are presently living, but rather that we live on into eternity.

This is our plea as well, oh God! For He requires this of us that we shall strive earnestly for the kingdom of God as well as for His righteousness. To this can be added the words of promise, that whatever else might be needful for us here in this world shall be added unto us (Matt. 6). In the Thirty-seventh Psalm David says, "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart" (Ps. 37:4). When we truly consider the whole matter, what more could our hearts desire than to be with God in heaven eternally? Yes, standing before Him and ready to do His bidding. Oh God, this is our innermost longing and plea, and we desire this only and alone to be our fate. Do not let us be put to shame regarding our hope, for the same has been unequivocally assured unto us if only our life and walk would not always be so evil and contrary. Do help us, Oh, Lord, and keep us through Thy Word! Yes, this Your Word must always be our guide. Oh, so easily we allow ourselves to be drawn away from the same, which, however, is our own fault. The loss will be great indeed.

Our flesh is weak and lustful as was also that of the ancient Israelites in the desert. They thought evil of the life-sustaining manna which fell from heaven, and longed for the fleshpots of Egypt. This is noted here in a spiritual sense. If we ask the Lord that He should keep us through His Word, we must also do everything that He has commanded us to do, for then the Lord Jesus will be with us all the days of our lives. Jesus says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death" (John 8:51). And further He says, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). And again the Word says, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12).

If this spiritual food is no longer good enough for us, and we complain as Israel did saying, "And the people spake against God, . . . our soul loatheth this light bread" (Numbers 21:5), and we seek to satisfy ourselves with the wine of this world and do not heed the prophetic Word but cast it aside, then it will also be too much for us when we are warned against alien books which are not written by the watchers of Zion, the teachers that turn many unto righteousness. Do understand this correctly, for Solomon says, "The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd" (Eccl.

12). Solomon says further, ". . . by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end" (Eccl. 12:11,12). Of what value are such books and teachings of foreign confessions which are not in accordance with the faith in Jesus Christ? Undoubtedly they are filled with great wisdom, but they are not adequate to instruct us in our faith. They also teach us to take up the sword for the shedding of blood.

In contrast, we confess that Christ taught us to put the sword into its sheath. When the Lord Jesus returns, all wars, disagreements, and bloody garments will be burnt and consumed with fire (Isa. 2:4). The prophet says that no nation will brandish the sword against another. By this he refers to the children of the new covenant, who have accepted Christ in such a manner. Through this acceptance they have received the power to become the children of God. From that time forth these have been of one mind to zealously follow their Lord and King in His gentle and peaceful footsteps, with humility and all deference. They have fulfilled this goal, exerting all their might to make the swords into ploughshares; nor do they oppress anyone with war or the cries of war.

This teaching was accepted by the very first Christians, and it has borne fruit, so that an unarmed simple fisherman - according to the parable as portrayed in *The Wandering Soul* [Die Wandelnde Seele] - has more power to cleave asunder than the captains of war did previously with their iron bows. The chairs and benches were filled with zealous students with tears on their cheeks who gazed upon the teacher with hearts eager to learn. It was a joyous excitement when they saw each other filled with the sweet heavenly sap of the gospel. Thereafter they were sprinkled with the water of baptism like young plants growing beside streams of water. They were all united in this teaching. "What shall I tell you?" it states in the book *The Wandering Soul*: "Cows and bears were feeding together in the same meadow, and their young lay together." Indeed, one really ought to say that the mountains, forests, and meadows were united as one through the beautiful words of the gospel.

Behold, my friends, in this manner the teachings of the gospel have worked mightily in the hearts of men, creating them anew and inspiring them. But how unfortunate it is in these times of ours, that Christendom has fallen so totally asleep and that the love has grown cold. At the same time, man - as it seems - clings so much to his own righteousness that it has become almost impossible to settle differences if something has gone amiss because of a mistake or an oversight. I wish to say together with the apostle, "Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good." And especially, "Be kindly affectionate one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer" (Rom. 12:9-12).

Accordingly, I trust that we will be able to settle our differences and to adjust ourselves to the circumstances of the times, even if they are evil; and thereby not to lose, but to come to the knowledge of the will of the Lord, in accordance with Ephesians chapter 5, verses 16 and 17. Let us not allow ourselves to be drawn away from the Word of God which is, after all, intended to preserve us unto eternal life! Therefore, "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein" (Heb. 13:9).

Behold, this is also how it can happen when we hunger for the Word of God, that we try to feed ourselves with food which is not nourishing and which does not satisfy the soul. By this I am referring to the teachings of other confessions.

When the prodigal son started to starve and realized his need, he came to himself and went back home to his father, which is advisable for us as well. We should turn to our beloved heavenly Father and confess our mistakes to Him. We should ask of Him that He would not allow us to be put to shame, and that we would not be like the blind leading the blind who comfort their people in their misfortune through such books by saying, ". . . Peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jer. 8:11). May we heed the foundation of all teachings, ". . . [to] fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Eccl. 12). Yes, all those who wish to be saved must articulate themselves according to the Holy Word. For Christ says, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27). He is also the way, the truth and the life. There should be no doubt in this regard, if only we follow Him for then He will lead us into that eternal and blissful life. Since we are so weak and incapable of our own self, we should pray unto God according to the model that Christ, our Saviour, provides when He speaks the following words, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:23,24).

In the Seventy-eighth Psalm, Asaph says, "But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God." By nature we are unfit to do good. As a result, we have to break our will and open our hearts to God, our Lord, as David says in the Fifty-first Psalm, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Ps. 51:17). Wherefore we are able to see and have a firm assurance that our all-knowing God is well pleased by a contrite and fearful heart. Oh, that we would at all times walk honestly in His sight and offer Him our downtrodden and anguished hearts in sorrow and repentance!

That God in His love for mankind would gladly dwell in such hearts, which consider themselves to be unworthy, can clearly be understood from the prophet Isaiah, when he states in chapter 57, verse 15, "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, . . . and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." In chapter 66, the Lord speaks further, "For all those things hath mine hand made, and I all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" (Isa. 66:2).

We should not think that we have immediately been saved merely by crying "God, be merciful to me a sinner" together with the tax collector, and that we can then righteously ascend and enter unto our rest. For we must also forsake all the evil ways of which we are still partakers. For these sins, as it seems, appear to have priority within many people, since they continue to abide by the same. But even so, ". . . the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings" (Prov. 5:21). The Psalmist says, "Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance" (Psalm 90:8).

Oh, that everyone would confess and forsake their sins, so that we might also

receive mercy! May the God of all grace strengthen us and grant us power for this purpose, so that we would not merely say "God, be merciful to me a sinner," but that we would also truly strive to be upright before God with our all life and conduct. Oh that we would not only live here in this world to please man, but far rather to please God Who cleanseth our hearts. Amen, in Jesus' name. Amen!

Oh, yes, my dear friends! If only we would be afraid before the Holy Word and beware of and flee from all sin, so that we might be preserved unto the eternal life. When we have arrived in the joyous life everlasting, we will have achieved our ultimate goal and glorious hope. I cry unto the Lord in the words of song number 473, verses 6 to 10;

6. Gieb, dasz ich eifrig ringe,  
mein Herz und Sinn bezwinde,  
ja, was sich gegenstellt.  
Hoer', was ich noch begehre:  
Halt' mich bei reiner Lehre,  
bis ich fahr' aus der Welt.

7. Nichts soll mich von dir treiben,  
dir will ich treu verbleiben  
auch bei der groeszten Noth,  
wenn Satan Feuerpfeile  
durch Staerk und Macht in Eile  
der Seel' zu schieszen droht.

8. Herr! du pruefst Nier' und Herze,  
du weiszt, wie sehr der Schmerze  
mir an die Seele geht;  
du kennst das bitt're Sorgen,  
das jede Nacht und Morgen  
bewaffnet um nicht steht.

9. Ich suche meiner Sunden  
Erledigung zu finden,  
thu' dir die Miss'that kund;  
du kennst die schwachen Kraefte  
im Besserungsgeschaefte,  
mach' du mich selbst gesund.

10. Mir wuerden Worte fehlen,  
hier alles zu erzaehlen,  
was mir oft wiederfaehrt;  
auch bei Gebet und Singen  
musz ich noch oftmal ringen,  
weil Weltgedank' mich stoert.

[English translation]

6. Grant that I may strive sincerely,  
for my heart and soul to overcome  
every vain and sinful folly.  
Observe my great desire  
in Thy teachings to abide  
until I cross the great divide.

7. Nothing shall separate me from God  
to Thee I will be true  
even in the greatest danger  
when Satan throws his poison  
and arrows - strong and deadly -  
against my fear-struck soul.

8. Lord, prove my inner being  
Thou knowest the agony  
I suffer within my heart;  
Thou knowest the anxious sorrows  
that assail me night and day  
assembled in fearsome array.

9. I seek from sin and fear  
for'er to be freed!  
Reveal to me my evil ways  
my weakness and my need -  
in the ways of betterment -  
O, make me whole again.

10. Mere words cannot express  
here everything to tell  
Ev'n though I enjoy the good  
- when I pray and sing -  
I wrestle oft with worldliness  
which too much to me clings.

---

I will now turn to our text from the Gospel of Luke, chapter 18, verses 9-14.  
But first let us kneel in prayer . . .

---

We read from our text as follows:

And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I

thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. (Luke 18:9-14).

---

Thus far the reading of the text. "And He," namely, Christ, "spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others . . ." Beloved friends, Christ, our Saviour, frequently spoke and taught the people through parables. He knew about all things when he was addressing the people, and it seems as if whatever existed was a foreshadow and allegorical figure of the kingdom of God. He did not pay heed to the outwardly things, nor were these matters of His concern. His purpose here on earth was that the kingdom of God, which is eternal, might become rooted and established. For this reason He constantly sought to implant the same, and to this day, it still remains the will of the Lord that the Gospel be preached unto all people. To this end He spoke as is recorded in our text, "And He spake this parable . . ."

It is unfortunate, however, that many do not accept His teachings, but disdain and murmur about the same (John 14:6). In Luke chapter 7, verses 29 and 30, it is stated, "And all the people that heard him, and the tax collectors, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him." Oh, that self-proclaimed wisdom would cease to be in our midst and that it might have remained solely among the scribes and Pharisees! However, I am afraid that this evil is incipient within us to this very day, and that mankind does not respect the Word of God. Wherefore the Lord has reason to lament as He did through the prophet Jeremiah, "To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? Behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot harken: behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it " (Jerem. 6:10). And in chapter 7, verse 24, it is stated, "But they harkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward."

Alas, alas, this is to be feared! In part it is also manifest that not all have come to a knowledge of the grace of God in Christ Jesus, whereby they might lead a holy and God-fearing life. What is far worse, they are neither converted nor born again. They do not allow the grace of God to ". . . teach[ing] us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" in accordance with Titus chapter 2. Instead they wantonly misuse the precious grace of God when they hear that the forgiveness of sins is freely granted by Him for the sake of Jesus. They believe it to be sufficient for them that they are sinning in the grace of God. Or they believe that they do not need to allow this to be a matter of such great earnestness since this is the general practice of Christendom. They say to themselves that God dearly wants to forgive their sins and that surely He would not be that particular at all. Yes, they do not say this

openly, but in their hearts they think, "Oh, of what great value is the sacrifice of Christ?" Such poor souls and blinded people have not ever really understood the true grace of God. They do not in reality know what it means that forgiveness comes from God, and that from Him alone. Otherwise they would surely fear Him and live according to His commandments. But to the Pharisee-minded this is foolishness, and they do not really even want to learn to know about this.

---

The text says further, "Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican." Beloved friends, the Pharisees were a people who were greatly esteemed. Christ also says this about them, "Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not" (Matt. 23:2,3). Wherefore Isaiah chapter 10 also states, "Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed; To turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless!" (Isaiah 10:1,2). To this Jesus adds, ". . . they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments. And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues." For this purpose Jesus announced *His woe upon them* (Matt. 23).

In contrast, the publicans were despised and were regarded as being entirely rejected by the Pharisees. This can be seen in the way that the scribes and Pharisees wanted to bring accusations against the Lord Jesus. They said, "The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners" (Matt. 11:19). In Luke chapter 5, verse 30, it is stated, "But the scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?" It appears as if the Pharisees withdrew themselves completely from the publicans and had no dealings or friendship with them whatsoever. For which reason our beloved Saviour also instituted the separation of those who were punishable among His disciples and followers, as He says in Matthew chapter 18, "And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican" (Matt. 18:17).

Beloved friends, generally speaking, it has become a widely accepted practice in our time that one exalts himself above the other and seeks to out do everyone else with ostentatious clothing and other apparel. In order to portray this clearly and to take the same into consideration, we may appropriate and make reference to our parable and apply it to our current times, although the content in principle deals with prayer and the spiritual practice thereof. Oh, that everyone might truly consider and accept these truths for the salvation of their souls! For which reason our Saviour has given it and taught this teaching, so that all pride and haughtiness would be done away with and eradicated, and that lowliness and humility would be planted in its place and come into prominence, for then it will serve for our edification and for the salvation of our souls. Oh, if only all of us would genuinely humble ourselves, so that through the grace of God we might be raised up for the salvation of our souls!

In Amos chapter 6, it is stated, "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and

trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came! . . . Ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near; That lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall; That chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music, like David; that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph" (Amos 6:1,3-6).

Oh, that we would take this to heart, that we would remember and make a note thereof, against whom and for what reason the punishment of God is threatened! With woeful hearts we must apparently remember, lament and say together with the words of the prophet, " . . . But as if it were a very little thing, thou wast corrupted more than they in all thy ways. As I live, saith the Lord God, Sodom, thy sister, hath not done, nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters. Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good" (Ez. 16:47-50). Oh, wherefore I say! Do reflect upon this, for surely we are all living in over-abundance. Our striving is always to have everything unto perfection. I ask you to consider whether we do not thereby forget about the poor and neglect to help those in need? Here is a matter of great concern.

---

The two men mentioned in the text went up into the temple to pray. Prayer, my friends, is not among the spiritual practices of lesser importance; rather, it is one of the most necessary. In the exercise of prayer a believing Christian must truly humble himself before God wherein a reverend prayer can be made in truth. Such a prayer is a heartfelt conversation between a believing soul and God. Indeed, the believer must yield himself unto God and fall before His feet in confidence and trust, whereby, through the goodness of the Lord, the inwardly man can be strengthened and comforted.

For which reason also our Lord Jesus exhorts us so earnestly, through the parable of the widow, who prevailed upon the unjust judge with such great persistence to help her from her enemy. Therefore let us pray at all times and not become faint (Luke 18:1). Our souls should at all times appeal unto God through faith, from the most inwardly foundations of our hearts, and cling unto Him. A renewed power, well-being and blessing will flow like streams of living water from such a prayer, through Jesus Christ.

The two men went up into the temple to pray. From this we may learn that when we wish to enter into a conversation with God through prayer, we must cleanse and free our hearts from all the perishable matters of this world, and that together with Paul and all the saints, we must seek to have our walk in heaven (Phil. 3:20,21). If our souls and minds are completely immersed with earthly concerns and have their joy in these perishable, worthless things, it is quite impossible to have a worshipful prayer or to make a proper sacrifice.

These two men went into the temple to pray. This shall serve as an encouragement for us that if our prayer is to occur in the name of Jesus, it must

flow from the innermost foundations of our soul. If our hearts have been cleansed and sanctified, then they are indeed the true temple of the living God, wherein He wishes to dwell (2 Cor. 6:16). If our prayer is merely outwardly in words without an inward foundation, it is not pleasing unto God.

---

These two men differed in their appearance before man. The Pharisee was undoubtedly seen as having been a pious and God-fearing man. The publican, in contrast, was disdained and rejected, but the difference was only in so far as the outwardly appearance was concerned. The matter comes to an entirely different conclusion than this; namely, the tax collector, it says in the text, ". . . went down to his house justified rather than the other . . ."

Therefore we should not heed the accusations and rejections of man if we are indeed innocent. Rather, let this be our highest concern that we are accepted and received in grace by God, the Almighty One. What would it profit us even if we were esteemed, treasured and praised before man, but found in this that we were rejected and despised by God our Lord? It is well worth noting that which the Lord once spoke to Samuel, ". . . Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth: for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7).

This shall serve for our instruction as well as for our comfort. If we are regarded as pious by man, we have need to conduct a thorough examination of ourselves, whether the same can also subsist before God, Who knows all the secrets of our hearts. For what would it help us even if all the worldly-minded people would consider us to be true and upright Christians, but our consciences convicted us as mere hypocrites before God and the others? In contrast, why should it sadden us when people disparage and reject us, if we find that through grace, we have a good conscience before God? We will be judged not by man, but by the Lord (1 Cor. 4:4).

---

The text states further, "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess."

When we consider this Pharisee according to his outward appearance, we might well conclude that he was imbued with considerable falsehood. It is quite probably correct that he was possessed with many virtues in prayer - undoubtedly, they were good virtues - which he also enumerated in order to exalt himself. Fittingly Asaph says in the Seventy-third Psalm, "Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish. They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth. Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them. And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High? Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches" (Psalm 73:6-12).

Indeed, I say, the Pharisee exalted himself with virtues with which he may well

have been gifted. He said, ". . . God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are . . ." In so doing he thanked his God that he was no extortioner, unjust, adulterer or even as the publican. Rather he fasted two times during the week and gave a tithe of all that he had. Truly, this one--the Pharisee--could not have subsisted before God with all his talents which he considered himself to have, for he had not practised the same in accordance with the good will and pleasure of God. For God knoweth all the secrets of our hearts. Paul says, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:9,10).

Christ, at all times, demonstrated and taught us that we should take the narrow way. Since there is not room for any of the foregoing misdeeds on this way, only a few choose to travel it. The majority, however, choose the broad way. Our abundantly loving Saviour says, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matt. 7:13,14).

For this reason, it is a characteristic and mark of all the highly esteemed and fashionable - the wide and the broad - practices of the pharisees, that they do not have room on the narrow way, which we would do well to take note of. For I consider that the present lifestyles and the stately clothes - indeed, all the arrogant prayers and supplications - are probably similar to those of the Pharisees, if not even a little worse. Our beloved Saviour points to the scribes and Pharisees and warns His disciples, as well as to us, that we should beware of the same, in order that we would not become partakers of their sins. We should remember that we are but a farming people, and that a lowly state or condition is more becoming for us. Menno Simons writes, "In all honour and discretion, shun all unnecessary pride and arrogance and do not make nor desire any clothes except those which are essential and comfortable for your necessities and daily labour. For then they would not allow themselves to be seen at the godless temples and visitations where such pride and pageantry takes place" (Volume 2, page 209). Christ, our Saviour, spoke to the people, ". . . what went ye out to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they who are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in king's courts" (Luke 7:25).

---

When we further consider the Pharisee aforementioned in our text and wish to mirror ourselves on the example of the Saviour, He warns us, "Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily, I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly. And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward" (Matt. 6:2-5). "Moreover, when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance; for they disfigure their faces, that they

may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward" (Matt. 6:16).

From this foundational teaching of Jesus it is clearly manifest that inwardly this Pharisee was not the holy person that he pretended to be on the outside. He made his prayers, fasted and gave alms solely in order to be praised and honoured before man. He did not show these good deeds and virtues with a sincere heart or out of love for God and in love for his neighbour. He was truly one of those to whom Paul refers when he writes, "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (2 Tim. 3:5). Oh, therefore, my beloved friends! Do take heed lest anyone of you should harbour such a shallow facade as is evident in the Pharisees! They did all their works - as they themselves would have regarded them - because they wanted to be seen by the people. "Let your light so shine before men," says Jesus, "that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). It is evident that believers are known by their works, in the way that a tree is known by its fruits. All unfruitful trees and unbelievers are likewise known by their works, and can easily be distinguished thereby.

Such good works, however, should not be done only through an outwardly holy appearance, in order to thereby please a number of mortal beings. Nor should we follow the pretentious presentations and self-righteousness of the Pharisees and others. Their works consist chiefly of their own wishes and self-composed prayers, which according to Scripture are but a degrading and futile service of God. We must bring forth all such virtue through a personal faith, even as the Holy Scripture teaches and exhorts us to do. For which purpose, we have Christ and His apostles as an example for us, to follow in His footsteps which is the foremost commandment. All the foregoing we should do from the heart in honour of the One, Who created us. We should learn true humility and sincere lowliness from Christ, and we should deny all pride, which is the beginning of all evil (John 4:44). Pride arises out of the sinful heart of man and reveals itself openly through ostentatious house-keeping, and unseemly speaking, deeds and apparel.

In contrast, we should adorn ourselves inwardly with a humble spirit which does not exalt itself, but in humility esteems the other higher than himself. Outwardly in our lives we should fashion and model ourselves after the example of our Head and Saviour, Jesus Christ. We should reject all greed, which is called a root of all evil (1 Tim. 6:10) and whereof many sinful desires and deeds of unrighteousness arise. We should rather apparel ourselves in the love and mercy of our heavenly Father and exercise these virtues toward our neighbour and fellow man with the works of compassion, whereby, also, we can please the Creator in our time (Micah 6:8).

Behold, my friends! If we bring forth and allow such good works and fruits of love to shine forth in obeisance and humility, then these have a different essence than those for which the Pharisees desire to be praised. The Lord has no pleasure in such arrogant talk and bragging, which is evident from the prayer of Judith when she says, "The proud have not pleased Thee; but at all times Thou hast had pleasure in the prayer of the needy and humble" (Judith 9:13).

---

This is also the case with the publican in our text, when he prays, "And the

tax collector, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13). The publican, perhaps, had such a lowly attitude of himself because he knew that he was both despised and rejected by man, which he probably realized when the Pharisee thanked God that he was not like other people or like this publican.

But what should he do? He could not take his refuge for his lowly condition with man. In all likelihood he must have felt like David in Psalm One-hundred and eight when he called upon God, "Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man" (Psalm 108:12). Therefore it is best to appeal to God for grace, as David will have known himself - and which we all confess - that we are merely weak mortal beings. We may readily find the counsel that even if our fellowman thinks much of himself, in reality, this is as nothing, for grace and forgiveness can be received from God alone. In Psalm One-hundred and twenty-one, David says, "My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth" (Psalm 121:2).

Beloved, when we truly give thought and consider how this publican, disdained and rejected by the people, coped with his condition, we should accept this as a good teaching, that if we have an offence against anyone, we should openheartedly confess the same to God and appeal to Him for forgiveness, consolation, help and advice. What kind of needs do we have to bring before God other than the ones that the publican had. He realized that he was a sinner and did not hold back in presenting his prayer unto God, and to ask for grace. Oh, that we also might realize our sinful condition and truly repent for the same!

We have many reasons for which to confess our sins. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Prov. 28:13). In Psalm Thirty-two, David bursts forth with the following words:

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah. For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him. Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah. (Psalm 32:1-7).

Behold, my friends! David was so driven by the conviction of his sins that he cried and repented sincerely and asked for forgiveness. He also received the same, as it is stated, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). This is the promise in our text when it states, ". . . this man," namely, the tax collector, "went down to his house justified, rather than the other, for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 18:14).

## Editor's Note

Primary translation of 'A Sermon on Luke 18:9-14' and transcription for computer by Rev. Ben Hoepfner, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1990. The sermon was received by the editor courtesy of Mrs. Peter K. Penner, nee Elizabeth F. Reimer, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1984. Mrs. Penner is a great-granddaughter of Klaas Friesen (1793-1873). Approximately 12 sermons from the 1850s and 60s are contained in the Document Collection of son Johann P. Friesen (1847-1920) of Rosenort, Manitoba--courtesy Rev. Jake P. Friesen, Blumenort, Manitoba, 1982, presently in the possession of the Archives of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference, 440 Main Street, Steinbach, Manitoba. A number of these sermons can be identified as belonging to Klaas Friesen, by reference to the "Ministerial Journal" of colleague Johann Dueck (1801-1866) of Muntau who has recorded the name of the preacher who spoke on a particular Sunday during the period 1848 to 1862.

# PART EIGHT

## JOHANN DUECK 1801-1866

### Chapter One

### Biography

**A Biography of Reverend Johann Dueck (1801-1866), Muntau, Molotschna Colony, South Russia. By Delbert F. Plett, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1992.**

---

#### Section One. Klaas Dueck 1743-1826.

1 The father of Johann Dueck (1801-1866) was Klaas Dueck who emigrated from Prussia in 1817. He settled in the village of Muntau, Molotschna Colony, South Russia. Johann Dueck (1801-1866) and his family lived in Muntau for 40 years as did two of his brothers.<sup>1</sup> A Claas Dyck family is listed in the 1819 immigration records as follows:

Family 17. Dyck, Claas, Fuerstenauerweide, age 76, Landwirt, to ... Molotschna (father of number 13). Family 13. Dyck, Abraham, Fuerstenauerweide, age 36, to . . . Molotschna.<sup>2</sup>

According to the family history by John P. Dyck of Springstein, Manitoba, this is the father of Johann Dueck (1801-1866).<sup>3</sup> This is confirmed by the 1835 census for the Molotschna Colony which lists a Klaas Dueck (died 1826) in the village of Muntau with the following children: Jakob - born 1800, Johann - born 1801, Bernhard - born 1806, Aaron - born 1810, Peter - born 1813, and Gerhard - died 1819.<sup>4</sup> This information has been verified by Henry Schapansky who writes that "Nicholas Dyck b. 1743 was probably listed at Walldorf in 1776 [Konsignation]: no children listed, one female person (Rosenort Gemeinde), later of Furstenau."<sup>5</sup> Mr. Schapansky subsequently also advised that "baptismal records for the Rosenort Gemeinde indicate that Abram Dueck (born 1783), son of Klaas Dueck of Fuerstenau, was baptised in 1801."<sup>6</sup> The 1835 census also provides the information that Klaas Dueck was the son of a Johann Dueck.

Family historian, John P. Dyck, Springstein, Manitoba, has written as follows regarding Klaas Dueck:

Klaas Dueck arrived in Russia in 1817 and spent the first winter with his brother Jakob Dueck in Chortitz or at least in the Chortitz Colony. The following year, 1818, Klaas Dueck settled with his

family in Muntau in the Molotschna Colony, that was begun in 1804.<sup>7</sup>

His son Jakob Dueck (1800-1868) married and remained resident in Muntau, where he raised his family of 21 children, 11 of whom grew to adulthood and had families of their own. His son, Jakob Dueck (1826-1914), also lived in Muntau where he was a carpenter and builder of windmills.<sup>8</sup>

At the time of the 1808 Revisions-Listen the Kleine Gemeinde (KG) fellowship in Muntau included the following: Johann Friesen (1768-1835)--Wirtschaft 3<sup>9</sup>; Jakob Giesbrecht (born 1771)--Wirtschaft 4;<sup>10</sup> Dirck Reimer (born 1782)--Wirtschaft 5<sup>11</sup>; Gerhard Giesbrecht (born 1747)--Wirtschaft 7<sup>12</sup>; Jakob Penner (born 1771)--Wirtschaft 8<sup>13</sup>; Cornelius Heidebrecht--Wirtschaft 10<sup>14</sup>; Jakob Loewen--Wirtschaft 11<sup>15</sup>; Anton Schellenberg--Wirtschaft 12;<sup>16</sup> Johann Loewen (born 1781)--Wirtschaft 13<sup>17</sup>; Johann Koop (born 1766)--Wirtschaft 14<sup>18</sup>; Jakob Reimer (born 1752)--Wirtschaft 18<sup>19</sup>; Peter Fast (born 1780)--Wirtschaft 19<sup>20</sup>; Daniel Loewen (born 1773)--Wirtschaft 20;<sup>21</sup> David Hiebert (born 1768)--Wirtschaft 21.<sup>22</sup> KG-related families who settled in Muntau in 1818 or later include the following: Peter Rempel (1792-1837) who immigrated to Russia with his mother and stepfather, Johann Janzen, in 1818<sup>23</sup>; Klaas Dueck (born ca.1743) immigrated to Russia in 1818 with his son Johann Dueck (1801-1866), who became a KG minister. According to Dueck's "Ministerial Journal", the KG fellowship in Muntau included Isaac Harder<sup>24</sup> and Johann de Veer.<sup>25</sup> Cornelius Loepp (1810-1891), the son of Cornelius Loepp (born 1783) who settled in Blumstein in 1804, farmed in Muntau for many years.<sup>26</sup> Cornelius Loepp is also listed as a Beisitzer or deputy mayor of Muntau in the 1848 "Gemeinde Berichte".<sup>27</sup> The other Beisitzer is Jakob Dueck who may very possibly be the brother to Johann Dueck (1801-1866). The school teacher and author of the 1848 report filed for Muntau is listed as Gerhard Goossen who is probably Gerhard Goossen (1811-1854) who later taught in Schoenau.<sup>28</sup> Isaak Regehr (1797-1840) apparently lived in Muntau as son Jakob (1832-1906) was reported to be from the village at the time of his marriage in 1852.<sup>29</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
1	Klaas Dueck	1743		1826
m				
2	Abraham Dueck	1783		
2	Peter Dueck			before 1892
2	Jakob Dueck	Feb 14, 1800		Oct 3, 1868
2	Johann Dueck	1801		Mar 3, 1866
2	Bernhard Dueck	1806		
2	Aron Dueck	1810		
2	Peter Dueck	1813		
2	Gerhard Dueck			1819

#### Section Two. Elias Loewen (died 1803) Family.

1 Johann Dueck married Helena Loewen (1806-1879).<sup>30</sup> She appears to have been the daughter of Jakob Loewen (born 1771) from Kalthof, Prussia.<sup>31</sup> According to the research of Henry Schapansky, Jakob Loewen (born 1771) was the son of Elias Loewen who died on August 3, 1803, in Koldau, Prussia. Elias

Loewen is listed in the village of Kalthof in the 1776 Konsignation in Prussia: "Loewen, Elias, Kalthof, weber, 1 son 1 daughter, miets-man." His oldest son, Heinrich Loewen (born 1762), and youngest son, Abraham Loewen (born 1779), remained in Prussia.<sup>32</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
1	Elias Loewen			Aug 3,1803
m	Maria Vogt		Jan 29,1758	
2	Hein Loewen	Mar 2,1762	Nov 15,1795	
m	Maria Doell	Feb 28,1753		
2	Maria Loewen			
2	Elias Loewen	1764	Oct 19,1794	
1	Elias Loewen			Aug 3,1803
2m	Helena Thiessen	1745	Nov 25,1773	
2	Jakob Loewen	Nov 7,1774		
2	Abraham Loewen	Sep 22,1779	Apr 17,1798	
m	Helena Thiessen	May 14,1783		

2 Son Elias Loewen (born 1764) was baptised in 1793 at which time he is shown as being from Koldau, Prussia. He married Katharina whose last name is not known at this time. In 1803 the Elias Loewen family immigrated to Russia.<sup>33</sup> They are listed as follows in the immigration records:

Loewen, Elias, Kalthof, born 1764, Leinweber, to Muensterberg, married October 19, 1794, Fast, Helena, Kalthof, age 29, married June 16, 1793 Heuboden, to Muensterberg; children Wilhelm born May 6, 1796, Heinrich October 20, 1802 Kalthof.<sup>34</sup>

On June 20, 1804, Elias Loewen (born 1764) and his family settled on Wirtschaft 19 in Muensterberg. The family is listed as follows in the 1808 Revisions-Listen:

Elias Loewen 44, from Koldau, Amt Marienburg, linenmaker, wife Helena 35, children Wilhelm 12, Heinrich 7, Jakob 3, Helena 1, mother Helena 63. Property 1 wagon, 1/2 plow, 1 harrow, 4 horses and 7 cattle.<sup>35</sup>

The connection to Muensterberg is significant as it gave the Loewen family a direct link to one of the two village strongholds of the KG when it was first founded in 1812. The other village--at the other end of the Molotschna Colony--was Petershagen, home of Klaas Reimer (1770-1837) founding Aeltester of the KG. The connection to Elias Loewen Sr. also gave granddaughter, Helena Loewen, and her husband, Johann Dueck (1801-1866), a three generation link to the strong Anabaptist-Mennonite traditions and conservative cultural values which gave rise to the formation of this reform movement. The KG community in Muensterberg in 1808 included the following; Franz Kroeker (born 1772) - Wirtschaft 2<sup>36</sup>; Johann Reimer (born 1774) - Wirtschaft 8<sup>37</sup>; Julius Friesen (born 1780) - Wirtschaft 11<sup>38</sup>; Abraham Wittenberg - Wirtschaft 14<sup>39</sup>; Johann Kopp (born 1741) - Wirtschaft 15;<sup>40</sup> Jakob Friesen - Wirtschaft 16<sup>41</sup>; Hermann Neufeld (1760-1835) - Wirtschaft 17<sup>42</sup>; Elias Loewen - Wirtschaft 19<sup>43</sup>; and Isaac Thiessen

(born 1763) - Wirtschaft 20.<sup>44</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
2	Elias Loewen	1764	Oct 19,1794	
m	Helena Fast	1774		
3	Wilhelm Loewen	May 6,1796		
3	Helena Loewen	1799		
3	Heinrich Loewen	Oct 20,1802		
3	Jakob Loewen	1805		
3	Helena Loewen	1807		
3	Margaretha Loewen	Oct 26,1812		

2 Son Jakob Loewen (born 1774) was born in Leske, Prussia, and was baptised in 1794. The family immigrated to Russia in 1803 where they settled on Wirtschaft 17. The family is listed as follows in the 1808 Revisions-Listen:

Jakob Loewen, age 37, from Koldow, Amt Marienburg, Leinweber,  
Wife Catarina age 44, Children Catarina 14, Jakob 10, Helena 3,  
Abraham 1. Property, 1 wagon, 3 horses and 8 cattle.<sup>45</sup>

According to the "Prediger List" of 1823 Jakob Loewen also became a minister. The information regarding the family of Elias Loewen (died 1803) is based on the research of Henry Schapansky, New Westminster, B.C.<sup>46</sup> No information is currently available regarding any of the children of Jakob Loewen other than their daughter Helena Loewen who appears to have married Johann Dueck (1801-1866), the KG minister of Muntau.<sup>47</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
2	Jakob Loewen	Nov 7,1774		
m	Catarina	1764		
3	Catarina Loewen	1794		
3	Jakob Loewen	1798		
3	Helena Loewen	1805		
3	Abraham Loewen	1807		

### Section Three. Johann Dueck (1801-1866), Muntau.

2 Son Johann Dueck married Helena Loewen (1806-1879).<sup>48</sup> They lived in Muntau for 40 years as did two of his brothers.<sup>49</sup> Susanna Dueck Penner has written that Johann and Helena Dueck apparently lived in Fischau for a while before they settled down in Muntau. This is confirmed by the "Wahl-Liste von die Lehrer der Kleine Gemeinde" as recorded by Peter W. Friesen which shows a Johann Dueck resident in Fischau in the ministerial elections for the years 1837 and 38. The Johann Dueck family must have moved to Muntau shortly thereafter since he is listed there in the ministerial election records for 1840.<sup>50</sup> Susanna Dueck Penner provides the following information regarding her grandparents:

My grandfather, Johann Dueck, born in 1801, came along with his parents, Klaas Duecks, from West Prussia, near Danzig, to South Russia, as a 16 year old boy. For the first winter they stayed with a Jakob Dueck family in the Chortitz settlement. Then they moved to

the Molotschna where his parents, Klaas Duecks, settled in the village of Muntau; where the grandparents, Johann Duecks--after apparently living for a time in Fischau, also lived for some 20 years. Grandfather had a brother who also lived in Muntau. The names of his children were Jakob, Cornelius, and Aron; they remained in Russia, where my father, Peter L. Dueck, frequently wrote letters to them.<sup>51</sup>

Johann Dueck ". . . was said to have been a fairly large man with a big build. By comparison, grandmother [Mrs. Dueck] was only a small person and was fairly plump."<sup>52</sup> Johann Dueck was elected as a deacon of the KG on July 22, 1848. Almost a year later, on July 21, 1849, he was elected as a minister--a position in which he served faithfully until his death in 1866. He was keenly interested in the history of the church and is credited by Aeltester Peter P. Toews (1841-1922) as one of four Ohms whose writings and records he used to compile his history of the KG in 1874.<sup>53</sup>

Of Johann Dueck's writings only his "Ministerial Journal" has survived the passage of time and has been translated and published in this volume (see Part Eight, Chapter Two).<sup>54</sup> The journal details the ministry of an active servant of God who worked tirelessly, preaching, teaching, attending ministerial meetings, and counselling parishioners and others in need. The "Journal" is an extremely valuable record of marriages, deaths and other events in the community. It also chronicles the efforts of the ministerial of the KG to articulate a particular understanding of Christian truth and the impact that this effort had in the day to day life of its membership.

Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) writes as follows regarding the death of his dear friend and neighbour Johann Dueck:

I also wish to notify you--perhaps you have heard it already--that our minister Johann Dueck has died of a painful 13 day long nerve fever, having reached the age of 64 years and 7 months. And Margaretha, the daughter of my children, Johann Duecks, died one day after the death of her grandfather, of a 2 day excruciatingly painful sickness at the age of 4 years and nine months; and together with her grandfather, she was brought to her mortal resting place and grave on the 7th day of March, 1866, where they shall rest until the resurrection and the great judgement day. Oh, this departure is most tragic to us. But if we would truly give thought to our grief, we would surely wish, "Ah, if only we might soon be there as well." Song 199 in the old *Gesangbuch* without notes.

And in his sickness this Ohm [Johann Dueck] has very earnestly counselled our Aeltester Friesen that he should but work so that he might once again reunite all the minds that are separated and to build up again the house which is fallen. Alas, my beloved brethren, I do believe that all of us could well apply this counsel to ourselves, since all of us must take some of the blame. I believe that if everyone would truly examine themselves in this regard, it would not be so difficult since we have all had a part in this and were also

present at the communion service. Nor can we lay all the fault at the feet of the Aeltester that he is not worthy to serve the office, for our beloved God has allowed him to come to repentance and has forgiven him his sins. How, then, can we now judge him? Are we not thereby placing God in judgement? I for my part, cannot do so.<sup>55</sup>

The Christian zeal and devotion of Johann and Helena Dueck is affirmed by the fact that most of the five sons and two daughters who survived them were intimately involved with the work of the Church. Two of them were ministers, one was an Aeltester, one was a deacon and another son was a teacher. After the death of Johann Dueck in 1866 his widow married for the second time to Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) of Muntau.<sup>56</sup> She and her husband immigrated in 1875 and settled in the village of Gruenfeld, Manitoba, where she died. She is buried in the old Gruenfeld cemetery near the intersection of P.T.H. 52 and Provincial Road 216.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
2	Johann Dueck	Apr 16,1801		Mar 3,1866
m	Helena Loewen	Feb 12,1806	1824	Nov 13,1879
3	Anna Dueck	Jun 18,1825		Apr 6,1887
3	Jakob Dueck	Nov 3,1826		five weeks old
3	Helena Dueck	1828		
3	Jakob Dueck	Oct 19,1829		Oct 21,1831
3	Katharina Dueck	Dec 17,1831		Feb,1832
3	Johann L. Dueck	Jan 15,1833		Mar 29,1894
3	Jakob Dueck	Oct 6,1835		Oct,1836
3	Bernhard Dueck	Aug 16,1837		Oct 28,1896
3	Jakob L. Dueck	Jun 26,1839	Dec 15,1856	Oct 27,1893
3	Abraham L. Dueck	Feb 16,1841	Feb 27,1862	Jul 18,1899
3	Peter L. Dueck	Oct 15,1842		Jan 15,1887
3	Aron Dueck	Aug 1,1844		Aug 10,1844
3	Katharina Dueck	Aug 8,1845		Aug 24,1845
3	Klaas Dueck	Oct 18,1846		Nov 5,1846
3	Aron Dueck	Mar 16,1848		Mar 20,1848
3	Katharina Dueck	Jan 6,1850		Jan 14,1850

#### Section Four. The Descendants of Johann Dueck (1801-1866).

The remainder of this chapter will consist of brief biographies of the married children of Helena Loewen and Johann Dueck and a listing of their grandchildren and whom they married. It is noteworthy that many members of the Dueck family were literate and articulate people writing extensively in journals and letter correspondence. Sons Johann, Jakob, Abraham and Peter L. Dueck all left behind significant writings relating both to the development of the KG and also to the history of the Steinbach-Kleefeld area of Manitoba.

3 Daughter Anna Dueck married Johann Loewen the son of Isaac Loewen (1787-1873), one-time KG deacon of Lindenau. The Johann Loewen family lived in the village of Kleefeld, Molotschna. They moved to the village of Blumenhof, Borosenko, in 1872, purchasing a village farm from brother-in-law Johann Warkentin who was moving to his own estate called Hochfeld. The family moved

to Rosenort, Manitoba, in 1875 where Johann Loewen was elected as a deacon.  
 4 Daughter **Helena Loewen** (1855-1886) married the widower **Cornelius E. Eidse** (1840-1914) and the family moved to Lonetree, Kansas in 1898.<sup>57</sup> Sons **Peter D. Loewen** (1860-1927), **Johann D. Loewen** (1862-1934), **Abraham D. Loewen** (1864-1961), and **Cornelius D. Loewen** (1866-1939) were progressive farmers living in Rosenort, Manitoba.<sup>58</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
3	<b>Anna Dueck</b>	Jun 18,1825		Apr 6,1887
m	<b>Johann Loewen</b>	Dec 29,1823	Jul 24,1845	Dec 2,1881
4	<b>Johann Loewen</b>	Dec 26,1846		Dec 25,1847
4	<b>Isaak Loewen</b>	Oct 19,1848		Jul,1851
4	<b>Anna Loewen</b>	Dec 17,1850	Jan 31,1871	Jul 6,1877
m	<b>Peter Hiebert</b>	Sept 19,1846		Oct 27,1917
4	<b>Johann Loewen</b>	Mar 29,1853		Jul,1860
4	<b>Helena Loewen</b>	Feb 21,1855	Feb 2,1874	Oct 28,1886
m.	<b>Corn. E. Eidse</b>	Aug 26, 1840		Oct 30, 1914
4	<b>Isaak Loewen</b>	Feb 21,1855		1857
4	<b>Isaak Loewen</b>	Jul 31,1857		1857
4	<b>Jacob Loewen</b>	Mar 10,1859		Jun 14,1859
4	<b>Peter D. Loewen</b>	Jun 6,1860	Oct 18,1884	May 21,1927
m	<b>Elis B. Froese</b>	Jul 27,1865		May 21,1927
4	<b>Johann D. Loewen</b>	May 27,1862	Apr 6, 1884	Oct 1,1934
m.	<b>Elis. K. Kroeker</b>	Jan 9,1864		Jul 31,1915
4	<b>Abraham D. Loewen</b>	May 19,1864	Oct 2,1886	Nov 22,1951
m	<b>Marg B. Kroeker</b>	Aug 6,1866		Jun 23,1932
4	<b>Corn. D. Loewen</b>	Nov 17,1866	Dec 29,1888	Jun 15,1939
m	<b>Maria Dueck</b>	Dec 17,1870		Mar 27,1932

3 Daughter **Helena Loewen** (born 1828) married **Jakob Penner**, the son of **Peter Penner**, one-time KG minister of Prangenau, Molotschna. The **Jakob Penner** family lived in Prangenau from where they moved to Friedensfeld. This was a settlement of 5400 acres located 30 miles north of Nikopol, founded by the KG in 1866. **Johann W. Dueck** has written that the **Penners** had a very large enterprise in Friedensfeld, Russia, which he describes as follows:

To the **Penner** family one could aptly apply the verse, "These are simple things for God, to enrich the poor and impoverish the rich". The **Penners** had a very large enterprise in Friedensfeld of which I myself still have many remembrances from when we lived in the village, even though I was only six or seven years old. I can still remember that they had a very large massive two story dwelling house, which was built of kilned bricks and a roof covered with plates of kilned clay. A fine carriage with glass windows drawn by three horses was their mode of transportation when they went visiting.

At the time we lived in Friedensfeld they at times had in excess of one hundred workers. It was not unusual for them to have draught animals consisting of one hundred pair of oxen and one

hundred pair of horses. Through land dealings and efficient enterprises the Penners aspired more and more to a large empire. After we had been in America for about ten years they were at the highest point [of their prosperity] as their cash assets consisted of about one hundred and twenty thousand ruble in deposits at Banks and loans owing to them. Then came the crash!

Uncle Penner bought many thousand desjatinen of land, paying--according to what he himself wrote us in a letter--forty thousand ruble down and signing promissory notes for the balance. From the balance of this sum they now had to purchase agricultural implements and hire thousands of workers; soon this money was all expended. Then what happened? Many bad years came one after the other so that there was barely enough production to maintain this impressive farming enterprise. The interest compounded by many thousand of rubles every year and could not be paid. The mortgage holders--from whom uncle Penner had bought the land--threatened to repossess it, if it was not paid for by a set deadline. Through all this trouble and worry it happened that uncle Penner died of a heart attack after he had lain speechless for three or four days.

After uncle Penner's death the mortgage holders took the land, livestock, equipment and so on, all of which had also been given as security. So the Penners were completely bankrupt and came into poverty. Aunt Penner died some years after this bankruptcy. Now we friends in America collected and donated money, and in this year--1903--have already helped three of the Penners' children to come here to America. These are: Johann D. Penners, B Janz's (Penners' daughter Helena) and H. Siemens (Penners' daughter). Also there still is a Johann Siemens family that would dearly like to be helped over here.<sup>59</sup>

The Penner family belonged to the Brüdergemeinde at Friedensfeld, South Russia.

4 Son **Johann D. Penner** emigrated from Russia in 1903 with the assistance of relatives in Manitoba. Eventually he established a large furniture store in Winnipeg and became known as "Moeble Panna". This enterprise folded after some time.<sup>60</sup> Daughter **Helena D. Penner** married Benjamin Janz and the family immigrated in 1903. They homesteaded in Main Centre, Saskatchewan, where Benjamin Janz served for many years as the Aeltester of the local Brüdergemeinde.<sup>61</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
3	Helena Dueck	1828		
m	Jakob Penner			
4	Johann D. Penner	Jun 13, 1849		
m				
4	Helena D. Penner			
m	Benjamin Janz			
4	Penner			
m	H. Siemens			
4	Penner			
m	Johann Siemens			

3 Son **Johann L. Dueck** (1833-1894) married for the first time to Agata Dueck<sup>62</sup> who was the daughter of Peter Dueck (1801-1842) and Anna Harms (1808-1874) of Blumstein.<sup>63</sup> Johann L. Dueck married for the second time to Margaretha Reimer (1838-1867). They announced their wedding bans on June 8, 1857, and were married 10 days later on June 18. Margaretha Dueck, nee Reimer, "died in childbirth on March 22, 1867, having been sick for 13 hours. She gave birth to a little boy, Heinrich, who attained the age of 42 months when he departed also."<sup>64</sup> The Johann L. Dueck family lived on a Wirtschaft in Alexanderkrone. Dueck was elected as a deacon of the Molotschna congregation of the KG in 1870.<sup>65</sup> The family continued to reside in Alexanderkrone, Molotschna until 1875 when they immigrated to America and settled in the village of Gruenfeld, now Kleefeld, Manitoba. Dueck married for the third time to Anna Thielmann, the daughter of Jakob Thielmann of Neukirch, Molotschna.<sup>66</sup> Johann L. Dueck married for the fourth time to the widow Cornelius Toews, nee Cornelia Boschmann of Gnadenu, Kansas.<sup>67</sup> A number of letters written by Johann L. Dueck were published in 1990.<sup>68</sup>

4 Son **Johann D. Dueck** married Margaretha Hiebert, the daughter of Johann Hiebert (1816-1890) of Alexanderwohl, Molotschna, and later Gruenfeld, Manitoba.<sup>69</sup> The family lived in the village of Alexanderfeld, southwest of Hillsboro, where Johann D. Dueck served for many years as the pastor of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite congregation there.<sup>70</sup> Daughter **Maria Dueck** married Franz K. Goossen, the son of KG minister Gerhard P. Goossen (1832-1872).<sup>71</sup> The Franz K. Goossen family lived in Hochstadt until around 1900 when they moved to Canada, Kansas. They lived there for about a year. From here they moved to Clearspring, Manitoba, where they lived until 1916 when they moved to Littlefield near Lubbock, Texas, where they lived for one year after which they returned to Canada because of the war conditions. They settled in Steinbach, Manitoba, where they lived for the rest of their days.<sup>72</sup> Daughter **Elisabeth R. Dueck** married Johann T. Regier, the son of Jakob Regier and Anna Toews of Hierschau, Molotschna.<sup>73</sup> Johann T. Regier died soon after the marriage.<sup>74</sup> Elisabeth Dueck married for the second time to the widower Johann B. Toews, son of Peter W. Toews, Blumenort, Manitoba.<sup>75</sup> Daughter **Anna T. Dueck** married Heinrich W. Bartel and the family lived in Hochstadt, near Kleefeld, Manitoba.<sup>76</sup> Daughter **Katharina T. Dueck** married Jakob P. Penner, the son of Peter H. Penner (1839-1916), Greenland, Manitoba. In 1911 the young couple moved to Steinbach, Manitoba, where they operated a business. In 1916 they moved to a farm in Clearspring, northeast of Steinbach. In 1927 the family moved to Linden, Alberta.<sup>77</sup> Daughter **Helena T. Dueck** married Johann G. Warkentin, the son of Johann L. Warkentin of Blumenhof, Manitoba.<sup>78</sup> Around 1905 Helena and her husband moved to Greenland where they farmed on a small scale and ran a blacksmith shop. Son **Jakob T. Dueck** married Sara W. Plett, the daughter of Johann L. Plett, a well-to-do farmer in Blumenhof, Manitoba. She died in the flu epidemic of 1900 only a few weeks prior to the deaths of her father, Johann L. Plett, and her grandfather, Cornelius S. Plett (1820-1900). Jakob T. Dueck married for the second time to Aganetha Penner the daughter of Cornelius Penner (1854-1899). The young couple lived in Greenland until 1904 when they moved to Hochstadt. After the death of Jakob T. Dueck, his widow remarried to Johann G. Warkentin, her brother-in-law. Daughter **Margaretha T. Dueck** married Peter P.

Penner, the brother of the husband of her older sister, Katharina. Around 1910 they moved to the Ridgewood district northwest of Steinbach where they farmed. Peter P. Penner also served as a deacon of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite.

Gen.	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
3	<b>Johann L. Dueck</b>	Jan 15,1833		Mar 29,1894
m	Agata Dueck	Jun 6,1836	Aug 21,1855	Nov 27,1856
4	Johann Dueck	Jul 22,1856		
m	Margaretha Hiebert	Mar 29,1860	Oct 7,1877	Sept 2,1936
3	<b>Johann L. Dueck</b>	Jan 15,1833		Mar 29,1894
2m	Marg Reimer	Dec 4,1838	Jun 18,1857	Mar 22,1867
4	Helena Dueck	May 12,1858		Nov 7,1858
4	Helena Dueck	Aug 20,1859		Nov 10,1873
4	Marg Dueck	May 11,1862		Mar 3,1866
4	Maria Dueck	May 20,1863	Nov 4,1883	Jan 19,1940
m	Franz K. Goossen	Oct 26,1862	Nov 4,1883	Apr 28,1929
4	Elis Dueck	Jan 21,1865		Jul 9,1899
m	Johann Regier	Jan 1,1863	Jan 1,1885	Jun 4,1886
2m	Joh B. Toews	Mar 30,1865	Apr 17,1887	Jul 8,1967
3	<b>Johann L. Dueck</b>	Jan 15,1833		Mar 29,1894
3m	Anna Thielmann	Sept 18,1843	Jun 11,1867	Mar 12,1882
4	Anna T. Dueck	Apr 6,1870		
m	Heinrich Bartel	May 22,1867	Sept 9,1894	Mar 6,1949
4	Katarina T. Dueck	Jan 2,1873		Jun 3,1951
m	Jakob P. Penner	May 6,1877	Nov 6,1898	Sep 20,1956
4	Helena Dueck	Apr 27,1875		Jan 22,1908
m	Johann G. Warkentin	Dec 30,1867	Jul 10,1895	Jan 30,1947
4	Jakob T. Dueck	Apr 27,1875		Mar 13,1908
m	Sara W. Plett	Oct 5,1880	Sep 18,1898	Sep 22,1900
2m	Aganetha Penner	Feb 7,1882	Apr 20,1902	Oct 24,1934
4	Margaretha T. Dueck	Jun 8,1878	Mar 8,1896	Dec 25,1955
m	Peter P. Penner	Mar 23,1875		Jun 19,1949
4	Bernhard T. Dueck			
3	<b>Johann L. Dueck</b>	Jan 15,1833		Mar 29,1894
4m	Cornelia Boschmann	Jul 15,1837	Dec. 5,1886	

3 Son **Bernhard L. Dueck** married Agatha Thielmann, a sister to the third wife of his older brother, Johann.<sup>79</sup> The Bernhard Dueck family lived in the village of Schoenau until 1867 when they moved to the village of Friedensfeld, northwest of Nikopol which was founded by the KG in that year. Bernhard L. Dueck left the KG and joined the Mennonite Brethren Church. Alfred Redekopp has written as follows regarding their church involvement:

Bernhard and Agatha Dueck's family was prominent in the Friedensfeld M. B. Church. Soon after establishing their home in Friedensfeld, the Mennonite Brethren families met at their home for fellowship and worship. Bernhard Dueck was deacon for the group and his neighbour, Jakob Jantz, was the minister. Bernhard

promoted Sunday School, youth programs and music and singing associations with great enthusiasm. Music and singing was the family's greatest love. In 1885 he wrote the report of the Friedensfeld M. B. Church for the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Russia. He was also active in other services requiring his writing and record-keeping skills. For a number of years he was in charge of fire protection (Brandaeltester) and he also looked after the well-being of orphans (Waisenvorsteher).<sup>80</sup>

Bernhard L. Dueck is mentioned by the Mennonite Brethren historian Peter M. Friesen.<sup>81</sup> He did well financially and operated a dye-works in addition to farming. Notwithstanding the differences in religious beliefs, he corresponded regularly with his relatives in Manitoba.<sup>82</sup> Bernhard L. Dueck was a big heavy-set man like his father, Johann Dueck, and brother, Peter L. Dueck.

4 Son **Johann B. Dueck** married Susanna Dueck, the daughter of Peter Dueck of Muntau. The family lived in Saborowka, Siberia. Son **Jakob B. Dueck** lived in Friedensfeld until 1911 when they moved to the village of Waldheim, Omsk, Siberia. Son **Bernhard B. Dueck** lived in Friedensfeld where he served as the choir leader of the M. B. congregation. In 1903 the family moved to the village of Bahnhof in the Memrik settlement and from there moved on to Poltava, 5 miles from the city of Choral, where he and his brother Abram were partners in a 4 story steel mill together with 2 other men. The business was near bankruptcy at the outbreak of the World War. Son **Abram B. Dueck** married Aganeta Wiebe the daughter of Jakob Wiebe.<sup>83</sup>

Gen.	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
3	<b>Bernhard Dueck</b>	Aug 16,1837		Oct 28,1896
m	Agatha Thielmann	1837		Jan 24,1895
4	<b>Johann B. Dueck</b>	1863		
m	Susanna Dueck	Oct 26,1868		
4	<b>Jakob B. Dueck</b>	Aug 28,1865		Apr 3,1926
m	Liese Regier	Sep 17,1865		Aug 5,1935
4	<b>Helena Dueck</b>	1867		
4	<b>Bernhard Dueck</b>	Nov 28,1869		Jan 12,1936
m	Margaretha Wiebe	Oct 2,1872		Feb 8,1937
4	<b>Abram B. Dueck</b>	Oct 24,1872		
m	Aganeta Wiebe			
4	<b>Anna B. Dueck</b>	1879		

3 Son **Jakob L. Dueck** was married to Maria Rempel (1840-1917), the daughter of Peter Rempel of Paulsheim.<sup>84</sup> Heinrich Rempel has recorded that the wedding took place at the home of his parents in Paulsheim. The Jakob L. Dueck family farmed in Gnadenthal, Molotschna.<sup>85</sup> In 1875 the family immigrated to America where they settled in Gruenfeld, Manitoba. Jakob L. Dueck was elected as a minister of the KG on March 4, 1882.<sup>86</sup> He died in 1893 of very severe kidney failure.<sup>87</sup> A least one of his letter books covering the period 1877 to 1883 is still extant.<sup>88</sup>

4 Son **Johann R. Dueck** married Margaretha P. Kroeker, the daughter of

Franz M. Kroeker who settled in Steinbach, Manitoba, in 1874. Kroeker established his daughter and her husband on his Wirtschaft in Steinbach. Later Johann R. Dueck also had a retail store. He was a song leader in the KG. Son **Peter R. Dueck** married Sara P. Kroeker a sister to his older brother's wife. They also established their home in Steinbach, across the street from her parent's place. Peter R. Dueck was elected as a deacon in 1893, as a minister in 1900, and as the Aeltester of the East Reserve KG in 1901.<sup>89</sup> Son **Jakob R. Dueck** married Anna Isaac and the couple made their home in Kleefeld. He was elected as a deacon in 1900 and as a minister in 1914. In 1919 he was elected as Aeltester to replace his older brother Peter R. Dueck. Daughter **Maria R. Dueck** married Heinrich L. Fast the son of Heinrich Fast of Steinbach. The family lived in Kleefeld, Manitoba. Son **Heinrich R. Dueck** married Katharina Reimer, the daughter of Steinbach pioneer and one-time village Schulz, Johann R. Reimer. Heinrich R. Dueck was elected as a deacon in 1914 and as a minister in 1916. He was known for his progressive views. Daughter **Ellisabeth R. Dueck** married Peter P. Reimer the son of Blumenort farmer and minister Peter R. Reimer. Peter P. Reimer farmed in Neuanlage near Blumenort. He was elected as Aeltester of the East Reserve KG in 1926, an office in which he served until his death. Son **Bernhard R. Dueck** married Anna K. Friesen, the daughter of Heinrich L. Friesen of Rosenhof, Manitoba. The couple established their farm on a half section of land, two miles east of Rosenhof. Daughter **Anna R. Dueck** married Abraham P. Reimer, a brother to Aeltester Peter P. Reimer. The family farmed two miles north of Steinbach, at the so-called "Giroux corner". Abraham P. Reimer was elected as a song leader in the Blumenort KG in 1917.<sup>90</sup>

Gen.	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
3	<b>Jakob L. Dueck</b>	Jun 26,1939	Dec 15,1859	Oct 27,1893
m	Maria Rempel	Feb 27,1840		Mar 17,1917
4	<b>Johann R. Dueck</b>	Dec 1,1860	Nov 19,1882	Nov 24,1901
m	Marg P. Kroeker	Sept 13,1863		Aug 5,1918
4	<b>Peter R. Dueck</b>	Aug 29,1862	Dec 9, 1888	Jan 7,1919
m	Sara P. Kroeker	Mar 7,1871		Feb 10,1951
4	<b>Jacob R. Dueck</b>	Jan 18,1866	Jul 5,1885	Dec 9,1924
m	Anne E. Isaak	Jun 27,1868		Feb 7,1925
4	<b>Heinrich Dueck</b>	Mar 5,1867		Jan 3,1871
4	<b>Bernhard Dueck</b>	Jan 29,1869		Dec 17,1870
4	<b>Maria Dueck</b>	Jul 28,1871	Jul 25,1889	Feb 13,1900
m	Heinrich L. Fast	Nov 4,1865		Apr 6, 1963
4	<b>Heinrich R. Dueck</b>	Aug 27,1873	Mar 7,1897	June 20,1944
m	Katharina Reimer	Feb 3,1878		Feb 10,1921
4	<b>Elisabeth Dueck</b>	Nov 23, 1876	Feb 27,1898	Feb 8,1935
m	Peter P. Reimer	Jun 29,1877		Apr 8,1949
4	<b>Bernhard R. Dueck</b>	May 23,1879	Mar 17,1901	Sep 30,1969
m	Anna K. Friesen	Feb 25,1882		Aug 27,1948
4	<b>Anna Dueck</b>	Oct 14,1883	Apr 12,1903	Mar 21,1964
m	Abram P. Reimer	Feb 14,1882		May 17,1961

3 Son **Abraham L. Dueck** married Elisabeth Rempel (1842-1901), the daughter of Peter Rempel of Paulsheim. She was a sister to Elisabeth Rempel who had

married brother Jakob L. Dueck. A family history book provides the following information, "The first seven years of their married life they [Abraham and Elisabeth Dueck] lived with his older brother Jakob in the village of Gnadenfeld."<sup>91</sup> Son Johann R. Dueck has written regarding these times:

The village of Gnadenfeld was founded in 1860 and the parents on both sides arranged things so that Jakob L. Duecks and our parents could settle down together. In the long run, however, Mother didn't like this arrangement, so in the spring of 1870 they moved to Borosenko, where they rented some land. This was about 200 verst (130 miles) northwest, close to Nikopol, where almost the entire Kleingemeinde had settled down in approximately seven villages. Our village was Annafeld on the Baseluck River. There were only 8 settlers placed from north to south, on our village. To the southwest was Steinbach, where I attended school.<sup>92</sup>

It appears that Abraham L. Dueck served as the Brandaeltester for the village of Annafeld as his records include a list of the Annafeld farmers and their respective assessments. Dueck himself is one of the three highest assessed farmers, whose inventory is valued as follows; Martin Klassen--500, Kornelius Goossen--300 and Abraham Dueck--300.<sup>93</sup> Dueck may also have served for a time as the village schulz as his records include a detailed listing of birth, baptismal and marriage dates for all the residents. In 1875 Abraham L. Dueck and his family emigrated from Russia and settled in Gruenfeld (later Kleefeld), Manitoba. He had served as a song leader of the KG for 9 years when he was elected as a deacon in 1891. Two years later he was elected as a minister with a large majority and two years after that--in 1895--he was elected as the Aeltester of the East Reserve Gemeinde.

4 Son **Johann R. Dueck** married Maria K. Friesen, the daughter of Johann F. Friesen (1808-1872), the third Aeltester of the KG. They farmed in Rosenhof, Manitoba, for many years. Johann R. Dueck served for 20 years as a deacon; he also served on numerous committees. He enjoyed writing and a historical report which he wrote for the 60th anniversary celebration of the Mennonite immigration to Manitoba was translated by his nephew Ben B. Dueck and was published in 1987.<sup>94</sup> Son **Abraham R. Dueck** also lived in Rosenhof, Manitoba. Daughter **Elisabeth R. Dueck** married Isaac B. Plett, the son of Isaac L. Plett (1844-1871) who died in Friedensfeld, South Russia. Isaac B. Plett was an active entrepreneur and inventor. At various times he ran a steam engine threshing outfit, a well-drilling business and a sawmill.<sup>95</sup> Daughter **Maria R. Dueck** married for the first time to Blumenort, Manitoba, store owner Johann R. Reimer. She married for the second time to Cornelius B. Loewen, a wealthy Steinbach businessman and farmer. Daughter **Helena R. Dueck** married widower Klaas R. Friesen, the son of Steinbach entrepreneur Abraham S. Friesen. Klaas R. Friesen started the "Friesen Machine Shop" business in Steinbach and also served as a minister of the KG. Son **Heinrich R. Dueck** married Maria K. Friesen, the daughter of Heinrich L. Friesen of Rosenhof, Manitoba. The couple established their home in Rosenhof.<sup>96</sup> Son **Peter R. Dueck** lived at Kleefeld, Manitoba. Daughter **Anna R. Dueck** married Jakob K. L. Friesen, the son of Heinrich L. Friesen, Rosenhof, Manitoba. She married for the second time to widower Peter P. Reimer (1877-1949) who served

as Aeltester of the East Reserve KG from 1926-1949.

Gen.	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
3	Abraham L. Dueck	Feb 16,1841	Feb 27,1862	Jul 18,1899
m	Elis Rempel	Oct 16,1841		Nov 17,1901
4	Abraham Dueck	Nov 11, 1862		Nov 19,1862
4	Johann R. Dueck	Dec 1,1863		Feb 1,1937
m	Maria K. Friesen	Mar 6,1869	Jan 1,1890	Jun 6,1933
4	Abraham R. Dueck	Feb 25,1866		Jun 28,1936
m	Aganetha K. Friesen	Mar 2,1878	Apr 17,1898	Jan 3,1936
4	Elisabeth Dueck	Aug 26,1867		Sept 23,1932
m	Isaac B. Plett	May 28,1867	Nov 21,1887	Aug 20,1933
4	Helena Dueck	Jun 9,1869		Jan 8,1874
4	Peter Dueck	Feb 26,1871		Jan 23,1873
4	Heinrich R. Dueck	Sept 8,1872		Jul 17,1873
4	Maria Dueck	May 11,1874		Dec 22,1960
m	Johann R. Reimer	Sept 7,1872	Feb 4,1893	Aug 10,1902
2m	Corn B. Loewen	Oct 22,1863	Jun 21,1903	Dec 22,1960
4	Helena Dueck	Jul 4,1876		May 28,1914
m	Klaas R. Friesen	Oct 26,1870	Sept 13,1894	Apr 5,1942
4	Heinrich Dueck	Feb 13,1878		Jun 23,1957
m	Maria K. Friesen	Jan 30,1890	Mar 20,1910	Aug 29,1932
2m	Sarah Dyck	Nov 18,1891	Dec 3,1933	Jun 12,1962
4	Peter R. Dueck	Jan 9,1880		Mar 19,1955
m	Anna D. Barkman	Apr 30,1883	Mar 23,1902	
4	Anna R. Dueck	Nov 12,1883		Feb 2,1939
m	Jacob K. L. Friesen	Nov 3,1879	Feb 2,1902	Sept 12,1930
2m	Peter P. Reimer	Jun 29,1877	May 12,1935	Apr 8,1949
4	Katherina Dueck	Jun 5,1886		Jun 3,1887

3 Son Peter L. Dueck married for the first time to Justina Wiebe from Schoenau, Molotschna. Her parents died in 1856 and she was taken in and raised by the Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) family of Muntau.<sup>97</sup> Peter L. Dueck married for the second time to Susanna Loewen, the daughter of Peter Loewen, Hierschau.<sup>98</sup> Dueck was a short heavy-set man who usually kept his weight around 300 pounds.<sup>99</sup> He was a school teacher and taught in the village of Gnadenthal, Molotschna. A letter by Dueck to Peter P. Toews, Blumenhoff, Borosenko, dated November 8, 1866, and another, dated August 31, 1867, are still extant.<sup>100</sup> A few years later the family moved to the new KG village of Friedensfeld, northwest of Nikopol, where he served as the school teacher. In 1871 he got a teaching position in the main KG village of Blumenhoff where the family lived until 1874 when they immigrated and settled in Gruenfeld, Manitoba.<sup>101</sup> Peter L. Dueck ran a bookstore store for many years which served the entire Mennonite community in southeastern Manitoba. This bookstore was taken over by his oldest son Johann after his death. Dueck was a well educated and intelligent man who maintained an extensive letter correspondence leaving 32 letter books at the time of his death.<sup>102</sup> He was originally favourably disposed towards the union which Aeltester Peter P. Toews was proposing with Johann Holdeman. As he studied the matter further he changed his mind and became a vocal opponent of the move. His

"Simple declaration regarding the Holdemans' secession from our Kleine Gemeinde" as well as several other writings were published in 1990.<sup>103</sup>

One day during New Year's holidays Peter L. Dueck had been visiting at the home of his neighbour, Heinrich Rempel. He felt great pain and returned home. The doctor promised relief but the fact that the pharmacist would not come back and other factors led the family to believe that it could be stomach sickness. Dueck was in great pain and comforted himself with the fact that his Saviour had suffered similarly. The pain was so severe that he lost consciousness for the last 5 hours. Then he was released from this vale of sorrow and transported to that better land.<sup>104</sup>

4 Son **Johann W. Dueck** married **Margaretha K. Kroeker**, the daughter of **Aeltester Jakob M. Kroeker**, **Rosenort, Manitoba**. **Johann W. Dueck** lived in **Rosenhof, Manitoba**, where he served as a school teacher for 17 years and also as a song leader and auctioneer. In 1913 he started a store in **Rosenhof**. **Johann W. Dueck** was a literate and articulate man.<sup>105</sup> He was the author of the article "Historie und Begebenheiten aus Frueherer Zeit und die Gegenwart Abgeschrieben aus Briefen, Büchern, und Zum Theil selbst erlebt" published in 1981 and frequently cited in this paper.<sup>106</sup> Son **Peter W. Dueck** lived in **Gretna, Manitoba**.<sup>107</sup> He served as a school teacher in the village of **Rosenfeld**, near **Altona**, from where he and his family moved to **Medicine Hat, Alberta**, where he was involved in the oil business. From here he moved to **Peace River, Alberta**, where he owned a general store. From here the family moved to **Spokane, Washington**, where they lived for the remainder of their days.<sup>108</sup> Daughter **Susanna L. Dueck** married **Abraham R. Penner** from **Blumenort, Manitoba**. **Penner** served for many years as the **Waisenvorsteher** of the **East Reserve KG**.<sup>109</sup> Daughter **Helena L. Dueck** married **Heinrich R. Reimer**, the son of deacon **Abraham R. Reimer** from **Blumenort**. The **Heinrich R. Reimer** family moved to **Landmark, Manitoba**, where he served for many years as the pastor of the **Prairie Rose KG**. Daughter **Elisabeth L. Dueck** married **Peter B. Kroeker**, the son of **Rev. Peter M. Kroeker** of **Rosenort, Manitoba**. The family farmed in **Twincreek**, northwest of **Steinbach**. **Peter B. Kroeker** was elected as a minister of the **KG** in 1916. Daughter **Margaretha L. Dueck** married **Aron R. Reimer**, a brother to the husband of older sister **Helena**. The **Aron Reimer** family lived in **Blumenort**.<sup>110</sup>

Gen.	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
3	<b>Peter L. Dueck</b>	Oct 15,1842		Jan 15,1887
m	<b>Justina F. Wiebe</b>	Apr 3,1844	Nov 1,1862	Oct 10,1870
4	<b>Johann W. Dueck</b>	Mar 11,1865		Jun 1,1932
m	<b>Maria K. Kroeker</b>	Dec 7,1870	Jul 31,1893	Dec 14,1939
4	<b>Peter W. Dueck</b>	Mar 29,1870	1893	1942
m	<b>Margaretha Janzen</b>	1873		1940
3	<b>Peter L. Dueck</b>	Oct 15,1842		Jan 15,1887
2m	<b>Susanna Loewen</b>	Oct 7,1852	Jan 1,1871	Apr 6,1918
4	<b>Heinrich Dueck</b>	Mar 21,1873		Aug 13,1874
4	<b>Isaac Dueck</b>	Sep 10,1874		Jan 2,1875
4	<b>Susanna Dueck</b>	Apr 29,1876	Aug 12,1894	
m	<b>Abraham Penner</b>	May 30,1874		Aug 4,1956
4	<b>Helena Dueck</b>	Feb 16,1878		
m	<b>Heinrich R. Reimer</b>	Jul 26,1876		

4	Elisabeth Dueck	Dec 26,1879	Mar 10,1898	
m	Peter B. Kroeker	Feb 24,1873		Sep 12,1955
4	Bernhard Dueck	Feb 7,1882		May 27,1882
4	Anna Dueck	Aug 30,1883		Aug 23,1905
m	Cornelius W. Brandt	1877	Aug 23,1904	
4	Margaretha Dueck	Dec 2,1885		
m	Aron R. Reimer	Nov 17,1885	Apr 16,1906	Feb 8,1953
2m	J. E. Barkman	Nov 16,1885	Jul 1,1954	

### Notes: Johann Dueck (1801-1866) Biography.

1. Peter H. Dueck, *et al.*, *Abraham L. und Elisabeth Dueck und ihre Nachkommen 1841-1965* (Kleefeld, Man., 1965), 23.

2. Benjamin H. Unruh, *Die Niederländisch-neiderdeutschen Hintergründe der Mennonitischen Ostwanderungen im 16., 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Karlsruhe, 1955), 366.

3. John P. Dyck, *Klaas Dueck and Descendants (1743-1981)* (Springstein, Manitoba, 1981), 9.

4. The information from the 1835 Molotschna census is from the copy at the Mennonite Heritage Centre, 800 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Manitoba, courtesy of Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba, August 4, 1993.

5. Henry Schapansky, 914 Chilliwack St., New Westminster, B. C., V3L 4V5, letter to the author August 10, 1993.

6. Henry Schapansky, telephone conversation with the author August 14, 1993.

7. John P. Dyck, 9.

8. *Ibid.*, 12-16. Jakob Dueck (1826-1914) was the great-grandfather of John P. Dyck, genealogist of Springstein, Manitoba.

9. Johann Friesen, or von Riesen, as he was also known, had a son Johann von Riesen (1797-1872) who died at the home of his son, Jakob, in Blumstein, Molotschna. Another son Abraham Friesen went to the Bergthal Colony, South Russia, as a blacksmith. He married and settled down there. In 1876, Abraham and his family immigrated and settled in the village of Hochfeld, 2 miles west of Blumenort, Manitoba. Helen Buhr Regier, *1768-1983 Friesen* (North Newton, Kansas, 1981), 3.

10. He was the father of Maria Giesbrecht (1800-1855) who married Isaac Regier (1797-1840) of Muntau. They were the parents of Jakob Regier (1832-1906) who settled in Rosenfeld, Manitoba, in 1874; see Plett, "Isaak Regier/Johann de Veer Genealogy," unpublished paper, Steinbach, Man., 1992, 2 pp.

11. According to the research of Henry Schapansky, Dirck Reimer (born 1782) was the son of Jakob Reimer (born 1752), who settled on Wirtschaft 18 in Muntau in 1804. He married the widow of Arend Reimer (died before 1808) and thereby became the step-father to a large family, some of whom were almost his age. Henry Schapansky to author November 28, 1992. In fact, it appears that Wirtschaft 5 was the property of Arend Reimer (died before 1808) and that his widow Susanna Dyck (1763-1846) married for the second time to Dirck Reimer, her neighbour's son. One of the step-sons was Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) who was a dearly beloved Ohm in the KG. Plett, "Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) Genealogy," Plett, ed., *Profile 1874* (Steinbach, Man., 1987), 239-245. Arend Reimer (died before 1808) was also the father of Helena Reimer (born 1780) who married Jakob Regehr (born 1775), who settled on Wirtschaft 19 in Schoensee in 1805. Schapansky to author November 28, 1992.

12. Gerhard Giesbrecht (born 1761) had two children who were interconnected with the KG: Daughter Elisabeth Giesbrecht (1801-1879) married Peter Thiessen (1798-1881) who was the father of Wilhelm and David Thiessen who settled in Jansen, Nebraska, in the 1870s. Gerhard T. Thiessen, *Genealogical album*, unpublished family records, 1953, 35, courtesy of Willie Thiessen, 19411 E Parlier Ave., Reedly, California, 93654, 1988. See also Henry N. Fast, "The Kleine Gemeinde in the United States of America," Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 111. Son Peter Giesbrecht (1794-1842) married Maria Harder (1795-1856), the aunt of Johann Harder (1811-1875), Blumstein,

Molotschna, who served for many years as the Aeltester of the Ohrloff Gemeinde. See Plett, "Johann Harder Genealogy 1764-1826," Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims* (Steinbach, Man., 1990), 376.

13. Their daughter, Adelgunda Penner (1805-1888) married Heinrich Suderman who died somewhere between 1841 or 1844. The couple lived in Ladekopp. Adelgunda remarried to a Klaas Dyck and then lived in Prangenu where her second husband died in 1869. In 1877 Adelgunda immigrated to America in the company of her daughter, Katarina, and son-in-law, Peter Funk, who settled in Bruderthal, northeast of Hillsboro, Kansas. In 1885, Adelgunda Penner Suderman Dyck, decided to live with her daughter, Adelgunda, and her husband, Peter Joost (1828-1891), who lived in the village of Alexanderfeld, southwest of Hillsboro. Carolyn L. Zeisset, *A Mennonite Heritage A Genealogy of the Suderman and Wiens Families 1800-1875* (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1975), 38-48. Peter Joost had immigrated to Rosenort, Manitoba, with the KG in 1874, and moved from there to Alexanderfeld, Kansas, shortly thereafter. The village of Alexanderfeld, was a haven of Kleine Gemeinde related families many of whom had first settled in Manitoba; eventually it became a stronghold of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, who still have a congregation at the original village site. Nick P. Wiebe, *The History of the Alexanderfeld Congregation* (Hillsboro, Kansas, 1972), 12 pages.

14. According to Edward R. Brandt, *Brandt Roots 1605-1988* (13-27th Ave., S.E., Minneapolis, Mn., 55414, 1988), 77, their daughter Justina Heidebrecht (born 1796) married Johann von Baergen (born 1787) who settled on Wirtschaft 7 in Schoensee with his widowed mother in 1805. According to the Verzeichnis 1812-1813, a daughter Gertruda was born to the couple on Wirtschaft 7 in Schoensee on October 4, 1812. Unruh, 307, 320 and 334. According to Helena Jahnke, "Lineage of my grandparents Klaas Friesens born in West Prussia," Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 210, Justina Bergen, the first wife of KG school teacher Cornelius F. Friesen (1810-1892) was born in Schoensee on October 24, 1812. She was the step-daughter of Peter Fast, Muntau. This connection could only be correct if an error was made in the Verzeichnis so that a Gertruda was listed instead of a Justina. Presumably Justina Heidebrecht Baergen (born 1796) could have married for the second time to Peter Fast (born 1780) of Wirtschaft 19 in Muntau.

15. Jakob Loewen appears to be the father of Helena Loewen (1806-1879) who married Johann Dueck (1801-1866), Muntau, who served as a minister of the KG for many years. Jakob Loewen was the brother of Elias Loewen who had settled on Wirtschaft 19 in the village of Muensterberg in 1804. Schapansky to author November 6, 1992.

16. Unruh, 307. Several of Anton Schellenberg's siblings left significant descendancies in the Kleine Gemeinde. Plett, "Gerhard Schellenberg Genealogy 1725-1802," Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 427-466. Anton Schellenberg is believed to be the forefather of Johann Schellenberg (1846-1919) who settled in the West Reserve, Manitoba, during the 1870s. Solomon Warkentin, *Heinrich and Maria Regehr Warkentin*, unpublished family study, 5-6. Genealogist Ed Schellenberg, Steinbach, Manitoba, is believed to be a descendant of this family.

17. Johann Loewen (born 1781), was the brother to Daniel Loewen, Wirtschaft 20, Muntau, who married the widow of Andreas Koop. Johann and Daniel Loewen were the sons of Wilhelm Loewen (died before 1794) whose widow married for the second time to Arend Janzen (born 1764) who settled on Wirtschaft 19 in Halbstadt in 1804.

18. Johann Koop (born 1766) was the grandfather of Johann Koop (1831-1897) a wealthy farmer in Muntau, Molotschna, and later in Blumenort, Manitoba. Plett, "Jakob Barkman Genealogy 1765," in Plett, ed., in *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 282-283; cf. Plett, "Koop families in the Kleine Gemeinde," unpublished paper, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1992.

19. Jakob Reimer (born 1752) is listed in Tiegenhagen, Prussia, in the 1776 Konsignation. He was the father of Dirk Reimer (born 1782) who married Susanna Dyck (1763-1846), the widow of Arend Reimer (died before 1808). Henry Schapansky, letter to the author November 28, 1992. Arend Reimer and Susanna Dyck were the parents of Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884); see Plett, "Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) Genealogy," 239-245. Jakob Reimer (born 1752) was also the father of Helena Reimer (born 1775) who married Jakob Giesbrecht (born 1763) who settled on Wirtschaft 15 in Blumstein in 1804. They were the parents of Maria Giesbrecht (1802-1877) who married Johann Harms (1798-1887) who served as the Schulz or mayor of the village of Margenau. They, in turn, were the parents of Abram Harms (1833-1909), KG school teacher, who later settled in Alexanderfeld, near Hillsboro. Plett, "Johann Harms Genealogy 1771," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and*

*Pilgrims*, 390. Jakob Reimer may have died prior to 1812 as the Wirtschaft is owned by Peter Thiessen by the time of the 1812-1813 Verzeichnis. Unruh, 332. According to Gerhard T. Thiessen, "Genealogy album," 35, his great-grandfather, Peter Thiessen (1798-1881), moved to Muntau with his parents in 1805. He married Elisabeth Giesbrecht (1801-1879) the daughter of Gerhard Giesbrecht, Wirtschaft 7, Muntau. It seems plausible that Peter Thiessen purchased Wirtschaft 18 sometime prior to 1812. It is also recorded that Peter Thiessen married for the second time to Regina Koop, the daughter of Johann Kopp who settled on Wirtschaft 15 in Muensterberg in 1804. Peter Thiessen (1798-1881) was the father of Wilhelm and David Thiessen who settled in Jansen, Nebraska, in the 1870s.

20. Peter Fast (born 1780) was a supporter of the KG since Klaas Reimer (1770-1837) has recorded that some of their early meetings were held at the home of Peter Fast, Muntau. Klaas Reimer, "Ein Kleines Aufsatz," quoted in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years* (Steinbach, Man., 1985), 187; cf. Klaas Reimer, "Ein Kleines Aufsatz," in Part Two, Chapter Two. Peter Fast was the step-father of Justina Bergen, the first wife of KG school teacher Cornelius F. Friesen (1810-1892). Helena Jahnke, "Lineage of my grandparents Klaas Friesens born in West Prussia," 210. She was born in Schoensee, from which one would assume that her mother had moved to Muntau after her second marriage.

21. Andreas Koop immigrated to Russia in 1804. Unruh, 350. Andreas Koop (1773-ca.1805) appears to have settled on Wirtschaft 20 which was owned by his widow's second husband, Daniel Loewen, by the time of the 1808 Revisions-Listen. Daniel Loewen (born 1773) was the brother to Johann Loewen (born 1781) who had settled on Wirtschaft 13 in Muntau in 1807--courtesy of Henry Schapansky, letter to the author August 28, 1992. Although the village of settlement is not stated the Andreas Koop family is identified as living in Muntau by other sources. Gerhard and Elisabeth Wiens, Hillsboro, Kansas, Letter to the *Rundschau* November 1, 1900, refers to a recent visit of David Loewen and that he and Loewen were both from Lindenau, Molotschna; also that their wives were cousins, namely, she (Mrs. David Loewen) was a daughter of Heinrich Reimer, and his wife (Mrs. Gerhard Wiens), was a daughter of Andreas Koop. Courtesy of Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1989. Andreas Koop (1773-ca.1805) was the father of Heinrich Koop, a wealthy KG Vollwirt in Landskrone; see Plett, "Koop families in the Kleine Gemeinde", unpublished paper, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1992.

22. Davit Hiebert (born 1768) was the brother to Johann Hiebert (born 1760) who settled on Wirtschaft 19 in Halbstadt in 1804. John P. Dyck, *Braeul Genealogy (1670-1983)* (Springstein, Manitoba, 1983), 91. Johann Hiebert (born 1760) served as a deacon for the pioneer Molotschna Flemish Gemeinde. Klaas Reimer, "Ein Kleines Aufsatz," quoted in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 164. David Hiebert's son Abraham Hiebert appears to be the father of KG farmer Johann Hiebert (1816-1890) of Neukirch and Alexanderwohl, Molotschna, and later of Gruenfeld, Manitoba. Albert H. Hiebert and John H. Toews, editors, *The Family of Johann Hiebert 1816-1975* (Hillsboro, Kansas, 1975), 7. David Hiebert (born 1768) was the father of David Hiebert (born 1796) who married Katharina Hoomsen (born 1800) whose daughter Katharina Hiebert (1830-1905) married Johann Jakob Braeul (1835-1907), the son of Jakob Braeul (1803-1866) who taught in the village of Rudnerweide, Molotschna, for 32 years. See Plett, "Johann Harder Genealogy 1764-1826," Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 364. Johann Jakob Braeul (1835-1907) taught in Ohrloff for 29 years. He was the grandfather of Agnes Braeul (born 1905) who married John P. Dyck (born 1901) of Springstein, Manitoba, the author of the Braeul family book.

23. Plett, "Johann Janzen, Reinland," unpublished paper, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1992. See also Plett, "Peter Rempel (1792-1837) Genealogy," Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 233-238.

24. Plett, "Isaac Harder, Rosenfeld," unpublished family study, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1992. Isaac Harder, who died in Rosenfeld in 1870 was the father of Elisabeth Harder (1833-1870) who married KG patriarch Peter Penner (1816-1884) of Margenau and later of Blumeort, Manitoba.

25. Johann de Veer married the widow of Isaak Regehr (1797-1840) and was the father of Maria de Veer (1842-1916) who married Klaas B. Friesen (1839-1922) who settled in Steinbach, Manitoba, in 1874; see Plett, "Isaac Regehr/Johann de Veer Genealogy," unpublished paper, 1992; cf. Helena Jahnke, "Lineage of my grandparents Klaas Friesens born in West Prussia," 211.

26. This is based on various references identifying Cornelius Loepp (1810-1891) as being from Muntau. Kornelius P. Neufeld, "Register Heft des Kornelius Peter Neufeld, Mersia, Ontario, und fruherer Schoenefeld, Süd=Russland," unpublished journal and genealogical record, courtesy of

Eric Neufeld, Box 1474, Swan River, Manitoba, R0L 1Z0, December 30, 1991. This journal provides a listing of the children and grandchildren of Cornelius Loepp (1810-1891). A number of the Loepp children married into KG and Muntau-related families.

27. Woltner, *Die Gemeinde Berichte von 1848 die Deutsche Seidlungen am Schwarzen Meer* (Leipzig, 1941), 96. Kornelius Loepp, the village Schulz of Muntau, is listed as receiving a gold watch from the Czar for services rendered during the Crimean War. This must have been Cornelius Loepp (1810-1891) since his son, Cornelius Loepp (1833-1916) would have been too young to hold the office in 1848; cf. Plett, "Jakob Heidebrecht Genealogy," Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 424, footnote 12.

28. Plett, "Gerhard P. Goossen Biography," in Part Thirteen, Chapter One.

29. Peter P. Toews, genealogical notes, appended to the edited version of the manuscript of *Das Wachsame Auge Gottes* written by his father; see Johann Toews, unpublished journal, Fischau, Molotschna, pages 66-90--courtesy of Milton and Margaret Toews, Abbotsford, B.C., 1982.

30. Peter P. Toews, "Genealogy Register," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 29.

31. This connection is based on the fact that the Jakob Loewen family is the only one listed with a daughter Helena of the correct age. The fact that they were also from the village of Muntau makes the connection all the more reliable.

32. Henry Schapansky to author November 6, 1992.

33. *Ibid.*

34. Unruh, 342.

35. *Ibid.*, 307.

36. Their son Franz Krocker is believed to be one of the three candidates baptised into the KG in 1816 by Aeltester Heinrich Janzen, Schoenweise. The baptism is reported in a copy of the *Namenverzeichnis der Mennonitischen Gemeinden* published in 1857 and owned by Kornelius Hildebrand, Chortitza, dated 1860. Kornelius Hildebrand has added the information that the first three KG baptismal candidates were baptised by Heinrich Janzen in Schoenweise in 1815. The names of these baptismal candidates are given as Heinrich Dick, Paul Wittenberg and Anna Krocker. Paul Wittenberg appears to be the son of Abraham Wittenberg (born 1760) from Wirtschaft 14 in Muensterberg who had a son Paul born in 1793. Anna Krocker may be the daughter of Franz Krocker resident on Wirtschaft 2 in Muensterberg who had a daughter Anna Krocker born in 1796. Unruh, 316-317. I am indebted to Dr. James Urry for referring this information to my attention. Dr. James Urry, Letter to the author, June, 1990.

37. Johann Reimer was the father of Peter Reimer (1806-1886) of Contentiusfeld, Molotschna, whose son Bernhard Reimer (1832-1893) settled in Inman, Kansas. Gus Reimer, "The Reimer Genealogy," unpublished family study, Reedley, California, 1965. Courtesy of Jane Friesen, Dinuba, California, 1986.

38. Katharina Friesen Regier, "Family register, written by Franz Janzen," unpublished family records, copied by Katharina Friesen Regier February 21, 1933--courtesy Centre for M. B. Studies, Hiebert Library, 1717 S. Chestnut, Fresno, California, 93702, 1986. Translated from German to English by Samuel Regier April 20, 1983. This family history deals with Bernhard Friesen (born 1810) who took over Wirtschaft 11 in Muensterberg from his father Julius Friesen (born 1780). Grandson Julius Friesen (1848-1936) married the widow Anna Enns in 1875. He served for a time in an office of the Gebietsamt. Julius Friesen immigrated to America and died in Enid, Oklahoma, in 1936. Daughter Anna (born 1854) was married to Paul Koop who took over the Wirtschaft in Muensterberg after Bernhard Friesen died. The Paul Koop family immigrated to Canada in 1927 where they settled in Dondorn, Saskatchewan.

39. Their daughter was one of the three youths to be baptised into the KG by Aeltester Heinrich Janzen, Schoenweise, Old Colony, in 1816.

40. His daughter Regina Koop married Peter Thiessen from Muntau. Plett, "Koop families in the Kleine Gemeinde," unpublished paper, 1992. Son Thomas Koop was the father of Isaac Koop (1833-1922) who immigrated to America and belonged to the Bruderthal Gemeinde in Hillsboro. Daughter Maria Koop married Johann Baergen the son of Jakob von Baergen of Schoenau; see Plett, "Baergen families in the Kleine Gemeinde," unpublished paper, 1992.

41. Jakob Friesen was married to Maria Thiessen, whose brother, Peter Thiessen (Wirtschaft 12) in Rosenort, Molotschna, was the father of KG minister Peter Thiessen (1808-1873) of Schoenau. Jakob Friesen (born 1775) is mentioned several times in the autobiography of Klaas Reimer, "Ein Kleines Aufsatz," in Part Two, Chapter Two.

42. Hermann Neufeld was a well-to-do farmer who saw his nine children marry and become established on farms of their own. He also served for a time as the village schulz and is mentioned by Klaas Reimer (1770-1837) in his autobiography, "Ein Kleine Aufsatz," Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 169. Hermann Neufeld's son Heinrich married Regina von Riesen, the sister to Abraham Friesen, the second Aeltester of the KG. Most of the Heinrich Neufeld children settled near Inman, Kansas, during the 1870s.

43. Elias Loewen (born 1764) was the brother to Jakob Loewen (born 1771), Wirtschaft 17, Muntau, whose daughter Helena married Johann Dueck (1801-1866), a KG minister.

44. Isaac Thiessen (born 1764) was the father of Johann Thiessen (1811-1865) of Muensterberg, and of Helena Thiessen (1793-1827), who married widower Peter Heidebrecht (1782-1862) of Lichtenau. Heidebrecht's son, Peter Heidebrecht (1815-1896), settled in Jansen, Nebraska, in 1874; see Plett, "Jakob Heidebrecht Genealogy," 422; cf. Henry N. Fast, "The Kleine Gemeinde in the United States of America," 106-107.

45. Unruh, 307.

46. Schapansky to author November 6, 1992.

47. Reference is made in this regard to two letters, one by Jakob L. Dueck, Gruenfeld, Manitoba, and one by his brother Abraham L. Dueck, Gruenfeld, Manitoba, which deal with their Loewen relatives--courtesy of Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1992. A number of Loewen family connections could be made by a study of this information.

48. Full birth and death dates are found in the genealogical records of Susanna Dueck Penner. Susanna and Abraham R. Penner, "Family records," Blumenort, Manitoba, unpublished journal and miscellaneous papers as photocopied by the writer in 1981--courtesy of Katharina Wiebe, Steinbach, Manitoba.

49. This information may not be quite accurate given the information provided by Susanna Dueck Penner that her grandparents lived for a time in Fischau.

50. Peter W. Friesen, "Wahl-Liste von die Lehrer der Kleine Gemeinde," Tiege, Molotschna, and later Jansen, Nebraska. Peter W. Friesen was the son of Abraham Friesen (1782-1849), the second Aeltester of the KG. This document is found in the Bethel College KG Collection--courtesy of John Schmidt, Mennonite Library and Archives, 1981. See also Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 279.

51. Copied by Susanna Dueck Penner on March 21, 1950, from the journal of her cousin, Johann R. Dueck, "Lebensbeschreibung meiner Voreltern Vaeterlicher Seite," Susanna and Abraham R. Penner, "Family records," Steinbach, Manitoba, 4.

52. Johann W. Dueck, "Historie und Begebenheiten . . .," Plett, ed., *History and Events* (Steinbach, Man., 1982), 85.

53. Peter P. Toews, ed., *Sammlung . . . zur Historie der Kleinen Gemeinde der Mennoniten* (Blumenhoff, South Russia, 1974), iv.

54. Courtesy of Levi Dueck, Box 25, R.R.1, Morris, Manitoba, R0G 1K0, October 30, 1989.

55. Heinrich Reimer, "Familienbuch," unpublished journal, 126-130--courtesy of Milton and Margaret Toews, Abbotsford, British Columbia, November 9, 1992.

56. Plett, "Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) Genealogy," 239-245.

57. Gertrude Klassen, et. al., editors, *Family Book David and Aganetha Klassen 1813-1900* (Rosenort, Manitoba, 1974), 132.

58. Lenore Eidse, ed., *Furrows in the Valley. The Rural Municipality of Morris 1880-1980* (Morris, Manitoba, 1981), 442-445.

59. Johann W. Dueck, "Historie und Begebenheiten . . .," 86.

60. His son Jakob Penner became a City of Winnipeg councillor and a Communist. He was known as "Communist'e Panna". His son Roland Penner is a very well respected lawyer and one-time Attorney-General of the Province of Manitoba.

61. Telephone call with grandson Alvin Janz of Steinbach, Manitoba, December 9, 1992.

62. Spelled Dyken or Duken in some of the original journals.

63. Plett, "Johann Harms Genealogy 1771," 397-399.

64. Heinrich Reimer, "Familienbuch," unpublished journal, 11A—courtesy of Milton and Margaret Toews, Abbotsford, B. C., November 9, 1992.

65. Peter P. Toews, "Anhang n.1," Plett, ed., *History and Events*, 49-50.

66. Alfred H. Redekopp, *Jakob Thielmann and Helena Kroeker: A Family History and Genealogy of their descendants* (229 Home Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3G 1X2, 1987), 59-98.

67. Plett ed., *Profile 1874*, 225-226. She was a sister to Gerhard Boschmann (1827-1895) and Heinrich Boschmann (1828-1907) who settled in Gnadenu, Kansas, in 1874 and 1875, respectively. Plett, "Boschmanns in the Kleine Gemeinde," unpublished paper, 1989, 4-5.

68. Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 15-16, 28-30, 37, 60-61 and 63-64. One of the letters of Johann L. Dueck was published in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 52-53.

69. Albert H. Hiebert and John H. Toews, compilers, *The Family of Johann Hiebert 1816-1875* (Hillsboro, Kansas, 1975), 96-111.

70. Nick P. Wiebe, *The History of the Alexanderfeld Congregation* (Hillsboro, Kansas, 1982), 32 pages.

71. John R. Goossen et. al., editors, *Gerhard Goossen Family Book* (Rosenort, Manitoba, n.d.), 187 pages. Franz K. Goossen was the father of long-time Steinbach Notary Public, John D. Goossen. He in turn was the father of Steinbach lawyer Ernest R. Goossen who was this writer's partner in the practice of law for 10 years.

72. Telephone call with grandson, Jonas Goossen, Steinbach, Manitoba, December 11, 1992.

73. Plett, "Cornelius Toews Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 221.

74. Jakob G. Friesen and Frank P. Wiebe, compilers, *Family Tree of Jakob Regier 1832-1906* (Kleefeld, Manitoba, 1960), 35-36.

75. Johann B. Toews, "Memoirs," Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 163-170, provides additional information regarding this family.

76. Peter K. Bartel et. al., editors, *Bartel* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1991), 60-120, has a recent update of the history and genealogy of this family.

77. Alfred Redekopp, 68-70.

78. Plett, "Martin Warkentin 1764 Genealogy," Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 472-474.

79. Alfred Redekopp, 11-28, has a listing of their children and family history.

80. *Ibid.*, 11.

81. Peter M. Friesen, *The Mennonite Brotherhood in Russia (1789-1910)* (Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1978), 545.

82. Johann W. Dueck, "Historie und Begebenheiten . . .," 89.

83. The information regarding the children of Bernhard L. Dueck (1837-1896) is from Alfred Redekopp, 11-28.

84. Peter P. Toews, "Genealogy register," 48, family 118.

85. Peter H. Dueck et. al., 18.

86. Peter Baerg, "Gemeinde Chronicle 1879-1896," Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 549.

87. Henry L. Fast, "The last days of Jakob L. Dueck," in John Dueck et. al., editors, *Descendants of Jakob und Maria L. Dueck 1839 1986* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1986), 17-18. This family book is a very valuable source of information with pictures and an up-to-date genealogy.

88. Received by this writer from my cousin, Peter P. Thiessen, Spanish Lookout, Box 427, Belize, C. A., during a trip there in 1985. The original journal is now in the possession of the Archives of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference, 440 Main St., Steinbach, Manitoba.

89. For additional information regarding the ministry of elder Peter R. Dueck, see Royden K. Loewen, "Peter R. Dueck Biography," unpublished paper, presented at a symposium of the History Committee of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference held at the Steinbach Bible College, Steinbach, Manitoba, April 14, 1987.

90. Their son Jakob D. Reimer served for many years as the manager of the Steinbach Credit Union. Daughter Maria Reimer married Abraham K. Penner, the founder of the large building construction company, A. K. Penner & Sons Ltd., Blumenort, Manitoba.

91. Peter H. Dueck et. al., 18.

92. Johann R. Dueck, "Biography of Johann R. Dueck (1865-1937)," in Peter H. Dueck et. al., 24-25.

93. Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph* (Steinbach, Man., 1986), 194. I am indebted to Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba, for referring this information to me. These particular documents are from the collection of Diedrich Dueck, Belize, Central America.

94. Johann R. Dueck, "Historical Report (1874-1890)," Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 203-207.

95. Plett, *Plett Picture Book* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1981), 41-44.

96. It was their son, Levi Dueck of Morris, Manitoba, who had possession of the "Ministerial Journal" of Stammvater Johann Dueck. He was kind enough to share this treasure with the editor on October 30, 1988.

97. Johann W. Dueck, "Historie und Begebenheiten . . .," 89.

98. He was the son of one-time KG deacon Isaac Loewen (1787-1873), Lindenau, Molotschna; see Part Nine, Chapter One.

99. Johann R. Dueck, "Excerpts from Father's autobiography," in Peter H. Dueck *et. al.*, 25.

100. Peter P. Toews Collection, "Letter collection for 1866-1870"--courtesy of Milton and Margaret Toews, Neilberg, Saskatchewan, 1981.

101. The story of the Peter L. Dueck family is told by son Johann W. Dueck, "Historie und Begebenheiten . . .," 93-126.

102. *Ibid.*, 87. To date only one of the journals of Peter L. Dueck has come to light; namely, Peter L. Dueck, "Journal," unpublished ledger, 84 pages, courtesy of A. D. Penner, Steinbach, Manitoba, June 30, 1993. A copy has been placed with the Archives of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference, 440 Main St., Steinbach, Manitoba. This journal contains some genealogical records, poems and historical writings and may be the original source for some of the notes and comments recorded by daughter Susanna Dueck Penner.

103. Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 95-104 and 541-544. A copy of the "Simple declaration regarding the Holdemans' secession from our Kleine Gemeinde," by Peter L. Dueck, is also found in the document collection of son-in-law Heinrich R. Reimer as well as in the journal of son Johann W. Dueck: "Historie und Begebenheiten . . .," unpublished ledger, Rosenort, Manitoba, 414-419.

104. Taken from the obituary as recorded by Abraham L. Dueck, "Tage=Buch," as transcribed by Susanna Dueck Penner; see Susanna and Abraham R. Penner, "Family records," 19.

105. Loraine Dueck, "Family History of John W. Dueck," in Lenore Eidse, ed., *Furrows in the Valley, The Rural Municipality of Morris 1880-1980* (Morris, Manitoba, 1980), 400-402, has an excellent history of this family.

106. Johann W. Dueck, "Historie und Begebenheiten . . .," 85-126.

107. Apparently, brothers, Peter W. Dueck and Johann W. Dueck, were to have attended school in Gretna, Manitoba, in 1890, during the first year of its operation. Telephone call with Mr. A. D. Penner, Steinbach, Manitoba, December 14, 1992. Unfortunately the Mennonite Collegiate Institute records for 1890 were destroyed by fire, making verification of the details impossible.

108. His two oldest sons, Peter and John, joined the United States Army and were killed during World War One. The third son, Leonard Dueck, moved to Vancouver, British Columbia, where he had a General Motors car dealership during the late 1940s and 50s--the biggest dealership of its kind at the time. Telephone call with Abram D. Penner, Steinbach, Manitoba, December 14, 1992.

109. Their son Abram D. ("A.D.") Penner was the founder of "Penner Dodge" and also one-time mayor of Steinbach. Their daughter Margaret Penner married Frank F. Reimer, the founder of the Reimer Express trucking company of Winnipeg.

110. Their sons Abram and John A. Reimer were the founders of "Reimer Farm Supplies", Steinbach, Manitoba, one of the largest John Deere dealerships in Manitoba.

# Chapter Two

## Ministerial Journal 1848-1862

A Journal of Ministerial Meetings of the Kleine Gemeinde for the Years 1848 to 1862. Recorded by Reverend Johann Dueck (1801-1866), Muntau, Molotschna Colony, South Russia.

---

### Ministerial Elections 1838-1847.

1838, June 26 - Elections were held. Firstly, Joh. Friesen was chosen as deacon, and secondly, Claas Friesen as minister (Lehrer). The lot was used to break the tie between Johann Friesen and Claas Friesen.

1840, Feb. 21 - Elections were held. K. Reimer was chosen as deacon and Joh. Friesen, Neukirch, as minister. The ministerial now consists of Ab. Friesen as Aeltester; H. Balzer, P. Penner, C. Friesen and Joh. Friesen as ministers; and Isaac Loewen and Klaas Reimer as deacons.

The votes cast in the deacon election were as follows: J. Friesen, Neukirch - 9; K. Reimer - 42; Tiessen, Schoenau - 5; J. Dueck, Muntau - 8; W., Rosenort - 3; and A. Friesen - 2. Total 69. The results of the ministerial election were as follows: Johann Friesen - 40, and Klaas Reimer - 29. Total votes cast - 69.

1846, Jan. 5 - An election was held at A. Friesen's in Rueckenau. First two deacons were elected - B. Fast, Rosenort and Abr. Friesen, Neukirch. The votes for deacon were recorded as follows: Joh. Dueck, Muntau - 16; B. Fast, Rosenort - 43; Jak. Friesen, Blumstein - 2; Ab. Friesen, Neukirch - 43; Joh. Thielmann, Neukirch - 1; Ab. Friesen, Rueckenau - 15; H. Ens, Fischau - 12; Cor. Doerksen, Alexanderthal - 1; Pet. Tiessen, Schoenau - 26; P. Friesen, Marienthal - 1. Total - 160.

B. Fast was elected with 43 votes and Ab. Friesen with 43 ballots. The choice fell upon Ab. Friesen of Neukirch through the drawing of lots. Two ministers were elected from the deacons: namely, B. Fast with 59 votes; Ab. Friesen, Neukirch - 50; Klaas Reimer, Tiege - 50; and Is. Loewen, Lindenau - 3. Total 162 votes cast. Of the entire brotherhood only two brethren were not present.

1846, June 7 - Our minister H. Balzer died at the age of 46.

1847, June 10 - We held the election for Aeltester in Rueckenau at David Klassen's. The votes were cast as follows: Joh. Friesen, Neukirch with 66; Claas Friesen, Rosenort, received 9 votes; Pet. Penner, Prangenau, received 1 vote; and Bernhard Fast received 15. In total 91 votes were cast.

1847, July 6 - After two hearings and deliberations in order to debate and consider the matter regarding the questionable conduct of our minister Peter Penner, Prangenau, the brethren unanimously asked him to resign from his position.

---

1848, March 7 - Isaac Loewen was asked to resign from his position as deacon. The reason was that he knew that his son-in-law, Kornelius Plett, had treated an adult servant girl too strictly and had also struck her. The Gemeinde did not know this at first, and because Brother Loewen did not regard the matter to be that important he had not informed the fellowship of these circumstances.

1848, July 22 - An election was held at Ab. Friesen's in Rueckenau for two deacons. The results were as follows: P. Tiessen, Schoenau - 65; J. Dueck, Muntau - 43; H. Ens, Fischau - 23; A. Friesen, Rueckenau - 23; P. Friesen, Marienthal - 9; P. Friesen, Tiede - 9; Claas Friesen, Neukirch - 9; J. Thielmann, Neukirch - 1; P. Heidebrecht, Blumstein - 1; G. Kornelsen, Lichtenau - 1; C. Janzen, Neukirch - 1. Total votes cast - 181. Peter Friesen was elected as a deacon with 65 votes and I, Dueck with 43. The results of the election for a minister from among the three deacons was as follows: Klaas Reimer, Tiede - 12; Peter Tiessen, Schoenau - 40; I as deacon had 38 votes. There were 97 brethren of whom 92 were present and 5 were absent.

1848, Aug. 8 - After the worship service in Schoenau a brotherhood meeting was convened. The concern was regarding kilned roof tiles, whether they were allowed or not. If allowed, Brandt was thinking that he would want to use the same to cover his roof. The brethren, however, did not deem this to be advisable. This was my first brotherhood meeting as a member of the ministerial.

1848, Sept. 11 - Attended my first ministerial meeting at Claas Friesen's in Rosenort. Two points were discussed. Firstly regarding B. Fast's debts, for they exert a negative influence and are not edifying as he is a minister. Accordingly a number of the brethren find the matter offensive. Secondly the poor within our Gemeinde should not become arbitrarily indebted to outsiders. They should rather turn to the deacons who would be able to assist in those matters.

1848, Sunday, Sept. 12 - Brotherhood meeting was held in Rueckenau after the worship service in order to present the two ministerial concerns to the brethren.

1848, Sunday, Sept. 19 - A brotherhood meeting was again held after the worship service in Tiede to discuss the two points presented to the brethren. As B. Fast was against it, opportunity was granted to him to explain the matter before the brethren, in order that they could regain their confidence in him.

1848, Sept. 26 - Brotherhood meeting was held after the worship service in Neukirch regarding the matter of B. Fast, whether he could remain in his service or not. The unanimous decision was he should not.

1848, Sept. 30 - Was in Blumstein at Ab. Friesen's. Inquiries were made of those in our Gemeinde who were in need, in order to determine the extent of their difficulties.

1848, Oct. 3 - Brotherhood meeting was held after the worship service in Schoenau. Fast's writing was read. Jacob Braun was notified before the brotherhood that his unscriptural conduct would be discussed the next Sunday. The stubborn behaviour of Joh. Warkentin, Blumstein, was also discussed. He was sharply admonished for not having accepted the position of Hirtenschulz (pasture manager) of the village which was assigned to him. He, however, was not present.

1848, Oct. 10 - I was in Rueckenau. After the sermon Heinrich Koop's son was united in matrimony with Anna Fast, Petershagen. A brotherhood meeting was

held after the worship service. Six points were discussed. Firstly, regarding Fast that he explain as soon as possible in writing to which Gemeinde he had joined himself. Secondly, Braun from Neukirch was sharply admonished regarding his Wirtschaft which did not properly conform. He promised improvement. Thirdly, to deal with Brandt, Tiegenhagen, because of his dispute with his neighbour Toews. Fourthly, to deal again with Warkentin, Blumstein, as there is a discrepancy with the reports of the neighbours. Fifthly, the petition for donations was read to the meeting and it was decided that the collection therefore would be held next Sunday. Sixthly, Peter and Elisabeth Loewen were joined in matrimony.

1848, Oct. 17 - Brotherhood meeting was held after the worship service in Tiede, and the matter of Warkentin, Blumstein, was discussed. He has promised to settle his matter with the village council. Secondly, the ministerial is to investigate the matter regarding Brandt's cattle, to verify whether it is correct the way it was represented.

1848, Oct. 21 - Peter Tiessen, Klaas Reimer and I were at the home of the widow Regier to investigate her circumstances.

1848, Oct. 24 - I was at Ab. Reimer's place in Rosenort to investigate his material circumstances. I was also accompanied by Ohm Abr. Friesen.

1848, Oct. 24 - I attended the worship service in Neukirch. Later the donations received were counted and the results were: 1662 ruble and 50 kopek, and 31 ruble and 50 kopek, for a total of 1694 ruble.

1848, Oct. 31 - A brotherhood meeting was held in Schoenau after the worship service. The purpose was to discuss the indifference among the youths. They were severely admonished.

1848, Nov. 14 - Was in Tiede at the worship service. I stayed overnight at Bartel's. Ohm Ab. Friesen, Blumstein, preached. Mrs. Doerksen came to us before the service and asked for acceptance. Mrs. Toews, Rosenort, also appeared before us in order to request an accommodation regarding her husband.

1848, Nov. 21 - Was in Neukirch at worship service. Stayed at Bartel's overnight. A brotherhood meeting was held after the worship service to discuss the indifference of the youth, and also regarding the increasing debts. The brethren were very severely admonished. Henceforth they should not enter into debt without the knowledge of the Gemeinde.

1848, Nov. 28 - Was in Schoenau at the worship service. Tiessen preached. A brotherhood meeting was held after the worship service, and the discussion regarding the two points of indifference and debt were concluded.

1848, Dec. 5 - I was in Rueckenau at the worship service. Tiessen from Schoenau preached.

1848, Dec. 12 - I was in Tiede for the worship service. Tiessen presented the thanksgiving message.

1848, Dec. 15 - I was in Blumstein together with Hein. Reimer at the home of Ohm Ab. Friesen together with the other ministers. We sought for inspiration and discussed how we could edify and guide the Gemeinde in accordance with the Scriptures.

1848, Dec. 25 - I was in Schoenau for the worship service, and Ab. Friesen, Neukirch, preached. Diedrich Isaac, Ohrloff, came to see us prior to the service in order to make representations for acceptance.

1848, Dec. 26 - The second holiday. It was not recorded who had preached.

## 1849

1849, Jan. 1. - I was in Tiede for the worship service. Ohm Joh. Friesen preached. D. Isaac asked for acceptance into the fellowship.

1849, Jan. 6 - Epiphany. Worship service was held in Schoenau. Ohm Claas Friesen, Rosenort, preached.

1849, Jan. 9 - I was in Rueckenau at the worship service. Ohm Joh. Friesen preached and also officiated at the wedding of Claas Friesen and the widow Thielmann. A brotherhood meeting took place after the worship service and Joh. Rempel was severely admonished for smoking tobacco. He promised to improve himself. Also the applications for acceptance into the fellowship of Esau and Harms were discussed, but that of Harms was immediately declined.

1849, Jan. 16 - I was in Tiede for the worship service. Ohm Joh. Friesen preached. A brotherhood meeting was held after the worship service regarding the acceptance of Isaac. The matter was postponed for lack of improvement and conviction.

1849, Jan. 30 - The worship service was held in Schoenau. Joh. Friesen preached. A brotherhood meeting followed. Isaac from Ohrloff was accepted. Martin Warkentin Jr. was dismissed from the fellowship. The training and nurturing of children was dealt with. Also that it was not suitable for us to hire servants from the Society.

1849, Jan. 20 - I was in Blumstein at Ohm Ab. Friesen's for a ministerial meeting. The discussion concerned Isaac, Warkentin, child-training and the hiring of servants.

1849, Feb. 6 - I was in Rueckenau at the worship service. Ohm Claas Friesen preached. A brotherhood meeting followed and dealt with the behaviour of Claas and Heinrich Koop. In view of anticipated improvement the matter was left as it stood.

1849, Feb. 13 - I was in Tiede at the worship service. Claas Friesen from Rosenort preached. The wedding banns of Warkentin, Margenau, and Catharina Thiessen, Neukirch, were proclaimed.

1849, Feb. 27 - I was in Schoenau for the worship service. Ohm Claas Friesen preached. Brotherhood meeting followed. It dealt with Rosenorter Fast, and with Braun from Lindenau, because of his wine-drinking which he took beyond our measure. This led to a discussion of the ban and separation. Also Johann Fehrs were admonished for several misdemeanours.

1849, March 6 - I was in Rueckenau for worship service. Ab. Friesen, Neukirch, preached. Before the service Braun, Lindenau, entered the ministerial office (Ohm's Stube) regarding his matter.

1849, Mar. 13 - I was in Tiede for worship service. Ab. Friesen, Neukirch, preached. Following this, the declaration by Fast, Rosenort, was read to the brotherhood. Marriage banns of the bridal couple Jacob Barkman and El. Giesbrecht were proclaimed.

1849, Mar. 27 - I was in Schoenau for the worship service, and Tiessen, Schoenau, preached. Afterwards Martin Kroeker came to our place for dinner. He is from Margenau.

1849, April 3 - I was in Tiede for worship service. Ab. Friesen, Neukirch preached.

1849, April 10 - I was in Schoenau for worship service, and Joh. Friesen, Neukirch, preached and read the Articles. After the service the declaration of thanks from the Supervisory Committee [Comitaet] was read, regarding the grain which was provided to the Jews. Before the service began Martin Warkentin came to us and asked for acceptance.

1849, April 17 - I attended the worship service in Rueckenau. Ohm Joh. Friesen read the Articles for the second time. Brotherhood meeting was held after the worship service. H. Koop, Landskrone, was called into account because of his unscriptural business and conduct and was separated from the fellowship.

1849, April 24 - I was in Rueckenau in the worship service. The Articles were presented for a third time. Brotherhood meeting followed in order to present the young people and two were admonished.

1849, May 1 - I was in Rueckenau in the worship service. The Articles were presented again. Brotherhood meeting followed which dealt with Klaas Koop's unsatisfactory conduct. He was dismissed from the Gemeinde because he had also misled the youth. He was severely admonished because of his drinking brandy to excess. He promised to improve.

1849, May 8 - I was in Rueckenau for worship service. Ab. Friesen, Neukirch, presented the Articles for the fifth time. He asked the young people whether they agreed with them, whether they had repented from their sins, and whether they desired to be baptized. They answered with 'yes' whereupon they were to receive the baptism on the next following Sunday.

1849, May 12 - Ascension Day. I was in Tiede for the worship service. Ohm Claas Friesen preached. It was announced that a brotherhood meeting would be held in Schoenau after the worship service on the second day of Pentecost.

1849, May 15 - The young people were served in Rueckenau for the first time. Ohm Joh. Friesen, Neukirch, performed the baptism. He baptized a young man, Jacob Wiebe from Schoenau. Joh. Isaac, Blumstein, and Cornelius Friesen, Margenau, came to the ministerial office [Ohm's Stube] before the worship service regarding their matter.

1849, May 22 - The first day of Pentecost. I was in Neukirch for worship service.

1849, May 23 - The second day of Pentecost. I was in Schoenau for worship service. Ab. Friesen, Neukirch, preached. Brotherhood meeting followed and dealt with the unscriptural dealings of Isaac from Blumstein. He was dismissed from the fellowship. The celebration of communion [referred to as "Einigkeit" or unity] was discussed and it was decided to hold the same as soon as possible.

1849, May 29 - I was in Rueckenau for worship service. Joh. Friesen, Neukirch, preached the examinatory sermon. Brotherhood meeting was held after the worship service. Martin Klassen, Fischau, together with his wife, were dismissed from the fellowship. Discussed also were the recent rumours regarding two married couples, namely, Franz Kroekers and Cornelius Friesens. Upon their promises to improve themselves and to have greater respect, they were forgiven by the fellowship. This concluded the issue.

1849, June 5 - I was in Tiede for worship service. Joh. Friesen, Neukirch, again presented the examinatory sermon. Before the worship service, Klassen came to the ministerial office [Ohm's Stube] regarding their reacceptance into the Gemeinde. Brotherhood meeting followed the worship service in order to

designate the celebration of communion for the next following Sunday. The widow Greta Warkentin was also discussed, whether anyone might wish to provide her with lodging.

1849, June 12 - I was in Neukirch to attend the [unity] communion. Joh. Friesen served the Gemeinde with the bread and the wine. It was the first time he did so in his office as Aeltester. I stayed at his place for dinner. He gave me notice to come to Schoenau on Saturday in order that we might talk with the widow Warkentin and to minister unto her.

1849, June 19 - I was in Schoenau for communion. After the worship service the brotherhood was notified to attend at A. Friesen's in Rueckenau on the next following Tuesday to hold a ministerial election.

1849, June 21 - The ministerial election took place in at A. Friesen's in Rueckenau. First of all a deacon was elected and then from the three deacons, a minister. The votes for deacon fell as follows: Heinrich Ens - 28 ballots; Peter Friesen, Tiege - 26; A. Friesen, Rueckenau - 11; Jakob Friesen, Blumstein - 7; Claas Friesen - 7; Peter Friesen, Marienthal - 4; Gerh. Kornelsen, Lichtenau - 1; Jacob Wiebe, Schoenau - 1; Kornelius Doerksen, Alexanderthal - 1. Heinrich Ens, Fischau, was elected as deacon. The votes for the ministerial election were as follows: deacon Klaas Reimer, Tiege - 9, I received 62 votes, and deacon Hein. Ens, Fischau - 14. Total 85 votes. I, Johann Dueck, was elected as minister.

1849, June 26 - Worship service took place in Rueckenau. Claas Friesen preached.

1849, July 3 - I was in Tiege for worship service. Claas Friesen preached. In the afternoon I went from Rosenort to Rueckenau to pay my last respects to our beloved Aeltester Abr. Friesen before his burial in the cemetery.

1849, July 10 - The worship service took place in Neukirch, but I did not attend.

1849, July 17 - I was in Schoenau for worship service. Ohm Claas Friesen preached. Gerh. Rempel was married by Joh Friesen. Klassens were reaccepted into the fellowship.

1849, July 24 - I gave my first sermon in Rueckenau.

1849, July 31 - I presented my second sermon in Tiege.

1849, Aug. 7 - I presented my third message in Neukirch. After the worship service a brotherhood meeting was held. The same dealt with Tiessen, Konteniusfeld, and also with the gathering of grain for the needy. Everyone may give as much as they please.

1849, Aug. 14 - I was in Schoenau and preached for the fourth time. A brotherhood meeting was held after the worship service. The matter of Tiessen, Konteniusfeld, was presented to the brethren. The deacons were placed in charge of gathering together the grain for the poor.

1849, Aug. 21 - I was in Rueckenau for the worship service. Ab. Friesen presented the sermon. Brotherhood meeting was held after the worship service. Tiessen, Konteniusfeld, was dismissed from the fellowship.

1849, Aug. 28 - I was in Tiege for worship service and Ab. Friesen preached.

1849, Sept. 4 - I was in Neukirch for worship service. Ab. Friesen preached. A brotherhood meeting was held after the worship service. It dealt with Martin Friesen, Waldheim, because of his horseback riding and other problems in the village. He was put out of the Gemeinde.

1849, Sept. 11 - I was in Schoenau for the worship service. Ab. Friesen preached.

1849, Sept. 18 - I was in Rueckenau for the worship service. After this, a brotherhood meeting was held. The issue of the separated brethren was discussed. My wife and I stayed at Hein. Friesen's for dinner. Joh. Friesen preached.

1849, Sept. 25 - I was in Tiede for worship service. Ohm Joh. Friesen preached.

1849, Oct. 9 - I was in Schoenau for worship service. Peter Tiessen, Schoenau, preached.

1849, Oct. 15 - The ministerial convened in Neukirch at Joh. Friesen's. I was absent.

1849, Oct. 16 - I was in Rueckenau for worship service. Peter Tiessen preached. After this, a brotherhood meeting was held. Gerhard Rempel's deficient behaviour and the matter regarding child-training was discussed.

1849, Oct. 23 - I was in Tiede for worship service. Tiessen, Schoenau, preached. Brotherhood meeting followed the worship service. Martin Friesen's reacceptance into the fellowship was discussed.

1849, Oct. 30 - I was in Neukirch for worship service. Tiessen preached. Friesen was accepted, but Rempel was dismissed because of his bad behaviour.

1849, Oct. 31 - We four Ohms (ministers) met with the Oberschulz (district mayor).

1849, Nov. 6 - I was in Schoenau for the worship service and proclaimed the Word. After this, brotherhood meeting was held. Penner's bad behaviour toward the Schulz and the school teacher was discussed. He was dismissed from the fellowship.

1849, Nov. 13 - I was in Rueckenau for the worship service. I presented the sermon. After the worship service, Joh. Friesen joined my daughter Helena and Jacob Penner in holy matrimony. We discussed and decided to gather the next following Saturday in Rosenort at Ohm Friesen's for a ministerial meeting.

1849, Nov. 19 - I was present at the ministerial meeting in Rosenort.

1849, Nov. 20 - I was in Tiede for the worship service. I did the preaching. After this, a brotherhood meeting was held. It dealt with Sawatzky's problems. The matter was not concluded.

1849, Nov. 27 - I was in Neukirch for worship service and preached there. A brotherhood meeting was held. Penner, Ohrloff, was accepted. Sawatzky's flour dealings in Kizelge [?] were discussed. The matter was not concluded. Johann and I were at Ohm Penner's place in Prangenau.

1849, Dec. 4 - I was in Waldheim and preached in the school. After the worship service the Ohms of that area convened a brotherhood meeting. Ens, Fischau, and I were also present. The subject matter was not concluded. We stayed overnight at Isaac Friesen's. Sunday we returned home from there. Ens stayed overnight at our place and early Monday morning he drove home with his wagon.

1849, Dec. 11 - I was in Rueckenau for worship service. A brotherhood meeting was held regarding Peter Tiessen, Schoenau, as he was not in harmony with the Gemeinde. Ohm Joh. Friesen preached.

1849, Dec. 18 - I drove to Tiede with Hein. Reimer for the worship service. Because of the high waters we could not get there and were forced to return.

1849, Dec. 25 - Christmas Day. Ab. Friesen preached the first Christmas text

in Neukirch. After worship service, a brotherhood meeting was held. Tiessen, Schoenau, presented his written declaration to the brethren regarding the matters in which he was not in agreement. The same did not bear any fruit.

1849, Dec. 26 - The second holiday. I preached in Schoenau. A brotherhood meeting was held thereafter where Tiessen's matter was discussed. Finally he was removed from his office as a minister by all the brethren who were present as well as by the Ohms.

## 1850

1850, Jan. 1 - I was in Rueckenau for worship service. Joh. Friesen presented the New Year's message. The text was based on Luke 2:21.

1850, Jan. 6 - The children were in Tiege for worship service. Ohm Claas Friesen preached. After this, brotherhood meeting was held. The acceptance of Harms into the Gemeinde was discussed. Also regarding the funds for keeping watch which some brethren had paid. It was agreed that the Gemeinde would assume responsibility for the payment of the same.

1850, Jan. 15 - I was in Schoenau. Claas Friesen preached.

1850, Jan. 28 - We Ohms came together in Rosenort at Ohm Claas Friesen's for a ministerial meeting. We talked with Abr. Reimers regarding their debts and counselled them to sell and to pay. We also discussed others who had fallen so deeply into debt.

1850, Jan. 29 - I was in Tiege for worship service. Ohm Claas Friesen preached. After this, brotherhood meeting was held. We discussed the many debts and took measures within the Gemeinde to reduce the same.

1850, Feb. 5 - I was in Neukirch for the worship service. Claas Friesen preached. A brotherhood meeting was held. The many debts were discussed once more and how to decrease them. We were at Peter Penner's in Prangenau where we stayed overnight.

1850, Feb. 12 - I was in Schoenau for the worship service. Ohm Claas Friesen preached. A brotherhood meeting was held. We discussed the situation of Tiessen from Schoenau.

1850, Feb. 19 - I was in Rueckenau for worship service. Ohm Ab. Friesen, Neukirch preached. A brotherhood meeting was held regarding Tiessen from Schoenau and he was again received as a brother into the Gemeinde.

1850, Feb. 26 - I was not in Tiege.

1850, March 5 - I was in Neukirch for the worship service. Stayed overnight at Peter Penner's in Prangenau. Ab. Friesen preached.

1850, March 12 - I was in Schoenau for worship service. Ab. Friesen preached. A brotherhood meeting was held. Upholstered chairs as well as multi-coloured blankets were discussed and that we should not thereby seek to imitate the world.

1850, March 19 - I preached in Rueckenau. A brotherhood meeting followed the worship service. The matter of overly adorned material goods like chairs and checkered blankets was discussed, the Gemeinde views the same as pride.

1850, Mar. 26 - I was in Tiege for the worship service and preached there. We were in Lindenau at Loewen's.

1850, April 2 - My wife and I were in Neukirch, where I preached. We stayed at Bartel's.

1850, April 9 - Preached in Schoenau and then left for home. Loewens from Lindenau were at our place.

1850, April 16 - I presented the Palm Sunday sermon in Prangenau. For dinner we were at David Klassen's together with Isaac Harders.

1850, April 21 - I was in Tiede for worship service. Joh. Friesen presented the Good Friday message.

1850, April 23 - The first Easter holiday. Joh. Friesen preached again. I was absent.

1850, April 24 - The second Easter holiday. I preached in Schoenau. My text was Luke 24:13-26.

1850, April 29 - I was at Joh. Friesen's in Neukirch to attend a ministerial meeting. Several matters were discussed.

1850, April 30 - From Neukirch I drove to Margenau for the worship service. A brotherhood meeting was held. Gerhard Rempels were received into membership. The young people were presented and Ohm Joh. Friesen read the Articles.

1850, May 7 - I was in Tiede for the worship service. Joh. Friesen read the Articles for the second time. A brotherhood meeting was held after the sermon. Five baptismal candidates were presented.

1850, May 14 - I was in Neukirch for worship service. The Articles were read for the third time. Eight youths were presented together with their sponsors. One was not accepted and another one was added. The matter of Harms and Braun was discussed regarding their acceptance. This subject was not concluded.

1850, May 21 - I was in Schoenau for worship service. Joh. Friesen read the Articles the fourth time. After the sermon he instructed the youths who had been presented.

1850, May 28 - I was in Margenau to attend the worship service. Joh. Friesen read the Articles for the fifth time. The candidates were asked the questions which they answered with 'yes'.

1850, June 1 - Ascension Day. I was in Tiede for worship service and preached the Ascension Day message.

1850, June 4 - I was in Neukirch for worship service. Joh. Friesen served the candidates with baptism. I had dinner at Abram Friesen's.

1850, June 11 - I was in Schoenau for the worship service. Ab. Friesen, Neukirch, conducted the Pentecost message. This was the sermon for the first holiday.

1850, June 12 - The second holiday. Ab. Friesen preached in Margenau. I was absent.

1850, June 18 - I was in Tiede for worship service. Claas Friesen, Rosenort, had the examinatory message. A brotherhood meeting was held. The discussion dealt with the holding of communion. Also regarding the tobacco smoking of Joh. Rempel. He was not present and as a result the matter was not concluded.

1850, June 26 - Worship service was held in Neukirch. Claas Friesen preached. I was absent. Brotherhood followed. Joh. Rempel was dismissed from the Gemeinde because of his failure to live a life of discipleship.

1850, July 2 - I was in Schoenau for worship service. Claas Friesen, Rosenort, presented the examinatory message. Brotherhood meeting followed. The celebrating of communion [unity] was discussed. In the afternoon I spoke with

Brandt as he is seemingly not in harmony with the Gemeinde in certain respects such as the saying of prayers during funeral services, and the use of elaborately adorned chairs.

1850, July 9 - I was in Prangenau for the worship service. Friesen, Rosenort, preached. After this, a brotherhood meeting was held. The discussion concerned Tiessen of Schoenau who had spoken against the unity at Joh. Friesen's, and with the unsavoury conduct of Brandt and Friesen of Waldheim. They asked the Gemeinde for forgive them and promised loyalty and harmony with the fellowship.

1850, July 13 - I was at Tiessen's in Schoenau. The entire ministerial spoke with him and counselled him to maintain peace. It was fruitless.

1850, July 16 - I was in Tiede for worship service. Joh. Friesen gave the examinatory message. After this, a brotherhood meeting was held and the matter of Tiessen, Schoenau, was presented. After extensive deliberation he was dismissed from the Gemeinde.

1850, July 23 - I was in Neukirch for communion. For dinner I was at Peter Penner's in Prangenau.

1850, July 30 - I was in Schoenau to attend communion. Our children from Prangenau were also in Schoenau and stayed two nights with us.

1850, Aug. 6 - I did not attend in Margenau.

1850, Aug. 13 - I was in Tiede for worship service. Ab. Friesen preached. The two Friesen couples and a young man were guests there, namely, Pet. Friesen's children from Schidlitz. After the worship service a brotherhood meeting was held. The discussion concerned those who have been separated.

1850, Aug. 20 - I was in Neukirch for worship service. Ab. Friesen preached. After this, a brotherhood meeting was held. The reacceptance of Joh. Isaac was discussed.

1850, Sept. 3 - I preached in Prangenau. Ab. Friesen and I were the only ministers in attendance there. H. Koop was present and came to ask for reacceptance.

1850, Sept. 10 - I was in Tiede for worship service. The guest speaker was from Prussia. It was Ohm H. Wall from Schoenau. He preached on a text from 2 Corinthians 5:17-21.

1850, Sept. 17 - I preached in Neukirch. After the service a brotherhood meeting was held. The discussion concerned the reacceptance of the Jacob Brauns.

1850, Sept. 23 - The Ohms were all gathered together at our place. We discussed the amount of debt within the fellowship and the acceptance of those who had been separated.

1850, Sept. 24 - I preached in Schoenau. A brotherhood meeting was held. Hein. Koop and the Jakob Brauns were accepted. Also the debts were discussed and that they should be reduced within the Gemeinde.

1850, Oct. 1 - I preached in Margenau. Brotherhood meeting was held. Hein. Koop was received into the fellowship. We also talked with Corn. Friesen and Martin Kroeker about the hiring out of children and their many debts.

1850, Oct. 8 - I preached in Tiede. Brotherhood meeting was held after the service. The reacceptance of Joh. Rempel was discussed. Corn. Friesen made a declaration to the brethren regarding his attitude the previous Sunday and acknowledged that he had been sharp against the Gemeinde. He apologized for the same and was forgiven.

1850, Oct. 15 - I was in Neukirch for worship service. Ohm Joh. Friesen preached. After worship service, brotherhood meeting was held. The same dealt with the fallen brethren, Joh. Rempel and Peter Tiessen, since they had asked for reacceptance. Also regarding Kroeker's many debts.

1850, Oct. 22 - I was in Schoenau for worship service. Joh. Friesen preached. A brotherhood meeting was held and talked about the reacceptance of Joh. Rempel and Pet. Tiessen. We are as yet not convinced that we should accept them as there are insufficient signs of improvement.

1850, Oct. 29 - I was in Margenau for worship service. Ohm Joh. Friesen from Neukirch preached.

1850, Nov. 5 - I was in Tiede for worship service. Ohm Joh. Friesen preached. A brotherhood meeting was held. Peter Tiessen, Schoenau, was accepted. Joh. Rempel was discussed but he was not accepted. The matter of Wall's acceptance was also discussed, as they are applying and want to join themselves to the Gemeinde.

1850, Nov. 12 - I was not in the worship service in Neukirch. A brotherhood meeting was held.

1850, Nov. 19 - I was in Schoenau for worship service. Brotherhood meeting was held and discussed the acceptance of the Walls and Rempels. Claas Friesen preached.

1850, Nov. 26 - I was not in Margenau. The Walls were accepted.

1850, Dec. 3 - I was in Tiede at the worship service. Ohm Claas Friesen preached for the fourth time. The ministers from Neukirch were absent.

1850, Dec. 3 - Joh. Friesen held worship services in Marienthal where he preached in the school.

1850, Dec. 10 - I was not in the worship service in Neukirch. Ab. Friesen preached there.

1850, Dec. 17 - I was in Schoenau for worship service. Ab. Friesen, Neukirch, preached. After the worship service, we Ohms were together at Tiessen's in Schoenau, to discuss a number of serious concerns and how we could regulate and solve the same the most effectively in accordance with the Scripture and the way of love. I was at Wiebe's in Schoenau for dinner.

1850, Dec. 24 - I was not in Margenau. Ab. Friesen preached.

1850, Dec. 25 - Christmas Day, the first holiday. I preached in Tiede.

1850, Dec. 26 - Worship service was held in Neukirch but I was not present. Ab. Friesen preached. It was the second holiday.

1850, Dec. 31 - I was in Schoenau for worship service and presented the New Year's message. Both of the Ohms, Johann and Abraham Friesen, Neukirch, stayed overnight at our place.

## 1851

1851, Jan. 1 - The worship service was held in Margenau. Joh. Friesen, Neukirch, preached. I was absent.

1851, Jan. 6 - Epiphany. Claas Friesen, Rosenort, preached in Tiede. I was not present.

1851, Jan. 7 - I preached in Neukirch. My wife and I stayed away for two nights, one night in Neukirch at Joh. Friesen's and one at Penner's in Prangenau. We had our team hitched together with Reimer's. Brotherhood meeting was

convened after the worship service. We discussed several matters which may threaten to cause a diminishment of the fellowship. The brethren were severely admonished regarding mockery, debts and the bringing up of children.

1851, Jan. 14 - I preached in Schoenau. After the sermon, a brotherhood meeting was held. We talked about the disobedient children of Tiessen from Muntau, and about the jesting. We talked about the debts of Kroeker from Margenau and Friesen from Waldheim. Also regarding the requests of Joh. Klassens, Rueckenau, who wish to join our fellowship. For lack of a proper testimony they were not yet accepted.

1851, Jan. 14 - Ab. Friesen from Neukirch preached in Marienthal and also officiated for the marriage of Claas Koop.

1851, Jan. 21 - I preached in Tiege. I drove home immediately after the service.

1851, Jan. 28 - I preached in Tiege. A brotherhood meeting was held. Joh. Rempel, Rosenort, was accepted.

1851, Feb. 4 - Joh. Friesen preached in Neukirch. I was not present.

1851, Feb. 11 - None of the Ohms were present in Schoenau other than Ens and myself. I spoke on the words from 1 Timothy 1:15-18.

1851, Feb. 18 - I was not in Margenau. Joh. Friesen preached. Our children and Ohm Pet. Penner were at our place. The children stayed for two nights.

1851, Feb. 25 - I rode to the worship service in Tiege on horseback. Driving was impossible because of the excessive mud. Ohm Joh. Friesen, Neukirch, preached.

1851, March 4 - I was in Neukirch for worship service. Claas Friesen preached. Brotherhood meeting followed the worship service. Franz Wiens and Franz Froese were presented for acceptance into the Gemeinde. I had driven there on Saturday together with Peter Rempel. I stayed overnight at Joh. Friesen's in Neukirch. Johann stayed overnight at Penner's in Prangenu.

1851, Mar. 11 - I was in Schoenau for the worship service. Joh. Friesen preached. Claas Friesen preached in Marienthal.

1851, Mar. 18 - I was in Margenau for worship service. Claas Friesen preached. Froese was accepted into the fellowship. Johann Friesen, Neukirch, united Claas Friesen in holy matrimony.

1851, Mar. 24 - I was in Tiege for worship service. Claas Friesen presented the sermon.

1851, Mar. 28 - Froese got married. Joh. Friesen officiated.

1851, April 1 - I was in Neukirch for the worship service. Ab. Friesen preached. The Wiens' were accepted into the fellowship. My wife, Jacob and myself stayed overnight at Penner's in Prangenu.

1851, April 6 - I presented the Good Friday service in Schoenau.

1851, April 8 - The first holiday. I was in Margenau for the worship service and Joh. Friesen preached. I drove along with Hein. Reimer.

1851, April 9 - The second holiday. I was in Tiege for the worship service. Ab. Friesen preached. For dinner I was in Blumstein.

1851, April 15 - The Articles were read in Neukirch for the first time. I was not present.

1851, April 22 - I was in Schoenau for worship service. The Articles were presented for the second time. The baptismal candidates were introduced for the

first time. There were twelve young people.

1851, April 29 - I went to Margenau for the worship service together with Joh. Fehrs. A brotherhood meeting was held thereafter. The candidates were presented a second time. A Wedel from Waldheim was presented for acceptance. (Articles read) for a third time.

1851, May 6 - I was in Tiege for worship service. A brotherhood meeting held thereafter. The testimonies were given for the young people. Wedel was presented for acceptance. The brethren did not approve the same. (The Articles were read for a) fourth time.

1851, May 13 - I was in Neukirch for the worship service and presented the spring sermon. After this I instructed the youths. Peter Friesen and Catharina Penner were united in holy matrimony by Joh. Friesen.

1851, May 17 - I was in Schoenau for the worship service and presented the Ascension Day sermon. Joh. Friesen and Abraham Friesen were not present.

1851, May 20 - The worship service was in Margenau. The youths were asked the questions whether they were sorry for their sins and whether they desired to be baptized. After the worship service Hein Wedel from Waldheim was accepted into the fellowship. I was absent.

1851, May 27 - First holiday of Pentecost. I was in Tiege for worship service. Ab. Friesen had the sermon. Joh. Friesen was absent. The banns were proclaimed for Mrs. Koop and Wedel.

1851, May 28 - Second holiday. The worship service was held in Neukirch. Ab. Friesen preached. Thereafter Ohm Joh. Friesen united Mrs. Koop and Wedel in holy matrimony. I was absent.

1851, June 3 - I was in Schoenau for worship service. The twelve candidates were served with baptism by Joh. Friesen.

1851, June 10 - I was in Margenau for the worship service. Ohm Claas Friesen conducted the examinatory sermon. After the worship service, we Ohms (the ministers) were together at David Klassen's and had a discussion regarding the exercise of the holy ban within our fellowship.

1851, June 17 - I was in Tiege for the worship service. Ohm Claas Friesen presented the preparatory sermon. A brotherhood meeting was held after the worship service. We discussed a number of new fashions and unbecoming apparel. After dinner, Ens from Fischau and I were at Isaac Loewen's in Lindenau to discuss the misdemeanour of their servant girl. Nothing was brought to a conclusion.

1851, June 18 - I was in Petershagen together with Ohm Joh. Friesen and Isaac Harder to discuss the unsanctified behaviour of Maria and the Fasts.

1851, June 24 - I was in Neukirch for worship service. Claas Friesen conducted the examinatory sermon. After the worship service, the brotherhood accepted Joh. Penner. We talked about holding the communion service; also about the payment by David Klassen and Franz Kroecker of their debt to (Isaac) Friesen. My wife and I stayed at Penner's for the night. Sunday we four ministers were at Penner's and questioned and counselled their children and admonished them regarding foolish talk.

1851, July 1 - I was in Schoenau for worship service. A brotherhood meeting was held and a day was set for the holding of the communion service. Fast from Petershagen together with his wife, renounced the fellowship by means of a written

statement.

1851, July 8 - The unity or communion service was held in Neukirch. Fehr drove along with me but did not attend the communion. Klaas Reimer was absent.

1851, July 15 - My wife and I attended worship service in Schoenau. A total of eleven persons - including Loewens - were absent in both places.

1851, July 22 - Worship service was held in Margenau. Ab. Friesen presented the sermon. I was absent.

1851, July 29 - I was in Tiege for worship service. Ab. Friesen preached. Joh. Friesen was absent.

1851, Aug. 5 - My wife and I were in Neukirch for worship service. Ab. Friesen preached. We stayed overnight in Prangenu.

1851, Aug. 12 - Services were conducted in Schoenau. I was absent since I preached in Marienthal.

1851, Aug. 19 - I preached in Margenau. The Walls from Waldheim withdrew from the fellowship by means of a written statement.

1851, Aug. 26 - I preached in Tiege. Neither of the two Neukircher Ohms was present.

1851, Sept. 2 - I preached in Neukirch. Johann and I had dinner in Prangenu at my children. Ens from Fischau was along with us. Ab. Friesen joined his children in matrimony.

1851, Sept. 9 - I preached in Schoenau. The Ohms from Neukirch and Klaas Reimer from Tiege were absent.

1851, Sept. 16 - The worship service was in Margenau. Claas Friesen preached. I was absent.

1851, Sept. 18 - We Ohms were together in Rosenort.

1851, Sept. 23 - I was in Tiege for worship service. Ohm Claas Friesen preached.

1851, Sept. 30 - I was in Schoenau for the worship service. Claas Friesen preached. Ab. Friesen preached in Marienthal. Brotherhood meeting was held in Schoenau.

1851, Oct. 7 - I was in Margenau for the worship service. Ohm Joh. Friesen preached. A brotherhood meeting was held. Certain matters were decided for the next following Thursday; namely, a ministerial election was called for October 11, 1851.

1851, Oct. 11 - The ministerial election took place and the results were as follows: G. Ko. - 15; K. J. - 8; P. F. - 12; Cl. F. - 3; P. Fr. - Marienthal - 9; P. Heid. - 1; J. Fr. - 11; Neukircher Cl. Fr. - 25 deacon; J. W. - 2, etc. The ballots for minister fell as follows among the deacons: Klaas Reimer - 7; Hein Ens - 52; Claas Friesen 32; A total of ninety-one brethren had voted.

1851, Oct. 14 - I was in Tiege for worship service. After this Joh. Friesen united two bridal couples in marriage; a couple from Neukirch--the bridegroom being Pet. Reimer, and Catharina Friesen, and Jacob Fast and Catharina Friesen from Blumstein.

1851, Oct. 21 - The worship service was held in Neukirch, but I was not there. After this, a brotherhood meeting was held.

1851, Oct. 28 - I was in Schoenau for the worship service. A brotherhood meeting followed. Joh. Friesen preached.

1851, Nov. 4 - I was in Margenau for the worship service. Brotherhood

meeting followed. Reimer and the Brauns were dismissed from the fellowship. Ab. Friesen preached.

1851, Nov. 11 - I was in Tiege for the worship service. Hein. Ens, Fischau preached for the first time. Thereafter brotherhood meeting was held. There was extensive discussion about the debts of the following four; namely, Kroeker, Cor. Friesen, Brandt and Isaac, Blumstein.

1851, Nov. 18 - The worship service was held in Neukirch, but I was not there. Ens preached.

1851, Nov. 25 - I was in Schoenau for the worship service. Ens preached. Ab. and Claas Friesen were not there. Joh. Friesen preached in Marienthal.

1851, Dec. 2 - The worship service was held in Margenau, but I was not there. Ens presented the sermon.

1851, Dec. 4 - The Ohms were together for a ministerial meeting in Rosenort. We talked about our spiritual edification.

1851, Dec. 9 - I was in Tiege for the worship service. Ab. Friesen preached. Brotherhood meeting followed and dealt with deacon Reimer's slowness of paying debts and keeping of his word.

1851, Dec. 16 - I was in Neukirch for the worship service. I stayed overnight at Pet. Penner's in Prangenau, Ab. Friesen preached. Wedding banns were proclaimed for the bridal couple Peter Toews and Aganeta Barkman.

1851, Dec. 23 - I was in Schoenau for the worship service. Ab. Friesen preached.

1851, Dec. 25 - The first Christmas holiday. I was in Margenau for the worship service. Joh. Friesen preached.

1851, Dec. 26 - The second holiday. Worship service was held in Tiege. I presented the sermon there and proclaimed the wedding banns of Brandt and Anna Fast.

1851, Dec. 30 - The worship service was held in Neukirch. Joh. Friesen presented the New Year's message and officiated for Peter Toews' wedding.

## 1852

1852, Jan. 1 - Worship service was held in Schoenau. Joh. Friesen preached. After the service I united Claas Brandt and Anna Fast in matrimony. Ens presented the New Year's sermon in Marienthal.

1852, Jan. 6 - Epiphany. I preached here in the school.

1852, Jan. 10 - Joh. Friesen officiated at the wedding of Claas Koop and Catharina Barkman.

1852, Jan. 13 - I preached in Tiege.

1852, Jan. 20 - I preached in Neukirch. I drove there on Saturday together with Johann and Hein. Reimer. I stayed overnight at Ohm Joh. Friesen's, Neukirch. Johann and Reimer drove to Prangenau where they stayed overnight, Johann at Penner's and Hein. at Reimer's.

1852, Jan. 26 - We Ohms had our ministerial meeting at Ohm Ens' in Fischau and dealt with the discrepancy in the financial accounts for 1849 of Klaas Reimer from Tiege.

1852, Jan. 27 - I was in Schoenau to attend the brotherhood meeting which dealt with the Klaas Reimer's incorrect financial report. We also talked about holding a collection on two Sundays for the Holdsteinische Gemeinde which has

unfortunately been ravaged by war. Two Sundays were designated for this purpose in Tiede and Neukirch.

1852, Feb. 3 - I preached in Margenau. A brotherhood meeting was held thereafter. Klaas Reimer's treasury report was again discussed.

1852, Feb. 10 - I was in Tiede for the worship service. I drove along with Reimer. Ens preached. After this a brotherhood meeting was held and Klaas Reimer was dismissed from his position as deacon.

1852, Feb. 17 - Worship service was held in Neukirch. I did not attend. Ens had preached.

1852, Feb. 24 - I was in Schoenau for the worship service. Ens preached. On the same day services were also conducted in Marienthal by one of the two Ohms from Neukirch.

1852, Mar. 2 - Worship services took place in Margenau. I was absent. Ens preached. Thereafter a brotherhood meeting was held. The discussion concerned the erection of a monument in honour of Kontenius. It was decided that everyone could contribute according to their desires.

1852, Mar. 9 - Worship services were held in Tiede. Claas Friesen preached followed by a brotherhood meeting.

1852, Mar. 16 - I was in Neukirch for worship service. Claas Friesen preached and after that a brotherhood meeting was held. The brethren were reconciled with each other. They asked for forgiveness and promised to live more respectfully in the faith.

1852, Mar. 23 - I was in Schoenau for the worship service. Ab. Friesen conducted the Palm Sunday message.

1852, Mar. 28 - Joh. Friesen presented the message for Good Friday. I was not there. Johann came from Prangenau to attend the worship service.

1852, Mar. 30 - The first Easter holiday. I preached in Tiede and prayed for Mrs. Reimer's request. On the second holiday the worship service took place in Neukirch. I was not there. Ab. Friesen had preached.

1852, April 6 - Services were held in Schoenau and Marienthal. The Articles were read for the first time in Schoenau. I preached in Marienthal. I went there on Saturday already.

1852, April 13 - I was in Margenau for the worship service. A brotherhood meeting was held thereafter. The Articles were read for the second time. The youth were presented. There were five all together counting Johann.

1852, April 18 - I was in Rosenort for a ministerial meeting.

1852, April 20 - I was in Tiede for the worship service. The youth were presented a second time. One additional candidate was added so that there were six. The Articles were read for the third time.

1852, April 26 - I was in Neukirch for the worship service. I went with Hein. Reimer. The witnesses gave their testimonies for the youths. The Articles were read a fourth time.

1852, May 3 - I preached the spring message in Schoenau. After the sermon I instructed the baptismal candidates. There were five.

1852, May 8 - I was in Margenau for the worship service. Joh. Friesen presented an Ascension Day message and asked the candidates a number of questions. A brotherhood meeting was convened thereafter.

1852, May 11 - The five candidates were baptized in Tiede. A brotherhood

meeting was held thereafter. The matter of Cornelius Ens was discussed but not concluded.

1852, May 18 - I was in Neukirch for the worship service. Ens presented the Pentecost Day message. I was absent.

1852, May 19 - The second holiday. The service was in Schoenau. Ens preached. Penners were at our place and stayed for two nights.

1852, May 25 - I was in Margenau for worship service. Claas Friesen, Rosenort, had the examinatory message. A brotherhood meeting was held following this. Cornelius Ens' situation is now concluded. Fehr was admonished regarding certain things.

1852, June 1 - I was in Tiege for worship service. Claas Friesen presented the examinatory message for the second time.

1852, June 8 - Worship service in Neukirch. I was present. Claas Friesen preached and a brotherhood meeting was held thereafter. Mrs. Friesen's matter was concluded and the day for the communion service was set.

1852, June 15 - I was in Schoenau for the worship service. Claas Friesen presented his examinatory message for the fourth time.

1852, June 22 - Communion service was held in Margenau. I went there together with Fehrs.

1852, June 29 - My wife, Johann and I, attended the communion service in Tiege. Eleven persons were not there.

1852, July 6 - I was in Neukirch for the worship service. Ab. Friesen preached. I spoke with Hiebert, Alexanderwohl, why he had not attended the communion service. The matter was not settled.

1852, July 13 - I was in Schoenau for the worship service. Ab. Friesen preached. Joh. Friesen was absent.

1852, July 20 - The worship service was held in Margenau. I was absent.

1852, July 27 - I was in Tiege for the worship service. Abraham Friesen preached. A brotherhood meeting was held thereafter. The application of Mrs. Wiens to be accepted into the Gemeinde was not approved.

1852, Aug. 2 - Saturday. I drove to Prangenu.

1852, Aug. 3 - I preached in Neukirch. A brotherhood meeting was held thereafter. The application of Mrs. Wiens was again rejected.

1852, Aug. 10 - I preached in Schoenau. After the worship service, Mrs. Wiens was accepted into the Gemeinde.

1852, Aug. 17 - I preached in Margenau. After the service Claas Friesen joined Mrs. Wiens and Johann Rempel in holy matrimony.

1852, Aug. 24 - I preached in Tiege for the fourth time.

1852, Aug. 31 - I was in Neukirch for the worship service. Ens from Fischau preached.

1852, Sept. 7 - I was in Schoenau for the worship service. Ens preached.

1852, Sept. 14 - Ens preached in Margenau. I did not attend there.

1852, Sept. 21 - I was in Tiege for the worship service. Ens preached for the fourth time.

1852, Sept. 28 - Joh. Friesen preached in Neukirch. I was absent.

1852, Oct. 5 - I was in Schoenau for the worship service. Joh. Friesen preached.

1852, Oct. 6 - We ministers were at Ohm Claas Friesen's for a ministerial

meeting.

1852, Oct. 12 - I was in Margenau for the worship service. Ohm Joh. Friesen preached. A brotherhood meeting was convened thereafter. We spoke to Peter Friesen, Marienthal. He asked the Gemeinde for forgiveness.

1852, Oct. 19 - I was in Tiege for the worship service. Joh. Friesen preached. Brotherhood meeting took place after this. We made a decision regarding the deacon election which was scheduled for the next following Sunday in Neukirch.

1852, Oct. 20 - I was in Neukirch for the worship service. Claas Friesen preached. After this, the brethren were asked to stay for the deacon election. The results of the election were as follows: Jacob Friesen, Blumstein - 29; Ger. Kornelsen, Lichtenau - 16; Peter Friesen, Tiege - 14; Claas Friesen, Paulsheim - 13; Corn. Jantzen, Neukirch - 9; Isaac Loewen, Schoenau - 2; Jacob Wiebe, Schoenau - 2; Ab. Friesen, Rueckenau - 2. Total ballots cast were eighty-seven. There were eleven brethren absent. Ninety-eight brethren in total.

1852, Nov. 2 - I was in Schoenau for the worship service. Claas Friesen preached. Jacob Friesen was absent because of sickness.

1852, Nov. 9 - Worship service was held in Margenau. Claas Friesen preached. I was absent.

1852, Nov. 16 - I was in Tiege for the worship service. Claas Friesen preached.

1852, Nov. 23 - I was in Neukirch for the worship service. I drove there already on Saturday and stayed overnight at Joh. Friesen's. Ab. Friesen preached and Joh. Friesen officiated for two couples: Jacob Fast and Mrs. Penner, Ohrloff; and Jacob Regier and Anna Toews from Fischau.

1852, Nov. 30 - I was in Schoenau for the worship service. Ab. Friesen preached. They were at our place on Saturday.

1852, Dec. 7 - The worship service was held in Margenau. I was absent. Claas Koop resigned from the fellowship. Ab. Friesen preached.

1852, Dec. 14 - I was in Tiege for the worship service. Ab. Friesen preached. After the service I officiated for the wedding of Peter Tiessen, Schoenau, and Elisabeth Fast.

1852, Dec. 21 - Worship service was held in Neukirch. I was not present. Joh. Friesen presented the sermon.

1852, Dec. 25 - Christmas. On the first holiday the worship service was held in Schoenau. During these days worship service was also held in Marienthal where Joh. Friesen preached.

1852, Dec. 26 - The second holiday. The worship service took place in Margenau.

1852, Dec. 27 - The ministerial convened at our place. Ens from Fischau and deacon Claas Friesen were absent due to illness.

1852, Dec. 28 - I was in Tiege for the worship service. Joh. Friesen preached. A brotherhood meeting was held thereafter. The brethren were warned against bad behaviour and creating offence. They were not to depart from the way of peace and love, but rather to foster steadfastness.

### 1853

1853, Jan. 1 - I presented the New Year's message in Neukirch. After the worship service the brotherhood meeting counselled the friends to again be

reconciled with each other. On Saturday we Ohms convened at Penner's in Prangenau to discuss the holding of communion service.

1853, Jan. 4 - I was in Schoenau for the worship service. I preached. The Neukircher Ohms were absent.

1853, Jan. 6 - The worship service was held in Margenau. I presented the Epiphany sermon. Friesen, Ens and Jacob Friesen were not there.

1853, Jan. 11 - The worship service was held in Tiege. I preached. Joh. Friesen and Claas Friesen from Neukirch were absent.

1853, Jan. 18 - I preached in Neukirch and spent one night in Prangenau and one night in Paulsheim. Abram was along but Boeh. was not.

1853, Jan. 25 - I was in Schoenau for the worship service. The brotherhood meeting after this dealt with the indifferent attitudes regarding marriage and warned against the same. It was counselled that in the future more care should be exercised in this regard. Ens preached.

1853, Feb. 1 - The worship service was in Margenau. Ens preached. I was absent.

1853, Feb. 8 - I was in Tiege for the worship service together with Johann. Ens preached. The ministers from Neukirch and Ohm Claas Friesen, Rosenort, were not there.

1853, Feb. 12 - Franz Krueger [Kroeker] was buried.

1853, Feb. 14 - Claas Friesen was buried.

1853, Feb. 15 - The worship service was held in Neukirch. Ens preached. I was absent.

1853, Feb. 22 - I was in Schoenau in the worship service. Joh. Friesen preached. After this, the brotherhood meeting admonished Mrs. Abraham Friesen, Blumstein, because of her negative speaking.

1853, Mar. 1 - The worship service was held in Margenau. Joh. Friesen preached. I was absent. Paulsheimer Klassen was talked to and seriously counselled to make restitution regarding the difficulties which he had raised for their village mayor (Dorfschulz). He promised to comply.

1853, Mar. 8 - I was in Tiege for the worship service. Joh. Friesen preached.

1853, Mar. 9 - Martin Warkentin Sr., Blumstein, died.

1853, Mar. 15 - My wife, Peter and I, were in Neukirch for the service. Joh. Friesen preached. Went to Prangenau for dinner.

1853, Mar. 22 - I was in Schoenau in the worship service. Claas Friesen preached. Prior to the service Fehr was in the ministers' office (Ohm's Stube) and acknowledged his error. He promised to improve. Penners from Prangenau came on Saturday and left for home on Monday.

1853, Mar. 29 - I was in Margenau for the worship service. From there I drove to Paulsheim where I stayed overnight. Peter went along. Claas Friesen preached.

1853, April 5 - I was in Tiege for the worship service. I went along with Reimer. A brotherhood meeting was held thereafter. Enquiries were made regarding books and *Die Wandelnde Seele*. How many copies would each one desire? Claas Friesen preached.

1853, April 12 - Worship service was held in Neukirch. Ab. Friesen preached the Palm Sunday message. I was not present.

1853, April 17 - Easter Sunday. I was in Schoenau for the worship service.

Ens preached.

1853, April 19 - The first holiday. Worship service was held in Margenau. Ab. Friesen preached. I was not present.

1853, April 20 - The second holiday. I preached in Tiege on the words 'Soon cometh the Sabbath'.

1853, April 26 - The Articles were read in Neukirch. I was absent.

1853, May 3 - The youths were presented in Schoenau. There were five.

1853, May 10 - The youths were presented for a second time in Margenau. Two more attended, making a total of seven. I was absent.

1853, May 17 - The youths were presented with their witnesses in Tiege.

1853, May 24 - I was in Neukirch for worship service. I presented the message for spring. The youths were instructed after the worship service.

1853, May 28 - I was in Schoenau for the worship service. Joh. Friesen preached the Ascension message. The youths were instructed and asked the necessary questions in preparation for baptism.

1853, May 31 - The youths were served with baptism in Margenau. I was absent.

1853, June 7 - I was in Tiege for the worship service. Ab. Friesen had the message for the first day of Pentecost.

1853, June 8 - The worship service was held in Neukirch. The second Pentecost message was given by Ens. After the service, Joh. Friesen joined Cornelius Ens and the widow Friesen in holy matrimony. I was absent.

1853, June 14 - I was in Schoenau for the worship service. Claas Friesen gave the examinatory message.

1853, June 21 - I was in Margenau for the worship service. Friesen delivered the examinatory message. A brotherhood meeting was held thereafter. The issue of pride was discussed and that it does not belong in the Gemeinde. From there we drove to Paulsheim where we stayed overnight.

1853, June 28 - I was in Tiege for the worship service. Claas Friesen preached.

1853, July 5 - The worship service was held in Neukirch. A brotherhood meeting followed. I was not there.

1853, July 12 - Martin Kroeker resigned from the Gemeinde. I was in Schoenau for the worship service. Joh. Friesen preached. A brotherhood meeting was held thereafter and dealt with reconciliation before celebrating communion. A date was not set at that meeting.

1853, July 19 - The worship service was held in Margenau. Joh. Friesen preached. After this a brotherhood meeting was held and a decision was made to proceed with the communion service.

1853, July 26 - I was in Tiege for the communion service.

1853, Aug. 2 - I was in Neukirch for the communion service.

1853, Aug. 9 - I was in Schoenau for the worship service. Ab. Friesen preached.

1853, Aug. 16 - I was in Margenau for the worship service. Ab. Friesen preached.

1853, Aug. 23 - I was in Tiege for the worship service. Ab. Friesen preached.

1853, Aug 30 - I was in Neukirch for the worship service. Ab. Friesen preached.

1853, Sept. 6 - I preached in Schoenau.

1853, Sept. 13 - I preached in Margenau. Thereafter I went to Paulsheim. I stayed overnight at Boeh. Dueck's.

1853, Sept. 20 - I preached in Tiege.

1853, Sept. 27 - I preached in Neukirch and went to Prangenau.

1853, Oct. 4 - I was in Schoenau for the worship service. Ens preached. A brotherhood meeting followed.

1853, Oct. 11 - I was in Margenau for worship service. Ens preached. A brotherhood followed. Heidebrecht was dismissed from the fellowship because of improper child disciplining.

1853, Oct. 18 - I was in Tiege for the worship service. Ens preached.

1853, Oct. 25 - I was in Neukirch for the worship service. Ens preached. The matter regarding Heidebrecht was presented to the brethren.

1853, Nov. 1 - Worship service was held in Schoenau. Joh. Friesen preached. Heidebrecht was reaccepted into the Gemeinde.

1853, Nov. 8 - I was in Margenau for the worship service. Joh. Friesen preached. Joh. Koop and Catharina Barkman were united in holy matrimony. I was absent.

1853, Nov. 15 - I was in Blumenort for the worship service. Joh. Friesen preached and the banns for Kornelius Loewen and Helena Bartel were proclaimed. I was absent.

1853, Nov. 22 - I was in Neukirch for the worship service. Saturday I went along with Fehr's children and stayed overnight in Prangenau.

1853, Nov. 24 - The wedding for Aganeta Duecken and Claas Ens took place.

1853, Nov. 29 - I was in Schoenau for worship service. Kornelius Loewen and Helena Bartel were wedded by Joh. Friesen.

1853, Dec. 6 - The worship service was held in Margenau. Claas Friesen preached. I was absent.

1853, Dec. 13 - The worship service was held in Blumenort. Claas Friesen preached.

1853, Dec. 20 - The worship service was held in Neukirch. I was absent. Claas Friesen preached.

1853, Dec. 25 - The first Christmas service was held in Schoenau. Ens preached.

1853, Dec. 26 - The second holiday. The worship service was held Margenau. I was present.

1853, Dec. 27 - The worship service was held in Blumenort. I was absent.

## 1854

1854, Jan. 1 - The worship service was held in Neukirch. Joh. Friesen preached. I was absent.

1854, Jan. 3 - The worship service was held in Schoenau. Joh. Friesen presented the New Year's message.

1854, Jan. 6 - I presented the Epiphany message in Margenau. The day previous we Ohms had a ministerial gathering at Joh. Friesen's in Neukirch. We dealt with Wedel's matter. My wife and I stayed in Prangenau for night. After the service the brotherhood meeting pardoned Wedel's persistent praising.

1854, Jan. 10 - The worship service was held in Blumenort. Ab. Friesen

preached. I was absent.

1854, Jan. 17 - The worship service was held in Neukirch. Ab. Friesen preached. I was absent. A brotherhood was held thereafter. The meeting dealt the written pleas issued by the Gebietsamt requesting donations for the nursing of wounded soldiers. Each individual was permitted to give as much as he saw fit.

1854, Jan. 24 - I was in Schoenau for the worship service. Ab. Friesen preached. A brotherhood meeting was held thereafter. The subject was the same as had been dealt with previously.

1854, Jan. 31 - The worship service was held in Margenau. Ab. Friesen preached. I was absent. On Saturday, Tiessen from Konteniusfeld was at Joh. Friesen's in Neukirch and requested acceptance into the Gemeinde.

1854, Feb. 7 - I preached in Blumenort. Claas Friesen, the deacon, was absent.

1854, Feb. 14 - I preached in Neukirch. After the worship service Tiessen was accepted into the Gemeinde. On Saturday, Joh., Abram and I went to Paulsheim. We stayed in Prangenu for night.

1854, Feb. 21 - I preached in Schoenau. Penners came over on Saturday and drove home on Sunday. The bans were proclaimed for a bridal couple, namely, A. Loewen. Joh. Barkman withdrew from our fellowship.

1854, Feb. 28 - I preached in Margenau. Ens was absent. Johann had come along. Mrs. Fast came to see us before the service and asked to be accepted in order to be part of the Gemeinde again. A brotherhood meeting took place after the worship service and Mrs. Fast's request was presented to the brethren. After the brotherhood meeting we talked with Elisabeth Koop regarding the pearls which she wore around her neck. We attributed this to pride. She promised us not to wear them.

1854, Mar. 7 - We were in Blumenort for the worship service. Ens preached. After this Joh. Friesen joined Ab. Loewen and Helena Tiessen in holy matrimony. Thereafter a brotherhood meeting was held and Mrs. Fast's reacceptance was discussed. No hindrances prevailed.

1854, Mar. 14 - The worship service took place in Neukirch. Joh. Friesen preached. Ens from Fischau was sick. I was absent.

1854, Mar. 21 - I was in Schoenau for the worship service. Ens preached.

1854, Mar. 28 - No worship service in Margenau. I was not there.

1854, April 4 - The worship service was held in Blumenort. I presented the Palm Sunday message. After this, the brotherhood meeting dealt the acceptance into the Gemeinde of Friesen from Sparrau [?].

1854, April 9 - Joh. Friesen presented the Good Friday message in Neukirch. We were there and for dinner we were in Prangenu.

1854, April 11 - Claas Friesen presented the Easter message in Schoenau. We were there also. On the same day the Easter message was presented by Joh. Friesen in Marienthal.

1854, April 12 - The second holiday. Ab. Friesen preached in Margenau.

1854, April 19 - The Articles were read in Blumenort. I was not there.

1854, April 26 - The worship service was held in Neukirch. I was not there due to sickness. Johann and Boehrend were there. A brotherhood meeting was held. Two young people were presented.

1854, May 1 - We were together at Jacob Friesen's in Blumstein and discussed

some matters of concern.

1854, May 2 - I was in Schoenau for the worship service. Joh. Friesen read the Articles for the third time. Three youths were presented to the brotherhood.

1854, May 9 - I was not in Margenau for the worship service. Three youths were presented with their witnesses. The Articles were read a fourth time.

1854, May 16 - I presented the spring message in Blumenort. Afterward the young people were instructed.

1854, May 20 - The worship service was held in Neukirch. Joh. Friesen had the Ascension Day message and thereafter the necessary questions for baptism were asked of the youth.

1854, May 23 - The worship service was held in Schoenau. The youths were served with baptism.

1854, May 30 - The worship service was held in Paulsheim. Ens had preached. I was not there.

1854, May 31 - The second holiday. Ens preached in Blumenort. I was there also.

1854, June 6 - The worship service was held in Neukirch. Claas Friesen presented the examinatory message. I was not there.

1854, June 12 - They [the Ohms] were at our place.

1854, June 13 - We were in Schoenau for the worship service. Claas Friesen presented the examinatory message. A brotherhood meeting was held thereafter. The holding of the communion services was discussed.

1854, June 20 - The worship service was held in Paulsheim. Claas Friesen preached. A brotherhood meeting was held thereafter. The holding of communion was talked about. Peter Rempel was admonished regarding his scoffing. I was absent.

1854, June 27 - I was in Blumenort for the worship service. Ohm Friesen gave the examinatory message. A brotherhood meeting was held thereafter. Dealt with Bartel regarding his manifold offenses and failure to deal lovingly. He promised to reform and to conduct his life according to love. He was forgiven.

1854, July 4 - The communion service was held in Neukirch.

1854, July 11 - I was in Schoenau for the communion service.

1854, July 18 - Ab. Friesen preached in Paulsheim. I was absent.

1854, July 25 - Ab. Friesen preached in Blumenort.

1854, Aug 1 - Abraham Friesen preached in Neukirch. A brotherhood meeting was held thereafter. Fast from Ohrloff was dismissed from the fellowship for unacceptable striking of his step-children and servant girls. I was also at the worship service.

1854, Aug. 7 - I was in Schoenau for the worship service. Ab. Friesen preached.

1854, Aug. 15 - I preached in Paulsheim.

1854, Aug. 22 - I preached in Blumenort. Fast from Ohrloff asked for acceptance. Mrs. Goossen was accepted into the fellowship and Isaac from Schoenau was dismissed.

1854, Aug. 29 - I preached in Neukirch.

1854, Sept. 4 - I preached in Schoenau.

1854, Sept. 11 - Ens preached in Paulsheim. On Saturday I was designated to go to Waldheim to investigate the problem between Friesen and Mrs. Fast. A

brotherhood convened on Sunday. The brethren dealt with the matter regarding Martin Friesen. They also dealt with the matter of Wiens from Marienthal regarding the exercise of revenge against his servant. He was dismissed from the Gemeinde.

1854, Sept. 18 - I was in Blumenort for the worship service. Ens preached.

1854, Sept. 25 - The worship service was held in Neukirch. Ens preached. After the worship service, Wiens from Marienthal was again accepted. I was not there.

1854, Oct. 3 - Loewen and I attended the worship service. Ens preached.

1854, Oct. 10 - The worship service was held in Paulsheim. Joh. Friesen preached. I was not present.

1854, Oct. 17 - Worship service was held in Blumenort. Joh. Friesen preached. Fast from Ohrloff was again accepted.

1854, Oct. 18 - Mrs. Bartel was buried.

1854, Oct. 24 - I was in Neukirch for the worship service. Joh. Friesen preached. I stayed at Penner's overnight.

1854, Oct. 29 - Mrs. Klassen from Paulsheim was buried.

1854, Nov. 1 - I was in Schoenau for the worship service. Joh. Friesen preached. A brotherhood meeting was held after this. Mrs. Plett was accepted into the Gemeinde. Isaac Braun asked to be forgiven for his excessive wine drinking. He promised to improve. Due to good confidence he was forgiven.

1854, Nov. 7 - The worship service was held in Paulsheim. I was absent. Claas Friesen preached.

1854, Nov. 14 - I was in Blumenort for the worship service. Claas Friesen preached. Klassen was there with his bride, although their banns were not proclaimed.

1854, Nov. 21 - I was in Neukirch for the worship service together with Boehrend and we stayed at Penner's for night. Claas Friesen preached. Klassen and his bride had their banns proclaimed.

1854, Nov. 23 - The bridal couple was joined in holy matrimony by Ab. Friesen.

1854, Nov. 28 - I was in church in Schoenau. Claas Friesen preached.

1854, Dec. 5 - The worship service was held in Paulsheim. I was absent. Ab. Friesen preached.

1854, Dec. 12 - I was in Blumenort for the worship service. Ab. Friesen preached.

1854, Dec. 9 - Mrs. Friesen from Paulsheim died and was buried on the 13th.

1854, Dec. 18 - I stayed in Kleefeld overnight.

1854, Dec. 19 - I was in Neukirch for the worship service. Abraham Friesen preached and Joh. Friesen joined Bartel and his bride in holy matrimony. I was not present.

1854, Dec. 24 - We had a ministerial meeting at Claas Friesen's in Rosenort. We dealt with the condition of our Gemeinde. Isaac from Schoenau came and asked for acceptance.

1854, Dec. 25 - The first Christmas service. I preached in Schoenau and also joined Franz Kroeker and the widow Reimer from Tiege in holy matrimony. Elisabeth Penner has withdrawn from our Gemeinde by a written declaration. Elisabeth Penner died. Joh. Friesen preached in Marienthal.

- 1854, Dec. 26 - The second holiday. I preached here in the school.  
1854, Dec. 27 - We and the Fehrs were in Fischau at Ens' in Marienthal.

### 1855

- 1855, Jan 1. - I preached the New Year's message in Blumenort.  
1855, Jan. 2 - Joh. Friesen preached the New Year's message in Neukirch.  
1855, Jan. 6 - Epiphany. Joh. Friesen preached in Schoenau.  
1855, Jan. 7 - Joh. Friesen preached in Paulsheim.  
1855, Jan. 16 - I preached in Blumenort.  
1855, Jan. 23 - I preached in Neukirch. Brotherhood followed to talk about Isaac's acceptance.  
1855, Jan. 30 - I preached in Schoenau. Brotherhood followed to talk about Isaac's acceptance.  
1855, Feb. 6 - I preached in Paulsheim. I went there on Saturday and stayed at Friesen's overnight. Left for home on Sunday afternoon.  
1855, Feb. 13 - Ens preached in Blumenort. I was there.  
1855, Feb. 20 - Ens preached in Neukirch.  
1855, Feb. 27 - Ens preached in Schoenau.  
1855, Mar. 6 - Ens preached in Paulsheim.  
1855, Mar. 13 - Joh. Friesen preached in Blumenort. I was present.  
1855, Mar. 20 - Ab. Friesen presented the Palm Sunday message in Neukirch.  
1855, Mar. 25 - Good Friday. Ens preached in Schoenau. Ab. Friesen presented the Good Friday message in Marienthal.  
1855, Mar. 27 - Joh. Friesen had the Easter message in Paulsheim.  
1855, Mar. 28 - On the second Easter holiday, Ens presented the message in Blumenort.  
1855, April 2 - My wife and I were in Neukirch for the worship service. The Articles were read. A brotherhood meeting followed.  
1855, April 10 - The Articles were read for a second time in Schoenau. After this the youths were presented. There were twelve. The brethren were warned not to petition against the administration and exhorted not to aspire for equality with the world.  
1855, April 17 - The Articles were read a third time in Paulsheim and the youths were presented. A brotherhood was held thereafter and the brethren were warned against making accusations.  
1855, April 24 - We were in Blumenort for the worship service and the Articles were read. A brotherhood meeting was held. The accusations against Warkentin and Joh[?] Ensz by Joh. Regehr [?] were discussed.  
1855, May 1 - I presented the spring message in Neukirch and instructed the baptismal candidates.  
1855, May 5 - Ascension Day. Joh. Friesen preached in Schoenau and examined the candidates in preparation for baptism. I was absent.  
1855, May 8 - The candidates were baptized in Paulsheim. I was absent.  
1855, May 9 - Mrs. Fehr died and was buried on the 11th.  
1855, May 15 - Pentecost. Was in Blumenort for the worship service. Ens preached.  
1855, May 16 - Ens preached in Neukirch on the second holiday. I was absent because of rain.

1855, May 22 - I was in Schoenau for the worship service. Claas Friesen had the examinatory message. After that, the brotherhood prepared itself for the communion service.

1855, May 29 - The worship service was in Paulsheim. Claas Friesen had the examinatory message. Brotherhood meeting followed and dealt with the readiness for the communion service. I was absent.

1855, June 5 - I was in Blumenort for the worship service. Friesen preached the examinatory message. Brotherhood meeting followed. Dealt with Friesen and Regier both from Kleefeld regarding their unsatisfactory conduct during *podwodden*. The brethren were all admonished in this regard as we had also done previously but which they had not heeded. They were both dismissed from the Gemeinde.

1855, June 12 - I was in Neukirch for the worship service. Friesen had the examinatory message. After this, the brotherhood meeting accepted Joh. Isaac from Schoenau back into the Gemeinde, and decided upon a day for the communion service.

1855, June 19 - I attended the communion service in Schoenau and after this both Regier and Friesen from Kleefeld were accepted back into the fellowship.

1855, June 27 - Communion service was held in Neukirch.

1855, July 3 - I was in Blumenort to attend the worship service. Ab. Friesen preached.

1855, July 3 - Mrs. Joh. Friesen died during the evening and was buried on Tuesday.

1855, July 10 - I was in Neukirch for the worship service. Ab. Friesen preached. After this I joined Johann Defehr and Maria Harder in holy matrimony. I had dinner in Kleefeld.

1855, July 16 - The ministers were all together at our place.

1855, July 17 - I was in Schoenau for the worship service. Friesen preached.

1855, July 24 - The worship service was held in Paulsheim. Ab. Friesen preached. I was absent.

1855, July 28 - The worship service was held in Neukirch. A brotherhood meeting followed.

1855, July 31 - I preached in Blumenort.

1855, Aug. 7 - The worship service was held in Neukirch. Joh. Friesen preached as I was sick.

1855, Aug. 14 - I preached in Schoenau. Ab. Friesen officiated for Gerhard Rempel's marriage, and Johann and Agata Ducken had their banns proclaimed.

1855, Aug. 21 - I preached in Paulsheim. Officiated for my children and proclaimed the wedding banns of Joh. Friesen and Ab. Friesen.

1855, Aug. 28 - Ens preached in Blumenort. Claas Friesen officiated for the two bridal couples and proclaimed the wedding banns of Ens and his bride.

1855, Aug. 26 - The two pair of bridal couples were at our place, Ens and Friesen.

1855, Sept. 4 - Ens preached in Neukirch. After the service he was married by Claas Friesen. A brotherhood meeting convened thereafter to discuss the Russian harnesses and counsel was given to remain free of the same.

1855, Sept. 11 - Ens preached in Schoenau. Brotherhood followed to discuss the matters of the previous Sunday. Claas Friesen's wedding banns were

proclaimed.

1855, Sept. 18 - Ens preached in Paulsheim. I was absent. Joh. Friesen officiated for the wedding of Claas Friesen from Paulsheim.

1855, Sept. 25 - Joh. Friesen preached in Blumenort. I was also there.

1855, Oct. 2 - The worship service was held in Neukirch. Joh. Friesen preached. A brotherhood meeting was held thereafter. Fast's matter was discussed.

1855, Oct. 9 - I was in Schoenau to attend the worship service. Joh. Friesen preached.

1855, Oct. 16 - I was in Paulsheim for the worship service. I went there from Penner's in Prangenau. Joh. Friesen preached.

1855, Oct. 20 - David and Anna had their banns proclaimed.

1855, Oct. 23 - I was in Blumenort for the worship service. Claas Friesen preached. A brotherhood meeting convened thereafter. Fast's aspirations were forgiven by the brethren. David Loewen and Anna Reimer had their banns proclaimed.

1855, Oct. 30 - Claas Friesen preached in Neukirch. I was absent. A brotherhood meeting was also held. Unrau's request to be accepted as a member was approved.

1855, Nov. 6 - I was in Schoenau in the worship service. Claas Friesen preached. After this, the brotherhood meeting agreed to accept Unrau. The bridal couple David Loewen and Anna Reimer were joined in holy matrimony by Joh. Friesen.

1855, Nov. 13 - I was in Paulsheim with Jacob and Abraham. Claas Friesen preached and after the service Unrau was accepted.

1855, Nov. 20 - I was in Blumenort for the worship service. Ab. Friesen preached. The brotherhood meeting dismissed Margareta from Muntau from the fellowship because of fornication with a soldier. Her father who had beat her in anger was also dismissed from the Gemeinde. Following this the bridal couple, Unrau from Alex. and Mrs. Fast from Waldheim, had their banns proclaimed.

1855, Nov. 27 - The worship service was held in Neukirch. Ab. Friesen preached, and after this he joined Unrau and Mrs. Fast in holy matrimony. I was absent.

1855, Dec. 4 - I was in Schoenau for the worship service. Ab. Friesen preached. A brotherhood meeting was held thereafter. It was decided to reaccept Harder and Margareta. The brethren were also warned against the use of new-fashioned clothes.

1855, Dec. 11 - The worship service was held in Paulsheim. Ab. Friesen preached. I was absent.

1855, Dec. 17 - Saturday. The Ohms were together in Blumenort for a ministerial meeting.

1855, Dec. 18 - I was in Blumenort for the worship service. Ab. Friesen preached.

1855, Dec. 25 - The first Christmas service. The worship service was held in Neukirch. Ab. Friesen preached.

1855, Dec. 26 - The second holiday. I preached in Schoenau and Joh. Friesen in Marienthal. He preached the Christmas message.

## 1856

1856, Jan. 1 - The service was held in Paulsheim. Joh. Friesen preached. I was not there. Ens preached in Blumenort.

1856, Jan. 6 - Epiphany. The service was held in Blumenort. Joh. Friesen preached.

1856, Jan. 8 - The service was held in Neukirch. I preached. A brotherhood meeting was held thereafter and dealt with the accusations which are levelled against the Ohms. My wife and I stayed for two nights in Prangenu.

1856, Jan. 15 - I preached in Schoenau. After this, the brotherhood meeting dealt with the accusations.

1856, Jan. 22 - I preached in Paulsheim. For the night I stayed with Peter Rempels.

1856, Jan 23 - Mrs. Wiebe was buried.

1856, Jan. 29 - I preached in Blumenort. My wife and I had dinner at Claas Friesen's in Rosenort.

1856, Feb. 5 - The service was held in Neukirch. Ens preached. After this, the brotherhood meeting convened. Old disturbing things which existed between Peter and Ab. Friesen were reconciled. Due to sickness I was not there.

1856, Feb. 12 - The service was held in Schoenau. Ens preached. I was there also.

1856, Feb. 16 - Mrs. Claas Friesen from Paulsheim died and was buried on the 20th.

1856, Feb. 17 - Jacob Wiebe, Schoenau, died and was buried on the 21st.

1856, Feb. 19 - The service was held in Paulsheim. Ens preached. I was absent.

1856, Feb. 26 - Ens preached in Blumenort. I was there.

1856, Mar. 3 - The service was held in Neukirch. Brotherhood meeting followed. Joh. Friesen preached. We dealt with Thielmann from Nikolaidorf and his excessive wine drinking. He was forgiven. I was not there.

1856, Mar. 11 - Joh. Friesen preached in Schoenau. I was there.

1856, Mar. 18 - The worship service was held in Paulsheim. Friesen preached. I was absent. Mrs. Loewen died and was buried on the 21st. Is. Loewen died and the funeral was on the 26th in Blumstein and the burial on the 28th. Mrs. Joh. Friesen died and we were at the burial on the 31st.

1856, Mar. 25 - I was in Blumenort for worship service.

1856, April 1 - The worship service was held in Neukirch. Claas Friesen preached. I was there and stayed overnight in Prangenu.

1856, April 8 - I was in Lindenau for the worship service. Claas Friesen preached.

1856, April 13 - Good Friday. Friesen preached in Paulsheim.

1856, April 15 - The first holiday. I was in Blumenort for the service. Claas Friesen preached.

1856, April 16 - The second Easter holiday. The worship service was held in Neukirch. Joh. Friesen preached. I was not there. The children of Ab. Friesens got married on April 22.

1856, April 22 - The worship service was held in Lindenau. Joh. Friesen read the Articles. I was there.

1856, April 29 - I was in Paulsheim for the worship service. I stayed overnight

at Boehrend Dueck's. The Articles were read and the youths were presented.

1856, May 5 - Bartel's son, Jacob was buried.

1856, May 6 - Mrs. Toews from Neukirch was buried. I was in Blumenort for the worship service. The youths were presented a second time. There were nine of them.

1856, May 13 - I was in Neukirch for the worship service. The witnesses gave their testimonies for the baptismal candidates.

1856, May 20 - Ens presented the spring message in Lindenau and instructed the youths. I was there.

1856, May 24 - Ascension Day. Joh. Friesen presented the message in Paulsheim. He asked the youths the necessary baptismal questions. I was there.

1856, May 27 - The baptismal candidates were baptized in Blumenort. Friesen's Abram was there with his bride and their banns were proclaimed.

1856, June 3 - The first Pentecost holiday. Ens preached in Neukirch. I was absent.

1856, June 4 - The second Pentecost holiday. Ab. Friesen preached in Lindenau. After the service Ens joined the bridal couple in holy matrimony, namely, Abraham Friesen and Anna Isaac.

1856, June 10 - Claas Friesen presented the preparatory message in Paulsheim. After this, the brotherhood meeting convened regarding Peter Harms of Sparrau. His matter was mentioned twice and was presented again. Upon his promises the matter was concluded. I was there.

1856, June 17 - Claas Friesen had the examinatory message in Blumenort. I was present. Brotherhood meeting followed and a day was set for the communion service.

1856, June 24 - We were in Neukirch for harmony. For dinner we went to Prangenau. Prior to the service Mrs. Friesen was admonished regarding her new-fashioned dress, and as she promised to let it go and not to be a stumbling block, she was allowed to partake of communion.

1856, July 1 - I was in Lindenau for the worship service. Braun from Lindenau was summoned to appear in the ministers' office. He was admonished regarding his drinking of wine which is commonly being spoken about and was asked to quieten such talk by abstaining therefrom. But he got up and left during the service.

1856, July 8 - Ab. Friesen presented the thanksgiving message in Paulsheim. I was not present during the communion service.

1856, July 15 - I was in Blumenort for the worship service. Ab. Friesen preached and proclaimed the banns of Aeltester Joh. Friesen and Elisabeth Klassen from Margenau.

1856, July 22 - I was in Neukirch for the worship service. Aeltester Friesen preached. A brotherhood meeting was held thereafter. The meeting dealt with some matters concerning new fashions.

1856, July 24 - Aeltester Joh. Friesen had his wedding in Margenau. Claas Friesen officiated.

1856, July 29 - I was in Lindenau for the worship service. Brotherhood meeting followed and dealt with the new fashions in clothes and gave directions regarding them. The banns of the bridal couple Joh. Toews and Anna Warkentin were proclaimed. Ab. Friesen preached.

1856, Aug. 6 - I preached in Paulsheim. The banns of Cor. Harms and Catharina Tiessen were proclaimed. After the service Toews and Anna Warkentin were married by Ab. Friesen.

1856, Aug. 12 - I preached in Blumenort. The banns of the bridal couple Peter Penner and Elisabeth Harder were proclaimed.

1856, Aug. 15 - There was a wedding in Schoenau. Cor. Harms and Catharina Tiessen were married by Claas Friesen.

1856, Aug. 22 - I preached in Neukirch. After the worship service, Penner and Elisabeth Harder were joined in holy matrimony by Joh. Friesen. I was in Prangenau for dinner and for lunch in Kleefeld.

1856, Aug. 26 - I preached in Lindenau.

1856, Sept. 2 - Ens preached in Paulsheim. I was not there.

1856, Sept. 9 - Ens preached in Blumenort. I was present.

1856, Sept. 16 - Ens had the message in Neukirch. I was present.

1856, Sept. 23 - Ens preached in Lindenau. I was present.

1856, Sept. 30 - Joh. Friesen preached in Paulsheim. I was not present.

1856, Oct. 7 - Joh. Friesen preached in Blumenort. I was present. On the 7th during the evening Thielmann died and was buried on the 10th.

1856, Oct. 14 - Joh. Friesen preached in Neukirch. I was there.

1856, Oct. 20 - We ministers got together at H. Ens' in Fischau to speak about the loss of money which occurred at Martin Kroeker's in Margenau.

1856, Oct. 21 - I attended worship service in Lindenau. Joh. Friesen preached. Brotherhood meeting followed to speak about the money. Each one should bear a part of the loss. Four Sundays were to be used for collecting the amount.

1856, Oct. 28 - The worship service was held in Paulsheim. Claas Friesen preached. A brotherhood meeting was held after the worship service and confirmed what was decided the Sunday previous in Lindenau.

1856, Nov. 4 - The worship service was held in Blumenort. Claas Friesen preached. I was present.

1856, Nov. 11 - The service was held in Neukirch. Ohm Claas Friesen preached. I was present.

1856, Nov. 18 - I was in Lindenau for the worship service. Ohm Claas Friesen preached. After this brotherhood meeting was held. Isaac Braun was dismissed from the Gemeinde because of his drinking.

1856, Nov. 25 - The worship service was held in Paulsheim. Ab. Friesen preached. I was absent.

1856, Nov. 27 - The sister-in-law died and was buried November 30.

1856, Dec. 2 - I was in Blumenort for the worship service. Ab. Friesen preached.

1856, Dec. 9 - I was in Neukirch for the worship service. Ab. Friesen preached.

1856, Dec. 16 - I was in Lindenau for the worship service. Ab. Friesen preached.

1856, Dec. 23 - Dueck and I were in Paulsheim for the worship service. Ab. Friesen preached. I spent one night at B. Dueck's in Gnadenfeld and the second at Penner's in Prangenau.

1856, Dec. 25 - The first Christmas holiday. I was in Rosenort for the worship service. Claas Friesen preached.

1856, Dec. 26 - The second holiday. The service was held in Neukirch. Joh. Friesen preached. I was absent.

1856, Dec.30 - I preached the New Year's sermon in Lindenau. A brotherhood meeting followed and Braun's reacceptance was approved.

### 1857

1857, Jan. 1 - The New Year's service was presented in Paulsheim by Joh. Friesen. I was absent. Braun from Lindenau was accepted.

1857, Jan. 6 - The Epiphany sermon was presented by Claas Friesen in Rosenort.

1857, Jan. 13 - I preached in Neukirch.

1857, Jan. 20 - I preached in Lindenau.

1857, Jan. 27 - The worship service was held in Paulsheim. I was absent due to the cold. Joh. Friesen preached. Unrau died.

1857, Feb. 3 - Worship service was held in Rosenort. I presented the sermon. After the service the Ohms stayed behind to discuss certain things and to decide that a brotherhood meeting should be held on the next coming Sunday.

1857, Feb. 10 - We were in Neukirch for the worship service. Ens preached. After the worship service a brotherhood meeting convened to deal with the division between the brethren. We saw that Friesen's feelings were hurt. Joh. Friesen, three brethren and I went there on Sunday. The matter was addressed by the three brethren and they acknowledged that they had offended Friesen and asked for forgiveness. The matter was concluded. We stayed overnight and left on Monday for Prangenau. In the afternoon we went to Kleefeld and then home. The bridal couple, Jacob Friesen and the widow Thielmann, were in the worship service.

1857, Feb. 17 - We were in Lindenau for the worship service. Ens preached. The bans were proclaimed for the bridal couple Jacob Friesen and Mrs. Thielmann.

1857, Feb. 19 - Jacob Friesen and the widow Thielmann got married. Joh. Friesen from Neukirch officiated.

1857, Feb. 23, Jacob Toews withdrew from the Gemeinde by means of a written statement.

1857, Feb. 24 - I was in Paulsheim for the worship service. Ens preached. A brotherhood meeting followed and a young person was accepted into the Gemeinde. The widow Friesen from Marienthal wants to marry him, namely, Goertzen. We also dealt with other items, like parting of the hair.

1857, Mar. 3 - I was in Rosenort for the worship service. Ens preached.

1857, Mar. 10 - We were in Neukirch for the worship service. Ohm Joh. Friesen preached.

1857, Mar. 17 - The worship service was held in Lindenau. Joh. Friesen preached. I was absent.

1857, Mar. 24 - The worship service was held in Paulsheim. Joh. Friesen preached. I was absent.

1857, Mar. 31 - Worship service was held in Rosenort. Claas Friesen had the Palm Sunday message. I attended.

1857, April 5 - Ens presented the Good Friday message in Neukirch. I was present.

1857, April 7 - The first Easter holiday. I preached in Lindenau. Joh. Friesen preached in Grossweide.

1857, April 8 - The second holiday. Ab. Friesen preached in Paulsheim. I was absent.

1857, April 14 - The Articles were read for the first time. A brotherhood meeting was called to discuss the matter regarding Penner and Ens.

1857, April 21 - The Articles were read a second time. A brotherhood meeting convened thereafter. The matter regarding Penner and Ens dealing with the stud service was forgiven. The youths were presented; there are eleven. The worship service was held in Neukirch.

1857, April 28 - The worship service was held in Tiegenhagen. The Articles were read a third time. The youths were presented; there were twelve. We dealt with Bartel and son Dirk. The matter however was not unanimously concluded.

1857, May 5 - Joh. Friesen preached in Paulsheim. I was there. A brotherhood meeting was convened thereafter. The youths were presented with their witnesses. Bartel apologized to the Gemeinde for his shortcoming regarding son Dirk. The matter was concluded.

1857, May 8 - I presented the spring message in Rosenort. The youths were instructed.

1857, May 16 - Ascension Day. Joh. Friesen asked certain questions which the youths were to answer. Whether they wished to be baptized? He presented the Ascension Day message.

1857, May 19 - The youths were served with baptism in Tiegenhagen.

1857, May 26 - The first Pentecost holiday. I preached in Paulsheim.

1857, May 27 - I preached the second Pentecost sermon in Rosenort.

1857, June 1 - Mrs. Ab. Friesen died and was buried on the 2nd of June.

1857, June 2 - I was in Neukirch for the worship service. Ab. Friesen presented the examinatory message.

1857, June 8 - Dueck and Margareta Reimer had their Verlobung.

1857, June 9 - I was in Tiegenhagen for the worship service. Ab. Friesen preached. A brotherhood meeting was held thereafter and the holding of a communion service was discussed.

1857, June 16 - Ab. Friesen had the examinatory message in Paulsheim. The brotherhood meeting decided to hold the communion service on the next following Sunday.

1857, June 18 - Dueck got married.

1857, June 23 - I was in Rosenort to attend the communion service.

1857, June 30 - I was in Neukirch to attend the communion service. Six were not present.

1857, July 7 - I presented the thanksgiving message in Tiegenhagen after the communion service.

1857, July 14 - I preached in Paulsheim. After the service, Joh. Friesen officiated for the wedding of Jacob Kroeker and Maria Klassen.

1857, July 21 - I preached in Rosenort.

1857, July 28 - I preached in Neukirch.

1857, Aug. 4 - I was in Tiegenhagen for the worship service. Ens preached. Joh. Friesens, Penners, Duecks, Isaac Harders and Joh. Fehrs were at our place.

1857, Aug. 11 - The worship service was held in Paulsheim. Ens preached. I

was absent.

1857, Aug. 18 - I was in Rosenort for the worship service. Ens preached. The brotherhood meeting dismissed Corn. Toews from the Gemeinde, as he had entered the room of a woman through the window and stood before the husband as if he had been carrying on with the wife. Later, however, he denied everything.

1857, Aug. 25 - I was in Neukirch for the worship service. Ens preached. The brotherhood discussed Cor. Toews' acceptance, as he had requested it.

1857, Sept. 1 - I was in Tiegenhagen for the worship service. Claas Friesen preached. After this, the brotherhood discussed the acceptance of Toews. As his father was absent without a valid ground, the acceptance was postponed.

1857, Sept. 8 - I was in Paulsheim for the worship service. Claas Friesen preached. On Saturday I was at Sawatzky's in Friedensdorf. For night I was at Boehrend Dueck's. The bridal couple, Peter Wiebe and the daughter of Toews, were there.

1857, Sept. 15 - I was in Rosenort for worship service. Claas Friesen preached. A brotherhood meeting followed. Cornelius Toews was reaccepted and Joh. Friesen officiated at Peter Wiebe's marriage.

1857, Sept. 22 - Claas Friesen preached in Neukirch. I was not present.

1857, Sept. 29 - I was in Tiegenhagen for the worship service. Joh. Friesen preached.

1857, Oct. 6 - Worship service was in Paulsheim. Joh. Friesen preached. I was present.

1857, Oct. 13 - I was in Rosenort for worship service. Joh. Friesen preached. In the afternoon Corn. Toews got married to Elisabeth Friesen. Ens officiated.

1857, Oct. 20 - Worship service was held in Neukirch. Joh. Friesen preached.

1857, Oct. 27 - The worship service took place in Tiegenhagen. Ab. Friesen preached. I was present.

1857, Nov. 3 - The worship service was held in Paulsheim. Ab. Friesen preached. I was absent.

1857, Nov. 10 - Worship service was held was in Rosenort. Ab. Friesen preached. I was not present.

1857, Nov. 17 - I was in Neukirch for the worship service. Ab. Friesen preached. A brotherhood meeting followed. Joh. Isaac's acceptance was discussed.

1857, Nov. 24 - I preached in Tiegenhagen. After this, the brotherhood spoke about Isaac's acceptance, but he was not approved.

1857, Nov. 27 - Brandt died.

1857, Dec. 1 - I preached in Paulsheim. Saturday I was at Joh. Friesen's in Neukirch, and for the night I was in Prangenau and left for home on Sunday. Brandt was buried in Tiegenhagen. I was not there.

1857, Dec. 8 - I preached in Rosenort on the text Matthew 20:17.

1857, Dec. 14 - I preached in Neukirch. Peter Penner was dismissed from the Gemeinde. I stayed overnight in Prangenau. I had dinner at Ab. Friesen's.

1857, Dec. 21 - Worship service was held in Tiegenhagen. Ens preached. Ab. and Claas Friesen stayed overnight at Reimer's. Penner was reaccepted.

1857, Dec. 25 - The first Christmas holiday. The worship service was held in Paulsheim. Ab. Friesen preached.

1857, Dec. 26 - The second Christmas holiday. Ohm Claas Friesen preached in Rosenort. My wife and I were present. Isaac presented himself (to the Ohms)

prior to the worship service.

1857, Dec. 29 - Sunday, Joh. Friesen preached the New Year's message in Neukirch.

### 1858

1858, Jan. 1 - I presented the New Year's message in Tiegenhagen. Isaac from Schoenau was present. In the afternoon I gave the New Year's message for the funeral at Peter Dueck's. On the same day Joh. Friesen had the New Year's message in Marienthal.

1858, Jan. 6 - Epiphany. Joh. Friesen preached in Rosenort. After dinner we Ohms remained together for a ministerial meeting and talked about the Holy Scripture and many other items.

1858, Jan. 12 - Ens preached in Neukirch. A brotherhood meeting followed and numerous matters were discussed. A number of the members are pursuing equality with the world which is not merely evidenced in their manner of dress. We ministers seek to counteract this. On Saturday I, together with Reimer and Peter, went to Duecks and for the night we went to Prangenau and only on Monday did we leave for home. On Sunday Johann Isaac came to us [Ohms] before the worship service and asked for acceptance, but he was not yet approved.

1858, Jan. 19 - Ens preached in Tiegenhagen. I was present. The brotherhood meeting discussed the song books [*Gesangbücher*] and Heidebrecht's matter. The matter was not concluded.

1858, Jan. 26 - Ens preached in Paulsheim. I was absent. Isaac from Schoenau was accepted.

1858, Feb. 2- I was in Rosenort for the worship service. Ens preached. The brotherhood meeting followed. The matter of Heidebrecht from Blumstein was concluded. He confessed his fault. Jacob Fast and his bride were present at the worship service.

1858, Feb. 9 - Claas Friesen preached in Neukirch. I was absent.

1858, Feb. 11 - Jacob Fast from Ohrloff had his wedding. Joh. Friesen officiated.

1858, Feb. 16 - I was in Tiegenhagen for the worship service. Joh. Friesen preached. He was at our place.

1858, Feb. 23 - The worship service was held in Paulsheim. Joh. Friesen preached. I was absent.

1858, Mar. 2 - I was in Rosenort for the worship service. Claas Friesen preached. A brotherhood meeting followed and my son Boehrend was accepted into the Gemeinde.

1858, Mar. 4 - He and Agatha Thielmann had their engagement party [Verlobung].

1858, Mar. 9 - I attended worship service in Neukirch. Joh. Friesen preached. Boehrend and Agatha had their banns proclaimed as a bridal couple.

1858, Mar. 16 - I was in Tiegenhagen for the worship service. Claas Friesen had the Palm Sunday message. Boehrend and Agatha got married in the afternoon at our place. Joh. Friesen officiated.

1858, Mar. 21 - Ens presented the Good Friday message in Paulsheim. I was absent.

1858, Mar. 23 - The first Easter holiday. I preached in Rosenort and Joh.

## Friesen in Marienthal.

1858, Mar. 24 - The second Easter holiday. Ab. Friesen preached in Neukirch. I was absent, but the children were there.

1858, Mar. 21 - Mrs. Barkman died and was buried on the 25th in Waldheim.

1858, Mar. 30 - During the last Easter holiday we attended the betrothal of Franz Loewen at Hamm's in Kleefeld. Joh. Friesen presented the Articles in Fischau. I was present.

1858, April 6 - We were in Paulsheim for the worship service. The Articles were read a second time. The youths were presented. There were six males and five females.

1858, April 13 - I was in Rosenort. The Articles were read a third time. The candidates were presented. There were twelve.

1858, April 20 - I was in Neukirch. The youths were presented with their witnesses.

1858, April 27 - Ens had the spring message in Fischau. The youths were instructed. I was there.

1858, May 1 - Ascension Day. The worship service was held in Paulsheim. The youths were asked the necessary questions regarding our confession of faith. I was not there.

1858, May 4 - We were in Neukirch. The youths were served with baptism. I was there.

1858, May 11 - The first Pentecost holiday. I preached in Neukirch. I was the only one in attendance from here. I had dinner at Johann Dueck's in Alexanderkrone. H. Loewen and the widow Brandt had their banns proclaimed.

1858, May 12 - The second holiday. I preached in Fischau and Abraham Friesen in Marienthal. H. Loewen and the widow Brandt had their banns proclaimed.

1858, May 18 - Joh. Friesen had the examinatory message in Paulsheim. I was absent.

1858, May 20 - H. Loewen and Mrs. Brandt were married. Joh. Friesen officiated.

1858, May 25 - Ab. Friesen preached in Rosenort. I was present.

1858, June 1 - Ab. Friesen had the examinatory message in Neukirch. I was present. The bridal couple Jacob Barkman and the widow Warkentin were there.

1858, June 5 - Jacob Barkman got married in Paulsheim. They were married by Friesen.

1858, June 8 - Ab. Friesen presented the examinatory message for the fourth time. I was in Tiegenhagen also.

1858, June 15 - I attended the communion service in Neukirch.

1858, June 22 - I attended the communion service in Rosenort.

1858, June 29 - I presented the thanksgiving message in Neukirch.

1858, July 6 - I preached in Fischau.

1858, July 13 - I preached in Paulsheim.

1858, July 20 - I preached in Rosenort.

1858, July 27 - I was in Neukirch for the worship service. Claas Friesen preached. After this, the brotherhood meeting dealt with the acceptance of Friesen from Lichtenau which was agreed upon. We also talked about the daughter of Jacob Friesen from Kleefeld. He has promised to be more careful about her

behaviour.

1858, Aug. 3 - The worship service was held in Fischau. Claas Friesen preached. Boeh. Duecks came along to the service. Wedding banns were announced for a couple.

1858, Aug. 10 - I did not attend the worship service which was held in Paulsheim. Harms' son Isaac and Margaretha Friesen were united in marriage. Friesen officiated.

1858, Aug. 17 - I was in Rosenort for the worship service. Claas Friesen preached. After this Friesen from Lichtenau together with his wife were accepted into the Gemeinde. This had been agreed upon earlier.

1858, Aug. 24 - The worship service was held in Neukirch. Ens preached. After this, Harms was counselled and warned regarding his dealings with the village farm [Feuerstelle-Handeln]. I was present.

1858, Aug. 31 - I was in Fischau for the worship service. Ens preached. Boe. Duecks were there also.

1858, Sept. 7 - The worship service was held in Paulsheim. Ens preached. The brotherhood meeting dismissed Wiens from No. 2 from the Gemeinde because of unpermitted dealings with straw [Rohr].

1858, Sept. 14 - I was in Rosenort for the worship service. Ens preached. Brotherhood meeting followed. We dealt with Harms' matter. It was not concluded as he was unwilling to accept the counsel of the Gemeinde. I was there.

1858, Sept. 21 - Joh. Friesen preached in Neukirch. The brotherhood meeting accepted Wiens back into the church. We also talked about carriages with springs and their use. I was present. The bridal couple, Hein. Brandt and Anna Warkentin, both from Prangenu, had their banns proclaimed.

1858, Sept. 28 - I was in Fischau for the worship service. Joh. Friesen preached.

1858, Oct. 5 - Joh. Friesen preached in Paulsheim. He officiated for the wedding of H. Brandt and Anna Warkentin. I was not present. The brotherhood meeting dealt with Joh. Friesen from Marienthal as he had been physically hitting his wife. He was dismissed from the Gemeinde.

1858, Oct. 12 - Joh. Friesen preached in Rosenort.

1858, Oct. 19 - Claas Friesen preached in Rosenort. I was present. Joh. Friesen from Marienthal was reaccepted.

1858, Oct. 26 - Claas Friesen preached in Fischau. Ens officiated at the wedding of Peter Loewen and his bride. I preached in Marienthal. Joh. Friesen from Neukirch got a ride with me from Prangenu.

1858, Nov. 2 - Claas Friesen preached.

1858, Nov. 9 - Claas Friesen preached. I was present.

1858, Nov. 16 - I preached in Neukirch and was away for two nights. I stayed one night in Prangenu and one in Alexanderkrone.

1858, Nov. 23 - I preached in Fischau. The brotherhood meeting dealt with Fast, Ohrloff, and his stubbornness regarding his step-daughter. As he was repentant, he was forgiven.

1858, Nov. 30 - I preached in Paulsheim. I went on Saturday and stayed overnight at B. D.'s in Gnadenfeld. On Sunday we stopped at Isaac's for dinner and in the afternoon I went home with Abraham.

1858, Dec. 7 - I preached in Rosenort, where we also stayed for dinner.

1858, Dec. 14 - Ens preached in Neukirch. For one night we stayed in Prangenau and another in Kleefeld. We had vassa at Thielmann's.

1858, Dec. 21 - Joh. Friesen preached in Marienthal.

1858, Dec. 20 - Saturday. We attended the burial of Joh. Dueck's little Helena in Alexanderkrone. We stayed there overnight. As a result, we were in the worship service in Fischau on December 21.

1858, Dec. 25 - Joh. Friesen had the Christmas message in Paulsheim.

1858, Dec. 26 - The second Christmas holiday. I preached in Rosenort.

1858, Dec. 28 - The worship service was held in Neukirch. Joh. Friesen preached the Christmas message. I was present.

## 1859

1859, Jan. 1 - Penners, Joh. Duecks and I were in Fischau for the worship service. Ens preached.

1859, Jan. 4 - Ens preached in Paulsheim. I was not present.

1859, Jan. 6 - Epiphany. I was in Rosenort for the worship service. Claas Friesen preached.

1859, Jan. 10 - We Ohms had a ministerial meeting.

1859, Jan. 11 - Ens preached in Neukirch. I was present. A brotherhood meeting was held thereafter. We talked about F. Wiens, Ab. Reimer and child-training, as well as Jak. Friesen from Kleefeld and his daughter Margaretha.

1859, Jan. 18 - I preached in Fischau and Ens in Marienthal.

1859, Jan. 25 - Joh. Friesen preached in Paulsheim. I was not present.

1859, Jan. 27 - The ministers were together at Jacob Friesen's in Blumstein and talked about the matter of Peter Friesen, Marienthal, and the conflict between him and Jacob Friesen. We also dealt with Jacob Friesen's daughter Margaretha from Kleefeld.

1859, Feb. 1 - Joh. Friesen preached in Rosenort. I was absent. A brotherhood meeting was held thereafter. We discussed the use of carriages with springs and the discontinuance of the same. In the afternoon Joh. Friesen, Claas Friesen and I, went to Kleefeld to deal with Ab. Reimers and Margaretha Friesen and sought to solve the conflict between them. Reimers promised to be more careful with their words in the future.

1859, Feb. 5 - Betrothal of Peter Dueck took place at Joh. Friesen's.

1859, Feb. 8 - Joh. Friesen preached in Neukirch. During the night between the 7th and 8th Margaretha gave birth to a daughter. After the worship service the brotherhood meeting dismissed Margaretha from the fellowship. Jacob Friesen was asked to come the next Sunday to Fischau. I was absent from the worship service in Neukirch.

1859, Feb. 15 - Joh. Friesen preached in Fischau. After this, the brotherhood meeting dismissed the Jacob Friesens as they had exercised poor care over their children so that the Gemeinde was put to shame. In their blindness they had strengthened their daughter Margaretha in her fornication and adultery. I was present.

1859, Feb. 22 - Joh. Friesen preached in Paulsheim. After this, the brotherhood meeting accepted the Jacob Friesens back into the church. The carriages with the spring were dealt with again, as well as F. Lopky [Johke ?]. I was absent.

1859, Feb. 28 - Jacob Friesens from Kleefeld were at our place and related that due to their sincere entreaties they had been reaccepted into the Gemeinde in Paulsheim.

1859, Mar. 1 - I went with Joh. Defehr to the worship service in Rosenort. Claas Friesen himself preached. No one from Neukirch or that area was there.

1859, Mar. 8 - Claas Friesen preached in Neukirch. I was not there.

1859, Mar. 15 - I was in Fischau for the worship service. Claas Friesen preached. None of the Neukircher ministers was there. Joh. Duecks were at our place for dinner and stayed overnight. From here they went to Lindenau. Joh. Friesen preached in Marienthal.

1859, Mar. 22 - I preached in Paulsheim. My wife and I had dinner at Peter Rempel's. In the afternoon we went home.

1859, Mar. 29 - I preached in Rosenort. Boehrend Duecks went along. Margaretha Friesen from Kleefeld appeared before us in the ministers' office and asked to be reaccepted. None of the Ohms from Neukirch was present.

1859, April 5 - I preached in Neukirch. I did not have the Palm Sunday message, but the one from the previous Sunday. After dinner we were at Joh. Dueck's.

1859, April 10 - Joh. Friesen from Neukirch had the Good Friday message. My wife and I and Boehrend Duecks stayed at Ens' in Fischau for dinner. Joh. Friesens also stayed there.

1859, April 12 - The first Easter Sunday. Joh. Friesen preached in Paulsheim. I was absent.

1859, April 13 - The second Easter holiday. Joh. Friesen preached in Rosenort. My wife and I were there. The situation with the youth was announced. We stayed in Schoenau for dinner together with Thielmanns and also Damarm [?].

1859, April 14 - Joh. Friesen read the Articles for the first time in Neukirch. I was absent.

1859, April 21 - The Articles were read a second time in Fischau. The youths, consisting of four males and four females, were presented. The children and I were there.

1859, April 25 - The Ohms were together in Rosenort and discussed the conditions in the Gemeinde.

1859, April 26 - Ab. Friesen preached in Marienthal.

1859, May 3 - We were in Nikolaidorf for the worship service. The youths were presented. There were eleven of them. The Articles were read a third time. Our son was also presented.

1859, May 10 - We were in Rosenort for the worship service. The youths were presented with their witnesses. The Articles were read a fourth time. Our Jacob was presented.

1859, May 17 - I was in Fischau for the worship service. The youths answered the necessary baptismal questions. Prayers were said for Toews' Jakob as he was sick with the small-pox. He died at one o'clock in the afternoon and was buried on Saturday.

1859, May 24 - Abraham, Elisabeth and I were in Nikolaidorf for the worship service. Eleven youths were baptized. After the service Margaretha Friesen was accepted. Johann Tiessen from Konteniusfeld was instructed regarding his difficulties with respect to the division of the inheritance.

1859, May 31 - Pentecost. I preached in Rosenort. After this the brotherhood meeting dealt with the acceptance of Peter Ens' from Neukirch.

1859, June 1 - During the second holiday I preached in Neukirch. After this, Peter Ens' were accepted.

1859, June 7 - I was in Fischau for the worship service. Ab. Friesen had the examinatory message. Joh. Friesen was not present.

1859, June 14 - I was in Nikolaidorf for the worship service. Ab. Friesen preached. After this, the brotherhood meeting dealt with correcting certain things.

1859, June 21 - I was in Rosenort for the worship service. Ab. Friesen preached. The brotherhood meeting following dealt with Johann Tiessen from Konteniusfeld regarding his crude manner of speaking, and of many other matters to prepare us for the communion service. We stayed in Rosenort.

1859, June 28 - Peter Friesen together with his family [?] withdrew from the fellowship by way of a written statement.

1859, June 28 - I was in Neukirch for the worship service. A brotherhood meeting was held thereafter regarding the holding of communion service. It also dealt with Tiessen's crude speaking. He has promised to reform. Ab. Friesen preached.

1859, July 5 - I was in Fischau for the worship service. Joh. Friesen had the examinatory message. We talked about Hein. Bartel's acceptance.

1859, July 12 - The worship service was held in Nikolaidorf. I was absent. Joh. Friesen preached. Joh. Friesen from Marienthal has withdrawn from the church.

1859, July 19 - We were in Rosenort for the communion service.

1859, July 26 - We were in Neukirch for the communion service. Ten members were absent.

1859, Aug. 2 - I preached in Fischau presenting the thanksgiving message subsequent to the establishment of unity by the communion service.

1859, Aug. 9 - I preached in Nikolaidorf. Dealt with Peter Penner as he had not attended the communion service.

1859, Aug. 16 - I preached in Rosenort. I had the thanksgiving message in response to the celebration of unity at the communion service.

1859, Aug. 23 - I preached in Neukirch. After this, the brotherhood meeting concluded the matter of Peter Penner from Waldheim, as he regretted not having been at the communion service. Two song leaders were appointed, namely, Joh. Dueck and J. Friesen.

1859, Aug. 30 - Ens preached in Fischau. We were in attendance. After this, the brotherhood meeting dealt with Joh. Rempel.

1859, Sept. 6 - Ens preached in Nikolaidorf. We were present, having driven there from Gnadenfeld where we had gone on Saturday and stayed for the night.

1859, Sept. 13 - We were in Rosenort for the worship service. Ens presented the sermon. A brotherhood meeting followed. Joh. Rempel asked to be forgiven for his inconsiderate conduct. He was forgiven.

1859, Sept. 20 - Abraham, Peter and I were in Neukirch for the worship service. We were in Rueckenau on Saturday and discussed the unbecoming conversation between Peter Ratzloff and Catharina Friesen and gave the appropriate instructions in this regard. We are hoping for improvement. Ens preached.

1859, Sept. 27 - I was in Fischau for the worship service. Claas Friesen from

Rosenort preached.

1859, Oct. 4 - I was in Nikolaidorf for the worship service. Claas Friesen preached. We went to Prangenu on Saturday and on Sunday from there to Nikolaidorf and in the afternoon we attended the funeral of Mrs. H. Reimer. From here we went to Prangenu again and stayed overnight at Penner's. Monday we went home.

1859, Oct. 11 - We were in Rosenort for the worship service. Claas Friesen preached.

1859, Oct. 18 - Peter and I were at the worship service in Neukirch. Claas Friesen preached. After this, we spoke with Abraham Reimer as he had not kept his word regarding payment of his debts. We spoke also regarding his daughter's embellishments with her clothes.

1859, Oct. 25 - I was in Fischau for the worship service. Joh. Friesen preached.

1859, Nov. 1 - The worship service was held in Nikolaidorf. Joh. Friesen preached. I was absent.

1859, Nov. 8 - I was in church in Rosenort. Joh. Friesen preached.

1859, Nov. 15 - The worship service was held in Neukirch. The bridal couple H. Bartel and Gertruda Warkentin were there. Joh. Friesen preached. I was absent.

1859, Nov. 22 - The worship service was held in Fischau. Ab. Friesen preached. Thereafter the bridal couple, H. Bartel and Gertruda Warkentin, were joined in holy matrimony by Ens. Joh. Friesen had not come although he was to have officiated. I was present.

1859, Nov. 28 - Jacob and I went to Prangenu, then to Penner's. In the afternoon we went with Penners to P. Rempel's in Paulsheim. Here Jacob courted Maria Rempel.

1859, Nov. 29 - Together with Penner I went from Prangenu to Nikolaidorf for the worship service. Jacob went to Paulsheim to court Maria Rempel. Ab. Friesen preached.

1859, Dec. 3 - We were in Paulsheim for the betrothal.

1859, Dec. 6 - From Kleefeld we went to Rosenort for the worship service. Jacob and Maria had their banns proclaimed. Ab. Friesen preached.

1859, Dec. 13 - The worship service was held in Neukirch. Ab. Friesen preached. I was absent.

1859, Dec. 15 - We were in Paulsheim at Peter Rempel's to attend Jacob's wedding. Joh. Friesen officiated.

1859, Dec. 20 - I was in Fischau for the worship service. Ens preached. We had dinner at B. Dueck's, Schoenau. Joh. Loewens from Kleefeld were also there. They were with us for the night. For dinner we were in Tiegenhagen at Loewen's and for vassa at Dueck's in Schoenau.

1859, Dec. 25 - Joh. Friesen had the Christmas message in Nikolaidorf. I was not present.

1859, Dec. 26 - Sunday. Johann Friesen preached in Neukirch.

## 1860

1860, Jan. 1 - Joh. Friesen preached in Friedensruh and I in Fischau. I presented the New Year's message.

1860, Jan. 3 - Sunday. Joh. Friesen had the New Year's message in Nikolaidorf. We also determined when to have the next brotherhood meeting.

1860, Jan. 6 - Epiphany. Joh. Friesen preached in Rosenort. I was present.

1860, Jan. 10 - I preached in Neukirch on the text Matthew 25:13.

1860, Jan. 12 - A general brotherhood meeting took place in Neukirch. We discussed the use of jewellery and adornments in clothes. The decision was to do away with them. Tiessen from Konteniusfeld and Ratzloff from Blumstein have withdrawn from the fellowship by means of written statements.

1860, Jan. 17 - I preached in Fischau. A brotherhood meeting was held thereafter. We dealt with the acceptance of Isaac from Schoenau. His request for acceptance was rejected by the brethren. The acceptance of Friesen from Hierschau was approved.

1860, Jan. 24 - I preached in Nikolaidorf. After this, Friesen from Hierschau was accepted into the Gemeinde. On Saturday I went with the children to Paulsheim where they intend to live. On Sunday I returned home from Nikolaidorf.

1860, Jan. 31 - I preached in Rosenort. Peter, Abraham and I went with the sleigh. In the morning Ratzloff from Blumstein came into the ministers' office and asked to be accepted as a member, as in his mind he had not been of one mind with us for some time already. We concluded that he still was not in one accord with us. We gave him fourteen days probation. Isaac from Schoenau also asked for acceptance. He was again rejected because of his apparently critical view of Braun.

1860, Feb. 7 - We were in Neukirch for the worship service. On Saturday Peter and I went with the sleigh to Prangenu and Sunday we returned home. Ens preached.

1860, Feb. 14 - We were in Fischau for the worship service. Abraham and B. Duecks went along. After this, the brotherhood meeting concluded Ratzloff's matter and forgave him in love. He is to do away with his accentuated walk, parting of the hair and the ribbon on his cap.

1860, Feb. 21 - The worship service was held in Nikolaidorf. Ens preached. After this the brotherhood meeting convened because of the immorality of Joh. Tiessen from Konteniusfeld. He was dismissed from the Gemeinde. We talked also about pride that we should do away with the same.

1860, Feb. 28 - We were in Rosenort for the worship service. On Friday we went from our place to Kleefeld and stayed overnight at Loewen's. On Saturday we went to Rosenort. Ens preached. After the worship service it was announced that Tiessen was requesting reacceptance into the Gemeinde.

1860, Mar. 6 - We were in Neukirch for the worship service. Claas Friesen preached. Tiessen from Konteniusfeld asked for acceptance. It was not deemed appropriate as yet and the matter was deferred. Saturday we went to Prangenu where we attended the worship service on Sunday. In the afternoon we went home. We were gone two nights.

1860, Mar. 13 - We were in Fischau for the worship service. Claas Friesen preached. No one came from Neukirch.

1860, Mar. 20 - The worship service was held in Nikolaidorf. Joh. Friesen preached. I was absent. Tiessen from Konteniusfeld was accepted.

1860, Mar. 25 - We were in Rosenort for the worship service. Claas Friesen had the Palm Sunday message. None of the ministers from Neukirch were present.

1860, April 1 - Good Friday. Ab. Friesen from Neukirch preached in Neukirch. We were present. Thursday we went to Kleefeld for lunch, for night to Prangenau. On Friday we went to Joh. Dueck's for dinner in Alexanderkrone. After lunch we went home.

1860, April 3 - Easter Sunday. Ens preached in Fischau. After this, we were at Boehrend Dueck's.

1860, April 4 - The second holiday Joh. Friesen preached in Nikolaidorf. I was absent.

1860, April 10 - In Rosenort the Articles were read for the first time.

1860, April 17 - In Neukirch the Articles were read for the second time. The youths were presented. There were fifteen. I was present.

1860, April 24 - The Articles were read a third time in Fischau. The youths were presented a second time. One was added. Now there are sixteen. I was present.

1860, April 30 - On Saturday we ministers: Joh. Friesen, Ab. Friesen, Ens and I were in Prangenau to reconcile the matter between Martin Friesen and Bartel. Claas Schmidt from Steinbach and Peter also came here to deal with the harmony in the colony.

1860, May 1 - In Nikolaidorf the youths were presented with their witnesses. I was present.

1860, May 8 - I preached the spring message in Rosenort. After this, the youths were instructed.

1860, May 12 - Ascension Day. Joh. Friesen preached and asked the youths the baptismal questions. I was there. The bridal couple Peter Siemens and Catherine Penner got married. Joh. Friesen officiated.

1860, May 15 - Sixteen youths were baptized in Neukirch. Joh. Friesen officiated. I was there.

1860, May 22 - The first Pentecost holiday. I preached in Fischau.

1860, May 23 - The second holiday. Ab. Friesen preached in Nikolaidorf. I was not there.

1860, May 29 - Claas Friesen had the examinatory message in Rosenort. I was present.

1860, June 4 - The old Mr. [Mrs.?] Warkentin died and was buried on June 6th. I was present for the ministerial at Joh. Friesen's in Neukirch.

1860, June 5 - We were in Neukirch for the worship service. Ohm Claas Friesen preached. The brotherhood meeting discussed certain items and dealt with the forthcoming communion service.

1860, June 12 - The worship service was held in Fischau. Claas Friesen preached. Joh. Harms and Margaretha Loewen were married by Ens. The brotherhood decided upon the date for the communion service. I was present.

1860, June 16 - Heinrich Reimer from Prangenau and Margaretha Warkentin from Blumstein got married in Blumstein. Joh. Friesen officiated.

1860, June 19 - We attended communion service in Nikolaidorf. We had dinner in Paulsheim and spent the night at Dueck's in Gnadenfeld. For dinner and lunch we were in Prangenau. From there we went home on Monday.

1860, June 26 - We were in Rosenort for communion service. We stayed for dinner. We copied the writings which the Aeltester made available to us. Seven were absent of those who were qualified to partake of the communion service.

1860, July 3 - The worship service took place in Neukirch. Ab. Friesen preached. I was there. The writing was read.

1860, July 10 - The worship service was held in Fischau. Ab. Friesen preached the thanksgiving message. I was present.

1860, July 17 - Ab. Friesen had the thanksgiving message in Neukirch. I was present.

1860, July 24 - Ab. Friesen preached in Rosenort. The bridal couple Peter Kroeker and Margaretha Braun had their banns proclaimed. I was there. For dinner I was in Schoenau at B. Duecks.

1860, July 27 - Joh. Friesen and Ens were present at the ministerial meeting.

1860, July 29 - Ohm Friesen and I went to Halbstadt with the writing.

1860, July 31 - I preached on the subject 'Take Heed' in Neukirch. I was at Ab. Friesen's for dinner and at Dueck's for lunch in Alexanderkrone. After the worship service the brotherhood followed. The son of Peter Penner by the name of Peter was dismissed from the fellowship because of too much drinking.

1860, Aug. 7 - I preached in Fischau. The bridal couple Peter Friesen and Elisabeth Barkman were betrothed. Joh. Isaac from Schoenau has again been accepted.

1860, Aug. 14 - I preached in Nikolaidorf. The bridal couple Peter Friesen and Elisabeth Barkman were married. A brotherhood meeting was held thereafter and the reacceptance of Peter Penner was discussed. It was not approved.

1860, Aug. 21 - I preached in Rosenort. Thereafter the brotherhood meeting accepted Penner's Peter from Margenau.

1860, Aug. 26 - Peter was in Fischau at Wiebe's. He returned home with us.

1860, Aug. 28 - I was in Neukirch for the worship service. Ens preached. After this I went to Margenau and stayed overnight. On Monday I went to Joh. Dueck's for dinner and to Joh. Loewen's for lunch in Kleefeld. After this I went home.

1860, Sept. 4 - I was in Fischau for the worship. Ens preached. The banns were proclaimed for Peter Penner and Helena Penner.

1860, Sept. 11 - The worship service was in Nikolaidorf. Ens preached. Joh. Friesen performed the marriage ceremony for a couple. I was not there.

1860, Sept. 18 - I was in Rosenort for the worship service. Ens preached.

1860, Sept. 25 - Joh. Friesen preached in Neukirch. I was not there.

1860, Oct. 2 - I was in Fischau for the worship service. Joh. Friesen preached. In the afternoon we were at B. Dueck's. Thielmanns were there as well.

1860, Oct. 9 - I was in Nikolaidorf for the worship service. Joh. Friesen preached. On Saturday we were at Joh. Dueck's for dinner and for lunch at Penners, where we stayed overnight. The children went to Paulsheim for the night. On Sunday we had dinner at P. Rempel's in Paulsheim and in the afternoon we went home.

1860, Oct. 16 - I was in Rosenort for the worship service. Johann Friesen preached. The bridal couple Joh. Tiessen and Anna Tiessen had their banns proclaimed.

1860, Oct. 23 - I was in Neukirch for the worship service. Ab. Friesen preached. Joh. Tiessen and Anna Tiessen were betrothed on the 22nd. Mrs. Jacob Friesen died at Joh. Loewen's in Kleefeld on the 22nd at 11 o'clock in the morning and was buried on the 24th. The second night we stayed in Prangenau. Monday for dinner we were at Joh. Dueck's. In the afternoon we left for home.

1850, Oct. 30 - I was in Fischau for worship service. Ab. Friesen preached. I officiated for the bridal pair Joh. and Anna Tiessen. Ohm Joh. Friesen was not there.

1860, Nov. 6 - The worship service was held in Nikolaidorf. Ab. Friesen preached. I was present.

1860, Nov. 13 - The worship service was held in Rosenort. Ab. Friesen preached. I was present.

1860, Nov. 17 - Peter D. and Mar. Friesen were betrothed.

1860, Nov. 20 - I was in Neukirch for the worship service. Claas Friesen preached. I left for home on the 20th and then returned again because of the bridal [?].

1860, Nov. 27 - I was in Fischau for the worship service. Claas Friesen preached and Joh. Friesen officiated for the bridal couple Peter D. and M. Friesen.

1860, Dec. 4 - The worship service was held in Nikolaidorf. Claas Friesen preached. I was not present.

1860, Dec. 11 - The worship service was held in Rosenort. Claas Friesen preached. A brotherhood meeting followed regarding A. R. in Kleefeld. I was not there. I was in Paulsheim.

1860, Dec. 18 - The worship service was held in Neukirch. Joh. Friesen preached. A brotherhood meeting followed and Ab. Reimer from Kleefeld was dismissed from the Gemeinde. I was present. The bridal couple Jacob Friesen and the widow Braun were betrothed. We stayed enroute overnight. We were also in Gnadenfeld.

1860, Dec. 25 - The first Christmas holiday. Joh. Friesen preached in Nikolaidorf.

1860, Dec. 29 - The second holiday. Jacob Friesen got married to the widow Braun in Mariawohl. Friesen officiated.

## 1861

1861, Jan. 1 - Ens preached in Rosenort. I was present.

1861, Jan. 6 - Epiphany. I preached in Neukirch. On the 5th we had our ministerial meeting in Neukirch. Claas Friesen and Ens were not present. Peter and I stayed overnight in Prangenu.

1861, Jan. 8 - I preached in Fischau. B.D. went with me to the worship service. Peter and I were there for dinner.

1861, Jan. 15 - I preached in Nikolaidorf. The subsequent brotherhood dealt with the matter between the brethren, and Klassen's problem with the Dorfschulz (village mayor). He has promised to rectify the matter.

1861, Jan. 14 - We drove to Paulsheim where we stayed for the night. On Sunday we attended the worship service and for the night we went to Prangenu. On Monday we were at Joh. D.'s for dinner and then we went home.

1861, Jan. 22 - I preached in Rosenort. A brotherhood meeting followed to discuss the matter of Joh. Rempel and Friesen from Lichtenau, regarding a number of unscriptural matters.

1861, Jan. 29 - I preached in Neukirch of the text 'When Ye Shall See.' A brotherhood meeting followed and we again endeavoured to bring the matter between the Paulsheimer brethren to a settlement. On the 28th I went to Kleefeld

and stayed overnight. I had dinner in Prangenu and stayed overnight. The next morning I went to Alexanderkrone and in the afternoon I returned home. I left Peter in Prangenu.

1861, Feb. 1 - Peter was brought to Waldheim.

1861, Feb. 5 - We were in Fischau for the worship service. Abraham Thiessen and Aganeta Hard. [?] were married. The brotherhood meeting decided the date for the ministerial election. We stayed at Ens' for dinner. Abraham stayed also.

1861, Feb. 12 - I was in Nikolaidorf for the worship service. On Saturday I went to Paulsheim for the worship service. The brotherhood meeting followed. Maria Friesen was dismissed from the church because of bad behaviour. The decision was made to have an election for a minister [Lehrer] on the 13th.

1861, Feb. 13 - The election took place in Neukirch and the results for the deacons were as follows: Ab. Friesen, Tiede - 32; Peter Friesen, Tiede - 31; Joh. Dueck, Alexanderkrone - 30; Jak. Penner, Prangenu - 27; Joh. Loewen, Kleefeld - 25; Kornelsen, Lichtenau - 25; Jak. Friesen, Nikolaidorf - 13; Dav. Klassen, - 8; Corn. Janzen - 5; Ab. Loewen - 4; Peter Ens - 8; Jak. Barkman - 8; Ab. Friesen, Rueck. - 2; Kroeker, Kleefeld - 2; Cor. Ens, Bl. - 1; Is. Friesen, W. - 1; P. Toews, M. - 1; D. Loewen, L. - 1. The votes for minister fell as follows among the four deacons: Pet. Friesen with 80 ballots, Ab. Friesen with 62, Claas Friesen with 46 and Jacob Friesen with 32.

1861, Feb. 19 - The worship service was held in Rosenort. Ens preached. The brotherhood meeting dismissed Franz Isaac from the Gemeinde because of too much drinking and smoking. I was also present in Rosenort. Two song leaders were appointed: B. D. Schoenau; and Ab. Friesen, Kleefeld.

1861, Feb. 26 - Ens preached in Neukirch. I was absent.

1861, Mar. 5 - We were in Fischau for the worship service. Peter Friesen from Tiede preached. Prior to the service the Ratzlaw matter was critically discussed. But the matter was not concluded. We were at B. D. in Schoenau for dinner.

1861, Mar. 9 - The widow Kroeker (Margenausche) died.

1861, Mar. 12 - The worship service was held in Nikolaidorf. Peter Friesen preached a second time. I was not present. A brotherhood meeting followed. Maria Friesen was accepted into the Gemeinde.

1861, Mar. 15 - Mrs. Kroeker was buried.

1861, Mar. 19 - I was in Rosenort for the worship service. B.D., Schoenau, went along. Peter Friesen preached. None of the ministers from Neukirch were there.

1861, Mar. 23 - Mrs. Kroeker died and was buried on the 25th.

1861, Mar. 26 - I was in Neukirch. Peter Friesen preached. A brotherhood meeting followed. Franz Isaac was accepted into the Gemeinde. On Saturday we had dinner in Kleefeld and vasa in Alexanderkrone at Dueck's. For the night we stayed at Penner's in Prangenu and after the worship service we went home for the funeral of Mrs. Wilhelm Loewen.

1861, April 2 - I was in Fischau for the worship service with Joh. Duecks, Reimers and Loewens, who had stayed overnight at our place. Ab. Friesen from Tiede preached for the first time. Naturally we were at B. Duecks. Joh. Friesen preached in Sparrau.

1861, April 9 - The worship service was held in Nikolaidorf. Ab. Friesen from Tiede preached. A brotherhood meeting followed and it was decided to provide

hay for Ger. Giesb. in Prangenu. I went to Paulsheim for dinner and stayed overnight. On Monday I went to Gnadenfeld and after lunch left for home.

1861, April 16 - I was in Rosenort for the worship service. Ab. Friesen from Tiege preached. The bridal pair Claas Friesen and Maria Defehr had their banns proclaimed.

1861, April 21 - I had the Good Friday message in Neukirch. I proclaimed the banns of the bridal couple Claas Friesen and Maria Defehr. For dinner I went to Prangenu and for vaspas I went home. I brought Jacob Duecks and Peter along.

1861, April 23 - Easter Sunday Ab. Friesen from Tiege preached and after that the bridal pair Claas Friesen and Maria Defehr were joined in holy matrimony. I was in Fischau for the worship service. Jacob Duecks and Penners from Prangenu were there also. Ab. Friesen from Neukirch preached the Easter message in Sparrau.

1861, April 24 - The second Easter holiday. Ab. Friesen from Neukirch preached in Nikolaidorf. I was not present.

1861, April 30 - I was in Rosenort for the worship service. We went to Alexanderkrone on Saturday and stayed overnight in Kleefeld. The next day we went to Rosenort where we stayed for dinner. The Articles were read for the first time and it was decided that the presentation of the candidates would take place the next Sunday.

1861, May 7 - I was in Neukirch for the worship service together with Abraham. Joh. Friesen presented the Articles and a brotherhood meeting was held thereafter. The youths were introduced. There were five males and eight females for a total of thirteen. We went to Prangenu for dinner and to Alexanderkrone for vaspas at Dueck's. Abram was presented by myself.

1861, May 14 - I was in Fischau for the worship service. The Articles were presented by Joh. Friesen. A brotherhood meeting convened to examine the youths. The dispute between the Blumsteiner brethren was presented and we endeavoured to achieve a reconciliation.

1861, May 21 - I was in Nikolaidorf for the worship service. Joh. Friesen read the Articles. A brotherhood meeting convened to present the youths with their witnesses. And of . . . [?] 53 votes.

1861, May 28 - I preached the spring message in Rosenort and instructed the youths.

1861, June 1 - Ascension Day. Joh. Friesen preached and asked the necessary baptismal questions for the youths to answer with 'yes' before baptism.

1861, June 4 - The thirteen youths were baptized by Joh. Friesen in Fischau. I was present. The school teacher Harder from Halbstadt was in attendance as our guest to hear the Word.

1861, June 11 - The first Pentecost holiday. Ab. Friesen from Neukirch preached in Nikolaidorf.

1861, June 12 - The second Pentecost holiday. Ens preached in Rosenort. I was present. None of the ministers from Neukirch was there.

1861, June 18 - I preached the examinatory sermon in Neukirch. A brotherhood meeting followed to discuss the communion service. For dinner I was in Prangenu and after vaspas I went home.

1861, June 25 - I preached in Fischau. A brotherhood meeting followed and a date was decided upon for the communion service.

1861, July 2 - I was in Nikolaidorf to attend the communion service. I was in Prangenu for dinner.

1861, July 9 - I was in Rosenort for communion service. Five were absent.

1861, July 16 - Worship service was held in Neukirch. Ab. Friesen preached. I was absent.

1861, July 23 - I preached the thanksgiving message in Fischau with respect to the communion service. Ab. Friesen preached in Sparrau.

1861, July 29 - Mrs. Loewen died and on July 30th we attended the funeral at Isaac Loewen's in Lindenau.

1861, July 30 - The worship service was held in Nikolaidorf. Ab. Friesen preached. I was absent.

1861, Aug. 6 - We were in Rosenort for the worship service.

1861, Aug 13 - We were in Neukirch for the worship service. I preached and proclaimed the banns of the bridal couple Pet. Unger and Justina Friesen. We stayed overnight at Penner's and had dinner there and vassa at Dueck's.

1861, Aug. 20 - I preached in Fischau. Peter Unger and Justina Friesen were married by Joh. Friesen. Franz Kroecker, Kleefeld, and Margaretha Plett from the same village, had their banns proclaimed.

1861, Aug. 27 - I preached in Nikolaidorf. After this the brotherhood discussed the acceptance of Klassen's Johann. We had dinner in Paulsheim and stayed there overnight.

1861, Aug. 29 - Kroecker from Kleefeld and Margaretha got married. Ens officiated.

1861, Sept. 2 - I preached in Rosenort. The ministers from Neukirch were not there. A brotherhood meeting was held and we talked about Joh. Klassen's acceptance.

1861, Sept.10 - Claas Friesen preached. I was absent.

1861, Sept. 17 - Claas Friesen preached in Fischau. Ab. Friesen from Tiede preached in Sparrau. I was in Fischau.

1861, Sept. 24 - Claas Friesen preached in Nikolaidorf. After this, Joh. Klassen was accepted. I was not present.

1861, Oct. 1 - Claas Friesen preached in Rosenort. We went from Rosenort to Alexanderkrone.

1861, Oct. 8 - Ens preached in Neukirch and Joh. Friesen in Paulsheim. I went with Joh. Friesen from Prangenu to Paulsheim to attend the service.

1861, Oct. 15 - Ens preached in Nikolaidorf. I was present and had dinner at B.D.'s.

1861, Oct. 22 - Ens preached in Nikolaidorf. Joh. Friesen joined the bridal couple Joh. Klassen and Maria Friesen in holy matrimony.

1861, Oct. 29 - Ens preached in Rosenort. I was present.

1861, Nov. 5 - Peter Friesen preached in Neukirch and Joh. Friesen in Paulsheim. I was not there.

1861, Nov. 9 - Ohm Friesen and all the Aeltesten attended at the Gebietsamt where they met with the District Governor [Statsrat] Von Hahn.

1861, Nov. 12 - The worship service was held in Fischau. Peter Friesen preached. I was present. Saturday, the 11th, Joh. Friesen's were at our place.

1861, Nov. 19 - Peter Friesen preached in Nikolaidorf. I was absent.

1861, Nov. 25 - A ministerial meeting was held in Rosenort.

1881, Nov. 26 - Peter Friesen preached in Rosenort. I was present. The brotherhood meeting convened to deal with Tiessen.

1861, Dec. 3 - Ab. Friesen from Tiede preached in Neukirch. I preached in Paulsheim. A brotherhood meeting was held thereafter. Joh. Tiessen from Konteniusfeld was dismissed from the Gemeinde because of his spiteful speaking notwithstanding prior warnings. He did not heed these.

1861, Dec. 10 - Ab. Friesen from Tiede preached in Fischau. A brotherhood meeting was held thereafter. The membership was admonished regarding certain issues. I was present.

1861, Dec. 17 - Ab. Friesen preached in Nikolaidorf. A brotherhood meeting was held thereafter. They talked about the killing of dogs. I was absent.

1861, Dec. 24 - Ab. Friesen from Tiede preached in Rosenort. I was absent.

1861, Dec. 25 - The Christmas holiday. Joh. Friesen preached in Neukirch and Ens in Paulsheim. I did not attend.

1861, Dec. 26 - The second holiday. Ens preached in Fischau. I was present.

1861, Dec. 31 - Joh. Friesen had the New Year's message. I was absent.

## 1862

1862, Jan. 1 - Joh. Friesen preached in Rosenort. I was present.

1862, Jan. 6 - Epiphany. Joh. Friesen preached in Neukirch and officiated for the wedding of Cor. Friesen and Sara Janzen. A brotherhood meeting followed to discuss certain follies. Peter Penner and Friesen's Abraham were dismissed from the fellowship.

1862, Jan. 7 - I preached the Epiphany sermon in Fischau.

1862, Jan. 14 - Joh. Friesen preached in Mariawohl. Maria Brandt was admonished and Penner and Friesen have asked for reacceptance. We went to Gnadenfeld to B. D.'s on Saturday and on Sunday we attended the worship service. In the afternoon we went home.

1862, Jan. 21 - Joh. Friesen preached in Rosenort. I was present.

1862, Jan. 28 - Joh. Friesen preached in Neukirch and Peter Friesen in Paulsheim. I was in Neukirch.

1862, Jan. 30 - Joh. Defehr died.

1862, Feb. 2 - Lichtenau. Defehr was buried.

1862, Feb. 4 - Joh. Friesen preached in Fischau.

1861, Feb. 11 - Ab. Friesen preached in Marienthal. I was there.

1862, Feb. 18 - Ab. Friesen preached in Rosenort. He also proclaimed the banns of Ab. Dueck and Elisabeth Rempel as a bridal couple.

1862, Feb. 25 - Ab. Friesen preached in Neukirch and Ab. Friesen from Tiede in Paulsheim.

1862, Feb. 27 - The wedding of our children took place. Claas Friesen officiated.

1862, Mar. 4 - Ab. Friesen preached in Fischau. I was there. Both of the Tiessens were discussed.

1862, Mar. 11 - I preached in Marienthal. A brotherhood meeting was held thereafter to discuss the participation of the Halbstaedter in the horse races and we forgave them. We were in Paulsheim for dinner and in the afternoon we went home with Ab. Duecks.

1862, Mar. 18 - I preached in Rosenort. Ab. Duecks were in Schoenau for the

worship service. Duecks were along.

1862, Mar. 25 - I preached in Neukirch and Ab. Friesen from Neukirch in Paulsheim. On Saturday we went with Ab. Duecks to Paulsheim and stayed overnight. Early the next morning we went with Peter to Prangenau. On Saturday afternoon we went home with Peter.

1862, April 1 - Palm Sunday I preached in Fischau. I was at Ens' in Fischau for dinner.

1862, Feb. 2 - We talked about Ab. Tiessen and voiced our concerns and counselled him to make matters right in love. It seemed then that we were of one mind with Peter Tiessen. On the same day Ab. Tiessen came to me for advice. I counselled him to settle everything peacefully; otherwise we would sever ourselves from him.

1862, Feb. 9 - The worship service was held in Marienthal. Ens preached. A brotherhood meeting followed and Abr. Tiessen was dismissed from the fellowship. I was absent.

1862, Feb. 11 - Mrs. Fast from Neukirch was buried. On the 15th we Ohms were together for a ministerial meeting at P.F.'s in Tiege.

1862, Feb. 16 - I was in Tiege for the worship service. I went along with Joh. Friesen. Ens preached. The brotherhood meeting followed. Claas Friesen was dismissed from his ministerial position and Peter Tiessen, Landw. [?] and Abr. Tiessen withdrew from the fellowship by means of a written statement.

1862, Feb. 23 - The worship service was held in Neukirch. Ens preached. A brotherhood meeting followed. Ohm Claas Friesen from Rosenort was dismissed from his ministerial position. We also talked about the acceptance of Boschmanns' and Brauns' who want to join our Gemeinde. This was agreed upon. Joh. Tiessen withdrew from the fellowship by means of a written statement.

1862, Mar. 1 - I was in Fischau for the worship service. Peter Friesen preached. I had dinner in Lindenau. On Saturday I went with Joh. Dueck's to Schoenau and stayed overnight.

1862, Mar. 8 - I was in Marienthal for the worship service. Peter Friesen preached. The two couples were accepted into our fellowship. On Saturday I went to P. D.'s and on Sunday I went home.

1862, Mar. 15 - I was in Tiege for the worship service. P. Friesen preached.

1862, April 3 - Gerhard Rempel had Verlobung.

1862, April 6 - H. Ens had the Good Friday message in Marienthal. I was present.

1862, April 8 - Easter Sunday. H. Ens preached in Rosenort. I was there too. Joh. Friesen preached in Kleefeld and in the afternoon Ab. Friesen preached at Reimer's in Kleefeld.

1862, April 9 - Ab. Friesen from Neukirch preached in Neukirch and Joh. Friesen in Paulsheim. Gerhard Rempel and Elisabeth Friesen were united in marriage by Ab. Friesen. I was in Paulsheim for the worship service.

1862, April 15 - The Articles were read in Fischau.

1862, April 22 - The Articles were read in Mariawohl a second time. The youths were introduced; there were seven males and nine females for a total of sixteen.

1862, April 29 - The youths were introduced in Rosenort. There were seven males and eleven females. I was present and introduced Peter.

1862, May 6 - The youths were presented with their witnesses in Neukirch. I was not there.

1862, May 13 - Ab. Friesen from Tiege had the spring message in Fischau and the youths were instructed. I was present.

1862, May 17 - Ascension Day. Joh. Friesen preached in Mariawohl and asked the baptismal questions. I was present. A brotherhood meeting was convened thereafter as Joh. Tiessen from Konteniusfeld has asked for acceptance. Gerhard Siemens married Mrs. Fehr.

1862, May 20 - The worship service was held in Neukirch and the youths were baptized there. A brotherhood meeting was held. Tiessen from Konteniusfeld was accepted.

---

## Editor's Note

Johann Dueck, "Ministerial Journal 1848-1862," Muntau, Molotschna, South Russia, unpublished journal, 205 pages, was received by the editor on October 30, 1989, courtesy of Mr. Levi Dueck, Box 25, R.R.1, Morris, Manitoba, ROG 1K0, a great-grandson of Johann Dueck (1801-1866). The primary translation and transcription for computer was completed by Rev. Ben Hoepfner, Steinbach, Manitoba, in 1991. Another segment of the ministerial journal of Rev. Johann Dueck covering the years 1865-1866--as recorded by son Peter L. Dueck--was published in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1986), 59-62.

The "Ministerial Journal 1848-1862" was not always easy to decipher. Every attempt has been made to cross check questionable phrases to ensure their accuracy but no doubt some errors have been made. It was not always possible to reach a definite conclusion as to the specific meaning of a word or phrase, which has been indicated in some cases by the insertion of a question mark. Anyone using a specific reference for research purposes is advised to refer to the original text in order to verify the same.

# Chapter Three

## Commentary

---

**Comments and observations regarding the Ministerial Journal of Johann Dueck (1801-1866), Kleine Gemeinde minister of Muntau, Molotschna Colony, South Russia. By John Dyck, 48 Coral Crescent, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R2J 1V7, 1993.**

---

### **Introduction.**

The ministerial journal of Johann Dueck (1801-1866) provides a significant record of the beliefs and practises of the Kleine Gemeinde (KG) Mennonite church. That record includes some earlier entries and covers more fully the fourteen year period from 1848 to 1862.

Dueck focuses on events and experiences as they relate to the KG church. He records where he preached or attended church services Sunday mornings. His journal shows the dates of membership classes, baptism and communion services. He has notes on the discussions that took place at most brotherhood meetings. The practises of discipleship and discipline which were intended to mould members into willingly obedient Christians are recorded here. The journal provides a considerable amount of detail concerning election of deacons and ministers. Entries record the dates of marriages of KG members, giving the names of marriage partners. Deaths and burial dates of individuals in the KG church family are also given. However, the emphasis is on the activities of the church and the experiences of members in relation to the church. There are only a few references to events in the larger community.

Johann Dueck was the son of Klaas Dueck who emigrated from Prussia to Chortitza, Russia in 1817 and relocated to Molotschna in 1818. Here Johann Dueck lived most of his life in the village of Muntau. (For a biography, see Part Eight, Chapter One.)

### **Other Ministerial Journals.**

Ministerial journals like the one by Johann Dueck have a long tradition in the Mennonite church. Among some of the better known journals are those of the following Flemish church leaders: Aeltester Gerhard Wiebe (1725-1796)<sup>1</sup> of Elbing in Prussia, Minister David Epp (1781-1843)<sup>2</sup> of Chortitza in Russia and his son Aeltester Jacob Epp (1820-1890)<sup>3</sup> of Judenplan and later Baratov-Schlachtin in Russia.

Each of these journals contribute notably to our understanding of the practises and traditions common to that community in their time periods. Some of

them, like the Gerhard Wiebe and David Epp journals focus primarily on the activities of the church. Others, like the Jacob Epp journal also tell about day-to-day events in family life, community activities and in the social practises of the church community as well as his personal faith journey. The Gerhard Wiebe journal covers the last eighteen years of his life, the David Epp record is for his last five years and the Jacob Epp diary starts in 1851, has a nine year gap and then runs for thirty years until his death in 1890. By comparison, the Johann Dueck journal starts in 1837 has a ten year gap and continues for fifteen more years.

The experience of Johann Dueck and the KG as recorded in this journal reflects the difference between this church and that of either Wiebe or Epp. Church members in the communities in which Wiebe and Epp ministered had no alternative Mennonite church which they could conveniently join. KG members lived amid other Mennonite churches and this journal records the efforts of a church to strengthen the practise of faith among its members within the context of a larger Mennonite society whose other churches were less restrictive of the activities of their members.

The study of the Mennonite church has been enriched by these and other ministerial journals which are sometimes the only source of information on the life and work of the church in a certain community at a particular time.

#### **Early Entries, 1838-1848.**

The Johann Dueck journal begins with a brief entry on the election of a minister and a deacon on June 26, 1838. The second entry eight months later again reports on elections and names all ministers and deacons in the KG at that time. In this election Johann Dueck of Muntau, one of six candidates receiving votes in the election for deacon, received eight of the sixty-nine votes cast.

Following a silence of almost six years the journal records the results of an election held on January 5, 1846. Among the 160 ballots cast (two per adult male member) in the election of two deacons sixteen were for Johann Dueck. The next vote on July 22, 1848 resulted in the election of Dueck as deacon with forty-three votes. This heralds the beginning of more consistent entries in the journal. Deacons have traditionally been part of the ministerial in most Mennonite churches. As a result the entries after this date include notes on the discussions at ministerial meetings. Less than a year later, on July 21, 1849, Johann Dueck was elected to the ministry. During this period the journal also reports the election of Johann Friesen as Aeltester in June of 1847.

#### **Ministerial Elections.**

The journal reflects the KG practise of electing deacons from the membership at large without any nominations. While this sometimes resulted in several members receiving only a few votes, the reported count shows that the majority of members usually agreed on who were suitable candidates for office. Ministers were elected from among the deacons and the Aeltester from the ministers, at least in most of the instances recorded in this diary. Not so common was the practise of using the lot to break a tie. This practise was used by the KG on at least one occasion according to the Johann Dueck journal.<sup>4</sup>

The election reports provide enough detail to develop an ongoing record of the ministers and deacons who served the church throughout that period. In

addition the number of votes cast is frequently followed by the number of brethren absent. The first election recorded, in 1846, has eighty brethren voting while the last election recorded, in 1861, shows 112 brethren voting. The highest rate of brethren reported absent at any election was on October 20, 1852 when eleven brethren were absent out of a total of ninety-eight.

As in most Mennonite churches, the ministerial consisted of the Aeltester, the ministers and deacons. Johann Dueck reports on periodic ministerial meetings held for the sole purpose of edification of the ministers for more effective ministry. Here they sought inspiration through the study of Scripture so that they would be able to guide the *Gemeinde* more effectively according to God's Word.<sup>5</sup> Other ministerial meetings were held to discuss concerns which, if deemed necessary, were later presented to a brotherhood meeting. Sometimes lengthy agendas were prepared for brotherhood meetings.

During the period covered by this journal KG members could be found in many villages throughout the Molotschna Settlement. To accommodate that scattered membership, the ministerial planned two worship services to be held each Sunday morning in rotation in key villages; generally these were villages with a significant KG fellowship. These included newer villages such as Neukirch, Rueckenau, Tiede, Prangenau and Margenau, as well as older ones such as Schoenau and Tiede, indicating that the KG was well represented in both.

The journal of Johann Dueck records for each Sunday the name of the village in which services were held and frequently notes which ministers were absent. This is similar to entries in the Gerhard Wiebe and Jacob Epp diaries which also record in which village the minister was speaking. Ministers in those Gemeinden would take turns bringing the Sunday morning message. In later years such preaching lists were published and referred to as *Andachtsliste*. KG ministers also took turns bringing the Sunday morning message but usually, in their turn, spoke several Sundays in succession.

While the diaries of Gerhard Wiebe and David Epp frequently record the text for the Sunday morning messages, Johann Dueck only mentions the text or the topic of messages on seven occasions throughout the entire period covered by the journal.<sup>6</sup> We learn more about the teachings of the KG from their practises and ministerial (*Lehrdienst*) decisions which are well documented by Dueck.

The ministerial obviously considered a clear knowledge of doctrine important for Christian living and all candidates for membership were exposed to the Articles of Faith on five successive Sundays before being eligible for baptism and membership. David Epp in Chortitza also records five Sundays in which the Articles of Faith were presented to baptismal candidates. Gerhard Wiebe, on the other hand, records only three Sundays in which the Articles were presented, some of which were conducted separate from the morning service. All three churches presented candidates to the membership for approval and acceptance.<sup>7</sup> While Gerhard Wiebe rarely refers to delays in the acceptance of members, the KG on numerous occasions postponed the acceptance of new members, sometimes even after they had started attending instruction classes, because they were not convinced of the sincerity of an applicant.

The quest to maintain purity in the church led to the dismissal of some members from the KG. When members who were separated from the church did not promptly seek readmission the ministerial was concerned. Dueck reports

discussions concerning specific cases of separated brethren as well as the principle of separation and banning at ministerial meetings. Both Wiebe in Elbing and Epp in Chortitz report similar incidents of dismissal of members for a variety of causes.

### Relations with *Gebietsamt*.

While relations with the non-KG community received scant mention in the journal there are several significant references to such relationships that deserve attention.

When a petition was received for donations in the fall of 1848, presumably from the *Gebietsamt*, the brotherhood considered the request and approved membership donations. The total amount raised in two Sunday collections amounted to 1694 ruble. The following spring a letter of thanks for grain for Jews was received and read after a Sunday morning service. Presumably that refers to the application of those funds.<sup>8</sup>

In fall of 1849 the four KG ministers met with the *Oberschulz*.<sup>9</sup> The purpose is not stated. When the Holsteinsche *Gemeinde* had been ravaged by war the brotherhood designated two Sunday collections for relief purposes in January 1852.<sup>10</sup> Two months later funds were requested, likely by the *Gebietsamt*, for a monument for Kontenius and the membership was given freedom to donate as they saw fit.<sup>11</sup> In early 1854 the brotherhood again granted freedom to donate as each member saw fit in response to a *Gebietsamt* request for donations for the nursing of wounded soldiers.<sup>12</sup>

Although the journal does not give any reason why, brethren were warned not to petition the administration and not to aspire to equality with the world.<sup>13</sup> Twice when problems developed between members and *Dorfsschulzen*, the matters were discussed at brotherhood meetings and members were asked to resolve the problems.<sup>14</sup> When a person refused to accept a position as *Hirtenschulz*, an appointment by the village council, he was admonished by the brotherhood.

On November 9, 1861 Aeltester Friesen joined all the other Aeltesten in a meeting with District Governor Van Hahn. These entries confirm that the KG were anxious to meet what they considered legitimate needs in the community beyond their own membership.

### Purity of the Church.

According to the journal the KG were concerned about the purity of the church. Such purity was measured in terms of the love, peace, humility and willingness to remain separate from the world as evidenced in the lives of individual members. The membership would, at brotherhood meetings held after the Sunday morning service, define what that meant in practical daily living. For example, the drinking of wine or brandy "beyond our measure" or "to excess" was not acceptable.<sup>15</sup> Persons who smoked were also admonished.

Lack of humility was similarly considered unacceptable. Evidence of pride was seen in the use of kilned roof tiles,<sup>16</sup> upholstered chairs and multi-coloured blankets,<sup>17</sup> pearl necklaces,<sup>18</sup> new fashions,<sup>19</sup> and carriages with springs.<sup>20</sup> These were seen as attempts to emulate the world and seeking equality with the world was a matter of pride.

Both Wiebe and Epp record similar events of dismissal from the church. In

the church in Chortitza, members would appear before the ministerial at regularly held meetings. Here they had the opportunity to confess their offense and make restitution or seek forgiveness. In the case of disputes between brethren, if there was reconciliation, they were usually permitted to go in peace. For many other transgressions the matter was laid before a brotherhood meeting after the Sunday morning service, where the person was forgiven or dismissed as the occasion called for. Trespasses brought before the ministerial included a person who drank "strong brandy",<sup>21</sup> a couple whose engagement had been announced and then separated by mutual agreement,<sup>22</sup> dissensions between members and immoral behaviour.

Brotherhood meetings in the KG were usually held after Sunday morning services. Here the members would discuss what they considered to be appropriate behaviour for Christians. When some transgression came to the attention of the brotherhood they sought to help correct the offending party. Where correction was accepted and remorse was evident the person was usually forgiven. When the offending party sought to excuse his behaviour the result was frequently dismissal from the church.

Re-admission of such a person into the fellowship took place after a suitable period of time had elapsed during which the dismissed person could have experienced repentance and remorse. While Gerhard Wiebe in his diary does not, in most cases, detail the discussion that preceded re-admission, Dueck notes a number of instances where the membership meeting was not convinced of the sincerity of repentance. Whenever that happened, the person was not re-admitted until a later meeting when the membership felt assured that the person desired to reform.

On the other hand, the two diaries reveal a number of key differences between the two churches. While both churches practised the discipline of members at meetings after the Sunday morning services, the KG meetings included special instruction for members who were involved in debatable issues and discussion of faith matters included interaction between the laity and the ministerial. The Wiebe diary does not offer any such details.

### Separation.

In addition to differences in practise, a number of differences between the KG and the church of Gerhard Wiebe in Elbing result from the fact that Wiebe's church encompassed the entire Mennonite community in the Elbing area whereas the members of Dueck's church were scattered throughout the Mennonite villages in the Molotschna. As a result the church at Elbing could exert considerably more forceful influence over its members than the KG could exercise over theirs.

Unlike members of the Elbing church, members of the KG who did not wish to submit to the discipline of the church could more readily succumb to the option of joining one of the other churches in the Molotschna. That members, by and large, continued to remain in the church and that new members kept joining them, given the more stringent moral and ethical requirements of the KG for membership, speaks of a high degree of commitment to the church and to its teaching among adherents.

Dueck, like Aeltester Gerhard Wiebe, records the frequent dismissal of members for unacceptable behaviour. In Wiebe's church almost every dismissed member was received back into the church, usually within a few weeks. The

members of the KG, on the other hand, had a number of exceptions when members were unwilling to meet the requirements for re-admittance into the fellowship and presumably joined another church. While Dueck reports on members who were dismissed and did not return, some dismissed persons sought readmission in order to remove the blot on their Christian character only to withdraw voluntarily later and join another church.<sup>23</sup> Dueck reports on several letters of withdrawal received by the church.

### Financial Matters.

Two kinds of financial concerns were dealt with by the brotherhood and the ministerial according to Johann Dueck. One was the material needs of poor members and the other was the debts which were sometimes incurred by the poor but more often by the wealthier members. The church made an effort to privately seek out those in need and offer them assistance.<sup>24</sup> One year the church gathered grain for the needy and people were encouraged to bring their contributions to the deacons who were in charge.<sup>25</sup> Deacons would sometimes visit families to assess their needs.

As early as 1848 a brotherhood meeting agreed that debts were not edifying and, indeed, were offensive to some members. The wealthier were counselled to sell what they could in order to get out of debt. The poor were asked to turn to the deacons for assistance. All members were especially counselled not to become indebted to outsiders. A deacon who either could not, or would not, get rid of his debt was asked to resign from office after discussions at three brotherhood meetings failed to convince him.<sup>26</sup> At one brotherhood meeting brethren were instructed that "they should not enter into debt without the knowledge of the Gemeinde."<sup>27</sup> In early 1850 at a ministerial meeting and two brotherhood meetings a specific person's debts were discussed as well as "others who had fallen so deeply into debt." The last of those meetings "took measures within the Gemeinde to reduce the same."<sup>28</sup>

Since the brotherhood seemed to be in full agreement that debts were not edifying, they now began to deal with individuals who remain indebted to others. In fall of 1850 and during 1851 specific members were counselled at a brotherhood meeting to get out of debt.<sup>29</sup> Evidently the teaching of the church had its effect. Members apparently complied with the wishes of the brotherhood for Dueck reports only one further concern over debts. Dated eight years later this entry deals with one specific individual.<sup>30</sup>

### The Way of Love and Family Life.

Entries in the journal confirm that the KG brotherhood was strongly opposed to violence of any kind. Striking servants was always treated as a severe offence.<sup>31</sup> A deacon who knew that his son-in-law had struck his servant girl and who had not considered it significant enough to inform the fellowship was asked to resign from office.<sup>32</sup>

When a husband struck his wife he was promptly dismissed from the *Gemeinde*.<sup>33</sup> When a father beat his daughter in anger because she had had an affair with a soldier, they were both dismissed. Individuals who persistently fought or quarrelled with one another were counselled and, if they reconciled they were forgiven.<sup>34</sup> If they refused to reconcile, they were dismissed. There was no room

in a peace church for dissension and physical violence.

On several occasions Dueck reports that ministerial and brotherhood meetings discussed the raising of children.<sup>35</sup> The church was concerned that children receive a good example from their parents, that they be taught proper Christian conduct at home as well as in the church. Improper child discipline was discouraged.<sup>36</sup> This illustrates that the KG stressed the value of a genuine and close family life as taught in the treatise "Faith and Reason" by the KG minister-philosopher Heinrich Balzer (1800-1846) of Tiege.

Preparation for communion included the traditional Mennonite preparatory sermon which called for self examination and reconciliation wherever there was a problem between members. This was also the practise in the churches in Elbing and Chortitza. In addition to this the KG included a brotherhood meeting at which there was open discussion of any tensions that might exist between members. Only after these had been removed was a date set for the communion service. This probably explains why communion in the KG was often referred to as "*Einigkeit*" (unity).

The Johann Dueck journal gives evidence of the concern in the KG for the proper use of dismissal in discipling members. When members sometimes expressed disagreement with the *Gemeinde* in written papers, these were presented to the brotherhood meetings for consideration and discussion.

At several meetings the ministerial discussed the proper use of the bann. Separated brethren who did not return for readmission to the *Gemeinde* were a constant concern of the ministerial. Discipline was intended to be a step in the discipling process and not a form of punishment. Therefore dismissed members were expected to seek readmission to the church.

### Spiritual Conditions.

Many Mennonites became affluent in Russia. At the same time growing industrialization and an increasing flow of commerce made new merchandise readily available. New styles in clothing, new building materials and household items attracted Mennonites to markets and bazaars, sometimes even on Sundays, and influenced the dress and homes of Mennonites.

Johann Dueck records the concern of the KG over the negative influence of these trends. In particular, the *Gemeinde* were extremely concerned over the loss of humility resulting from what they saw as attempts to have the latest innovations in clothing and household goods. Attempts to outdo neighbours in displaying the latest styles were seen as evidence of vanity or else were certain to lead to pride.

On a few occasions Dueck reports that the meetings discussed the spiritual condition of the *Gemeinde*. This arose in part out of a concern for the effectiveness of the methods being used in the practise of separation as a means of maintaining sound spiritual life among members. Likely the discipline practises were influenced by a growing concern over declining moral standards in the larger Mennonite community. A 1856 request by the Association for Improvement in Schools in Molotschna, addressed to all village school teachers, requested an evaluation of the moral conditions of each community.<sup>37</sup> While the responses varied, most of them verify that teachers shared a concern that Christian morals were lacking in their communities.

## Conclusions.

The diary of Johann Dueck is useful in that it enables the student of history to determine the extent to which KG practices of church polity and discipline still mirrored those of their 17th century predecessors on whom they presumably endeavoured to model themselves. Changing times introduced new lifestyles to the Mennonite community and with them came new concerns for proper Christian conduct. The diary reveals how Dueck and other KG leaders sought to give direction to their members as to what was sound and acceptable Christian practise in these new circumstances.

The practises of the KG relating to baptism and communion were not unlike those of the church of Gerhard Wiebe in Elbing or the churches of David Epp in Chortitza and Jacob Epp in Neu-Chortitza. The practise of discipline, usually at a brotherhood meeting after the Sunday morning service, was also similar in all three congregations - though the failings for which discipline was administered varied.

While the diary reveals many similarities between the KG and other Mennonite *Gemeinden*, there were also some key differences. Separation of members from the church was handled more severely and requests for readmission sometimes required more evidence of a change in attitude before being granted. There appears to have been more emphasis on the purity of the church and on humility as a necessary personal characteristic to evidence that purity in the individual lives of members of the body of Christ.

The diary of Johann Dueck is an important addition to the growing collection of KG materials that is helpful in understanding the place of that *Gemeinde* within the larger Mennonite community in Russia and Canada.

## Endnotes: Commentary.

1. The Aeltester Gerhard Wiebe diary can be seen on microfilm #279 at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives in Winnipeg. A typed copy of parts of this diary is also available there.

2. The original of the David Epp diary is at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives, volume 1017. A typed copy is available in volume 2432. Diaries are very important sources for documenting historical events. A good example is provided by John B. Toews, *Perilous Journey: The Mennonite Brethren in Russia 1860-1910* (Hillsboro, Kan., 1988), 94 pages. Toews has used the diary of David Epp (1781-1843) to tell the story of early roots of the Brudergemeinde.

3. Three volumes of the Jacob Epp diary are at the Mennonite Heritage Centre, volumes 2169 and 1017. An English translation of major segments can be found in Harvey Dyck, ed., *A Mennonite in Russia: The Diaries of Jacob D. Epp 1851-1880*, (Toronto, Ont.: University of Toronto Press, 1991).

4. January 5, 1846

5. Examples are December 15, 1848; December 4, 1851; January 6, 1858.

6. On September 10, 1850 a speaker from Prussia spoke from 2 Cor 5:17-21; Johann Friesen brought the New Year's message on January 1, 1850 based on Luke 2:21; on April 24, 1850 Johann Dueck spoke on Luke 24:13-26; on February 11, 1851 he spoke on 1 Tim. 1: 15-18; on January 10, 1860 on Matthew 25:13; on July 31, 1860 Dueck spoke on the topic "Take Heed" and on January 29, 1861 on "When Ye Shall See."

7. Examples can be found in each journal in the entries made in April and May of any year. Those were the months when candidates were traditionally being prepared for baptism.

8. October 17 and 24, 1848.

9. October 31, 1849.

10. January 27, 1852.

11. March 2, 1852.
12. January 17, 1854.
13. April 10, 1855.
14. March 1, 1853 and Jan 15, 1861.
15. February 27, 1849 and May 1, 1849, March 3, 1856 give examples.
16. September 11, 1848.
17. March 12, 1850.
18. February 28, 1854; January 12, 1860.
19. December 4, 1855; July 22, 1856.
20. September 21, 1858; February 1, 1859; February 22, 1858.
21. Epp. January 11, 1840.
22. Epp. January 2, 1840.
23. This practice was criticized by later leaders such as Peter P. Toews (1841-1922), on the basis that it was ". . . an attractive liberty, for many a lustful or also discipline avoiding and cross-fleeing child of God in the church of Christ;" see Peter P. Toews, *By their fruits shall ye know them* (Roblin, Man.: C. W. Friesen, 1983), 35, as quoted in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph* (Steinbach, Man., 1986), 164. In his day, Klaas Reimer, founder of the KG, had successfully fought against a movement within his congregation to ban members who left to join other Gemcinden on the grounds that such people were no longer their responsibility; Klaas Reimer, "Ein Kleines Aufsatz," quoted in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years* (Steinbach, Man., 1985), 190.
24. September 30, 1848.
  25. August 7 and 14, 1849.
  26. September 11 and 26, 1848.
  27. November 21, 1848.
  28. January 28, 29 and February 5, 1950. Later that year on September 24 a brotherhood meeting discussed means by which debts could be reduced.
  29. October 1 and 15, 1850. January 14, June 24 and November 11, 1851.
  30. October 18, 1859.
  31. August 1, 1854.
  32. March 7, 1848.
  33. October 5, 1858.
  34. March 16, 1852; October 12, 1852.
  35. January 30, 1849.
  36. October 11, 1853; August 1, 1854.
  37. Peter J. Braun Archival Collection, file 1820, at Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives.



# PART NINE

## ISAAC LOEWEN 1787-1873

### Chapter One

### Biography

A Biography of Isaac Loewen (1787-1873), Lindenau, Molotschna Colony, South Russia. By Delbert F. Plett, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1992.

---

#### Section One. Isaak Loewen 1735-1797, Tiegenhoff, Prussia.

1 The research of Henry Schapansky has established that Isaak Loewen (1735-1797) of Tiegenhoff, West Prussia, was Stammvater of the Kleine Gemeinde (KG) Loewen family.<sup>1</sup> Isaak Loewen was resident in Tiegenhoff where he is listed in the 1776 Konsignation or census. In 1782 Loewen married for the second time to Maria, the widow of Johann Olfert. She had two children by her first marriage, namely, Maria Olfert baptised in 1782 and Abraham Olfert born 1779 and baptised in 1791. Abraham Olfert immigrated to Russia in 1803 where he settled in the village of Einlage, Chortitza Colony.<sup>2</sup> Isaak Loewen Sr. had three children with his first wife--two daughters and a son Isaak Loewen (1759-1834).

2 The oldest daughter **Khristina Loewen** was born in 1765 and baptised in 1785. She married Peter Petkau on December 2, 1790. The family immigrated to Russia in 1804 where he died in 1808. Khristina Loewen married for the second time to the widower Daniel Neufeld (born 1759) who had settled in Rosenthal, Chortitza Colony in 1793. Daniel Neufeld is listed in Burwalde in 1802 and 1808.<sup>3</sup> The younger daughter **Eliesabeth Loewen** was baptised in 1796. In 1798 she married Julius Martens.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
1	Isaak Loewen	1735		1797
m	?			
2	Isaak Loewen	1759	Oct 10,1786	1834
2	Khristina Loewen	1765	Dec 2,1790	
m	Peter Petkau			1808
2m	Daniel Neufeld	1759		
2	Eliesabeth Loewen		Dec 26,1798	
m	Julius Martens			
1	Isaak Loewen	1737		1797
2m	Maria ?		Oct 20,1782	

## Section Two. Isaak Loewen 1759-1834.

2 Son Isaac Loewen (1759-1834) was baptised in the Ellerwald Gemeinde in 1779. He married Margaretha Ens.<sup>4</sup> The couple had two sons, namely, Isaac Loewen (1787-1873) and Jakob Loewen (born 1803) who died young. Isaac Loewen (1759-1834) married for the second time to Eva, whose last name is unknown. The family lived in the district of Elbing in Prussia where he was a carpenter and cabinet maker by occupation.<sup>5</sup>

In 1804 the family immigrated to Russia, where they settled in the village of Lindenau in the Molotschna Colony on October 20, 1805. During the journey to Russia the Isaak Loewen family travelled in the same wagon train with the families of Johann Warkentin (1760-1825) (who settled in Blumenort, Molotschna),<sup>6</sup> and Cornelius Toews (1766-1831), who also settled in the village of Lindenau on Wirtschaft 10. After living in the new settlement for three years, Isaak Loewen (1759-1834) was firmly established on Wirtschaft 6 and was moderately well-to-do. He was active in grain and silkworm farming.<sup>7</sup> The family is listed as follows in the Revisions-Listen of 1808:

Isaak Loewen, age 49, from Elbing, tischler, Wife Eva age 48, Son Isaak 21, Jakob 5. Property 1 wagon, 1/2 plow, 1 harrow, 5 horses, 7 cows, 150 tschetwert of unthreshed shocks, and 23 loads of hay.<sup>8</sup>

The information regarding their children is confirmed by Peter P. Isaac (1846-1923), who states that Isaak Loewen came to Russia in 1805 with his parents and one brother Jakob.<sup>9</sup> It appears that Jakob died young as one source reports that Isaac was an only child.<sup>10</sup> For a listing of the KG fellowship in the village of Lindenau; see Delbert F. Plett, "Johann Toews 1793-1873," in Part Ten, Chapter One. It is noteworthy that the house built by Isaak Loewen (1759-1834) when he first settled in Lindenau in 1805 stood for over a hundred years.<sup>11</sup> According to the 1835 Molotschna census, Isaak Loewen died in 1834.<sup>12</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
2	Isaak Loewen	1759	Oct 10,1786	1834
m	Margaretha Ens			
3	Isaac Loewen	Jul 1,1787		Jun 21,1873
3	Jakob Loewen	1803		
2	Isaak Loewen	1759		
2m	Eva	1760		

## Section Three. Isaac Loewen 1787-1873.

3 Son Isaac Loewen (1787-1873) married Margaretha Wiens (1790-1861) in 1813.<sup>13</sup> The young couple took over his parent's Wirtschaft number 6 in the village of Lindenau, where they farmed and raised their large family of 13 children. Peter L. Dueck (1842-1887) has written that "Isaac Loewen had lived in his parent's Wirtschaft, Feuerstelle, or farmyard for as long as he had been farming."<sup>14</sup> The ownership of a full farm at a young age will have provided a good degree of financial security for the family. Like his father, Isaac Loewen was active in silkworm farming. An article in the *Unterhaltungsblatt* in 1850 written by two German agricultural students cited Isaac Loewen of Lindenau as a 'Lehrmeister' or master teacher in the field.<sup>15</sup> The Isaac Loewen family evidently had the

normal complement of servants in that on June 17, 1851, the ministers Enns and Dueck attended at the Loewen residence in Lindenau regarding the misdemeanour of their servant girl.<sup>16</sup>

Mrs. Margaretha Loewen, nee Wiens, died on July 29, 1861.<sup>17</sup> Shortly thereafter, Isaac Loewen held an auction sale of his goods.<sup>18</sup> It appears that the family Wirtschaft in Lindenau was taken over by the youngest son, David W. Loewen (1836-1915), somewhat earlier.<sup>19</sup> Prior to his retirement, Isaac Loewen also assisted his other children by way of loans. Son Cornelius W. Loewen (1827-1893), records in his journal that shortly after the auction sale in 1861, he received 25 ruble, which reduced his overall debt to his father to 121 ruble. After his retirement in 1861, Isaac Loewen lived with various of his children. Peter L. Dueck (1842-1887) reports that he got to know Isaac Loewen when he lived at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Cornelius S. Plett, in Kleefeld.<sup>20</sup>

On October 10, 1837, Isaac Loewen was elected as a deacon of the KG. He faithfully served this office until March 7, 1848, when he was removed from this position for the reason that he had been too complacent regarding the unscriptural conduct of his son-in-law, Cornelius S. Plett (1820-1900). At the time, Plett was an Anwohner in Lindenau where he was manufacturing wagon wheels. He had struck his adult servant girl and Loewen became aware of this but did not inform the ministerial. This was regarded as a grievous omission and the brotherhood removed Loewen as a deacon on the grounds that he should have taken the matter more seriously.<sup>21</sup> That Isaac Loewen accepted this admonition and was able to strengthen his Christian walk is evident from his own writings which show that his greatest concern in his retirement years was that all his children would be able to find salvation and live a life of discipleship.

Isaac Loewen was very concerned over the state of affairs in the KG during the 1860s and became involved with the reform group under Aeltester Heinrich Enns (1807-1881). The writings pertaining to the 1866 division refer to an incident where the group under Aeltester Johann Friesen (1808-1872) came to Loewen's home in Lindenau on New Year's Eve of 1865, to consult with him regarding a proposed resolution of the separation.<sup>22</sup> It is evident from this—as well as the concerns which Loewen later expressed in his writings—that he had many spiritual trials and tribulations to endure. According to various references in the writings of Peter P. Isaac (1846-1923) and Aeltester Peter P. Toews (1841-1922), Isaac Loewen over the years became a dearly beloved pillar of the Gemeinde. Peter P. Isaac (1846-1923), for example, refers to the incident of the drowning of Mrs. Johann Brandt in the Molotschna River and then refers to Isaac Loewen as follows, "If I could have asked the aged grandfather, Isaac Loewen, long ago deceased, in Lindenau, he could have given me a more detailed account of the accident which overtook this great-aunt Katharina."<sup>23</sup>

Isaac Loewen also had a love of history and Aeltester Peter P. Toews reports that he relied on Loewen's records as one of several major sources for his "Sammlung . . . zur Historie der Kleinen Gemeinde der Mennoniten" a collection of writings pertaining to the history of church.<sup>24</sup> His own letters reveal Isaac Loewen to have been an intelligent and spiritual man; reflective--although somewhat maudlin--and sensitive by nature. Although Loewen modestly claimed to have received only a limited education, it is evident that he was articulate and versant in German, that he read and translated from the Dutch language, and that

he had a comprehensive knowledge of the seminal writings of the Anabaptist-Mennonite faith. His letters were written with a view to inspiring and enriching the Christian life of the recipient.

Isaac Loewen died on June 21, 1873, at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Jakob Friesen, in the village of Heuboden, Borosenko Settlement, Russia, where he was buried two days later.<sup>25</sup> He had achieved a life span of 85 years, 11 months and 11 days.<sup>26</sup>

#### Section Four. The Writings of Isaac Loewen 1787-1873.

The presently known writings of Isaac Loewen (1787-1873) have been collected, translated and published in Part Nine, Chapters Two, Three and Four of this work. Undoubtedly the most devastating event of Loewen's life was the departure of his son, Heinrich, from the KG church and his subsequent death by lightning in 1863. Loewen had become a widower only two years previous and was obviously in a vulnerable frame of mind emotionally. He responded to these events by pouring his heart out in several letters which were gathered together into a small book in manuscript form after his death.

After the death of his first wife, son Heinrich Loewen became the subject of reproach for his loose living during his time as a widower. He became enamoured to the ways of the world and cast his eyes upon a young lady, Maria Doerksen, who did not belong to the KG and refused to join this group. Notwithstanding the endeavours of family and friends to win Heinrich back, he renounced the Gemeinde and was accepted into the more liberal Ohrloff Gemeinde, even though they knew about his loose living. The couple was married in the Ohrloff Gemeinde which had encouraged his deviation.

The first letter in Chapter Two is a response to this decision. Before the letter was even finished, however, Heinrich Loewen was killed as he sat between two other men in a building after returning from a Sunday church service. That Heinrich Loewen was deeply remorseful because of his departure from the Gemeinde and regarding his transgression, was evidenced by the fact that on the day of his death he had opened his *Gesangbuch* to sing number 660, the first stanza of which reads as follows:

Herr Jesus Christ! ich schrei' zu dir  
aus hochbetruerter Seele,  
dien' Allmacht lasz erscheinen mir,  
und mich nich also quaele,  
viel groeszer ist dein Angst und Schmerz,  
so jetzund drueckt und quaelst mein Herz,  
als dasz ich's kann erzaehlen.

The second letter was written by Isaac Loewen to Heinrich's widow, Maria. In this letter Isaac Loewen tries to reconcile his love for his children and sympathy for his daughter-in-law, with his firm belief in the teachings of scripture.<sup>27</sup> The death of Heinrich Loewen was a tragedy which shocked the KG, as well as the wider Molotschna community. Bernhard Harder (1832-1884)--the famous evangelist and poet--told one of the KG brethren "that he was still trembling from the shock of that stroke of lightning."<sup>28</sup> These letters provide the portrait of a man who

loved his children dearly.

The letters in Chapter Three were written in 1865 by Isaac Loewen to Peter P. Toews (1841-1922), then a young minister living at the new KG settlement of Andreasfeld, near the Chortitza Colony.<sup>29</sup> Peter P. Toews was married to Anna Warkentin, a granddaughter of Isaac Loewen and hence the reference to "in-law." These letters provide interesting details as to the dynamics of the extended Loewen clan, as well as some of the social and cultural activities of the time. Letter One, for example, provides an account of a trip to the Crimea to visit the KG congregation there.<sup>30</sup> Reference is also made to the difficulties encountered among the brethren at Friedrichsthal, one of the villages at Andreasfeld, and the role played by Isaac Friesen, the local minister.<sup>31</sup>

The letters in Chapter Four are a miscellaneous collection written between 1867 and 1871. Letter One is a general spiritual admonition by Isaac Loewen to his children and grandchildren.<sup>32</sup> Letter Two is again addressed to Peter P. Toews--by now living at Blumenhof, Borosenko; it expresses Loewen's concerns that a reconciliation could occur within his beloved KG. He also encourages Peter P. Toews in the leadership role that he is being called upon to fill.<sup>33</sup> Letter Three was written by Isaac Loewen in 1871 to his granddaughter, Maria L. Plett, who was living with her parents in the village of Blumenhof, Borosenko, at the time. In this letter, Loewen expresses his love and concern for his granddaughter, and cites scripture and other references for her to study.<sup>34</sup> This letter provides a fitting remembrance of Isaac Loewen as an elderly Ohm who loved his family dearly and who was genuinely concerned over their eternal salvation.

### Section Five. The Descendants of Isaac Loewen (1787-1873).

3 The remainder of this chapter will consist of brief biographies of the children of Isaac Loewen (1787-1873) and Margaretha Wiens (1790-1873) and a listing of their grandchildren and whom they married.<sup>35</sup> It is noted here that the family of Isaac Loewen was relatively normative for the KG in socio-economic terms. A study of the movements and farm purchases of his sons and grandsons illustrates the financial strategies employed by the 25 per cent of the Molotschna residents who were among the landowning class in the 1860s. As far as is presently known all the sons and sons-in-law of Isaac Loewen (1787-1873) had their own *Wirtschaft*. A detailed listing of the descendants of Margaretha Wiens and Isaac Loewen was published in 1961 in the massive genealogical work, *The Descendants of Isaac Loewen* by Dr. Solomon Loewen, Hillsboro, Kansas.<sup>36</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
3	Isaac Loewen	Jul 1,1787		Jun 21,1873
m	Margaretha Wiens	Jan 6,1790	May 16,1813	Jul 29,1861
4	Isaac Loewen	Oct 17,1815	Sep 18,1842	1856
4	Marg Loewen	Aug 22,1817		Feb 2,1883
4	Kath Loewen	Nov 3,1818		Jun 6,1857
4	Anna Loewen	Nov 10,1819	Aug 27,1839	Sep 17,1874
4	Jakob Loewen	Dec 29,1820		Jan 15,1901
4	Sara Loewen	Sep 12,1822	Oct 26,1841	Mar 23,1903
4	Johann Loewen	Dec 29,1823		Dec 2,1881
4	Peter Loewen	Jun 17,1825		Aug 26,1887
4	Corn Loewen	Jan 11,1827		Nov 10,1893

4	Elisabeth Loewen	Aug 2,1829	Mar 13,1906
4	Hein Loewen	1830	Jun 2,1863
4	Abraham Loewen	Feb 25,1833	Mar 20,1886
4	David Loewen	May 7,1836	Jun 7,1915

4 Son Isaac W. Loewen (1815-1856) married Anna Wiebe (1819-1856), the granddaughter of Peter Wiebe (born 1755) from Stattfelddamfeld, Prussia.<sup>37</sup> Peter Wiebe immigrated to Russia in 1803 and settled on Wirtschaft 21 in Schoenau, Molotschna, in 1804.<sup>38</sup> Isaac W. Loewen and his family lived in the village of Schoenau where he is listed in the KG ministerial election of 1852.<sup>39</sup> This couple both died in 1856 of typhus, the so-called "soldiers disease" which broke out after the Crimean War.<sup>40</sup>

5 Son Isaac W. Loewen (1845-1926) moved from Rosenfeld, Borosenko, to Rosenort, Manitoba, in 1874.<sup>41</sup> Isaac W. Loewen was married for the second time to the widow Johann R. Dueck, nee Margaretha R. Dueck, of Steinbach, and they bought the Tomenson farm in Clearspring where they lived until her death.<sup>42</sup> Isaac W. Loewen had a son Isaac J. Loewen who had a son Isaac P. Loewen. The saying arose that the oldest son in the paternal Loewen line had always received the name Isaac for seven generations in a row.<sup>43</sup> Son Peter W. Loewen (1852-1919) settled in Neuanlage, Manitoba, and served as a minister of the KG.<sup>44</sup> Daughter Margaretha Loewen (1841-1878) married Johann S. Harms (1839-1884) and in 1874 the family emigrated from Heuboden, Borosenko Colony, to Rosenort, Manitoba. In 1875 the family moved on to Jansen, Nebraska, where he became a minister of the KG.<sup>45</sup> Daughter Maria Loewen (died 1885) married Johann Thielmann (1845-1912), who became a wealthy estate owner, farming first in the KG settlement of Friedensfeld, and later on a nearby estate.<sup>46</sup> Another daughter married Abram Thielmann but this family has not been identified to date.<sup>47</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
4	Isaac W. Loewen	Oct 17,1815	Sep 18,1842	1856
m	Anna Wiebe			1856
5	Margaretha Loewen	Jan 12,1841	Jun 12,1869	Mar 16,1878
m	Johann S. Harms	Dec 3,1839		Dec 5,1885
5	Isaac W. Loewen	Aug 16,1845		Aug 16,1926
m	Elizabeth Jansen	May 2,1843		Apr 25,1892
2m	Marg P. Kroecker	Sep 13,1863		Aug 5,1918
5	Maria Loewen		1865	1885
m	Johann Thielmann	Dec 28,1845		Feb 19,1912
5	Peter W. Loewen	Aug 29,1852	Dec 24,1872	Nov 15,1919
m	Anna Koop	1854		Oct 2,1890
2m	Katherina Friesen	1863	Jul 3,1891	Nov 12,1913

4 Daughter Margaretha W. Loewen (1817-1883) married Isaac Braun (1815-1869), the son of Isaac Braun (1795-1831) and Elisabeth Toews (1796-1861).<sup>48</sup> Margaretha Braun and her family lived in Mariawohl, Molotschna.<sup>49</sup> She married for the second time to Jakob F. Friesen (1820-1888) of Kleefeld, Molotschna, a brother to the third KG Aeltester Johann F. Friesen (1808-1872). Jakob Friesen was known as the "large" Jakob Friesen.<sup>50</sup> In 1874, the family moved to Rosenort, Manitoba.<sup>51</sup>

5 Daughter **Margaretha Braun** (1841-1919) married Peter M. Kroeker (1840-1915) of Rosenort, Manitoba, who was elected as a minister of the KG in 1873. Daughter **Anna Braun** (1825-1913) married Franz Froese (1825-1913) and also settled in Rosenort, Manitoba.<sup>52</sup> Daughter **Maria Braun** married Gerhard Harms, the son of Peter Harms (1806-1870) of Sparrau.<sup>53</sup> The couple lived in Heuboden, Borosenko, and emigrated to Rosenort, Manitoba, in 1874. They had only one daughter.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
4	<b>Marg W. Loewen</b>	Aug 22,1817		Feb 2,1883
m	Isaac Braun	Aug 14,1815	Feb 2,1837	Feb 3,1869
5	Isaac Braun	Jan 15,1838		Jan 25,1839
5	Elis Braun	Jul 30,1839		Jan 24,1840
5	Marg Braun	Mar 22,1841		
m	Peter Kroeker	Jan 20,1840	Aug 2,1860	Apr 15,1915
5	Elis Braun	Oct 2,1842		Jan 13,1845
5	Anna Braun	Mar 1,1844		Aug 29,1908
m	Franz Froese	May 1,1825		Jan 20,1913
5	Elis Braun	July 23,1846		
5	Isaak Braun	Jan 8,1848		Apr 2,1848
5	Kath Braun	Jul 26,1850		Aug 18,1851
5	Maria Braun	Jul 26,1850		Sept 28,1878
m	Gerhard Harms	Nov 12,1849	Feb 26,1871	Jul 28,1911
4	<b>Marg Loewen</b>	Aug 22,1817		Feb 2,1883
2m	Jacob Friesen	Sep 10,1820	1877	Apr 26,1888

4 Daughter **Katharina W. Loewen** (1818-1854) married Klaas Friesen (1813-1856), the son of Klaas Friesen (1774-1839) who had settled in the village of Lindenau in 1804. When the Molotschna village of Paulsheim was founded in 1853, the Klaas Friesen family moved there as well.<sup>54</sup>

5 Daughter **Elisabeth Friesen** (died 1864) was the first wife of Cornelius P. Toews (1836-1908), who was a delegate to North America for the Blumenhof KG in 1873.<sup>55</sup> Daughter **Anna Friesen** (1849-1918) married Peter S. Harms (1849-1924) and the family settled in Jansen, Nebraska in 1875, later moving to Inman, Kansas, and eventually to Montezuma, Kansas.<sup>56</sup> Daughter **Katharina Friesen** married Cornelius P. Goossen, the brother to KG minister Gerhard P. Goossen (1832-1872). Goossen married for the second time to Katharina Barkman (1851-1912) whose father, Rev. Jakob Barkman, settled in Steinbach, Manitoba, in 1874, and who drowned in the Red River the following year. The Cornelius P. Goossen family settled on Wirtschaft 15 in Steinbach, Manitoba, in 1874.<sup>57</sup> He sold half his farm in 1882 or 1883 and continued farming on a smaller scale but made a good living in spite of it. After 17 years he sold the remaining half of his land to Heinrich Sobering.<sup>58</sup> Daughter **Margaretha Friesen** (1854-1909) married David Hiebert (1853-1900), the son of Johann Hiebert (1816-1890) of Alexanderwohl, Molotschna.<sup>59</sup> The family lived in Plymouth, Nebraska. David Hiebert was a minister of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite.<sup>60</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
4	<b>Kath W. Loewen</b>	Nov 3,1818		Jun 6,1854
m	Klaas Friesen	Aug 3,1813	Oct 8,1838	Jul 3,1856

5	Elis Friesen			1864
m	Corn Toews	Jun 15,1836	1857	Feb 12,1908
5	Anna Friesen	Oct 10,1849		Nov 15,1918
m	Peter Harms	Jun 24,1849	Oct 13,1869	Nov 1,1924
5	Kath Friesen	Sep 22,1844	Dec 12,1863	Dec 9,1870
m	Corn Goossen	Nov 30,1839		Jan 8,1916
5	Marg Friesen	May 14,1854		Mar 13,1909
m	David Hiebert	Mar 5,1853	Sep 10,1873	Jul 3,1900

4 Daughter **Anna W. Loewen** (1819-1874) married **Johann Warkentin** (1817-1886), who became a wealthy *Vollwirt* in Blumstein, Molotschna. During the 1860s Johann Warkentin was actively involved in the purchase of land and relocation of many of the KG folk to the Borosenko colony near Ekatherinoslav. In 1872 Johann Warkentin purchased the Hochfeld estate north of Borosenko where he was joined by his brother-in-law David Loewen (1836-1915). In 1875 Johann Warkentin and his family moved from Hochfeld, South Russia to Blumenhof, Manitoba.

5 Daughter **Margaretha Warkentin** (1841-1913) married the widower **Heinrich Reimer** (1818-1876) of Prangenu, Molotschna, and later Blumenhoff northwest of Nikopol. From them are descended the Holdeman Reimers. Margaretha Warkentin married for the second time to her cousin, **Johann L. Plett** (1855-1900), a wealthy Blumenhof area farmer. Daughter **Anna Warkentin** (1843-1925) married **Peter P. Toews** (1841-1922), the Aeltester of the Blumenhof KG at the time of the emigration to Manitoba in 1874. Son **Isaac L. Warkentin** (1845-1929) was a self taught medical doctor who acquired great renown for his healing skills during the pioneer years in Manitoba.<sup>61</sup> Twin brother **Johann L. Warkentin** (1845-1908) married **Maria P. Goossen** (1848-1888) and the family lived in Blumenhof, Manitoba, where they farmed in a big way.<sup>62</sup> Daughter **Katharina Warkentin** (1847-1871) married **Peter P. Isaac** who was the author of the well-known *Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern*.<sup>63</sup> She died without leaving any issue. Daughter **Aganetha Warkentin** (1857-1876) married **Aaron Penner** also a farmer in Blumenhof, Manitoba. He was killed by lightning when he looked out of the door of his house.<sup>64</sup> Daughter **Ellisabeth Warkentin** (1859-1922) married **Abraham B. Klassen** (1850-1935), the son of KG delegate **David Klassen** (1813-1900). Abraham B. Klassen was elected as a minister of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite in 1884. In 1902 the family moved to Swalwell, Alberta.<sup>65</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
4	<b>Anna W. Loewen</b>	Nov 10,1819	Aug 27,1839	Sep 17,1874
m	<b>Johann Warkentin</b>	Jun 6,1817		Dec 9,1886
5	<b>Marg Warkentin</b>	Sep 8,1841		Apr 11,1913
m	<b>Hein Reimer</b>	Feb 8,1818	Jul 9,1860	Feb 25,1876
2m	<b>Johann L. Plett</b>	Oct 17,1855	Feb 20,1877	Nov 16,1900
5	<b>Anna Warkentin</b>	Jan 31,1843	Nov 24,1863	Mar 12,1925
m	<b>Peter P. Toews</b>	Aug 6,1841		Nov 2,1922
5	<b>Joh Warkentin</b>	Feb 13,1845		Oct 19,1908
m	<b>Maria Goossen</b>	Feb 15,1848	Feb 19,1867	Mar 18,1888
2m	<b>Anna Klassen</b>	Feb 10,1839	Sep 12,1891	Feb 15,1927
5	<b>Isaac L. Warkentin</b>	Feb 13,1845		Jan 9,1929
m	<b>Kath Penner</b>	Dec 14,1840	Dec 20,1864	Feb 15,1920

2m	Anna Toews	May 9,1846	Apr 16,1922	Dec 30,1928
5	Kath Warkentin	1847	Jan 8,1867	Jun 11,1871
m	Peter P. Isaac	Nov 26,1846		Sep 29,1925
5	Agan Warkentin	May 27,1857	Jan 1,1876	Jul 6,1876
m	Aaron Penner	Mar 30,1852		Sep 2,1892
5	Elis Warkentin	Oct 15,1859	Dec 6,1877	Jul 8,1922
m	Abraham B. Klassen	Aug 10,1850		Dec 26,1935

4 Son **Jakob W. Loewen** (1820-1901) married Anna Penner (1822-1907), the daughter of Peter Penner of Prangenau, Molotschna, one-time KG minister. This family lived in Waldheim, Molotschna, until 1867 when they moved to the settlement of Friedensfeld. In 1870 they joined the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Gemeinde. In 1874 the family emigrated from Russia settling in the village of Gnadenu near Hillsboro, Kansas. In 1882 Jakob Loewen obtained title to his farm property located three miles east and two miles south of Hillsboro. In 1892, the Jakob Loewen family homesteaded near the town of Hitchcock, Oklahoma, near the farm of their daughter Maria and her husband, Johann Hiebert. They lived here for several years and then returned to Kansas to lived with their children.

5 Daughter **Maria Loewen** married Johann Hiebert (1843-1923), the son of Johann Hiebert (1816-1890) of Alexanderwohl, Molotschna, and later of Gruenfeld, near Kleefeld, Manitoba. They settled in Marion County, Kansas, but in 1892, they homesteaded near Hitchcock, Oklahoma.<sup>66</sup> Son **Peter Loewen** married Katharina Schapansky. The couple immigrated to Hillsboro, Kansas, where they farmed in the Gnadenu area. Later he became President of the Mennonite Mutual Insurance Company, Newton, Kansas. They belonged to the Bruderthal Church, Hillsboro. Son **Jakob Loewen** (1855-1941) farmed in the Hillsboro, Kansas, area and became well-known as a self-educated country doctor. He was the great-grandfather of Dr. Solomon Loewen, former professor at Tabor College and author of *The Descendants of Isaac Loewen* genealogy book referred to above.<sup>67</sup> Daughter **Anna Loewen** married Wilhelm Reddig and the family farmed at Lehigh, Kansas.<sup>68</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
4	<b>Jakob Loewen</b>	Dec 27,1820		Jan 15,1901
m	Anna Penner	Sep 11,1822		Aug 11,1907
5	Marie Loewen	Aug 25,1847		Apr 20,1936
m	Johann Hiebert	Dec 9,1843	Feb 30,1867	Aug 7,1923
5	Peter Loewen	May 30,1850		Jul 8,1929
m	Kath Schapansky	Aug 23,1850		1923
5	Isaac Loewen	Mar 22,1854		Dec 6,1916
m	Helena Reimer	Sept 24,1857	Jan 1,1879	Dec 7,1907
5	Jacob Loewen	Oct 5,1855		Jun 19,1941
m	Justina Leppke	Aug 30,1857	Dec 15,1878	Feb 12,1947
5	Johann Loewen	Jul 6,1857		Feb 18,1898
m	Dor Schaeffler	Jan 6,1864	1881	Nov 3,1908
5	Anna Loewen	Feb 15,1862		Feb 26,1908
m	Wilhelm Reddig	Nov 9,1859	Oct 1,1881	Jun 22,1939

4 Daughter **Sarah W. Loewen** (1822-1903) married Cornelius S. Plett (1820-

1900), the son of Johann Plett (1765-1833) from Fuerstenwerder, Prussia, and later of Blumstein, Molotschna. In 1854 the Cornelius S. Plett family took up a full Wirtschaft in the village of Kleefeld, Molotschna. The family prospered financially and by 1871 had a wheat crop of 270 acres. Cornelius S. Plett served for a time as Schulz (mayor) of Kleefeld. In 1872 the family moved to Blumenhof, Borosenko, where they purchased a Vollwirtschaft from brother-in-law Johann Warkentin. In 1875 the two brother-in-laws and their families emigrated to Manitoba where they established the village of Blumenhof.<sup>69</sup>

5 Daughter **Margaretha L. Plett** married widower Franz M. Kroeker of Kleefeld, Molotschna, the brother to Jakob M. Kroeker, Rosenort, Manitoba, who would later serve as KG Aeltester. The Franz M. Kroeker family settled in Steinbach, Manitoba, where he was the highest assessed farmer for some time. Son **Isaac L. Plett** married Maria Brandt, the daughter of Klaas Brandt and Maria Reimer of Tiegenhagen.<sup>70</sup> The Isaac L. Plett family moved to Friedensfeld, South Russia, where he died.<sup>71</sup> His widow moved to Canada in 1874 and eventually—in 1878, settled in the village of Steinbach. Son **Cornelius L. Plett** (1846-1935) was elected as a minister of the KG in 1891.<sup>72</sup> In 1914 he married for the third time and moved to Satanta, Kansas. Daughter **Sarah L. Plett** married Jakob J. Thielmann, the son of Jakob Thielmann (1810-1862), Neukirch and later Alexanderkrone.<sup>73</sup> The Jakob J. Thielmann family farmed in the village of Friedensfeld.<sup>74</sup> Daughter **Maria L. Plett** (1850-1934) married Peter R. Reimer (1845-1915), who was elected as a minister of the KG in 1881. The Peter R. Reimer family lived in Blumenort, Manitoba, where he was a substantial farmer.<sup>75</sup> Daughter **Katharina L. Plett** (1854-1944) married Heinrich Wohlgenuth (1849-1899).<sup>76</sup> The family purchased NE1/4 Section 26-7-6E in Blumenhof, Manitoba, from her father in 1887 where they lived for the rest of their days. Heinrich Wohlgenuth was elected as a minister of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, in 1894. Son **Johann L. Plett** married his cousin, Margaretha Warkentin, the widow of Heinrich Reimer (1818-1876) who had sons almost his age. He became one of the wealthiest farmers in the Blumenort area north of Steinbach. Sons **Peter, Abraham, David** and **Jakob L. Plett** married Aganetha, Gertrude, Helena and Maria B. Koop who were the daughters of Johann M. Koop a wealthy farmer from Muntau, Molotschna, and later of Neuanlage, Manitoba.<sup>77</sup> Son **Peter L. Plett** (1858-1944) was elected as a deacon of the KG in 1891. In 1914 he and his family moved to a new Kleine Gemeinde settlement near Satanta, Kansas. Abraham, David and Jakob L. Plett were substantial farmers in the Blumenhof district north of Steinbach raising large families. David and Jakob L. Plett also operated steam engine/threshing outfits during the first two decades of the 20th century.<sup>78</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
4	Sara W. Loewen	Sep 12,1822	Oct 26,1841	Mar 23,1903
m	Corn S. Plett <sup>79</sup>	Oct 28,1820		Nov 18,1900
5	Marg Plett	Oct 27,1842		Dec 9,1920
m	Franz M. Kroeker	Aug 6,1827	Aug 19,1861	Aug 9,1905
5	Isaac L. Plett	Mar 15,1844		Jul 27,1871
m	Maria Brandt	Sep 22,1843	Nov 1863	Jun 27,1927
5	Corn Plett	Aug 8,1845		Jul 11,1846
5	Corn L. Plett	Oct 29,1846		Jan 3,1935
m	Sarah Enns	Jun 18,1849	Oct 3,1869	Nov 21,1872

2m	Helena Rempel	Dec 24,1843	Mar 23,1873	Nov 23,1913
3m	Kath Heidebrecht	Sep 12,1845	Dec 12,1915	Oct 4,1929
5	Sarah Plett	Oct 29,1846		Dec 23,1881
m	Jacob Thielmann	Jul 17,1841	Oct 31,1865	Jan 17,1894
5	Anna Plett	Apr 23,1848		Apr 23,1873
m	Gerhard Siemens	Mar 9,1834	Feb 1870	Nov 16,1908
5	Jacob Plett	Dec 17,1849		
5	Maria Plett	Dec 29,1850		Oct 6,1934
m	Peter R. Reimer	Dec 29,1845	Jul 8,1873	Nov 10,1915
5	Katharina Plett	Feb 8,1854		Jan 18,1944
m	Hein Wohlgenuth	May 9,1849	Nov 7,1875	Mar 4,1899
5	Elisabeth Plett	Feb 8,1854		Apr 27,1854
5	Johann L. Plett	Oct 17,1855		Nov 16,1900
m	Marg Warkentin	Aug 17,1841	Feb 20,1877	Apr 11,1913
5	Elisabeth Plett	Dec 4,1856		Feb 17,1859
5	Peter L. Plett	Feb 18,1858		Oct 19,1944
m	Agan B. Koop	Oct 12,1859	Feb 27,1879	Apr 4,1883
2m	Susanna Friesen	Feb 5,1864	Jul 29,1883	Oct 18,1936
5	Abr L. Plett	May 18,1859		Oct 15,1934
m	Gertrude B. Koop	Nov 25,1861	Nov 21,1879	Jun 2,1943
5	David L. Plett	Oct 8,1863		Jun 25,1953
m	Helena B. Koop	Feb 8,1865	Jan 20,1883	Mar 30,1940
5	Jakob L. Plett	Dec 12,1864		Nov 4,1931
m	Maria B. Koop	Jun 10,1864	Nov 14,1885	Sep 13,1918

4 Son **Johann W. Loewen** (1823-1881) married **Anna Dueck** (1825-1887). She was the daughter of minister **Johann Dueck** (1801-1866) of Muntau, Molotschna. The **Johann Loewen** family lived in the village of Kleefeld, Molotschna. In 1872 they moved to the village of Blumenhof, Borosenko, purchasing a village farm from brother-in-law, **Johann Warkentin**, who was moving to his own estate called Hochfeld. The family moved to Rosenort, Manitoba, in 1875 where **Johann Loewen** was elected as a deacon of the KG.

5 Daughter **Helena Loewen** (1855-1886) married the widower **Cornelius E. Eidse** (1840-1914). **Eidse** moved to Lonetree, Kansas, in 1898.<sup>80</sup> Sons **Peter D. Loewen** (1860-1927), **Johann D. Loewen** (1862-1934), **Abraham D. Loewen** (1864-1961), and **Cornelius D. Loewen** (1866-1939) were progressive farmers living in Rosenort, Manitoba.<sup>81</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
4	<b>Johann W. Loewen</b>	Dec 29,1823		Dec 2,1881
m	<b>Anna Dueck</b>	Jun 18,1825	Jul 24,1845	Apr 6,1887
5	<b>Johann Loewen</b>	Dec 26,1846		Dec 25,1847
5	<b>Isaak Loewen</b>	Oct 19,1848		Jul,1851
5	<b>Anna Loewen</b>	Dec 17,1850	Jan 31,1871	Jul 6,1877
m	<b>Peter Hiebert</b>	Sept 19,1846		Oct 27,1917
5	<b>Johann Loewen</b>	Mar 29,1853		Jul,1860
5	<b>Helena Loewen</b>	Feb 21,1855	Feb 2,1874	Oct 28,1886
m.	<b>Corn. E. Eidse</b>	Aug 26,1840		Oct 30, 1914
5	<b>Isaak Loewen</b>	Feb 21,1855		1857

5	Isaak Loewen	Jul 31,1857		1857
5	Jacob Loewen	Mar 10,1859		Jun 14,1859
5	Peter Loewen	Jun 6,1860	Oct 18,1884	May 21,1927
m	Elis B. Froese	Jul 27,1865		May 21,1927
5	Johann Loewen	May 27,1862		Oct 1,1934
m.	Elis K. Kroeker	Jan 9,1864		Jul 31, 1915
5	Abraham Loewen	May 19,1864	Oct 2,1886	Nov 22,1951
m	Marg B. Kroeker	Aug 6,1866		Jun 23,1932
5	Cornelius Loewen	Nov 17,1866	Dec 29,1888	Jun 15,1939
m	Maria Dueck	Dec 17,1870		Mar 27,1932

4 Son Peter W. Loewen (1825-1887) married Susanna Enns (1829-1857) who was a sister to KG Aeltester Heinrich Enns (1807-1881).<sup>82</sup> The family lived in Hierschau. By the 1870s they had moved to Savitzki, an estate located north of the Borosenko village of Steinbach.<sup>83</sup> In 1875 they settled in Hochstadt near Kleefeld, Manitoba. Peter Loewen married four times, his second wife was Aganetha Bartel.<sup>84</sup> His last two wives were from the Chortitz Colony. Peter W. Loewen married for the fourth time to a widow Esau who had seven children but they were all grown up except Justina, who was the first wife of Jakob Regier, and Jakob, who married Elisabeth Giesbrecht.<sup>85</sup>

5 Son Isaac E. Loewen married Helena K. Sawatsky the daughter of Abraham Sawatsky of Jansen, Nebraska.<sup>86</sup> He married for the second time to Katharina Friesen, a sister to Jakob S. Friesen, founder of the *Steinbach Post*. The Isaac E. Loewen family settled in Hochstadt, Manitoba, in 1874. In 1891 they moved to Jansen, Nebraska, where he served as a school teacher.<sup>87</sup> Daughter Susanna E. Loewen married for the first time to widower Peter L. Dueck, a son of KG preacher, Johann Dueck (1801-1866), Muntau, Molotschna. Peter L. Dueck was a teacher by profession, teaching in the Molotschna village of Gnadenthal, and in the villages of Friedensfeld and Blumenhoff, Borosenko, in Russia. The family settled in Gruenfeld, Manitoba, in 1874, where he again served in this position.<sup>88</sup> He was a well educated intellectual man.<sup>89</sup> Daughter Margaretha E. Loewen married Abram P. Isaac, the son of Johann W. Isaac (1809-1864), Schoenau, Molotschna.<sup>90</sup> In 1874 Abram P. Isaac and his brother, Peter P. Isaac, settled in Schoenau, near the present day Kleefeld, Manitoba.<sup>91</sup> The Abram P. Isaac family lived in the Kleefeld area where many of their descendants are still living today. Abram P. Isaac served for many years as a minister of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite.<sup>92</sup> Son Jakob B. Loewen (1862-1919) moved from Rosenort, Manitoba, to Hillsboro, Kansas, in 1890.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
4	Peter W. Loewen	Jun 17,1825		Aug 26,1887
m	Susanna Enns	Jul 13,1829		Apr 28,1857
5	Susanna Loewen	Jul 13,1847		Sep 18,1852
5	Peter Loewen	Jul 13,1847		May 3,1849
5	Isaac E. Loewen	Jan 16,1850		Mar 2,1925
m	Helena Sawatsky	Dec 19,1854		Aug 11,1872
2m	Kath Friesen	Mar 17,1854	Dec 6,1873	Mar 15,1925
5	Susanna Loewen	Oct 7,1852		Apr 16,1918
m	Peter L. Dueck	Oct 15,1842	Jan 1,1871	Jan 15,1887

2m	Peter R. Reimer	Aug 19,1870	Nov 10,1889	May 20,1946
5	Marg E. Loewen	Mar 16,1855	1875	Sep 27,1930
m	Abram P. Isaac	Dec 31,1852		Mar 10,1938
4	Peter W. Loewen	Jun 17,1825		Aug 26,1887
2m	Aganetha Bartel	Jul 25,1836	Oct 26,1858	Aug 25,1867
5	Peter Loewen	Sep 2,1859		Jul 5,1865
5	Anna Loewen	Nov 2,1860		Mar 24,1862
5	Jacob Loewen	Oct 10,1862		
5	Kath Loewen	Mar 31,1864		Oct 6,1865
5	Peter Loewen	Dec 8,1865		
4	Peter W. Loewen	Jun 17,1825		Aug 26,1887
3m	Katharina Siemens	Jan 26,1838	Jun 15,1869	Jun 26,1871
5	Kath Loewen	Mar 14,1870		May 2,1870
5	Gerhard Loewen	Jun 6,1871		Oct 29,1871
4	Peter W. Loewen	Jun 17,1825		Aug 26,1887
4m	Elisabeth Esau	Apr 4,1829	Jan 6,1874	

4 Son **Cornelius W. Loewen** (1827-1893) married Helena Bartel (1833-1876), the daughter of Jakob Bartel (1808-1872) from Marienthal, Molotschna.<sup>93</sup> Cornelius W. Loewen was an active trader whose diary provides valuable information regarding life in Russia and the early settlement in Manitoba. In 1867 Cornelius Loewen sold his Wirtschaft in the Molotschna for 3400 rubles.<sup>94</sup> The family then moved to Gruenfeld near Borosenko which was founded by the KG in 1867. In 1874 the family emigrated to Manitoba and settled in the village of Gruenfeld where Mrs. Cornelius Loewen died in 1876. Shortly thereafter Cornelius W. Loewen married for the second time to the widow of Rev. Jakob M. Barkman (1824-1875) of Steinbach, and apparently moved to her Wirtschaft in Steinbach.

5 Son **Cornelius B. Loewen** resided in Steinbach, Manitoba, for most of his life and was active in the threshing and lumbering business. After about 1902 he concentrated on his farming ventures and sold his lumber interests to his son Cornelius T. Loewen (1883-1960) who founded the Loewen Millwork window manufacturing enterprise.<sup>95</sup> Cornelius B. Loewen married for the second time to the widow Johan R. Reimer, nee Maria Dueck.<sup>96</sup> Cornelius B. Loewen died in Meade, Kansas, of a heart attack.<sup>97</sup> **Isaac B. Loewen** (1865-1938) married Anna Wiebe (1878-1958).<sup>98</sup> The couple left the Steinbach area in 1901, eventually taking out a homestead in Sunnyslope, Alberta. In 1938 the family returned to Manitoba where he died three months later.<sup>99</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
4	Corn W. Loewen	Jan 11,1827		Nov 10,1893
m	Helena Bartel	Jan 15,1833	Oct 22,1853	Oct 23,1876
5	Corn B. Loewen	Oct 22,1863		Jul 26,1928
m	Anna Toews	Nov 3,1863	1882	Nov 11,1901
2m	Maria Dueck	May 11,1874	Jun 21,1903	Dec 22,1960
5	Isaac B. Loewen	Dec 18,1865	Jul 28,1895	Aug,1938
m	Anna Wiebe	May 6,1878		Sep 26,1958

4 Daughter **Ellisabeth W. Loewen** (1829-1906) married Peter P. Penner (1826-1894), who was a brother to Anna Penner (1822-1907) who married Jakob

Loewen.<sup>100</sup> The family settled in Friedensfeld in the 1860s.<sup>101</sup> When the Cornelius S. Plett family immigrated in 1875, Elisabeth W. Loewen became a surrogate grandmother to the children of her niece, Mrs. Jakob J. Thielmann, nee Sarah L. Plett, who had been sick when her parents immigrated and who died soon thereafter. David J. Thielmann later recalled that his great-aunt had filled the role of grandmother and that they had always gone to the Peter Penner home for Christmas.<sup>102</sup> The Peter P. Penner family remained in Russia where they experienced all the horrors of the Soviet Revolution.

5 Daughter **Katharina L. Penner** married Phillip Isaac who was the son of Phillip Isaac (1825-1859) of Blumenort, Molotschna, a cousin to Johann W. Isaac (1809-1864) whose sons settled in Gruenfeld, Manitoba, in 1874. The Phillip Isaac family lived in Friedensfeld, northwest of Nikopol.<sup>103</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
4	Elis Loewen	Aug 2, 1829		Mar 13, 1906
m	Peter Penner	Aug 14, 1826		Oct 6, 1894
5	Anna Penner			
m	Franz Peters			
5	Elis Penner	Dec 18, 1851		Jun 5, 1935
m	Heinrich Willms		1872	Aug 21, 1884
2m	Peter Funk	Dec 27, 1850		Nov 2, 1929
5	Marg Penner	Jan 1, 1856		Apr 10, 1936
m	Peter Toews			
2m	Abr Thiessen	Aug 26, 1855		
5	Kath Penner			
m	Phillip Isaac			
5	Helena Penner			
m	Jacob Funk			
5	Peter Penner			
m	Anna Dueck			
2m	Marg Isaac			
5	Jacob Penner			

4 Son **Heinrich W. Loewen** (1830-1863) married for the first time to Maria Fast (died 1862), a sister of Johann W. Fast (1837-1924), pioneer publisher and Mennonite Brethren minister of Hillsboro, Kansas.<sup>104</sup> The family lived in Tiegenhagen, Molotschna. After the death of his first wife, Heinrich Loewen married for the second time to Maria Doerksen, and then joined the Ohrloff Gemeinde, which grievously hurt his father.<sup>105</sup> Someone in the KG wrote a twenty-three stanza poem about the pain experienced by his father and his siblings regarding this decision.<sup>106</sup> Heinrich W. Loewen was tragically killed by a bolt of lightning on June 2, 1863, while he was sitting between two close relatives.

5 Son **Heinrich F. Loewen** (1862-1935) was raised by his uncle Jakob W. Fast of Jansen, Nebraska. Heinrich F. Loewen became a minister in 1892. He was a wealthy farmer and moved to Meade, Kansas, in 1907.<sup>107</sup> Heinrich F. Loewen was the patriarch of a large family.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
4	Heinrich W. Loewen	1830		Jun 2, 1863
m	Maria Fast			Oct 27, 1862

5	Heinrich Loewen	Feb 9,1862		May 18,1935
m	Marg Friesen	Feb 21,1860	Jan 11,1882	Mar 19,1897
2m	Maria Doerksen		Feb 22,1899	May 31,1904
3m	Marg Hiebner	Jan 26,1869	Mar 14,1905	Nov 29,1930
4m	Kath Hiebner			
4	Heinrich W. Loewen	1830		Jun 2,1863
2m	Maria Doerksen			
5	Maria Loewen	Feb 16,1864		Feb 19,1921
m	Hein Poetker	Dec 24,1857	Oct 25,1884	Oct 25,1927

4 Son Abraham W. Loewen (1833-1886) married Helena Thiessen (1834-1869). The family lived in the Molotschna village of Alexanderwohl, from where they moved to Hierschau in 1867. After the death of his first wife, Abraham Loewen married Susanna Ratzlaff (1846-1905) who had been working as the family maid. Abraham Loewen was elected as a deacon of the KG in 1866. In 1874 the family settled in Gruenfeld, Manitoba.<sup>108</sup>

5 Son Abraham T. Loewen married Helena P. Isaac, the daughter of Johann W. Isaac of Schoenau. In 1890 they settled in Hochstadt and from there they moved to Alberta in 1902. Daughter Margaretha Loewen (1860-1945) married Peter Baerg (1856-1933), the son of KG minister Peter Baerg (1817-1901) of Kleefeld, Manitoba. Peter Baerg Jr. lived in Swalwell, Alberta, and served as a minister of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite. Daughter Anna T. Loewen married widower Jakob T. Regier and the family lived in Hochstadt where they operated a store for many years. One son of this union, Abraham L. Regier, survived to found a family. He lived in Swalwell, Alberta.<sup>109</sup> Daughter Susanna R. Loewen married Jakob W. Reimer, the son of Heinrich Reimer (1818-1876) of Prangenu, Molotschna, and later of Blumenhof, Manitoba.<sup>110</sup> The family lived in Hochstadt, Manitoba, but by 1908 they had moved to Alberta. Daughter Maria R. Loewen married David L. Toews, the son of Jakob B. Toews, her father's cousin. In the spring of 1904, the David L. Toews family moved to Swalwell, Alberta, and in 1912, they moved on to a new settlement of the Holdeman church at Needles, British Columbia. Sons Johann R. Loewen and Jakob R. Loewen both moved to Swalwell, Alberta. Many of the family of Abraham Loewen (1833-1886), as well as his brother, David Loewen (1836-1915), were members of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
4	Abr W. Loewen	Feb 25,1833		Mar 20,1886
m	Helena Thiessen	Jan 10,1834		May 16,1869
5	Abr T. Loewen	Nov 11,1856		Sep 4,1944
m	Helena Isaac	May 5,1858	Mar 8,1877	Jun 30,1945
5	Marg Loewen	Jan 12,1860		Jan 11,1945
m	Peter Baerg	Nov 2,1856	Feb 11,1879	Jan 23,1933
5	Helena Loewen			
5	Anna Loewen	Aug 7,1862		Jan 4,1897
m	Jacob T. Regier	Jan 31,1861	Jul 6,1890	Jul 26,1916
4	Abr W. Loewen	Feb 25,1833		Mar 20,1886
2m	Susanna Ratzlaff	Sep 18,1846		Nov 23,1905
5	Isaac Loewen	Jan 1872		1872

5	Susanna Loewen	Sep 4,1874		Mar 16,1941
m	Jacob W. Reimer	Oct 28,1873	Aug 4,1895	May 6,1956
5	Maria Loewen	Aug 10,1876		Feb 14,1936
m	David L. Toews	Oct 12,1876	Apr 30,1902	
5	Johann R. Loewen	May 5,1878		
m	Lena Boese	Apr 18,1887	May 8,1906	
5	Jacob R. Loewen	Oct 12,1885		
m	Margaret Toews	Oct 30,1888	Jan 10,1910	Aug 1,1920
2m	Agnes Toews	Dec 15,1890	Sept 27,1921	

4 Son **David W. Loewen** (1836-1915) married **Anna Reimer** (1835-1901), the daughter of **Heinrich Reimer** (1792-1884) of Muntau.<sup>111</sup> The family lived in the village of Lindenau, having apparently taken over the parental farm. Later they moved to the village of Hochfeld, near the Borosenko settlement. In 1874 David Loewen was elected as a song leader of the KG. The family settled in Hochstadt, Manitoba, in 1875 where he was one of largest landowners for many years.<sup>112</sup> In 1902 David Loewen went on an extended trip to Russia to visit family and friends. David Loewen died at the home of his children **Johann Nickels** near Hillsboro, Kansas.<sup>113</sup>

5 Daughter **Margaretha Loewen** (1836-1915) married **Jakob B. Toews** (1855-1938) and the family moved to Swalwell, Alberta.<sup>114</sup> Son **Heinrich R. Loewen** married **Katharina Goossen**, the daughter of **Gerhard P. Goossen** (1832-1872) one time KG minister in Gruenfeld, South Russia. The **Heinrich R. Loewen** family farmed in Fairbanks, Texas, where they both died. They belonged to the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite.<sup>115</sup> Son **Isaac R. Loewen** (1860-1953) lived in Winkler, Manitoba.<sup>116</sup> Son **David R. Loewen** married **Maria T. Regier**, the daughter of **Jakob Regier** and **Anna Toews**. The **David R. Loewen** family settled at Hochstadt, Manitoba. He carried the mail from Steinbach to Grunthal via Chortitz, Kleefeld, and Hochstadt. From here they moved to Swalwell, Alberta, where they farmed. They are both buried at the cemetery in Winton, California.<sup>117</sup> Son **Jakob D. R. Loewen** lived for a time at Hillsboro, Kansas, but by 1912 the family was living in Swalwell, Alberta. Daughter **Helena Loewen** married **Johann Nikkel**. The couple moved to Fairbanks, Texas, from where they moved to Hillsboro, Kansas, in about 1906. They are both buried in the Alexanderfeld cemetery, located 2 miles southwest of Hillsboro.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
4	<b>David Loewen</b>	May 7,1836		Jun 7,1915
m	<b>Anna Reimer</b>	Nov 7,1835		Aug 11,1901
5	<b>Marg Loewen</b>	Aug 19,1856	Jan 25,1876	Feb 14,1948
m	<b>Jakob B. Toews</b>	Mar 5,1855		May 7,1938
5	<b>Loewen</b>			infancy
5	<b>Heinrich Loewen</b>	Apr 16,1859	Jun 24,1883	May 13,1946
m	<b>Katharina Goossen</b>	Nov 9,1864		Mar 17,1843
5	<b>Isaac Loewen</b>	Dec 23,1860	Jun 11, 1862	Apr 20,1953
m	<b>Elisabeth Friesen</b>			Dec 23,1934
5	<b>David R. Loewen</b>	Oct 7,1862	Mar 30,1884	Nov 13,1945
m	<b>Maria Regier</b>	May 1,1863		May 23,1942
5	<b>Loewen</b>			infancy

5	_____ Loewen			infancy
5	Jakob D. R. Loewen	Apr 30,1871		
m	Maria Isaac	1880		May 17,1899
2m	Salom Hunsberger	Jun 7,1890		1909
3m	Sara Friesen	Jun 25,1880		
5	Helena Loewen	Nov 30,1873	May 22,1899	May 20,1938
m	Johann Nikkel	Apr 28,1852		Jul 26,1936
5	Susanna Loewen	Jun 18,1876		

### Endnotes: Isaac Loewen 1787-1873.

1. Henry Schapansky, 914 Chilliwack St., New Westminster, B.C., V3L 4V5, letter to the author January 6, 1992.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Information courtesy of Henry Schapansky.

4. *Ibid.*

5. Benjamin H. Unruh, *Die Niederländisch-niederdeutschen Hintergründe der Mennonitischen Ostwanderungen im 16., 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Karlsruhe, 1955), 311-313.

6. Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims* (Steinbach, Man., 1990), 184-188, provides a detailed account of this family.

7. Peter P. Toews, "Zur Hundertjährigen Erinnerung, im Interesse der Familie Isaak Loewen von Lindenau, Suedrussland," in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph* (Steinbach, Man., 1986), 53-54.

8. Unruh, 311.

9. Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," 184.

10. Peter L. Dueck, "Ein alter Brief aus Vaters alte Bucher und es geht uns auch noch an," in Susanna and Abraham R. Penner, "Family records," 15, unpublished journal and miscellaneous papers, as photocopied by the writer in 1981, 68 pages—courtesy Katherina Wiebe, Steinbach, Manitoba; quoted in Plett, *Plett Picture Book* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1981), 8.

11. Peter P. Toews, "Zur Hundertjährigen Erinnerung, im Interesse der Familie Isaak Loewen von Lindenau, Suedrussland," 53-54.

12. The 1835 Molotschna census is courtesy of the Mennonite Heritage Centre, 800 Schafesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Manitoba, August 16, 1993.

13. For information regarding her ancestry, see Plett, "Wiens families in the Kleine Gemeinde," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 493-496.

14. Peter L. Dueck, "Ein alter Brief aus Vaters alte Buecher und es geht uns auch noch an,"

15. Peter L. Dueck (1842-1887) was married to Susanna Loewen (1852-1918), the granddaughter of Isaac Loewen.

15. As cited by Dr. Royden K. Loewen, "Family, Church and Market: A History of a Mennonite Community Transplanted from Russia to Canada and the United States 1850-1930" (Doctoral dissertation, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1991), 33-34.

16. Rev. Johann Dueck, "Ministerial Journal 1848-1862," published in Chapter two, Part Eight, courtesy of Levi Dueck, Box 25, R.R. 1, Morris, Manitoba, ROG 1KO, October 30, 1989.

17. *Ibid.*

18. Cornelius W. Loewen, "Journal," unpublished ledger—courtesy Archives of The Evangelical Mennonite Conference, 440 Main St., Steinbach, Manitoba.

19. Cornelius W. Loewen has recorded that on November 24, 1858, he borrowed 61 ruble and 55 kopek silver from David Loewen, Lindenau, which would indicate that he was already fairly well established by that time in order to be able to make such a loan. Cornelius W. Loewen, "Journal."

20. Peter L. Dueck, "Ein alter Brief aus Vaters alte Buecher und es geht uns auch noch an," 15.

21. Johann Dueck, "Ministerial Journal 1848-1862."

22. Aeltester Johann F. Friesen, letter February 1866, in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 171.

23. Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," 186.

24. Aeltester Peter P. Toews, *Sammlung von Briefen und Schriftliche Nachrichten zur Historie der Kleinen Gemeinde der Mennoniten* (Blumenhoff, South Russia, 1874), iv.

25. See Gerhard J. Thielman, ed., *Plettentag am 2 Juli 1945* (Blumenort, Manitoba, 1945), 43; see also Peter L. Dueck letter referred to in Plett, *Plett Picture Book*, 9 and 13.

26. Cornelius W. Loewen, "Journal."

27. The foregoing details are based on a comment by Aeltester Peter P. Toews, *Sammlung . . . zur Historie der Kleinen Gemeinde der Mennoniten*, quoted in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 157-158.

28. *Ibid.*, 158.

29. The letters in Chapter Three are contained in the Peter P. Toews, Document Collection, Mennonite Library and Archives, North Newton, Kansas, deposited by Professor Clarence Hiebert of Tabor College. The primary translation of the writings in Part Three was completed by Peter U. Dueck and Rev. Ben Hoepfner of Steinbach in 1988. The writer also wishes to acknowledge a grant from the C. P. Loewen Family Foundation to the Hanover Steinbach Historical Society Inc. in 1988 which funded the completion of translation of this valuable work.

30. This letter was previously published in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 41-44.

31. Isaac Friesen (1834-1980) was married to Maria Toews (1834-1898), a cousin to Aeltester Peter P. Toews (1841-1922). Plett, "Cornelius Toews Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874* (Steinbach, Man., 1987), 229. Isaac Friesen was the grandfather of Gordon Friesen, author of *The Flamethrowers* (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Press, 1936).

32. Letter One in Chapter Four came from the collection of writings written by Isaac Loewen (1787-1873) regarding the death of his son Heinrich. This "book" contains a preface and three letters, and consists of 78 pages of material written in an artistic and firm handwriting. This manuscript was deposited at Mennonite Library and Archives, Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas (possibly by the descendants of Heinrich Loewen), from where the author received a copy on February 10, 1981. The primary translation of the writings in this journal were completed by Dr. Solomon Loewen, Hillsboro, Kansas, in 1985.

33. Letter Two comes from the Peter Toews letter collection on file at Mennonite Library and Archives, North Newton, Kansas. Primary translation completed by Peter U. Dueck and Rev. Ben Hoepfner, Steinbach, Manitoba, in 1989.

34. Letter Three was handed down to Aeltester David P. Reimer (1894-1963), the son of Maria L. Plett. David P. Reimer in turn gave the letter to his son-in-law, Martin P. Penner of Ridgewood near Steinbach, who gave a copy to the writer in 1981. This letter was previously published in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 224-225.

35. Much of the information in this section is based on a similar survey published in 1981 in Plett, *Plett Picture Book*, 8-9.

36. Dr. Solomon Loewen, *The Descendants of Isaac Loewen* (Meade, Kansas: Peter E. Loewen, 1961), approximately 520 pages.

37. Henry Schapansky, letter to the author October 10, 1992.

38. Jakob W. Friesen (1892-1981), Kleefeld, Manitoba, unpublished family records, 1. Mr. Friesen writes that Peter W. Loewen (1852-1919) of Blumenort, Manitoba, was a first cousin to his grandfather, Jakob P. Wiebe (1829-1901), who also grew up in Schoenau; cf. Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," 190-191. This would mean that the father of Anna Wiebe (1819-1856) was an older brother to Jacob Wiebe (1799-1856), the patriarch of the Blumenort, Manitoba, Wiebes; see Frank P. Wiebe, *Jakob Wiebe, Schoenau, Molotschna, Province Taurien, South Russia, 1799-1856* (Mount Lehman, B. C., 1966), 96 pages.

39. "Wahl-liste," ministerial election records, as quoted by Aeltester Peter P. Toews, "Sammlung . . . zur Historie der Kleinen Gemeinde der Mennoniten," 319, quoted in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 157-158.

40. Susanna and Abraham R. Penner, "Family records," 15; cf. Johann W. Dueck, "Historie und Begebenheiten . . .", Plett ed., *History and Events* (Steinbach, Man., 1982), 89, describes how Jakob Wiebe (1799-1856)--the uncle to Anna Wiebe--died of this disease in 1856.

41. Dr. Royden K. Loewen, farmer and historian of Blumenort, Manitoba, is their great-great grandson.

42. Plett, *Plett Picture Book*, 36-37.

43. Susanna and Abraham R. Penner, "Family records," 5 and 21. The source has two separate references which state that there were seven Isaac Loewens in the line; cf. Isaac P. Loewen, quoted in Gerhard J. Thielman, ed., *Plettentag am 2 Juli 1945* (Blumenort, Manitoba, 1945), 43, states that he was the sixth in the line of Isaac Loewens and that he broke the line when he did not name his oldest son Isaac.

44. John U. Loewen, Blumenort, Manitoba, farmer and former Reeve of the Rural Municipality of Hanover is a grandson of Peter W. Loewen (1852-1919).

45. Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 401.

46. Alfred H. Redekopp, *Jakob Thielmann and Helena Kroeker A Family History and Genealogy of their Descendants* (Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1987), 99-114. Professor Harry Loewen of the University of Winnipeg, is their great-great grandson. Since the age of Maria Loewen is not known she has been arbitrarily placed between brothers Isaac and Peter W. Loewen, in the listing of children.

47. Susanna and Abraham R. Penner, "Family records," 16.

48. Plett, "Cornelius Toews Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 223-225, has more information regarding this family. Elisabeth Toews (1796-1861) was the aunt of Aeltester Peter P. Toews (1841-1922).

49. *Rundschau*, 1913, courtesy of Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba, quoted in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 224.

50. Peter L. Dueck, as transcribed by daughter Susanna Dueck Penner; see Susanna and Abraham R. Penner, "Family records," 15.

51. Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 220.

52. They are the forebears of all the Holdeman Froese families. The children of Franz Froese (1825-1913) were first cousins to Mrs. Johann A. Fast, nee Marie Regier (1854-1935) of Goessel, Marion County, Kansas. Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," 209. According to a letter of Alice Fast Kuenstig, 3001 Don Ray Dr., Jefferson City, Mo., 65109, dated April 30, 1991, Marie Regier (1854-1935) was the daughter of Abraham Regier (1813-1872) and Elisabeth Froese (1820-1896).

53. Plett, "Johann Harms Genealogy 1771," Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 395.

54. Helena Jahnke, "Lineage of my grandparents Klaas Friesens, born in West Prussia," Plett, ed, *Profile 1874*, 211.

55. Cornelius L. Toews, *Cornelius P. Toews, 1836-1908* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1973), 85 pages. Norman Toews, owner of Growsir Stores in Steinbach, is their great-grandson.

56. Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 402.

57. John R. Goossen et.al., *Gerhard Goossen Family Book Born 1811 Died 1874* (Rosenort, Manitoba, 1981), 8.

58. Gerhard G. Kornelsen, "Steinbach, then and now," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 258.

59. Albert H. Hiebert and John H. Toews, compilers, *The Family of Johann Hiebert 1816-1975* (Hillsboro, Kansas, 1975), 125 pages. Gilbert Toews, former International dealer in Steinbach, is their grandson.

60. Telephone interview with Alfred Toews, Steinbach, Manitoba, December 27, 1991.

61. Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 473-474.

62. Royden K. Loewen, *Blumenort: A Mennonite Community in Transition* (Blumenort, Manitoba, 1983), 320.

63. An English translation has been published in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 179-224.

64. Royden K. Loewen, 293-294.

65. Abraham B. Klassen, "Life's Experiences," in Plett, ed, *Profile 1874*, 173-185.

66. Albert H. Hiebert and John H. Toews, 45-71.

67. Dr. Solomon Loewen, *History and Genealogy of the Jakob Loewen Family* (Hillsboro, Kansas, 1983), 208, contains detailed information on this branch of the Loewen family.

68. They were the great-grandparents of Kenneth Reddig, currently Archivist of the Manitoba Provincial Archives, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

69. Additional information on the Plett family is contained in Plett, *Plett Picture Book* (Steinbach, 1981), 159 pages; Gerhard J. Thielmann, *Plettentag am 2 Juli 1945* (Blumenort, Manitoba, 1945), 52 pages; and Aeltester David P. Reimer, *Familienregister der Nachkommen von Groszeltern Cornelius and Sarah Plett* (Blumenort, 1953), 140 pages.

70. Plett, "Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 241-242.

71. Their great-grandsons now owned Westfield Industries, Rosenort, Manitoba, a large manufacturer of augers and other farm implements.

72. His son Heinrich E. Plett (1870-1953) founded Plettville in Blumenort, Manitoba, and left over 2,000 descendants by 1992. Royden K. Loewen, *Blumenort: A Mennonite Community in transition* (Blumenort, Manitoba, 1983), has a great deal of additional information regarding all the families who settled in the Blumenort, Blumenhof, and Neuanlage/Twincreek area north of Steinbach.

73. Alfred Redekopp, 9-10.

74. Alfred Redekopp, the author of the Thielmann family book, is their great-grandson.

75. They were the parents of two Bishops of the Kleine Gemeinde, namely, Peter P. Reimer (1877-1949) and David P. Reimer (1894-1963).

76. Jonas Toews, ed., *Henry E. Wohlgermuth Family Book* (Rosenort, Manitoba, 1991), 78.

77. Plett, "Koop families in the Kleine Gemeinde," unpublished paper, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1992, has additional information regarding Johann M. Koop (1831-1896).

78. See Plett, *Plett Picture Book* for additional information.

79. Source for the birthdate of Cornelius S. Plett (1820-1900) is the "Seelenlisten for the village of Blumenhof" submitted to the Rural Municipality of Hanover in 1881; published in John Dyck, ed., *Working Papers of the East Reserve Village Histories 1874-1910* (Steinbach, Man.: Hanover Steinbach Historical Society Inc., 1990), 160.

80. Gertrude Klassen, et al., *Family Book David and Aganetha Klassen 1813-1900* (Rosenort, Manitoba, 1974), 132.

81. Lenore Eidse, ed., *Furrows in the Valley. The Rural Municipality of Morris 1880-1980* (Morris, Manitoba, 1981), 442-445.

82. For a genealogy of the Enns family, see Plett, "Cornelius Enns Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 247-252.

83. Johann W. Dueck, "Historie und Begebenheiten . . .", 104-105.

84. Although there is no evidence at this point, it is believed that Aganetha Bartel (1836-1867) was probably related to the other Bartels in the Kleine Gemeinde. See Plett, "Johann Bartel 1796-1837," unpublished paper, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1992.

85. Susanna and Abraham R. Penner, "Family records," 7.

86. Plett, "Abraham von Riesen (1756-1810) Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 275.

87. Plett, "Gerhard Schellenberg Genealogy 1725-1802," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 442.

88. An extensive account of this family has been provided by son Johann W. Dueck, "Historie und Begebenheiten . . .", 93-126.

89. Two of his writings have been published in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 541-544.

90. Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," 206-207.

91. All of which is described in some detail in Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," written by brother Peter P. Isaac, and also in the memoirs of Abram P. Isaac himself, namely, Abraham P. Isaac, "Reminiscences of the past," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 171-177.

92. F. L. Isaac and Dan F. Isaac, *The Family Tree of Abraham Isaak 1852-1938* (Kleefeld, Manitoba, 1985), 51 pages.

93. Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 476 and 489, has additional information on the Bartel family.

94. Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 13-15, contains extracts from Cornelius W. Loewen's diary. Regrettably Cornelius W. Loewen (1827-1893) has not recorded the name of the village where they lived in the Molotschna.

95. For additional information on this family see Abe Warkentin, *Reflections on Our Heritage: A History of Steinbach and the R. M. of Hanover from 1874* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1971), 42-43, and elsewhere.

95. Peter H. Duock, et.al., *Abraham L. and Elizabeth Duock and their Descendants* (Kleefeld, Manitoba, 1965), pages 41-46.

97. Elizabeth Giesbrecht, "Life History of Father C. B. Loewen," published in *Memoir of Gerhard F. Giesbrecht* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1966), 13-14, no author or editor given,

98. She was the daughter of Steinbach pioneers Johann Wiebe (1841-1909) and Maria Neufeld (1840-1921); see Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 56; cf. Gerhard G. Kornelsen, "Steinbach, then and now," 256.

99. For additional information and a photograph of this family, see Mary Davis, "Mr. Isaac Bartel Loewen," in H. Gratz, ed., *Footprints on Mi-Chig-Win, Memoirs of the Sunnyslope Pioneers* (Sunnyslope, Alberta, n.d.), 339-341.

100. These siblings were the children of Anna Dick and Peter Penner, from Prangenu. He was a one-time KG minister; see Dr. Solomon Loewen, *History and Genealogy of the Jakob Loewen Family*, 16; cf. Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 293.

101. Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 195.

102. David J. Thielmann, letter for the Plett gathering, written March 25, 1945, and published in Gerhard J. Thielmann and David P. Reimer, editors, *Pletttag am 2 Juli 1945* (Steinbach, 1945), 27.

103. Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," 181.

104. Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 478.

105. Aeltester Peter P. Toews, "Sammlung . . . zur Historie der Kleinen Gemeinde der Mennoniten," quoted in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 157-158.

106. This poem is found in Heinrich Reimer, "Familienbuch," Muntau, Molotschna, unpublished journal, 285-290. This poem has been translated by Rev. Ben Hoepfner, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1993.

107. Henry N. Fast, "The Kleine Gemeinde in the United States of America," Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 108.

108. Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," 201-205.

109. Jakob G. Friesen and Frank P. Wiebe, *The Family Tree of Jakob Regehr 1832-1906* (Kleefeld, Manitoba, 1969), 25-28.

110. Plett, "Heinrich Reimer 1791-1884 Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 241-242.

111. Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 239-245.

112. *Ibid.*, 67.

113. A small booklet was published in 1911 to commemorate the 75th birthday of David Loewen (1836-1915). No author cited, *Jubilaemus=Hefte zum 75ten Jahresfelle des Groszvaters David Loewen* (Kleefeld, Manitoba, 1911), 9 pages.

114. Frank T. Barkman, et.al., *Jakob B. Toews Family Ledger 1855-1938* (Swalwell, Alberta, 1982), 127 pages.

115. John R. Goossen, et.al., 9-10.

116. Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 442.

117. Frank G. Friesen and Frank P. Wiebe, 31-32.

# Chapter Two

## Writings 1863

Writings of Isaac Loewen (1787-1873), Molotschna Colony, South Russia, to his son, Heinrich Loewen (1830-1863), Tiegenhagen, Molotschna, and his daughter-in-law, nee Maria Doerksen.

---

### Preface.

After I had completed my letter to you, beloved children - which came from an overflowing heart (Matt. 12:34) and which I did not write without a good reason - I gave much thought and reflected as to whether the writing would not seem too harsh for you in certain respects. Then I considered everything carefully in light of the present misleading time, which is so full of temptations and horrible deceptions for the soul. At the same time, my beloved, I wanted it to be for the very best of your souls; and in view of the seriousness of the matter, I - for myself - thought that it had been expressed neither too severely nor too harshly, and that it was in harmony with the Word of God. I am also mindful of what Paul says in 1 Timothy chapter 4, verse 1, "The Spirit explicitly says that in latter times some will fall away from the faith, paying heed to deceitful spirits and doctrines and demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy."

Now take note, my son, surely you will have experienced some of these matters for yourself, if you really consider it and call to mind the impudent and shameless acts, done without reproof or shame, either before man and much less before God. Likewise the playing of musical instruments has now made inroads among many people. They have found so much pleasure in this that even elderly and respected individuals have played for the entertainment of their younger members, to give pleasure to them and to foster their fleshly lusts. Some of these are already walking in error and speak arrogant words of vanity (2 Pet. 2:18). Now let us consider what Paul says in 1 Corinthians chapter 10, verse 31, "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." Now then, can the aforementioned activities concerning fleshly deeds, contribute to the glory of God, and that out of faith? I would think not. Well, and if not? To this one might well answer that it could really only bring honour to our evil enemy and that it would only contribute to the building up of his kingdom.

As you yourself have often said, the first and most perilous reason which can be seen as dangerous for you, and that you were so much alone and away from our people, is foremostly as follows: You trusted too much in your own nature and you allowed yourselves to become too involved and went along with others in conforming to the world in certain points contrary to the teaching of the apostle in Romans 12. Also, you have been deceived by sweet words and fashionably contrived speeches by those who have a form of godliness, and who are of those who worm their way into homes, yet being laden with sins (2 Tim. 3), and among

whom you were often found yourself. Among these are also deceiving foxes dressed in sheep's clothing, whom one cannot easily distinguish and who harm the vines in the Lord's vineyard, so that they do not bear fruit (John 15).

Now then, beloved, two ways are set before us in the Holy Scriptures, as the Lord Jesus Himself says in Matthew 7, verses 13 and 14, ". . . The gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction. The gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life. . . ." In Isaiah chapter 5, verse 14, it is also stated, "Therefore hell has also opened its mouth wide to devour nobility and the rebel shall descend into it." Someone once asked the Lord Jesus whether only a few would be saved. However, He said unto them, ". . . strive to enter, for many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able" (Luke 13:23). In Matthew chapter 11, verse 12, the Lord Jesus says, "The kingdom of heaven suffers violence and violent men take it by force." From this one can clearly understand - at least, according to my humble understanding, that no one can enter into the kingdom of God without forcefully putting one's nature and human understanding into submission. Paul also says, ". . . every thought must be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."

Now my dear son, if you still have some spiritual insight and feeling, and if you would consider the few citations I have given with an impartial heart and mind in the light of the Holy Scripture, I do hope that you will take notice and become aware as to the road which you have taken, whether it be the wide one on which you can travel without hinderness, or the narrow one which requires that we crucify the flesh and its lusts and cravings. Eternal death is promised to those who walk in the ways of sin.

In conclusion of my short preface, I beg you, dear children, in heartfelt love, that you receive and consider this humble and modest writing with a childlike sincerity and love for your own souls, and that you might receive and consider the same for your father's sake, in the way that I have intended it, in fatherly love and concern. So then read it meditatively and with an impartial mind and well-disposed heart.

#### **First Letter.**

Dearly beloved children, Heinrich Loewen and your beloved wife,

I, your father, have experienced much sorrow and sadness since the time of your marriage. When I think of your situation, my beloved son, this has seldom occurred without tears. Nor did I know how I would be able to attain peace of mind in this regard, until I finally decided to write something to you, my beloved children, as shall follow here:

Nehmts doch in Dank, O liebe Kinder mein,  
obschon es ist sehr schlecht, gering und klein;  
so kommt es doch aus Vaterlieb getrieben,  
Dieweil ich euch aus Herzensgrund thu lieben,  
so wuensch ich euch das Ew'ge seel'ge Leben,  
Dient's euch zur Lehr, wollt Gott die Ehre geben.

Oh, my dear children, accept with thanks  
Though my writing be only humble and low,  
for it comes with a father's love and kiss,

I love you with all my heart and soul,  
and I wish you, eternal life and bliss,  
if this serves for a lesson,  
may God receive the blessing.

Oh, my beloved children, I pray that you might read these humble lines with deep meditation, and above all, that you might carefully mirror yourselves in God's Word to consider and examine your innermost being with truly impartial hearts and minds. The way Isaiah says, "Seek out of the book of the Lord and read: no one shall have lack; neither this nor that will be missing" (Isaiah 34:16). Jesus says, "Search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39, 1 Tim. 4:13). Peter says, "We have a more sure word of prophecy, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place."

Ah, yes, beloved, if only you will give heed to the word of the Lord, when you are reading the Holy Scriptures for the edification of your souls. For then, by God's grace, it will surely shine in your darkened hearts and enlighten them. Therefore read devoutly in the Holy Scriptures, the Menno Simon's book, the *Martyrs' Mirror*, and the other books written by nonresistant Christians and by men who love the truth. Read these writings and study them. In these days there are many new writings which have been published which are written in the spirit of the modern times, which are, however, not all in accordance with the spirit of Christ. These books are available in great quantities and are zealously being read by many. For years already these writings have caused great disturbances - in matters of faith - amongst us Mennonites. Solomon has also warned against the reading of many books, saying, "Be warned, my son, of anything in addition to them. Of making many books there is no end" (Eccl. 12:12).

So, my beloved, if only you would read the Holy Scriptures with an impartial mind and spirit, as your one and only guide and thereupon to establish your conduct of life so that you might, in all humility and obedience to God's Word, walk in the way of godliness which leads unto eternal life. For Jesus has gone on before us and He says to us, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no one can come to the Father but by me" (John 14:6).

Yes, dear children, I have waited a considerable time for a visit from you, with a heart full of longing. If I could at least hear, oh, my son, that you - together with your dear wife - had been to visit among some of your brothers and sisters, but I have not yet been able to hear of any such visits. Alas, indeed, my beloved, it appears that on account of you I must lament with Jerusalem and say, "O Lord, behold; for I am in distress: my bowels are troubled; mine heart is turned within me; . . . for I am deeply saddened" (Lamentation 1:20).

Oh, indeed, my dear children, in fatherly love and sincerity, I am compelled from the depths of my heart to remind you and to exhort you. It might very well be the last time - be this at an appropriate season or otherwise - for it is not my expectation to be here much longer. Oh, my dear son, I am fearful lest you have not merely grown cold in spiritual love as a limb torn from the body, the Gemeinde, which is the body of Christ, for it seems to me that you have actually grown cold and died with respect to your natural love towards your blood relatives, such as father, brothers, sisters and the children of your siblings. It seems that you

are so aloof and disinterested toward us. Oh, Lord, how is it possible that the enemy can be so successful at bewitching people with a thirst for the love of the world.

Or, on the other hand, are you perhaps ashamed about your misdeeds, so that this is the reason for keeping yourselves aloof from us all? I know that you are not ignorant of our situation and sometimes I wonder if perhaps you are afraid that your conscience will convict you and that it might reproach you to some extent if you were to visit us? Oh, I ask you to forgive me and not to hold anything against me that I may not have done or said exactly the way you feel it to be right. For I am writing according to the burden on my heart, inasmuch as it concerns the events which have taken place, and as I perceive the same in accordance with the Holy Scripture.

I am doing this out of sincere love and with an earnest mind. Perhaps I might provoke you to good works (Heb. 10:15). Similarly, Paul says in Hebrews chapter 3, verse 7, "So as the Holy Spirit says: Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts" (Heb. 3:7f). Oh, if only the latter were the case with you; namely, the shame of your fall. For if you love your souls, I would therefore expect that you would do that which is necessary to be done for this end, and surely the Lord would be merciful unto you. Therefore, do come and visit us, for none of us would approach you with malice. On the contrary, we would much more rejoice and take courage that we might again become children, brothers, and sisters, in the spirit of the Lord, and that all of us together might be diligent and strive to do His will; for surely those who only say, "Lord, Lord!", will not enter the kingdom (Matt 7:21). I pray to the Lord with the words of the song writer in song number 188, stanza 4 and 5:

Das er uns woll, durch sein' Barmherzigkeit  
Und Heiligen Geist stets leiten und regieren;  
Damit wir seinen Namen wuerdig fuehren;  
Und auch sein Reich bei uns werd ausgebreit't  
Das auch sein Will bei uns recht thaetig sei,  
gleich wie er wird vollzogen in dem Himmel  
Und das er, weil wir in dem Weltgetuemmel  
Noch Leben, unser taeglich Brot verleiht.

That He would, through His mercy and Holy Spirit,  
Guide us and control us;  
So that we bear His name worthily,  
Thus we His Kingdom do extend far and near.  
That His will be truly done in us,  
Just as it is done in heaven  
And that, while we live in this world of turmoil,  
He would supply us with our daily bread.

Oh, yes, my dearly beloved son, there is something else which weighs heavily on my mind. What if your mother should open her eyes and see her son! I am so deeply moved at the thought of this that I can hardly think about it without tears - and this happens often. What if it were possible that she could once again lift up

her eyes from the grave and behold her (third) youngest son leading the way, followed by the precious children which are entrusted to him - once they have become older - and altogether walking in the ways of the world, in liberty, pomp, splendour, and whatever else can be found on the broad road? Oh, indeed, how shocked she would be, and what heartfelt sadness and sorrow she would feel, if she would think of all the anxiety, fear, concern, trouble and shedding of tears, and the great pain and torment, that she had experienced - night and day, as she brought you into the world. But only by the gracious help, love and mercy of God. She would now have to see her beloved son hastening on the broad road unto eternal destruction.

Oh, how often the two of us - your mother and I, have reminded ourselves of our gratitude toward our all-wise Creator, that our inherently good God has permitted us - as totally unworthy as we are - to experience His great mercy, and that we were able to raise up our dear children during our life time and to live together with them all - although only according to our weakness - in spiritual fellowship, in peace and in love, as one with the Gemeinde. And in so far as we are aware, that our dear children, with their beloved spouses, are also living together in love, peace and harmony. For this, we give praise, honour and thanks to our God of grace! But oh, my beloved, the sorrow and heartfelt pain that I must undergo on your behalf! Your mother has escaped this through her untimely death. For me, however, this frequently becomes a depressing thought in my mind, if perhaps, I have become guilty because of my sins, and that this is the reason for what is happening to me, and that I have to undergo such heartfelt sorrow in my old days. Oh, if only the Lord would grant that all of this might work out for my best! But now, my son, behold and observe what Sirach says, "Whoever forsakes his father, will suffer shame; and whoever grieves his mother, shall be cursed." What a sad and terrible statement for the one to whom this is applicable.

Oh, son, I say again, think of the children which the Lord has entrusted to you as a precious responsibility and in respect of whom you will have to give an account on the last Day. Be mindful, also of what your deceased wife said on her sickbed, as she reminded you of her and your children as little orphans, saying - as you yourself related it to me - that you should accept the children and take care of them as a father and raise them. The way you are doing it now, however, is not what she meant. An ancient teacher, Peter Peters, has said, "That it was a great abomination before God, if children are sacrificed through fire to the God Moloch, or if parents knowingly and wilfully permitted their children to starve to death."

Truly one would consider this to be a great cruelty. Peters, however, says, "Are those doing any better, who bring up their children in the world in lust, pride and all kinds of vain things?" Are these any better? I think it is far worse, for they are leading their children to the devil. A life of fleshly lusts ends with an eternal death. We see this in the parable of the rich man, of whom no other evil thing was said by the Lord Jesus to His disciples, but that he clothed himself in costly apparel and lived gaily in splendour every day. Jesus also mentioned a poor man who died and was buried and was carried into the lap of Abraham by an angel. The rich man also died and was buried. Being in hell (hades) and in torment, the rich man "lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far away; and he called and said: "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, for I am in anguish in these flames." But Abraham said: "Son remember that during your lifetime you received your good

things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted and you are being tormented" (Luke 16). This is a noteworthy parable and a warning against all pride, splendour and arrogance. I concur with the poet who wrote song number 302, stanzas 7 to 9, which state as follows:

v. 7 Denn weil aus Hoffart, Zank and Neid,  
Uns alles Unglueck ruehret,  
So wird Unsegen jederzeit,  
Und Fluch dabei gespueret.  
Da man misbraucht Gewalt und Gut.

v. 8 Durch hohe Augen, stolze Wort'  
Und praechtige Gebaerden;  
in was fuer Stand, and welchen Ort,  
Die immer finden werden,  
Wird angedeutet, dass dabei  
Ein aufgeblasen Herz auch sei,  
An dem Gott hat ein Greuel.

v. 9 Wohl aber dem, der oft erwaegt,  
Dass man hier Gottes Gaben,  
In irdischen Gefaessen traegt,  
Die grosse Schwachheit haben.  
Der ist demuettig ueberall.  
Dass er nicht wie der Satan fall'  
Durch Hoffart in Verdammnis.

Furthermore, my son, let me refer to a discussion that took place while you were in the company of a number of our neighbours, where reference was apparently made to your marriage. They had said that both of you should leave our Gemeinden and come over to theirs. In this way neither one of you would have your own way. Alas, even then already you were being introduced to such an ephemeral flattery. Accordingly, one may conclude that you were influenced hereby and later followed this advice. At that time I thought it was said only in fun and I did not really suspect anything bad on your part. But on the day after the wedding at your neighbour's place you fell in love with and became a friend of the world and the imitation thereof, and committed yourself unto its vain and dissolute company, of whom Isaiah speaks in chapter 5, verse 11, ". . . they pursue strong drink . . . till wine inflames them."

Then all sorts of pranks and foolish things are committed in the course of excessive drinking which are not becoming of a Christian. You joined them and took part in all of this. You are also aware of what Paul says in Romans chapter 1, verse 32, after he has listed a number of vices, "That, although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only do them, but also have pleasure in them that do them." Consequently you were conscience-stricken and convicted that you had not done right and that you could not stand before God and the Gemeinde; and since you had become a friend of the world, you also knew that you had become God's enemy, according to 1 John

chapter 2, verses 15,16; and that the Spirit, Who teaches rightly, had departed from you, according to Ecclesiasticus chapter 1, verse 6. Following this you took refuge with those who had formerly flattered and falsely comforted you in your misfortune, and who had assured you of your salvation. Then you and your beloved decided to set the engagement date thereby heaping the second sin upon yourself, and whereby you had committed a double wrong. For this you ought to have honestly repented before God, in whose sight you have sinned so grievously. Such a repentance would have been a thousand times better for your soul than the turning to those, as mentioned above, who comforted you falsely. Thus, you brought upon yourself the harm of your soul and the danger of destruction. I am not referring to those who meant well or those who are not guilty in this matter.

But, oh, how sad! I had no idea that the men in whom I had such a good confidence thus far, and with whom I often spoke, would do this. I had thought better of them. How pitiful and sad! There are still such men who are so willing to take members who have fallen into sin into their protection, and thereby to bring the holy ordinances of God into complete disrepute. Oh, if they had only left it up to the Gemeinde to consider the matter and to make a judgement regarding your sinful wrongdoing. For the watch over your soul has been entrusted unto the Gemeinde, together with the ordinance of the ban, which our beloved Saviour has commanded us to practice with love. The same is to be implemented for the edification of the sinner and his conversion, but only after careful consideration of the matter. In this way your soul could still be saved through the grace of God. Oh, by turning to God in true remorse, repentance, and humility, you might have been converted and returned back to the Gemeinde. But unfortunately and to your soul's greatest harm, you have been falsely deceived and led upon the broad road (Matt 7:14). The main reason for this evil is probably that just like Dinah, you had given yourself out upon the open field; that is, you dismissed the assembly and the Gemeinde from heart and mind, whereby you were put to shame before God and the world.

Oh, my dear son, as already stated above, in no wise do I like to express myself in this manner regarding such an important matter. I would much rather put my hand over my mouth and remain silent. Now, however, it concerns you, my children, and I cannot but uncover this deception of your soul and bring it to your attention in as much as is possible, as it has to do with the eternal condemnation. Indeed, I wish and pray in spirit and mind that our God, Who is truly kind, in His profound grace and goodness, might be merciful to you and soften and break your heart, so that you, like Saul who was later called Paul, in fear and trembling, would earnestly plead, "Lord, what is it that you want me to do?" (Acts. 9). I pray that upon your remorse and repentance, the Lord might grant you grace to acknowledge His holy truth, so that you could come to a true understanding of the everlasting and eternal truths, and that it might be sufficient for the salvation of your souls. I also wish that together with the prodigal son, you might beat upon your breasts, and that with a repentant heart you could cry out the words with which the well-known songwriter addresses the heavenly Father, namely, from stanzas 10 to 12 in song number 107:

v. 10 - Ja, du hast gar teuer geschworen,  
Dass niemand soll sein verloren,

Der, der Suendenschuld erkennt,  
Sich zu Christi Leiden wend't.  
Wer im Glauben Christum fasset,  
Sich selbst, Welt und Sunde hasset,  
Richtet Freud' im Himmel an,  
Weil er wahre Buss' getan.

v. 11 - Drum, auf solch dein Wort und Schwoeren  
Will ich, Vater, wiederkehren.  
Vater, nimm mich auf in Huld,  
Rechne nicht die alte Schuld!  
Der den Schaecher und Manasse  
Nicht verzweifeln wollen lassen;  
Mitten in dem Suendenlauf,  
Nimm mich auch in Gnaden auf.

v. 12 - Wenn ich meine Suend' beweine,  
Mir im Gnadenblick erscheine,  
Petri gleich und Magdalen',  
Lass mich auch vom Fall aufstehn,  
Dass ich kuenftig besser wandle,  
Mit Zachaeo redlich handle,  
Und dich nicht zum Zorn beweg',  
Auf dem alten Suendensteg.

Before I proceed further with my writing, I should relate something about your notification to our Gemeinde. In your report to the Gemeinde, my dear son, you write that you had already been received into the Halbstadt-Ohrloffter Gemeinde on the preceding Sunday. However, on the next following Tuesday you still did not know whether you had been received or not. In case you had not been accepted, Ohm Heinrich Enns had notified you to come to Fischau on Friday. Some of your fellow brethren said that you had not been received on the Sunday. There are also eye and ear witnesses who saw and heard that you were presented to the brethren in the church, as well as your wrong doing. Whereupon the brethren had said that you should first make matters right with the Gemeinde. They did not approve your acceptance at the time, and thereafter the meeting adjourned. According to my humble judgement this is an unusual form of acceptance.

My beloved children, now that you have entered into the state of matrimony, it is my heartfelt plea and advice to you, that you be diligent and strive, in as much as is possible, through the help and support of God, to seek peace, harmony and love one with another. Strive particularly after that godly peace and love, without which no one will see the Lord. Indeed, I say, love one another. Oh, do endeavour at all times not to do anything that is contrary to the other, for you are now united with each other for as long as God grants you life (Eph. 5). This is my sincere wish and desire for you, my dear children.

And now, my beloved daughter-in-law, I direct myself especially to you with a few words, for I love you just as much as I love my son, since you have both

become one flesh through the mystery of matrimony, according to Ephesians 5. Therefore you are also my daughter, for married couples are so closely joined together. The bond between them supersedes the natural love and obedience that children owe to their parents. The married couple must leave father and mother and cleave to each other as they are become one flesh. Oh, beloved, as your dear husband in love toward you - through temporal love - had become tired and weary in the struggle against sin and gained a greater love for you than for Jesus, our Saviour and Lord, he did not take to heart or consider what the Lord Jesus Himself says, "He who loves anything more than me is not worthy of me." This in spite of the vows of obedience which he had made to the Gemeinde, and his covenant to God to remain true unto the end.

Oh, my dear daughter, I have a good confidence in you that if your dear husband had remained steadfast, as he stated in the letter which he wrote to you with respect to your marriage, that you both might pray to God for a virtuous marriage partner, and that He would grant that both of you would be of one mind in the faith. I had hoped that God would have articulated your hearts so that your marriage would have taken place in the Lord and that you might have recommitted yourselves and have promised anew, your faithful obedience unto God, the Lord, in the manner indicated in your husband's writing to you. Then he would not have had to break the vow of obedience which he had made with God, nor forsaken and turned his back to the Gemeinde. Oh, behold, this was a great fall for him and a very great loss for his soul! Our faith has its foundation in the obedience to His holy word, by which we will be judged on the Last Day. John says clearly, "Whoever transgresses and does not remain in Christ's teaching, he has no God." But, alas, instead, he turned from discipleship to become a part of those who do not consider it necessary to render obedience to the word of the Lord in all respects. Truly, this is just cause for reflection!

Oh, yes, my dear son, you are often in my thoughts when I am in the worship services [assembly], whether I attend a sermon or a brotherhood meeting, that you are unable to enjoy together with us these exhortations and instructions, which are so inspired with sound teachings. Yes, I can hardly ever think about you without tears welling to my eyes. You also frequently come to my mind when I am alone by myself. I often meet my other children and grandchildren at the place of worship services, and with whom I often spend a time together, with one or the other. You, however, are always missing. When we visit together we ask one another how each one is doing, and in like manner, we frequently talk about you, but not with joyful feelings.

Alas, my dear son, if only I could live to see the day when our gracious Lord would be merciful to you, the way He was to the two women in Blumstein whose husbands left our assemblies together with them. These men died, having reached only about half their years. Both of the women, however, again remarried and came back to the Gemeinde together with their young husbands, and that not without deep remorse and regrets, which in part was also what had convicted their husbands. There was also a young person who married a girl from outside of us, and contrary to our confession of faith. Later, however, upon sincere remorse, he and his wife came back to the Gemeinde, which awakened a great joy within our fellowship.

Alas, too bad, too bad, for those who now and then become weary and tired

and forsake the assembly and turn their backs upon the truth. And yet through the grace of God, we can continue to comfort ourselves that there is still hope for us also. Recently a married couple and a young male person came over to our Gemeinde. The Lord had enlightened them and opened the eyes of their spiritual understanding so that they became aware of their sinfulness and the dangerous condition of their souls. Like Abraham and Lot they left their father's house and their blood relations and went out to ascend the heavenly Mount of Virtue, and to follow the ways of Christ, in order to escape the eternal punishment that is to come upon the whole world on the Last Day.

Well, beloved children, it is generally said - and you are probably not totally unaware of this - among many people, who do not want to leave the broad road of sin and who prefer to have honour before man rather than with God, that there are also failings to be seen in the Kleine Gemeinde, or that we also commit faults. We readily admit that mistakes are made among us, and not only mistakes, but transgressions also occur. We are, after all, only such people as all our fathers were before us. The wrong doers, however, we expell from the Gemeinde according to the teachings of Paul. If the Gemeinde should be unacceptable because of its faults, then the Galatians, Corinthians and other such Gemeinden of the apostle's times, would also have been unacceptable. We cannot, however, praise and thank the Lord enough for the great love and grace He has had toward us, His small flock, thus far. He has so far always provided us with true watchmen, shepherds and ministers who have in weakness, yet by His spirit, protected the Gemeinde through the word of the holy Gospel, so that no bitter root would grow up and cause discord and displeasure, and so that the Gemeinde would not thereby become soured. They have endeavored, as much as possible, to cleanse the Gemeinde from all open worldly and spiritual ungodliness, so that they could not participate in the Lord's Supper with unconfessed sins.

Now, my beloved children, I want to write something about a separation that seemed very needful to our long ago deceased, Ohm Heinrich Balzer, from Tiede - may he be remembered in the highest regard. Balzer was a man taught by God, gifted with great insight, and who was held in the highest esteem among the people and dearly beloved by his parishioners. Here was a man convicted by his conscience and by the Word of God, without peace until he left that fellowship - although he resisted this for a long time, to join the Kleine Gemeinde. Thus he joined a Gemeinde which is hated by the world, but prefers the honour of God instead of the honour of man, which - as is said - he would have done even if there was no eternity.

In friendly remembrance for his fellow-seekers of God in the Gemeinde which you have now joined, and out of love for the truth, Balzer took his leave from them with a song of farewell which he composed. For your reflection and in his memory, I will allow a number of stanzas of this farewell song to follow here, namely, verses 3 to 25:

v. 3 - Wollt ihr, Lieben, gerne wissen,  
Warum ich von euch ausgeh'  
Und fragt ihr mit Traenenguessen,  
Warum ich euch solches Weh,  
Herzleid und Betuebnis mach?

O, so denkt nur fleissig nach,  
Nehmt des Herrn Wort zur Seite,  
Und merkt, worauf es hindeute.

v. 4 - Nicht von Scherz noch lieblos Wesen  
Wird mein Herz so hart gepresst;  
Jesum hat es sich erlesen,  
Drum sein Geist nicht Ruhe laesst,  
Bis ich mich von dem entzieh',  
Und noch offenbar allhie  
Bei uns gegen seinen Willen,  
Sich in Unschuldsschein will huellen.

v. 5 - Merkt, Geliebte, was Gott fordert  
Von den Seinen in der Welt.  
Sein Wort, das uns recht beordert,  
Sprich dem, der hier Freundschaft haelt,  
Mit der Welt und Suendenlust,  
Und nicht flieht, was ihm bewusst;  
Alle Gnade, Kraft und Leben,  
Ewig ab, sie ihm zu geben.

v. 6 - Nun, nehmt Gottes Wort zum Spiegel,  
Und beschaut doch unsern Leib,  
Die nach Christi Wort und Regel  
Soll als sein erkaufte Weib,  
Ohne Flecken, zart und schoen,  
Auch ohn' Tadel heilig sein;  
Und bepruefet sie daneben,  
Wie sie steht in diesem Leben.

v. 7 - Hat sie noch ein starkes Wollen,  
Und ist Schwachheit blos die Schuld,  
Dass sie mit der Welt der Tollen,  
So vermengt ist, und so wild  
Nach dem Fleischessinn hinlebt,  
Und der Eitelkeit anklebt;  
O! so wird der Herr in Gnaden  
Sie noch von dem Fluch entladen.

v. 8 - Aber ach! mein Herze bebet,  
Wenn es sieht den frechen Sinn,  
Worin manches Glied schon lebet,  
Und von Eins aufs Andre hin,  
Taumelt, geht so frecht und frei;  
Und nicht selten Spoetterei  
Ueber Gottes Wort sich zeuget,  
Und von Gott sich ganz abneiget.

v. 9 - Rache ueben, Brueder strafen,  
An Person und Eigentum.  
Nach der Welt und Reichtum gaffen;  
Ehre, Gunst, Gewalt und Ruhm,  
Geiz, Betrug und Luegen frei,  
Schelmenlieder ohne Scheu,  
Darf man ueben mit Vergnuegen  
Und bleibt so im Tode liegen.

v. 10 - Ungehorsam, Pracht und Spielen,  
Wollust, ohne Scham und Zucht,  
Geilheit, Frechheit, ist bei vielen,  
Tabak, stinkend, bis zur Sucht,  
Raucht und braucht man ohne Mass,  
Fast ohn' End' und Unterlass,  
Eitle Buecher und Romanen,  
Märchen, Fäbeln und zusammen.

v. 11 - Nachrichten von dem Weltwesen  
Liest man emsig und vertieft  
Sich dadurch so stark im Lesen,  
Dass man kaum des Feindes Gift,  
Das er darin eingestreut,  
Ahnen kann; Unachtsamkeit  
Hat den Besten so benommen,  
Dass der Feind das Spiel gewonnen.

v. 12 - Bildung nach der Welt Manieren,  
Kunst, Geschicklichkeit und Witz;  
Durch Gelehrsamkeit zu zieren,  
Nimmt in unsrer Mitte Sitz.  
Die Vernunft blend Einfals Sinn;  
Man strebt da am staerksten hin,  
Was des Leibes Wohlfahrt gruendet,  
Und in dem man Wohlstand findet.

v. 13 - Auf den Festen und Hochzeiten  
Ist die Gottesfurcht verbannt;  
Prassen, Saufen, Lustbarkeiten,  
Fleischlich Singen, und verwand;  
Beiderlei Geschlechter sein,  
Schamlos sich einander freun  
Zucht und Keuschheit abgewichen,  
Ist zur Freiheit eingeschlichen.

v. 14 - Und ob in Begraebnistagen,  
Gottes Furcht und Innigkeit,  
Oder ob man Fleischbehagen,

Recht zum Spott der Sterblichkeit,  
Und den Tabak ehrt und meint,  
Und als Abgott, wie es scheint,  
In dem Heil'gen fast muss weichen-  
Wird einst jener Tag uns zeigen.

v. 15 - Spoetter, lasst euch ja nicht duenken,  
Dass ihr Gott betruengen werd't;  
Er laesst durch sein Wort euch winken;  
Wollt ihr sein gerechtes Schwert  
Seine Rache einst entgehen,  
So muesst ihr von dem abstehen,  
Was ein Greuel ist zu nennen,  
Wollet ihr nicht ewig brennen.

v. 16 - Das hat so die Zeit allmachlich  
Und behutsam eingefuehrt,  
Dass der Sachen fast unzuehlig  
Durch Gewohnheit kaum gespuert;  
Wider Gott und Gottes Will',  
In der Freiheit allzuviel  
Als erlaubte Sachen gelten,  
Frei geuebet nicht gar selten.

v. 17 - Selbst die Waechter auf den Mauern  
Zions, schweigen hierzu still;  
mancher seufzt zwar mit Bedauern  
In seinem Herzen, sucht und will  
Von dem Uebel sein befreit,  
Doch fuercht' man sich recht bereit,  
Mit des Herren Wort zu strafen,  
Und das Boese abzuschaffen.

v. 18 - Nach des Herren Wort zu schmuecken,  
Die Gemeinde, durch den Bann,  
Hat der Zaun all solche Luecken,  
Dass schon jeder Freche kann  
In des Herren Haus eingehen,  
Und als Glied vereinigt sein;  
Geht zum heil'gen Abendmahle  
Und verunreinigt dadurch alle.

v. 19 - Denn die Werke, die er treibet,  
Sind im Licht und offenbar,  
Zeuet, dass er ist und bleibet  
Mit Vergnuegen in der Schar,  
Die gottlos und boese sind;  
Denn auch er ist so gesinnet,

Dass er Scherz und Narrheit liebet,  
Und sich noch als Christ ausgiebet.

v. 20 - Hierin fehlen nun die Frommen,  
Dass sie keinen Unterschied  
Zwischen Suendern angenommen  
Und dass, wo man offen sieht,  
Dass Verkerstheit, fleisches Sinn,  
Sich stuerzt ins Verderben hin;  
Ihn durchs Abendmahl noch troesten:  
Du bist auch von den Erloesten.

v. 21 - Lehrt die Schrift doch solche meiden,  
Die noch fleischlich sein gesinnt,  
Und befiehlt sich abzuschneiden  
Von den'n, so ganz gottlos sind;  
Wie ein wenig Sauerteig,  
Spricht die Schrift, so wird auch euch  
Boese Sitten gar verderben,  
Und euch geistlich machen sterben.

v. 22 - Suche, Liebe, teure Seele,  
In des Herren werthes Wort,  
Ob du findest eine Stelle,  
In der Bibel, hie und dort,  
Die ein solches Leben lehret,  
Oder nicht davon abkehret;  
Such', und du wirst wahrlich finden,  
Dass dies sind verdammte Suenden.

v. 23 - Wer aufs Fleisch den Tod hier saeet,  
Und nach Fleisches Luesten lebet,  
Einst den ewgen Tod auch maehet,  
Weil er selbst darnach gestrebt;  
Gott ist ein gerechter Gott,  
Mit Ihm treibt man keinen Spott;  
Will der Mensch sich nicht bekehren,  
Stirbt er ewig nach begehren.

v. 24 - Dies, getreue, fromme Herzen,  
Die ihr Gott fuercht't und vertraut,  
Ist, was mich macht viele Schmerzen,  
Und mein Herze so bemannt,  
Dass ich seit zwei Jahren hin  
Nicht mehr ruhig in mir bin;  
Doch erst dieses Spaetjahr heftig,  
Mich gedrungen, stark und kraeftig.

v. 25 - Gottes Geist sprach unablaessig  
 In mein Herze, durch sein Wort:  
 Du musst von der Welt dich gaenzlich  
 Reissen, und an einen Ort  
 Gehen, wo man es redlich meint,  
 Und die Schwachheit stets beweint.  
 Willst du zu dem Leben gehen,  
 So muss ich dich folgsam sehen.

This poem consists of 50 stanzas. Read and reflect upon this lovely song in its entirety, for its contents are very instructive. If you will read it attentively, you will, I hope, find edification for your soul; that is, if you are desirous for this. Well, dear children, the fact that none of us and of our members were present at your engagement [Verlobnis] and your wedding is not unknown to you; namely, the reason for the same. My son, since it might seem somewhat strange to your dear wife, I will give some explanation in that regard for her sake.

All of us Mennonites invariably have a confession of faith, whereupon all our young people are still baptized. We, however, believe that a confession that comes from the mouth only is of no validity. For we believe the way James says, "Faith without works is dead" (Jas. 2). The patriarch Abraham is an example for all obedient and believing Christians. He was not unwilling when the Lord commanded him to leave his fatherland, and his blood relations, and to depart from his father's house to go to a land that He would show him. Abraham believed God's promises. When he was told to slay his beloved son Isaac and to offer him as a sacrifice, God, seeing his obedience and faith, spared him and provided another as an offering. Hence God requires obedience and not sacrifices (1 Sam. 15:23).

From this we perceive that the true Christian faith is solely based upon obedience to the Word of the Lord. This obedience follows and obeys Christ's teachings, commands and orders, pattern and example. Of these we have sufficient teachings and commandments in the scriptures, whether in the Old or New Testaments. Moses had already said to the fathers, "The Lord your God will raise a prophet like me from among your brethren; Him you shall obey in all that he will say to you; and it shall come to pass that, whatever soul does not obey that prophet, shall be destroyed from his people" (Deut. 18:15). Note the reference to 'obedience'. And in Matthew chapter 3, verse 17, it says, "Behold a voice from the cloud said: This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased; listen to him." (See also Luke 9:35; Mark 1:11; 1 Peter 2:21; 2 Peter 1:17). Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that you should follow in his steps.

Jesus Himself says in John 15:14, "You are my friends, if you do what I command you." Also in chapter 8, verse 31, speaking to the believing Jews, He said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples." According to Matthew 28, verses 18 to 20, Jesus said, "All authority has been given unto me in heaven and on earth." He told His disciples to baptize in the name of the triune God and "to teach them to observe all" that He had commanded them, promising to stay with them to "the end of the world." Observe, this is the everlasting truth. In Matthew chapter 5, verse 18, Jesus also says, "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from

the law until everything is accomplished." See also Luke chapter 21, verse 33, and other similar passages. John says that any one who transgresses and does not abide in His teaching does not have God (2 John). This is a very clear and unequivocal statement.

We have allowed ourselves to be baptized upon our faith - as set forth above - receiving it as a seal of our covenant. Upon our bended knee we knelt before God and the Gemeinde, and promised to obey faithfully, all that the Lord Jesus and His holy apostles have commanded us to do, unto the end of our days. From the foregoing it is clearly manifest that a true faith in Jesus requires obedience, and that there are not two kinds of faith. Namely, to believe that which is promised and to strive to obey in weakness, and with the help of God to practice the same. Or to believe that one can no longer live out what the holy scriptures prescribe; or to believe that if the apostles were still alive today, that they would teach us differently than what they taught during their time.

Not everything is observed that is commanded and prohibited in the Holy Scriptures; neither is everyone free to do and not to do as they choose. Certain things are forbidden and other things are commanded, and many do not consider it necessary to interpret these passages literally. You can determine for yourselves as to what is right as you consider the actions which are committed publically, and prove the same in the light of the Holy Scriptures. Herein you will find a great many things which are dealt with contrary to the will of God, when compared with the holy scriptures, for the scriptures are our only guide.

It is evident, therefore, that the two interpretations of the nature of faith are not the same in spirit. Consequently persons who are of an unlike faith should not enter into matrimony, and at the same time claim it to be done in the Lord. For if it is done in the Lord, or if they call themselves brothers and sisters in the Lord, they must - in their weakness - be of the same mind as Jesus Christ was also. (Phil. 2:5; 1 Cor. 9:1-2; 2 Cor. 13:11;)

In the *Martyrs' Mirror* there are four statements of faith or confessions of faith drawn up by the Old Flemish Anabaptist Gemeinden from various countries and regions, who unitedly agreed on one of those confessions of faith, which was subscribed to by the ministers and leaders of 17 Gemeinden. Besides these confessions I know of two more, from one of which I shall quote a short extract, which deals with matrimony, as follows:

Sixth question: Is it proper for a member of our Gemeinde to enter the state of matrimony with a member of another Gemeinde with which we do not stand in spiritual fellowship?

"Answer: No! Since the Lord God not only forbade Israel to intermarry with foreigners, as we read in Deuteronomy chapter 7, verses 2 and 3, but they were further restricted to marry only those of their father's tribe (Num. 30:8). Similarly, it seems proper to stay within our tribe or Gemeinde and take a believing sister for a wife (1 Cor. 9:5), because in marriage they are so closely united that the two are one flesh (Matt. 19:5,6; Eph. 5:29).

Seventh question: If one of the members of our Gemeinde does not consider himself bound to heed the rules and regulations with respect to marrying; in what manner ought one to deal with such a

person?

Answer: One must sincerely warn such persons and remind them of the covenant which they made when they joined the Gemeinde and attempt to advise them against their wrongful endeavour. We must diligently and gently indicate to them that if they continue in their intentions, that they are acting contrary to their vows and are offending the Church of God (1 Cor. 10:32, etc.). If all this is ineffective, and if he or she stubbornly persists in carrying out such a marriage, loving with a fleshly love their spouse more than Christ and His church, then they may not be a disciple of Christ any longer (Matt. 10:27). As they have married outside of the Gemeinde, they are to be put out of the Gemeinde and be separated from the same. For if they wax wanton against Christ and marry outside of the Gemeinde, they bring judgment on themselves, that they have broken their first faith (1 Tim. 5:11,12).

Thus far the extract dealing with matrimony. Here is the reason why we consider it altogether impermissible for us to attend engagements and weddings of those who marry outsiders. Instead of attending, we should feel obliged to stay at home, and to mourn for and to deplore such souls, rather than to honour the celebration of such a union with our presence according to their wishes. You can read more about this in a booklet called *A Simple Explanation About Various Matters In The So-called Kleine Gemeinde*, written by Ohm Abraham Friesen in January of 1841, and published in 1845. I do believe that you will have this booklet in your possession.

In conclusion, my beloved son, it is my heart's desire that our gracious God would also grant you repentance and remorse regarding your fall, so that you would be able to humble yourself and that you might be able to express yourself with tears of remorse regarding the situation as a certain separated person who had strayed makes known in his song of lamentation. I am herewith enclosing this song, which serves as a mirror from which you can see how someone was led to weeping and lamentation on account of their deviation.

*Lamentation of One Who Went Astray  
by the name of Nikolas Meinaerts.*

v. 1 - So bin ich von der Welt betrogen,  
Dass jetzt mein Herz muss leiden Pein;  
Und Gottes Wort nicht g'nug erwogen,  
Ich darum nun muss traurig sein.  
Verirrt von Gottes Wegen,  
Bin ich in grosser Not.  
Wie soll ich's doch anlegen?  
Glaub', Hoffnung, Lieb' sind in mir tot.

v. 2 - Entfremd't durch eig'ne Schuld von Gott,  
Ich jetzt mit Traenen muss beklagen,  
Worueber schaendlich mich die Welt bespott't,

Und ich werd' immer mehr zerschlagen;  
Mein Traenenbrot ich esse,  
So dass ich jede Nacht  
Mein Bett ich ganz durchnaesse,  
Bis meine Seel' von Suenden noch verschmacht.

v. 3 - Und ueberdenk' ich meine Jahren  
In Traurigkeit und grossem Herzeleid,  
Dass ich mein Heil hab' lassen fahren,  
In dem die Seligkeit mir war bereit.  
So zeugt auch nun mein Herze  
Ganz traurig gegen mich,  
Weil es dem Todesschmerze,  
Schon so ganz nahe fuehlt in sich.

v. 4 - Ich bin gekruemmt bis an mein Ende,  
Und mein Gebein ist ganz zerstoert.  
Hilf, Herr, doch mich aus dem Elende,  
Weil Trost der Suender nur begehrt.  
So sind der Feinde viele,  
Hilf, Herr, mir von der Last,  
Sie haben mich zum Ziele,  
Bis mich der ew'ge Tod erfasst.

v. 5 - Doch ist der Tod schon mein Geselle,  
Das Gebet mir keinen Trost gewaehrt,  
Dass auch durch Traeum' sich meine Seele,  
Fuehlt von Verdruss ganz ausgezehrt.  
Den Zorn hab' ich empfunden,  
Dein' Rach' hat mich zerknickt.  
Rasch, Herr, zu dieser Stunden  
Hilf, eh' mein' arme Seel' erstickt.

v. 6 - Wie kannst du mich so ganz verlassen,  
Hast du, Herr, mich doch selbst gemacht,  
Und mich verzagt und hilflos lassen,  
Zwar hab' ich selbst mich um mein Heil gebracht.  
So sind doch abgewichen,  
All' ohne Unterschied.  
Du kennst auch mein Gebrechen,  
Herr, mir doch meine Schuld vergib.

v. 7 - Ich schon mit jener Magdalena,  
Beklag' mit Petro meinen Fall.  
Auch mit dem Weib aus Kananaea,  
Vergiesse Traenen ohne Zahl.  
Bekenn' auch mit dem Moerder  
Dir meine Missetat,

Was ich auch noch will foerdern,  
Nur Herr, den verlor'nen Sohn empfängt.

v. 8 - Auch ruf' ich mit dem Blindgeborenen:  
O! David's Sohn, erbarm' dich mein,  
Und suche doch, mich ganz Verlorenen,  
Da ich nicht unterlass' mit Schrein:  
"Barmherz'ger Samariter,  
Komm leg' mich auf dein Pferd."  
Ist gleich die Kur was bitter,  
Deine Hilf' der Suender nur begehrt.

v. 9 - Herr, war doch deine Guet' und Treue  
Dem David Hilf' und Medizin.  
So sieh' doch auch auf meine Reue,  
Gleich wie du dazumal auch ihn.  
O! Herr der Gnaden,  
Warum einst Petrus bat.  
O, dank sei dir von Herzen  
Dass gnaedig du vergeben hast.

### Second Letter.

Dearly beloved daughter-in-law, Maria Loewen,

Yes, beloved, because of fatherly love I am urged and cannot refrain from writing about the tragedy pertaining to both of us, through my son, as well as your beloved husband.

I do want to relate to you something that occurred at the time when you got married, which amazed me in one sense, but also saddened me; namely, that some members of other churches expressed their views, saying that because none of your husband's friends had been at the engagement ceremony and at the wedding, that both I and your husband's brothers and sisters may have been angry, because your husband left the Kleine Gemeinde and went over to another. Oh, indeed, most beloved, if our absence from the ceremony where your wedding vows were exchanged had taken place because we were angry, that would have been indeed a perverted attitude and an abomination before God. Our loving Saviour has taught us to love our enemies and to do good to those who do evil to us, and to bless those who curse us (Mt. 5:44f). Oh, how much rather we ought to intercede for our very own beloved and nearest blood relative, for whom we should much rather beseech God and not hate nor resent him, for such a great lack of mercy could not stand before God in all eternity. Oh, no, my most beloved, no! Oh, that everyone would judge the happenings and events of this misfortune and wrong impartially in accordance with the word of God!

Now, my most beloved, I am persuaded to write a little something about our mutual grief, as mentioned above. The letter which I had written to both of you earlier, while your man was still alive - the editing of which I had not yet finished before his death, and which is now completed - I will enclose the same with this letter and direct it to you, and that to the end that it might impact upon you, as

well as me, and all who will read this, to draw their attention to this great tragedy and that it might serve to awaken all our souls. Do read this thoughtfully and with an open mind, proving everything with the Holy Scripture and let the word of God and the Lord Jesus and the teachings of the apostles be your guide.

Now, my beloved daughter-in-law! Before I had finished the final corrections of my sorrowful writing to you, my beloved children, about your dear husband's fall, I was to learn to my great dismay and heartache that the Lord of the living and the dead according to His good pleasure, had taken the life of my dear son through a sudden lightning stroke and reverberating thunder clap as he was sitting in the middle between two of his close relatives. This happened on Sunday evening, June the second at around 10 o'clock. He was killed and also wounded somewhat, whereas the other two sitting on either side of him had not been injured, except that they felt some outwardly pain on the side next to the dead person.

But, alas, dear Lord! Would that all of us might really be startled by the almighty God through this fearful death, that we would be deeply moved within our hearts and consciences and so that we might reflect earnestly upon this calamity, looking at the same and considering it in the light of God's word! It would undoubtedly cause us to heed the word of the Lord more carefully and to increasingly take captive every thought unto the obedience of Christ.

In the large martyrs' book we find a similar event described, which is to have happened in the year 1160. At a certain place in France when some people had gathered, one of them was suddenly smitten dead to the ground by the wrath of God. One of those present - a rich merchant by the name of Petrus Waldus - was so stricken and inwardly broken by this death that he repented and became converted to the true Christian faith, and began to preach the gospel. He found much acceptance in France and Italy, so that his followers were given the name Waldenses. Many of this group were later taken captive and cruelly tortured for the sake of the true Christian faith, and through their martyrdom they gave their lives for the gospel. Oh, behold, my dearly beloved, what death awakened within that rich merchant. It is truly desirable that God might also awaken us through this fearful death.

Oh, yes, my most beloved daughter-in-law. In the word of the Lord we read much about thunder and lightning as God's rebuking from heaven to make known His displeasure against the people's disobedience toward His holy word. "There is lightning and who is not afraid? It will thunder and who will not get scared?" (Esdras 16:10, 4th book). The holy man Job also recognizes this and says, "Behold, how He speaks His light upon it; for by it He frightens the people. His companion announces the angry thunder in the clouds" (Job 36:30,31). Whereof Job says, "Because of this my heart pounds . . . listen attentively to the wrath of His thunder in the clouds and to the rumbling from His mouth; He directs His lightning to the ends of the earth. After that comes the roaring thunder, and when His thunder is heard, He holds nothing back. God's voice thunders in marvellous ways; He does great things, yet we cannot understand" (Job 37:1-5).

David says, "The Lord thunders in heaven; He shoots out great lightnings, the earth shakes. At Thy rebuke they fled, at the voice of Thy thunder they took to flight" (Ps. 18:14,15; Ps. 104:7). Solomon says, "He will whet the stern wrath as a sword; the bolts of lightning will go straight to the target, as from a tightly drawn

bow, and thick hail will fall from the wrathful thunder claps" (Wisdom 5:21-23). David says, "God is a righteous judge and a God who expresses His wrath every day; if He does not relent, He will sharpen His sword; He will bend and string His bow" (Ps. 7:11,12). One can read similar truths in Revelation chapters 10 and 16.

Indeed, if we truly consider and reflect thereon in the fear of the Lord, that the above holy men have considered the lightning and the thunder as being the fierce wrath of the living God! . . . Oh, my beloved daughter, I do not doubt at all in this regard, that henceforth, if a thunder storm should come up and if the thunder and lightning would allow themselves to be heard to some extent, that this would surely remind us of that Sunday evening of June the second, in the year 1863, and that horrible and fearful, but nonetheless sad, misfortune of my son, whom I loved so dearly, as well as your beloved husband. Alas, would that this could awaken in us a desire for the love of God and the beloved Saviour and that out of love to God, we would work out our salvation in fear and trembling, in order that, like the wise virgins, we would be found watching for the future coming of the Lord, as we do not know the day nor the hour when the Son of Man will come. The Lord Jesus himself says in Luke chapter 21, verse 35, "For as a snare it shall come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." Which is also what one poet says as a warning, "Lest there come that day, like lightning and a thunder bolt, upon those who live on earth, Without mercy, no one sparing."

I have no evidence from the holy scripture that God the Lord has slain someone by lightning or by a bolt of thunder. Although, the Lord has slain some because of disobedience, for instance, the priest Eli and both of his sons of whom the Lord had earlier said ". . . that He would perform against Eli all that He had spoken concerning his house" (1 Sam. 3:12-14). He knew that his children were doing evil, he, Eli, their father, did not restrain them. "Therefore shall this iniquity of his house not be atoned for; and so both of his sons, Hopni and Phinehas, died in the war." When it was announced to their father Eli that both of his sons had died, he was so startled that he fell off his chair, broke his neck and died (1 Sam. 4:17-18).

In Genesis chapter 38, we read about Er, Judah's first-born, who was wicked in the sight of the Lord, so that He slew him. With Onan it was the same. "The thing he did displeased the Lord. Therefore the Lord slew him also." In what manner, we are not told. Also, we have a dreadful example in Lot's wife, when she with Lot and his two daughters were led by the Spirit of God and escorted by an angel, out of Sodom (Gen. 19:20). But his wife looked back and became a pillar of salt as a reminder to the disobedient and unbelieving souls (Wisdom 10:7). The prophet Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for you before I am taken away from you. Elisha said, Let a double portion of your spirit be upon me. As they still went on and talked, behold, a chariot of fire and horses of fire came and parted the two of them." By faith Enoch was taken away so that he should not see death, for God took him away. Even before this, he received the testimony that he had pleased God. Paul states in Hebrews chapter 11, verse 4, that God took the latter away, because he had led a godly life in faith.

But alas, Oh Lord! This unforgettable calamity and experience is a heart-piercing memory and remains in my thoughts, and still impacts heavily upon me. Our all-wise, kind and merciful God, Who does not desire nor is pleased with the death of the sinner, has so suddenly taken away my child from this day of grace

in his early years. Such a taking away out of this life causes me much more sorrow and sadness for his soul in my innermost being, than did his heavy fall. The hope of his coming back is now extinguished forever. Everything on this earth has come to an end for him.

Whatever our all wise, kind and righteous God, in His wise purpose, has withheld from us regarding the death of my son and your dear husband, we cannot know, and we ought to allow the matter to rest there and not form any judgement. Neither this hope nor that can be of any help or harm to the deceased. We, however, must be on our guard, lest we who are still living, comfort ourselves with a false hope in this disaster. Neither should we presume nor think that this, my son, was more sinful than any other person living in Molotschna. Our loving Saviour says, "No, unless you amend your ways, you will likewise perish" (Lk. 13:3).

Oh, my dearly beloved daughter, how did you feel on that Sunday evening when you noticed the lightning and thunder and then ran out of the house of your friend, where you were visiting, to your children? Then when you came back to search for your dear husband? Oh, behold, and how terrified you were when you found your so dearly beloved man in the street lying dead on the ground, having been killed in the building by lightning and thunder! Indeed, for several days thereafter you were so full of grief and sorrow that I had very great pity for you. Yes, in my empathy I would have wept aloud for you and with you, if I had not controlled myself and refrained from weeping. My greatest sorrow was not the natural death of my son alone, but rather his transgression and that he had to leave us so suddenly. Oh, indeed, my dearest, you must nearly have been broken with pain and very deep sorrow when, in humility and in the fear of the Lord, you consider how it all happened. On our part my son was counselled and exhorted in writing as well as with words. It remained overlooked from the other side.

You will probably know about all of the foregoing to some extent, and in addition to this, the fact that none of your dear husband's friends were present at the celebration of your marriage. But my beloved daughter, do not take this as evil and do not think negatively of it. I sincerely beg this of you. For it is no small matter for us, nor did it occur without good reason, or because of indifference or lack of love. Oh, no, rather it was done for the reason that we did not want to transgress against the word of God. I do not want to burden you with guilt, my beloved, concerning something which has already happened. Oh, no, for my wish is only that it would make all of us alert as to what or who might have contributed to the matter.

Behold, my most beloved, we do not consider our separation to be our own work, but as an act of obedience to God's holy calling in grace. Yes, we believe that such a person experiences much grace and mercy from God. And observe, the greater the grace and mercy that a person experiences, the greater the sin will be for the one who wilfully withdraws from this abundant grace and who rejects it for whatever reason (2 Tim. 1:9). This is made very clear when it is stated that ". . . if they escaped from the corruption of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and are again entangled therein and are overcome, their last condition is worse than the first. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them" (2 Peter 2:20,21). We also read similarly in Hebrews chapters six and ten.

As the Holy Scriptures warn the backslider so severely, we should take it much more seriously and be very heedful, realizing that God might be displeased with someone who leaves the Gemeinde and turns his back upon the truth, since He so suddenly put an end to the life of my son and your dear husband, through which you, beloved, have been placed in great sorrow. Let us ponder this and carefully consider it, so that this disaster, as already mentioned, would be a lesson for us all. The event teaches us that if we act only according to our own reason and choices as to what is right, although sincerely believing it to be for the best, and not according to the word of God and His holy will and good pleasure, that we have not done right thereby. For everything that we do should and must be done in accordance with God's will if the Lord is to grant His blessing upon it. For this purpose He has given us His Holy Word in order that we may structure our affairs in accordance with the same.

Well, my beloved daughter, with a loving heart I must remind you of something and ask you to ponder thereon. That you might take the sudden death of your husband to heart and to remain mindful of how much he wanted you, and you also wanted him, to be your marriage partner. Because of this you both joined another church, and for the reason that you did not want to submit yourself to the Kleine Gemeinde. The primary explanation which you gave for this was our teaching on humility. For our Gemeinde in its weakness, and in as much as possible, with the help of God and according to His Word, so dearly strives for humility and lowliness, although only in great imperfection.

Most beloved, the Holy Scriptures teach us everywhere abundantly that pride is an abomination in the eyes of God. Our first parents, Adam and Eve, were cast out of paradise, because they wanted to be like God. The first world was destroyed for that reason, and Sodom and Gomorrah had to suffer punishment; all of them because of their arrogance and pride (Isa. 3:16-24; 1 Pet. 3-4; 1 Tim. 2:9,10; Gen. 3; 2 Pet. 3). That pride is an abomination before God is seen from the fact that God created man in His own image. Out of love, He sent his only beloved Son from heaven and delivered Him to die on the cruel cross for sinful humanity so that all of us who believe in Him should obey His Word, which will judge us on the last day. The holy apostle Peter says, "He left us an example that we should follow in his footsteps" (1 Pet. 2:21; John 3:16; Isa. 53:5; John 12:47,48).

The Lord Jesus Himself said, "All that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination before God" (Luke 16:15). When they adorn themselves so smartly and extravagantly in apparel after the fashion of the world, in order to gain the friendship of the world, and since the world is enmity with God, then what the Lord Jesus Himself says comes to pass. "He that loves anything more than me is not worthy of me" (Jas.4:4; Matt. 10:37,38).

Behold, my dearly beloved, what kind of adornment and beauty a certain song writer desires for himself for his soul, which we find in song number 325, stanzas 11 to 12:

Menschen oft in Kleider prangen,  
Stolzen Pfauen gleich, sich blaeh'n,  
Aber wie wir sie empfangen,  
Nicht betrachten, nicht versteh'n  
Kleidung zeigt die Sunden an,

Die in Adam wir getan.  
Man sollt, wenn wir sie anlegen,  
Stets den grossen Fall erwägen.  
Christi Purpur soll allein,  
Meiner Seelen Brautschmuck sein.

Seht ihr nicht die Rache winken  
Die aus Gottes Worte toent?  
Dass mit Putz, mit Schein, und Schminken,  
Ihr des Schoepfers Weisheit hoehnt;  
Und mit solcher eitlen Pracht,  
Euch bei Gott verhasst nur macht.  
Sagt, was seinem Bilde gleiche?  
Ob nicht alles zitternd weiche?  
Drum ist meine Zierd' allein,  
Christi Bilde aehnlich sein.

The divinely inspired apostle Paul says in Romans 12:2, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is acceptable to the Lord!" (Rom. 12:2) Without this renewal of the mind, a person cannot distinguish between the worldly Christendom and defenceless Christianity, as long as one has an earthly or natural mind. Paul also testifies of this when he says that, ". . . the natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

We have joined ourselves to the Kleine Gemeinde by the grace of God, and upon the conviction of our conscience, although the original reason for the separation was the practice of exercising vengeance, and the use of corporal punishment, which had made inroads into the Grosse Gemeinde at that time. Presently, however, we surely believe that the Holy Scriptures show clearly everywhere that we ought to be obedient to the Lord's Word in all things (Deut. 18:15). As a matter of fact, the Lord has spoken to all humankind in many ways, that we should obey the Lord Jesus, His beloved Son (Luke 9:35; Mark 1:1). The Lord Jesus Himself says, "If you do whatever I command you, you are truly my disciples" (2 Peter 1:17; 1 Peter 2:21). James, the apostle, says, "For whosoever keeps the law and yet offends in one, is guilty of all." Therefore we must, out of love, be obedient to all the commandments of the Lord. John says, "So then we know that we love the children of God and observe his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous." Therefore, we are obliged, according to the teachings of the Lord Jesus and His apostles, to practise humility and to resist pride. I concur with the words of the composer of song number 281, stanza 13:

Ich will dem Vorbild seiner Lehre  
Ergeben und gehorsam sein  
Was Jesus tut und lehrt ist mein;  
Ich lerne, was ich seh und hoere;  
Ein Beispiel hat er mir gelassen,

In Sanftmut, Demut und Geduld;  
Ich geh mit ihm die Leidensstrasse,  
Denn mich erfreut nur seine Huld.

Sirach says in chapter 15, "In the beginning God created man and he was given a choice. Are you willing to keep God's commands and faithfully do what pleases him? He has put before you fire and water. Grab hold of what you want. Man has before him life and death. Whatever he wants, that will be given to him."

Since our eternal welfare or ruin depends on the choice we make, I conclude with the words of the writer contained in song number 435, stanza 11:

Wohlan, O Mensch! Du hast die Wahl,  
Gott hat dir jetzund vorgestellt  
Entweder Freuden oder Qual,  
Von zweien nimm, was dir gefaellt,  
Kann dir das ew'ge Herzeleid  
Nicht schrecken von der Suendenlust,  
So sollt' doch ja die hoechste Freud'  
Anreizen, dass du Busse tust.

Song number 434, stanza 3:

O Ewigkeit, du machst mir bang,  
O ewig, ewig ist zu lang,  
Hier gilt fuerwahr kein Schreien;  
Drum wenn ich diese lange Nacht,  
Zusammt der grossen Pein betracht,  
Erschreck ich recht von Herzen.  
Nichts ist zu finden weit und breit,  
So schrecklich als die Ewigkeit.

Yes, beloved daughter, we find many descriptions of eternity in the Scriptures and in the various song books [*Gesangbücher*]. The Lord Jesus has laid only two ways before us, the broad road which leads to eternal condemnation and the narrow one which leads unto eternal life. The Lord Jesus also said of Himself, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one cometh to the Father but by me." As the situation of the human soul, which never dies, is so pitiful, in light of the long and fearful eternity, I am compelled by my conscience, fatherly love and duty, for the sake of my child's soul, as well as for mine, to append the following pages, which I wrote to you and to your dear husband [See previous letter. Editor].

In conclusion I ask you to accept these lines, as well as the enclosed writing, from me in love, for I have written the same to you with parental love and affection. From a father who loves you dearly.

*Isaac Loewen in Lindenau, 1863.*

# Chapter Three

## Letters 1865

Three Letters from Isaac Loewen (1787-1873), Lindenau, Molotschna, to Peter Toews (1841-1922), Andreasfeld, 1865.

---

### First Letter.

Beloved in-law Peter Toews, together with your beloved wife. Yes, my beloved children in the Lord. It is my heartfelt wish that these humble and simple lines directed to you might be received into your hands in the best of physical and spiritual well being. Praise be to the Lord, I am presently again more or less well.

On the 25th of this month of November, I received your worthy writing from your father, who, together with your mother and the two small boys came from Prangenau and arrived at Franz Kroeker's in Kleefeld where your letter was personally handed to me. They had also been in Mariawohl as Mrs. Jakob Friesen was bedridden with illness.

Now, my beloved in-law. Indeed, all of you my precious children. You have reminded me that I have not kept my promise to visit you during the summer. I do not recollect having said this myself, and yet, it is not that the desire to do so was lacking. Perhaps it was said by me on the occasion when both of you beloved, were travelling from your home in Andreasfeld to visit your parents in Blumstein, and stopped in where I was residing and took me along to your parents, my children. From this I perceived in you, that you had a childlike love for me, as I also love you, and have a good confidence in you, which I have also had for all my grandchildren until now.

My coming there this summer has not occurred and as I am to be truthful, I must admit that this omission may find its cause in my indolence and in the chilling of love. I sometimes reflect on what Paul reminds us of and says that we are to "call to remembrance the former days" at which time the Lord made manifest the truth to me, as well as to many others, through the Holy Spirit of love and compassion. Indeed, I am mindful of the love of God and His holy word and the brethren which motivated us at the time, so that neither miserable roads nor inclement weather was able to keep us from attending the worship services and visiting the brethren.

I would further legitimize my exoneration regarding not coming there by adding that many friends visited you this summer, so that from what one heard, it seemed as if guests were visiting at your place almost every day, so that I frequently thought to myself that it might also be too difficult for you for me to visit you at the present time. With the plentiful work in your settlement and your own demands on your time, it might be very inconvenient, and if I had driven along with friends who wanted to remain in your area for a good length of time, in order to be of some help to you there, then I would only have been a burden and difficulty for you. For I have no energy left to be of any assistance to you,

even though such work might be most essential to you. Yes, I must confess anew, that if only I was immersed in all the gifts of pure love which are of God and which surpass all the wonderful virtues in 1 Corinthians Chapter 13. For then I would have given little heed to these matters with which I have excused myself, as stated above, since love makes every burden easy and thinks no evil.

Now my beloved children, I will relate to you how an opportunity for a journey to the Crimea overtook me by surprise. I had never once thought of travelling to the Crimea, even though there is always much talk of the Crimean brothers and friends, and even though I have personally read many letters from which their good-heartedness was manifest. Shortly before our departure, Ohm Johann Friesen related to me in Mariawohl at Jakob Friesen's, that Aron Schellenberg wanted to be wedded with the daughter of Abram Wall, and that they had summoned him [Ohm Johann Friesen] to marry them. They had also invited a number of people for the wedding and as these guests had made plans to visit there as well, there was no exclusion. But I still had no thoughts of a journey to the Crimea.

The following Sunday, worship service was in Tiege, and as I arrived there Ohm Abram Friesen inquired of me as to whether Cornelius Enns had been to see me, for the previous day they had discussed between themselves, that Enns was to come to summon me for the trip to the Crimea. They needed one more travelling partner and he was to see whether I would even want to come along, but Enns had not been to see me because of other circumstances. Abram Friesen and his wife planned to go and also Cornelius Enns, but now they very much wanted to have one more travelling companion. Up to this point I still had no idea that I would travel to the Crimea. However both Abram Friesen and Cornelius Enns talked to me after the worship service and I decided on the spot that we would plan to depart in the early morning of the following Wednesday. This is also what occurred and thus it came to pass that I visited the friends in the Crimea, without me having considered it beforehand or having had previous intentions in that regard.

Thursday evening at around 10 o'clock we arrived in Annenfeld. Saturday the pair, Aron Schellenberg and Anna, the daughter of Abram Wall, held their engagement celebration [Verlobnis] and Sunday we had worship service there. After dinner we, Abram Friesen and Jakob Wiebe with their wives and myself, drove to Krasbosar which was situated some 4 verst from Annenfeld from where we returned on Monday. On Tuesday the above mentioned bridal couple was married. There were three families present from a village called Schwesterthal which lay some 17 verst distant from Annenfeld, among whom the minister Peter Baerg was also found, and by whom Ohm Abram Friesen was now summoned to come to preach. The following day, Wednesday, we drove to Schwesterthal where there was a considerable assembly for worship services. On Thursday, Franz Janzen, the son-in-law of Abram Wall, and his daughter, the wife of Janzen, were received into the Gemeinde in the presence of a small group, consisting of our people and a few others from the villages.

Accordingly we had sojourned in Annenfeld for seven days. On Thursday after vesper at around 5 o'clock, we departed from there and on Sunday at 2:30 o'clock in the afternoon, we arrived in Blumstein at Cornelius Enns'. Thus our Crimean expedition had taken up 11 days. Two days to drive there, two days return, and we were there for seven days. We always had beautiful weather and I

enjoyed good health. Cold and rainy fall weather set in the moment we came home. Now I have briefly related of the manner in which I came to a journey to the Crimea.

I will not deny that the love which I have perceived in the good-minded letters which the Crimean brothers and sisters have written to the brethren and Gemeinde here, will also have contributed somewhat to my inspiration to visit them. Without reflecting adversely in any way on any of my children, I must say that I find myself so empty and unskilled for piety - yes, full of misdeeds and underboils from the soles of my feet to the top of my head, so that nothing good is to be found in me. I would have to cast down my eyes with the tax collector, and say, 'Lord, be merciful unto me poor sinner.'

Oh, I must confess that I feel so insignificant compared to the Crimean brethren and sisters who are in their fresh zeal, which they evidence to us brethren and the Gemeinde through the moving of the heavenly power which they have received in their hearts, and through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, the truth has been revealed to them. As stated I must admit that in this respect the Crimean brethren serve me as an inspiration and remembrance of that for which Peter also admonishes us, to think of the day on which the Lord through the Holy Ghost revealed His sacred truth unto me, and gave me the knowledge and love of God, love for the dear brethren, and the Gemeinde.

On the contrary, when I think back, I find that I was completely passive and indifferent in love, and so completely incapable of any piety, that I must join with the words of lament of the well known poet from song number 484 [*Gesangbuch*]:

Ich musz ob Traegheit klagen,  
wo ich sie laenger wird'  
allhier noch muessen tragen,  
so drueckt sie mich zur Erd'.  
Ich mein', es soll sich legen,  
doch bleib ich, wie ich bin,  
ganz los in Tugenwegen,  
noch leider immerhin.

You also mentioned, beloved in-law, that you long, with great concern, for the trust misused by you. If I understand you correctly you mean this in general, instead of meaning that you have seen it reinstated. You say this doubtfully, but that it could still occur. Through what the continued misused trust has arisen there by you, and what grounds the same had, remains unfamiliar to me.

Your 'small' Gemeinde there, as you call it, is only a small part of our so-called Kleine Gemeinde [small flock]. But it did in fact constitute your election. However, the impurity which has arisen in some among your brethren there, also came to germinate and take root with us here, and after a time it came to bloom in one and the other among you there, and finally it produced fruit in several. But it was crushed before it came to be completely ripe, so that it did not pour out its seeds. This has happened through the watchfulness of the true and concerned Gardener, who has been commissioned for that purpose, namely, by the Lord of the vineyard.

Oh, beloved children. I bid you from my heart that you do not completely

throw away the faith, and yet, beloved in-law, as I understand your letter, you still have a positive anticipation of winning more confidence in the future. I would also expect this for you and wish the same for you. For love thinks no evil and rather is overflowing with a hope of eternal life, and believes all of the promises of God. Beloved in-law, you also write that I am to forgive you if you were to err. Oh, only too gladly would I forgive you, for only in deepest humility do I experience grace to strive to capture the sinful impulses within me.

Now let us praise the Lord for His goodness, and that we have not yet completely expired, and that His compassion continues without limit. From which we can perceive that the Lord still reigns over us with His hand of grace, and that the good and faithful head of the household, who knows everything in our hearts, will have heard all our prayers; and that He shall have inspired and sent faithful men after His own heart; as true workers in the vineyard of the Lord, His Gemeinde, for which you so much yearn for from the heart, for the building up of His small flock, to lead and to pasture with teaching and living, also to set a goodly example for us with good conduct. The one who is called to His service to preach the Holy Word which has been entrusted to him by the Spirit of Truth, should not overlook the gifts which have been entrusted to him by the Lord and should invest the pound with interest with all earnestness and zeal, by admonishing, threatening, and by punishing, with all patience and teachings. For which purpose the compassionate Father wishes to endow him with power, wisdom and gifts of the spirit, and to stand by his side with all might and comfort, so that he can carry out the requirements of his office in truth and in love with a joyful and undaunted courage [ . . . out the requirements of his office in truth and in love with a joyful and undaunted courage . . . Note: A line is missing here and a substitute has been inserted by supposition. Editor].

I need to be much more thankful inwardly, for these, your remembrances. I perceive therefrom that the both of you, so beloved, do think of me; and I believe that you write to me out of love. Oh, when I think of how precious the treasure of love is, I frequently become anxious, for without love all the outwardly evident piety is nothing. How will I come by the same? Yes, love is so exceptionally priceless in value that even the most wonderful deeds of virtue are as nothing without love (1 Corinthians 13). Peter Peters says, "God himself must pour out love through the Holy Spirit in the hearts of men, who know themselves in their nothingness and poverty. For He considers it to be and says, that there is no greater harm which mankind can incur than conceit, self-righteousness, self-praise, ostentatiousness, which could well be called the sequestered door, or the dividing wall, through which the love of God is done away with, so that the same will have no place within us nor obtain entry. The love of God is not perishable and will endure unto eternal life."

Yes, my beloved, do remember me in your prayers, for I would gladly be free and rid of the above-mentioned evils, which continue to cling to me and make me slothful. After all, true love is free of vices and evil thoughts, malice, gossip, and backbiting. Love is also free of all guile and falsehoods, and whatever else is contrary to the holy will of God. Which is why I entreat my God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that He might grant me strength through the grace of the Lord for the salvation of the souls which have been entrusted to me.

In addition to the foregoing, it is my wish and the prayer of the Lord for His

servants, that through the grace of the Saviour and through His help, His servants might lead fearlessly, in truth and full of love, for the glory of the Lord and His honour, unto eternal bliss, and that all the souls entrusted into your care might give heed to you as you have presented the word of God to them. Also that you might do it with joy and not with groaning.

I do not know of much to report to you of our temporal circumstances, except that since the brotherhood meeting I am still staying with my children. I have myself transported from one to the other. I have frequently stayed with the widow Heinrich Loewen, and have on occasion resided with her for one, two, and also three weeks after the other, sometimes also longer. She is still unable to make a decision from among all her suitors who have proposed to her in marriage, to select one of them. According to what she says, she still dreams frequently of her husband. She is dearly fond of her little daughter called Maria, who very much resembles her father, which also helps to remind her of her former husband.

In conclusion I bid you, my beloved children, to receive and accept this inferior, simple and imperfect writing, in love, just as I have also written it in love. Not so as to weaken love, but rather to strengthen and encourage even though it is done in weakness. My beloved. I ask that you do pardon and forgive me for everything in which I might have been too insensitive to you; be it in this writing or in something else, in which I might have caused you sorrow, for my failings are manifold. Although I know that the beloved Apostle says that all things are to be done in love, something might still have unintentionally occurred without my having become aware of it. Good intentions I have in abundance, but to do what is good I do not find in myself.

Now beloved children, receive a heartfelt greeting from me. I wish you health physically as well as spiritually, and a thriving well-being. I am currently quite well, to the Lord be praise and thanks. Do please also greet in-law Corn. Toews together with his beloved wife, and wish them both a peace-loving disposition and a heartfelt love between each other, also an undaunted courage to carry the cross which the Lord has laid upon them, and a heart full of trust, patience, and comfort. The Lord will not impose upon them in excess of their capability, nor leave or forsake them. Do also greet in-law Cornelius Goossen and his wife from me. I also wish them a definite prosperity from the heart. It has been related to me that in-law Goossen is to have been at Peter Goossen's this fall.

Do also greet your beloved parents from me. Your aged father is my bosom friend, with whom I have stood in loving harmony, although in weakness, since the time of our youth. I am always reminded of him when I walk by his former property in Fischau. I also give thanks for the greeting to me, from your father, which I read in his letter to in-law Plett, and from which I could perceive that he still thinks of me. I suppose that our friendship will soon come to an end, as we are both fragile, old and aged. We need not place much expectation that either of us will be here much longer. But the day and the hour are not revealed to us, as this is known to the Lord alone.

Do also greet the aged in-law Jakob Toews and his beloved wife from me. I suppose that I need no longer expect a visit from him. Also greet his two sons-in-law together with their wives from me. Might the Lord stand at the side of both of these beloved men in their difficult service with comfort, power and strength, and impart to them as much aid and support as they shall find necessary for the

duration of their lives, so that they would not become faint-hearted nor weary for so long as they live.

Do also greet from me the aged and elderly Isaac Harms together with his beloved wife. I am indeed sorry that I was not home when they were here to visit me. He is almost the only one who still visits me occasionally from among those who have moved there from here.

Now my precious children; yes, beloved friends in the Lord. In closing I would add that as far as I am concerned, our correspondence one to the other, as we live so far distant from each other, shall serve only and alone for the purpose of building love and to grow and increase in love, and to strengthen ourselves to grow in faith, although in great weakness. Oh, that we might continually become more immersed in love which is also your intention; that we might maintain a good courage and find repentance of our sins and sanctify our time in the exercise of prayer. Oh, that God would grant us the spirit of prayer, that our prayers might be fervent, and that we might have a firm faith in Christ. Then we shall avoid and have victory over the vain emptiness of the world, and will come to possess the piety of love within us. May the Lord of compassion through His only Son help us for this. And now, together with a greeting, I bid you to remember me in prayer.

*Is. Loewen*

## Second Letter.

Beloved grandchildren in Andreasfeld; yes, my dear children in the Lord. Firstly, I earnestly wish the peace of God and the love of Jesus Christ unto all the dear brethren and sisters in the Lord, together with good health and all well-being, physically as well as spiritually.

I am at present still quite well as are also David Loewens and their children. I report to you that on the 5th of July, 1865, Peter, the son of Peter Toewses, finally died after three days of extremely painful suffering. His sickness was so severe that he and the ones attending him often wished that he could die. It was an anguish to behold according to what was related to me. The five years and ten months that he lived were hardly ever without pain. His funeral was held on the 6th, where David Loewens and I were present. I spoke with all my children there, except Cornelius Loewens, who were not present because of the harvest. They are all well. Further I report to you that Abram Thiessen was not successful in his intention of hindering us from taking the Lord's Supper. As I was told, he also attended the preceding general brotherhood meeting which was held on his account, in order to disturb the same. I do not know of anything definite to say regarding what tactics he had in mind nor what his future intentions are.

Now, dear brother-in-law, Peter Toews, I do not know what worthwhile truths I should write about, whether those for edification, or those for the raising up of sluggish hands and weary, paralysed knees, in order to take certain steps with our feet, so that we would not falter like the lame and sick with respect to our souls, but far rather that we might be restored in the faith. I, however, am very unfit for the foregoing. I feel myself to be much too slow and incompetent to be the author of anything good and useful. Nevertheless, for sometime already, I have wanted to write, not only to you, beloved, and to your dear parents - who are my children, but also to my grandchildren in Friedrichsthal. Only too gladly I would also write

to my other well-known friends, brethren and sisters in the Lord, whom I dearly love, and who are living there with you as a Kleine Gemeinde, being a small branch of the Kleine Gemeinde here, and who are living together there in a good relationship with each other.

Let me share with you, first of all, that the time I spent with you there in both valleys did not seem long to me at all. This was especially the case with you, dear brother-in-law, as we had many times of fellowship together not only there in Andreasfeld but also on the journey to the Molotschna and during the travelling we did here to various of my children and your friends. Yes, I had a splendid fellowship with you and I will remember for a long time the harmony we enjoyed together. Whether we will ever be able to get together again like this, we do not know. We want to commit this unto our all-knowing God, who alone knows everything. Yes, unto Him only do we want to commit this, and as well, to place ourselves in His care. As already stated, beloved, I feel very thankful toward you for the wonderful fellowship. The Lord alone be praised!

Nevertheless, I must assert myself and say - at least in so far as I in my weakness am able, that while I was with you there in Andreasfeld, as well as in Friedrichsthal, I found good hope and a continuing love and unity among nearly all the brethren there, one unto the other, except for a few who might possibly lack for something in humility. I am, however, hopeful that with the help of God they will be able to rectify whatever they are lacking, so as to continue to have peace and unity among each other and love one toward another, in such a way as it is becoming for the brethren and sisters.

Now, dearly beloved, if a person with the help of God and His spirit has learned true meekness and inward humility from our Lord Jesus Christ - which I wish above all else to have learnt for myself, and all that which follows therefrom, and to be so minded as Jesus Himself sayeth in Matthew 11:19; When such a person then becomes aware and conscious of having offended any of the brothers and sisters through words or deeds, or in something else whereby one has been a stumbling block to anyone; Oh, how gladly such a one then directs himself in love towards the dear brethren and acknowledges their misdeeds with heartfelt remorse, and begs for forgiveness; and if only we would think more highly of others than of ourselves, as the Apostle teaches, what a heartfelt love and confidence would thereby be awakened among the brethren. Indeed, that people would thereby be moved to tears, and that they would be so much more motivated unto peace, love and unity, even those who are already elderly. This would also serve as an example and teaching for the younger brethren and sisters and contribute to a more circumspect conduct among them.

Indeed, if a person humbles himself in this wise before God and the Gemeinde, then the love for the brethren will again raise itself and be strengthened; and according to the teachings of Jesus, these persons shall find rest unto their souls. Oh, what a victory and God-pleasing good fortune thereby accrues to the Gemeinde; namely, a Godly peace, and the restoration of love and confidence one unto the other. It would obviously be desirable if the foregoing occurred in all respects without further delay if it is to resolve the present issues and difficulties.

Matthius Servus wrote a letter of instructions from his prison cell to one of his friends. Among others things, he writes the following words:

If any one among you is overtaken by sin, let him confess it simply and truthfully, without any deceit, according to reality, and without being ashamed, in like manner as he was without shame when he committed the error. For otherwise it will not serve him for the best. It is written, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy" (Prov. 28:13). I have told you before and say it again, one can excuse one's self in the eyes of men with enticing words and cover one's self with fig leaves (Gen. 3). But when the real tribulation comes, will this be sufficient to withstand the onslaught of the evil one? Therefore, let each one exercise due diligence.

Thus far from Matthius Servus. I have quoted a brief extract from this man, who is a servant and witness of the truth, as a warning and instruction.

Further, love compels me, dear children, to let you know of my view and opinion with this brief and simple letter stating how gravely concerned I am - and how will it all come out in the end - regarding the serious striving for land, especially in view of the fact that there has been a recession and a prolonged money shortage. You who live on rented land and those who have a share in it, possibly already know how to work together in love, a love which promotes unity. You will know better than we here how to pay the rent and other financial expenses. I believe that you will use good judgement and mature consideration, before deciding to buy the land, so that it will be done in harmony with love (1 Cor. 13). My wish, dear children, in regard to the aforementioned project is to guard you against all unrest, uncleanness and strife, and everything that could lead to the like. This is my earnest and heartfelt desire for you, my beloved children, as you can perceive. The quest for unnecessary affluence has often, as is well known, led to the above mentioned vices, whereby peace has been disturbed, and love has been weakened, or even extinguished.

Please take note, my beloved children, that I have read a letter in the *Martyrs' Mirror*, written from prison by a man with the name of Jakob Roohr. He was a witness of the truth, a teacher and an Aeltester. His letter is of great importance to me and I have transcribed a portion of the same in order to send it to you. Hopefully it will serve for the edification and exhortation of all of us; and indeed, that it may assist us in evaluating the current circumstances of our time. Among other things, Roohr writes as follows:

Dear brethren, become well versed in the Scripture even at the expense of temporal advancement, so that through good habits you may receive enlightened discernment so that you may distinguish between good and evil. For such earthly gain can be a great impediment for the spiritual gifts, as our senses can thereby become filled with the cares and concerns of this world and our energy impoverished and dissipated. Therefore, dear brethren, remember what the apostle says, ". . . for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come" (1 Tim. 4:8).

The Lord hath given you many temporal blessings, so that you

are not in need nor articulated by poverty. But the exercise of the Godly virtues is beneficial for all purposes, serving the spiritual inner man as well as the physical body, and provides that which is essential for salvation. Godliness does everything; it does not neglect the body but utilizes the bodily activities in a balanced way. Godliness casts its burdens upon the Lord, Who cares for us. Therefore, the apostle says that unto godliness are the promises of this eternal life given (Matt. 6:25). Dear brethren, "If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God." Taste what is heavenly and not what is earthly. Do not be like a mole which lives in the earth, digging around with its mouth, and which at the same time is so blind it cannot look upward towards the heavens.

Please note, beloved brethren, I am not hereby saying that you are like that; no, that is the furthest from my mind. My confidence in you far exceeds such a view. When we examine ourselves thoroughly, we find that we ourselves are of those who concentrate on what is earthly and are blind with respect to the spiritual. And when we have barely been enlightened through Christ so that we have an understanding for the spiritual things - and that we are renewed in Christ - yet, all too often we continue to follow our own nature, whereby our faith is subdued and defeated. For our faith is often vanquished through our fallen nature which seeks to impair the fruits of our piety through unbelief and the lack of faith in God (1 Tim. 6:10). For this reason people suffer shipwreck in their faith. When two warring vessels meet one another on the seas, it is evident that one will overcome the other. Similarly, unbelief - through our sinful human nature - wars against faith. Hence, we must firmly counter this danger through the exercise of our faith, so that at length we shall not be overcome thereby. Unbelief has great support; firstly, from Satan, who has his work in the children of unbelief, and secondly, from our own flesh.

Consider therefore, beloved brethren, that when a city is betrayed by someone, a strenuous effort must be applied to gain back the victory over the enemy. Accordingly, it is evident that we must exercise great diligence before we can overcome these enemies: Firstly our own flesh which is inclined to all evil against the Spirit. As a result we must pay heed as to how careful the kings of this world are when they first see that their enemies are preparing themselves, for then they prepare themselves also and make themselves strong so that they may resist their enemies. Likewise, we who are to be circumspect as the heroes and proponents of goodness, should be careful and have a childlike single-mindedness against evil. Yet, when we perceive that our enemies are preparing themselves, we venture forth to engage them, but hardly through faith, rather through unbelief. It is manifest that our sinful natures are inclined after that which is earthly and that we do not allow ourselves to be satisfied with a little, but rather desire more and

more, because of our love of wealth. For this reason our natures are not easily satiated.

So we imprint this upon our minds; we even place two or three witnesses to stand on guard; yet, we do not fully realize how detrimental this evil nature is to our faith and how far our thoughts are thereby disbursed and scattered. The outcome is that we are much more concerned about our temporal well-being than our eternal state, and that our spiritual gifts are weakened instead of strengthened. Consequently one has no desire to offer the hand of a shepherd to feed the flock of Christ and to pasture the same with the gifts that God has entrusted unto us. Justly the apostle says, "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out" (1 Tim. 6:6,7). "Now, beloved reader, though we may not think or seek to gather a treasure for ourselves, and have no desire to keep the entire benefit for ourselves, we should remember that we are not striving for ourselves, for we are nothing but servants of a great King. Now then, imagine yourselves to be a king who has many servants and who appoints a particular servant to be the chamberlain and another to be the housekeeper. What if the chamberlain, by whom you expect to be served, would leave his position and would want to be the housekeeper? Do reflect somewhat on the matter as to whether you would be satisfied with such a servant.

Likewise, dear brother, the Lord has appointed you as a servant who is to serve Him with spiritual gifts which you have received from Him. What if you too would want to set aside your spiritual gifts and then serve Him only with the temporal? Do consider the matter as to how well you would please Him. If you make the excuse that it is not your duty, then you should know that it is not only the teachers who are obligated to admonish the Gemeinde; indeed, there is no such teaching in the Bible. Therefore, my very dear brother, be true unto your own self, commit yourself unto the Lord, and remain with the Gemeinde. I am asking this of you with all sincerity, so that the flock might remain together. I trust the Lord will help you and preserve you until the fullness of time, if you seek Him with a faithful heart. Consider this well, I ask you.

Thus far from Jakob Roohr. Ah, yes, dear children, the words of the apostle Paul in Hebrews 4:1 are truly worthy of consideration, and which I bring forth into remembrance for you in love with these words from the first verse, "Therefore, let us fear . . ." note that he uses the word 'fear'. The verse continues, ". . . lest while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it." Note that he says, "so that none would come short of it." And then he says in verse two, "For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also . . ." 'They' referring to the literal Israel, and then he adds, ". . . but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard."

But alas, alas, my beloved, we have also heard the word that was preached,

many times it has been proclaimed to us. If only we would truly believe, so that it would help us now or in times to come. Behold how the Lord laments over Israel after He had borne them 40 years in the desert. He said, ". . . It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways" (Ps. 95:10). Oh, if only the Lord would not have to lament like this over us! Oh, beloved, what shall I say? Especially when I recall the fact that the merciful Lord has had patience with me and my disobedience and bestowed His goodness and grace out of pure mercy, not only for 40 years as with Israel, but for 80 years less two. Yet I have been and remain a sinner, unclean and wretched, one who is incompetent and in whom nothing good is to be found. Although I have the desire to do that which is good, yet I continue to err from the right way, so that I have to pray with the publican, with my eyes downcast, "Lord be merciful unto me a sinner."

Finally I am coming to my point. Observe how much the Lord has grieved over Israel, so that he swore over Israel in His wrath, and said, ". . . that they should not enter into my rest" (Psalm 95:11). In the 11th verse of Hebrews, chapter 4, the same apostle says, "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." Therefore, my beloved, it is essential to withstand our old nature with all zeal, for our old nature is concerned mainly with temporal things. We should battle against the same with all sincerity and with God's help, especially in such matters where the severest trials and temptations seek to draw us from the straight and narrow way, so that we would fail to attain unto His eternal peace. Yes, if only we would seek to follow - through faith - the way which leads unto eternal rest, as Jesus has shown us with His life and as He Himself has taught us. He says, "I am the way, the truth and the life" (John 14:6). In Matthew 7:13,14, Jesus has also shown us the entrance into both the narrow path and the wide way as well as the exit and the ultimate end of both of these choices.

May we consider this carefully in humility and in prayer, and also that which Paul counsels his Timothy - all of which is meant in the same sense - when he exhorts him to walk the way of life which leads unto our eternal rest and to strive after the same. Let us take note of this and fasten it in our hearts, the way we read - as already stated above - in the first letter to Timothy, chapter 6, from the 6th verse almost to the end of the chapter. "But godliness with contentment is great gain." This would be a profitable teaching for our present life here as well as in our future life to come. Oh, if only all of us in a truly childlike way might appropriate this into our hearts and souls, and with the help of God through faith to strive therefore; and then, after the fulfilment of the days of our lives, that through grace, we might enter into our eternal rest. Oh, that all of us, my dear children, and all my beloved friends, might become partakers thereof through grace, so that on that great Day, when the dead shall arise from their graves and be placed to the right hand side, we might be among those to whom the Lord Jesus will say, ". . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." It is my heartfelt wish that the Lord Jesus might say this to all of us sinful human beings. Now I would earnestly want to raise a prayer with the words of the poet in song No. 445, stanzas 11 and 12:

O heil'ger Geist, regiere mich,  
bis ich von hinnen scheid,

dass ich empfinde kraeftiglich  
den Vorschmack dieser Freude,  
die kein Mensch hie erfahren hat,  
und doch an uns nach Gottes Rat  
soll offenbaret werden.

Nun hilf denn, dass ich  
meinen Lauf, Herr Jesus  
bald vollende! Ich sehne mich  
zu dir hinauf: gib mir ein  
selig Ende. Komm' bald, Herr,  
und erloese mich, denn  
meine Hoffnung steht auf dich;  
Komm', Jesus, komm' in Gnaden.

Now beloved children, in conclusion I quote from the book by Peter Peters called *The Heavenly Wedding* [Die Himmlische Hochzeit]. In this book he describes the delights of heaven which will be experienced after this life is over. The excerpt reads as follows:

Consider, oh Christian soul, how tasteful the heavenly wine will be, of which Jesus spoke to His disciples before His suffering, saying, ". . . I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom." This could also be restated as follows: Remember, oh, my soul, how very precious and enjoyable the fellowship with the heavenly beings will be! It will be all the more wonderful because of the harmonious unity which will govern there. For no adversarial disputation will find place there, nor will there be any misdeeds or mortal failings. Oh, what a joyous harmony of love.

Oh, take heed of this in your thoughts. Oh, you who are summoned along the way of your pilgrim journey here on this earth. As long as you are here amidst the devastation of this mortal life, your cross will not seem hard to carry and those who are against you will not be able to hinder you on your journey, if only you have this living hope. And if you sincerely believe this in truth and cling to the same within your heart, as if you see it before your very eyes, it will increase your zeal and inflame your love for the Bridegroom, Who hath called us to this joyful state and blessed fellowship. Remember this in your thoughts.

Thus far from Peter Peters. Further now, it is my plea to you, my beloved children, to receive this lowly and simple writing from me, with childlike love just as it has been written to you in fatherly love. Although this writing is very undistinguished and lacks scholarly form, I have written it nevertheless in so far as I am able. For I have merely endeavoured to share something with you, even though it is according to my limited gifts and limited knowledge. I trust that it will please the Lord, and that He will grant His blessing and approval thereto

according to His grace. I trust it will serve for the good of us all and that it will rebound to the praise of God. My beloved, I know that you are aware that I am not educated according to the current standards. In addition, I have only a weak memory, my eyesight is failing and seems to be getting worse, so that I find it difficult to write.

Since I expect that this writing may, perhaps, serve as a final farewell unto you, my beloved children, I bid you again - all of you who may read this or hear it being read - to forgive me all my mistakes as they may appear in this letter or otherwise in my life, whereby I may have offended anyone or hurt someone. This is easily possible, and I cannot express this on paper to the satisfaction of every individual, although I would gladly do so. Someone who knows me would probably be better able to differentiate the nuances of what I mean to say, nevertheless, I ask for forgiveness. I bid all of you again, that you would forgive me in everything from the depths of your hearts and to harbour no hard feelings against me.

Also since I have frequently given a bad testimony through my uncircumspect and faulty conduct, it is my prayer that no one here will partake thereof to their detriment. Now, my dear children and all my good friends, please receive another heartfelt greeting from me. In conclusion, I ask again that you forgive me that I address all of you with this letter, whereby I wish to visit all of you. To write each one of you individually is too difficult for me, as you can perceive from the above. If you desire to send these simple but well-meaning lines to one another, please feel free to do so, since you are not living that far apart from each other.

And to you, my beloved Ohm Isaak Friesen, I must include a special greeting. I inform you, first of all, that deep down in my heart, I feel very thankful toward you. Being absent from you, I am mindful of the discussions we have had together, as you will recall. Secondly, I must also mention the following, that I am overjoyed within my heart for your attitude which I sensed within you, when I was with you, and that you have retained the same unchanged until now, which I believe is the result of the love of God. I am pleased that you have accepted the responsibility to remain with the little flock which God has entrusted to you, and to which, in my opinion, you have been appointed as its watchman and shepherd through the holy counsel of God. As He has promised, the Lord will surely want to grant you, by means of His Spirit, wisdom, comfort and power, and an irrepressible courage to feed the souls entrusted to you with the Word of life. For this is the true nourishment for the soul, which will refresh and satisfy.

As a most unworthy being, I wish the above unto you, that you may fulfil the office to which you have been appointed by the Lord, unto the end of your days, out of love for the Gemeinde, and for the glory of the Lord and our beloved Saviour. May God grant you His grace to this end! Amen! In conclusion of this unworthy writing, I wish you my greeting, and also to your beloved wife, together with all well-being, physically as well as spiritually. Greetings are extended to you from your loving friend and brother in the Lord. When you pray for something to the Lord, remember me also, for I am doing likewise.

God bless, *Isaac Loewen*

### Third Letter.

Dear brother-in-law Peter Toews,

I ask you to send, according to opportunity, this letter to your dear parents, as my dear children, and extend my greetings to them and their children; and I wish them all physical and spiritual well-being. I trust they will visit me before long, for which I am waiting with deep sighing and longing. Extend greetings also, to your parents Johann Toews', my bosom friends, whom I will not readily forget. Greet also my beloved grandchildren, such as, Cornelius Toews', Cornelius Goossens and Isaac Warkentins, who are also there by you. And what about David Thiessens, are they in good health? Greet them as well. What is our young fellow-brother, Jacob Enns doing? Greet him as well. As I am hearing nothing from him, ask him to write to me. Greet also the beloved friend Jacob Enns, Sr. I have only been to his place once, but we had much to discuss. He became very precious to me. Greet also his wife. I wish them both the best of health and well-being.

Now I must report a few words to you my beloved children, Johann Warkentins, as I did not complete my letter to you. I have received the information which follows, namely, that on July 8th the District Office [Gebietsamt] has given certain announcements to the village mayors [Schulzenaemter] which they are to make known to the general public. I have extracted the relevant portions of the same which state as follows:

When colonists, who arbitrarily and without permission from the Ministry of Internal Affairs [Reichs-Domain], move from one government district to another, they will forever be excluded by the local authorities from the privileges of a Colonist, and in such event they shall for all time be deprived of the rights and privileges to which this status entitles them and they shall be accorded another status with all its incumbent obligations and shall henceforth be dealt with according to the universal law.

Beloved, I have the confidence in you and need not worry that you will arbitrarily do anything in this important matter which would be in conflict with the law. The announcement was of importance to me. But I do not know the statutes. Does this provision regarding resettlement apply only to purchased land, or also to rented land, or to both? I wanted to refer to these land concerns, as I have heard it said by one of those concerned about the land question, that the higher authorities were involved in this.

Finally, all you beloved in the Lord, whom I love dearly, I would be nearly moved to tears of joy if I could hear from you that, through the grace of God, you have achieved true love, peace and brotherly harmony. Yes, you two brothers, Isaac and Peter Harms, I had nearly forgotten about you. Indeed, you two elderly gentlemen, I trust that you are brilliant shining examples - in so far as our mortal weaknesses allow, for the young brethren and sisters, of love, peace and unity, among one another, as the apostle teaches us in Hebrews 12.

Beloved in-law Peter Toews, and your dear wife. Yes, my dear children, I wish you good health in body and in soul, as well as prosperity in all things, physical as well as spiritual. This is my heartfelt wish for you as a friendly greeting, and also that these simple lines would come to your hands in good health. I am presently

quite well and have not been at home from the 23rd of October - when Jacob Thielmann was engaged to Sara, daughter of Cornelius Pletts, until the 14th of November. During this time I visited all my children and grandchildren. Also during this time, your father (my son-in-law, Johann Warkentin) and Peter Heidebrecht, met me while I was at Johann Loewen's in Kleefeld. They arrived there at noon while they were butchering hogs and left after lunch to go on to Ohrloff for the night.

On October 3rd at Abraham Loewen's, I received your worthy correspondence to me of October 26th through your brother, Cornelius Toews from Hierschau. From this letter I perceive that you are well. I also understand that you want me to read your writing and examine it as to whether it could have been offensive to anybody and that you want my opinion regarding the same. I do not think that it would have been offensive to anyone, if I correctly understand your meaning from the writing. I perceive your wish that the moving from various destinations would be done according to the will of the Lord, and also desire this, from the bottom of my heart. Now that this has already happened, time will tell whether such moves were good. We wish foremostly that love, peace and unity would hold sway among the brethren and sisters in the Lord as well as among the married people . . . and that the peace of God might rule in all their hearts!

I suppose it is possible that the enemy has sown the seed of bitterness in a number of hearts there in Friederichstal, as you say. It is, however, also possible that the evil enemy has already sown this seed here in a number of hearts, and that for years already this seed has grown in the womb, and even during the time of pregnancy the fruits of this seed have frequently manifested themselves from within the innermost being. Such a person knows how to speak with very beautiful, coloured and attractive words and to give them a gloss, so that no one suspects anything. He makes the evil seem small and covers it with an apron of fig-leaves, and in that way, hides it as long as possible, until it can no longer be hidden and their foolishness must come to light. Finally the time of giving birth thereto has arrived and then the guile and the spirit of lying must become obvious through the fruits which arise therefrom, which have been present in these people all this time; and it becomes obvious that they have been held captive by the enemy of our souls. Experience shows us that this is possible and that this has taken place. If a person as described above has been among the brethren in Markusland, he would probably not belong among those who tremble in fear because of conscience pangs and feelings of guilt in view of the wrath of God, and who would confess their sins with tears of remorse, the way you describe those who are mourning and repentant, in your letter. No one knows what is within a man, except the spirit of the being that is within the heart.

You also mention that you have had no worship services there for four weeks and that you expect Ohm Isaak Friesen for the next Sunday. It has been reported here, however, that no one came to you there at that time, as he was discouraged. Thus it could be six weeks . . . [Line missing. Editor] before you will have any services with him to share the word of life from the mouth of God with you: Namely, to satisfy those who are hungry and thirsty, to encourage those who are weary and heavy hearted, and to awaken them from their sleep of indifference. We know that by nature man is prone to do evil and then when the means, which are necessary for resisting the enemy, are lacking, it is all the more easy for Satan to

sow his destructive weeds into the hearts of men. This is especially the case when Satan is granted much time for this.

You also mention, dear brother-in-law, as I understand you, that Ohm Isaak Friesen, without his choosing went from Friedrichsthal to Borosenko much too soon. This agrees with what I myself understood from his own mouth when he still lived in Andreasfeld. At that time he mentioned that it had not been his wish to leave the majority of the brethren and sisters and that this was very hard for him. According to your letter, you wish that this was done according to the will of the Lord, which I also desire from the depths of my heart; Also that the scattering of the members of our fellowship would operate for the salvation of all, and that God would grant that good results might grow therefrom. You have added the comment that it was his responsibility to bring these consequences. I do not truly understand what you mean by this. Do you perhaps mean this in a temporal sense, that it was his responsibility to render due obedience to his father. In part I will gladly agree. A question, however, comes to mind. Do the temporal circumstances of the few church members in Borosenko have the priority over those in Friedrichsthal, the care of whom the Lord has entrusted to him?

Dear brethren, the shepherd whom, after all, the Holy Spirit has called to feed the flock of Christ (Acts 20), must have much sadness and heartache in his soul, when he realizes that he can only seldom come to visit his dear brethren and sisters. Yet he has to give an account to the Judge on that great day for all those entrusted to him, and as to how he worked in the house of God. Surely Ohm Friesen would wish to be able to say with the holy Paul before the dear Lord, "Behold I and the children which God hath given me." Indeed, I say again, how often must he not have heavy thoughts and almost be overcome from depression, when he considers this in his mind, and asks himself how his brethren and sisters in Friedrichsthal might be getting along, in spite of some previous unpleasantries now and again experienced there. Who knows how often he must ask, "How are they getting along? How are their souls prospering?" seeing as he can only seldom travel there to see his brethren and sisters in person.

It must be hard for him, I believe, when he considers his love for those who have done the most to his being there, and when he realizes he can no longer help them not to become lax. Yes, I know of his loving concern for the dear brethren and sisters, and that he felt he could not do justice to them. This concern is clearly evident in his letter to me. I perceive also the fact that he seldom travels to Markusland has much to do with his weak physical condition. I trust the brethren in Borosenko will bear with me in love when I write these things, for I have the confidence . . . the way Paul writes to Timothy, when he says "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine" (1 Tim. 5:17).

Please understand, dear brother-in-law, my opinion is that the dear brethren in Borosenko should either take Ohm Friesen to Markusland, when he longs to go there, or to help him in other ways, when he is inspired by his love and ardour to visit the church members who are entrusted to him; and if he would wish to practice the love and willingness unto the brethren which finds place within himself, surely they would gladly want to take part and to share his difficulties. Oh how that would increase Ohm Friesen's love and brotherly confidence in his dear brethren as well as strengthen his faith. Indeed, that would be a healing balm for

his sad and weary soul. This would also awaken a genuine joy in all of us here, if we could truly see it in practice this way, and that everything was done to the honour of God and to praise and glorify His holy name.

Before I conclude this letter, my beloved children, I wish to extend instructive exhortations for our life's journey to eternity. It encourages those of middle age and the elderly to pursue love and grow therein, and to show many fruits thereof. I have translated the following out of Peter Peter's book:

Listen, you who are grown up and are able to understand what is being spoken. See to it that you live according to the model of Christ in an experiential way so that you may set an example. Let this conduct be your daily concern, so that those who are growing up may be inspired to follow your example by your deeds and not in your words only. God has given you time and opportunity for this purpose (Eph. 4:13). Exercise, therefore, humility, lowliness, compassion and above all, the works of love, to demonstrate the above; not in words alone, but in deed and in truth. Remember the words of Paul who says, "Do all things without murmuring and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain" (Phil. 2:14-16).

It behooves all elderly Christians to follow this teaching. Nor should they murmur against God in any circumstances, even if they suffer physically and are poor, or endure much persecution (Matt. 5). They should be satisfied at all times in whatsoever God permits to come their way (John 1:1). If God blesses them with material goods they should at all times demonstrate their love towards the poor who are in need of their aid (John 1:27). Even if they should thereby suffer loss of material possessions, they should not murmur, but rather be content and extend such mercy with joy (1 Tim. 6). Nor is it seemly for any of them to create confusion or strife (Rom. 14). Instead they should promote anything which serves for peace, holiness, edification and for love (1 Cor. 16). Let all your deeds among people be done in the way of love (Rom. 12). Whatever ye do in word or in deed, do so in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving due thanks for everything unto God, our Father (Col. 3:17).

Therefore read always and exercise yourselves in this manner in godliness. Live worthily so that your walk might be blameless and pure as the children of God (Eph. 4). Evaluate at all times your state and calling and know that you have been chosen and called by God to be holy and without blame in love (Rom. 1). This says very much for it excludes all jealousy, gluttony, drunkenness, uncleanness and everything that is akin to this (Gal. 5). For to live in sin makes one punishable. Consider also the zeal that we must exert in order to gain the victory over sin and to rectify the reasons for our sin and to make them right (Matt. 7). This is the purpose for

which Jesus came, He wants us to experience righteousness and its blessings (Matt. 1:21). For this reason we must continually appear before Him as our healing Master, when we have sinned, in order that we may once again come to true holiness, and that our lives might be blameless, and so that we would be examples before all mankind, and that we might shine as lights in this dark world. These manifestations are found in those who are humble and lowly as is stated above (1 Cor. 1).

Oh, how wonderfully fortunate, blessed and holy is such a life, if we demonstrate our love, modesty, fairness and honesty to all people in our deeds (Phil. 4). We ought to have love and sympathy for the poor, compassion for those who are hardened and angry, friendship and sympathy to the tyrannical and embittered (Rom. 12); we should give good compliments to those who speak evil of us, and demonstrate kindness unto those who slander us (1 Peter. 4). We should pray for those who rob, oppress and harm us. This is a godly exercise and a holy way unto a blessed destination (Matt. 5). For these reasons we are responsible to live earnestly, to meditate on the Word of life, and with all zeal, to seek to fulfil our calling and election (2 Peter 1). In this way we will be abundantly sure that the gate into the Kingdom of our Master, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, is prepared and open for us.

Listen attentively those of you who have become old, and thereby acquired this obligation to be teachers (Heb. 4:15). Since your pilgrimage is drawing to a close, examine yourselves as to how much closer you have become . . . [Half a page here is indecipherable in the manuscript. Editor].

Sincerely consider in your hearts, how the love of Christ must have burned with the being of Paul, for he says, "For I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38,39).

Here you can see how deeply the apostle was rooted through a steadfast faith and in the love of God. God remained with him, even as John says, "He who remains in love, remains in God, and God remains in him."

[A Margin Note. Editor]. In conclusion, dear children and all friends, accept this in love . . . from your dear and loving father,

*Isaac Loewen in Lindenau, the 21st day of July, 1865.*

# Chapter Four

## Letters 1867-1871

Three Letters by Isaac Loewen (1787-1873) Lindenau, Molotschna Colony, South Russia, written between 1867 and 1871.

---

**First Letter. A Letter to my Children and Grandchildren, 1867.**

Beloved children and grandchildren; yes, all of my loved ones in the Lord, a friendly greeting to you! It is my wish for you that everyone of us might have a heartfelt desire for the restoration of a genuine unity in the Spirit through the bond of love and peace, and that all of us might work together toward this end.

Alas, my beloved! It is indeed tragic that considerable wrong thinking and mistrust - yes, and even suspicion, has arisen within our midst, even though we are only few in number. This has occurred, at least partially, because our love has truly become diminished in many cases, and I believe that you - my beloved, will also have perceived this. Perhaps some of you, my beloved children, will not be able to totally exclude yourselves in this regard, for mistrust has spread amongst us to an alarming degree.

Now I would like to ask you, my beloved, what might really be the reason that we are in such a situation? Why is this happening to us, and why have matters developed in this way. If I may venture to answer my own question, in my opinion the fundamental reason would be as follows: That we have not taken sufficiently to heart the seriousness of the division in our midst, nor have we fully realized that the same should inspire us unto repentance and improvement. For we do believe that the Lord has allowed these things to occur, and that the same are to promote the best for our souls. In my mind the fact that so many misfortunes have befallen us is also for our own good. Our beloved God knows what is best for us, and for this reason He allows us to fall, so that it may bring us unto remorse and repentance. If only we receive the same in such a way in accordance with the Word of God, He will also restore us again.

It appears that to some extent we have fallen into apathy which has enabled our enemy to succeed. The evil one is always on the alert to purposely ensnare his victims with the evil root of avarice or greed. These evils are rooted very deeply within the hearts of man so that the same are the cause of many an evil, and they shoot out many branches of diverse species, over which a person can readily fall; and that without warning. This is especially the case if a person is not always on the alert and has fallen into slumber. The evil enemy thereby wins the battle, for he knows when the time is right to ensnare a person within the spider's web, which springs from the evil root - speaking in human terms of course, so that the victim cannot easily be freed. It is not without reason that Paul calls greed a root of all evil. He says, "of all evil" (1 Tim. 6:1-6).

Alas, children, be on guard against greed (Luke 12:15). Our hearts are not empowered to free themselves from the snare referred to above. Our fallen nature

finds this to be very hard. Yes, very hard. I feel this to be most applicable to myself. There is no other hope for a brotherly unity to be restored but by putting to death the old man, called Adam by name. There is no other way or escape from the net. I do not refer only to those things that relate to greed, but to everything that causes distrust and suspicion; namely, to the foundational sources of evil. We must confess the same openly and sincerely, for otherwise, I do not think that a righteousness-working and enduring conciliation will take place. We must work to bring about a true confidence and a genuine trust one among the other, in order to attain a pure love, peace and the bond of perfection.

Oh, behold, my beloved children! I feel it necessary to repeat it once more, that because of these and other similar unpleasant matters, as already mentioned before, misunderstanding and distrust have arisen among us. Yes, partially because of sweet sounding words and humble - even ostensibly sympathetic - speeches, which are presented as excuses whereby sincere people are persuaded to have somewhat too much confidence in the ones who make these excuses. Others, again, have used convincing words whereby they have apparently made the guilty ones feel stronger, who otherwise might have acknowledged their fault and confessed the same. Instead, these and similar matters more are protracted, and much evil thinking, distrust, and loveless speaking arises during this time in respect to those who stand under suspicion. These things were done without first conducting a thorough investigation and inquiry of the matter. As a result it got so loud at some brotherhood meetings that it must have sounded like a fight was erupting to anyone overhearing the discussion. Please forgive me for speaking like this, for it has saddened me greatly.

I have now explained to some extent, my dearly beloved children, the sorrowful situation within our Gemeinde, according to my humble opinion. I have done so in order to advise you, as well as to exhort you to do your best in love, to contribute toward the restoration of brotherly reconciliation, as much as the Lord will grant you grace for so doing. I trust that with God's help, we will once more be reunited. My beloved, what will be needed and required to restore a genuine brotherly love and brotherly confidence amongst us? May we in grace be found before God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, to be a true and spiritual peoplehood; yes, as dear brothers and sisters who belong to the supreme Head of the Church of Christ.

And what is more, my dear children, to this can be added the words of the holy apostle Paul, when he addresses and exhorts the elect of God in Colossae, and advises them. These teachings can also serve us to maintain brotherly love and unity amongst ourselves, if only the peace of God would rule in our hearts, for which we have also been chosen as a body or community. We ought also to be thankful for everything at all times, and according to my thinking it is also required that we brothers and sisters visit one another and come together, so that the words of Christ would also come to dwell richly within us in all wisdom, the way the apostle says, so that we might edify one another with hymns of praise and melodious spiritual songs. Let us do this with all our hearts in word and in deed and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, that we might become as united as is exemplified by the believers at Jerusalem who were one in body and soul (Acts 4:32). May God grant this. Oh, if this could be said of us! For then much worthless conversation about earthly and vain things would be left unspoken.

What I mean to say is this, my most beloved, let all of us, above all else, beseech our dear God of love and peace, and humbly plead with Him to once again be merciful to us and to grant us properly repentant and contrite hearts. Let each and everyone of us truly examine ourselves carefully whether we have offended our brother or sister in any way, whereby they might have been saddened or vexed, be this through loveless words or unfounded and inconsiderate statements regarding anyone, whether or not it occurred in their presence or otherwise. Let such a one, as stated above, who might have offended a brother or sister, or who might have been a stumbling block, humble himself and with repentance and remorse, ask the offended one to forgive him in love.

Yes, my beloved, I beg of you that as much as you desire to be united with all the dear brothers and sisters in love and unity, that you would likewise be ready to admit your offence against your fellow member, be your shortcoming great or small. I say it again, be willing to confess. Ah, my beloved, I do hope that no one would refuse to do this; may we all be ready to ask for forgiveness. However, I do not mean to say - nor do you - that a brother should request the other person to ask for forgiveness of him. Oh no, my beloved, no! If only everyone might examine himself, for I do believe that their conscience will tell them what they need to do. The way James speaks in chapter 5, verse 16, "Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another." I have no doubt that if everyone of us would do this, in as much as is possible according to our weak mortal natures, that it would be possible with the help of God to once again restore the Gemeinde, as the Scripture teaches, unto sincere love, peace and unity.

In order that this might occur through grace, let us therefore beseech the Lord for help, with the words of the poet who says,

Hilf uns ja fleiszig halten, Die Einigkeit im Geist;  
Dasz ueber uns moeg walten, Dein Segen allermeist;  
Nach deinem Geist und Sinn, Einander uns Vertragen  
In Freundschaft und Nachjagen, Dem koestlichen Gewinn.

Help us to be diligent, to keep the unity in the Spirit  
That over us would rule, Your blessing most of all  
According to your spirit and mind, To bear one another  
In a friendly way and to pursue, after the costly prize.

At this point I want to present something further regarding the circumstances of our Gemeinde; namely, an extract from a letter written to Prussia by our Reformer, Menno Simons - may we remember him with a blessing - regarding dissension and the restoration of unity within the Gemeinde. I believe that it provides us with a good teaching and admonition, which we should heed. Among other things the letter states as follows:

After there has been amongst you, sad to say, much discord and bitterness, and as you now have again given one another the kiss of peace and are again greeting one another as brothers. I exhort you, therefore, in Christ Jesus that you examine yourselves in this matter, whether you love each other with genuine brotherly love and

whether you are telling your brother by the spirit of Christ, "The Lord's peace be with you!" Oh, my brothers, I greatly fear that such greeting is more a habit coming merely from the lips instead of from the heart. Oh, my beloved, let everyone take care that his heart and mouth are in agreement. For whosoever speaks peace to his brother with his mouth but still harbours anger, in my opinion, is a hypocrite and not a true Christian. For this reason let everyone take care that whenever he deals or converses with his neighbour, he would do it as if he were before God, who knows and sees all things.

Oh, my dearly beloved brethren and sisters in Christ Jesus, I exhort you in love with the word of the Lord, that if there are still some brethren in your midst, who do not have peace with others, which I hope is not the case, that the same would leave their offering, their fasting, prayers and almsgiving at the altar, as long as they are not united and likeminded in peace. Let the impure in heart be far from you.

Let none of you complain against his brother or inwardly groan, although your poor brother has offended you inadvertently, or in error and in wrong dealings, and owes you ten or twenty pennies. Do not deal too harshly with your erring brother. Rather, always consider how your own case stands before God; namely, you owe many thousands pounds and do not have a single penny with which to pay Him. If you want to escape the punishment of your Lord, his severe judgement and imprisonment, then He must pardon you in grace. Why? It is through the crimson blood of Christ, which is your substitute. Thereby He graciously pardons your sins. Therefore also forgive your brother, no matter what wrong he has done to you. If, however, you do not forgive, then you will not be forgiven. Christ Himself says so in Matthew, chapter 18. For this reason I exhort you, as does also the holy apostle Paul, that you behave yourselves in a friendly manner toward one another and forgive one another, even as God has forgiven you in Christ Jesus.

Most esteemed brethren, consider God's Word which you have certainly often heard, that if anyone is angry with his brother, he will be guilty before the court and if anyone says to his brother "Raca", he is answerable to the Sanhedrin. Do you not know that anyone who says, "You fool", will be liable to the fire of hell? And that John says, "He who does not love his brother abides in death" and "He who hates his brother is a murderer?" (1 John 3). "He who seeks revenge," says Sirach, "will find the Lord's revenge and his sins will be retained. Forgive your neighbour's wrong and you, when you pray, will also be forgiven. The man who keeps on being angry with another man, how can he hope to receive forgiveness of God? He who shows no mercy to his fellow-man, how dare he ask for the remission of his sins? Oh, man, consider the end! Let go of this animosity" (Sirach 7).

My dearest brethren in the Lord, do not believe that I have written this admonition merely to some particular brothers. Not at

all. I have written this because I have seen with my eyes and heard with my ears the pagan ways and impurity of many individuals, the evil suspicion and slander, indeed the terrible fruit that comes from this quarrel. This is why I exhort you all in general. If the devout who are now with me spiritually, are living in Christian peace with one another, they should forever persevere in the same. Should there be some who might carry the poisonous sting of bitterness in their heart, these I have exhorted to repent without further delay, to ask for God's grace, to desire, to seek and pursue . . . this very desirable Christian restoration of reconciliation.

Secondly, I exhort you, as my comrades and those in the patience of Christ, if you desire and follow this peace (the peace above referred to) with a sincere heart, as I also do, you no doubt will foster genuine Christian love. You surely know how this operates in all matters and what its characteristics and nature are. Indeed, if you humble yourselves under its sceptre and voluntarily submit to its administration and government, then the holy peace of God will, I think, continue to remain with you in genuineness, and you will grow and increase more and more.

Love operates blamelessly, it takes care how it speaks and what it does, lest it sins against God. It does not anger, destroy, or vex the brethren. It is always diligent to set a good example for the neighbour in all righteousness, instruction and training. It refrains from malice, for its nature is godly, and it hates all unrighteousness, wilful sinning and cunning evil. If love is provoked through a word or deed, it bears such provocation patiently. Love is not revengeful and therefore it cannot be deceived by anyone, as it reaffirms the truth. It is treasured by others and approaches them with humility, even those who hate it. As love is congenial, it draws many to the truth. It wins, satisfies or pacifies the hearts of those who are ill disposed toward it. It has no inwardly evil thoughts nor does it conduct itself with impropriety toward others, whether secretly or openly. It does so with a devout and sincere heart, without guile or deceit, in righteousness before God in Christ Jesus.

Neither is this love bitter, nor does it hate its brother when he stumbles. It does not talk behind people's backs. Nor does it slander, but rather covers the multitude of sins, according to James and Peter. This love comes from God and therefore it operates in a godly manner. It raises the weak; it teaches the foolish; it reproaches the guilty; it bears everything that can be borne. It receives those who are in misery; it clothes the naked; it feeds the hungry; it gives the thirsty to drink; it visits the sick. All in all, its willing and able services are at the disposal of all people. Should it happen, as it indeed does from time to time, that a devout brother has grievously fallen, then love is at all times ready to accept brotherly rebuke and instruction. It is not haughty, but accepts instruction with thanksgiving instead, like a wise person. Solomon says, "Rebuke the wise man and he will love you." Love understands the underlying

intention, namely, the glorification of God.

My faithful brothers in the Lord, I do believe this love to be an excellent means of reconciliation and peace. Oh that this love mentioned above had been at the helm of your ship! For then it would not have been stranded or suffered such damage.

My dear brethren, do understand how I mean it. Love still exists today. Arise out of your folly and do not delay. Henceforth be diligent to approach one another with care, modesty, lovableness, sincerity and devoutness. Avoid all offence, useless quarrelling and arguing; rather shun the like and flee therefrom, so that this genuine evangelical, Christian peace, will not leave you again, but rather, as becomes the church of the saints, it will become rooted, and rest and dwell within you.

Behold, my most esteemed brethren and sisters, I have written this exhortation to provoke you unto love with an upright heart and attitude; I have written this to all of you who desire this genuine peace, and who seek for the very best. I write to the godly-minded everywhere, and to those who are dear brothers and fellow sojourners. With the holy Paul I am confident in saying, according to the witness of my conscience, that it is life for me if you stand fast in the Lord. Therefore I beseech you to also accept this with the same attitude and mind as I have written it. It is my desire that the Lord's will be done and that you might take hold of the word . . . , lest I should have laboured in vain. I trust that you find herein instruction, profit and peace.

Oh that our merciful Father would add His grace and blessing to what I have written in love, and that it might serve for the best of my fellow man. Amen.

Thus far from Menno Simons. Finally, in conclusion hereof, I ask you to accept from me these lowly and imperfect lines in love, with the same mind as they have been given. Beloved children, I especially hope that you will accept the admonishment and instructions from our highly treasured Reformer, as they direct us toward love, peace and unity. Indeed, my beloved, if only we might truly take to heart the noble deeds and ways of love, in the way Menno has presented the nature and characteristics thereof! Oh, if we could but seize hold of this love, peace and unity! Oh, how much more would we not henceforth strive to walk more circumspectly, in order that we would not again depart from the treasure of virtuous love and peace.

May the merciful Father, through the Lord Jesus Christ and His grace, grant His blessing and success to the foregoing worthy and desirable exhortations. Amen! Thus far from your father who loves you dearly.

*Isaac Loewen Lindenau, April, 1867.*

April 24, 1869

Beloved Children in the Lord,

Dear in-law Peter Toews, together with your beloved wife; yes, all of you my beloved. I wish and desire for you the best of physical health, but above all spiritually. Yes, I wish unto you, together with all your beloved co-workers and fellow sojourners, the peace of God, and through the love of Christ, an impartial heart, patience and abundant courage, in this our time of tribulation. The foregoing is conveyed to you as a fatherly greeting from me, a weak and frail old man.

I have received your precious letter of December 11th and the same found me in good physical health. Praise God! I wish you the same that you will likewise receive this humble letter in good health. From your letter I perceive that you still are getting along much the same as ever and that your beloved wife is coming ever closer to the time of giving birth, with the hope and comfort that the dear Saviour would stand by her with His gracious support. This is also my wish and desire for her that our all-loving God would sustain those who love Him, during their pilgrim journey onto the eternal, promised Fatherland. May He preserve her life, and according to His grace, not permit her to suffer during childbirth above her measure to endure.

From our own more than abundant experience, we know that many a beloved woman has sacrificed her life in such circumstances. Just like the example from the Holy Scriptures of the beloved patriarch, Jacob, who suffered the loss of his beloved Rachel as they journeyed to Egypt, some distance from Ephrath, when she gave birth to Rachel. The confinement fell hard upon Jacob's wife, and she became distraught that she had to die, and therefore she called her son Benjamin.

P. J. Twisck states that it was as if she was thereby saying that her son was a symbol and was to bear a name signifying that she had borne him with much pain and suffering, and for the reason that it cost her life. "And it came to pass, as her soul was departing (for she died), that she called his name Ben-oni: but his father called him Benjamin. And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem" (Gen. 35:18,19). Jacob called him Benjamin, namely, the son of his right hand, as the child was born under unique circumstances and was his most beloved son. He was special as Jacob was old and the son took the place of his mother. Dear children, let us observe what Paul says that there is still a good comfort reserved for the dear wives, although they give birth with pain because of the cardinal sin, which is their divinely given punishment (Gen. 3:6). "However she shall be saved in child bearing, if she continues in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety" (1 Tim. 2:14,15). What a fine promise for all God loving women!

Now dear in-law, I can give you a perfect example of the joy which would return to us if the Lord would articulate all our hearts so that we could again be reconciled in a Biblical sense. Indeed we have reason to reflect and to be careful in this regard, which can be understood from the declaration. As you know, some ministers already differed regarding a number of issues long before the separation. Because of the length of time during which these differences have existed, it is also a matter of concern that a number of these issues have become deeply rooted in our hearts, so that ultimately these matters also had their impact on the Gemeinde. Consequently it could not have continued to please the Lord, when we

truly consider the words which he gave to the Pharisees (Matt. 12), that we must also believe it to be the truth. And yet, before it could come to a division, it first had to be exposed publically before everyone through a harsh unbiblical deed, and to support the same, in order that we could be strong enough to renounce the ministers; and that we no longer had confidence in them, and therefore, also had to dismiss them.

This was not enough, rather they also dismissed Ohm Enns from his office and through a petition signed by the ministers, they made it known to all the brethren in the Gemeinde what an evil man Enns supposedly was. This was endorsed by all the ministers and justified by them. You know, dear in-law, what you discussed with Ohm Johann Friesen at Isaak Friesen's in Blumenhoff regarding various matters. I, too, was in Blumenof at the time, although, I did not hear the discussion, but I have heard about the same from another.

Now perhaps there are still some among the ministers who can truthfully present themselves in accordance with the Scripture, so that with a good conscience and with joy we can acknowledge them to be good and faithful ministers and steadfast leaders, and that we may once again give them our trust and in faith be reconciled with them out of love. As we were involved in the beginnings of the division with sorrowful hearts, and were supposed to renounce the beloved ministers and state that we could no longer have confidence in them, in accordance with the first declaration of the ministers to Ohm Enns, we should partake in the reconciliation so that the Gemeinde would not suffer any further damage therefrom. What I have just written is for you only and is not intended to mean anymore than that we should give serious thought to the impropriety in the conduct of the matter.

My dear in-law, if, however, the reconciliation can take place in the way that I understand it from your writing and from the declaration, and in accordance with the wishes expressed therein, I am confident that it will also occur in accordance with the will of God. Oh, how full of gladness we would be and with what tears of joy would we not extend to each other the hand of brotherly love, and then with the help of God we would work together with each other to build the house of the Lord of the Gemeinde in genuine fellowship. I will close my remarks in this regard prayerfully, with the words of the poet from song number 407:

Gott! unser Fuehrer, Schild and Ruhm,  
bau' dein' Gemeinde hier auf Erden  
und lass sie als dein Eigentum  
durch deinen Geist gegrundet werden,  
so wird dein Ruhm durch sie erhoben,  
dein Ruhm, mein Gott! dem Ruhm gehoert,  
so wird sie hier and dort dich loben,  
so lang die Ewigkeit selbst waehret.

Dear children, what is the dear sister Gerhard Goossen still up to these days? Does she still have to remain confined to her sick bed? The way I am hearing it, the outlook is not yet for a complete restoration of health as her sickness and condition still varies a good deal from time to time. This is what is implied by what we hear. I am frequently very mindful of the beloved sister, and trust that the Lord

will grant her abundant patience, of which she has already been much in need during her lengthy suffering. I do hope that through grace she continues to remain steadfast in her faith in the Lord, which also brings a great reward. I hope that with the help of God, she will also be able to cast all her concerns upon Him. I trust that she will feel as one poet advises us, namely, to cast all our burdens upon the Lord, as is expressed by the following stanzas:

Wirf in allen deinen Sachen  
Dein Anliegen auf den Herrn  
Und denk er wird es wohl machen.  
Seine Guet' ist nah und fern.  
Er sorgt fuer die Voegelein  
Und fuer jeden ins gemein  
Der mit Bitten und mit Flehen  
Tut nach seiner Hilfe sehen.

Drum befiehl ihm deine Wege  
Und wirf deine Sorg' auf ihn  
Und richt deinen Gang und Stege  
Allezeit nach des Herrn Sinn.  
Und tu' dabei hoffen fest  
Er wird wohl machen aufs best'  
Sei mit allem wohl zufrieden  
Wie er dir dein Teil beschieden.

Schickt er dir ein Kreuz zu tragen  
Sei zufrieden, trag es gern  
Denk es sind zeitliche Plagen,  
Die sich nicht erstrecken fern  
Er wird den Gerechten nicht  
Stossen von sein Angesicht  
Noch ewig in Unruh lassen  
Sondern ihn mit Freud umfassen.

Dort in jenem Freudenleben  
Wir erwachen nach seinem Bild  
Will er uns das ew'ge Leben  
Und sein unser Lohn und Schild,  
Lasst denn diese kurze Zeit  
Nur in voller Mueh' und Streit,  
Wenn der Tod ein End' wird machen  
Hoeren auf all unsere Sachen.

Wenn der Herr dir Krankheit sendet  
Und mancherlei Ungemach,  
Denk das er's zum Besten wendet.  
Und befiehl ihm deine Sach.  
Seufz' und klage nicht zu sehr

Du machst dir die Plage schwer.  
Merk auf die Beispiel der Frommen,  
Die durch Kreuz zu Gott gekommen.

Hiob verlor ja all das Seine  
Allzumal auf einen Tag.  
David's Fluch, ach der war nicht kleine  
Joseph im Gefaengnis lag  
Daniel in der Loewen Grub',  
Da Gott Habakuk hin hub,  
Der ihm Speise musste bringen,  
Dass er koennte Gott lobsingem.

Lasset uns nun zu Gott flehen,  
Dass er uns durch seinen Geist  
Leite uns auch uebersehen  
Unsere Fehler allermeist,  
Die wir hier auf Erd' begehen,  
Und dass er es laesst geschehen,  
Dass wir nach dem Weltgetuemmel  
Gehen in den Freudenhimmel.

Zuletzt wuensche ich nichts mehr  
Als dass des Herrn Segen  
Komm ueber allen her  
Und dieses ueberwegen  
Auf dass wir unparteiisch  
In allen Dingen sein.  
Und sprechen recht so wie  
Vom Grund des Herzens rein.

Hierauf schliess ich Adje,  
Gott wolle uns alle geben  
Gesundheit Fried' and Ruh'  
Hiernach das ew'ge Leben,  
Auf dass, wenn wir geschieden  
Und unseren Lauf vollbracht,  
Die Kron' des Lebens im Frieden  
Vor uns schon dort gemacht.

Dear children, allow this to be enough for this time. In conclusion I extend a cordial greeting. Please accept these simple and humble lines in love the way I have written the same in love. They are simple and without rhyme, yet I trust you will understand the meaning better than that I could portray it with my pen. I trust you will glean from them nothing that will lead to harm but only for peace and edification. I have the confidence in you that it will be so.

Now I commit you unto the Lord and His divine guidance. Let us pray to Him that He might rule all our hearts to the honour and glory of His name, and

for the salvation of all our souls, through the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!

This far from your loving father, whom you might remember in your prayers as he has requested.

*Is. Loewen Kleefeld, April 24, 1869.*

Greet Gerhard Goossens, your dear parents and parents-in-law, Cornelius Toews', Kornelius Loewens, Abr. Loewens, and all who ask about me and are still in remembrance of me; yes, including all the sisters and brethren in the spirit. Johann Thielmanns visited me for two hours, not more. The many mistakes in my writing are due to my short memory and poor eyesight.

### **Letter Three: An Epistle to a Granddaughter, 1871.**

Beloved Granddaughter Maria Plett,

I do not know at the present time how soon it may be before an opportunity will avail itself to forward a letter along to you in the Molotschna. However, I will attempt to compose a letter on the chance that an opportunity will arise in the future, whereby I can forward the same to you. At times I find that writing is very tiresome for me, partially because of eyes which have already grown very dim and in part due to a faltering intelligence. Because of the compulsion of love I will nevertheless try to write a short reply as requested in your letter of the 3rd day of December of last year, and let its form and rhyme be as it may. I am prepared to err for you my granddaughter, for I know that you will receive this from your aged and feeble grandfather for the good in childlike love, and that you will forgive me no matter how imperfect and insignificant it may be.

First of all I will say something about the solemn vows which you have now made with your beloved God, and which you have promised to keep through the holy baptism. You mention that you are unable to fulfil this covenant from your own strength and that you have in mind to follow the advice of the apostle James when you are lacking in wisdom (James 1:5). Yes, it is of all things most necessary to practice this teaching in accordance with the inwardly inspiration, which--I perceive from your previous writing--you find within yourself.

In the writings of Peter Peters which he writes for the instruction of young people, certain converted youths say,

But beloved messenger help us pray, yes, remember us in your prayers. We want to consider your beneficial instruction and at all times submit ourselves in obedience unto the word of God, in the hope that the Lord will help us to complete a blessed journey toward the heavenly wedding unto which you have been summoned us.

Now the Messenger replies,

Beloved children, Surely you do not want to go about this most solemn matter lightheartedly. For a true conversion is a wonderful matter and I say unto you that there is great joy in heaven (Luke 15:7), over one sinner who is converted, and if this results in rejoicing in heaven then you should also become a partaker of this heartfelt joy. Give thanks with great gratitude unto the Father who

hath made you worthy to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light, (Col. 1:12), and who leads you from out of the darkness into the kingdom of His beloved Son. I beseech you, receive this unto your heart and remain within the words and teaching of Christ, for Jesus our Lord shall make us free from the slavery of sin (John 8:36), so that you might be true followers and disciples of Christ. Watch ye, stand fast in the faith (1 Cor. 16:13), and give an account of yourselves like men. For the devil will seek to controvert you (1 Peter 5:8), in order to draw you away. Continue steadfastly in prayer (Eph. 6:18), and continue therein with thankfulness and be of good courage, for the remuneration will be great.

May the God of peace, who once brought forth from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal testament, make you fit unto all good works in order that His will might be done, and to do what is pleasing unto Him through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Thus far from Peter Peters. Now beloved daughter, do take the aforesaid to heart and preserve that which hath been promised in your disposition and thoughts, and do not fail to give heed unto them. Yes, take to heart the words which the beloved Paul spoke unto the Philippians, admonishing them.

Da Freud der Fuell allezeit  
Wird sein fuer deinem Thron,  
Aus Gnaden sein bereit,  
Durch Christus deinen Sohn.

Where the fullness of joy eternally  
before Your throne, shall be  
prepared through grace so free  
through Jesus Christ, Your Son.

Further from the book by Peter Peters:

Mag Gottes Lieb euch nicht bewegen,  
Zu treten auf sein heiligen Pfad,  
So ueberregt wieder dagegen,  
Sein Strafergericht, bedenket das,  
Das grosze Lohn, das er wird geben  
All'die ihm dienen ganz aufrecht  
Bewegt euch dieses nicht zum Leben  
So seid ihr gewisz der Suende Knecht.

And further Peter Peters considers the manner in which good friends here on earth come together and must part again, and how they commit each other unto the grace of God until that time when there shall be no more parting. He states as follows:

It is very certain that although good friends come together here in this mortal realm, they must again part from each other in recognition that this is not the place which has been prepared for them where they shall dwell eternally (Heb 4:19). Rather the same will follow in perfection later when the great King of Kings will come to gather His precious jewels (1 Tim. 6:16), and to impart the eternal inheritance unto his chosen ones (Rev. 19:16 and 17:14); Where they shall never more part (Matt. 25:34), and where they shall behold the majesty of God in perfect joy (Rev. 7:19), just as He is, together with the heavenly hosts (Tim 4:17); and where their hearts will now be bound together by the bond of perfection, which is love (Col. 3).

And in parting amidst many tears (Acts 20:37), and in prayer to God (Acts 21:5), they embrace each other with the kiss of peace (Acts 21:5). And then, because of necessity and not their desire, they part having committed each other to the gracious keeping of God, in order that if they would not once again see each other in person, that they would then find each other in the eternal Fatherland of peace (Acts 20:13). I wish that all of Christendom might confess a knowledge of this meeting, in order that they would all prepare themselves and venture forth in the way of piety, with a perfect faith and love (Luke 12:39); yes, and the hope of their eternal salvation (1 Peter 1:5). May the gracious Father through His beloved Son and through the leading of the Holy Spirit grant this unto us (1 Cor. 13). Amen.

Thus far from Peter Peters. Now my beloved, I wish from my heart that our benevolent God and Father would also allow us to partake of the foregoing. Beloved Maria, may you receive these few lines together with a greeting in good health and forgive that which is deficient, and at all times think of me for the best, and I will do likewise. Write to me if you have opportunity as this would be very welcome with me. I continue to commit you unto God and His grace. Thus far from your grandfather who loves you dearly.

*Isaac Loewen Blumenhoff, the 8th of October, 1871.*

## **Editor's Comment**

The origin of the documents in Part Nine, Chapters Two, Three and Four, is described in Part Nine, Chapter One, and in the appropriate footnotes. I acknowledge with thanks the assistance of Dr. Harry Loewen, Chair of Mennonite Studies, University of Winnipeg, Manitoba, in editing the writings in Chapter Two, Three and Four, Part Nine.

# Chapter Five

## Commentary

**The Hard Love of a Mennonite Patriarch: The Letters of Isaac Loewen (1787-1783), Lindenau, Molotschna Colony, South Russia, A Commentary by Dr. Harry Loewen, Chair of Mennonite Studies, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1992.**

---

### Introduction.

The letters of Isaac Loewen, written between 1863 and 1871, resemble the epistles of the Apostle Paul and other New Testament writers. Written to his children, grandchildren and other relatives, they express Loewen's concern for the spiritual life of the recipients and that of the entire Kleine Gemeinde (KG). The extraordinary length of these letters and the occasional reference with regard to the possibility that others may read these writings as well, leave little doubt that Loewen had a future wider readership in mind.

### Letters to Heinrich and Maria Loewen, 1863.

The first two letters, written in 1863 to his son Heinrich and his daughter-in-law Maria, deal with Loewen's sorrow over his children's "worldliness" and the sudden death of his son. It may well be that with these letters Loewen not only wished to admonish his children to heed the ways of God and of the KG, but also to let others know that he did not approve of his son's misconduct, especially his decision to marry "outside the faith" and to join a Grosse Gemeinde congregation. There is some evidence that members of the KG held Loewen at least partly responsible for his son's waywardness.

The two letters are of considerable interest to students of Mennonite religious life in nineteenth-century Russia. The details of tension between Loewen and his children Heinrich and Maria are sketchy, but the broad outlines of their relationship and of the Heinrich Loewen story emerge fairly clearly in the letters. According to Editor Delbert Plett, Heinrich "became enamoured to the ways of the world and cast his eyes upon a young lady, Maria Doerksen, who did not belong to the KG and refused to join this group." Heinrich then "renounced the Gemeinde and was accepted into the more liberal Ohrloff Gemeinde, even though they knew about his loose living."

It is not altogether clear what Heinrich's "loose" living consisted of. There is some indication that after his first wife died, Heinrich did not take his Christian faith and membership in the KG all that seriously. Of great concern to his father and the Gemeinde was his courting of a woman who did not belong to the KG. In the end he decided to marry her and, since she did not wish to join the conservative group, join the more "liberal" Ohrloff Gemeinde. There is also some indication that Heinrich indulged in alcoholic beverages, which the KG did not approve of. Moreover, Maria Doerksen was considered vain with regard to the

wearing of "outward apparel," an external sign, in the eyes of the strict KG, that Maria was "not right with the Lord."

Loewen's letter to his son and his new wife is the expression of a father and congregational leader who was deeply concerned about his child's salvation and standing in the KG. Since Heinrich and Maria were now married, one might ask what they could have done to appease their father and the Gemeinde. They could, of course, not be expected to annul their marriage, nor is there any indication that Loewen had this in mind. But they could, and were expected to, repent of their course of action and "worldliness," and return to the KG fold. Loewen, in fact, suggests that they do so, citing examples of couples who returned to the Gemeinde. "There was," Loewen writes, "a young person who married a girl from outside of us, and contrary to our confession of faith. Later, however, upon sincere remorse, he and his wife came back to the Gemeinde, which awakened a great joy within our fellowship."

To bring about remorse, Heinrich and Maria are admonished to read specific passages in the Bible, Menno Simons, the *Martyrs' Mirror*, and "other books written by nonresistant Christians and by men who love the truth." They are advised to avoid writings that are "written in the spirit of the modern times." Mennonites, according to Loewen, read these modern books "zealously" and were misled by them. It might be added that this fear of "modern" and what was considered less than pietistically-Christian ready material was also shared by the early Mennonite Brethren. More liberal Mennonites, including P.M. Friesen, considered this as cultural backwardness and "obscurantism."

In his attempt to bring his children back to the way of the KG, Loewen resorts to what today would be called psychological or emotional pressure. "What if your mother should open her eyes and see her son!" he asks Heinrich. "What if it were possible that she could again lift up her eyes from the grave and behold her [third] youngest son . . . walking in the ways of the world, in liberty, pomp, splendour, and whatever else can be found on the broad road?" Loewen adds that his son's children from the first marriage have a bad example in their father, and that his first wife would be disappointed and sad about Heinrich's conduct.

Maria, who also is addressed in this letter, must have been confused about her father-in-law's admonition. On the other hand he tells the couple that they "have both become one flesh through the mystery of matrimony, according to Ephesians 5," and on the other hand he considers Maria the cause of his son's downfall, his leaving the Gemeinde, and loving Maria more than Christ. Loewen adds: "This in spite of the vows of obedience" Heinrich had made to the congregation and God. All would have been well, according to Loewen, had Heinrich and Maria been "of one mind in the faith," by which he means membership in the KG.

There is no doubt in Loewen's letter about what the writer and other KG members thought of Mennonites in the Grosse Gemeinde whom Heinrich and Maria had joined. To express his disapproval of the more liberal Mennonites, Loewen quotes from a long poem written by Ohm Heinrich Balzer, a KG leader. In this poem Balzer states the reasons for his own leaving the "old" Mennonite church. Among the more obvious sins and failures among Mennonites, Balzer mentions smoking, reading of "vain books", "novels" and newspapers, worldly education, art, ostentatious wedding celebrations, drinking of alcoholic beverages,

and "carnal" activities in which young people of both sexes participate. In all this, according to Balzer, the "watchmen," leaders among Mennonites, are silent and refuse to stem the tide of loose living. Loewen adds that for the above reasons none of the KG members, including Loewen the father, had attended the wedding of Heinrich and Maria. To attend would have meant approval of the marriage and participating in the sins of other Mennonites.

The letter to Heinrich concludes with a long poem entitled "Lamentation of One Who Went Astray." While there is no evidence that Heinrich felt guilty about what he had done, by quoting the poem Loewen hoped to awaken remorse in his son. Stanza one of the poem reads in free translation: "I have been betrayed by the world/My heart now suffers pain/Since I did not heed God's word sufficiently/I now must suffer remorse/Strayed from God's ways/I am in great anguish/What shall I do in my condition?/Faith, hope and love are dead within me."

Whether Loewen's letter of admonition would have caused Heinrich to "repent," is not known, for the young man never lived to see the letter. While visiting two of his friends, Heinrich was suddenly killed by a stroke of lightning. When Loewen received the news of his son's tragic death, he wrote another letter, to Maria, with the intent to comfort his daughter-in-law and to make her see that Heinrich's death was God's punishment of a sinful life. He also expresses the hope that Maria will regard her husband's death as God's voice to her. Both letters were then sent to Maria. Citing numerous examples from the Bible of how God punishes sinful people, Loewen states that his son's death causes him "more sorrow and sadness for his soul" than did "his heavy fall." "The hope of his coming back," Loewen writes, "is now extinguished forever."

In his letter to Heinrich, Loewen had briefly mentioned why he and other members of the Gemeinde had not attended the couple's wedding. In his letter to Maria he explains at greater length the reason for his and other members' absence. They all sought to remain faithful to the Bible's instruction with regard to "marriage in the Lord." Maria should know that the KG takes the rule of being one in the faith very seriously.

Loewen then refers to the emphasis of the KG on humility, implying that Maria's lack of humility prevented her from joining the KG. Pride and vanity, according to Loewen, lie at the root of all sin, and Maria had become guilty of pride and vanity. "Clothes show the sins we have committed in Adam," Loewen writes, thereby indicating how he and other members viewed this young woman's life. After many references to, and quotations from, biblical passages and hymns, Loewen concludes that there are only two ways for Maria to follow: "The broad road which leads to eternal condemnation and the narrow one which leads into eternal life."

It is not known how Maria felt about, or responded to, the two letters from her father-in-law. In a letter to his brother-in-law Peter Toews, Loewen writes in 1865, two years after Heinrich's death, that he has "frequently stayed with the widow Heinrich Loewen." In the same letter Loewen also writes that Maria is "still unable to make a decision from among all her suitors who have proposed to her in marriage." Maria still dreams of her late husband, Loewen writes, and she is dearly fond of her daughter "who very much resembles her father." Thus while there are few details about the later relationship between Loewen and his daughter-in-law, the little evidence there is points in the direction of cordiality and

love between the two.

### Unity and humility.

Loewen's letters written between 1865 and 1871 (Chapters 3 and 4) require little comment. They deal primarily with family and congregational matters, expressing concern with regard to the unity and spiritual life of the KG. Quoting at great length from the Bible, hymns, Menno Simons, the *Martyrs' Mirror*, and from writings of KG leaders, Loewen instructs his readers to shun the world, to remain steadfast in the faith, to help preserve the unity among members and congregations, and to practice humility which Loewen considers an important characteristic of the KG.

To preserve humility among members and harmony within the congregation, church discipline, according to Loewen, is most necessary. Indeed, if a person humbles himself before God and the Gemeinde, Loewen writes to Peter Toews, "then the love for the brethren will again raise itself and be strengthened." Lack of humility, on the other hand, is a root cause of a lack of faith and worldliness.

Another concern of Loewen is the materialism which he sees around him, including among his children and members of the KG. Quoting Jakob Roohr in the *Martyrs' Mirror*, Loewen warns against "temporal advancement" in all areas of life. "For such earthly gain can be a great impediment for the spiritual gifts, as our senses can thereby become filled with the cares and concerns of this world and our energy impoverished and dissipated." It might be observed that the KG, while industrious and desirous to remain model farmers, stressed spiritual values over material things more than any other group among Russian Mennonites.

Loewen's many references to, and quotations from, the *Martyrs' Mirror* and Menno Simons, lends support to Delbert Plett's argument that the KG was more conscious of its Anabaptist roots and principles than any other group among the Mennonites. As Loewen writes after a lengthy quotation from the writings of Menno Simons: "Beloved children, I especially hope that you will accept the admonishment and instruction from our highly treasured Reformer, as they direct us towards love, peace and unity." Similar to the Mennonite Brethren, who in 1860 sought to base their faith and conduct on the writings of Menno Simons, the KG found in this sixteenth-century reformer a guide for its faith and life.

In his interpretation and application of biblical principles and rules of behaviour, Loewen was a strict literalist. Because of this biblicism the generally well-meaning, loving and sensitive father could on occasion become insensitive, even harsh, toward his children. This insensitivity we have encountered already in his letters to Heinrich and Maria. In his letter to Peter Toews and his "beloved wife," who was his granddaughter and expecting the birth of a child, Loewen mentions the possibility that the mother could die in childbirth. "Many a beloved woman," he writes, had to sacrifice her life for the new-born. Loewen then refers to Paul who saw in childbirth "pain because of the cardinal sin, which is [the woman's] divinely given punishment." However, there is promise for the woman, Loewen concludes for according to Paul, a woman "shall be saved in child bearing, if she continues in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety." It is not known whether Mrs. Toews appreciated this kind of "comfort" from her grandfather although it certainly reflected contemporary attitudes.

## Conclusions.

What conclusions can be drawn from Isaac Loewen's letters concerning the man Loewen, his relationship to his children and relatives, and the KG of which he was a prominent member? There is no doubt that Loewen saw himself as a humble servant of God and concerned member of the KG. His patriarchal concerns for his children and the congregations were sincere, well-meaning, and biblically based. Accepting the Bible literally as the Word of God and seeking to fashion his faith and life according to the precepts and examples of the Bible even imitating its writing style, Loewen had no doubt that his admonitions were within his God-given responsibilities toward his children and the Gemeinde.

Loewen loved his children and was primarily concerned about their souls' salvation. Whether he was sufficiently sensitive in expressing his concerns, especially with regard to his son's second marriage and decision to leave the KG for what Loewen considered to be a less spiritual congregation, is a debatable question. Viewed from our modern perspective, Loewen appears in his letters as a narrow, conservative patriarch, however well-meaning his intentions. However, within his own time Loewen was hardly an exception. Not only leaders of the KG engaged in frank talk and moralizing with regard to spiritual and ethnical issues, but also other pietistic leaders pointed out frankly and vividly moral and spiritual deficiencies in their communities and congregations. Leaders like Bernhard Harder of the "old" Mennonite church, Jacob Bekker of the Mennonite Brethren, and Eduard Wuest of the Lutheran church are only some of the more outspoken examples. Thus what today appears to be "fundamentalist" religiosity, was quite acceptable in nineteenth-century Russia.

Nevertheless, the view of Christian faith and life expressed by writers such as Isaac Loewen was even in their time considered narrow and legalistic by the communities which the KG rejected as being "too worldly." Hence the charge of the more "progressive" Mennonites at the time that the KG, with its alleged rejection of higher learning and "worldly" books and dress codes, was culturally backward.

The letters certainly reveal the tension that existed between the KG and the other Mennonites with regard to their different understanding of how the gospel was to be applied to life's situations. While the KG was more conservative and literalistic in its application of biblical teaching, the "old" Mennonite communities allowed for greater freedom in faith and ethical issues and were more open and receptive to education and culture. Yet when all is said, one can readily agree with historian P.M. Friesen that the KG was the first reform movement among the nineteenth-century Russian Mennonites to remind the rest of their co-religionists that they had strayed from their earlier traditions and were in need of a thorough reformation. And this was no mean achievement.

# PART TEN

## JOHANN TOEWS 1793-1873

### Chapter One

### Biography

A Biography of Johann Toews (1793-1873), Fischau, Molotschna Colony, South Russia. By Delbert F. Plett, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1992.

---

#### Section One. Background of the Toews family.

1 The grandfather of Johann Toews (1793-1873) was Cornelius Toews (1737-1800) born in Prangenau, Amt Marienburg, in 1737 and died in Ladekopperfeld in 1800.<sup>1</sup> His wife Elisabeth Regier (1735-1811) was born in the village of Ladekopperfeld in 1735 and their son Cornelius Toews was born in the same village in 1766. Therefore it appears that the Toews family settled in her parental village shortly after their marriage. The village of Ladekopperfeld and/or Ladekopp was located about five miles southwest of the village of Tiegenhof. Tiegenhof in turn was situated somewhat centrally in the Grosswerder area on the banks of the Tiege River approximately ten miles from the Frisches Haff.<sup>2</sup>

What is confusing is that the Ladekopperfeld villagers were Frisians belonging to the Ohrloffersfeld congregation situated some five miles north of Ladekopp.<sup>3</sup> It is generally believed that the Cornelius Toews family belonged to the Flemish Gemeinde. The 1776 Konsignation lists a Cornelius Toews family in Ladekopp; the only other Cornelius Toews family listed is from Ellerswald in the Elbing district, twenty-five miles away.<sup>4</sup> It appears, therefore, that the Cornelius Toews listed in Ladekopp is the grandfather of Johann Toews (1793-1873). The Cornelius Toews (1737-1800) household is listed as follows in 1776: "Father, mother, four sons, one daughter, one male servant, moderately well-to-do." This is confirmed by the *Bauernverzeichnis* which lists a Cornelius Toews resident in Ladekopp in 1772 with a credit of eight in the *Zinsbuch*.

It has already been mentioned that Elisabeth Regier, the wife of Cornelius Toews, was born in Ladekopperfeld. This information is problematic for two reasons. Firstly, the Ladekopperfeld villagers supposedly belonged to the Frisian congregation at Orloff. Secondly, the Regier family name was quite common among the Mennonites in Prussia, being especially prominent in the Heuboden congregation further south along the Nogat River.<sup>5</sup> The problem is simplified if it can be assumed that the reference to Ladekopperfeld can also refer to Ladekopp. Only one Regier family is listed in Ladekopp or the immediate vicinity,

namely, that of Jakob Regier. His family is listed as follows in the 1776 Konsignation: "Father, mother, three sons, three daughters, one female servant, moderately well-to-do."<sup>6</sup> However, Henry Schapansky is of the view that this is not the forbear of Elisabeth Regier (1735-1811).<sup>7</sup>

Cornelius Toews Sr. died in Ladekopp in 1800. His widow Elisabeth joined the immigration to the Molotschna Colony, Russia, in 1803, where she died in 1811.<sup>8</sup>

### Section Two. Cornelius Toews (1766-1831) Family.

2 Cornelius Toews (1766-1831) was born in the village of Ladekopperfeld as has already been mentioned. He was baptised in 1786. He married Margaretha Loewen in 1790. She was the daughter of Johann Loewen who was born in Tiegenhagen in 1738 and died in 1797. Her mother was Anna Siemens born 1734 and died 1803. In his "Familienbuch" Cornelius Toews has written as follows regarding the death of his mother-in-law; "She brought her earthly life to 69 years. May God also grant her a joyous future as well as us all." The Johann Loewen family lived in Tiegenhagen, Amt Tiegenhoff. The Johann Loewen family is listed as follows in the 1776 Konsignation: "Arbeiter, husband, wife, 3 sons, 2 daughters, labourer."<sup>9</sup> Daughter Margaretha Loewen was born in Tiegenhagen in 1767. She was baptised in 1786.<sup>10</sup>

Cornelius and Margaretha Toews lived in the village of Tiegenhagen where all their children except Jakob and Margaret were born. A number of families whose children would later join the Kleine Gemeinde (KG) lived in the Tiegenhagen area: e.g. Abraham von Riesen (1756-1810) lived in Tiegenhagen where their son Peter was born in 1779; Martin Warkentin (1705-1782), Gerth Schellenberg (1725-1805), Isaac Loewen (1737-1797)<sup>11</sup> and Hans Kornelsen (1746-1828) lived in the neighbouring village of Tiegenhoff.<sup>12</sup>

In 1803 the Cornelius Toews family joined the immigration to Russia where they settled on Wirtschaft 10 in the village of Lindenau on July 15, 1804. The aged grandfather Isaac Loewen (1787-1873) later recalled that his parents, Isaac Loewens, had travelled to Prussia in the same wagon train with the Cornelius Toews family and that of Johann Warkentin (1760-1825) who would settle in the Molotschna village of Blumenort.<sup>13</sup> The Loewen family also settle in Lindenau on Wirtschaft 6. The Cornelius Toews family is listed as follows in the 1808 Revisions-Listen:

Cornelius Toews 42, from Tiegenhagen, Amt Tiegenhof, Tischler, wife Margaretha 41, children Johann 17, Elisabeth 12, Cornelius 5, Jakob 3, friend Cornelius Toews 26. Property, 1 wagon, 1/2 plow, 1 harrow, 5 horses, 9 cattle.<sup>14</sup>

The immigration records of 1803 also show that Gerhard Dyck was emigrating from Tiegenhagen, Prussia to Lindenau, Molotschna Colony, Russia, where he was a servant with the Cornelius Toews family.<sup>15</sup> The foregoing indicates that the Cornelius Toews family was relatively well-off financially.

The following KG-related families pioneered in the village of Lindenau in 1804-5 and are included in the 1808 Revisions-Listen: Peter Friesen (born 1768) - Wirtschaft 1;<sup>16</sup> Peter Wiebe (born 1765) - Wirtschaft 2;<sup>17</sup> Isaac Loewen (born

1759) - Wirtschaft 6;<sup>18</sup> Cornelius Toews (1766-1831) - Wirtschaft 10; Jakob Wiens (1758-1820) - Wirtschaft 11;<sup>19</sup> Claas Friesen (1774-1839) - Wirtschaft 13;<sup>20</sup> David Hiebert (1775-1852) - Wirtschaft 15.<sup>21</sup> KG-connected families who lived in Lindenau after 1808 include the following: deacon Isaac Loewen (1787-1873) who took over his father's Wirtschaft 6; Cornelius S. Plett (1820-1900)--Loewen's son-in-law--lived in Lindenau from 1841-1856 as an Anwohner manufacturing wagon wheels;<sup>22</sup> Cornelius Eitzen (1800-1860), whose son Abraham was born in Lindenau in 1830;<sup>23</sup> Martin Kroeker who is listed in the 1837 KG election records;<sup>24</sup> Aeltester Klaas Reimer (1770-1837) died at the home of Peter Kroeker in Lindenau in 1837;<sup>25</sup> In 1825 the Gerhard Neufeld (1795-1869) family bought a Feuerstelle in Lindenau.<sup>26</sup>

The Cornelius Toews family made their home in Lindenau where Mrs. Toews died in 1823. Toews recorded the following poem in his "Familienbuch" regarding the death of his wife:

We saw you sow in tears  
 - yet in your tearful sowing -  
 we saw the birth of grace  
 which dried our tears.  
 Now joyfully to behold  
 our Saviour Jesus Christ,  
 Whose blood and sacrifice  
 - sufficed -  
 to open heaven's door  
 for you and me.

On January 23, 1824, Toews married again to Margaretha Doerksen. His second wife had one child Margaretha who was the daughter of "the renowned and skilled Anton Schellenberg."<sup>27</sup> A daughter Katharina Toews was born to Cornelius and Margaretha Toews in 1825 but she died in 1844.

### Section Three. Biography of Johann Toews 1793-1873.

3 In 1793 Johann Toews was born in Tiegenhagen, Prussia. In 1803 his parents left Prussia - their former Homeland - and immigrated to Russia where they arrived safely in the village of Neuendorf on October 27. Son Johann was eleven years of age in 1804 when his parents settled in the village of Lindenau as pioneers of the Molotschna Colony.<sup>28</sup>

In 1814 Johann Toews (1793-1873) became a member of the KG. He was likely one of the first youths to be baptized in the infant movement. On July 4, 1816, he married for the first time to Elisabeth, daughter of Johann Harder (1764-1826), Blumstein, Molotschna.<sup>29</sup> Johann Harder (1811-1875), Aeltester of the Ohrloff Gemeinde from 1860-1875, was her nephew. After his marriage Johann Toews pursued his trade as a carpenter and cabinet maker. He and his bride were living with his parents. The young couple made their home in Lindenau until 1830 when they bought an Anwohnerstelle in Schoenau. Toews was concerned about spiritual things and in 1828 he bought a copy of Menno Simons', *Auszug der Merkwürdigsten Abhandlungen aus den Werken Menno Simons* (Koenigsberg: Johann Decknatel, 1765), 255 pages. This book is sometimes referred to as "Der Kleine

Menno".<sup>30</sup>

Johann Toews' first wife died on October 6, 1834. On November 18 of the same year, Johann married for the second time to a widow Wiebe from Rosenort. She died on December 29 of the same year.<sup>31</sup> On August 20, 1835, he married for the third time to Maria Plett (1811-1895) who was born in Fuerstenwerder, Prussia.<sup>32</sup> In 1838 the couple bought one-half of Wirtshaft 9 in Fischau for 1100 ruble banko taking possession in March. On December 14, 1844, they took over the other half of the Wirtshaft for 900 ruble banko.<sup>33</sup> Toews was a successful farmer and in 1850 his name was mentioned in the *Unterhaltungsblatt*, a German language newspaper, for achievements in the silk industry.<sup>34</sup> He was listed as the top silkworm producer in his village.<sup>35</sup> For a survey of KG-related families in Fischau, see Part Six, Chapter One.

Johann Toews was known as a good neighbour who gave generously of his time to counsel and assist those in need. In a letter to Peter P. Toews of August 21, 1876, Jakob Woelk of Fischau--and a former neighbour--writes as follows:

I remember in those days when I was a young inexperienced school teacher, how many times I talked with your aged father and discussed various matters with him. And I remember how he exerted himself to be a support for me; whereby I was able to overcome the many problems which invariably arise in a school.<sup>36</sup>

The Toews Wirtschaft 9 in Fischau was a pleasant place to be. During a journey of ministerial visitation to the Molotschna in 1874 Peter P. Toews visited the Wirtschaft and later expressed some of his fond memories:

In the evening of the previous day of our journey we arrived in Fischau. The following morning I went into the woods in order to refresh myself from the journey. These were the woods which my father had planted in his time. I wanted to once more see the place where I had frequently passed back and forth; it was the time of which the Apostle speaks, ". . . in which we were enlightened and endured a great battle of affliction". Many a tree was still completely familiar to me as it I had never gone. I remembered at that moment what the beloved Saviour says; "Every plant which our heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted out". Then in prayer to God the groaning in my heart came forth, 'Lasz mich niemals die Kreuzes Dornen fliehen, weil sie das Zeichen deiner Freundschaft sind, wobei der Geist doch Kraft und Liebe sind, So werd ich der wie eine Rose bluehen, die wenn gleich Thau und Suedwind drueber weht, doch in der Kraft in deinem Garten stehn'.<sup>37</sup>

The Johann Toews family farmed in Fischau until 1864 when they sold their Wirtschaft to Heinrich Wiens from Schoenau for 3000 ruble.<sup>38</sup> On September 9th of the same year they moved to the village of Friedrichsthal (Markuslandt) near the Old Colony together with son Cornelius and his family. They rented a smaller property of 33 1/3 desjationen. Several years later the family moved to the village of Blumenhof, in Borosenko, where Toews died on May 15, 1873.<sup>39</sup> His widow

moved to Gnadenu, Kansas, with her children Johann P. Goossens.

Johann Toews became grievously ill in 1850, an experience which prompted him to write a biographical booklet entitled *Das Wachsame Auge Gottes an der Herzen meiner Lieben Kinder*.<sup>40</sup> These writings deal with how God protected Johann Toews during a number of life threatening experiences. The booklet was published by Aeltester Peter P. Toews under the title *Das Wachsame Auge Gottes: Aus den hinterlassenen Schriften des Johann Toews* (Kleefeld, Manitoba, 1908), 24 pages. This booklet has been translated by Cornelius L. Toews (1891-1982), a great-grandson, and is published in Part Ten, Chapter Two of this book, under the title *The Watchful Eye of God*.

Johann Toews was a devout Christian whose example of discipleship had a profound effect on his family and others around him. He was interested in the historic writings of the Mennonite faith and his library included books such as *Der Kleine Menno*,<sup>41</sup> *The Wandering Soul*,<sup>42</sup> and *Ausgewählte Schriften* by Peter Peters.<sup>43</sup> Johann Toews also had an interest in the history of his church. Son Peter P. Toews has written that his father was one of four revered Ohms in the KG whose collected documents and writings were major sources of primary material for his *Sammlung . . . zur Historie der Kleine Gemeinde der Mennoniten* which he compiled in Blumenhoff, South Russia, in 1873.<sup>44</sup> One of the stories which Johann Toews remembered from his childhood days in Prussia was that the Mennonites had wanted to build special worship houses but did not have the freedom to do. Permission was finally granted by the government on the condition that the Mennonites would provide the monies to build a cathedral for the Catholics. Toews frequently mentioned this incident since he had often walked by the Cathedral which was not far from Tiegenhagen where he was born and raised.<sup>45</sup>

#### Section Four. Family of Johann Toews 1793-1873.

4 Biographies of each of the children of Johann Toews (1793-1873) were published in 1987: see Delbert F. Plett, "Cornelius Toews Genealogy," Plett, ed., *Profile of the Mennonite Kleinen Gemeinde 1874* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1987), 217-224.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, this information will not be repeated here

Gen.	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
3	Johann Toews	Oct 25,1793		May 15,1873
m	Elizabeth Harder	1800	July 4,1816	Oct 6,1834
4	Helena Toews	Dec 23,1817		
m	Jakob Buller			
4	Margaretha Toews	Nov 23,1819	Mar 19,1839	Oct 22,1860
m	Jakob F. Friesen	Sep 10,1820		Apr 26,1888
4	Elizabeth Toews	Nov 5,1821	Aug 22,1840	c.1852
m	Martin Klassen	Feb 23,1822		c.1882
4	Maria Toews	Aug 2,1824		1854
m	Peter Loewen			
4	Johann Toews	Sep 10,1826	Aug 5,1856	Oct 26,1895
m	Kath S. Friesen	Aug 2,1831	Sep 2,1851	Mar 4,1856
2m	Anna Warkentin	May 4,1830	Aug 5,1856	Oct 16,1900
4	Katharina Toews	Jan 17,1830		Feb 11,1905
m	Heinrich Abrams			

4	Anna Toews	Jul 16,1832	Nov 5,1852	Dec 2,1893
m	Jakob Regier	Jan 27,1832		Nov 13,1906
3	Johann Toews	Oct 25,1793		May 15,1873
2m	widow Wiebe		Nov 18,1834	Dec 29,1834
3m	Maria Plett	Mar 30,1811	Aug 20,1835	Jun 15,1895
4	Cornelius Toews	Jun 11,1836		Feb 21,1908
m	Elisabeth Friesen		1857	Jul 24,1864
2m	Anna Bartel	Oct 4,1838	Sep 12,1867	Jan 29,1918
4	Jacob Toews	Feb 27,1839		May 21,1859
4	Peter Toews	Aug 5,1841	Nov 12,1863	Nov 3,1922
m	Anna Warkentin	Jan 31,1843		Mar 12,1925
4	Susanna Toews	Jan 10,1844	Jun 25,1861	Oct 14,1912
m	Johann P. Goossen	Jan 5,1842		Dec 14,1904
4	Abram Toews	Jul 5,1846		Mar 9,1848
4	Abram Toews	Dec 12,1848		May 5,1849
4	Abram Toews	Aug 24,1850		Oct 2,1850
4	Maria Toews	Dec 27,1854		Dec 3,1918
m	Kornelius Doerksen	Feb 15,1824		May 31,1888
2m	Jakob J. Hildebrand	Feb 4,1859		1937

#### Endnotes. Johann Toews 1793-1873 Biography.

1. Much of the information for this chapter follows a four page family chart of the Cornelius Toews (1737-1800) family prepared by Mr. Victor Goossen, Rosenort, Manitoba, in 1982, expanding and editing an earlier chart prepared by Rev. Frank P. Wiebe, Steinbach, Manitoba. School teacher Cornelius L. Toews (1891-1982) Steinbach, Manitoba, formerly of Swalwell, Alberta, was a knowledgeable genealogist with respect to the Toews family. He was the great-grandson of Johann Toews.

2. A. Janzen, "Ladekopp," ME 4, 267.

3. Dr. Glenn Penner, "West Prussian Villages (circa 1540-1820)," unpublished paper, Plum Coulee, Manitoba, 1979, 11, paper presented at the Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1979.

4. Horst Penner, *Die ost-und westpreussischen Mennoniten* (Weierhof, 1978), 460.

5. Otto Regier, "Regier," ME 4, 272-273.

6. Horst Penner, 45.

7. Henry Schapansky, 914 Chilliwack St., New Westminster, B. C., V3L 4V5, letter to the author August 10, 1993.

8. Unfortunately she has not yet been identified in the immigration records as published by Benjamin H. Unruh, *Die Niederländisch-neiderdeutschen Hintergrunde der Mennonitischen Ostwanderungen im 16., 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Karlsruhe, 1955). She is not listed with the family of son Cornelius Toews (1766-1813). Unruh, 345.

9. Horst Penner, 443.

10. Cornelius Toews, "Familienbuch von unsere beiderseitigen Eltern, dessen Geburt, Trauung und Absterben, nebst unsere Geburt und Trauung, wie auch unsere Kinder, bis auf dieser Zeit," as transcribed and continued by grandson Peter W. Toews (1831-1922), Gruenfeld, Manitoba, and later Swalwell, Alberta, unpublished family record, 4 pages--courtesy of Ted de Veer, 1050-63rd St. S.E., Salmon Arm, B.C., V1E 4M3; English translation by Ted de Veer.

11. It is possible that Isaac Loewen (1737-1797) was related to Johann Loewen (1738-1797), possibly brothers. I am indebted to Henry Schapansky, 914 Chilliwack St., New Westminster, B.C., V3L 4V5, March 15, 1991, for sharing the information on these Loewen families with me.

12. For additional information in the Prussian background of various KG families see Plett, "Prussian Roots of the Kleine Gemeinde," in Part One, Chapter Six.

13. Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims* (Steinbach, Man., 1990), 184.

14. Unruh, 312.

15. Unruh, 337.

16. He was a brother to Johann Friesen (1763-ca.1830) of Schoenau, who was elected as a minister of the Grosse Gemeinde in 1805. Johann Friesen (1763-ca.1830) was the father of Johann F. Friesen (1808-1873); see Part Five, Chapter One.

17. His daughter Anna Wiebe (1801-1881) married Jakob Toews (1805-1873) and the family later lived in Prangenau and Margenau; see Plett, "Cornelius Toews Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874* (Steinbach, Man., 1987), 226. This connection is based largely on the fact that Anna Wiebe, daughter of Peter Wiebe, is the only one of the correct age listed in the 1808 Revisions-Listen. It is also logical that they would marry someone from the same village.

18. He was the father of Isaac Loewen (1787-1873), well-known KG deacon of Lindenau; see Part Nine, Chapter One.

19. For a listing of this family; see Plett, "Wiens Families in the Kleine Gemeinde," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 493-498.

20. For information on this family see Helena Jahnke, "Lineage of my Grandparents Klaas Friesens," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 209-212.

21. Rev. David Hiebert was a personal friend and colleague of Klaas Reimer (1770-1837) although he did not join the Kleine Gemeinde. In his "Familienbuch", Cornelius Toews (1766-1831) has recorded that his daughter, Elisabeth Toews (1796-1861), and her husband, Isaac Braun, were married on September 10, 1814, by David Hiebert.

22. Plett, *Plett Picture Book* (Steinbach, Man., 1981), 17.

23. He was the son of Cornelius Edsen (Eidse) of Fischau. Plett, "Cornelius Eidse Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 253.

24. Aeltester Abraham L. Friesen, quoted in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years* (Steinbach, Man., 1985), 279.

25. Plett, "Abraham von Riesen (1756-1810) Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 277.

26. He was married to Katharina Thiessen (1795-1882) whose sister Helena Thiessen was married to Peter Heidebrecht of Lichtenau; see Plett, "Peter Neufeld 1697-1769," unpublished paper, revised 1993, 10; see also Plett, "Jakob Heidebrecht Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 422-424.

27. There is some speculation that Margaretha Doerksen may have been married for the first time to Anton Schellenberg (born 1805) the son of Anton Schellenberg (born 1774) of Wirtschaft 12 in Muntau, Molotschna. See Plett, "Gerhard Schellenberg Genealogy 1725-1802," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 440-441.

28. Johann Toews, *Das Wachsame Auge Gottes an die Herzen meiner Lieben Kinder*, unpublished journal, as collected by son Peter P. Toews, 1866, 90 pages, is the source of much of the information in this biography. The journal will be cited herein as Johann Toews, *Das Wachsame Auge Gottes*. The biographical portion of this work was later published by Peter P. Toews under the title *Das Wachsame Auge Gottes: Aus den hinterlassenen Schriften des Johann Toews* (Kleeefeld, Manitoba, 1908), 24 pages.

29. For a detailed listing of his family see Plett, "Johann Harder Genealogy 1764-1826," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 361-386.

30. Robert Friedmann, *Mennonite Piety Through the Centuries* (Sugarcreek, Ohio: Schlabach Publishers, 1980), 125. The title pages bear the inscription "Johann Toews 1828" and then "Peter Toews 1870". Three pages later Peter Toews has noted that he received the book from his father in 1870. Another one of the title pages has a handwritten extract from Menno Simon's "Fundamentbüch". The original of this book is presently at the Mennonite Heritage Centre, 800 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Manitoba-courtesy of Mr and Mrs Milton Toews, Neilberg, Saskatchewan, 1980.

31. Two Wiebe families are listed in Rosenort, Molotschna, in the 1808 Revisions-Listen, namely; Heinrich Wiebe (1778) on Wirtschaft 3 and Duerck Wiebe on Wirtschaft 20. Unruh, 328-329. It is possible that Johann Toews (1793-1873) married the widow of one of these two men although this is pure speculation at this point.

32. She was the sister of Cornelius S. Plett (1820-1900) of Lindenau and later of Kleefeld, Molotschna.

33. This Wirtschaft was originally settled in 1804 by Albrecht Boschman. Unruh, 310.

34. Royden K. Loewen, *Family, Church and Market: A History of a Mennonite Community Transplanted from Russia to Canada and the United States 1850-1930* (Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1991), 33-34.

35. See Royden K. Loewen, "The Kleine Gemeinde as Sectarian Farmers," Part One, Chapter Six.

36. Jakob Woelk, Letter to Peter P. Toews, Gruenfeld, Manitoba, August 21, 1876, in Peter P. Toews, Document Collection--courtesy of Mennonite Library and Archives, North Newton, Kansas, 1982.

37. Peter P. Toews, "Epistle to the Gemeinde in Manitoba 1874," in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph* (Steinbach, Man., 1987), 333.

38. The details of this transaction are confirmed also by the "Memoirs" of Heinrich F. Wiens (1830-1901) the purchaser of the wirtschaft. The family of Heinrich F. Wiens was closely connected to the KG. In 1876 Heinrich F. Wiens settled in Inman, Kansas; see Plett, "Wiens Families in the Kleine Gemeinde," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 507.

39. Peter P. Toews gives Blumenhoff, Borosenko, as the place of his father's death in his handwritten manuscript copy of *Das Wachsame Auge Gottes*, page 87.

40. Unpublished journal, 90 pages. I am indebted to Milton Toews for allowing me photocopy these and other documents in the Schrifttum of his grandfather, Peter P. Toews (1841-1922).

41. For a description of this book, see above.

42. One of the prizes of this writer's library is a copy of Schabalie, *Die Wandelnde Seele* (Stuttgart, 1863), 530 pages. This volume bears the inscription, "Received from the bookbinder on the 24th of June, 1861, by Johann Toews in Fischau." A later inscription, also on the front fly-leaf page, states "Maria Toews in Blumenhoff, 1869." Presumably the book was originally purchased by Johann Toews (1793-1873) in 1861 and then passed on to his youngest daughter, Maria, in 1869.

43. Another prize possession in the writer's library is Peter Peters, *Ausgewaehlte Schriften* (Stuttgart, 1865), 388 pages. This volume bears the following inscription, "Received by Johann Toews in Friedrichsthal January 17, 1866." A later inscription reads, "Received on June 28, 1881, in memory of my grandmother in Kansas. Johann Toews, Gruenfeld."

44. Peter P. Toews, *Sammlung von Briefen und schriftliche Nachrichten zur Historie der Kleine Gemeinde der Mennoniten. Wie dieselbe in Suedruszland, an der Molotschna ihren Anfang genommen, die Ursachen ihres Ausgangs, Bestehung, Trennungen und Fortbestehung* (Blumenhoff, South Russia, 1874), 476 pages.

45. As related by Peter P. Toews, *Sammlung . . . zur Historie der Kleine Gemeinde der Mennoniten* (Blumenhoff, South Russia, 1874), 57 footnote.

46. For more detailed biographies of the children of Johann Toews (1793-1873) and Elisabeth Harder (1800-1834); see Plett, "Johann Harder Genealogy 1764-1826," 376-381.

## Chapter Two

# The Watchful Eye of God

**The Watchful Eye of God. A Biography Written unto the Hearts of My Beloved Children. By Johann Toews (1793-1873), Fischau, Molotschna Colony, South Russia.**

---

Nehmt, Kinder, mit des Vaters Segen  
Dies Wort in Kindesliebe auf,  
Und wenn ihr's lest, so thut erwägen:  
Des Vaters Thraenen ruh'n darauf.

Herr, du enthaeltst das zu wissen,  
Was noch in Zukunft soll gescheh'n  
Doch seh'n wir g'nug aus allen Schluessen,  
Was du zu unserm Heil erseh'n.

Mit Wolkenbruch und kraeft'gen Blitzen  
Hast du dies Jahr uns heimgesucht,  
Insektenbrut und grosze Hitze  
Verzehrten einsteils uns're Frucht.

Wohl bitten wir um deinen Segen  
Doch wieder in zukunft'ger Zeit,  
Gieb nur, dasz wir ihn so anlegen,  
Dasz auch der Arme sich erfreut.

Wir sind von Habsucht mehr durchdrungen  
Als Mitleid uns genommen ein.  
Verswendung hat uns teils umschlungen,  
Verschwunden scheint die Furcht zu sein.

Mit Arbeit, Sorg' und vielen Schlummer  
Hab' ich ohn' Saeumen nicht gemueht,  
So ist denn auch nicht ohne Kummer  
Mein Leben bis daher verblueht.

Noch heut erschallt das Wort des Herrn  
In mir, was einst zu Adam sprach:  
Im Schweiß sollst du dich stets ernähren,  
Und nicht dem Unmut geben nach.

Und wie ich wohl zu allen Zeiten  
Hab' immer eig'ne Weg' gewaehlt  
So hat's doch in bedraengten Zeiten  
Mir dennoch nie an Brot gefehlt.

Auch hat mich Gott seit ein'gen Jahren  
Mit groszer Nachsicht ueberseh'n;  
Was ich sehr deutlich hab' erfahren,  
Wenn seine Hilfe war gescheh'n.

Auch diese Zeit, wie schon erwaehnet  
Hat die Gesundheit mir gefehlt,  
Wodurch Gott mir den Weg gelaehmet,  
Den er zu meinem Heil erwaehlt.

In Dankbarkeit sollt' ich zerfliessen  
Fuer das, was mir ist Gut's gethan,  
Und meine Suende kraeftig bueszen -  
Ach, Gott, sieh' mich doch gnaedig an.

Auch oft in meinem Wirkungskreise  
Hat Schwermutsseuche der Natur,  
Und auch Verdrusz auf manche Weise  
Versucht zu zieh'n mich von der Spur.

Auch haben Unversichtigkeiten  
Mir vielmals das Gemuet beschwert;  
So hat auch Leichtsinn noch zu Zeiten  
Das Seinige von mir begehrt.

Das mir wohl als den gröszten Suender  
Vor allem dennoch hier gebricht,  
Ist, was angehend meine Kinder,  
Fuer die ich bin gestellt ein Licht.

Auch hier fuehl' ich fuer meine Schulden  
Zu bringen meine Bitte fuer:  
Wollst, ew'ger Vater, dich gedulden,  
Auch wo sie schuldig sind an mir.

Oft find's der Krankheit kurze Zeiten,  
Dasz durch den Tod ein Elternpaar  
Genommen von der Kinder Seiten,  
Dasz diese werden dann gewahr,

Wieviel ihn'n durch den Tod entrissen.  
Dann denken koennen noch erfreut,  
Dasz sie sich noch zuletzt beflissen

## Der Elteren Gefaelligkeit.

Schon fuehl' auch ich, wie meine Kraefte  
Bereits so merkbar nehmen ab,  
Schon oft unfaeelig zum Geschaefte -  
Veilleicht bald rief genug zum Grab.

Nehm dieses doch ganz ungezwungen  
Von mir, ihr lieben Kinder, an  
Weil's mir die Zaehre abgedrungen,  
Und denkt, dasz ich bald sterben kann.

---

### Beloved Children:

Ever since I was stricken by a very severe fever in the year 1850, I have been greatly burdened, especially during moments of oppressive fever, with meditations and feelings. Seemingly without realization, I found myself in the act of rhyming, of which I otherwise really had no special gifts. I have composed some of my mental conceptions into poetry, which I am dedicating to you, my beloved children.

As you will perceive from these imperfect verses, my dear children, I have fervently remembered you in my prayers and supplications to the Lord Jesus. It is my hope and desire, that these simple words may find a way to your hearts and be cherished as words of remembrance from your father. Even as you bear away my mortal body to its last resorting place, may these words speak to you as if I were present in person, admonishing you to adhere to a true and zealous deportment, which is pleasing in the sight of God and to pursue the matters of eternal value.

I have composed this short writing for the fulfillment of this goal and the realization of this objective, which is intended to set before your mental vision, several important and very instructive experiences that happened during my lifetime.

*Johann Toews*

---

### The Watchful Eye of God.

I have already related to you, my beloved children, the incidents which follow here, and I have reminded you of the ever watchful eye of God, which looks out over us, even though we be endangered by whatever the situation may be. I have demonstrated this to you from my own personal experience. I must say how exceedingly willing the good Lord is, to save those to whom He will grant a time of grace. God permits dangers to befall us to which we have exposed ourselves by our own thoughtlessness. God also places certain dangers on us purposely, so that we should be mindful of the words of Psalm 50, where He says, "Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify Me."

I have experienced both of these situations--even when I directed my consciousness to the Lord and pleaded with Him for help and mercy; for the Lord prompts the prophets to say, "They turn their backs unto me, and not their faces; but whenever agony sets in, they cry out, "Help, oh Lord!" Even so was I; my eternal salvation was but naught to me, and I cared very little about God. I only called upon Him, whenever I found myself in real bodily danger; being blinded, I

did not realize the unsaved state of my soul.

The Lord did not forsake me, but rendered several tests of mercy and faithfulness, to save me from eternal doom. This was His purpose in several lifesaving experiences that I had to go through. How sorry I am now that I grieved the Lord, who first loved me with exceeding love, where I repaid Him with coldness and ingratitude. Oh if only I would have turned unto Him that very moment after I experienced for the first time the proof of His goodness; if only I would have surrendered my all unto Him with an undivided heart, and denied the deceiving ways of this world! For with God, there is eternal bliss. The world, however, shall pass away with all its lusts.

---

### **Falling through the Ice, 1819.**

If I remember correctly it must have been in 1819, soon after my first marriage, that the idea struck me, to don my skates and glide over the smooth ice to the village of Blumstein, to visit my wife's parents. The lay of the land between our place and Blumstein was in the form of a depression, and this lowland was filled with water in the spring. A heavy frost had formed a smooth surface of ice, and to a young man this looked very tempting. Not realizing in the least that danger was lurking, and depending on my own skill in the art of skating, I ventured out on the course.

To my surprise I suddenly found myself in difficulty. I had run onto a weak spot, which I was unable to see because the sun's reflection on the ice blinded my eyes. The ice swayed and buckled - I skated through a cold shower of ice - then it cracked and broke under my weight. Within the twinkle of an eye, I plunged headlong on all fours, bracing myself with both hands touching bottom beneath the surface of the water. I recovered my senses and quickly righted myself. Quite consciously I pushed my cap up onto my forehead since it had fallen forward over my eyes. I managed to get up on my feet. Fortunately I found myself in a spot where the water only reached up to my chest; but I did not perceive any hope of ever getting out on solid ice again? It was so weak and gave way every time I made an attempt to raise myself up on it. A new thought commenced to torment me, that by breaking the edge of the ice, I might reach water which would be too deep for the length of my body, and that could be the last of me. An agonizing fear took hold of me as I realized the danger I was in.

Behold children! If the holy and righteous judge had ended my life at that time, what would have been my lot in eternity? But the watchful eye of God hovered over me, even in extreme danger, and He helped me. At last I came to a spot where the ice held my weight, and I could get out. My situation was not good. I was approximately a small verst from home, the weather was very cold and my clothing was soaked. It is very difficult to run or skate in cold weather when your clothes are wet. This short distance homeward was not a pleasant experience, but I did not concern myself unduly in this regard. I was, indeed, very glad to arrive at home safely, where it was warm. Yes, even to this very day I am unable to render due thanks unto God, who saved me in a time of great danger. He also spared me from any further adverse consequences of the exposure to the cold.

---

### **An Accident, 1824.**

One day about five years later, also in winter or in early spring, I was riding horseback beside a deep ditch. The ditch was filled with slushy snow, since the effect of spring weather was beginning to show. All of a sudden my horse slipped and fell. Unfortunately it rolled sideways into the ditch. Again I felt the love of God near at hand, since He does not want the death of a sinner, but that he may be saved. It would have been easy enough for me to have fallen right under the horse, and to have died there without anyone being any the wiser, since there was no one in the vicinity. That this did not occur can only be credited to the watchful eye of God and His hand of mercy outreached over me.

By the grace of God I was able to reach the other side of the ditch with one foot when the horse fell, thereby escaping the danger of being destroyed. At this moment it seemed that my life was suspended in midair, on a very fine thread, as it is sometimes put. Only after I found myself on solid ground, and had an opportunity to observe the precarious state of my horse, did it become clear to me that the Lord had again wonderfully interceded for me. His goodness and wisdom be praised for evermore! My horse was lying with its legs uppermost, and had sunk quite some way down into the soft snow. I had to call for help to free it from this dangerous position which was also accomplished with the help of God.

---

### **A Wagon Overturns, 1827.**

In the fall of 1827, I went in company with my father-in-law, Johann Harder, to Melitopol, to buy hogs. Since he was very fond of horses, he thought he must occupy the driver's seat, and have control of the reins. A man by the name of Willms accompanied us, and we two sat in the spring seat. The same arrangements were made after we had bought the required number of hogs and had started on our return journey. We were quite happy and full of pranks, after downing a quart of wine, which Mr. Willms donated in compensation for his fare. We were listening avidly to the interesting stories of his financial experiences while yet in Prussia from whence he had recently emigrated, when all at once our hogs began to squeal.

My horse, one of the two we were driving, was easily frightened and upon hearing this noise, darted away suddenly, pulling his mate with him. Before my father-in-law was able to subdue this impetuous sudden run, we had reached the steep slope in the road near Zorakow. The hill was descended in full gallop, which made our hair stand up straight. I saw and heard only little of what was going on, but I could discern a very steep decline on the road ahead of us, and knew that something was going to happen. I remember only that one side of the wagon went up, and then I lost control of my senses. When I came to after a while, I seemed to awaken from a lengthy spell of unconsciousness, but could not determine how long I had lain there in that condition.

Now, dear children, be mindful of the situation I was in. I cannot to this day understand how I got mixed up in this affair, and how I was spared from any mishap whatsoever. I cannot get a clear picture of the whole procedure, except by this quotation, "With God, nothing is impossible." The horses were standing motionless beside the wagon-tongue, but they were all tangled up in the harness. I was lying on my back on the ground, beside the rear wheel, with my foot between

the spokes, and somehow wrapped up in the leash. As soon as I had worked myself free, I became concerned for my associates. Looking about me, I saw the wagon-box approximately one hundred yards towards the hill. On approaching, I also spied the hogs and my fellow-sufferers. Upon calling their names they both answered. I felt considerably better after I found that they were both alive. Now I began contemplating how to rearrange this disorderly occurrence, so that we could proceed on our homeward journey. I was unhurt, and with the help of God, I managed to get things in order well enough for us to proceed. Mr. Willms suffered several bone fractures, which, however, were looked after by a chiropractor and healed soon thereafter.

You may well realize, dear children, what affect this accident had on your grandfather. This occurrence was the cause of his death after several days of severe suffering. Again the Lord had foreseen to safeguard me through this accident, although seemingly, I had been dragged along the ground about one hundred yards, with my foot between the spokes of one wheel.

These experiences were important to me, and I found them to be more and more impressive as the Lord opened my eyes to the purpose of such miraculous leading. Whenever I reflect with respect to these as well as all the other wonderful things which the Lord has done unto me, I must stoop down to the lowest dust before His feet and confess, as did Jacob the patriarch, "Lord, I am too insignificant to be worthy of the least of all the compassion and faithfulness which you have shewn unto me your unworthy servant."

---

### Conclusion.

May this writing serve as a warning for you, my beloved children, and perhaps also for my grandchildren; that you do not thoughtlessly commit yourself into any danger. Should you nevertheless have fallen into such situations, may it also serve as an encouragement for you to trust and to call upon the One, who has revealed His omnipotence and love to your father in such miraculous ways. Of which the Holy Scripture also speaks, "O thou that heareth prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come."

Beloved children! Before I conclude this writing, I cannot refrain from drawing your attention to one peril which far exceeds all the others, namely, the danger of the soul. Through the fall of Adam, sin has entered into this world, and death hath come by reason of the entry of sin. Death hath penetrated the hearts of men, for they all have sinned. In our natural state we are separated from God, our sins constitute a partition between God and man. A punishment is pronounced upon the latter, namely, the unspeakable eternal torments of hell.

Therefore, my beloved children! What do we gain even if we can live here in respectability, good fortune and pleasant repose? For our lot in the hereafter shall be as it was with the rich man of whom we read in the New Testament; in the torment of Hell he pleaded in vain for a small drop of water. All of us would be subject to this destiny - no one could have been spared from this fate - if Jesus Christ had not come into the world to set the sinner free. This Jesus is the Lamb of God who bears all the sins of this world. Oh how great is the love of the Father who did not spare His only begotten Son, but rather surrendered Him for us all.

Oh how great is the love of our Saviour, that He would descend into such

degradation and torment for us. Oh how he did battle, perspiring sweat like blood, how His blood did flow from the holy wounds. Oh how great was His distress, as He gave himself on the cross of calvary in atonement for the curse against us!

Children! Jesus has so much love for us. Untiringly He follows us in order to draw us into His compassion; so that through honest penitence we might become converted to God, whereby we shall become partakers of His Spirit which will then give us the evidence that we are the children of God! Woe unto them who reject His grace, and wantonly continue to do so. The danger is great! Children, speed in haste from the Sodom of this world. Save your souls! Do not look behind you and also do not stand still. Remember Lot's wife. Lord Jesus, help us!

The word of God take oft to hand,  
It will refresh your soul,  
And persevere until the end  
Then heav'n will be your goal.

*Johann Toews*

---

### Der Kirchhof

"Aber Herr, lehre doch mich, dass es ein Ende mit mir haben muss,  
und mein Leben ein Ziel hat, und ich davon muss" (Psalm 39:5).

1. Stiller Kirchhof, Ziel der Leiden,  
Wenn wirst du mich nehmen auf-  
Dann, wenn ich von hier werd' scheiden  
Und beenden meinen Lauf.
2. Dass dies einmal wird gescheh'n,  
Unterliegt dem Zweifel nicht,  
Denn die Zeit heisst alles gehen,  
Wenn ihm erst die Kraft gebricht.
3. Komm' ich und seh' schon von ferne  
Dich vom Park geschlossen ein,  
Will mein Fleisch denn doch ungerne  
Von dir eingezwungen sein.
4. Doch ich werd' trotz dessen Wille  
Deinem Schosse einverleibt,  
Wo Gott weiss, wie lang die Hülle  
In der Ruh' verschlossen bleibt.
5. Tret' ich jetzt auf dem Teraine  
Deiner Hügel gross und klein,  
Seh' ich an dem Grabessteine,  
Hier schon ruhen mein Gebein.\*

6. O, so oeffnet mein Gemuete  
Sich durch einen Thraenenlauf  
Und fordert durch Gottes Güte  
Mich zur wahren Busse auf.

7. Leider bleibt es in Gezerre,  
Und was hab' ich für Gewinn,\*\*  
Wenn man mich wird durches Gesperre  
Tragen auf den Kirchhof hin?

by *Johann Toews*

\* The reference here is to son Jakob Toews who died in his twentieth year.

\*\* His soul quietly departed to be with God with a living hope for eternal life, in the year 1873 when he went to his rest, having completed his seventy-ninth year.

*Peter P. Toews*

---

## Editor's Note

Johann Toews (1793-1873) lived in Lindenau and later Fischau, Molotschna Colony, South Russia. His writings were collected and published in German in 1908 by son, Aeltester Peter P. Toews (1841-1922), Kleefeld, Manitoba, under the title *Das Wachsame Auge Gottes. Aus den hinterlassenen Schriften des Johann Toews* (Elkhart, Indiana, 1908), 24 pages. The translation of the German title is "The Watchful Eye of God." This writing was translated into English by his great-grandson, Cornelius L. Toews (1891-1982) of Swalwell, Alberta, and later Steinbach, Manitoba.

# Chapter Three

## Two Poems 1862

Two Poems written by Johann Toews (1793-1873), Fischau, Molotschna Colony, South Russia, as recorded by his son, Aeltester Peter P. Toews (1841-1922).

---

### Fluechtiger Ueberblik aus dem Leben. von Joh. Toews.

1  
Wie lang soll das Leid  
noch waehren? Was mir in  
meinem Lauf beschwert. Doch  
aber wuenschen zu entbehren,  
Was einst der Seelen-Heil  
bewachrt, Wird doch in mein-  
en grauen Tagen, Nicht  
ruehmlich sein von mir zu sagen.

2  
Wenn die Gedanken  
je zuweilen, Den Lebens-  
Weg mich fuehren vor, den  
mich passiert in starken eilen  
So straengt sich mir das Haar  
empor. So solt auch jetzt denk  
ich zurueck, Nicht weilen einen  
Augenblik.

3  
Womit sich Aeltern muszten  
plagen, Wird oft den Kindern  
auch zutheil, Wenn muehsam sie  
sich durchzuschlagen; Auf einen  
Weg der hoch und steil, So das  
sie diesen schweren Gang,  
Oft gehen mueszen Lebenslang.

4

Noch eh der Mensch erreicht  
die Jahren, Wovon im Psalm  
Moses spricht, Musz er auch wohl  
an sich erfahren, Was er in  
seiner Jugend nicht,  
den Aeltern genügsam aner-  
kannt, Dies wird auch ihm  
jetzt zugewandt.

5

Sobald er hat die Hoeh'er  
stiegen; Neigt er auch wieder  
niederwaerts, Im ersten Theil  
ist er vergnuegen, Im andern  
beugt ihm oft der Schmerz,  
Wohl ueber das was nur versehn,  
Auch was Muthwillig war geschehn.

6

Wem aber darf man dass wohl  
sagen? Wenn gleichsein ihn  
auf verdrieszt; und was darf man  
darueber klagen? Wenn es  
gerechtes Schiksal ist. Man  
wird gestraft wohl in der that,  
Womit man vor gesuendigt hat.

7

So darf man nicht noch  
einmal fragen, Warum gebunden  
sei die Reith? Denn das kann  
man sich selbst schon sagen.  
Was Noth in solchem Falle thut,  
das heiszt mit jener Suenderin,  
Sich ganz der Vorsicht geben hin.

8

Der Duldsamkeit sich  
ganz ergeben, Bedarf wohl  
mehr als eigne Kraft, Auch musz  
der Mensch sich selbst bestreben  
Um nicht zu bleiben in der  
Haft, doch bleibt selbst eige-  
ne Wirksamkeit, die gröszte  
Unvollkommenheit.

9

Wir armen und stolze, Menschen-  
kinder, die wir der  
Habsucht dienstbar sind  
Auch Ehr, und Eigennutz nicht  
minder in unsere Herzen ein-  
gang find't, das Niemand  
mit Bescheidenheit, Nachgiebt  
der Widerspenstigkeit.

10

Wenn nicht das Beispiel  
vor'ger Alten, ein Licht auf  
unserm Pfade waer, So wuerden  
gaenglich wir erkalten, Und unsre  
Lampen blieben leer; Zwar ruehm  
ich dieses nicht von mir, Wohl  
aber sagen darf ich's hier.

11

Mit diesem will ich  
nun beenden, Und suchen  
mich nach Moeglichkeit, Soviel  
ich kann zu dem zu wenden,  
Des Herrschaft bleibt in  
Ewigkeit, Der! wie ich weisz,  
auch schon bestimmt, Wie bald  
das Grab die Leichnam nimmt.

---

Psalm 39:8,9

Durch Johann Toews in Fischau  
geschrieben den 11ten Februar 1862.  
Im November 1864 aufgeschrieben von  
Peter Toews in der Kolonie Fischau.

## **Die Schlittenfahrt, Winter, 1862.**

1. Dass jetzt die Winterzeit,  
Ist allen wohl bekannt,  
Jedem auch eine Bahn  
Durch vielen Schnee entstand.

2. Man sah' den Schlittenbahn  
Mehr als in vor'gen Jahren,  
In Thaetigkeit gesetzt,  
Dass man auch koennte fahren.

3. War auch nicht allemal,  
das Wetter angenehm,  
Ist doch die Schlittenfahrt,  
Der Korpulenz bequem.

4. Begann man eine Fahrt  
An einem schoenen Tage  
So war die Tempratur,  
Am andern ihm zur Plage.

5. Dies galt auch eben uns,  
Im Innern angetrieben;  
Zu machen den Besuch,  
Den weit entfernten Lieben.

6. Sobald die Absicht uns,  
Nach Wunsch ergangen war,  
Nahm unsre Heimkehr auf,  
Der dritte Februar.

7. Doch der verfolgte uns  
Mit grausenden Gebeerden,  
Das wir in Furcht gesetzt,  
Um auch verirrt zu werden.

8. Auch kamen andre noch  
Dem Ungestuem entgegen,  
Die fuhren uns vorbei  
Und schienen auch verlegen.

9. Wie Gott nach seinem Rath  
die ganze Welt regiert  
Hat es auch Ihm beliebt,  
Und glueklich uns gefuehrt.

10. So das ohn Unfall wir  
Nach Hause sind gekommen  
Noch eh' die Dunkelheit  
des Tages Licht entronnen.

---

Durch Johann Toews  
abgeschrieben den 11ten Februar  
1862 von Peter Toews in Fischau.

---

### Editor's Note.

The above poems were found in a "Journal" in which Aeltester Peter P. Toews (1841-1922) collected ten poems including four of his own. A third poem by Johann Toews, "Der Kirchhof" is already included in "The Watchful Eye of God" published as Chapter Two, Part Ten of this work. Peter P. Toews, "Journal", courtesy of Milton and Margaret Toews, Nielburg, Saskatchewan, 1981. The Johann Toews poems were transcribed for computer by Rev. Ben Hoeppe, 20-411 Valhalla Drive, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R2G 0Y1, 1992.



# PART ELEVEN

## HEINRICH REIMER 1791-1884

### Chapter One

### Biography

#### Section One. Family background - Arend Reimer, Petershagen, Prussia.

1 Reimers within the Kleine Gemeinde (KG) are generally associated with Klaas E. Reimer (1770-1837)--who founded the movement in 1812. However, there is another important line of KG Reimers, namely, the family of Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884). A genealogy of the family of Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) was published in 1987. Considerable additional information has come to light since that time and, therefore, it seems appropriate to update the record.<sup>1</sup> Genealogist Edward R. Brandt has pointed out that Duerk Reimer (born 1772) would be the second husband of Susanna Reimer given the fact that she is 19 years older than he, namely, that Duerk Reimer was the step-father of Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884).<sup>2</sup> Henry Schapansky concurs with this view and writes, "I think that Duerk Reimer was the son of Jakob Reimer (born 1752) who also immigrated to Russia in 1803 and settled in Muntau and who had a son Duerk baptised in 1803."<sup>3</sup>

Through his dedicated research and unsurpassed knowledge of the Prussian Gemeindebücher, Henry Schapansky has been able to determine that the natural father of Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) was Arend Reimer.<sup>4</sup> He is listed in the 1776 Konsignation as resident in the village of Petershagen from where he moved to Plattenhof, Prussia, sometime later. It is interesting to note, therefore, that Arend Reimer was living in the same village--Petershagen--in 1776, where Klaas Reimer--founder of the KG--was born only six years earlier. This by itself does not prove any genealogical connection between the two men, but certainly raises the possibility. Henry Schapansky goes on that write that:

Arend Reimer's first wife was born in 1750 and died in Tiegenhagen on January 24, 1786. He married for the second time to Margaretha Braun. He married for the third time to Susanna Dyck, the widow of Peter Siemens (1741-1788). Arend Reimer must have died sometime after 1803 and prior to 1808 by which time his wife was already living on Wirtschaft 5 in the village of Muntau with her third husband, Duerck Reimer.

Henry Schapansky provides the following information regarding the family of Arend Reimer:<sup>5</sup>

Gen.	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
1	Arend Reimer			before 1808

m		1750	Jan 24,1786
2	Helena Reimer	1779	
m	Jakob Regier	1774	
1	Arend Reimer		before 1808
m	Margaretha Braun	1758	Apr 20,1788
2	Jakob Reimer		
2	Margaretha Reimer	Oct 10,1787	
1	Arend Reimer		before 1808
m	Susanna Dyck	1763	Feb 13,1846
2	Susanna Reimer	1789	
m	Arend Peters	1783	1809
2	Aron Reimer	1790	
2	Heinrich Reimer	Jun 9,1792	Jul 12,1884
2	Katharina Reimer	1794	
2	Dirk Reimer	1795	
2	Sara Reimer	1800	
2	Anna Reimer	1803	

Henry Schapansky has also written that the father of Duerk Reimer, who married Arend Reimer's widow, was **Jakob Reimer** (born 1752). Jakob Reimer is listed as resident in the village of Tiegenhagen, Prussia, in the 1776 Konsignation from where he emigrated to Russia in 1803. He settled on Wirtschaft 18 in the village of Muntau, Molotschna, where the family is listed as follows in the 1808 Revisions-Listen:

Jakob Reimer, 56, from Tiegenhagen, Amt Tiegenhoff, farmer, wife Helena 44, children Elisabeth 22, Margaretha 14, Peter 13, Cornelius 8, Abraham 6. Property 1/2 plow, 2 horses and 5 cattle.<sup>6</sup>

Jakob Reimer apparently sold Wirtschaft 18 sometime after 1808 since it is owned by Peter Thiessen by the time of the Verzeichnis of 1812.<sup>7</sup> Daughter Helena Reimer was married to Jakob Giesbrecht who settled on Wirtschaft 15 in the village of Blumstein, Molotschna, in 1804. Their daughter Maria Giesbrecht married Johann Harms (1798-1887) who later served as Schulz of the village of Margenau, Molotschna.<sup>8</sup>

Gen.	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
1	<b>Jakob Reimer</b>	1752		
m				
2	Helena Reimer	1775	Sep 7,1794	
m	Jakob Giesbrecht	1763		
2	Maria Reimer			
2	Jakob Reimer		May 30,1803	
m	Maria Fast			
2	Duerk Reimer	1782		
m	Susanna Dyck	1763		Feb 13,1846
1	<b>Jakob Reimer</b>	1752		
m	Helena			
2	Eliesabeth Reimer	Sep 18,1786		

2	Peter Reimer	Jan 3, 1796
2	Margaretha Reimer	1797
2	Kornelius Reimer	1800
2	Abraham Reimer	1802

Step-father Duerk Reimer originated from the village of Plattenhof, Amt Tiegenhoff, Prussia. The family immigrated to the Molotschna Colony, Russia, settling on Wirtschaft 5 in the village of Muntau in 1804. The 1808 Revisions-Listen shows the family as follows:

Duerck Reimer - age 26, from Plattenhof, Amt Tiegenhoff, farmer, wife Susanna - age 45; children, Aron 19, Heinrich 16, Catarina 14, Durck 13, Sara 8, Anna 5. Property: 1 wagon, 1/2 plow, 1 harrow, 3 horses, 6 cattle, 80 tschwert grain in unthreshed shocks, 18 loads of hay.<sup>9</sup>

At the time of the 1808 Revisions-Listen the KG fellowship and related families in Muntau included the following: Johann Friesen (born 1768)--Wirtschaft 3; Duerk Reimer--Wirtschaft 5; Gerhard Giesbrecht--Wirtschaft 7; Jakob Penner--Wirtschaft 8; Cornelius Heidebrecht--Wirtschaft 10; Jakob Loewen--Wirtschaft 11; Anton Schellenberg--Wirtschaft 12;<sup>10</sup> Johann Koop (born 1766)--Wirtschaft 14<sup>11</sup>; Jakob Reimer--Wirtschaft 18 (this property was sold by 1812 since Peter Thiessen is listed as living there in that year);<sup>12</sup> Peter Fast--Wirtschaft 19; Andreas Koop immigrated to Russia in 1804 and appears to have settled on Wirtschaft 20 which is owned by his widow's new husband, Daniel Loewen, by the time of the 1808 Revisions-Listen;<sup>13</sup> David Hiebert--Wirtschaft 21. KG-related families who settled in Muntau in 1818 or later include the following: Peter Rempel (1792-1837) who immigrated to Russia with his mother and stepfather Janzen in 1818; Klaas Dueck and his family who immigrated to Russia in 1818; his son, Johann Dueck (1801-1866) was elected as a minister of the KG in 1848 and served in this office until his unexpected death on March 3, 1866.<sup>14</sup> According to Rev. Dueck's ministerial journal, the KG fellowship in Muntau also included Isaac Harder and Johann de Veer. Cornelius Loepp (1810-1891)--the son of Cornelius Loepp (born 1783) who settled in Blumstein in 1804--farmed in Muntau. A more detailed survey of the KG fellowship in Muntau is provided in Chapter One, Part Eight, of this book.<sup>15</sup>

Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) has recorded in his "Familienbuch" that his mother died at their home in Muntau after a painful 9 day sickness and that she died one hour after midnight on February 14, 1846, achieving an age of 85 years.<sup>16</sup> The age corresponds with the age of Susanna Reimer (born 1763) which confirms the connection to the Duerk Reimer family on Wirtschaft 5 in Muntau. Nothing further is known about any of the siblings of Heinrich Reimer so that the remainder of this family sketch will deal exclusively with his branch of the family.

#### Section Two. Heinrich Reimer 1791-1884.

2 According to the "Familienbuch" of Heinrich Reimer, he was born on September 29, 1791 in Prussia.<sup>17</sup> Mrs. Heinrich Reimer, nee Maria Fast, was born on September 29, 1795.<sup>18</sup> From his research, Dr. Edward Brandt has determined that she was likely the daughter of Abraham Fast (born 1760) and Elisabeth

Barkman (born 1771) from the village of Tiede, who had a daughter Maria of the appropriate age.<sup>19</sup> According to the research of Henry Schapansky, Abraham Fast was the son of Peter Fast (1730-May 5,1806) of Orloff, Prussia.<sup>20</sup> Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) and Maria Fast (born 1795) were married on December 25, 1813. Likely they lived with his or her parents for the first year or so as was the custom at the time. In his "Familienbuch" Heinrich Reimer has recorded that on April 1, 1815, they took over the Feuerstelle which they had purchased from Abraham Neudorfs.<sup>21</sup> This must have been Wirtschaft number 15 as the 1808 Revisions-Listen published by Benjamin H. Unruh shows an Abram Neudorf family living there in 1808.

Heinrich and Maria Reimer were predeceased by four children. They had a particularly painful experience in 1842 when their son Peter died at the age of 12. Grandson Heinrich Rempel (1855-1926) has recorded that Peter had the fever three times. No one was there to witness his death since his parents had driven to Altona that day. By the time they returned home, Peter had already been placed in a coffin. This was a terrible sorrow for the parents.<sup>22</sup> Heinrich and Maria Reimer also took in two orphan foster children, Justina and Elisabeth Wiebe. They were the daughters of Jakob Wiebe (1799-1856) and his wife, Justina Friesen (1816-1856) of Schoenau, who had died of the influenza spread after the Crimean War.<sup>23</sup>

Mrs. Heinrich Reimer, nee Maria Fast, died on March 31, 1859. Heinrich Reimer as written the following relative to the death of his wife:

She suffered from a feeling of fullness and coughing, and in the end it was an extremely painful sickness. She was buried on the 4th of April. She was predeceased by 6 children--2 sons and 4 daughters. She was survived by 3 sons and 5 daughters who are left here in this vale of sorrow to serve their souls by striving to follow the narrow way. For those who follow the wide road and who live in pride and who have not converted themselves will hear the words spoken by the Lord on the day of Judgement, "You have had the freedom of this world and now you shall burn in eternal suffering" (Rev. 14:11). Alas, children, do submit yourself to suffer upon the narrow way rather than to go unto eternal damnation.<sup>24</sup>

Heinrich Reimer also recorded various details of the operation of his Wirtschaft in his "Familienbuch". Between 1845 and 1850 he made an advancement by portion giving each of his children 50 ruble banko, "Betten zu schaffen", 1 cow, 3 ewes, 2 roasting lambs, 1 spinning wheel, half dozen pewter bowls and 1 "wessilin vor stegsel".<sup>25</sup> A note in his "Familienbuch" from around this time states that "the capital of his children consisted of 312 ruble and 67 kopek apiece" for a total net worth of 3126.70 ruble.<sup>26</sup> Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) farmed in Muntau until 1858 when he sold the Wirtschaft to his youngest son Jakob Reimer for the sum of 3700 silver ruble. He also sold his livestock, farm implements, straw and various other goods which brought him an additional 1249 ruble and 92 kopek silver.<sup>27</sup> In 1858 Heinrich Reimer moved to Prangenu, undoubtedly to the home of his son, Heinrich Reimer, who lived in that village, where he paid 75 ruble per annum for room and board. In 1860 he moved to the home of his children, Johann L.

Duecks, Alexanderkrone, where he again paid 75 ruble for room and board.

Heinrich Reimer was very much concerned for the welfare and salvation of his children and grandchildren. He also had a love for the writings of the Anabaptist-Mennonite faith and gave copies of these books to his children and grandchildren as gifts for special occasions. This is illustrated by a copy of *Die Wandelnde Seele*, published by the KG in 1860, which he gave to his granddaughter Maria Brandt. On the title pages of the book Heinrich Reimer wrote a personal admonition of love and support for his granddaughter, stating that the book would serve her "as a guide to an inspired study of the Holy Scripture, the Menno Simons book, as well as the Peter Peters book, the *Martyrs' Mirror* by Tielmann Jan von Bracht, and other similiar writings." The entire memorial was translated and published in *History and Events* in 1983.<sup>23</sup> The memorial has been republished in this work as Document One in Chapter Two, Part Eleven.

In 1863 he moved to Paulsheim to the home of his children Peter Rempels. Heinrich Reimer has recorded various transactions for each year during this period, of which 1863 serves as an example:

annual rate for room and board	75 silver ruble	
expenses for me and my horse		30.77
November 24 for room and board		10.00
purchased a <i>Martyrs Mirror</i> from me		0.45
paid room and board--August 16		33.78

In 1863 Heinrich Reimer purchased 20 copies of the *Kleine Martierer Buch* which was published by the KG in that year. Similiar purchases were made by other members of the denomination thereby enabling such publications.<sup>29</sup> The following were some of the people who purchased books from Heinrich Reimer at 45 kopek per copy in the following years; widow Tilmansche, Alexanderkrone--5 copies on credit; Peter Thiessen, Muntau--5 copies; Hein Wiens, Paulsheim--1 book, paid; likewise Peter Rempel; J. Hiebert, Alexanderwohl, 1 book; Isaak Loewen, Lindenau--1 book, paid; Isaak Friesen, Waldheim--4 copies, paid.

In 1865 Heinrich Reimer moved to the home of his daughter Elisabeth in Paulsheim. On September 10, 1865, Heinrich Reimer invited all of his children to be his guests in Paulsheim. The purchases recorded under this date include the following; 2 pounds of coffee beans--76 kopek, 2 pounds of sugar--40 kopek, 7 pounds butter 13 pounds cheese--91 kopek, 1/4 pail brandy--1 ruble, 5 pounds of raisins--1.20 ruble, 1 roasting lamb--2 ruble, for flour and other items more--1 ruble. The invitation which Heinrich Reimer sent to his children reads as follows:

Again, another year has flown by since you have been invited to our place as my guests. And so, my love compels me to invite you all again for this year to attend here on the forthcoming Friday, the 10th of September, here at Peter Rempels, at 9 o'clock in the morning. Indeed, do come, all of you whose names are listed here below, for we shall await you all with love and will serve you with a humble repast.

And I also want to note that I have again made 8 chairs, which you can purchase for yourselves, be it for grain or cash, in whichever

mode of payment pleases you, Now, in closing, it is my wish, as the poet says, No. 344, "Du, Meine Seele Singe". In expectation of the foregoing I remain your steadfastly loving father,

*Heinrich Reimer*

Waldheim--Isaac Friesen, Peter Rempel; Gnadenthal--Jakob Duecks, Abraham Duecks; Nikolaidorf--Arend Reimer; Prangenau--Heinrich Reimer Senior, Heinrich Reimer Junior; Friedensruh--Isaac Bearg; Alexanderkrone--Heinrich Balzer, Johann Duecks, Johann Duecks Senior; Kleefeld--Isaak Plett; Muntau--Jakob Reimer; Lindenau, Isaak Loewen and David Loewen.

In 1865 Heinrich Reimer moved to the home of his children Isaak Friesen in Waldheim and again paid 75 ruble for board for himself and his horse. On July 17, 1866, Heinrich Reimer made another advancement by portion among his children of 1500 silver ruble. On July 23, 1866, Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) married for the second time to the widow of Johann Dueck, nee Helena Loewen, whose husband had died earlier that year. She was probably the daughter of Jakob Loewen (born 1771) of Wirtschaft number 11 in Muntau, who had a daughter Helena of the appropriate age.<sup>30</sup> For further information regarding her family see: Plett, "Johann Dueck 1801-1866 Biography", Part Eight, Chapter One. On September 1, 1866, Heinrich Reimer and his bride moved in with their children Johann L. Dueck and Margaretha Reimer and paid 135 ruble room and board for both of them. Reimer had a love for his church and on August 1, 1869, he wrote a letter to Peter P. Toews and the brothers and sisters at Borosenko, encouraging them with respect to the proposed reunification of the Blumenhoff Gemeinde with part of Johann F. Friesen's Gemeinde. This letter is published in Chapter Two, Part Eleven of this work as Document Two.<sup>31</sup>

Heinrich Reimer moved to the village of Blumenhof in the Borosenko colony, sometime in the early 1870s, where they probably lived with his son Heinrich Reimer who had moved there earlier.<sup>32</sup> They resided here until 1875 when they immigrated to Manitoba, Canada. They settled in the village of Gruenfeld, later Kleefeld, together with four of Mrs. Reimer's sons, two of whom--Abraham L. Dueck and Jakob L. Dueck--were married to Heinrich Reimer's granddaughters. The couple also had a married pair of children together, namely, Margaretha Reimer (1836-1866) and Johann L. Dueck (1833-1894), who lived in Gruenfeld, and it was logical that they would settle in this village as well.

Heinrich Reimer (1792-1884) was a dearly beloved Ohm in the Gemeinde although he never served in any particular office. A testimonial to the piety of this gracious Ohm is found in the writings of Johann W. Dueck, a grandson of Heinrich Reimer's second wife, who describes Heinrich Reimer as follows:

After Grandfather Johann Dueck had died in 1866 grandmother was married again to a certain Heinrich Reimer who had also lived in the village of Muntau. I knew these grandparents very well. Yes, how often have I not received candy [Marzipan], cookies and nuts from their loving hand especially at Christmas when all we grandchildren had to come and recite a "wish". This usually resulted

in the receipt of some money from grandfather. The grandparents also moved to America in 1874. They made their home with various of their children usually at Jakob or Abram Duecks in the summer kitchen. They always paid some money for their board, usually about one hundred dollars per year. Grandmother would spin wool for the various Dueck families in turn and then knit socks from the wool.

The dear grandfather sawed a lot of wood in his old age as he could hardly be without work. In spite of his age he was very robust and was only a small person physically. After it had finally become too hard for him to work, grandfather busied himself very much with reading in the Bible, Martyrs' Mirror and other sacred writings. Often one found him sitting in tears by any one of a number of beneficial books. In his latter days he also spoke much about his "desire to part from here and to be with Christ". He said so especially after the dear grandmother had been dead for five or six years. Although grandfather's eyesight was quite good--so that he could almost always read without glasses, his hearing was so much worse that one had to speak very loud if he was to understand. He experimented with the ear trumpet but this did not really seem to work, which occasioned great sadness for him especially as he could not longer hear God's word on Sunday. Finally after a pilgrimage of ninety-three years, he was released from all his earthly suffering and cares by the Lord who took him to be with Him in His Heavenly realm of peace. More detail about Grandfather's death and burial can be found in one of my diaries.<sup>33</sup>

When Heinrich Reimer's second wife died in Gruenfeld in 1879, he recorded the event in his "Familienbuch" writing as follows:

It has pleased our beloved Heavenly Father to take from my side through death my beloved wife, on the 19th of November at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. She had suffered for two months of old age during which time she was confined to her sick bed. She attained the age of 73 years, 8 months and 21 days.<sup>34</sup>

In 1882, Heinrich Reimer has recorded that he moved from the home of his daughter and son-in-law David Loewens in Hochstadt to the home of his grandchildren Jakob L. Duecks in Gruenfeld. He paid \$50.00 for one year for a warm room and free washing and sewing. Heinrich Reimer died in 1884. The remains of Helena and Heinrich Reimer are buried in the old Gruenfeld (Kleefeld) cemetery located at the intersection of P.T.H. 52 and P.R. 216.

Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) had always been a careful steward of his material possessions and was probably a typical KG *Musterwirt* or model farmer. As already mentioned above, he made a significant advancement by portion between 1845 and 1850 when each of his children received 50 ruble banko and other goods. In 1866 he divided another 1500 ruble among his children. According to the "Rechnung von der Theilungs am 2 Dezember 1884 dem Groszvater H. Reimer seine Nachlassenschaft" of Waisenvorsteher Gerhard Schellenberg,

Rosenfeld, the estate of Heinrich Reimer at the time of his death consisted of \$47.35 per share for each child, of which three shares went to Russia, namely, Isaak Friesens, Jakob Reimers and grandson Abraham Heinrich Reimer.<sup>35</sup>

Veteran Molotschna school teacher, Cornelius F. Friesen (1812-1892), also thought very highly of Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) and composed a poem especially for his funeral. The full text of this 25 stanza poem entitled "Ein Schrieben vom Absterben und Lebensgeschichte umserm Groszeltern Heinrich Reimers, Gruenfeld" was published in 1986.<sup>36</sup> An interesting feature of the poem was that the opening letters of each stanza spelt the names of Heinrich Reimer and his wife. Aeltester Peter P. Toews has written of Heinrich Reimer that he was one of four Ohms in the Gemeinde on whose documents and records he relied to complete his *Sammlung . . . zur Historie der Kleinen Gemeinde der Mennoniten an der Molotschna* in 1874.<sup>37</sup> The only book of Heinrich Reimer still extant today is his *Familienbuch* frequently referred to herein. This leather-bound journal consisting of 371 pages is a valuable source of information regarding Heinrich's own family as well as the history of the KG. The collection also contains priceless documents of the earlier Gemeinden in Prussia and their leaders who were regarded as role models by individuals such as Heinrich Reimer. The sense of historical consciousness common in the conservative Mennonite tradition is very much manifest in this collection.

Gen.	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
2	Heinrich Reimer	May 9, 1791	Dec 25, 1813	Jul 12, 1884
m	Maria Fast	Sep 29, 1795		Mar 31, 1859
3	Maria Reimer	Oct 26, 1814	Sep 24, 1838	Oct 26, 1851
3	Elis Reimer	Dec 11, 1815	Sep 24, 1838	Aug 28, 1879
3	Hein Reimer	Feb 8, 1818	Dec 7, 1839	Feb 25, 1876
3	Susanna Reimer	May 23, 1820	Mar 29, 1839	1895
3	Abr Reimer	Sep 30, 1821		May 7, 1850
3	Marg Reimer	May 21, 1823		Jul 14, 1825
3	Kath Reimer	Sep 23, 1824	Jan 24, 1846	Apr 4, 1901
3	Aron Reimer	Aug 29, 1826		Jul 10, 1902
3	Marg Reimer	Jul 14, 1828		Jul 14, 1828
3	Peter Reimer	Sep 1, 1829		Feb 18, 1842
3	Marg Reimer	Aug 25, 1831		Jan 8, 1832
3	Jakob Reimer	Dec 18, 1833	Sep 28, 1857	
3	Anna Reimer	Oct 29, 1835	Nov 6, 1855	Aug 11, 1901
3	Marg Reimer	Dec 4, 1838	Jun 18, 1857	Mar 22, 1867
2	Heinrich Reimer	May 9, 1792		Jul 12, 1884
2m	Helena Loewen	Feb 12, 1806		Nov 13, 1879

### Section Three. Maria Reimer 1814-1851.

3 Daughter Maria Reimer (1814-1851) married Klaas (Nikoli) Brandt (1813/1817-1857) of Tiege in 1838. Their verlobung or engagement party was held several weeks earlier on September 2, 1838.<sup>38</sup> Only little is presently known about the history of the Klaas Brandt family. He was the son of Peter Brandt who was likely the Peter Brandt who settled on Wirtschaft 11 in the village of Blumenort, Molotschna, in 1804.<sup>39</sup> In his "Seelenliste" Heinrich Rempel states that Klaas Brandt was from Tiege so that the family must have moved there later.<sup>40</sup> Klaas

Brandt was the brother of Aganetha Brandt, the wife of David Klassen (1813-1900), one of the delegates to North America for the KG in 1873.<sup>41</sup> Klaas Brandt also had a sister Elisabeth Brandt who was married to Abraham W. Friesen, Rueckenau, later resident in Jansen, Nebraska.<sup>42</sup> Mrs. Klaas Brandt, nee Maria Reimer, died on October 26, 1851, after a sickness of 8 days.<sup>43</sup>

The Klaas Brandt family appears to have moved several times within the Molotschna as son Peter R. Brandt was reportedly born in Conteniusfeld in 1848. Jakob Brandt, the son of Klaas Brandt by his second wife, was born in Tiegenhagen.<sup>44</sup> In a letter of 1855 Johann F. Friesen, the third Aeltester of the KG, refers to an incident involving Klaas Brandt. This was at the time that the newspaper *Die Mennonitische Blaetter* was founded in Prussia and the KG was asked to support this venture. The KG, however, felt that the spirit and beliefs propounded by this paper were contrary to many of the teachings of the forefathers and so they declined. In the letter Johann F. Friesen mentions that he had requested K. B. to notify the paper of this decision. He also noted that 'Brandt' had brought back the reply that the publishers were unwilling to accept this decision.<sup>45</sup> This would indicate that Klaas Brandt was a close supporter of Aeltester Friesen, who was in fact married to the daughter of his sister Aganetha Klassen, nee Brandt. According to the "Familienbuch" of Heinrich Reimer, Klaas Brandt got sick on November 17 and died in Tiegenhagen 11 days later, on November 27, 1857.<sup>46</sup>

4 The Klaas Brandt sons were known to be small of stature. Son **Heinrich R. Brandt** (1838-1909) worked for many years building wagons in association with his brother-in-law, Klaas R. Reimer, later a pioneer merchant in Steinbach, Manitoba. Brandt was an experienced woodworker and wagon builder and Klaas R. Reimer provided the iron work. Both men were married to Warkentin sisters. Heinrich R. Brandt's second wife was a cousin to the first.<sup>47</sup>

3 Son **Klaas R. Brandt** married the widow of Isaac S. Harms, whose son Isaac and daughter Anna, they raised.<sup>48</sup> She was born Margaretha Friesen and had a brother Abraham Friesen living in Nikopol in 1892.<sup>49</sup> Son **Peter R. Brandt** married Katharina Thiessen the daughter of Johann Thiessen (1813-1888) at that time living in Continiusfeld.<sup>50</sup> This family initially settled in Blumenort, Manitoba in 1874, from where they moved to Rosenort and from there to Jansen, Nebraska.<sup>51</sup>

Gen.	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
3	Maria Reimer	Oct 26, 1814	Sep 24, 1838	Oct 26, 1851
m	Klaas Brandt	c1813/1817		1857
4	Hein Brandt	Feb 2, 1838		Sep 15, 1909
m	Anna Warkentin	1836	Oct, 1858	May, 1873
2m	Kath Warkentin	1851	June, 1873	Aug 4, 1889
3m	Just Unger	Jun 30, 1864	Oct 27, 1889	May 11, 1835
4	Maria Brandt	Sep 22, 1843	Nov, 1863	Jun 27, 1927
m	Isaac L. Plett <sup>52</sup>	Mar 15, 1844		Jul, 1871
4	Klaas Brandt	May 12, 1845	1867	Feb 23, 1901
m	Marg Friesen	Oct 30, 1838	1867	Apr 31, 1933
4	Peter Brandt <sup>53</sup>	Jun 11, 1848	Jan 22, 1867	Jun 29, 1930
m	Kath Thiessen	Dec 21, 1846		Dec 3, 1916

#### Section Four. Elisabeth Reimer 1815-1879.

3 Daughter Elisabeth Reimer (1815-1879) married Peter Rempel (1814-1872) who was the son of Peter Rempel (1792-1837) of Muntau. A history of this family was published in 1987.<sup>54</sup> The couple held their verlobung on May 11, 1836.<sup>55</sup> The Peter Rempel family resided in the village of Paulsheim, Molotschna. Presumably they farmed here for most of their married life. In their later years they also took in a foster daughter who was 18 years old at the time of grandmother's death. Grandson Johann R. Dueck has recorded that his grandfather was a stout man, like Uncle Peter L. Dueck later in Manitoba, generally keeping his weight around 300 pounds. Peter Rempel died on January 1, 1872 at the age of 57 years, 5 months and 13 days.<sup>56</sup> He died from a stroke which occurred about six weeks prior to his death. The stroke must have occurred during the night as his wife only noticed in the morning that his mouth was twisted. From this time forth Peter Rempel was sick from time to time until his death as stated above. A symptom of his death was great difficulty in breathing.

The funeral of Peter Rempel was held on January 5, 1872, but he was buried a week later on the 12th in order that his children, the Abram L. Duecks and Dietrich Isaacs from Borosenko about 100 verst away, would be able to see his body.<sup>57</sup> Grandson Johann R. Dueck (1863-1937) who was only 9 years old at the time had fond memories of his grandparents stating that it was always a pleasure to be at their home. He remembered the funeral of his grandfather as follows:

One morning Dietrich Isaac of Rosenhof brought us the news that grandfather has passed away. Immediately preparations were made and the journey to Paulsheim started in the afternoon. But we didn't arrive in time for the funeral, since news in those days travelled mainly as opportunity presented itself. We arrived the next day in the afternoon. They had not buried him yet, they had only covered the grave. I did not, however, get to see my grandfather at this time, because they had forgotten to take me along to the viewing of the body and the burial. This annoyed me so much, I refused to eat the next meal. However, we always enjoyed being at Grandfather's place. There was an adopted daughter, 2 years older than I, who always got along very well with us children.<sup>58</sup>

Mrs. Peter Rempel, nee Elisabeth Reimer died at 2:00 p.m. on August 28, 1879, at the age of 63 years, 8 months, and 16 days. She was severely ill for only 3 days mainly because of her long endured sickness of many years which was a form of cramp colic and shortness of breath. She suffered for some time from a rupture which also played a role in her death. Peter Rempel also had a rupture and suffered from this condition for a longer period of time than his wife. This rupture caused much suffering as well as inconvenience.<sup>59</sup>

4 Daughter Maria Rempel (1840-1917) married Jakob L. Dueck of Muntau.<sup>60</sup> Heinrich Rempel has recorded that the wedding took place at the home of his parents in Paulsheim. The Jakob L. Dueck family farmed in Gnadenenthal, Molotschna.<sup>61</sup> Daughter Elisabeth Rempel (1842-1901) was married to Abram L. Dueck, a brother to Jakob L. Dueck. These families settled in Gruenfeld (later Kleefeld), Manitoba, in 1875. Both of them served in the KG ministry, Jakob as

a minister, and Abram as the Aeltester of the East Reserve Gemeinde. Daughter **Katharina Rempel** (1847-1890) was married to Dietrich Isaac who was also from Paulsheim. Later the family moved to Borosenko, and from there to Jansen, Nebraska in 1874.<sup>62</sup> Son **Peter Rempel** (1844-1915) married Elizabeth Bergman, the daughter of Jakob K. Bergman (Barkman) (1820-1902) former merchant of Waldheim.<sup>63</sup> The Peter Rempel family immigrated to America in 1890.<sup>64</sup> They settled in Hillsboro, Kansas, in 1904.<sup>65</sup> Later they moved to California where Mrs. Rempel died. One of their sons Rev. Jakob Rempel (1873-1976) was living in Morris, Manitoba in 1965.<sup>66</sup> Son Peter Rempel (1865-1937) was a minister of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Hillsboro, Kansas.<sup>67</sup> Son **Heinrich Rempel** (1855-1926) married Margaretha Schlabach (1853-1918), the daughter of Christian Schlabach. Her father died circa 1860, after which her mother, nee Anna Warkentin, married for the second time to Bernard Warkentin. The Warkentin family later moved to Kansas.<sup>68</sup> Margaretha Schlabach and her sister Elisabeth, who married Abram Richert, were brought up by their stepfather Warkentin whom they remembered fondly.<sup>69</sup> Heinrich Rempel stayed in Russia with his mother but immigrated to Manitoba in 1886 where he settled in Gruenfeld (later Kleefeld).<sup>70</sup>

Gen.	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
3	<b>Ells. Reimer</b>	Dec 11,1815	Sep 24,1838	Aug 28,1879
m	Peter Rempel	Jul 17,1814		Jan 1,1872
4	Maria Rempel	Oct 7,1837		Dec 21,1839
4	Maria Rempel	Feb 16,1840		Mar 17,1917
m	Jak L. Dueck	Jun 26,1939	Dec 15,1856	Oct 27,1893
4	Elis Rempel	Oct 4,1842		Nov 17,1901
m	Abr L. Dueck	Feb 16,1841	Feb 27,1862	Jul 18,1899
4	Peter Rempel	Feb 10,1844		Feb 2,1915
m	Elis Bergman	Apr 26,1846		Dec 8,1923
4	Kath Rempel	Sep 8,1847		Oct 8,1890
m	Diet Isaac	Jan 28,1846	Dec 13,1866	
4	Hein Rempel	Jun 4,1855		1926
m	Marg Schlabach	1853		1918
2m	widow Sara Dueck		1922	1926

#### Section Flve. Heinrich Reimer 1818-1876.

3 Son Heinrich Reimer (1818-1876) married for the first time to Margaretha Enns of Tiegerwiede. Their verlobung took place on November 23, 1839.<sup>71</sup> Two children were born to the couple but both died. Margaretha died on November 28, 1842, three days after the birth of her youngest child.

Heinrich Reimer (1818-1876) married for the second time to Helena F. Friesen. She was the youngest sister of Johann F. Friesen (1808-1872), the third Aeltester of the KG. As the oldest son he probably farmed with his father for a while in Muntau and then moved to his own Wirtschaft in Prangenu.<sup>72</sup> In 1858 the Reimer family was living in Prangenu, Molotschna, where his father came to live with them in room and board. Father Heinrich Reimer has recorded that his son's ". . . second wife died October 3 [Gregorian calendar] after a four day sickness which was also very painful in the end. She reached an age of 33 years, 6 months, and 9 days. On the 8th of this month, her son also died, having reached an age of one month, and having survived her."<sup>73</sup>

In 1860 Heinrich Reimer (1818-1876) married for the third time to Margaretha L. Warkentin (1841-1913), the daughter of Johann N. Warkentin of Blumstein.<sup>74</sup> In 1862 the Heinrich Reimer family was still resident in Prangenu where several of the children were listed as attending school. By the early 1870s Heinrich Reimer had moved to the village of Blumenhoff, Borosenko Colony, where he farmed. The family was always regarded as having been well-to-do. In 1870-71 they had a servant girl from the Old Colony by the name of Katharina Friesen (1848-1900) who later married the widower Peter P. Isaac--well-known as the author of the *Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern*.<sup>75</sup> In 1873 Heinrich Reimer was chosen together with Cornelius S. Plett to accompany his brother-in-law, Aeltester Peter P. Toews, to a meeting with Governor-General Totleben in Chortitza, regarding the emigration passes for the KG.<sup>76</sup> The family emigrated in 1875 and settled in Blumenhof, Manitoba, together with his wife's family, the Warkentins.

Heinrich Reimer (1818-1876) took sick on January 17, 1876, and on February 25, 1876, he died. His widow married for the second time to Johann L. Plett (1855-1900) also of Blumenhof. For further information about this family and their children, see Dr. Royden K. Loewen, *Blumenort: A Mennonite community in transition*.<sup>77</sup>

4 Son **Heinrich F. Reimer** married his second cousin Katharina Sawatsky. He married for the second time to Susanna Ratzlaff, the widow of KG minister Abraham Loewen. Heinrich F. Reimer settled in the village of Blumenort, Manitoba, where he was the first minister elected by the KG in Manitoba. In 1881 he, together with Peter Toews, joined with the Holdeman denomination after which he did not preach. Later he moved to Gruenfeld (Kleefeld), Manitoba. Daughter **Maria F. Reimer** married widower Abraham R. Reimer also of Blumenort, Manitoba. Abraham R. Reimer was one of the wealthier farmers in Blumenort. He also had a busy blacksmith shop and lent money to the farmers in the surrounding district including the Scottish and English farmers in the nearby Clearsprings settlement. Abraham R. Reimer was elected as a deacon of the KG in 1883. Son **Johann W. Reimer** married Elisabeth R. Toews, the sister to Peter R. Toews, KG Vorsaenger in Steinbach. The family farmed on Section 23-7-6E until 1916 when he sold the farm to brother-in-law Johann R. Toews and moved to Texas. After a few years the family returned to farm on the NE1/4 Section 7-7-6E in Clearsprings. After his second marriage, he again moved south, this time to Kansas. Son **Isaac W. Reimer** farmed with his brother Johann until 1891 when he moved to Greenland. The family farmed here until 1911 when they moved to Clearsprings, near Steinbach. Two years later they moved to Texas from where they returned in 1918 to settle in the northern part of Blumenhof, Manitoba, on NE 1/4 Section 2-7-7E. Son **Aaron W. Reimer** was one of the first KG youths to be baptized into the Holdeman Church in 1882. The family farmed on the NW1/4 Section 23-7-6E and in 1914 he purchased the farm of Dr. Isaac L. Warkentin on the SE 1/4 of Section 24-7-6E where he farmed until 1924. Shortly thereafter they moved to Crooked Creek, Alberta. Daughter **Anna W. Reimer** married Jakob T. Wiebe, the son of KG minister Heinrich Wiebe of Blumenort, Manitoba, who died in a blizzard in 1876.<sup>78</sup> The Jakob T. Wiebe family farmed on SE 1/4 Section 4-8-6E in Greenland. Wiebe was elected as a deacon of the Holdeman church in 1904 and as a minister in 1910. In time he served as a senior elder of the Holdeman denomination in Manitoba. Son **Jakob W. Reimer** married the daughter of

Abraham Loewen from Gruenfeld. In 1896 they purchased a farm in Blumstein, just south of Kleefeld, Manitoba, where they farmed until 1905 when they moved to Linden, Alberta. Son **Peter W. Reimer** and his family farmed in Greenland, Manitoba, until 1911 when they moved to Needles, British Columbia, from where they moved to Linden, Alberta, in 1918. Son **Abraham W. Reimer** farmed in Greenland, Manitoba, from where they moved to Needles, British Columbia, and then on to Linden, Alberta, together with twin brother Peter.

Gen.	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
3	<b>Heinrich Reimer</b>	Feb 8,1818	Dec 7,1839	Feb 25,1876
m	Marg Enns		Dec 7,1839	Nov 28,1842
4	Hein Reimer	Oct 3,1840		Oct 12,1840
4	Peter Reimer	Nov 25,1842		Dec 13,1842
3	<b>Heinrich Reimer</b>	Feb 8,1818	Dec 7,1839	Feb 25,1876
2m	Helena F. Friesen	1823		Sep 27,1859
4	Maria Reimer	Jan 19,1844		Apr 7,1844
4	Heinrich F. Reimer	Sep 2,1845		Mar,1900
m	Katharina Sawatsky	Oct 6,1846	Feb 10,1865	ca.1887
2m	Susanna Ratzlaff <sup>79</sup>	1846	1888	1905
4	Maria F. Reimer	Aug 3,1847	Oct 14,1866	Aug 10,1916
m	Abraham R. Reimer	Sep 3,1841		May 25,1891
4	Helena Reimer	Nov 25,1849		Nov 25,1849
4	Helena Reimer	Oct 24,1850		Oct,1851
4	Helena Reimer	Apr 9,1853		Apr 17,1853
4	Abraham Reimer	Sep 27,1859		Sep 28,1859
3	<b>Heinrich Reimer</b>	Feb 8,1818	Dec 7,1839	Feb 25,1876
3m	Marg Warkentin <sup>80</sup>	Sep 8,1841	Jul 9,1860	Apr 11,1913
4	Johann W. Reimer	Oct 7,1861		Nov 29,1952
m	Elisabeth R. Toews	Jan 12,1861	Jan,1881	Nov 12,1922
2m	Justina Penner	Jun 6,1875	Jul 22, 1923	Aug 25,1943
4	Anna Reimer	Aug 7,1862		Jan,1868
4	Isaac W. Reimer	Aug 2, 1864		
m	Anna Penner	May 31,1865	1884	Mar 10,1938
4	Aaron W. Reimer	Nov 2,1865	Apr 6,1884	Aug 8,1944
m	Susanna Friesen	Jun 14,1863		Jan 12,1946
4	Jakob Reimer	Jan 10,1867		Jul 6,1870
4	Anna W. Reimer	Aug 29,1871	Feb 14,1894	Jul 5,1924
m	Jakob T. Wiebe	Oct 25,1872		1965
4	Jakob W. Reimer	Oct 28,1873		May 6,1956
m	Susanna Loewen	Sep 4,1874		Mar 16,1941
4	Peter W. Reimer	Sep 14,1875	Jun,1899	Sep 22,1926
m	Aganetha De Veer			Mar 15,1900
2m	Marg Penner	Apr 29,1882		1964
4	Abraham W. Reimer	Sep 14,1875		Jan 6,1959
m	Aganetha Penner	Aug 25,1885	Nov 6,1899	Sep 6,1960

#### Section Six. Susanna Reimer 1820-1895.

3 Daughter **Susanna Reimer** (1820-1895) married Isaac Friesen (1816-1886) of Altona, Molotschna, on Good Friday, 1839. Their verlobung was held on March

11, 1839. Isaac Friesen was the stepson of the minister Klaas W. Friesen (1797-1873) of Altona and later Rosenort, Molotschna, by his first wife Margaretha Mathies. She was the widow of Johann Friesen (1773-1816) of Altona,<sup>81</sup> cf. Plett, "Klaas Friesen Biography," Part Seven, Chapter One. The Isaac Friesen family lived in Waldheim, Molotschna. He must be the Isaac Friesen shown as resident in Waldheim in the KG ministerial election records of 1861.<sup>82</sup>

4 Daughter **Susanna Friesen** (1850-1934) married Isaac Neufeld who was born in Ohrloff.<sup>83</sup> The Isaac Neufeld family lived in Waldheim.<sup>84</sup>

Gen.	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
3	Susanna Reimer	May 23, 1820	Mar 29, 1839	1895
m	Isaac Friesen	Aug 28, 1816		1886
4	Isaac Friesen			
m	___ Enns			
4	Hein Friesen			
m	___ Sperling			
4	Kath Friesen			
m	Benjamin Wedel			
4	Susanna Friesen	Jan 20, 1850		Mar 1, 1934
m	Isaac Neufeld	Mar 18, 1849		Feb 15, 1922

#### Section Seven. Abraham Reimer 1821-1850.

3 Son Abraham apparently never married and died at the age of 28, after a long and painful illness. It was always assumed that son Abraham Reimer had died as a single person without leaving any family. This does not appear correct since Heinrich Reimer Sr. makes the comment in his "Familienbuch" that ". . . one son was born to . . . [Abraham Reimers'] who is still alive in January 1, 1859."<sup>85</sup> Heinrich Reimer also writes that, "Nine o'clock on the 7th of May, 1859, was the hour that the beloved God summoned my son Abraham Reimer from this world after a lengthy--and for the last ten days--very painful sickness."<sup>86</sup>

4 The first name of Abraham Reimer's son is found in the "Rechnung von der Theilung am 2 Dezember 1884 dem Groszvater H. Reimer seine Nachlassenschaft" by Waisenvorsteher Gerhard Schellenberg, Rosenfeld, where he indicates that **Heinrich Reimer**, the son of Abram Reimer, was to receive the balance of his father's share of the estate. Grandson Heinrich Abram Reimer was living in Russia in 1884.<sup>87</sup>

Gen.	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
3	Abraham Reimer	Sep 30, 1821		May 7, 1850
m	?			
4	Heinrich Abr. Reimer			

#### Section Eight. Katharina Reimer 1824-1901.

3 Daughter **Katharina Reimer** (1824-1901) married Heinrich Balzer of Hierschau. The couple announced their marriage bans on January 11, 1846. The family lived in Muntau where their son Heinrich was born in 1852. Later they moved to Alexanderkrone where their younger children were born. Heinrich Reimer has recorded that on November 13, 1867, Heinrich Balzer's daughter celebrated her marriage to Cornelius Entz.<sup>88</sup> The Heinrich Balzer family immigrated to America in 1877 and settled on a farm in the Delft area north of

Mountain Lake, Minnesota.<sup>89</sup>

4 Son **Heinrich H. Balzer** married Sarah Klassen from Alexanderkrone. The family lived on a farm in the Delft area near Mountain Lake, Minnesota. The funeral of Heinrich H. Balzer was held in the Carson M.B. church. Heinrich Balzer's widow married for the second time to Abraham A. Buhler, a minister originally from Canada. After her second marriage the family moved to Reedley, California. Son **Jakob H. Balzer** (1861-1948) married Maria Klassen from Alexanderkrone. The family farmed in the Delft area near Mountain Lake, Minnesota. Daughter **Susanna Balzer** married Abram D. Ewert from Sparrau. The family farmed in the Bingham Lake area, later moving to Wolf Point, Montana. Abram Ewert died in St. Louis, Missouri. Son **Peter H. Balzer** married Sara Wiebe from Gnadenfeld, Molotschna. The family lived in Bingham Lake where Peter H. Balzer was active in the church as Sunday School Superintendent and other similiar offices. They are the parents of Abram P. Balzer (1902-1982) the founder of Balzer Manufacturing Co. in Mountain Lake, Minnesota.<sup>90</sup>

Gen.	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
3	<b>Kath Reimer</b>	Sep 23,1824	Jan 24,1846	Apr 4,1901
m	Hein Balzer	Aug 17,1820		Jun 25,1896
4	girl Balzer	Oct 11,1846		Oct 11,1846
4	Kath Balzer	Jan 11,1848		Jun 30,1853
4	Elis Balzer	Jan 17,1850		Dec 8,1851
4	Hein Balzer	Aug 28,1852		Jan 30,1898
m	Sarah Klassen	May 2,1854	Nov 14,1874	Jun 3,1919
4	Jakob Balzer	Jan 5,1855		Sep 30,1858
4	Susan Balzer	Jun 17,1857		Jun 21,1857
4	Kath Balzer	Jan 24,1859		Sep 4,1880
4	Jakob Balzer	Jun 23,1861		Aug 25,1948
m	Maria Klassen	Jul 6,1860	Dec 26,1883	Jan 24,1901
2m	Helena Fast	Jan 30,1866	Jan 31,1909	Jun 25,1933
4	Susan Balzer	Nov 19,1863		Jun 23,1948
m	Abram D. Ewert	Aug 5,1862	Jan 22,1884	Oct 7,1935
4	Peter Balzer	Feb 9,1866		Sep 30,1938
m	Sara Wiebe	Mar 28,1870	Dec 9,1885	Oct 3,1948

#### Section Nine. Aaron Reimer 1826-1902.

3 Son **Aaron Reimer** (1826-1902) married "for the second time" to Maria Janzen, the daughter of Johann Janzen from Ladekopf.<sup>91</sup> They announced their marriage bans on January 22, 1855. Heinrich Reimer makes an interesting comment in his "Familienbuch" to the effect that Aaron Reimer had "2 sons born to him from his first wife, which had died and 1 daughter who was alive. From his second wife, 1 daughter had died and 1 daughter was alive as of January 1, 1859."<sup>92</sup> This would indicate that Aaron Reimer was married once before. Peter Fast (1831-1910) of Jansen, Nebraska, has written regarding Maria Janzen's family that, "Diedrich Braun, who moved to Gnadenenthal, sold his small property to Peter Wiens, a brother of Mrs. Julius Barkman. Mrs. Wiens is a daughter of Corn. Janzen of Ladekopf. Mrs. Aron Reimer of Minnesota was her sister."<sup>93</sup> This confirms that information recorded by Heinrich Reimer, except that the name of the father of Maria Janzen is incorrect.

The Aaron Reimer family lived in Nikolaidorf where their son Johann A. Reimer was born in 1865. They emigrated from Russia in 1878 on the Ship SS Strassburg, where the family is listed as "Aron, Maria, Helena, Susanna, Johann, Heinrich, and Justina."<sup>94</sup> They settled on a farm 4 miles east of Bingham Lake, Minnesota.<sup>95</sup> The family is entered as follows in the 1880 U.S. census for Carson Township, Cottonwood County, "Aaron Reimer, age 53, Maria Reimer, age 46, Susan, age 19, Johann, age 14, Henry, age 11, Justina, age 9, and Aaron, age 1."<sup>96</sup> It appears from the foregoing that Helena Reimer shown on the ship list may be the daughter from the first marriage and that she was already married at the time of the 1880 census. Aaron Reimer received an inheritance at the time of the settlement of his father's estate in 1884.<sup>97</sup>

4 Son **Johann A. Reimer** (1865-1952) married Katarina Thiessen from Sparrau who had come to Mountain Lake in 1875. The family lived in the Delft area near Mountain Lake, Minnesota all their lives. Johann was choir director of the Carson M.B. church for 25 years.<sup>98</sup>

Gen.	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
3	Aaron Reimer	Aug 29,1826	Jan 24,1846	Jul 10,1902
m	Maria Janzen	1833		
4	Helena Reimer	before 1855		
4	Susan Reimer	1861		
4	Johann Reimer	Dec 1,1865		Jan 22,1952
m	Katarina Thiessen	Sep 25,1869	1886	Jun 1,1953
4	Hein Reimer	1869		
4	Just Reimer	1871		
4	Aaron Reimer	1879		

#### Section Ten. Jakob Reimer born 1833.

3 Son **Jakob Reimer** (born 1833) married Agatha Loepp, the daughter of Cornelius Loepp (1810-1891) of Muntau.<sup>99</sup> Her brother served as the Schulz or mayor of the village during the time of the Crimean War. On September 7, 1857, Jakob Reimer and Agatha Loepp announced their wedding bans and on September 28, 1857, they were married.<sup>100</sup> In 1858 Jakob Reimer purchased his father's Wirtschaft in Muntau for 3700 silver ruble.<sup>101</sup> In a letter of February 10, 1892, Mrs. Klaas Brandt of Rosenort, Manitoba, refers to uncle Jakob Reimer living in Muntau.<sup>102</sup>

Gen.	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
3	Jakob Reimer	Dec 18,1833	Sep 28,1857	
m	Agatha Loepp	Sep 5,1837		
4	Agatha Reimer	Jun 29,1856		Feb 2,1863
4	Eliz Reimer	May 9,1860		Mar 1,1862
4	Maria Reimer	Apr 12,1862		
4	Agatha Reimer	May 15,1864		
4	Anna Reimer	Oct 29,1866		
4	Jakob Reimer	Feb 19,1868		
4	Hein Reimer	Feb 26,1870		Jan 11,1878
4	Susanna Reimer	Dec 11,1871		
4	Helena Reimer	Nov 25,1873		
4	Korn Reimer	May 11,1875		

4 Anna Reimer May 7, 1877  
 4 Marg Reimer 1879

**Section Eleven. Anna Reimer 1835-1901.**

3 Daughter **Anna Reimer** (1835-1901) married **David Loewen** (1836-1915) who was the youngest son of the venerable grandfather **Isaac Loewen** (1787-1873) of **Lindenau, Molotschna**.<sup>103</sup> The **David Loewen** family resided in **Lindenau** for many years, having apparently taken over his father's **Wirtschaft**. **David Loewen** is mentioned in the **KG ministerial election records** in 1861 as being from **Lindenau**. By the early 1870s they had moved to the village of **Hochfeld** which was a small chutor. This estate was organized by brother-in-law, **Johann N. Warkentin**, who was quite active in the movement to settle the district during the late 1860s.

In 1874 **David Loewen** and his nephew, **Cornelius L. Plett** (1846-1935), were appointed as songleaders since most of the others had emigrated during that year.<sup>104</sup> In the following year the **David Loewen** family also left **Russia** settling in the village of **Hochstadt** near **Grunfeld** (presently **Kleefeld**), **Manitoba**. He was always a well-to-do farmer. **Anna Loewen** died in 1901 during a trip to **Texas** to visit their children living there. In 1902 **David Loewen** enjoyed a trip back to **Russia** to visit family and friends.<sup>105</sup> **David Loewen** died at the home of his children **Johann Nikkels** near **Hillsboro, Kansas**. The family joined with **Johann Holdeman** in 1882. Many of their children moved to the new settlement at **Swalwell, Alberta**, which was established by this denomination in 1904.

4 Daughter **Margaretha Loewen** (1836-1915) married **Jakob B. Toews** (1855-1938) and the family moved to **Swalwell, Alberta**.<sup>106</sup> Son **Heinrich R. Loewen** married **Katharina Goossen**, the daughter of **Gerhard P. Goossen** (1832-1872) one time **KG minister** in **Gruenfeld, South Russia**. The **Heinrich R. Loewen** family farmed in **Fairbanks, Texas**, where they both died. They belonged to the **Church of God in Christ, Mennonite**.<sup>107</sup> Son **Isaac R. Loewen** (1860-1953) lived in **Winkler, Manitoba**.<sup>108</sup> Son **David R. Loewen** married **Maria T. Regier**, the daughter of **Jakob Regier** and **Anna Toews**. The **David R. Loewen** family settled at **Hochstadt, Manitoba**. He carried the mail from **Steinbach** to **Grunthal** via **Chortitz, Kleefeld, and Hochstadt**. From here they moved to **Swalwell, Alberta**, where they farmed. They are both buried at the **Winton, California cemetery**.<sup>109</sup> Son **Jakob D. R. Loewen** lived for a time at **Hillsboro, Kansas**, but by 1912 the family was living in **Swalwell, Alberta**. Daughter **Helena Loewen** married **Johann Nikkel**. The couple moved to **Fairbanks, Texas**, from where they moved to **Hillsboro, Kansas**, in about 1906. They are both buried in the **Alexanderfeld cemetery**, located 2 miles southwest of **Hillsboro**.

Gen.	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
3	Anna Reimer	Oct 29, 1835	Nov 6, 1855	Aug 11, 1901
m	David Loewen	May 7, 1836		Jun 7, 1915
4	Marg R. Loewen	Aug 19, 1856	Jan 25, 1876	Feb 14, 1948
m	Jakob B. Toews	Mar 5, 1855		May 7, 1938
4	___ Loewen			infancy
4	Hein Loewen	Apr 16, 1859	Jun 24, 1883	May 13, 1946
m	Kath Goossen	Nov 9, 1864		Mar 17, 1943
4	Isaac Loewen	Dec 23, 1860	Jun 11, 1882	Apr 20, 1953
m	Elis Friesen			Dec 23, 1934

4	David R. Loewen	Oct 7,1862	Mar 30,1884	Nov 13,1945
m	Maria Regier	May 1,1863		May 23,1942
4	___ Loewen			infancy
4	___ Loewen			infancy
4	Jakob D. R. Loewen	Apr 30,1871		
m	Maria Isaac	1880		May 17,1899
2m	Salom Hunsberger	Jun 7,1890		1909
3m	Sara Friesen	Jun 25,1880		
4	Helena Loewen	Nov 30,1873	May 22,1899	May 20,1938
m	Johann Nikkel	Apr 28,1852		Jul 26,1936
4	Susanna Loewen	Jun 18,1876		

### Section Twelve. Margaretha Reimer 1838-1867.

3 Daughter **Margaretha Reimer** (1838-1867) married widower **Johann L. Dueck** (1833-1894) who was living in Alexanderkrone at the time. They announced their wedding bans on June 8, 1857, and they were married 10 days later on June 18. Margaretha Dueck, nee Reimer, "died in childbirth on March 22, 1867, having been sick for 13 hours. She gave birth to a little boy, Heinrich, who attained the age of 42 months when he departed also."<sup>110</sup> **Johann L. Dueck** was the son of KG minister **Johann Dueck** (1801-1866) of Muntau. He was elected as a deacon of the Molotschna congregation of the KG in 1870.<sup>111</sup> The family continued to reside in Alexanderkrone, Molotschna, until 1875 when they moved to Kleefeld, Manitoba. Margaretha Reimer died in 1867 after which Johann married for the third time to **Anna Thielmann**.<sup>112</sup> He married for the fourth time to the widow of **Cornelius Toews**, nee **Cornelia Boschman**, of Gnadenu, Kansas.<sup>113</sup> A number of letters written by Dueck were published in 1990.<sup>114</sup>

4 Daughter **Maria Dueck** married **Franz K. Goossen**, the son of KG minister **Gerhard P. Goossen** (1832-1872).<sup>115</sup> The **Franz K. Goossen** family lived in Hochstadt and around 1900 they moved to Canada, Kansas, where they lived for about a year. From here they moved to Clearspring, Manitoba, where they lived until 1916 when they moved to Littlefield near Lubbock, Texas, where they lived for one year after which they returned to Canada because of the war conditions. They settled in Steinbach, Manitoba, where they lived for the rest of their days.<sup>116</sup> Daughter **Elisabeth R. Dueck** married **Johann T. Regier**, the son of **Jakob Regier** and **Anna Toews** of Hierschau, Molotschna.<sup>117</sup> **Johann T. Regier** died soon after the marriage.<sup>118</sup> **Elisabeth Dueck** married for the second time to the widower **Johann B. Toews**, son of **Peter W. Toews**, Blumenort, Manitoba.<sup>119</sup>

Gen.	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
3	Marg Reimer	Dec 4,1838	Jun 18,1857	Mar 22,1867
m	Johann L. Dueck	Jan 15,1833		Mar 29,1894
4	Helena Dueck	May 12,1858		Nov 7,1858
4	Helena Dueck	Aug 20,1859		Nov 10,1873
4	Marg Dueck	May 11,1862		Mar 3,1866
4	Maria Dueck	May 20,1863	Nov 4,1883	Jan 19,1940
m	Franz K. Goossen	Oct 26,1862		Apr 28,1928
4	Elis Dueck	Jan 21,1865		Jul 9,1899
m	Joh Regier	Jan 1,1863	Jan 1,1883	Jun 4,1886
2m	Joh B. Toews	Mar 30,1865	Apr 17,1887	Jul 8,1967

## Endnotes. Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) Genealogy.

1. Plett, ed., *Profile of the Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde 1874* (Steinbach, Man., 1987), 239-245.
2. Dr. Edward R. Brandt, 13-27th Ave., Minneapolis, Minnesota, 55414-3101, letter to the author in 1981 and September 8, 1990.
3. Henry Schapansky, 914 Chilliwack St., New Westminster, B. C., V3L 4V5, letter to the author, July 9, 1990. This connection is verified by the 1835 Molotschna census records which show the father of Duerk Reimer to be a Jakob. Courtesy of Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba, August 4, 1993.
4. This connection is verified by the 1835 Molotschna census records which show the father of Heinrich to be an Arend. Telephone call with Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba, August 4, 1993.
5. Henry Schapansky, letter to the author November 28, 1992, and "Arend Reimer" and "Jakob Reimer" family charts.
6. Benjamin H. Unruh, *Die Niederländisch-neiderdeutschen Hintergrunde der Mennonitischen Ostwanderungen im 16., 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Karlsruhe, 1955), 307.
7. Gerhard T. Thiessen, "Genealogical Album," unpublished journal, 1953, 76 pages at page 35, courtesy of Willie Thiessen. 19411 E. Parlier Ave., Reedley, California, 93654, 1988. According to this journal the parents of Wilhelm Thiessen (1842-1927) Jansen, Nebraska, were Elisabeth Giesbrecht (1801-1879) and Peter Thiessen (1798-1881) who moved to Muntau with his parents in 1805. His wife Elisabeth Giesbrecht is stated to be born in Muntau in 1801. This, of course, is not possible since Muntau was only settled in 1804. However, Gerhard Giesbrecht, Wirtschaft 7, has a daughter born in 1801 and this seems to be a positive identification. Presumably the Peter Thiessen who had taken over Wirtschaft 18 by 1812 was the father of Peter Thiessen (1798-1881) who married Elisabeth Giesbrecht. A Jakob Thiessen (born 1770) Kalthof, with a son Peter of the correct age is listed in the 1803 immigration records. Unruh, 345. Although the family is listed as moving to Halbstadt, the 1808 Revisions-Listen shows them living on Wirtschaft 5 in Muensterberg. However this connection does not fit since the owner of Wirtschaft 18 in 1812 is a Peter Thiessen and not a Jakob Thiessen.
8. Plett, "Johann Harms Genealogy 1771," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims* (Steinbach, Man., 1990), 390-394.
9. Unruh, 307.
10. *Ibid.*, 307. Several of Anton Schellenberg's siblings left significant descendancies in the Kleine Gemeinde. Plett, "Gerhard Schellenberg Genealogy 1725-1802," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims* (Steinbach, Man., 1990), 427-466.
11. Plett, "Jakob Barkman Genealogy 1765," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 282-283.
12. Unruh, 332.
13. Unruh, 350. Although the village of settlement is not stated, the Andreas Koop family is identified as living in Muntau by other sources. Gerhard and Elisabeth Wiens, Hillsboro, Kansas, letter to the *Rundschau* November 1, 1900. Refers to a recent visit of David Loewen and that he and Loewen were both from Lindenau, Molotschna. Also that their wives were cousins, namely, she (Mrs. David Loewen) was a daughter of Heinrich Reimer, and his wife (Mrs. Gerhard Wiens), was a daughter of Andreas Koop. Courtesy of Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1989.
14. Plett, ed., *The Golden Years* (Steinbach, Man., 1985), 315.
15. This is based on various references identifying Cornelius Loopp (1810-1891) with Muntau.
16. The major source of information for the family of Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) is his own "Familienbuch" which is still extant. Heinrich Reimer, "Familienbuch," unpublished journal, 50 pages A, and 312 pages B, at page 47A. The journal bears the inscription "David R. Loewen, Hochstaedt". David R. Loewen (1862-1945) was a grandson of Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) and may have taken the journal with him when he moved to Swalwell, Alberta. The journal is presently in the possession of Milton and Margaret Toews, Abbotsford, B. C., who were kind enough to share this material during a visit with the writer on October 9, 1992. They, in turn, had received the same from his father, Isaac W. Toews, as being part of the document collection of his grandfather, Peter P. Toews (1841-1922), former Aeltester of the Kleine Gemeinde.

17. Grandson Heinrich Rempel (1855-1926) has recorded that his grandfather Heinrich Reimer was born on September 29, 1792 in Prussia. Heinrich Rempel, "Seelenliste," unpublished family record, 1, courtesy of Dr. Abram P. Toews, Ferguson, Missouri, 1981. Another source, Aeltester Peter P. Toews, "Genealogy register," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874* (Steinbach, Man., 1987), 29, family 64, states that the birth date was May 9, 1791, and this will be the date used for this family sketch.

18. Heinrich Reimer, "Familienbuch," 1A.

19. Dr. Edward Brandt, letter to the author 1981; see also Unruh, 326.

20. Henry Schapansky, letter to the editor March 25, 1993.

21. Heinrich Reimer, "Familienbuch," 1A. This is confirmed by grandson Heinrich Rempel (1855-1926) who has recorded that on April 1, 1815, his grandparents took over the feuerstelle which they had purchased from Abram Neudorf. Heinrich Rempel, "Seelenliste."

22. *Ibid.*.

23. Johann W. Dueck, "Historie und Begebenheiten . . .," in Plett, ed., *History and Events* (Steinbach, Man., 1982), 89.

24. Heinrich Reimer, "Familienbuch," 6A.

25. *Ibid.*, 14A.

26. *Ibid.*, 10 A.

27. *Ibid.*, 21A. All references connect Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) with the village of Muntau. Johann W. Dueck, "Historie und Begebenheiten . . .," 87; see also Peter H. Dueck et. al., *Abram L. and Elisabeth Dueck and their descendants* (Kleefeld, Manitoba, 1965), 25.

28. Plett, ed., *History and Events* (Steinbach, Man., 1982), 128-130.

29. Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 325-4, provides the story of the publication of this book by the KG.

30. Unruh, 307.

31. This letter was also published in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph* (Steinbach, Man., 1986), 50-51, where it was identified as having been written by Heinrich Reimer (1818-1876), the son of Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884). This, however, is not correct since Heinrich Reimer (1818-1876) lived in Prangenu until the late 1860s when he moved to Blumenhoff, Borosenko; he never lived in Alexanderkrone, whereas Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) is known to have lived in Alexanderkrone at various times with his son Johann L. Dueck.

32. The specific date is not known at this time. According to Aeltester Peter P. Toews, both Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) and his son Heinrich Reimer (1818-1876) moved to the Borosenko village of Blumenhof, where they lived until 1875, when they emigrated to Manitoba. Peter P. Toews, "Genealogy register," 29-30.

33. Johann W. Dueck, "Historie und Begebenheiten . . .," 89.

34. Heinrich Reimer, "Familienbuch," 12A.

35. Gerhard Schellenberg, Rosenfeld, "Rechnung von der Theilung am 2 Dezember 1884 dem Groszvater H. Reimer seine Nachlassenschaft," courtesy of Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1993.

36. Published in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 55-56.

37. Peter P. Toews, *Sammlung . . . zur Historie der Kleine Gemeinde der Mennoniten an der Molotschna* (Blumenhoff, South Russia, 1874), iv.

38. Heinrich Rempel.

39. Courtesy of Dr. Edward Brandt.

40. Klaas Brandt (1813/1817-1857) also had a brother Peter Brandt (1810-1897) of Rueckenau, Molotschna. Two of his daughters have been identified, namely, Aganetha married to Julius Wiens, and Elisabeth married to Cornelius Wiebe born in Tiegerweide--courtesy of Henry Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1989.

41. Interview with Jakob W. Friesen, Kleefeld, Manitoba. 1980. However, Abraham B. Klassen states in his unpublished family records that his mother Aganetha Brandt was born in Neukirch.

42. Unruh, 335.

43. Heinrich Reimer, "Familienbuch," 23A.

44. David P. Reimer, ed., *Brandt Reunion July 21, 1962 and Family Tree* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1963), 63 and 78.
45. Aeltester Johann F. Friesen, letter of 1855, in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 147.
46. Heinrich Reimer, "Familienbuch," 7A.
47. David P. Reimer, 15; cf. Plett, "Martin Warkentin 1764 Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 479.
48. Peter P. Tocws, "Genealogy register," 18. According to the death certificate her father was also an Abraham Friesen--courtesy of the Rural Municipality of Morris, March 22, 1983.
49. *Rundschau*, February 10, 1892. Courtesy of Henry Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1989.
50. David P. Reimer, 62.
51. Jakob Fast Brandt (1858-1924), son of the second marriage, came to America as the foster son of his uncle Jakob Fast, who settled in Jansen, Nebraska in 1875; see David P. Reimer, 77-78.
52. The death of Isaac L. Plett is described by Johann W. Dueck, "Historie und Begebenheiten . . .," 97; see also letter of Isaac L. Plett, 1871, published in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 221-223.
53. No author listed, *Generation of Peter R. & Katharina Thiessen Brandt 1845-1978* (n.p., n.d.)--courtesy of M. B. Archives, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1989, has additional information regarding this family.
54. Plett, "Peter Rempel (1792-1837) Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 233-238.
55. Heinrich Rempel, "Seelenliste."
56. Peter H. Dueck, ed., 25.
57. Heinrich Rempel, "Seelenliste."
58. Peter H. Dueck, ed., 25.
59. This paragraph is quoted verbatim from Heinrich Rempel, "Seelenliste."
60. Peter P. Tocws, "Genealogy register," 48, family 118.
61. Peter H. Dueck, ed., 23-26.
62. Henry N. Fast, "The Kleine Gemeinde in the United States," in Plett ed., *Profile 1874*, 107.
63. Plett, "Jakob Barkman Genealogy 1765," 281. The information regarding the family of Peter Rempel (1844-1915) is courtesy of Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1989.
64. Peter H. Dueck, ed., 21.
65. *Ibid.*. Peter H. Dueck states that Peter Rempel (1844-1915) died in Kansas.
66. *Ibid.*. Jakob Rempel (1873-1976) died in Kelowna, British Columbia. Alvin Rempel of Rosenort is his grandson. Dianne Rempel and Alvin Rempel, Box 156, Rosenort, Manitoba, R0G 1W0, letter to the author December 6, 1990, wherein they also provide a complete listing of the 12 children of Peter Rempel (1844-1915).
67. Orlando Harms, *The Journey of a Church. A Walk Through One Hundred Years of the Life and Times of the Hillsboro Mennonite Brethren Church 1881-1981* (Hillsboro, Kansas, 1987), 63-66. Peter P. Rempel died in California.
68. This information courtesy of Ed Schellenberg, Steinbach, who has done extensive research on the family of Peter Rempel (1814-1872).
69. Courtesy of Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba, December, 1986. A Christain Schlachab was Schulz of the village of Waldheim, Molotschaa in 1846; see Dr. Helmut Huebert, *Hierschau* (Winnipeg, 1986), 39.
70. Heinrich Rempel (1855-1926) eventually came to Gruenfeld to serve as a school teacher. This was made possible by the assistance of his brothers-in-law, Jakob and Abraham L. Dueck. Heinrich Rempel was one of the co-founders of the E. M. B. Church in Steinbach; see Abe Warkentin, ed., *Reflections on our Heritage: A history of Steinbach and the R. M. of Hanover from 1874* (Steinbach, 1871), 45. Heinrich Rempel was a frequent correspondent in the *Rundschau*.
71. Heinrich Rempel, "Seelenliste," 5, lists the name of the first wife of his uncle Heinrich Reimer (1818-1876) as Margaretha Fast of Tiegerweide. A three page 'Family Record', unpublished record--courtesy of Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1981, apparently written by Heinrich Reimer (1818-1876) and continued by his third wife, provides additional information; the surname of the first wife is given as Enns and the date of the first marriage as November 7, 1839. It appears that Heinrich Rempel's listing of the surname of the first wife of his uncle Heinrich

Reimer (1818-1876), as Fast was in error. It is possible that Heinrich Rempel made a mistake here thinking of his paternal grandmother whose maiden name was Maria Fast.

72. In a letter to the *Rundschau* of April 15, 1900, Peter Toews, Kleefeld, referred to the death of Heinrich F. Reimer, son of Heinrich Reimer from Prangenau. Courtesy of Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1989.

73. Heinrich Reimer, "Familienbuch," 8A.

74. For a listing of the family of Heinrich Reimer (1818-1876) by his third marriage, see George R. Wiebe *et al.*, *Heinrich Fast Reimer and Margaret Warkentin Family Book* (Rosenort, Manitoba, 1993), 319 pages.

75. Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," in Plett ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 195.

76. Peter P. Toews, "1872-1878 Diary," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 165.

77. Royden K. Loewen, *Blumenort: A Mennonite community in transition* (Blumenort, Manitoba, 1983).

78. For a recent listing of the family of Jakob T. Wiebe and Anna Reimer see, Ted Wiebe, *et al.*, *Heinrich F. Wiebe Family Book 1851-1992* (Rosenort, Man., 1993), 112 pages.

79. Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 205.

80. Peter P. Toews, "Genealogy register," 7, family number 1.

81. Cornelius P. Janzen, "Family records," unpublished journal—courtesy of Mennonite Village Museum, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1985.

82. Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 154.

83. No author listed, *The Neufelds of Waldheim 1744-1985* (n.p., n.d.). According to this genealogy the father of Isaac Neufeld (1849-1922) is believed to have been Johann which was Isaac's middle name; see Plett, "Peter Neufeld 1697-1769," unpublished paper, Steinbach, 1992, page 13, has record of a widow Johann Neufeld of Ohrloff, selling her Wirtschaft to Hermann Neufeld (1829-1911) in 1872. Any connection, of course, is purely speculative at this time.

84. They were the great-grandparents of Harold Neufeld, appointed as Energy Minister of the Province of Manitoba in 1988. I am indebted to Helmut Pankratz for drawing this material to my attention.

85. Heinrich Reimer, "Familienbuch," 25A.

86. *Ibid*, 7A.

87. Gerhard Schellenberg, "Rechnung von der Theilungs am 2 Dezember 1884 dem Groszvater H. Reimer seine Nachlassenschaft," Rosenfeld, Manitoba--courtesy of Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba, January 19, 1993.

88. Heinrich Reimer, "Familienbuch," 46A.

89. Waldo Balzer and Alvin Balzer, *Our Heritage. The Wonderful Story of the Balzers* (Mountain Lake, Minnesota, 1989), 123 pages, provides a listing of the descendants of Katharina Reimer and Heinrich Balzer.

90. Gary Riether, *Mountain Lake 1886-1986 Minnesota* (Mountain Lake, Minnesota, 1986), 138-139, has additional information regarding Balzer Manufacturing Company of Mountain Lake.

91. Heinrich Reimer, "Familienbuch," 9A. He actually writes that son Aaron married for the second time to Maria Janzen.

92. Heinrich Reimer, "Familienbuch," 25A.

93. Peter I. Fast, "Wiederholtes Tagebuch," unpublished journal, courtesy of Tabor College, Hillsboro, Kansas, 1986.

94. David A. Haurly, *Index to Mennonite Immigrants on United States Passenger Lists 1872-1904* (North Newton, Kansas, 1986), 82.

95. Ruby Winters, Rt. 1, Box 118, Bingham Lake, Minnesota, telephone call with the writer in June of 1990. Ruby Winters is the daughter of Harold Frantz and Elvira Reimer.

96. This is the only source available to me for her age at this time.

97. Peter P. Toews, Kleefeld, letter to the *Rundschau* April 15, 1890--courtesy of Henry N. Fast, 1989.

98. Susan Franz, *John A. Reimer, Family book* (n.p., n.d.), 30 pages, provides a listing of this family. Susan Franz was the wife of Mr. L. J. Franz. She was born on May 5, 1901, the youngest daughter of Johann A. Reimer.

99. Heinrich Rempel (1855-1926) states that his uncle, Jakob Reimer, "married Agatha Loepp the daughter of Kornelius Loepp of Muntau"; see Heinrich Rempel (1855-1926), "Seelenliste," 6. This is an important statement since it connects Agatha Loepp (born 1837) with Cornelius Loepp (1810-1891) of Muntau, who was married to Agatha Heidebrecht (1802-1882). Their son, Cornelius K. Loepp (1833-1916) served for a time as Schulz in the village of Muntau, receiving a gold medal for service during the Crimean War; see Margaret Friesen Loepp, *The Cornelius K. Loepp Family*, Unpublished family record, R. R. 2, Box 25, Morris, Manitoba, R0G 1K0, 3. Agatha Heidebrecht (1802-1882) was the daughter of Abraham Heidebrecht (born 1781) and Maria Blum who settled on wirtschaf three in Blumstein, Molotschna, in 1804; see Unruh, 314; cf. Plett, "Jakob Heidebrecht Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 416 and 424.

100. Kornelius Peter Neufeld, "Register Heft, Schoenfeld, South Russia, later Mersia, Ontario," unpublished journal, 38 and 46--courtesy of Eric Neufeld, Box 1474, Swan River, Manitoba, R0L 1Z0, December 30, 1991. This journal contains a complete record of the children and grandchildren of Cornelius Loepp (1810-1891). There are some minor discrepancies in dates between the "Seelenliste" of Heinrich Rempel and the "Register Heft" of Kornelius P. Neufeld. Neufeld gives the birth date of Jakob Reimer as November 18, 1833 and the wedding day as September 23, 1857. Rempel gives the birth date as December 18, 1833 and the wedding date as September 28, 1857. Neufeld also refers to Jakob Reimer as being from Muntau and therefore this is taken as being one and the same person.

101. Peter P. Toews, Kleefeld, letter to the *Rundschau* April 15, 1900--courtesy of Henry N. Fast, 1989. In this letter Peter Toews refers to the death of Heinrich Reimer (1845-1900) of Gruenfeld (Kleefeld) the son of Heiurich Reimer (1818-1876) and mentions that an uncle of the deceased may still be living in Muntau where the grandfather Heiarich Reimer (1791-1884) once lived.

102. *Rundschau*, February 10, 1892--courtesy of Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba.

103. Peter P. Toews, "Genealogy register," 8, family number 4.

104. Delbert F. Plett, *Plett Picture Book* (Steinbach, Man., 1981), 11 and 53.

105. This trip is mentioned by Peter P. Toews in a poem he wrote in honour of the Isaac Loewen (1787-1873) family of Lindenau, Molotschna. The poem is published in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 54.

106. Frank T. Barkman, ed., *Jakob B. Toews Family Ledger 1855-1938* (Swalwell, Alberta, 1982), 127 pages.

107. John R. Goossen, ed., *Gerhard Goossen Family Book* (Rosenort, Manitoba, n.d.), 9-10.

108. Plett, "Gerhard Schellenberg Genealogy 1725-1802," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 442.

109. Frank G. Friesen and Frank P. Wiebe, 31-32.

110. Heinrich Reimer, "Familienbuch," 11A.

111. One of his letters is published in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 52-53.

112. Alfred H. Redekopp, *Jakob Thielmann and Helena Kroeker: A Family History and Genealogy of their descendants* (229 Home Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3G 1X2, 1987), 59-98.

113. Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 225-226. She was a sister to Gerhard Boschmann (1827-1895) and Heinrich Boschmann (1828-1907) who settled in Gnadenu, Kansas, in 1874 and 1875, respectively. Plett, "Boschmanns in the Kleine Gemeinde," unpublished paper, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1989, 4-5.

114. Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 15-16, 28-30, 37, 60-61 and 63-64.

115. John R. Goossen et. al., *Gerhard Goossen Family Book* (Rosenort, Manitoba, n.d.), 187 pages. Franz K. Goossen was the father of long-time Steinbach Notary Public, John D. Goossen. He in turn was the father of Steinbach lawyer Ernest R. Goossen who was this writer's partner in the practice of law for 10 years.

116. Telephone call with grandson, Jonas Goossen, Steinbach, Manitoba, December 11, 1992.

117. Plett, "Cornelius Toews Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 221.

118. Jakob G. Friesen and Frank P. Wiebe, compilers, *Family Tree of Jakob Regier 1832-1906* (Kleefeld, Manitoba, 1960), 35-36.

119. Johann B. Toews, "Memoirs," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 163-170, provides additional information regarding this family.

# Chapter Two

## Writings 1861-1874

A Collection of Writings by Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884), Muntau, Molotschna Colony, South Russia, and later Gruenfeld (Kleefeld), Manitoba, written in the years 1861 and 1874.

---

Document One: A Commemorative Memorial by Heinrich Reimer in a book "Die Wandelnde Seele", which he gave to his granddaughter, Maria Brandt.

September 17, 1861

To Maria Brandt, Kleefeld, Molotschna,

From your loving Grandfather. I give this dear book, called the *Die Wandelnde Seele* to you as your very own, as a gift of love. It should serve you as a guide to an inspired study of the Holy Scriptures, the Menno Simons books, as well as the Peter Peter's book, and the *Martyrs' Mirror* by Tilman Jan von Bracht and other similar writings. It is also my heartfelt wish that in addition to natural human intelligence, you would beseech your beloved God for wisdom and the gift of the Holy Spirit, in order that you may understand what has been read. For you must judge spiritually, in order that through your reading of the Holy Scripture you may be able to find a "true wandering soul" and that you may walk through the desolation of this world on the path of truth, for which purpose Jesus has gone on before us as an example in this world and has said; "I am the way, the truth and the life, no one cometh to the father, but through me."

Be on guard for the reading of books of other confessions for as Solomon says, "By the making of many books there shall be no end" (Ecclesiastes 12:12). Although such books contain within them many natural and reasonable presentations of the Holy Scripture and are preserved as being scriptural, they contain only sweet words to please one's nature and splendid speech--as the Apostle Paul says, "That they mislead the innocent hearts."

The Apostle Paul in the third chapter of the Second Epistle to Timothy mentions many virtueless and blasphemous persons including those disobedient to their parents, all of whom we are commanded to avoid. Therefore my advice and plea to you, dearest child, is that you obey your parents who fear the Lord and love you dearly, and who have raised you with many labours and great diligence; and that you do not go forth and give yourself up to worldly associations without the permission and blessing of your parents, and that you do not come into contact and associate yourself to attend at yearly exhibitions and fairs or other idle assemblies, thereby giving occasion for all manner of evil, such as pride, vanity, lusts of the flesh, and the like--all of which lead one on the wide road of eternal damnation.

If you do not obey your parents and do not heed God's Word, and finally, if you elect the Christianity of the world, where no spiritual order governs the salvation of man and, instead, all ungodly ways are given free rein; oh! then for

once do reconsider what a desolation and heartbreak you create for your parents so that they will have to grieve for as long as they live. With tears in their eyes--if they have a spiritual love for their child--they will have to witness their child participate in the wicked ways of the world, through taking part in the Holy Communion. Oh, what a great sorrow for such concerned parents who have to see their child fall among the delusions of the children of the world and not be able to live in spiritual fellowship with their children.

And now in conclusion, I beseech you in fatherly love, and advise you, my beloved grandchild, that you should study the Holy Scriptures earnestly as it is the only direction marker and guide to eternal life. With this in mind I trust that you will receive this small admonition as a gift of love, and that you will accept it from me as an encouragement to seek out the way to salvation--I wish this from the heart.

From your grandfather who loves you and who will not be present here much longer.

*Heinrich Reimer*

Resident in turn with various of his loving children.

**Document Two: A Letter of Admonishment to Klaas Friesen, 1864.**

[The first part of the letter is missing] . . . now, however, without your expectation, an altogether different experience. Oh, yes, my beloved, I want to share with you only my views, the way I see it in my imperfections and with reservations, regarding your continuing dissatisfaction which is still strong within you.

Firstly, my beloved brother, I must say this much that I have known you until now as a quiet man with sound abilities and as one who is armed with the Spirit of God and His Word, and who loved the Gemeinde and the Gemeinde loved you. Which--according to my judgement--makes it all the more difficult and regrettable for us all. I, yes I, upon consideration of the reasons for your great dissatisfaction, must certainly say so for myself.

Secondly, you consider it as worldly when the ministers are singing according to the numbered notes [Ziffern]. I cannot understand it exactly in that way. For there are persons who cannot learn the melody by merely hearing it, but who can learn it by means of the numbered notes. The melodies according to numbers are usually simpler and less sophisticated than the old ones. It is not very praiseworthy that the older choristers [Vorsaenger] so often sing according to the numbers (zahlen). But we do not have any firm prohibition in the Word of God which forbids us to sing the songs using the numbered notes. According to my understanding, we cannot so completely base our actions solely on past practices. The youth have learned the songs according to the numbers and are practising the same. Otherwise we may develop two kinds of singing in our worship services and the song leaders could frequently have difficulties with the resulting disharmony, of which I am familiar through my own personal experiences. You have also mentioned that four-voice harmony will thereby be introduced into our assemblies. I hope that this will not happen as long as our ministers keep a watchful eye upon the Gemeinde, as they have done hitherto. For there is still a great difference between singing in unison or in four-part harmony.

Thirdly, you make accusations of pride. As far as I know our sermons speak

against pride, as do also the admonitions at our brotherhood meetings. Here reference is also made to matters which are merely unessential appurtenances which promote pride. As I already told you when I was there to see you, if the ministers want to work more seriously against this than merely with teaching and exhortations, they would have to use the ban. You also make accusations that the Ohms had admonished you regarding pride in reference to your children. If I have rightly understood and comprehended this, it came about not that they were accusing you, but because you had criticized others regarding their children. This is apparently why it occurred.

Fourthly, you may still have a fresh recollection--if you have spoken about it--of that which Johann Dueck had said and also regarding the song which he included in the thanksgiving sermon. Recently, when I was at your place, you told me that that song had not been appropriate for a thanksgiving sermon, which I cannot understand or comprehend in this way. In a thanksgiving service we acknowledge the many good things which we have received through the goodness of the Lord. I cannot see why we should not also be warned against loveless verbal judging, and to be encouraged to genuine brotherly love one for the other and to take this earnestly among each other, and to admonish and to counsel. This is the message contained in songs of this kind. Now my beloved, what shall I say to this? Johann Dueck has said it and also had the song in his sermon. The event cannot be made non-existent, and as I gather from the ministers, he has often taken a stand against you and explained that he did not mean it in the way you think he did. Likewise Johann Dueck has told you that the song in the sermon was not presented in the sense that you claim it was. Johann Dueck plead earnestly with you at your place that you should believe what he told you and regarding the song in the sermon. But you have been unable to believe him and to forgive him in spite of his submission and to be reconciled with him.

Oh my beloved friend, I have to say with sadness that I have never even remotely known you in such a way until now. Oh, too bad, too bad, when I think about what Paul says, "Love thinketh no evil." Do observe that lovelessness also promotes an unbecoming zeal, which has often revealed itself in you and which has manifested itself in your deeds. Like the lack of unity among you ministers of which I have heard from you, beloved friend, and in part have experienced in your presence; which was something very strange to perceive this from you. But I console myself with the fact that you have not done this with premeditated intention but rather because of the weakness which God has laid upon you as a cross being the fact that your natural sight has been taken away from you. According to your moods you spend a lot of your time thinking--for you cannot pass the time with anything else, since you cannot read or write. It is also a great hindrance in your everyday work in your Wirtschaft. Because of this you can come to various different views which lead you to all the above mentioned and add thereto and whereby your thinking may also be somewhat weakened.

I do not mean, beloved friend, that you are weak in the fundamentals of the faith. Oh, no, for the way that I have always understand you, I am in full agreement with you as is also the Gemeinde. I am referring only to the anger, the zeal, the inability to reconcile, and the fact that you could not or did not want to forgive. I consider this to be because of your weakness, because I--as well as many others, consider you to be as the man which we must now sadly experience in you,

which causes us heartfelt sorrow.

Alas, my dearly beloved friend, how is this even possible? I must repeat it again, I have never known you to be thus from former times even until this very hour. Nor have I come to know you that way although we frequently came together and have always stood in good harmony, and as far as I know, always had a good confidence in each another. During the brotherhood meetings I sensed many small agitations and also different things which occurred and were dealt with during your time, or evil intention against the neighbour which you did not want to or could not forgive if anyone had offended you. But I have never heard such things about you nor perceived the same. Thus I, for my part, cannot but attribute all of this in love to your weakness. I cannot think any evil of you, even if you do not come to the Last Supper and Love Service of the Lord, which I conclude according to your accusation that you probably will not come. For my part I would in mercy also gladly forgive you for this as well because of your weakness--which would otherwise not be sufficient nor be tolerated.

Fifthly, my beloved friend, you mention so doubtfully, that you were really not voted out of your service by all the brethren. To this I can only reply as follows: During a certain brotherhood meeting your lack of reconciliation and your great zeal was placed before the brethren and also of one occasion among you ministers before the sermon when you had spoken so that those who were present heard word for word what you had spoken with such great agitation that it seemed as if a loud disputation would break forth. This is not very seemly for a minister who should rather teach compassion and humility, as I understand the Scriptures. Paul says, "But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God" (1 Cor. 11:16). During another brotherhood meeting the brethren also have voted against you as was reported. I was not present then.

Sixthly and finally: oh, yes, my beloved friend, from the depth of my heart I wish that you would cry unto God that He might grant you the Spirit of grace, the love of Christ and fellow-man, and that you would find such a love for your fellow-brethren within yourself, and that you would be persuaded in your conscience and convinced that he [Dueck] meant it the way he told you and that you might commit the matter onto God if it was not the case.

Surely you did not think that you alone had to give account for Johann Dueck if matters with him were not standing correctly. The other ministers are just as guilty and responsible as you are--and they leave the matter with him, and that in faith! Oh, if only you could believe this as well that on the Day of Judgment you will not have to give an account for your brother, rather you need only be concerned regarding yourself. Concerning all these things regarding which you have made so much work for yourself and burdened yourself emotionally--and that not only for yourself, for undoubtedly your entire family has also been very much grieved thereby--the same will continue for as long as your persevere in your course. But with the help of God you can find rest and satisfaction within yourself and peace within your conscience. You can experience a blessed life and have contentment and tranquillity in your life and your family will greatly rejoice.

In closing I say with Paul, ". . . lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it" (Heb. 4:1). Oh, beloved, let us with the help of God seek to enter into the eternal peace. We are both no longer young . . . [The ending is missing].

**Document Three: A Letter to Children and Friends in Borosenko, April 15, 1866.**

My beloved children and friends. First of all I wish you, as also myself, the grace of God, the consoling fellowship of the Holy Spirit and the right confidence to our Aeltesten and ministers with a sincere greeting.

1. I may report that I and my children, as far as I know, are fairly well except that for a time I was coughing and sneezing--but spiritually less so than before. I wish you all the best of health for body and soul.

2. I also wish to notify you--perhaps you have heard it already--that our minister Johann Dueck has died of a painful 13 day long nerve fever, having reached the age of 64 years and 7 months.

3. And Margaretha, the daughter of my children Johann Duecks died one day after the death of her grandfather, of a 2 day excruciatingly painful sickness at the age of 4 years and nine months; and together with her grandfather she was brought to her mortal resting place and grave on the 7th day of March, 1866, where they shall rest until the resurrection and the great judgement day.

4. Oh, this departure is most grievous for us. But if we would truly give thought to our grief, we would surely wish, "Ah, if only we might soon be there as well." Song 199 in the old *Gesangbuch* without notes.

And in his sickness this Ohm [Johann Dueck] has very earnestly counselled our Aeltester Friesen that he should but work so that he might once again reunite all the minds that are separated and to build up again the house which is fallen. Alas, my beloved brethren, I do believe that all of us could well apply this counsel to ourselves, since all of us must take some of the blame. I believe that if everyone would truly examine himself in this regard, it would not be so difficult since we have all had a part in this and were also present at the communion service. Nor can we lay all the fault at the feet of the Aeltester that he is not worthy to serve the office, for our beloved God has allowed him to come to repentance and has forgiven him his sins. How, then, can we now judge him? Are we not thereby placing God in judgement? I for my part, cannot do so.

Oh my beloved brethren, can we not liken ourselves unto the great city of Nineveh, which grievously sinned against God--as we have also:

And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey. And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them (Jonah 3:1-5).

Behold, my beloved, they did not push the blame upon the king or upon this one or that one. No, they all, great and small, repented. Oh, let this be a lesson for us that we will do accordingly. I mean that we should do so before our Saviour with inwardly remorse and repentance, so that our great God would also forgive us our great sins the way He did in the city of Nineveh. Yes, we want to lay hand in hand and remove everything that could be a stumbling block whereby one or the

other might be offended. And we should forgive everything and burn it all in the fire of love. Oh, my beloved, no one should think that I want to lecture anyone. In no way is this the purpose of my writing, rather I am inspired to do so with an inwardly sadness.

Now I want to conclude my very modest writing. Best greetings to all my beloved friends from me and my children, and also to my beloved sister-in-law and Maria. Do also extend greetings to the Honourable Isaak Friesen. Do visit us in the near future for my thoughts are frequently with you there. As to my coming to you, I do not know anything definite. Do answer my letter, so that I may know what you think of this. In conclusion, I request that you greet the grandfathers Joh. Warkentin and Isa. Loewen. I remain your faithful Grandfather,

H. R.

Waldheim, the 15th of April, 1866

#### **Document Four: A Record of the 1869 Reconciliation.**

On May 14, 1869, with the help of God, a unification was effected to be together in one Gemeinde with the Gruenfelder. On Friday, May 16, in the morning, the four Ohms from Borosenko came here, namely; Ohm Abraham Friesen, Peter Toews, Gerhard Schellenberg and Isaak Friesen; and from the Crimea, the Aeltester Ohm Jakob Wiebe and Ohm Baerg. They all attended the worship service in Kleefeld and Aeltester Wiebe preached. A brotherhood meeting was held in the afternoon.

On Saturday May 17 the articles were read in Kleefeld, and on Sunday, May 18, the articles were again read in Kleefeld for the second time. A brotherhood meeting was also held but did not truly come to a conclusion. On May 19, Monday, a brotherhood meeting was held in Fischau. After the declaration of reconciliation was achieved, the young people were baptized, 1 male and 2 female.

On May 20, Tuesday, a preparatory sermon was presented in Alexanderwohl and in the afternoon there was a ministerial election. Abraham Klassen, Prangenau, and Johann Dueck, Alexanderkron, received the majority of ballots as deacons. Of the two deacons, Abr. Klassen was elected as the minister by a majority of ballots. On May 21 the Last Supper and Communion service was commemorated in Fischau. In the afternoon Aeltester Wiebe and Baerg again returned to the Crimea. The minister Isaak Friesen first presented a sermon and following this they all returned home to Borosenko, including Friesen from Heuboden, Jacob Friesen Jr. and Johann Warkentin from Blumenhoff.

**Document Five: A Letter to Peter P. Toews, Borosenko, from Heinrich Reimer.**  
[At the time resident with his children Johann L. Duecks, Alexanderkron, Molotschna.]

Alexanderkron, August 1, 1869

Beloved Ohms, brethren and sisters;

Firstly, I wish you the dear and worthy peace through Jesus Christ, our beloved Saviour. Amen.

Beloved Ohms, brothers and sisters. We wish to make all of you aware of our feelings of thankfulness and encouragement with respect to the reconciliation. Indeed, we are very thankful for the great love of our heavenly Father which has again been experienced, and which our compassionate God bestows upon our very

weak afflicted souls. Ah yes, I must confess that when the resolution of peace was effected in Fischau, with the help of God, it moved me to tears. In my great weakness I had prayed to our beloved God many times, that he surely would want to inspire all of our hearts for love and for reconciliation, and that we grieving and scattered sheep might again come under one charge. Indeed, I hope that all of us will have prayed to our heavenly Father, "Lord, your will be done". If it had not been the will of the Lord, how would the Ohms from the Crimea, the Aeltester Ja. Wiebe and Ohm Baerg, have made such a lengthy journey? And I have the assurance that through the incitement of the Holy Spirit the Ohms were of assistance regarding a reconciliation amongst us afflicted souls. They also served us with baptism, the Lord's Supper, a communion service and ministerial elections.

I repeat again, many thanks are returned to our beloved God and to you. Oh that the Lord would not be sorrowful regarding His lost sheep, but we must take fault if we fall into sin against our loving God. Certainly, our loving God does not wish that any should go lost, but rather that we return again and ask that He, the God of all compassion, might once more forgive our sins out of grace. Oh how can we sufficiently rejoice with heartfelt thanks that our compassionate God of grace is still ruling over us miserable sinners? We must consider this with a grateful disposition and say with the lamentations of the prophet Jeremiah that, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is their faithfulness." Indeed, so great that we must cry out and say with the king and prophet; "O Lord my God great are your wonders, and your grace which you have evidenced to us." There is nothing equal to Psalm 40. The prophet Isaiah speaks out and says, "His counsel is wonderful and magnificently worketh all things." Our benevolent God has marvellously led us insignificant ones, as we would have no substance to obtain peace of our own strength if our loving God had not caused it.

Yes, beloved Ohms and brothers and sisters, the matters which have gone so adversely for us through our dispersion, must be allowed to serve for our learning and as a warning of the future. I mean to say, for example, as Judas Maccabee said to the Jews, ". . . that they should not be provoked by these calamities, but that they should judge such punishments not to be for destruction, but rather as a chastening of our nation. And therefore he never completely withdraweth his mercy from us, and though he hath punished us with misfortune, yet doth he never forsake his people" (2 Maccabees 6). Similarly may the misfortune which we have had to experience serve not only as a warning, but also an example so that we might live in greater fear of God in the future and more carefully than we perhaps have done in the past and as Paul says; ". . . at all times to follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12).

Beloved Ohms and siblings. I find myself and my evil flesh to be so very weak when I think of the danger, how the devil is so everywhere present. Yes, he comes as an angel of light so that I must cry together with the poet. "Mein Gott ich musz mir klagen, durch dieses Lied die Plagen, die oft mein Herze quaeln, dass mir die guten Triebe, die Froemmigkeit und Liebe, bei fleisches schwachheit fehlt". I am sometimes very frightened that the evil enemy will lead us from the narrow path which Christ has walked before us. Therefore, it is my heartfelt plea that you would unite yourselves in your prayers with us very weak fellow pilgrims and pray

to God for us, that the loving God might grant true faith and love to us sinners in these troubled times. For which I pray with the poet; "O pflanz in mir so deine Liebe, das nichts als Liebe mich belebt, auf das mein Geist durch heisse Triebe, an dir als einen Liebling klebt."

I also wish to mention regarding our newly elected minister (Lehrer), Ohm Ab. Klassen, that he is very zealous in his service to teach us of the narrow way and to advise, which is also very essential. But I told him in love that he should not exert himself so much as it would weaken him, to which he replied that indeed his body was only weak. Therefore it is my plea that we might all wish to come to his aid in prayer to the Lord who can readily strengthen him. It is also my plea to you beloved Ohms that you would come to visit us as soon as possible.

I will now conclude this very insignificant writing. It is our wish that this little effort may come to comfort you in the best of health physically as well as spiritually. Physically we are quite well, many thanks be to God, but our spiritual condition is very poor as stated above. But we must always express our concerns in prayer. Now beloved Ohms and brothers and sisters, a heartfelt greeting to you from my beloved wife and myself and from the Johann Duecks. We remain your most subordinate and submitted brothers and sisters, and we say adieu, adieu, with a kiss of love.

*Heinrich Reimers*

#### **Document Six: A Letter of Farewell to My Beloved Children, 1874.**

Dearly beloved children;

The love of Christ urges me to leave a few written words behind with you before my departure for America. First of all, I wish you the peace and the grace of the God, the love of our Lord Jesus Christ and the assurance of salvation through the Holy Spirit.

Beloved children, you already know that our Gemeinde wishes to emigrate to America because she does not want to allow her children to be taken out of the circle of their families and--what is more--out of the Gemeinde, and to remain where they must be given over to a service wherein they are all the more subjected to the manifold lusts of youth--as had already happened. Therefore I am decided to undertake this journey and not to evade the discomfort of the same because of my advanced years and to remain together with the Gemeinde. This is the reason, beloved children, why I am going along. Yet I take leave of you with heaviness of heart, and this all the more so because I fear that some of you do not see the danger for the beloved children, whom Christ has sincerely entrusted to us as a precious treasure, and of whom He says, "Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Therefore, I would like to consider together with you, beloved children, whether it will still be possible to bring our children unto Him, or whether they are thereby hindered, particularly, if they are separated from the protection of their parents and are committed to a service during the years when they are most impressionable and vulnerable. This service, even if it is not a direct army service, is nonetheless a service in which they are vulnerable to the very same evil habits and the same sins which will seem just as appealing as in the actual military. I say this especially because this occurs exactly during the years when every Christian father should see to it that his son would be introduced to a like-minded Christian wife rather than to give his son over to an organization which is Christian in name

but which in actual fact is controlled by the state, or by the Vollost, and which will therefore be an organization which will seek to satisfy the lusts and frivolity of Sodom.

Children, I would want to be blameless if it should come to pass in such a way that anyone of your children would be endangered thereby and should be forced into such an experience. You are being promised that a Christian preacher will minister to the youths and will see to a proper discipline and order. But of what help shall this be, beloved children, when discipline and decency have so much disappeared in the contemporary church--as you yourselves very well know. How will such a church prevail if it abandons its youth, that is to say, if the youths are left alone to their own devices for their salvation? and if their appointed preachers themselves are slaves of pleasure?

Therefore, beloved children, if the gracious government now provides for us the freedom to emigrate and we can find new homes in America where we can live together with our children in peace and in accordance with our faith, is it not better, therefore, to make use of this freedom even though someone should object by saying we do not know how long this liberty will last? This is right, we cannot know this. But it has already prevailed much longer there than in Russia. And should it not prevail much longer out there--and we do not know this--then we have at least done everything we could in order to show our children that according to the will of Christ we do not want that they through liberty in Christ become the servants of man and help to build the world. Rather, that they might be brought under the influence of a Christian fellowship, and unto the Mount of Zion, and to the Word of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem and to the multitude of thousands of angels, and to the Gemeinde of the first-born whose names are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of those made perfect, and to Jesus, the Mediator of the New Testament, and to the sprinkling of blood which speaks more powerfully than Abel's (Heb.12).

Beloved children, consider how one day the Lord will hold us accountable for the souls of our children. Well in time do give proper consideration as to how you can train them from early childhood on in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and not for their own pleasure. The Lord says, ". . . prevent them not." Therefore do give diligent thought that you do not hinder them from coming to the Lord. For an education of the youth with certain aims and objectives in respect to the prospective service will sooner lead the youth away from Christ than to Him. How much less would the beloved youth be found walking in the ways of the Lord during the time of such a service. And if this should be the case of some individuals among them that they would perform this in lieu of military service, and if this in and of itself would point the hand in the direction of military service, would we not thereby to some extent declare that war is right rather than to deny it? How could we be Christians and His followers if we would endorse such an evil which Christ and His apostles have prohibited and warned against?

Yes, beloved children, Christ has forbidden much more than simply war. He has forbidden every unrighteousness and evil habit through which war and unrest can be motivated. He commanded us to love our enemies--if your enemy is hungry, feed him, if he is thirsty, give him to drink, etc. What do you think, beloved children, would the Mennonite youth who are subject to this service be able to do this if it should actually come so far that they would be fulfilling a position during

a time of war where the policy is to force the enemy to surrender through means of starvation and lack of water? These are the attributes of war. These and other frightful things more are the deeds of war. It is not to be expected, beloved children, that the Mennonite youth would not also be compelled to take part in such service during a time of war. A Christian cannot do these things if he wishes to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. And when such a youth comes home after such a service unto the bosom of his parental family and church, what kind of person will he be? Should not every Christian father seek to hinder his son from such a service for several years away from home? Especially when the aforesaid is forbidden by 2 Corinthian 7:2. It is as if the kingdom of God has to receive fornicators and others of such kind. Must not every father and every tender loving mother dread this? And not merely because of a remote possibility but rather a definite probability.

Oh, here I must again remind you of the words of Christ, ". . . prevent them not." Oh, leading the children to Christ requires that one uses the open door well in time. In doing so one foregoes fearful sorrows, woes and heartaches and severe accountability for the souls of your children. One prefers to do so even when it means suffering loss and ridicule. For this reason we will undertake the labour of an emigration and seeking a home where we can rather pray and work together with our children and where we need not give them up.

Now, beloved children, I ask you to receive this in love and that you would want to consider it. When you realize that this was written with the assistance of others, you will excuse it. Because of my high age my senses are no longer capable of assembling and expressing my thoughts and feelings properly on paper. Do, however, accept this as if I myself have said it to you. These are my farewell words and greetings given with much anxiety for the best well-being of my beloved children who are a great concern for me.

In conclusion I commit you unto God and to the Word of His grace,

Your father, *Heinrich Reimer*

I will prepare a small addition. Although it is too insignificant, yet love compels me to say farewell to you with this writing, beloved children and nephews and all my beloved friends. It is, nonetheless, my request and heartfelt desire to extend to you the peace of God and our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, as well as health and all good fortune and well-being, physically and also spiritually.

Firstly, a heartfelt greeting to all. Now my beloved children, what shall I really write to you, as my counsel and desires can be seen in this letter. Yet it is my request that our writing be accepted in love and that you would read the letter many times, so that it will become clearer to you. For when I read a strange writing and it is not quite clear, I read it many times. I think you might have had the same experience. I ask you to interpret it in love.

Now, my beloved children, do not interpret the letter as if we are blaming our gracious Czar that we have to emigrate. Oh, no! For our sins have been the inspiration and have caused the curtailment of our liberties. God threatens us hereby as a result. In this regard one may well consider whether the sign in the sky which we saw in 1872 and of which you--my son Reimer--wrote about to us, was not a call to repentance of our sins and forgiveness. I fear that the Lord could easily allow a severe punishment to come over us, even as the poet says, "Help,

beloved God, how great woes have engulfed us, as if nothing but affliction threatens us" etc.

Now it is our desire, time permitting, that you would make us a farewell visit. This would be very precious to us, as you know what you have promised. And if it is not feasible for you to visit us, then we take our farewell herewith and say, adieu, adieu, my beloved friends, until we meet again, if not in this world then in eternity. Amen!

We remain your loving but weak parents,

*Heinrich Reimers*

On the 9th of January it began to thaw so that there was a lot of water and on the 26th of January it was snowing heavily. Heinrich Reimer came with our things and fortunately the adults were at home. Beloved children, I say this to you with joyful heart that all our children and grandchildren have written us except you brother-in-law Isaak Friesen and your beloved wife and children, and also brother-in-law Peter Rempel and his beloved wife and children who have as yet not written us. We are far apart, so that we cannot speak to one other. Yet we can bless one another through writing.

Hence I want to say now, adieu, adieu, my beloved children and do not forget us in your prayers. Heartfelt greetings to all of you and greet all the children. We remain your faithful beloved parents,

*Hein. Reimer*

#### Editor's Comment

Document One is taken from an inscription written into the title page of a copy of *Die Wandelnde Seele* which Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) gave to his granddaughter Maria Brandt (1843-1927) on September 17, 1861. Maria Brandt married Isaac L. Plett (1844-1871) and the couple made their home in Friedensfeld, South Russia until his untimely death in 1871. In 1874 she immigrated to Manitoba where the book eventually was inherited by his grandson Abram D. Plett, founder of Westfield Industries, Rosenort, Manitoba. Courtesy of son Frank Plett, Rosenort, Manitoba, 1980. Document Five is from the Document Collection of Peter P. Toews, courtesy of Milton and Margaret Toews, Neilberg, Saskatchewan, 1981. Documents Two, Three, Four and Six are from the "Familienbuch" of Heinrich Reimer, unpublished journal, courtesy of Milton and Margaret Toews, Abbotsford, B. C., October 9, 1992.

Although Document Three is not definitely identified as such, it is believed to be a letter of admonition by Heinrich Reimer to Klaas Friesen (1793-1870), Rosenort, a senior Kleine Gemeinde minister who was removed from his office in 1864 for lack of cooperation regarding certain issues which arose in the church, such as the new numbered melodies (*Ziffern*) which were becoming popular among the Russian Mennonites at the time. The identity of the recipient of the letter is verified by the fact that Klaas Friesen was totally blind for the last seven years of his life; cf. Part Seven, Chapter One. Since Document Three refers to the removal from office of Klaas Friesen which occurred on February 23, 1864, the letter must be dated shortly thereafter.

# PART TWELVE

## PETER BAERG 1817-1901

### Chapter One

### Biography

A Biography of Peter Baerg (1817-1901) of Nikolaidorf, Molotschna Colony, South Russia, and later of Annenfeld (Schwesterthal), Crimea, and Gruenfeld (Kleefeld), Manitoba. By Delbert F. Plett, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1993.

---

#### Section One. Family Background.

1 Peter Baerg (1817-1901) has written that his father was Jakob Baerg, who was born on January 21, 1777, and died on December 26, 1845.<sup>1</sup> His mother was born on 1787 and died on December 25, 1826.<sup>2</sup> According to *A Janzen Family History*, his wife was also a Baerg, namely, Catharina Baerg (1787-1826).<sup>3</sup> The couple married in 1808 and emigrated from Hegewald, West Prussia, to the Molotschna Colony, South Russia, in 1818. The family is listed as follows in the immigration records:

Baerg Jakob, Hegewald, Landwirt (landowning farmer), to Molotschna, married Catharina Baerg, Hegewald, to the Molotschna, Children, Jakob 8, Johan 6, Isaac 4, Catharina 2 and Peter 1/2.<sup>4</sup>

Through his study of the *Mennonitische Rundschau* in 1988, Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba, was able to identify six children of Jakob Baerg, four of whom are listed above.<sup>5</sup> According to Russell H. Janzen, *Janzen 1780-1989: A Family history and genealogy of Jakob F. and Susanna (Baerg) Janzen, their ancestors and their descendants*, Jakob Baerg (1777-1845) had a total of 17 children from two wives. His first wife, Katharina Baerg, died Christmas Day, 1826, after which Jakob Baerg had another 8 children by his second wife whose name is not known.<sup>6</sup> It is possible that the Jakob Baerg (1777-1845) family lived in Prangenau, Molotschna, since sons Peter and Johann are known to have lived there.

#### Section Two. Children of Jakob Baerg 1777-1845.

2 Son Johann Baerg married Katharina Neumann, the daughter of Maria Peters (1791-1849) and Jakob Neumann (1780-1849) born in Danzig.<sup>7</sup> The Johann Baerg family lived in Prangenau and later moved to Nikolaidorf where they lived until they immigrated to America in 1879. According to a family history, Johann Baerg settled on a farm 5 1/2 miles southeast of Mountain Lake. Their granddaughter Catharina Willms married Gerhard Plett (1860-1933), who became

the Aeltester of the Margenau Gemeinde and died in the labour camps of the Soviet *Gulag*.<sup>8</sup> Their daughter Anna Baerg (1844-1910) married Peter Friesen (1846-1931), the son of KG school teacher Peter F. Friesen of Marienthal.<sup>9</sup>

2 Son Isaac Baerg lived in Lichtenau where he served for 20 years as Waisenvorsteher.<sup>10</sup> An example of his duties is found in *The Bergen History* which includes a copy of a letter in his handwriting dated February 24, 1873, appointing Gerhard Enns of Fischau as the Guardian of the widow Peter Esau of Fischau.<sup>11</sup> Daughter Katharina Baerg was born in 1816. She was married in 1841 to a Toews whose first name is not known at the present time. Her husband died on November 3, 1882.<sup>12</sup> Son Heinrich Baerg settled in the Inman area of Kansas in 1876. His son Isaac Baerg moved to Canada in 1921 and settled in Hochstadt near Kleefeld, Manitoba. Their son Albert Baerg (born 1897) was still living in Kleefeld, Manitoba, in 1991 at the age of 94. Daughter Anna Baerg (born 1831) married David Loewen in 1854. The family immigrated to Mountain Lake, Minnesota in 1876.<sup>13</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
1	Jakob Baerg	Jan 22,1777	Nov 3,1808	Dec 2,1845
m	Catharina Baerg	Jan 6,1787		Dec 25,1826
2	Jakob Baerg	Mar 11,1810		Mar 19,1875
2	Catharina Baerg	Mar 12,1811		Jan 5,1812
2	Johann Baerg	Mar 2,1813	Apr 20,1837	Feb 3,1892
m	Katharina Neumann	Mar 18,1818		Feb 20,1890
2	Isaac Baerg	Jun 15,1815		
m	?			
2	Katharina Baerg	Jul 23,1816		1899
m	? Toews			
2	Peter Baerg	Nov 17,1817		Jul 31,1901
2	Wilhelm Baerg	Feb 15,1820		
m	Helena/Christina ?			
2	Franz Baerg	Mar 15,1822		
2	Heinrich Baerg	Mar 15,1822		Jul 30,1887
1	Jakob Baerg	Jan 22,1777		Dec 2,1845
m	?		1827	
2	Maria Baerg	Feb 1,1828		
m	Peter Klassen/Voth ?			
2	Kornelius Baerg	Feb 11,1830		
2	Agatha Baerg	Oct 18,1831		
2	Elisabeth Baerg	Mar 17,1834		
2	Gerhard Baerg	Jan 2,1836		
2	Anna Baerg	Oct 17,1837	1854	
m	David Loewen	1829		
2	Aganeta Baerg	Mar 10,1839		
2	Abraham Baerg	Jun 3,1841		Nov 2,1841

### Section Three. Peter Baerg 1817-1901.

2 Son Peter Baerg (1817-1901) has recorded a great deal of autobiographical information in his journal entitled, "Dieses Schreibbuch Gehoert Peter Berg in Prangenau 1835". The "Schreibbuch" contains thirty "Schoenschrieben" or

calligraphy pieces dated between 1835 and 1842 set out in the form of a teacher's exercise manual for students to follow. Accordingly it appears that Peter served as a school teacher in Prangenau during the years mentioned.

On December 1, 1842, Peter Baerg married Susanna Neumann from Rudnerweide, Molotschna.<sup>14</sup> It is evident that he had a sense of historical consciousness for he recorded this event in his "Schreibbuch" on December 26, 1842. He has written also that his wife's father was born September 14, 1780, and died July 7, 1849, and that her mother was born January 4, 1791, and died January 20, 1849.<sup>15</sup> These are the exact birth and death dates recorded for Jakob Neumann and Maria Peters, the parents of Katharina Neumann (1818-1890), who married Peter's brother Johann. Therefore, it is concluded that they were sisters. It seems likely that Susanna was also related to Elisabeth Neumann (1814-1878) who married KG farmer Franz Wiens (1802-1881) from Blumstein.<sup>16</sup>

Peter Baerg and his young bride lived in the village of Prangenau. The "Schönschrieben" entries in his "Schreibbuch" only go up to 1842, from which it is concluded that Peter quit teaching after he married and went into farming. The family was still living in Prangenau on August 11, 1851, when daughter Katharina was born.<sup>17</sup> On April 25, 1852, Susanna and Peter Baerg moved to the village of Nikolaidorf, Molotschna.<sup>18</sup> This village was founded in 1852 and was also home to other families with KG connections, namely: brother Johann Baerg (1813-1892) and his son-in-law Peter Friesen who later settled in Mountain Lake, Minnesota; Kornelius Heidebrecht (1808-1890);<sup>19</sup> Abraham F. Neufeld (1819-1899), later of Inman, Kansas;<sup>20</sup> Martin Thielmann (1812-1856);<sup>21</sup> Jakob L. Friesen (1837-1901), who later settled in Jansen, Nebraska;<sup>22</sup> and Aaron Reimer (1826-1902), who settled in Mountain Lake in 1878.<sup>23</sup>

In 1861 the Peter Baerg family moved to the Crimea where they settled in the village of Schwesterthal located about 17 verst from the larger village of Annenfeld which had been founded a year earlier.<sup>24</sup> According to Johann Wall of Ebenfeld, Russia, three of the Wall brothers and others had purchased a block of land in the Crimea in 1861 where two villages, Bruderthal and Schwesterthal, were laid out.<sup>25</sup> Susanna and Peter Baerg must have done quite well on their *Wirtschaft* in Nikolaidorf for they purchased 100 *desjatien* (a double farm) after they moved to then Crimea. Baerg describes the move as follows:

On May 1, 1861, we moved to the Crimea on the land known as *Karatebell*, and presently as Schwesterthal and Bruderfeld. We purchased 4700 *desjatien* from the Maria Restewitsch at 20 ruble silver per *desjatien*. Of this I purchased 100 *desjatien*, for which I paid 75 ruble silver on April 27, 250 ruble silver on September 27, and 50 ruble silver on November 19. The traveling costs were 25 ruble silver which were deducted from the 375 ruble. The balance I paid in 1862.<sup>26</sup>

### Ministerial Career.

Peter Baerg was a man of considerable spiritual sensitivity. He was concerned that many of the Mennonites in the Crimea "went their own way and did not respect the Lord's way, but continued to live in evil habits and sin." He felt that everyone [was] . . . seeking to follow their own frivolity and foolishness, and

whoever can do this best, has the honour before the people, but assuredly not with God and our Saviour.<sup>127</sup> Baerg's endeavours to live a sincere Christian life did not go unnoticed and in 1862 he was elected as the minister of the local congregation which was considered to be an extension of the Gemeinde in the Molotschna under Aeltester Toews of Blumenort. Baerg describes his election as follows:

On September 11, 1862, there was a ministerial election here in Bruderfeld, where I was elected as a teacher [minister] of this Gemeinde. 'Oh, Father, I pray that You will grant me wisdom and strength for this difficult service in order that I might preach the Gospel, in such a way as would be pleasing unto You, oh God!<sup>28</sup>

Peter's election as a minister only increased his concerns regarding the spiritual life in the Crimea. He patiently preached and pleaded with his parishioners to change their ways--to no avail. Two years later, in 1864, he decided to leave this Gemeinde in order to join the KG. He described the spiritual struggle which led to his decision in "An epistle regarding my joining of the Kleine Gemeinde, 1864" which was written in response to a request from Aeltester Toews in the Molotschna for an explanation of this action. Baerg writes as follows:

When I, though a miserable sinner, was chosen to this high and difficult ministry, my courage failed me and I thought what a poor sinner I was. Yes, my sins burdened me so much, that I cried with David, "Lord, do not remember the sins of my youth." Oh, dear friend, it was then that I clearly saw the awful sin in which we lived. I made it my responsibility to warn the people, yes, many times I have admonished them with tears in my eyes. Yet nothing helped and everyone continued to live in their sin and would not turn to God. They would not follow the Word of God, but only listened to it. . . . I patiently tried to endure this for about two years. . . . If I had seen that it was possible to lead the Gemeinde according to Christ's teachings and God's commands, I would have stayed but it was impossible.<sup>29</sup>

Through his spiritual struggle Baerg had come to see the stark and unadorned reality of his own piety and that he was as nothing without the grace of God:

As far as my own poor and imperfect life is concerned, I freely confess that I am a poor miserable sinner, and often with David I must say, that my sin is ever before me and my words and deeds convince me of it. I am aware of the same thing as the apostle Paul, who said, "For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." But I pray that our loving and merciful God will keep me from presumptuous and deliberate sins until the end of my life. Yes, may He deliver me from over zealousness or running ahead of Him and that I might become more mature and always confessing my own unworthiness before him.

Baerg also made it clear that he was not trying to elevate himself as being more pious than his former brethren, rather that he simply wanted to make a genuine and sincere effort to follow the teachings of Christ as best as was possible:

Dear friends, I do not mean to say or give to understand that we are righteous and already perfect. Oh no, but we say with Paul, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things that are behind, and reaching forth to those things that are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:12-14).

Baerg became the first and only resident minister of the Crimean KG congregation until the election of Jakob A. Wiebe of Annenfeld--formerly of Margenau, Molotschna--in 1867. It was ironic that the two men both came from families which had immigrated to Russia in 1818 and after. It is interesting to speculate what impact this background had on their subsequent decisions regarding their spiritual lives. Also noteworthy is the fact that Baerg's wife was a descendant of the later Rudnerweide immigrants, who were generally much more Germanized and influenced by Separatist-pietism. In contrast, Wiebe's wife was a descendant of the original 1804 Molotschna settlers from the the village of Petershagen--one of two villages where the KG started. It would have been natural for Baerg's wife to have influenced him against the KG and for Wiebe's wife to have influenced him the other way.

Six letters written by Baerg between 1867 and 1869 have been published in Chapter Two, Part Twelve, and provide a first hand look at the KG group in the Crimea.<sup>30</sup> The 1869 election of Jakob A. Wiebe as Aeltester was a major event for the Crimean KG. Baerg was designated to preform the ordination, something which he did very reluctantly because of concerns regarding Wiebe's motives, as he explained in his letter to Peter Toews of October 14, 1869: "But I was very much persuaded and pushed for I did not want to do so . . . I was also scared that I might trespass upon a foreign office, and that I might thereby commit an offense before the Lord. He continued to entreat me in this regard until I finally acquiesced . . ." When Wiebe seceded from the KG only a few months later--September 21--to form the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren, Baerg was shocked and devastated. He writes, "Beloved, Ohm Toews . . . As I understand from your letters you appear to have concerns whether we might have given up the fellowship too quickly, which does not surprise me to an extent. When I consider the unity and oneness in the spirit, and the way we shared with each other and encouraged each other, we would surely want to wait to make sure that there could be no opening. For he [Wiebe] frequently allowed himself to be heard that we were united; the way one brother put it to me that he had said to him, "If we both say 'yes', then it definitely means 'yes'." This is surely how it should also be with a disciple of Christ; but then he [Wiebe] threw his promises into the echoes of the wind." Baerg remained true to the solemn covenants he had made with his God.<sup>31</sup> He was a man of rock solid faith not easily swayed by the winds of religious zealotry. In a

letter of October 3, 1869, he describes his reaction to this event:

The building which we thought to have raised in spring hath fallen and lies scattered about since it was apparently built on sand. A misfortune arose and a storm came, and the wind blew and encompassed the house and the house fell, and then was a great fall (Matt. 7). This has been our experience as well, that some had built upon the sand. Wherefore the Saviour says, we are to build upon a solid rock, namely, upon Him and to serve Him in truth, for he says, "I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh to the Father but through me." Whoever has not built their house of faith upon His solid rock will soon to be dissuaded therefrom. What other alternative do we have but that we remain of one mind and build anew. For that purpose we require wise and obedient carpenters who will follow and be obedient to their master in all matters and in which respect I, however, find myself to be completely inexperienced and incompetent.

With the departure of Wiebe, the responsibility for the small KG congregation in the Crimea again fell solely on Baerg's shoulders. On October 26, of the next year, 1870, he was chosen to ordain Peter P. Toews as Aeltester of the Blumenhoff branch of the KG at Borsenko.<sup>32</sup> His letters of the time refer to various matters where he worked devotedly and earnestly for the spiritual advancement of his parishioners.<sup>33</sup> It is clear that he was a man steadfast and true and not swayed by the winds of zealotry and fanaticism. His was a simple faith, motivated particularly by love and a willingness to serve his fellowman. In a letter of March 10, 1874, he writes as follows:

How very important it is to continue to pray to our Heavenly Father, that He might give us this love and sympathy for our fellow man and that He might be with us and strengthen us in all the things that are against us. He will do this if we put our trust entirely in Him, for He has never forsaken anyone that trusted in Him and built on Him. I have great comfort in all these adversities that occur, namely, that he that endureth unto the end will be saved. Let us therefore listen patiently to see what the Lord will do with us. Surely, we can trust Him.

The letter also tells of the preparations being made for the forthcoming emigration from Russia. Baerg writes, "the majority of our fellow brethren are inclined to undertake the great journal with you this spring. This is also our intention." But there were still problems in that their farm sales were not finalized yet." He writes further, ". . . we here in Annafeld have not sold yet. We all have buyers who wish to buy, but so far these have always postponed." This confirms contemporary reports that purchasers often waited until the immigrants were ready to leave, thereby, hoping to get the best possible price.

In May of 1874 Peter Baerg and his family--except for the two oldest daughters who were already married--left for Manitoba, Canada. Baerg describes

the immigration as follows:

On May 29, 1874, we moved from Annafeld in the Crimea to America, namely, we commenced our journey in this regard at the said time. we travelled for seven weeks and arrived here on August 2, and completed our journey in good health and repose. May the Lord be thanked many times for His gracious protection.<sup>34</sup>

The Baerg family settled in the village of Gruenfeld, where they pioneered and established a home and Wirtschaft under primitive conditions. Baerg also took on the responsibility of serving as interim leader of all the KG families who had settled on the East Reserve until the summer of 1875 when Aeltester Peter Toews arrived from Russia.<sup>35</sup> The family did reasonably well and by 1876 Baerg was insured for the following property: buildings-\$250.00, equipment and cattle-\$175.00, inventory and feed-\$250.00.<sup>36</sup>

However, the relative peace within the Gemeinde was not to last. In 1879 Johann Holdeman, an American Revivalist minister with "old" Mennonite roots, had visited the KG in Manitoba. By 1881 Aeltester Peter Toews and several other ministers had decided to resign their positions and to join Holdman's church. Peter Baerg was the senior minister of the KG and the only minister left on the East Reserve and, therefore, the responsibility for spiritual leadership again fell to him. Notwithstanding that he was ill and unable to preach for part of the time, Baerg had to stand strong and almost alone.<sup>37</sup> His philosophy was to build slowly and surely on the solid rock which was Jesus Christ. He opposed the union with Holdeman because he felt that Holdeman relied too much on dreams and personal revelations to resolve theological questions. The grounds for his opposition was eloquently expressed in his "Gemeinde Chronicle 1879 to 1896" which was translated and published in 1990.<sup>38</sup> Baerg was the only one of the ministerial of the Blumenhoff branch of the KG in Russia to remain steadfast and true.

#### **Retirement and Estate Settlement.**

By this time Baerg was 66 years old and slowing down in his farming operations. In 1882 he and his wife were concerned about the settlement of their estate and they made the following advancements by portion among their children. This is illustrated by the shares of daughters Anna and Sara, as follows: "And the two daughters, Anna and Sara, shall likewise receive the same, namely: firstly, a cow-\$35.00; secondly, a fur coat-\$15.00; thirdly, a quilt-\$7.00; fourthly, cash-\$8.00; fifthly, a chest-\$14.00." Baerg goes on to explain "that I have kept a record of these things in order to avoid arguments, for it is sometimes the case that there is strong disputation regarding the inherited property, and which I strongly urge you to avoid, my beloved children, and not to pursue the temporal affairs which serve much for that which is ungodly. Seek rather to be at peace with everyone, for without the same no one shall see the Lord."

In 1882 he noted in his "Schreibbuch" that he still had 100 rubel credit with "... our children Bernhard Friesens which are to be divided into three parts, but not equal parts. Firstly, Jakob Friesen's children are to receive 42 ruble all together; secondly, Abraham Friesens are to receive 36 ruble; and finally Bernhard Friesens 22 ruble." He also writes that "his four oldest children, namely, Maria,

Susanna, Catarina and Peter, have each received a cow."

According to the R. M. of Hanover Assessment records, Baerg's farming operation in 1883 consisted of the following: 240 acres of land, 22 cultivated 208 pasture, buildings worth \$100.00 and furniture \$75.00, 2 horses, 2 cows, 1/2 share in a feed crusher, mower and rake, and miscellaneous equipment for a total assessment of \$522.00. On March 5, 1884, they sold their Wirtschaft in Gruenfeld and moved to Neuanlage where they lived with their children Johann Koops. This lasted for only one year, and on March 31, 1885, they moved back to Gruenfeld.<sup>39</sup> At this time they built a new house in Gruenfeld which was insured for \$150.00 on December 24, 1885.

Mrs. Peter Baerg, nee Susanna Neumann, died in Gruenfeld on February 15, 1891. Shortly thereafter, Peter Baerg married for the second time to the widow Peter Penner, nee Katharina Schellenberg of Blumenort, Manitoba. He acquired a small house in the village which was entered in the insurance rolls on April 25, 1892, for \$75.00, with \$75.00 entered for feed and inventory, and \$25.00 for furniture. On September 19 of the same year a small barn was added with a value of \$100.00. In his retirement years, Baerg worked as a shoemaker.<sup>40</sup> Mrs. Baerg died in Blumenort on May 4, 1901.<sup>41</sup> Peter Baerg died in Neuanlage--presumably at the home of his daughter, Sarah Koop--on July 31 of the same year.

As was to be expected, given his earlier teaching career in the village of Prangenau, Peter Baerg was an articulate and literate man. He was known as a sound expositor of scripture and his sermons were considered important. In his "Familienbuch", Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884) has referred to a sermon preached in Paulsheim by Baerg on the 16th, 22nd and 24th of October of 1865.<sup>42</sup> Even years later, in 1924, Maria Reimer--the widow of colleague Rev. Peter R. Reimer (1845-1915) of Blumenort--writes that she has read two sermons by Peter Baerg and that she considers them authoritative. She writes, "The Ohm [Baerg] was very gifted in preparing a sermon, and how wonderful it is to be able to read them over again."<sup>43</sup> A collection of some 20 of Peter Baerg's sermons have been preserved and would form the basis of a more detailed study of the life and work of Peter Baerg.<sup>44</sup> As the senior minister of the KG and the leader in the East Reserve, Baerg, together with Aeltester Abraham L. Friesen (1831-1917), Jansen, Nebraska, and Aeltester Jakob M. Kroeker, Rosenort, Manitoba, truly deserves to be called the father of the 7,000 member Evangelical Mennonite Conference in Canada as well as of the 2,500 member Kleingemeinde of Belize and Mexico.

#### Section Four. Family of Peter and Susanna Baerg.

2 Susanna and Peter Baerg were blessed with six children who married and founded families. The Baergs loved their children dearly and recorded a good deal of information about them in the "Schreibbuch". The remainder of this chapter will consist of brief sketches of the Baerg children and their families.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
2	Peter Baerg	Nov 17,1817	Dec 1,1842	Jul 31,1901
m	Susanna Neumann	Jan 30,1820		Feb 15,1891
3	Maria Baerg	Feb 22,1844	Oct 18,1863	
3	Susanna Baerg	Nov 28,1848		
3	Kath Baerg	Aug 11,1850		
3	Peter Baerg Jr.	Nov 2,1856		Jan 23,1933

3	Anna Baerg	Aug 19,1859	Jan 22,1930
3	Sarah Baerg	Jun 30,1864	May 8,1941
2	Peter Baerg	Nov 17,1817	Jul 31,1901
2m	Kath Schellenberg	Aug 25,1824	May 4,1901

3 The oldest daughter **Maria Baerg** was married to **Jakob Friesen** and the family later moved from **Schwesterthal, Crimea**, to **Nikolaifeld, Sagradovfka**.<sup>45</sup> It is reported that **Friesen** served his **Gemeinde** as **Aeltester**.<sup>46</sup> The family had four sons and three daughters. **Jakob Friesen** married for a second time. The ages of the children are not available at the present time.

4 In a letter of 1898 **Peter Baerg Jr.** of **Hochstadt, Manitoba** inquired as to the whereabouts of their daughter **Justina Friesen** who was married to a **Peter Thiessen**.<sup>47</sup> Daughter **Maria Friesen** married **Abraham Martens** who had spent four years in the *Forstei*. After the marriage the family moved to **Neu-Samara** together with his brothers **Peter** and **Franz**. In 1925 they moved to **Manitoba** settling among the **KG** relatives in **Prairie Rose (Landmark)**. Here son **Peter Martens** married **Helena B. Koop** and daughter **Margaret** married **Peter J. Koop** who were their mother's first cousins. Daughter **Lena Friesen** married **Peter Schmidt** and settled in the **Oak Bluff** area. Son **Peter Friesen** lived in **Sagradovfka** and in 1925 moved to **Prairie Rose, Manitoba**, and later to **Alberta**. Son **Johann Friesen** remained in **Russia** with his family except for one son who was sent along to **Manitoba** with the other relatives because he was almost of military age at the time. Son **Thomas Friesen** moved to the **United States** and remained a bachelor all his days. Nothing further is known about son **Jakob Friesen** at this time.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
3	<b>Maria Baerg</b>	Feb 22,1844	Oct 18,1863	
m	<b>Jakob Friesen</b>			
4	Daughter	Jun 10,1864		infancy
4	Daughter	Jun 10,1864		infancy
4	<b>Justina Friesen</b>			
m	<b>Peter Thiessen</b>			
4	<b>Maria Friesen</b>			
m	<b>Abraham Martens</b>			
4	<b>Helena Friesen</b>			
m	<b>Peter Schmidt</b>			
4	<b>Peter Friesen</b>			
m	(?)			
4	<b>Johann Friesen</b>			
m	(?)			
4	<b>Thomas Friesen</b>			
4	<b>Jakob Friesen</b>			
m	(?)			

3 Daughter **Susanna Baerg** married **Abraham Friesen**, a brother to **Jakob Friesen** above. This family evidently remained in **Russia**. The family included five daughters but there may have been others. Some of the children moved to **Sagradovfka**. No further information is available at this time.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
3	Susanna Baerg			
m	Abraham Friesen			

3 Daughter **Katharina Baerg** married Bernhard Friesen, the son of Abraham and Helena Friesen of Lichtenau, Molotschna.<sup>48</sup> On April 12, 1889, Peter Baerg has recorded in his "Schreibbuch" he had a credit of 100 ruble with Bernhard Friesen and that "in the month of April the family [Bernhard Friesens] also immigrated to here [Manitoba] and that they had been unable to pay the money to the other heirs but that they had promised to send it to them as soon as they were financially able to do so." According to oral tradition the Bernhard Friesen family lived in Winkler, west of Morris, and various other locales. Here the family joined the Bergthaler Gemeinde.<sup>49</sup> The family lived in the village of Kronsweide and later joined the Summerfelder Gemeinde.<sup>50</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
3	Katharina Baerg	Aug 11,1850	Feb 2,1871	Dec 16,1921
m	Bernhard Friesen	Feb 12,1849		Aug 22,1921
4	Abraham Friesen	Nov 16,1871		Jan 20,1872
4	Susanna Friesen	Oct 28,1872		
m	Jakob Hiebert			
4	Katharina Friesen	Apr 9,1874		
m	Cornelius Rempel			
4	Helena Friesen	Jan 13,1876		
m	Peter Sawatzky			
4	Maria Friesen	Feb 12,1878		Nov 9,1878
4	Abraham Friesen	Jun 2,1880		
4	Anna Friesen	Sep 10,1881		Mar 4,1886
4	Bernhard Friesen	Aug 14,1883		
m	Maria Toews			
4	Peter Friesen	Jul 14,1885		
4	Johann Friesen	Jun 12,1887		
4	Maria Friesen	Jan 11,1891		Oct 30,1892
4	Maria Friesen	Jul 3,1894		Sep 6,1894

3 Son **Peter Baerg Jr.** married Margaretha Loewen, the daughter of Rev. Abraham Loewen (1836-1886) of Gruenfeld, Manitoba.<sup>51</sup> The family lived in Hochstadt near Kleefeld from where they moved to Linden, Alberta. Peter Baerg Jr. was a minister of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite.<sup>52</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
3	Peter Baerg Jr.	Nov 3,1856	Feb 11,1879	Jan 23,1933
m	Margaret Loewen	Jan 1,1860		Jan 11,1945
4	Peter Baerg	Jan 2,1880		Feb 27,1928
m	Eva Schartner	Dec 9,1892		
4	Susanna Baerg	Mar 3,1881	Dec 20,1900	May 20,1909
m	Abr. W. Klassen	Nov 18,1878		
4	Margaretha Baerg	Jan 3,1883	Mar 20,1906	Apr 5,1927
m	Johann W. Klassen	Sep 11,1880		
4	Abraham Baerg	Nov 19,1885	Mar 5,1916	

m	Susanna Schartner	Feb 3,1894		
4	Katharina Baerg			
4	Helena Baerg	Jul 22,1888	Apr 18,1911	Apr 24,1924
m	Isaac W. Klassen	Aug 3,1884		
4	Katharina Baerg	Mar 23,1890	Apr 26,1914	
m	David U. Boese	Feb 20,1889		
4	Anna Baerg	Feb 20,1892		
4	Johann Baerg	Mar 9,1894		1920
m	Margaret Wiebe	Oct 15,1899		
4	Jakob Baerg	Jul 13,1896	Jan 21,1922	
m	Helena Penner	Dec 25,1899		
4	Maria L. Baerg	May 15,1900	Apr 18,1920	
m	Aaron Megli	Sep 16,1897		
4	Sarah Baerg	Jan 6,1902		Jan,1903

3 Daughter Anna Baerg married Johann I. Wiebe, the son of Jakob Wiebe (1827-1901) of Blumenort, Manitoba.<sup>53</sup> Johann died two years later in 1884. This left Anna as a young widow and father Peter Baerg was very concerned for her welfare. On April 12, 1889, he recorded that "Anna has received the cow, also the quilt, but she has not yet received the her fur coat [peltz] nor the offset \$15.00, nor the \$8.00, but she has received the chest. And to the "neun [?]", the wood, which both together make \$7.00. But she still has \$7.00 coming to her. And thus there remains to be paid to her \$23.00. Now she has received the fur coat but not the \$8.00." In 1895, Anna married for the second time to school teacher Cornelius Fast of Steinbach.<sup>54</sup> After their marriage he taught school in Hochfeld and Neuanlage.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
3	Anna Baerg	Aug 19,1859	1882	Jan 22,1930
m	Johann I. Wiebe	Apr 19,1862		May 1,1884
4	Jakob Wiebe	Feb 5,1885		Sep 29,1947
m	Marg Isaac	May 10,1885	Nov 9,1905	Nov 20,1958
3	Anna Baerg	Aug 19,1859	1895	Jan 22,1930
2m	Corn W. Fast	Jun 24,1840		Feb 23,1927
4	Anna Fast	Jun 26,1896		Dec 11,1940
4	Kath Fast	Jul 11,1898		
m	Peter F. Loewen	Jun 19,1895		Jun 29,1945
4	Justina Fast	Feb 26,1903		
m	Jakob F. Reimer	Mar 16,1901		

3 Daughter Sara Baerg married Johann B. Koop, the son of Johann M. Koop (1831-1897), Muntau, Molotschna, and later of Neuanlage (Twincreek), Manitoba.<sup>55</sup> The family lived in Neuanlage until 1918 when they became one of the first families to settle in the Prairie Rose, Landmark, area.<sup>56</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
3	Sara Baerg	Jun 30,1864	Jan 4,1883	May 8,1941
m	Johann B. Koop	Jun 13,1863		Oct 12,1935
4	Sara B. Koop	Jul 26,1885		Mar 31,1963
m	Peter F. Plett	Sep 10,1884		May 4,1970
4	Susanna Koop	Oct 18,1886		Mar 2,1894

4	Johann B. Koop	Feb 20,1888	Jan 4,1908	Apr 24,1953
m	Aganetha Barkman	Jul 22,1885		Jan 22,1971
4	Katharina B. Koop	Jul 14,1889	May 28,1911	Dec,1955
m	Peter G. Barkman	Aug 3,1876		Dec 29,1956
4	Anna B. Koop	Nov 14,1890		Jun 17,1894
4	Peter B. Koop	Mar 17,1892	Jun 7,1914	
m	Katharina Barkman	Apr 19,1893		Jan 19,1925
4	Jakob B. Koop	Jan 9,1894	Dec 12,1915	
m	Anna Schellenberg	Apr 21,1894		
4	Susanna B. Koop	Apr 25,1894	Dec 5,1915	
m	Johann D. Barkman	Jun 12,1888		Nov 27,1974
4	Abraham B. Koop	Dec 23,1896		Oct 1,1900
4	Anna B. Koop	May 17,1898	Dec 20,1938	
m	Abr. C. L. Penner	Apr 19,1900		
4	Gertrude B. Koop	Jul 30,1901		Nov 1,1901
4	Abraham B. Koop	Aug 15,1902		Dec 15,1902
4	Helena B. Koop	Sep 3,1903	Jan 23,1927	
m	Peter Martens	Jul 16,1907		
4	Isaak B. Koop	Mar 22,1905		Jun 11,1905
4	Franz B. Koop	Jun 24,1907		Aug 15,1907

#### Endnotes: Peter Baerg 1817-1901 Biography.

1. Peter Baerg, "Dieses Schreibbuch Gehoert Peter Berg in Prangenau 1835," unpublished journal, unpaginated, 40 pages, received courtesy of David Penner, Kleefeld, Manitoba, July 10, 1993--henceforth cited as Peter Baerg, "Schreibbuch." In a telephone conversation of July 20, 1993, Mr. Penner indicated that he had received this journal about a year previous from his sister, Mrs. Wiebe, whose husband is a descendant of Peter Baerg (1817-1901), through his son Peter Baerg.

2. Peter Baerg, "Schriebbuch," 34, 39-40.

3. No author given, *A Janzen Family History* (n.p., n.d.)--courtesy of Mennonite Genealogy Inc., Winnipeg, Manitoba.

4. Benjamin H. Unruh, *Die Niederländisch-neiderdeutschen Hintergrunde der Mennonitischen Ostwanderungen im 16., 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Karlsruhe, 1955), 360.

5. Letters to the *Mennonitische Rundschau*, issues March 23, 1910, May 25, 1910, July 13, 1910 and May 3, 1911. Information courtesy of Henry N. Fast, telephone call with the writer January 2, 1989.

6. Russell H. Janzen, *Janzen 1780-1989 A Family history and genealogy of Jakob F. and Susanna (Baerg) Janzen, their ancestors and their descendants* (37-3351 Horn Road, Abbotsford, British Columbia, V2S 4N3), 271 pages. Mr. Janzen credits the records of granddaughter Susanna Baerg (1842-1917), who married Jakob F. Janzen, as being the source for this information. Russell H. Janzen, letter to the author, September 21, 1989.

7. Bruno Penner, *First Mennonite Church 1878-1978* (Mountain Lake, Minnesota), 1978, 94 pages. According to *A Janzen Family History*, Katharina Neumann was the daughter of Jakob Neumann, born in Danzig on September 14, 1780, and Maria Peters, born January 4, 1791. They were married about 1811 and immigrated to the Molotschna area where he died July 7, 1849, and she died on January 20, 1849.

8. Heinrich Goertz, "Gerhard Plett (1860-1933)," ME 4, 194-5. Their grandson, Gerhard Willms (1865-1914), was the grandfather of Dr. Helmut Huebert, the author of *Hirschau: An Example of Russian Mennonite Life* (Winnipeg, 1986), 404 pages.

9. No author stated, *The History of the late Peter Friesen Family* (n.p., n.d.), states that the father of Peter Friesen (1846-1931) was a Johann Friesen, a minister of the gospel and school teacher. Another source provides different information: the genealogical records of Johann P.

Friesen list a Peter Friesen born January 11, 1846, to Peter F. Friesen (born November 12, 1812) who was resident in Marienthal, Molotschna, and a brother to the third KG Aeltester Johann F. Friesen (1808-1872). Peter Friesen Jr. is listed as being married to an Anna Baerg but no further dates or details are given; see Plett, "Abraham von Riesen (1756-18100 Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874* (Steinbach, Man., 1987), 272; see also Johann P. Friesen, "Genealogical records," page 18--courtesy of Rev. Jake P. Friesen, Blumenort, Manitoba, 1982. This information is verified by the death certificate of Peter Friesen (1846-1931) which states that his father was a Peter Friesen and his mother was a Goertzen. This appears to be a definite identification and connects the Peter Friesen (1846-1931) family of Mountain Lake, Minnesota, with a host of relatives in Nebraska, Kansas, Manitoba, and elsewhere; see Plett, "Genealogy of Abraham Friesen 1756-1810," unpublished paper, Steinbach, Manitoba, revised 1993, for additional information regarding this family.

10. *Mennonite Rundschau* May 25, 1910. Courtesy of Henry N. Fast. An interesting theory regarding the identity of the spouse of Isaac Baerg (born 1814) is found in *The Franz & Gertrude Jantzen Family Record* (n.p., n.d.), no author's name given, which deals with the descendants of Gerhard Jantzen (1761-1813) and his two wives both named Anna Epp: Plett, "Peter Epp Genealogy 1690," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims* (Steinbach, Man., 1990), 304 and 324. The youngest child of Gerhard Jantzen (1761-1813) was Anna Jantzen (October 2, 1812 - Dec 16, 1852) who is listed as being married to an Isaac Baerg. No further details given. This connection is purely speculative but if correct would make Anna Jantzen (1812-1852) the aunt of Franz Jantzen (1843-1926) who died in Los Angeles, California in 1926.

11. Mike Hornbaker, *The Bergen History* (Maize, Kansas, 1983), 9. Both the Gerhard Enns and Peter Esau families later immigrated to Inman, Kansas.

12. In a letter to the *Rundschau* of February 1, 1899, her son Kornelius Toews of Nikolaidorf, Molotschna, reports the death of his widowed mother Katharina Toews, at the age of 82 years, 4 months and 19 days. The letter also states that she was a sister to Peter Baerg of Blumenort, Manitoba--courtesy of Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1989.

13. Russell H. Janzen, 222.

14. Peter Baerg, "Schreibbuch," 40. He also recorded her birth date; see also Peter P. Toews, "Genealogy register," in Plett, ed, *Profile 1874*, 44.

15. *Ibid.*, 39-40.

16. Peter Toews, "Genealogy register," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 10.

17. West Reserve Bergthaler Church Register, Volume 1, page 43--courtesy of John Dyck, 48 Coral Crescent, Winnipeg, March 25, 1993.

18. Peter Baerg, "Schreibbuch," 38.

19. Plett, "Jakob Heidebrecht Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 415-426.

20. Plett, "Abraham von Riesen (1756-1810) Genealogy," 289.

21. Alfred Redekopp, *Jakob Thielmann and Helena Kroeker: A Family History and Genealogy of their descendants* (Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1987), 255.

22. Henry N. Fast, "The Kleine Gemeinde in the United States of America," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 105.

23. See Plett, "Heinrich Reimer Biography," Part Eleven, Chapter One.

24. Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph* (Steinbach, Man., 1986), 42.

25. Letter of Johann Wall to the *Mennonitische Rundschau*, July 25, 1900--courtesy of Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba. Apparently Wall was a brother-in-law to Aeltester Isaac Peters.

26. Peter Baerg, "Schreibbuch," 38.

27. Peter Baerg, "An epistle regarding my joining of the Kleine Gemeinde, 1864," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 545-547.

28. Peter Baerg, "Schreibbuch," 37.

29. Published in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 545-547. This document was contained in the David L. Plett/John D. K. Plett Document Collection--courtesy of Mrs. Benny Plett, Blumenort, Manitoba, 1981.

30. Peter P. Toews, Document Collection, also contains additional letters by Peter Baerg covering the period 1870-1874.

31. Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 188-190, contains an account of these events.

32. Peter Toews, "Anhang n.1," in Plett, ed., *History and Events* (Steinbach, Man., 1982), 51.
33. Published in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 5-76.
34. Peter Baerg, "Schreibbuch," 38.
35. Royden K. Loewen, *Blumenort: A Mennonite Community in Transition* (Blumenort, Man., 1983), 265.
36. Johann Esau, "Brandbuch," unpublished journal, 195 pages, courtesy of Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1989.
37. Jakob M. Kroeker, "Life's story of the deceased beloved Jakob M. Kroeker," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 579.
38. Published in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 547-551. This document is courtesy of Klaas D. Reimer and Menno D. Loewen, Belize. It was translated by great-grandson Rev. Frank Koop, Stuartburn, Manitoba, 1989.
39. Peter Baerg, "Schreibbuch," 36.
40. Peter Baerg Jr., Hochstadt, Manitoba, letter to the *Rundschau* January 19, 1898--courtesy of Henry N. Fast.
41. Royden K. Loewen, *Blumenort: A Mennonite Community in Transition* (Blumenort, Man., 1983), 265-266.
42. Heinrich Reimer, "Familienbuch," unpublished journal, 36A.
43. Maria Reimer, Letter to Cornelius L. Plett, Satanta, Kansas, November 24, 1924, Cornelius L. Plett Letter Collection, courtesy of Marie Heinrichs and Henry H. Doerksen, Satanta, Kansas, 1982.
44. From the possession of granddaughter Mrs. Peter Martens, nee Helena B. Koop, Kola, Manitoba, received courtesy of Frank Koop, Calgary, Manitoba, 1989. The originals are presently in the Archives of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference, 440 Main St., Steinbach, Manitoba.
45. Peter Baerg, Letter to Peter Toews March 31, 1874, published in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 12-13.
46. *Rundschau* May 3, 1911 and January 19, 1898--courtesy of Henry N. Fast.
47. Peter Baerg Jr., Hochstadt, Manitoba, letter to the *Rundschau* January 19, 1898--courtesy of Henry N. Fast.
48. West Reserve Bergthaler Church Register, Volume 1, page 43--courtesy of John Dyck, 48 Coral Crescent, Winnipeg, Manitoba, March 25, 1993.
49. The family is listed in the West Reserve Bergthaler Church Register, including a listing of their 12 children: West Reserve Bergthaler Church Register, *ibid*.
50. Volume 2A Summerfelder Church Register, page 29. I am indebted to John Dyck, 48 Coral Crescent, Winnipeg, Manitoba, for referring this information to my attention. April 2, 1993.
51. Solomon Loewen, *The Descendants of Isaac Loewen 1787-1873* (Meade, Kansas, 1961), has a listing of descendants for this family.
52. Peter P. Toews, "Genealogy Register," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 58.
53. Frank P. Wiebe, *Jakob Wiebe 1799-1856* (Mount Lehman, B.C., 1966), 7-8, has a listing of their descendants.
54. For additional information on this family see, Kerry Fast, "The Fast," unpublished essay, prepared for Grade 12 History course at Steinbach Bible College; see also, Margaret Reimer, *Familien Register von Witwe Peter P. Reimer, geb. Margaretha Fast* (Steinbach, Man., 1965), 46 pages.
55. Peter P. Toews, "Genealogy Register," 28, and Royden K. Loewen, *Blumenort*, 283-285, have additional information on this family.
56. Peter Martens et. al., *The Koop Family Register 1801-1975* (Blumenort, Manitoba, 1975), 183-219, has a listing of descendants.

# Chapter Two

## Letters 1867-1869

Letters written in the years 1867 to 1869 by Peter Baerg (1817-1901) from Annenfeld, Crimea, to Aeltester Peter P. Toews, Blumenhoff, Borosenko, South Russia.

---

### Letter One.

Annenfeld, March 6, 1867

Firstly, I wish you much grace, compassion and peace of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. Beloved fellow worker, Peter Toews! I report to you herewith how things have gone with us regarding the "old" Peter Harms. We have already talked with him a number of times and admonished him, but he has not been obedient to our words. He came to mistrust us so that we feel compelled to talk with him again and I notified all the brethren to come together for this purpose and him as well. Whereupon, he also came and when he was there he asked me why I had summoned him. I replied that I had summoned all the brethren in order to talk with him, since it could not continue any longer this way. I also said further that he could not work out his salvation in that way, for God does not allow himself to be mocked by us sinners. He said that apparently there were some things that we wanted to discuss with him and I replied yes.

But soon he stood up and wanted to go away. I said he should wait until the other brethren were present also. For only one brother, namely, Martin Friesen, Prangenu, was present while the two of us were talking. But he said we would probably know what to do. I said he should remain here, but he went away. And after the brethren were assembled we spoke about the matter and we reached agreement that two brethren would go to him and summon him again, which was done. They had also talked with him, whether he might not want to come, but he declined, saying that he did not want to have a spiritual fellowship with us. They had also talked about other things which would be too much to describe in writing. I have earlier already sent one letter regarding this matter to Ohm Enns, which he was to forward to you. But I thought there might not be opportunity that quickly and, therefore, I considered it necessary to send this letter along with him so that you would receive the news sooner.

Now in closing, I also advise you that we, and all our beloved brothers and sisters, are quite well physically, but regarding the spiritual we frequently need to improve ourselves. Especially I, for I am so wounded in the soul that I must cry out with the verses of the Eighty-Eighth Psalm, verses 3 and 4, "For my soul is full of lamentation, and my body is nigh unto death. I am despised like those who go in the gutter, I am as one without help." And then also I find it within myself to lament with the poet,

Viele Feinde sind vor handen,  
 Todes Banden haben meine Seele bestrickt.  
 In der Finsterniszen Menge,  
 meine Gänge strauchten,  
 welches mich erstreckt.  
 Darum zu dir O Gott  
 der Gnaden so beladen,  
 du allein kannst mich erretten,  
 von den Ketten meiner Feind,  
 suende Gall and Todt.

And so to all of you, receive a heartfelt greeting from us; yes, we greet Martin Klassens, and Jakob Toews', as well as the other beloved brethren and sisters in the Lord. We especially greet you, Ohm Toews. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you (1 Thess. 5:28). I remain your fellow pilgrim to a blessed eternity.

*Peter Baerg*

#### **Letter Two:**

Annenfeld, January 8, 1867

May the grace, compassion and peace of God be multiplied in you and all believers in Christ Jesus; yes, may He strengthen us in all truth and that we may continue in the faith which we have once received by our deeds and good works, and to remain steadfast therein until the end of our life's journey; this is my heartfelt wish for you. Amen.

On the money! To Ohm Peter Toews in Borosenko as well as also the entire Gemeinde; yes, to all the beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord! You have perhaps been hoping for a writing for some time already, and have not received any until now, and I must fault myself that I am so barren regarding my writing. My conscience convicts me often in this regard so that in accordance with the love which I have toward you, I can do nothing else but to write you and to share something of our spiritual gifts and to strengthen you, in order that I may be comforted together with you through your faith and mine, which we have in common with each other (Romans 1:11,12). Namely, when we seek to admonish and comfort each other, for the way it appears and as you also write, not very much will come of our getting together.

Oh beloved, when we consider the words which our beloved Saviour speaks in John 14:16-17; "I will pray to the Father and he shall give you another comforter that he may abide with you forever. Even the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive." Oh, we have such a gracious advocate who has prayed unto the Father for us, in order that we would not go lost if we keep His commandments and practise them. For that is the love of God, says John, "If we keep his commandments" (1 John 5:2). The Lord Jesus has not laid anything difficult upon us for he says, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Behold, this is how easy the Lord Jesus has made the burden for us humankind, for we may eat and drink whatever we wish. The Saviour says, "That which goeth into the mouth does not defile a man" (Matt 15:11). Yes, we are also free to practise our faith, especially

in these last sorrowful times, and no constraint of our conscience has yet been imposed upon us, so that we enjoy much freedom. The beloved apostle Paul admonishes us so sincerely when he says, "You, however, beloved brethren, have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion for the flesh, but by love serve one another" (Gal 5:13).

Oh, yes, we have much to do to see that we do not give the flesh liberty for the flesh lusts contrary to the Spirit and the Spirit contrary to the flesh. The same are contrary to one another and the flesh does not do what the spirit wants (Gal. 17:22). But the fruits of the Spirit, however, are love, joy, peace, patience, hospitality, virtue, faith, compassion and empathy. Yes, my beloved, if you seek to fulfil those points which the holy apostle Paul has mentioned and recorded for us as a teaching, and if you practise the same in deed and in truth, and to demonstrate the fruits of the spirit with your entire life and being and allow the same to emanate from you, you will thereby assist your newly elected minister and lighten his burden. For no one disparages their youths, rather comes to their aid in all matters which arise. Show yourselves as obedient members of the Gemeinde of the Lord, that you abide therein as is seemly and within the calling to which you were chosen.

"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sins" (Hebrews 3:12-13). Oh, yes, beloved brothers and sisters, I have experienced it for myself, how much it has sobered me and still does that I am to be an example in word and in deed, in love, in spirit, in faith, and in virtue (Rev. 4:12). Indeed, when I consider that I am to admonish others, and to teach them, and then first consider myself, how full of sins and vices I am, for it weighs heavily upon my heart as if one is carrying a heavy load and must drive upon a high mountain. But we must do it for the sake of the will of the Lord.

Oh, beloved, Ohm Peter Toews, I believe that your experience will not be all that different than mine when you are called upon to instruct and admonish those whose heads are already gray, that it will also seem difficult for you. But it cannot be any different if the laws and commandments of the Lord are to be fulfilled for no Gemeinde can stand and continue without admonishment and guidance. But beloved! As already mentioned, you can come to the aid of the Gemeinde in many respects through your conduct, for the holy apostle Paul admonishes us so lovingly, when he says,

Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, . . . if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye (Col 3:12,13).

Oh beloved! I am of the firm hope that you yourself will walk earnestly in all matters for when we were gathered together at the home of Ohm Enns and the election was being held, I definitely felt that it had made a great impression upon you and us, indeed, within all of us, so that it clearly seemed as if we were united in one spirit with each other. Oh that together with a certain poet, we would be inspired unto prayer and supplication;

Wie schoen und lieblich sieth es aus,  
eintraechtlich in einem Haus,  
und stehn in Liebes flammen,  
wenn sie im Geist zusammen stehn,  
zu Gott in einem Sinne flehn  
und halten am mit Beten.

Indeed, if only we would similarly be steadfast in prayer and conduct ourselves in true fear of God, and daily take the cross upon ourselves and loyally seek to follow our Lord Jesus Christ. Our thoughts and desires should always be directed upwards in all our occupations which we pursue here in the temporal realm, so that we can say with Paul, "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ (Phil. 3). Oh, how far do we not frequently err herein, when our thoughts are directly to our material matters. I know this especially of myself so that I must frequently sigh and lament together with Paul; "Alas, miserable sinner that I am, who shall redeem me from this body of death?" I must also frequently lament with the poet;

The multitudes of sins  
weighs heavily upon me,  
my misdeeds, they do haunt me,  
my good intentions, Oh Lord,  
dissipate like the water;  
when in my heart,  
I resolve to live in piety,  
I am soon distracted therefrom.

Oh beloved Ohm Toews! If we would practise and conduct our service according to the commandments and will of the Lord, and according to what the holy Paul has prescribed for us, the words of the prophet Daniel might be helpful for us, when he says, "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever!" (Daniel 12:3). But we have much to battle and to overcome before we reach the throne in the heavenly Jerusalem.

This service is subjected to so many temptations; therefore, I bid of your wife for the compassion of the Lord that she might come to your aid in your service. Namely, that she might come to you in future circumstances of temptations and that she might comfort you therein. We also refer to what Paul teaches;

In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array. But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works (1 Tim. 2:9-10).

And in 1 Timothy 3:11, the apostle says; "Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things." Oh, if you would come to meet your husband with all good works, you can earn for yourself a good inheritance and choose for yourself the best portion together with Maria (Luke 10:42).

Oh beloved, I am in the firm hope that you will conduct yourself in such a manner that the people will see your good works and that they might say; "Oh, what a righteous people that is and that they would glorify their Father Who is in heaven." Yes, we should conduct ourselves relative to our fellowman, enemies as well as friends, in such a way that they would not say anything evil about us. Rather that if they would want to talk something about us that we would be able to comfort ourselves that it had occurred for the sake of the Lord and His will. For the Lord Jesus says;

Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake (Luke 6:22).

And further the Lord says, "And woe unto you if all men speak well of you" (Luke 6:26). It is clearly to be understood from these words of our Lord Jesus Christ, that it is not beneficial for a person if he is loved, honoured and spoken well of by everyone. For everyone who enters into the new birth and seeks to follow the Lord Jesus Christ with all earnestness will have had this experience that the people of the world do not love them anymore. Sirach says; "And so every man will find fellowship in his own" (Ecclesiastics 13). Paul says; "Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot speaking evil of you" (1 Peter 4:4).

Oh beloved, how many enemies spiritually as well as physically do we not have around us, whom we must resist? David says;

For the enemy strides and the godless press about me, for they would swallow me up, they would vanquish me. Be merciful unto me, oh God for men roar about me, they battle against me and frighten me" (Psalm 55 and 56).

Oh yes, and thus we have much to see to ourselves, and to continue watching and praying, that we are not vanquished. We are presently living in a very dangerous time, where the evil one presents himself as an angel of light for which purpose he uses the children of men who entice us that we should go to the way of sinners and in the way of flesh. He entices us through pride, arrogance and sin, and in the end he allows those who blindly pursue the same to go lost.

Oh, he thereby seeks to entrap our souls and to entice us toward ruination. Our most evil enemy is our own flesh and blood which always seeks security for itself, and will allow itself freedom to do this thing and the other. We must crucify our flesh together with our lusts and desires in order that we would not thereby lose the eternal salvation, for our salvation is everything. If our soul goes lost then everything is lost, and we have nothing more to hope for. But my beloved, let us consider the words which our Lord Jesus says so lovingly in Luke 18:7-8;

And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on earth?

Oh, the Lord continues to be gracious over us poor miserable sinners and wishes to redeem us, if only we are honest and sincere and seek Him with all earnestness. Yes, if we seek Him from our heart He will also allow Himself to be found by us. He has not yet allowed anyone to seek in vain, if only they have genuinely sought Him and in the correct places where He is to be found, namely, in lowliness which is where He wishes to be sought and found. For no one has yet found Him anywhere else. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself was born in a cattle barn, and therefore no one can find Him except as already stated, in lowliness..

Now in closing we greet you all with the kiss of love. We wish that this insignificant writing would find you in good health in the flesh and, especially, that your soul might be well--which is our greatest wish. For we are also quite well in the flesh--the Lord be thanked. He provides hope for our souls, even though it sometimes varies the way the poet writes; ". . . es Wechselt mit mir oft, bald meine Seele, oft bald fürcht sie das verderben!" But we are of the firm hope that the Lord will not deal with us according to our just deserts on that judgment day. Oh, beloved brothers and sisters, do remember us in your prayers as we also, although in great weakness, do not want to forget you either. We greet you Martin Klassens and Jakob Toews', and especially you, Ohm Peter Toews, as well as all the other beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord. Now I wish you the greeting of Paul, "Peace be unto the brethren with love and faith from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with you all who love our Lord Jesus Christ." Please forgive me for my imperfect writing for it is written in love,

*Peter Baerg*

Annenfeld, January 8, 1867

Your insignificant fellow pilgrim unto eternity. Amen. In the name of Jesus. Amen, Amen.

### Letter Three.

July 21, 1869

May the peace of God be with you all who love our Lord Jesus Christ Amen.

Dear beloved Ohms and also all the beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord. A sorrowful occurrence has taken place amongst us, for our Aeltester is intending to alter the baptism. He says that the baptism which we currently practise amongst us is no baptism, rather it must be a complete immersion in and under the water. Now, my beloved, we also want to inform you briefly how this has come about and taken place. Three men came from the Molotschna to serve Abraham Walls with baptism. Ohm Wiebe went over there in order to speak with them regarding temporal matters but not of spiritual matters--which is what he himself told me. On Sunday evening the three aforementioned men went to Ohm Wiebes, and Corn. Enns also went there, and, as I have understood, others from our brethren went there as well.

As I have heard they are to have been there almost until midnight and speaking about baptism, so that Ohm Wiebe said to me that it had been a disputation. Before we separated, he said to me that there would hardly be anyone else who would be as curious to partake of baptism as I! To this I replied, "I hardly think so!" But before they proceeded with the baptism they again were at

Ohm Wiebe's for almost four hours. Some of our brethren were also there and set themselves in opposition, the way they said. These men were to have expressed themselves that they had hope for the Annenfelders. But in Johannesruh, they were to have talked to our brethren that they had made a good beginning and that they would come again. But of the Annenfelders they had said they are factious, other than Corn. Enns--they had hope for him. The one man is to have stayed for night with Enns and they are to have spoken of many things. It happened one time that I came into a discussion with Enns regarding the baptism. He told me that the man had persuaded him with the verse by Peter, Chapter 3:21, when he says, ". . . not the putting away of the filth of the flesh . . ." The man had said that it was to be understood from this verse that the water was also to serve to some extent for the cleansing of the body. Which Enns had also conceded to him. But I replied to Enns, that the baptism could not serve for any cleansing of the body, for Peter says, ". . . not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God." But he believed the man more than me, so that I went away sorrowfully.

Sunday, after we had concluded the closing of the worship service, Ohm Wiebe said the brethren should stay together for a little while. He then presented the matter of the sister Wall--for she had already stood in doubt previously--whether it was right to baptize again. Ohm Wiebe made the presentation that we should talk about this, whether we were also united among ourselves if Mrs. Wall should ask one or the other of us, that we would be of one mind in this regard. This was also very necessary that we should be united regarding such articles of faith if we wished to be a Church of God. But I noted in Ohm Wiebe and also many of the brethren that they did not stand steadfast regarding that which we had once received.

Sunday, afternoon, Ohm Wiebe presented this matter of the baptism to us. He opened with these words, and said, "When I arrived in Borosenko, it had been so heavy upon his heart, but he did not know why it was so difficult for him, and that we had been deceived regarding the baptism as we had practised it for so long." He said, "It is no baptism, rather immersion--that is baptism." And he said, "Even if he remained completely by himself, he would remain firmly in this position."

Oh beloved, here you can see! I also asked him if he intended to institute the second baptism? He replied that he only recognized one baptism. I asked him if he would have himself rebaptised and also baptize others? He replied 'yes', that was his intention. He asked me, if I had any desire to speak further about this and I said 'no'. But we spoke a little more about it anyway and then we parted from each other and have had no further fellowship in spiritual matters since that time and for as long as he remains in such a spirit.

*Peter Baerg*

#### Letter Four.

Annenfeld, September 3, 1869

May the great compassion and grace be with you, and the peace of God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. I--lowly servant--wish you firstly the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit as a heartfelt greeting. Amen. I know that brother Klassen intends to visit you there, and as I hope, also personally bring you news

of how things are going for us here. My love for you compels me to visit you also with a small writing, for I frequently think of you and how things are going with you there. I trust that you will have perceived how things are going for us here from my letter and from Mrs. Esau's letter, at least, if you have already received them.

Oh, yes, beloved Ohms, and all beloved brothers and sisters. I cannot even start to say or write how hard this entire situation has been for me and continues to be! How often I have not thought to myself, if only I could be there with you in Borosenko so that I could talk with you? But not for the reason that I have been standing in doubt whether the events which have occurred here are right. Oh, no! No, way! Rather for the reason that together with you I am comforted by mine and your faith, which we share with each other (Romans 1:12).

Oh, I thank God everytime I think of you, and pray together with the poet,

Geheiligt wird dein Name sein,  
Dein Wort bei uns half halten rein,  
das wir auch leben heiliglich,  
nach deinem Namen wuerdiglich,  
Behuetet uns Herr vor falschen Lehr  
das arme verfuerhte Volk bekehr.

Oh, beloved, how are things standing so sorrowfully with our present day Christendom? What have we not all had to experience these last years? Yes, so many things have happened during the span of my ministry. Alas, for when I truly think of it and reflect thereon, it becomes so heavy upon my heart and I am seized by fear whether perhaps the last day will break upon us. The signs themselves, which our Redeemer prophesied before hand, are showing themselves abundantly. For He said, "Many will come in my name and say, 'I am Christ', and they will lead many astray" (Matt. 24); and this meaning He repeated many times. The apostles also have presented this clearly and unequivocally for us. "For I know," said Paul, "that after my departure grievous people will come among you, who will not spare the flock. Also from among yourselves, men will arise who will teach falsely, thereby seeking to draw the disciples unto them" (Acts 20).

Now in closing, we greet you all, yes, all you beloved brothers and sisters, with whom we are still standing in one spirit. We are well according to the body, and with the help of God, we also hope to be well spiritually. Peace be with the brethren and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

I remain your fellow pilgrim,

*Peter Baerg*

#### Letter Five.

October 14, 1869, Annenfeld.

Firstly, I wish you the peace of God and the love of Jesus Christ. Beloved brother Toews, and also all the beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord! We are--thanks be to God--well in body and wish you all the same. Indeed, we would wish from the heart that we might all be equally healthy spiritually, but a truly earnest struggle and commitment is required for that. Yes, watch and pray, that we might

receive the crown of eternal life, for we are living in a very sorrowful time spiritually, as our Saviour himself prophesied. False prophets will arise who will do great signs and wonders, and thereby seek to lead astray, if it were possible, the very elect.

Oh, for one might well be discouraged if our beloved Saviour and His faithful apostles had not foretold and written us regarding the same. He says, ". . . if you see Jerusalem besieged by an army then work for thereby has come your desolation." Oh beloved, we are also besieged spiritually by a great and powerful army. Oh, if we could truly see it with our very own eyes we would be astounded, so that it would seem as if we would be overwhelmed! Indeed, we can see it with our spiritual eyes that we are besieged on all sides by an army, by a great force, so that it often seems as if we would not be able to be victorious or to win the battle over them.

From the one side it seems as if it is not too difficult or too sensitive for the conscience of the Christian here to go along with everything in the world and, nonetheless, remain and be a disciple of Christ. And the seige is equally as powerful from the other side--the spiritual--as according to the flesh, for it seems as if some exert themselves to have such a loving and sweet demeanour that one might almost have doubts. But if one considers everything carefully and proves the same with the Word of God, it is readily discernable, namely, as to who is seized by the Spirit of God and who allows himself to be led by the same, yes, he can also perceive how the besieging army seems to be so wonderful and loving in order to thereby capture the soul. Accordingly we have much to do in our present times that we are not distracted from the simplicity in Christ and that we thereby miss the path of righteousness.

Oh, beloved! Wherefore, we have much reason to stand steadfast in our faith and not to err either to the right or to the left. For Peter says;

And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not (2 Peter 2:3).

Beloved, Ohm Toews and brother Fast. As I understand from your letters you appear to have concerns whether we might have given up the fellowship too quickly, which does not surprise me to an extent. When I consider the unity and oneness in the spirit, and the way we shared with each other and encouraged each other, we would surely want to wait to make sure that there could be no opening. For he frequently allowed himself to be heard that we were united; the way one brother put it to me that he had said to him, "If we both say 'yes', then it definitely means 'yes'." This is surely how it should also be with a disciple of Christ. And then he throws his promises into the echoes of the wind. If I am not able to express myself in this regard, I cannot comply, for even the words often fail me. It may be better that way for us poor sinners, as long as the Saviour loves me.

I must go back for a little, and commence with the Aeltester election, for I believe that each and every one who still has some feeling in his conscience will well know the purpose for an Aeltester election and ordination. The same is very clearly and definitely described in the Holy Scriptures. The Lord and those that partook therein know the best regarding the election itself. But I was very much

persuaded and pushed for I did not want to do so and held myself back. I considered myself to be too unworthy and incompetent to do so. I was also scared that I might trespass upon a foreign office, and that I might thereby commit an offense before the Lord. He continued to entreat me in this regard until I finally acquiesced and thought to myself, that if it was really seen this way by the Lord then I wanted to do it. This is also what occurred although in great imperfection, and so what shall I say now? Have I thereby too soon yielded up the fellowship? For I bid you from the bottom of my heart to instruct me of something better in this regard, and I gladly wish to accept the same, as I myself know that I am very weak in spiritual matters.

Oh, my beloved, I have done it for no other purpose than out of the fear of God. For in numerous references, the apostle admonishes us that we should be of one mind and love. We are to be like the many kernels that are ground together in one bread and baked into one loaf, and as the wine that comes from many grapes. This is also how we are to be, for we are to be one body like a loaf of bread; we are all to partake in one bread (1 Cor. 10:17). Furthermore (it was also done) for the sake of the fear of God so that we were not led astray thereby; although it seems that I may remain almost by myself except for a few who are standing steadfast in the faith. I was afraid that many more innocent hearts would have been led astray than is presently the case, had I remained together with him any longer--for a number were even in doubt whether I myself would remain steadfast. I never had any doubts in this regard, but I did suffer damage within my soul. I was very scared that if I remained any longer in the fellowship with him that the damage would be even greater and that many additional souls would be torn along with him. But as already mentioned, I would wish that you might teach me something better.

For now I must close for my time is becoming too short. I hope--if the Lord so will--that we can speak about this in person for we are hoping for a visit from you shortly. We have been hoping for this for a long time, but until now we have done so in vain. I had understood when I visiting with you that a number of people wanted to visit us this fall. What else do you need in this regard? Regarding the baptism which took place here on September 2, I believe that they first elected one person to baptize J. Wiebe. I have heard that it was Corn. Enns; he baptized Wiebe first and then Wiebe baptized the others.

Now receive a heartfelt greeting from all of us. We commit you unto God and the word of His grace. I remain your fellow pilgrim,

*P. Baerg*

## Letter Six.

October 3, 1869, Annenfeld

Firstly I wish you the peace of God and the comfort rich fellowship of the Holy Spirit through our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

Beloved Ohms we have heard with sorrow from brother Klassen from Prangenau regarding brother H. Friesen's debts and his dishonest dealings that he is to have done in Landskrone and regarding his letter which he is to have sent to Braun. Subsequent thereto, we held a brotherhood meeting where the two brethren from your region were present. When we asked him how matters stood

with him he concluded and conceded that he had been to hasty regarding the land purchasing, and regarding his house he would also have to dispose himself in order that he could sell it. Since this has not yet occurred, and since the wares which he had purchased have not yet sold, he could not do otherwise but to ask his creditors for more time and whether they would indulge him a little longer. He also wants to sell the sheep but it is not possible at this time.

Regarding the letter, he says he had not written it in that sense, the way it had been interpreted. If he had erred in this regard, he promised to retract it with another writing. Regarding the land disputation, or regarding the petition and complaint which he had sent to the Oberschulz, he read the same for us and the way we understand the same--according to our limited comprehension--it is only a petition. But he says that he should not have done this either. Presently he has travelled to the Molotschna in order to bring his affairs in order and to retract in those matters where he had erred. We also encouraged him in this regard that he should apologize wherever he might have offended anyone. And so we cannot bring the matter with him any further at the present time until he returns and we have received a report from the Molotschna brethren as to how it stands regarding the matter and with him, and until you, beloved Ohms from there, will visit us, in order that we can put matters regarding him and this matter in order--since you are more familiar with the matter in some respects than we are.

Therefore, please notify us as soon as possible that you are coming to visit us in order that you might come to our aid in all spiritual matters for we are presently unfit for any virtue. We must frequently cry out together with the poet;

Gott, ist noch dein Geist bei mir,  
der mir kann zeugnisz geben;  
ich sei dein Kind,  
ich zweifele schier,  
wenn ich beschau mein Leben;  
nichts ist an mir das mich entzuehndt,  
in wahrer Busz zu sein gestimmt,  
wie du von mir begehrest.

Yes, beloved we are of the firm hope that you will not decline our request, for Paul once said to his fellow brother Barnabus, "Let us again turn about and see our brethren, through all the cities in which we have preached the word of the Lord, how they are doing" (Acts 15:36). How much more necessary it is at present that you visit us in order to speak with us in person as to how we are standing in the faith and to strengthen each other. The building which we thought to have raised in spring hath fallen and lies scattered about since it was apparently built on sand. A misfortune arose and a storm came, and the wind blew and encompassed the house and the house fell, and then was a great fall (Matt. 7). This has been our experience as well, that some had built upon the sand. Wherefore the Saviour says, we are to build upon a solid rock, namely, upon Him and to serve Him in truth, for he says, "I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh to the Father but through me." Whoever has not built their house of faith upon His solid rock will soon to be dissuaded therefrom. What other alternative do we have but that we remain of one mind and build anew. For that

purpose we require wise and obedient carpenters who will follow and be obedient to their master in all matters and in which respect I, however, find myself to be completely inexperienced and incompetent.

Now beloved Ohms and brethren should I have erred in this way or in my previous writing and if I have thereby created offense to one or another, I bid you from the heart to forgive me, and to think of me in the way of love. My error is solely of my only goal which is to be saved and many others with me. As the Apostle also says, "I pray for Israel for that they might be saved." And this is my endeavour and I pray for my beloved brothers and sisters that all of us together might be saved. But I must frequently lament with the poet;

Dies ist auch mein Wille wohl;  
aber ach es felt vollbringen  
was ich auch verreichen soll,  
thu ich noch mit laszt und zwingen,  
seh ich dann mein bestes an,  
so ist doch nicht rein gethan.

Oh, beloved, pray for me--poor servant--who is nothing but the dust of the earth, for I have become like a wife who has been widowed, and has no helper. "Many bulls have compassed me about: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. They gape upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion. I am poured out like water and all of my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels (Psalm 22).

Oh, you most faithful Saviour Lord Jesus stand by me--poor one--in this last and evil circumstance, and keep me from erring, neither to the right nor to the left, yes, stand by everyone who is seeking you from the heart and who loves you in truth. We are all the work of your hands, and therefore, I pray that you would not allow us to depart from the path of your truth. Maintain us rather in the simple truth and that we would fear your name. Yes, that we might love and serve you and be faithful to you with all our hearts. Amen.

Now beloved, receive a heartfelt greeting from all of us. Thanks be to God, we are all well physically for which we give thanks to the most high, and also wish you good health in everything! But our endeavour and desire should be to strive and maintain the good health of poor and unperishable souls, and especially for myself, for I still do frequently that which I should not do and in that which I ought to do, I am frequently deficient. I commit you unto God and the word of His grace, for He is mighty enough to strengthen us and all of you.

I remain your fellow pilgrim,

*Peter Baerg*

#### Editor's Comment

The Peter Baerg letters are found in the Peter P. Toews Document Collection--courtesy of Milton and Margaret Toews, Neilberg, Saskatchewan, 1981. Translated by the editor. An additional eight or so letters written between 1870 and 1872 are contained in the Peter P. Toews Collection and still await translation and publication.

## PART THIRTEEN

### ABRAHAM L. FRIESEN 1831-1917

#### Chapter One Biography

A Biography of Aeltester Abraham L. Friesen (1831-1917) of Heuboden, Borosenko Colony, South Russia, and later of Jansen, Nebraska. By Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1992, based in part on a paper presented at a symposium of the History Committee of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference held at the Steinbach Bible College, Steinbach, Manitoba, March 13 and March 14, 1987.

---

#### Family Background.

Abraham L. Friesen was born into a family which produced a number of prominent KG leaders in the early history of this church. His great uncle, Klaas Reimer (1770-1837), married to Helena Friesen, founded the so-called Kleine Gemeinde (KG) and became its first Aeltester. Following the death of Klaas Reimer, Abraham Friesen (1782-1849), grandfather of A. L. Friesen, was chosen to lead this small group. Johann F. Friesen (1808-1872), Neukirch--a nephew of Abraham Friesen (1782-1849), was elected to replace him in 1847. This was a time of growth and stability in the small church. Following a pattern also found in other Mennonite churches, a number of the Friesen clan succeeded Abraham Friesen into the ministry of the KG. Prominent among these was grandchild, Abraham L. Friesen, who led a small group of the KG to Jansen, Nebraska in 1874.

Abraham L. Friesen was born to Jacob W. Friesen (1808 - 1889) and Anganetha Loppen (1808 - 1881) on September 13, 1831 in Blumstein, Molotschna Colony, South Russia.<sup>1</sup> Likely, Abraham remained in this village till his marriage to Anna Duecken (1833 - 1904) in 1853 at which time they moved to the Molotschna village of Tiege. They remained here till the 1860s when they joined the majority of KG families in their move to Markusland and Boresenko. Ministerial records show that in 1868 the Abraham L. Friesens were resident in the village of Heuboden, Boresenko colony.

Little is known about Abraham's wife Anna, except that she had a sister, Agatha (1836 - 1856) and a half sister Helena (1840 - 1856). Since both Abraham and Anna's children, Aganetha (1854 - 1859) and Anna (1869 - 1870), died in infancy, they fostered and cared for a number of children in their home. Among

these were, Anna Wiens (1847 - ), Cornelius Wiebe (1854 - ), Aganetha Friesen (1860 - 1903), Gerhard Friesen (1862 - ), Margaretha Giesbrecht (1852 - ) and Johann E. Friesen (1884 - ).<sup>2</sup> The American Passenger Ship lists also indicate that an eleven month child, Catharina, accompanied the Abraham L. Friesens on the ship Hammonia to New York<sup>3</sup>.

### Ministry.

Abraham was elected into the KG ministry by a brotherhood vote in 1861.<sup>4</sup> At this time all of the deacons eligible for the ministerial vote were Friesens, namely; Klaas, Jacob (Abraham's father), Peter (Abraham's uncle) and Abraham. Peter and Abraham received 80 and 62 votes respectively from the 110 brethren present. Others of the Friesen clan in the ministerial at this time were Abraham's uncle, Peter Thiessen, who was married to Margareta W. Friesen, and Aeltester Johann Friesen (1808-1872), a cousin to Abraham's father, Jacob W. Friesen.

Unfortunately, the 1860s were difficult times for the KG in Russia which eventually involved Abraham L. Friesen as well. During these years the KG was in the process of geographical separation with congregations in Markusland, Molotschna, the Crimea and Borosenko. Travel distances obviously hindered rapid communication between the groups. Then too, Abraham's cousin, Abraham F. Thiessen, became quite involved in the landless disputes in the Molotschna. Family ties were strained when Thiessen was excommunicated and the Peter Thiessen family withdrew from church membership. When Aeltester Johann F. Friesen proposed to reaccept Abraham Thiessen into the membership the Gemeinde split in two, with one group following minister Heinrich Enns and a smaller group including Abraham L. Friesen staying loyal to Johann F. Friesen.

However, this loyalty was short lived. Further problems led Aeltester Johann Friesen to excommunicate ministers Abraham L. Friesen and Peter W. Friesen together with deacons Jacob W. Friesen and Klaas Friesen. These men then formed the nucleus of a small branch of the KG. On May 7, 1868, twenty-six voting members elected Abraham L. Friesen as their Aeltester. Friesen took this new responsibility seriously, guarding the little flock with concern. When the Russian government threatened to remove special privileges from the Mennonites, he was quick to add his name to the petitions sent to the government. When it became evident that Russian policy was moving in new directions, the small group sent their own delegate, David Klassen, to America to investigate the possibility of immigration. His group became known as the Heubodner KG after the name of the village in Borosenko where Friesen resided. Though Klassen recommended Canada as a new haven for his church, Friesen considered the United States a better choice. Separate arrangements were made for his group to sail to New York, via Hamburg and Havre, France on the ship Hammonia. They left Hamburg July 1, 1874 and arrived at Hoboken, New York on July 16, 1874.

### The Church in Nebraska.

On the advice of Consul Cornelius Jansen who was married to Abraham's father's cousin, Helena von Riesen, Abraham L. Friesen led his group to Clarence Center, New York, where a number found temporary employment with Mennonite farmers. Meanwhile, Jacob Fast, Peter Heidebrecht and Abraham Friesen arranged for the purchase of land at \$3.75 an acre in Jefferson County, Nebraska, from the

B. & M. Railroad. Finally on August 26, 1874, this small KG church arrived at Beatrice, Nebraska ready to meet the rigours of pioneer life in their new adopted country.

Challenges quickly came, both from within the group and from outside sources. When Abraham L. Friesen cut grain with his new reaper on Sunday so that others could use the machine a number of members lost confidence in his leadership and joined the Peters church in 1878. The secessionist group was led by the minister Heinrich Ratzlaff (1848-1922). Also in the following years preachers, Eli Herr, John Holdeman, Jacob Wiebe and others came to preach and evangelize, drawing away members from the KG church. Within a few years of their arrival about half of the members had joined other churches.

In spite of these difficulties at home Abraham Friesen was ready to heed the call of the Manitoba brethren to help with the reorganization after their Aeltester, Peter Toews led a number of ministers and nearly half his congregation to join with John Holdeman in 1882. Abraham travelled to Manitoba a number of times to encourage the brethren and to conduct an Aeltester election and perform the installation service. Abraham L. Friesen maintained an active letter correspondence with parishioners, relatives and fellow elders in Manitoba, Russia and elsewhere. From these letters one notes that he showed a warm pastoral care for the church. Jacob L. Dueck in a letter of July 9, 1884, indicates that when his wife's grandfather, Heinrich Reimer (1791 - 1884), received a letter from A. L. Friesen, he received such comfort from it that he read it a number of times even though he was very weak. Many of these letters are still extant today and could form the basis of a more extensive biography of Friesen and his ministry.

A. L. Friesen also seemed to be quick to acknowledge his faults when at times he acted more on impulse than insight. The "Kuhprozes" and the "Komiedien Bude" episodes indicate his willingness to ask the brethren for forgiveness.<sup>5</sup> No doubt he was hurt when these actions involved further splits within the church. Considerable amount of additional information regarding these events and Abraham L. Friesen is to be found in my paper "The Kleine Gemeinde in the United States of America" published in D. Plett, ed, *Profile on the Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde 1874* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1987), pages 87-140.

Abraham L. Friesen was an excellent expositor of scripture and his sermons were well written and abundantly supported with biblical references. A collection of some 20 of his sermons are extant and provide a good source for further study.<sup>6</sup> During the years of his leadership A. L. Friesen maintained an active interest in promoting suitable literature among the KG churches in Nebraska and Manitoba.<sup>7</sup> There is evidence that he was responsible for the republication of two Peter Peters books, namely; *Ausgewählte Schriften* in 1901 and *Die Himmlische Hochzeit* in 1906. Two other booklets reprinted during these years were; *Eine Einfache Erklärung über Einige Glaubenssätze der sogenannten Kleine Gemeinde* in 1901 and *Eine kurze Beschreibung der Aeltesten Abraham Friesen in Ohrloff an der Molotschna* in 1904. Abraham L. Friesen was well aware that people are influenced by the literature which they read and he took the responsibility of making these books available to every KG home.

Abraham L. Friesen suffered personal grief when his wife, Anna, passed away on January 15, 1904 after 50 years and 11 months of married life together. He, however, was remarried in June 29 of the same year to widow Helena Friesen

of Steinbach Manitoba. Helena had previously been married to Heinrich B. Friesen of Jansen. She died on February 25, 1911.

### Meade, Kansas.

Shortly after his first wife's passing the KG of Jansen made the decision to move to Meade, Kansas. Since this was a decision that was arrived at after a number of brotherhood meetings it can be assumed that A. L. Friesen also gave leadership to this venture. The first contingent of the Jansen KG left for Kansas in 1906 with the majority following the year after. Among these were Aeltester Friesen and his second wife, Helena. Because of age and poor eye sight, A. L. Friesen's involvement in the church decreased with time. The last two pages of entries in his "Wahlliste" are written in rather large uncoordinated handwriting, with the last entry being January 11, 1914. Likely his final official function was to install Johann Reimer into the ministry on the same day on which the election was held. He has not included in his "Wahlliste" booklet the Aeltester election held the same year in November 23 in which Jacob F. Isaac was elected to this position. Aeltester Peter R. Dueck of Manitoba officiated at this installation.

Abraham L. Friesen passed away on March 14, 1917 and was buried in the South KG cemetery near Meade, Kansas. He had served the church as their Aeltester for nearly 49 years. Of the three Aeltesten elected by the Kleine Gemeinde in the late 1860s in Russia, Abraham L. Friesen was the only one who withstood the adversities of the time and remained faithful to the covenants he had once made with his Redeemer.

### Endnotes. Abraham L. Friesen.

1. A. L. Friesen, "Family register."
2. *Ibid.*
3. David A. Haury, *Index to the Mennonite Passenger Ship Lists, 1872 - 1904* (North Newton, Kansas, 1986), 15.
4. A. L. Friesen, "Wahlliste," unpublished manuscript.
5. Henry N. Fast, "The Kleine Gemeinde in the United States of America," in Plett, ed, *Profile of the Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde 1874* (Steinbach, Man., 1987), 122.
6. These sermons are in the possession of Dietrich Dueck, Box 327, Belize, who was kind enough to allow the same to be photocopied by the Archives of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference, 440 Main St., Steinbach, Manitoba, R0A 2A0--courtesy of Royden K. Loewen, Blumenort, Manitoba, 1992.
7. Fast, "The Kleine Gemeinde in the United States of America," 128.

# Chapter Two

## Sermon, Ephesians 6:10-17

---

A Sermon on Ephesians 6:10-17 written by Aeltester Abraham L. Friesen (1831-1917) of Jansen, Nebraska, and presented to the Kleine Gemeinde in Manitoba in February, 1882.

---

### Introduction.

"The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment. The law of his God is in his heart: no one of his steps shall slide" (Psalm 37:30,31).

"Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation" (Hebrews 13:7).

Furthermore Jesus says, "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock; And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it" (Matthew 7:24-27).

"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11).

---

The following sermon was presented by A. L. Friesen, Nebraska, here in Manitoba in the month of February, 1882, after the Holdemans had separated themselves from the Kleine Gemeinde. After this, the rest of the Gemeinde again united itself with Aeltester A. L. Friesen and his Gemeinde, which likewise was a remnant of the so-called Kleine Gemeinde and which had been separated since 1866. Copying finished May 20, 1882, *Cornelius Friesen*, Blumenort, Manitoba.

---

## A Sermon on Ephesians 6:10-17

By Aeltester Abraham L. Friesen, Nebraska

---

I--most unworthy one--sincerely wish you, my beloved, much grace, mercy and peace from God our heavenly Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ and the consoling fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

---

Dearly beloved in the Lord, we want to trust that it has been under the guidance of the all-knowing Creator that we, who have been so closely related, may yet in this world, yea, in this our last sad and deceiving time, not only see each other face to face, but also much more to once again unite and strengthen ourselves in our mutual faith which we have once received. I say with the Apostle, "First, I thank my God through Jesus for you all . . . , since we heard of your faith, that you have kept the word of His patience" (Romans 1:8). The Spirit says, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev. 3:10,11). "For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; That is that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me" (Romans 1:9-12).

Well, beloved, I have perceived and learnt from your part through your letters addressed to us that you have the same longing, and therefore, I have not spared any efforts to come to you according to the will of God, and as a result of which we are here today. May the Lord bless us and be present in the midst of our assemblies, and may He open our hearts and stand by us with the power and gifts of His Spirit, so that our exhortation would not be out of deceit nor lead to uncleanness, nor be of deception, but rather that we might be in the fullness of blessing, and that we might go in and go out, which is my heartfelt prayer. Now, my beloved in the Lord, you have now fallen into a such a great difficulty and sadness in that the Lord has taken your Bishop and leader of the Gemeinde, even as the angel of the Gemeinde in Asia threatened to cast away the lampstand, whereby many were saddened and a number fell into confusion and deception.

I wish much grace, mercy and peace from God our heavenly Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ together with the energizing power of the Holy Spirit unto the present assembly from the depths of my heart. Amen.

Song No. 346.

---

Beloved brethren and sisters in the Lord. In our present sad conditions and in these last days we may very well comfort ourselves with the Prophet Jeremiah and tell ourselves, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I trust in Him" (Lam. 3:22-4). It is also a precious thing to be patient and to trust in the Lord for help. And so, my beloved, may our souls find assurance and comfort in patience, for the Lord has never yet completely forsaken His little flock, even though He permits some destruction and division for righteousness sake. (As the Apostle Paul says that the Lord will do some scattering on earth). Matters are as Isaiah has said in times past, "And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom, and been made like unto Gomorrah" (Romans 9:29).

And even when the remnant of "the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city" (Isa. 1:8), the Lord nonetheless promises to remain with her unto the end. Therefore, let us, like David, attribute confidence and power unto the Gemeinde and consider the same positively, for the Lord has said, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble, Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, . . . There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah. Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth" (Psalms 46).

Oh, therefore, my beloved, let us place our trust and confidence solely and alone upon the Lord and His holy Word regarding all the travesty which hath befallen us. His Word is the truth and stands more securely than heaven and earth; it cannot be cast down nor even weakened by anyone in the world--be they as talented and learned as could may be. The one who has the Word of God as his only standard and guide need not fear--not even then when the world is destroyed, for we shall receive grace and judgment according to the Word that He has spoken.

And beloved, in view of the fact that the archenemy of all goodness--the false spirit--cannot endure the good if a person humbly clings firmly unto God, Satan will not let us go without tempting us. On the one hand and perhaps principally toward the young souls, he seduces the youth towards evil--unto all manner of uncleanness, the lusts of the flesh and the pride of life and whatever else leads to worldliness. On the other hand, he comes unto the righteous--those whom he cannot entice with unclean lusts--in the form of the holy angels, and presents himself as the preacher of righteousness; he seeks to seduce these through a form of false holiness, namely, through outward ceremonies and symbols which he unduly elevates and places on a pedestal. Satan thereby takes many captive who are laden with sin; for they would prefer not to confess their misdeeds and to deny themselves, and thereby, they avoid repentance and contrite remorse over their sins. How tragic! For they depend on the outward ceremonies and symbols and thereby promise themselves forgiveness.

These ceremonies then become their idols. Menno Simons deals with this in his First Volume, page 98, and says with Paul, ". . . professing themselves to be

wise, they became fools" (Romans 1:22). They fight primarily among themselves regarding the symbols and ceremonies which are of the least importance; but they fail to understand the real meaning and the purpose why these ceremonies were instituted, which should be of the highest importance. There is not a single letter in the entire Scripture telling us that there should be disputations concerning the outward and visible ceremonies. Further on page 65, Menno says, "He who seeks forgiveness through baptism, that one despises the blood of the Lord and esteems the water as his idol. Therefore everyone should take heed not to give the honour and praise of Christ to the outward ceremonies and the created elements." Thus far Menno Simons.

Our contemporary re-baptizers (Wiedertaeufer), who are against us in a threefold way, would certainly never confess with their mouth that they place such a great importance upon the outward ceremonies and ordinances. But their public practices demonstrate that this is so. Otherwise there is no way that they would re-baptize--according to their own sayings--people who have been born again through the Spirit of God, who are children of God according to the teachings of Paul, and who have been baptized after having been rightly taught by a humble servant of the Gospel. This unequivocally affirms the view of Menno and also agrees with what we read in the *Martyrs' Mirror*, (First Book 1,28), of a certain Haimo, "That if a baptism has taken place in accordance with the proscriptions of the Holy Scripture, it should not to be repeated."

Many disputations today are taking place regarding this issue and much division and deception has arisen thereby. Our beloved Saviour and Redeemer, and also His apostles, have already told us in times past that it would be so during the last days and that such events would come to pass, so that we should not allow ourselves to be estranged thereby. Indeed, such prophecies are more sure than heaven and earth; even if heaven and earth should pass away, we will still be judged according to the Word. Hence we know and firmly believe that the time comes and has already come that the prophecies are being fulfilled. Wherefore, my beloved, we want to place before ourselves the prophecies concerning the last times and to some extent to reflect thereon.

Christ says, "Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many" (Matthew 24:4,5). Further, "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before" (Matthew 24:23-25 and elsewhere). Still further, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15). Paul says, "This know also, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember" (Acts 20:29-31). And in 2 Timothy 3:1-6, he says, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves . . . Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts." And in Romans 16:18, he says, ". . . and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." The false prophet "doeth great wonders, so that he

maketh fire to come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men" (Rev. 13:13).

These and innumerable similar signs more are foretold for the last days. It would take too long to enumerate them all. I trust that the references mentioned will be sufficient to instruct us and to persuade us that we are living in a perilous and deceptive time, wherein Satan is loosed and knows that his time is short. Yes, the false spirit, Satan, will come out against us in such manifold forms. It will be as the apostle says, "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3:13). Thus, my beloved, we must above all else watch and pray that the Lord would grant us His good Spirit, that He would lead and guide us in all truth and that He would protect us from all deception. Oh for the false spirit presents himself in so many different ways in order to deceive us! But he will not be permitted to succeed in this, for it is written, "No man can pluck them out of my hand" (John 10). However, we must watch and pray that we do not fall into temptation.

---

Now, my beloved, let us further exhort ourselves with an admonition from our text to be strong in the faith which we have once received, so as not to give up in the fight and struggle against the deceitful attacks of Satan and that with prayer and supplication in the Spirit we might prevail upon the battlefield. And further, that we might stand firm in the faith and prove the spirits which arise in our times in accordance with the aforementioned prophecies, and so that we would not allow ourselves to be deceived and to be lead away from the simplicity in Christ. But before we deal any further with our text, let us bow reverently in prayer:

---

The text - Ephesians 6:10-17:

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore, take unto yourself the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand, therefore, having your loins girded about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Above all, taking the shield of faith, with which ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (Ephesians 6:10-17).

---

Beloved in the Lord, in this our last time and hour--indeed, in this sorrowful time--we want to reflect upon these words of exhortation by the Apostle Paul and

take them to heart, so that we would know how to arm ourselves in a spiritual way. For there are spiritual enemies which are raging around about us. Although their form is attractive, yet their goal is to tear us asunder. For that reason the apostle calls them ravening wolves and roaring lions who do not spare the flock. They will arise out of our own midst and hence they are all the more dangerous; for a lion does not roar when he has no prey. The apostle compares the deceivers here with roaring lions and says, "Under the pretence of holiness they will teach perversion and draw the disciples to themselves."

Therefore, watch and pray and "remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn everyone night and day" (Acts 20). For through the Spirit he saw afar off the dangers which the souls would face and openly warned the Gemeinde and pointed out the form in which the deceiving spirits would show themselves. He saw this as clearly as if he was seeing through a mirror, for the Spirit of God was in him. He did not speak of anything whereof Christ did not work through him; and because the Word stands so firm and unmoveable, not one iota thereof shall fall away; everything that is written in the Scripture will be perfectly fulfilled. Hence we definitely know also that the danger is very great. How fearfully the enemy of the souls has surrounded us--yes, he has besieged us, the army of the saints "and the beloved city" (Rev. 20).

Wherefore, my beloved, as we are so painfully aware of our present circumstances and the great weakness of our flesh, we feel together with the twelve spies, that we must consider ourselves as small grasshoppers compared to Satan, who must be seen as a fearful giant. For which reason Paul encourages us with the words of our chosen text as Caleb once encouraged Joshua and earnestly sought to comfort and strengthen him in the might of the Lord. But then our flesh and blood also arises within us as it did within the men who went out with Caleb and Joshua when they said, "We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we" (Numbers 13:31). But, beloved, let us listen further to our spiritual Caleb and Joshua (our Lord Jesus) for He strengthens and comforts us through His Spirit if only we listen for His voice. He says, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9).

This is also what the well-known poet encourages us with the following words:

Niemand soll in Zion sprechen;  
Ich bin elend arm und schwach;  
und durch so viel Ungemach,  
kann kein armer Suender brechen,  
denn der Herr ists der uns heilt,  
und der Schwachen kraft erthailt.

No one shall speak in Zion  
I am poor and weak  
and through so much misery  
no poor sinner can break through  
for it is the Lord Who heals us  
and gives power to the weak.

Sind die Feinde gleich vermessen,  
dennoch had es keine Noth,  
kommt wir wollen sie wie Brod,  
durch die Kraft des Lammes fressen.  
Sied getrost, sie fliehen schon;  
Hier ist Herr und Gideon.

Are the enemies formidable  
yet there is no need.  
Come, like bread we want to  
devour them in the power of the Lamb.  
Be content, they already flee  
He is the Lord and Gideon.

Sind wir schwach; Das Lamm hat staerke,  
sind wir arm, der Herr ist reich.  
Wer ist unserem Koen'ge gleich?  
Unser Gott, thut wunderwerke.  
Sagt ab, der nicht helfen kann,  
dem der Himmel unterthan.

Are we weak, the Lamb has power.  
Are we poor, The Lord is rich.  
Who is like our King?  
Our God does works of wonder  
reject, the one who cannot help  
but claim the Lord of heaven.

Yes, beloved, we must emulate this Spirit and attitude. The Apostle Paul exhorts us in our text to be strong in the sense that we cannot do anything in and of ourselves. Rather he says, ". . . be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6:10,11). If we wish to be strong in the Lord, we must realize that He himself has said, that without Him we cannot do anything. And when we realize this our poverty and need, we will confess our misdeeds and shortcomings and entreat our heavenly Father in a childlike manner for the power and assistance of the Spirit; for then we are promised, ". . . every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matthew 7:8). And further, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you" (John 16:23).

His power becomes mighty in the weak, so that they can withstand the deceptive attacks of the Devil irrespective of how cunning he may be. Oh, yes, beloved, how frequently we have already experienced these deceptive attacks. Sadly the devil has had far too much success because of the lukewarmness in our spiritual zeal. For then Satan approaches us from one side, as from the left, and also presents himself as a Christian, allowing himself to be baptized, attending the Communion and so on, and maintaining a great freedom--yes, he uses Christian liberty as a covering for evil of all kinds of lust and joys and conformity with the

world. He knows no pride for he considers everything to be free and clean for himself; he takes consolation in the falsehood, "For the pure everything is pure", and so on. Here is a great danger for who is able to escape from his snares? One has to be genuinely careful and be on guard if he does not want to be overcome and secretly taken captive. Our flesh, also, which is part of us, is naturally inclined toward evil.

On the other hand, the Devil reveals himself as an angel of light, as a friendly and loving--yes, even as a divine--messenger and holds himself out in the appearance of a harmless, born-again, repentant and genuine Christian. Yes, like the holy people, but among whom he is very careful and watches to see where he can attack us the most easily and do the most damage and hurt us the most. Yes, he inspires anger and creates divisions; he originates and assembles a new sect about himself. Menno Simons says with much regret that he has seen this done openly in his time and unfortunately more than 2 or 3 times. How much more so is this not true in the present day. Here one has to fast, watch and pray, and entreat God for His assistance. Otherwise one will not escape. This is our sword and armour which we must take and gird about ourselves, even as our text says, ". . . that we may withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." Yes, that we would not allow the field which is our heart to be conquered nor to be "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine." Nor should we be deceived with sweet words and powerful speeches. Paul says, "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace" (Hebrews 13:9).

Let us seek this grace with tears of woe for the heart is improved through tears, and God bestows grace upon those who allow themselves to be improved, and through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we expect to be saved (Acts 15:11). Behold, beloved, this is the way which we must go. This is our armour whereby we must conquer all heights which lift themselves up against our small understanding and weak faith, to disturb and oppose the same. Indeed, a genuine remorse and heartfelt repentance is the seed from which arises eternal joy. It is the pause which we must repeatedly observe--after having received the water baptism upon the confession of our faith--as often as we stumble anew into sin. For blessed are those who weep here on this earth, for in the eternal blessedness they will rejoice with laughter. He who sows here with tears will harvest in joy up yonder.

This is the word of truth whereby we are to "gird our loins". Yes, when we have improved our heart through genuine tears of repentance, we thereby receive grace and forgiveness of sin in this life and eternal salvation in the hereafter. This, then, is a good shield and breastplate of righteousness, which is the word that preaches of reconciliation to us. Therefore let no one of you be deceived by vain words that our salvation is to be found in outwardly ceremonies or symbols making you to believe that salvation rests in them, or words which seek to justify that which is being elevated so highly in our present times.

And then when the same has been cast away in any particular dilemma, it is as if everything loses its meaning and that all our efforts are in vain and for naught; and the days of our first conversion and enlightenment are thereby trodden underfoot. But the apostle says, "But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, . . . Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward" (Hebrews 10:32). The words of our

beloved Lord Jesus find a good application here; "But they that endure to the end, the same shall be saved" (Matthew 24:13). And, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev. 3:10,11).

Today this is interpreted as follows: their faith is not valid for it is lacking in either this or that, if it is not exactly according to their mode or outwardly ordering of the ceremonies or ordinances. Thus many of our forefathers, like the beloved martyrs and our venerable Aeltesten and teachers who in times past gave us the Word of God, are being placed outside of the citizenship of Israel, as strangers to the covenant of promise and as those who had no hope and were without God in the world (Eph. 2:12), because of these symbols which Menno Simons says are the least significant. We, however, beloved, know and are of good hope and have a firm confidence that God was with them with His Holy Spirit, that He stood by their side and preserved them in all truth, and that they have finished the course and persevered upon the battlefield in victory.

Yes, they have fought a good fight, they have kept the faith and henceforth shall be given unto them the crown of righteousness and salvation together with all the saints and all those which love the reappearing of the Lord Jesus. Now they rest under the altar until the fulfilment of the coming of their fellow servant and brother. "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them" (Rev. 14). The Lord in His power was mighty in them through genuine remorse and repentance, and they have laid aside the old man with his works and have renewed themselves and have put on the new man, who is created after God in righteousness-working holiness and truth. All of which must be done in God, although in great weakness and accompanied by many tears.

Although our former Aeltesten were also beset by many mistakes, misdeeds and deficiencies, as they themselves realized with regret, yet they experienced what Paul says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:1). "Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things" (1 John 3:19,20). "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8,9).

Therefore the apostle says, "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30). We grieve the Holy Spirit when we disparage the gifts of grace and the knowledge of our faith through the Holy Spirit, as if they were only the works of man. Rather, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering" as we have been taught, "for he is faithful that promised; And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:23-25). "For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry, Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him" (Hebrews 10:37,38). "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my

beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:57,58). "For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain" (1 Thes. 2:1).

I am referring here primarily to the entrance into our Gemeinde of our previous Aeltesten, for they did not come with magnificent speeches and great wisdom, and thereby declaring the testimony of God. They were ". . . determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." And they were with "us in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." And their "speech and . . . preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Cor. 2:1-4). Paul exhorts us and says of such leaders, "Remember them which have rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. Be not carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established in grace" (Hebrews 13:7,9). "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth" (2 Peter 1:10-12).

---

And finally, we read in our text, "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." We may well understand this to mean to watch and pray in faith that we do not fall into temptation. For if we watch and pray, the false and fiery love which is poured over us by those who oppose us, will not so readily penetrate into our hearts nor wound us so mortally, thereby causing anger and division in our teaching. Yes, if we are genuine and true worshippers, who worship our heavenly Father in a childlike faith and obedience in the Spirit and in truth, He will--according to His promises--not omit to hear us. He says, "Oh that my people had harkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries" (Psalms 81:13,14). This teaches us that our conduct and prayer should be one. Our reason must be taken captive in obedience to Christ and we must submit ourselves completely unto His will and His Word, and we must commit the whole matter unto Him. He can and will make all things well.

Nor do we know what we should pray. The Spirit is the One who must intercede for us, and that with groanings which cannot be uttered. Such a submitted will and repentant prayer which comes from faith, in accordance with simplicity in Christ, is a good weapon and defense, for God Himself is their protector; and according to His word the enemy must fail. As we do not know what we should pray, and as His Spirit intercedes for us with groanings in the best possible way, it is of no use that we make many words and pray them publicly before the people. Such a prayer frequently has more the appearance of a pretence than that it is sincere, humble and heartfelt. And if we have a faith which is

efficacious before God in accordance with His Word--and which of itself is a gift from God--we also believe that we do not know what we should pray.

When the disciples at one time were in great distress on the sea, they prayed, "Lord, help us, we are perishing!" Indeed, when we consider the intrinsic nature of prayer, it is in truth merely the expression of the innermost desires and longings of our heart. When the same are solely directed toward the goal of eternal joy and salvation, but the person does not know what he needs and what is best for him to achieve this, and his objective deceives him as he himself frequently does not know his heart well enough, and does not know the ways in which God will lead him, the cross must then keep the heavenward searching soul upright. And when the flesh continually seeks to avoid the cross, it is always a difficult struggle for a sincere and genuine disciple of Christ; particularly so, when--too frequently--he does that which he had committed himself not to do. This makes him anxious and sad, and because of his many shortcomings, he hardly knows what to do.

We have examples of the many saints in the Word of God who experienced this, and also of how they cried for help when they found themselves in extreme circumstances. Many times this did not occur in outwardly words. Let us take as an example, Moses when he, together with the great host of the people of Israel, faced extreme danger at the Red Sea. For on the one side they had the Red Sea, and on the other, there were unsurmountable heights, and behind them was Pharaoh's great army which was pursuing them in order to destroy them. As they did not know of any escape, they were sorely afraid and said unto Moses, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?" Moses answered the people, "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord . . ." (Ex. 14:12,13). After Moses had comforted the people, the Lord said unto him, "Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward" (Ex. 14:15). Behold, my beloved, although he comforted the people through his trust and faith in the Lord, the desire and longing of his heart was that God would help him. The Lord considered this as crying and He heard them, as He knows and understands our thoughts from afar and is a judge of the same (Hebrews 4).

Yes, I believe that an inwardly supplication of the heart is more important in prayer than the fashioning of many words. I find this substantiated also by the beloved martyrs when they were in extreme circumstances and danger, and in accordance with the way they expressed themselves in their letters they were not able to pray anything more than to say simply, "Lord, Thy will be done." We read of a sorrowful wife who wrote thus from prison to her beloved husband. An Aeltester by the name of Matis Serwas also wrote the like, namely, "I cannot pray anything other but to say, 'Lord, Thy will be done.'" Thus these have prayed more in the Spirit and in truth than with outwardly words. Therefore, we too should not pray anything more but to say, "Lord, may Your will be done." "For the Father," says Christ, "seeketh such to worship Him" (John 4).

On the contrary, the one who makes many words, as if he knows what he needs and yet does not really know, this is considered by the Lord to be merely a vain repetition, and such prayers will not be heard. And the one who gladly wishes to be seen or heard by making such a prayer has already received his reward for so doing. These words come from the mouth of Truth Himself. Therefore, beloved,

let us pray in the Spirit and in truth in all simplicity and humility. Let us, therefore, use the Word of God as our sole standard and guide, as it is "quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

And let us not deviate either to the right nor to the left, no matter who may come in a holy appearance with sweet words and excellency of speech, or with dreams and visions. Wherefore I say with the Apostle Paul, "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind" (Col. 2:18); nor should we heed dreams and visions, my beloved, for the powerful and unchanging Word of God should be more than sufficient for us to know the will of God and to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:13). For by the Word alone will we be judged on that judgment day, and by the Word we are told what is beneficial for us and what the Lord requires of us.

Menno Simons testifies accordingly and says, "I have no visions nor angelic communications, nor do I seek such or desire them so as not to be deceived by the same; for the Word of Christ alone is sufficient for me. If I do not follow His testimonies, I am truly lost." My beloved, if in his days such deceptions were already so prevalent that he feared to be deceived or led astray by such an emotionally based spirituality, such as angelic communications or visions, how much more do we not have reason to fear such in these our last days and times of deception, when unrighteousness increases evermore and achieves dominance! According to the prophecy of Christ, false Christians and false prophets will arise and do great wonders and signs to lead unto deception even the very elect, if it were possible, which is also what is happening today. Christ says, "Behold, I have told you so." And beloved, His Word stands firm and unmoveable and will come into abundant fulfilment without fail.

In contrast, the prophets of our day say exactly the opposite, namely, that a great conversion will take place which must be articulated and inspired by great signs and wonders. Therefore Christ says, "Take heed that no man deceive you, For many shall come in my name saying, I am Christ: and shall deceive many" (Matthew 24:4). It is evident that many will do so in my name, but will not say it in truth rather only in appearance. And they will say further, "Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not." This is truly being fulfilled even today which we can see before our very own eyes as clearly as we see the bright sunshine. Therefore, my beloved, let us take heed that we are ". . . not unwise, but understanding that the will of the Lord is . . ." that we shall be "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:17,16). "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all, to stand" (Ephesians 6:14).

---

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints. And pray also for me--a very weak and imperfect servant of the Word--who has tried today to draw your attention to our precarious times, how to be armed and how to utilize the time against the deceptive attacks of Satan. I have done so only in great

weakness and imperfection and that is why I am in the utmost need of your prayerful support, as I--although only in great weakness--also remember all of you in my prayers.

Yes, I must freely admit, beloved, how my conscience convicts me that even my best works are tainted with sin which is why I often come short and have stumbled. As a result of which it happens that someone may have been hurt by me and may have taken offense, for which I ask for your forgiveness as I am ready always to forgive the sins and weaknesses of my neighbour.

---

In conclusion, I concur with the words of the poet;

1. Entbinde mich, mein Gott,  
Von allen meinen Banden,  
womit mein armer Geist  
noch so gebunden ist.

Set me free, my God,  
From all the fetters, whereby  
my poor Spirit  
is still so much enslaved.

2. Mach aller Feinde Strick,  
und Tuecke ganz zu schanden,  
Durch dem in welchem du,  
Mein eigener Retter bist.

Destroy all the evil wiles  
and darts of the wicked enemy  
whereby and in which you  
my personal Saviour are.

3. Zerbrech, zerschlag, zerreis,  
und mach mich durch den Sohn  
zum recht gefreieten,  
sonst komm ich um die Kron.

Break, strike and tear  
and through thy Son, make me  
genuinely free, for otherwise  
I will not receive my crown.

4. Ich weisz, ich liebe dich,  
doch soll ichs recht bekennen,  
noch lange nich so viel,  
als meine Seel begehrt.

I know, I love Thee

yet rightly must confess,  
not nearly as much as my soul  
desires in love to be bless't.

5. Es ist noch was in mir,  
ich kann es selbst nicht nennen,  
Das öfters meinen Geist  
in deiner Liebe stoert.

Something is within me  
which I do not really know  
often it perturbs my soul  
and dispels my love for Thee.

6. Ach faend ich, denk ich oft,  
doch nur ein Raeumelein  
Da ich ganz ungestoert,  
dich liebend, moechte sein.

And if I only could  
find a place of rest  
where I could yield my heart  
to love You more I would.

7. O Vater mach mich frei,  
Stell mich auf weitem Raum,  
das sich mein Geist ausbreit  
als wie ein Cedarbaum.

O Father, make me free  
place me on an open plain  
where my spirit might unfold  
widely like a cedar tree.

8. Der Eigenwille schleicht  
sich oft in meine Glieder.  
Und stoert durch ihren Trieb,  
mir öfter alle Ruh.

Self-will enters stealthily  
often in my members  
disturbing by its inspiration  
and robbing me of inward peace.

9. Dies schlaegt die Freudigkeit,  
der Seele maechtig nieder,  
Kaum thut das Herz sich auf,  
so schlieszet weider zu.

It casts away with power  
the joy within my soul  
the heart has hardly opened  
when again it must be closed.

10. Soll Licht und Finsternis  
denn stets im wechsel sein,  
Nur mach mich von mir frei  
und von der argen Welt.  
Das meine edle Seel  
Ihr Freiheitsrecht behaellt.

Shall light and darkness  
conflict in me?  
Free me from myself  
and from the evil world,  
so that my soul may receive  
freedom's sure decree.

Now, may the God of all grace, who has called us to His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, prepare, strengthen and establish us upon the true foundation! To Him be honour and might from eternity to eternity! Amen!

---

Copying finished May 20, 1882, *Cornelius Friesen*, Blumenort, Manitoba.

---

## Editor's Comment

The Sermon on Ephesians 6:10-17, written by Abraham L. Friesen in 1882 is from the document collection of Margaret and Peter A. Plett, Landmark, Manitoba. Mrs. Plett, nee Margaret F. Reimer, received the original copy of this sermon from her parents, Klaas P. and Anna Reimer, Blumenort, Manitoba. Mrs. Reimer, nee Anna K. Friesen, received the same from her father, Cornelius P. Friesen (1844-1899), the village school teacher, who had made a copy on May 20, 1882. It appears that Cornelius P. Friesen added the four scripture verses to the sermon as a foreword and thereby also expressed his view of the schism which had just taken place. Cornelius P. Friesen was a first cousin to Jakob W. Friesen, Jansen, Nebraska, and formerly Blumstein, Molotschna, the father of Abraham L. Friesen. Peter A. Plett (1898-1990) typed the sermon in German in 1982. Primary translation of the same was completed by Rev. Ben Hoepfner, 411-20 Valhalla Drive, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R0A 0Y1, in 1992.

# Chapter Three

## Sermon, 1 Corinthians 15:58

A Sermon on the words, "Therefore, my brethren, be ye steadfast", from 1 Corinthians 15:58 written by Aeltester Abraham L. Friesen, Jansen, Nebraska, December, 1882.

---

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ! In the power of the Holy Spirit I cordially greet you, most worthy brethren and sisters in the Lord. Amen!

---

Greatly beloved in the Lord. It has, therefore, been the will of God, having left your assemblies a year ago, that we visit you again this winter in order that we may strengthen ourselves in the Lord and so that we may finish the work begun in the Lord, and that we may intensify our mutual love (Romans 15:24).

Now, beloved, on a certain occasion the Apostle Paul wrote to the Thessalonians as follows; "We give thanks to God always . . . Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and the patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father; Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake" (1 Thess. 1:2-5).

Dearly beloved, we feel much like Paul did when we say these words to you, for we have been consoled through your steadfast faith which has once been committed unto us and whereby we have been united anew with each other in mutual love, and that as a result of the grace and mercy of God. "For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord." For what thanks can we again render to God for His grace and goodness. The apostle says further, "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name" (Hebrews 13:15).

The fruit here is not merely the confession by the mouth, but much more to bring into the light the fruit which will sprout and grow therefrom. Concerning a mere confession in words, Paul has this to say, "For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision . . . They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate" (Titus 1:10,16). Therefore let us be disciples of God like the beloved children, and walk in the way of love, for the genuine childlike love which flows from the heart also brings forth works of love for his

neighbours. Love cannot be without works, unless it is not from the heart. It loves God because of His mercy and out of compassion it loves and serves its fellowmen. Love walks in the Spirit and not according to sight, of which Jesus says, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). This then is the greatest thanksgiving which we can render unto God if we follow Him in love. The fruit of the Spirit is described as follows by the apostle, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. 5:22). And further Paul says, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 5:25).

Beloved brethren, "If any man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness . . . Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. But if a man, think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden . . . For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially into them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:1-10).

For love, if it is genuine, is constituted in such a way that it will do unto others as it wishes to be treated itself. Therefore, love ". . . is longsuffering, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up. Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth" (1 Cor. 13:4-7). The apostle exhorts us also that we shall be sincere in our love. Yes, he says, "Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another. Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you; bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Romans 12:9-18). Paul says further, "Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares . . . Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me . . . Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein" (Hebrews 13:1-9).

This then, beloved, is the good fruit of a confession of faith spoken in His name and deed. Let us exert ourselves to do everything that we do--in word or in deed-- to the honour of God and the Lord Jesus Christ and that through Him we may give thanks unto God and the Father. "And whatever ye do," says the apostle, "do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye

shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ" (Col. 3:23,24). Yes, beloved, it is verily of an abundant grace that we may fear God and thereby walk in love, for "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6). Therefore let us endeavour "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace" (Eph. 4:3). For "Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8,9).

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (1 John 3:1). Of which His Spirit also bears witness, "For if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God" (1 John 3:20). If anyone comes into temptation and our heart condemns us, then we shall know that God is greater than our hearts and knows all things. In such circumstances John says, "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And thereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him" (1 John 3:18,19). God does not tempt us unto evil, He tempts no one (James 3). Let us watch and pray, so as not to enter into temptation, and that we will be delivered from the evil misleading spirits. Faith is not the possession of everyone. But the Lord is faithful; He will strengthen and protect us from the evil one, if only we cling firmly to Him and unto His word. May our hearts, however, be directed toward the love of God and to the patience of Christ.

We say with Paul, therefore, let us pray for one another that God may make us worthy of our calling and fulfil everything well that pertains to goodness and faith in power, so that His name be glorified in you, and ye in Him, according to the grace of our God and Lord Jesus Christ. Further he says:

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what restraineth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now hindereth will continue to hinder, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie: That they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. But we are bound to give

thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, Whereunto he called you by our gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle. Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work (2 Thess. 2:1-17).

We have great reason to consider and to reflect upon the prophetic teaching of the apostle when he himself says, "Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you, I told you these things?" And presently we see, beloved, how all these things are proceeding to their fulfilment and are being fulfilled. Paul is hereby saying that these things are to take place before Christ's coming, and that He will not come until all this is fulfilled. Therefore, we cannot say that He will not come, except that a falling away shall occur first--the way someone who is not familiar with the signs of the times recently said to me; for the truth is that our Saviour has already come. And in his prophecy which he already made eighteen hundred years ago, Paul says; "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work." And John says, "Children, it is the last time; and as ye have heard that the antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time, They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us" (1 John 2:18,19).

Behold, beloved, that the apostle already said this in his time and that the fruits and consequences thereof are still being fulfilled and affirmed to this very day. Who then would venture to impugn this immutable testimony? Who would want to say that the Lord is not yet coming and that the falling away is not yet taking place, as some think? This appears to be nothing more than a great deception and an effort to depart from the teachings of the apostle. It seems as if these individuals place themselves in the position of God and themselves fulfil the prophecy of Paul as apostates thereby exalting themselves above all others and casting down all the reasonable and divine worship of God which our beloved predecessor Aeltesten and teachers of old have taught in accordance with the holy and unchangeable Gospel, and who have bequeathed this faith unto us. Which faith we should follow, even as Paul says, "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken to you the Word of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation" (Hebrews 13:7). To this very day it is still being affirmed that our venerable Aeltesten have taught and expounded unto us the true and infallible Word of God; even today its power is mightily demonstrated for all the attacks of Satan, which have sought to tear down the foundations and doctrines of the Gospel, have not damaged nor tarnished the same with any great success. For it is written, ". . . and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). Much rather they shall thereby be put to shame. David says, "Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress with cause" (Psalms 25:3). Indeed, the words of Paul are

applicable even today, as he writes to the Galatians, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:6-8). Those who mislead the people today would not concede even for a moment that they are perverting the Gospel and that they are preaching a different gospel than the one which the apostle preached. They preach under such good appearances and so cunningly apparel the same with the Gospel and cover it with magnificent words--even if for no other purpose than as a blanket under which they hide themselves--so that frequently they would not be recognizable were it not for the fact that their works and deeds expose them so clearly before the day.

But for us, beloved, there is no other option but to cling firmly to the salvation yielding grace--of which we have once partaken and tasted the goodness of His Word and have felt the consolation of the Holy Spirit in our conscience--and to continue therewith the way we have once received it and in the way we have been taught, and not to withdraw therefrom. Yes, the way Jesus himself said, ". . . Take heed that no man deceive you" (Matthew 24:4). And further, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation" (Matthew 26:41).

---

Now, beloved, I wish to conclude my simple introductory remarks and to proceed to an exposition of the text and thereby attempt to edify and exhort you so that we may ground ourselves firmly in the truth which we have once accepted, and thus not to become wayward. Before we proceed to any further exposition, we first wish to humble ourselves before God and to entreat Him for His assistance and blessing, so that it will be done unto His honour and for the salvation of our souls. Hence we pray:

---

The text for our sermon reads as follows:

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58). Thus far.

---

We want to bring these earnest and exhorting words of the Apostle Paul into our consciences and thereby to encourage ourselves to remain steadfast in the faith which we have once accepted. This is not the gift of man, but the gift of God, Who has chosen us by the grace of Christ, through which we hope to be saved. For it is by grace that we are what we are. Indeed, the redemption of the entire human race was nothing else than pure grace, love and compassion. And it has cost Him His blood to make this grace available to us, even then when we were still His enemies. He has allowed the same to be freely offered to us and has caused it to be proclaimed through the all-abundant grace of the Gospel, which the apostles were to preach in all the world and to offer to the people who were as yet His enemies. The apostles--who first experienced this grace--had to offer their own

lives to the enemies of the cross of Christ to be sacrificed, nor did they esteem their lives precious in comparison with the saving grace of God which they had accepted; and which—in love and mercy—they desired all mankind to have, as without it, no man can be saved. We are saved solely by grace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Those who refuse to accept this offer have no part in Christ and remain eternally subjected to the penalty of death. This is most tragic when one truly reflects thereon! But how much more tragic is it not for those who have once been partakers of the goodness of the Word of God and the powers of the world to come through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, when they themselves fall away and thereby crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame, and so that they should again be renewed unto broken repentance (Hebrews 6). And further, "For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they had known it, to have turned from the holy commandment delivered unto them" (2 Peter 2:21). In another place the apostle exhorts us further and says, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised; . . . Not forsaking our assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries" (Hebrews 10:23-27).

Behold, my beloved, we are warned so earnestly against such a falling away, both as regards the worldly as well as the spiritual sides. Eternal punishment is threatened more severely than if we had never had the faith or any knowledge thereof. We see from the words of the text which we have read that the apostle had grave reasons to hold fast to the once accepted truth. He says, "Therefore, my beloved, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." Through the Spirit he prophesied beforehand that a very difficult time would come to pass and that after his departing grievous men and deceptive teachings would enter in amongst the flock which would lead his disciples away from the truth, which he had already seen and experienced even in his own time. As I have pointed out in the introduction, he says, ". . . for the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way" (2 Thess. 2:7). Peter says, "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not" (2 Peter 2:1-3). Therefore, since these things have all been foretold for us, let us not be "carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace" (Hebrews 13:9).

It would seem that the men who arise in our present day would in no way think or believe that the above mentioned references referred to or were applicable to them. They appear in a most attractive and pleasing form and seek to convert people to God, which is what they are doing—at least in their own view. But they deceive and pervert themselves. If they would in a true way want to win

people for God, then they would obviously seek to go to the unconverted who are still living in their natural circumstances, and then we could at least endorse them to some degree. But now they go to the converted and deceive their conscience, impugning and perverting their entire Godly service by alleging that it is not inspired and articulated by the Spirit of God. And they fashion unto themselves words whereby they pervert all that which has happened until now. And then, when everything has been arranged precisely according to their liking, they seek to draw followers after themselves and to teach them that without their ordinances and way of doing things they cannot be in fellowship with God, since He has but one Gemeinde in which He lives through His Spirit, which they confess for themselves and claim to be theirs alone. By so doing they--in part--truly reveal who they are. He who pays attention in this regard, quickly realizes which way things are going, namely, to destroy all worship not connected with their own--and that even if it is manifestly evident that the same is practised faithfully and honestly in accordance with the Word and in the fear of God. We already know full well that it is not within the power of mankind to be converted unto God and to live in the newness of life. Christ says, "Without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). And further, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him" (John 6:44).

Behold, for these people who now arise are so audacious that they seek to deny this with composed words. The apostle clearly saw all this through the Spirit of God and told us beforehand that false teachers would come forth who would seek to introduce damnable heresies amidst the truth and thereby deny the Lord Who had already purchased them; they will reap a sure condemnation which will quickly come over them. Yes, and many, he says further, will follow their condemnation, whereby the way of truth will be blasphemed. How can the way be more abundantly disputed or more clearly blasphemed then when it is directly said that it is not the way of truth, when in reality it is the truth, or when they say that it is the way unto destruction when in fact it is not so? For many a sorrowful and troubled soul has already found peace of conscience and brought forth genuine fruits of repentance through the way that we have been directed by our forefathers.

John says in this regard, "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God" (1 John 3:21). And further, "And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him" (1 John 3:28,29). "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (1 John 3:1). "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Romans 8:17).

Therefore, beloved, as we are given such wonderful promises, let us not become weary and fainthearted or become discouraged, for He who has given these promises is faithful. And when people here greatly ridicule us and disclaim the grace which has been given to us, let us--inspite of such scoffing--not become weak or lacking in courage. For these things have been foretold to us, through the Lord our only Redeemer and Saviour and by His apostles, that it would become so in our time and that they would mock us; but we should not believe them or be scared, nor should we yield unto them. We should remain steadfast and

unmoveable in the grace and truth which we have once acknowledged and continue to grow therein in the Word, knowing full well that our work in the Lord is not in vain.

And when we diligently exert ourselves in order that we may await grace and recompense on that great day--instead of disfavour and wrath--we have no reason to boast beforehand. For it is written that when we have done everything that has been asked of us, we shall--nonetheless--say, "We are unworthy servants, we have done only what we should have done." This statement clearly tells us that we have not earned anything after all and that the promise of salvation, in spite of it, always remains a gift of grace. When we examine our efforts in such an exercise, we find that even our best deeds are accompanied by sins and defects. Wherefore we always have good reason to walk in fear--yes, and "to work out our salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:13). Even so, it still remains nothing but pure grace and not of recompense even if we have done everything that we were commanded to do. How much more so if we have not been able to carry out all the things which have been required of us?

This question occasions much concern and sadness for the faithful soul, and he has to struggle with his flesh and blood and also with the false spirits; he has to pray that he might maintain courage and not become fainthearted. No other recourse is available to him than to cling firmly to the grace of God and to believe that nothing more will be required of him by God, other than faithfulness and that he would not sin wantonly against God and against man. He who honestly proves himself before God will always find himself to be so poor in the spirit that it will invariably chasten him, and show that he has nothing worthy to present before God and man but a humble and contrite heart which God in no way will despise or cast out. For it written, "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for their's is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted" (Matthew 5:3,4).

Oh what a fine promise for the sorrowful sinner, who so gladly would like to be saved and whose cheeks must often be wet with tears when he is troubled and aggrieved by his misdeeds and offenses; and how thankful he must feel when he is shown aright in the way of love. His own sins are always the most grievous for him, as he fully realizes that each one will have to give an account of himself unto God, and not for the sins of others. This is the way which the Holy Spirit teaches and guides us that God will intercede for anyone who will allow himself to be articulated by Him and that even with groanings which cannot be uttered, if the sinner is remorseful in respect to his sins and has a longing for the hope of salvation.

Whosoever wishes to walk in this way, may without any doubt, hope and trust that his work will not be in vain in the Lord. He can, as a result, be steadfast and unmoveable in this hope and not be discouraged if someone comes with a different teaching, for he will not accept the same in his heart nor will he greet them in the Lord, so as not to become partakers of their sins. In all this a God-loving soul must be humble and in awe before God and in simplicity in Christ. He must diligently and faithfully study the Holy Scripture, looking and searching therein to know what is well-pleasing before the Lord and as to the constitution of the divine nature, so that he might become evermore God-like and in order to continue to grow in the Lord.

The all-encompassing purpose must always be that we are to love with a

pure heart; not that we should love ourselves, rather we shall love God and our fellowman. God is a God of love and faithfulness, and His love is such that He demonstrates it even to those who are still His enemies. He maintains His faithfulness as He has promised and assures us that no one should be afraid to submit himself to His holy Word and to follow it (this, however, is not for the well-being of the flesh, but for the spirit, since the flesh finds this to be harsh and bitter) thinking that the effort, work, watching, praying, fighting and struggling, for the faith once accepted will be in vain. Oh no, "For the Word of the Lord," says David, "is right; and all His works are done in truth" (Psalms 33:4). "Oh blessed is that people whose God is the Lord; for He is near those who are of contrite heart and helps those that are cast down" (Psalms 34:18).

Let no one be deceived because of the grace of the Lord, believing that He will not punish the wilful sinner in the manner which He has stated and promised to punish the same. God will most certainly also honour His promises of judgment. No one should think that God is so very merciful, that He will not execute punishment against him, and, therefore, that he can wantonly sin as much as he likes. God can quickly become as angry as He is merciful, and His wrath over the godless is without end. Therefore you should not delay to convert yourself unto God. Do not tarry from one day to another, for His wrath comes suddenly and He will exercise revenge upon you and destroy you. He is full of compassion, but He also is angry; He is ready to be reconciled, but also punishes fearfully. His punishment is as great as is His mercy. He judges everyone according to their due rewards (Ecclesiasticus 5:4-9).

Now, beloved, as it has been said that we should become partakers of the Godly nature, let no one deceive himself and come upon the thought that he may take vengeance against his enemies. Oh no, beloved, no, for the discipleship which saves from eternal death follows and fashions itself only after our Redeemer Jesus Christ Who became man and walked here on this earth--and we must follow in His footsteps. It is written, "Vengeance is mine: I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thy enemy hunger, feed him: if he thirst give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head" (Romans 12:19,20).

My beloved, we should follow God in patience, love, lowliness and humility, and be so loving, patient, merciful and faithful as He has been and still continues to be toward us. We should also deal likewise with our neighbour and our fellowman. If we deal with our neighbour according to the way of love, we will also become partakers of His love. If we are patient with our fellowman, the Lord will also be patient toward us. If we are merciful, we shall also receive mercy. If we are faithful in our dealings and conduct--so that we keep our word if we have promised something--He will also be faithful to us. In short, we will be recompensed according to the measure by which we have given measure. It is written, "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me" (Matthew 25:45). We will receive compensation according to our deeds which we have done in our daily life, be they good or evil. Yes, it should be the substance of our love, mercy and faithfulness, that--through prayer and supplication--we would follow the Lord and remain steadfast in the evangelical faith which we have once accepted; for in this way we may firmly trust that our work in the Lord will not be in vain.

He who fears the Lord in this manner and loves Him and also his fellowman, may comfort himself with the words of Solomon when he says, "In the fear of the

Lord is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge" (Proverbs 14:26). In contrast, when we do not walk in the fear of the Lord and do not follow Him faithfully without wavering and readily allow ourselves to be tossed to and fro so that we do not place our trust solely in Him, then the Lord has no pleasure in us. Such a work will surely be in vain because he has gone about it half-heartedly. But this is not all! Oh no, for God is a righteous God and keeps His covenant, yes, He will carry out what He has promised. Hence no one will escape His punishment, and they will be punished according to the Word which He has spoken, which stands more firmly than heaven and earth. Each one in due time will receive his recompense and punishment.

Alas, for we are still so slothful in studying and following His Word! "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hand of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31). For the woe and misery of those who on that day will receive indignation and righteous punishment according to His Word cannot be described by any pen nor expressed by any tongue. The wrath which He will unfold on the godless has no end, and there will be neither mercy nor help. There shall be death without dying, an end without ending, no hope in need, no diminishing of pain. There shall be a calling for and seeking of death, yet it is in vain; death will flee, and you shall stay in need. You will lament and wring your hands, and yet, there will be no mercy.

Yes, beloved, as has already been said, the pain that those who neglect the time of grace will have to endure is beyond description. Oh the misery of one who suffers here on this earth when he is placed into the most excruciating pangs of death and becomes aware that there is no longer any hope of physical restoration--and when death then tarries to come so that he cannot yet die. How long must a day not appear to be for him or a night? Yet, even here there is still the hope that death will come soon, whereby he will be freed from his temporal suffering. Indeed, this is similar to the words written by a particular poet who says:

Kein unglueck ist in alle Welt  
das endlich mit der Zeit nicht faellt,  
und ganz wird aufgehoben;  
Die Ewigkeit hat nur kein Ziel,  
sie treibet fort und fort ihr Spiel,  
laeszt nimmer ab zu toben.

There is no woe in this world  
that finally will not end  
and completely be removed.  
But eternity has no definition  
it continues on for ever  
and its unrest never ceases.

Ja, wie der Heiland selber spricht:  
aus ihr kein erloesung nicht.  
O Ewigkeit du machst mir bang.  
O Ewig, Ewig, ist zu lang,  
hier gilt fuerwahr  
kein scherzen.

As the Saviour Himself has said  
there is no salvation from it.  
Oh eternity, you make me afraid,  
eternity, eternity, far too long!  
Indeed it is no  
laughing matter.

Drum wenn ich diese lange Nacht,  
zusammt der groszen Pein betracht,  
Erschreck ich recht von Herzen,  
Nichts ist zu finden weit und breit,  
so schrecklich als  
die Ewigkeit.

Through the long night, when  
wreaked with pain, I reflect thereon,  
I tremble with aching heart  
to find nothing near or far,  
so frightful and scary  
as eternity.

It appears that Sirach is right in saying, "Be mindful of the wrath which comes at the end and the wrath when you have to leave this earth" (Ecclesiasticus 15). Paul says, "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (1 Thess. 1:6-9). Such wrath also caused Moses to esteem "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward" (Hebrews 11:26).

Oh, that each one of us in this life might also acquire and attain unto this grace through our faith, deeds and works when we must leave this earth through our death. In which respect Sirach also gives us some additional excellent advice when he says, "Whatsoever you do, bear the end thereof in mind, for then you shall not do any evil" (Ecclesiasticus 7:40). All of the foregoing noteworthy and exemplary teachings of a living faith show us that he who lives his faith and does not merely profess the same with his mouth can have a firm and secure hope that his deeds in the end will not have been in vain. For he will reap without end and receive the fullness of grace upon grace.

Therefore, my beloved, if we have such a firm and secure hope which does not allow us to be put to shame if only we abide in it until the end, then we will be saved through grace. Let us be firm and unmoveable in the faith which we have once accepted. Let us also remember our teachers who taught us the Word of God and behold their end and follow their faith. Yes, I say again, "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace" (Hebrews 13).

Let us consider an example and teaching of those who were not faithful and

who turned from one side to another, from the left and also to the right, and who never came back to the secure and firm foundation. This is how the Lord described Ephraim, "Ephraim also is like a silly dove without heart: they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria" (Hosea 7:11). Indeed, they always learn more and can never again come to the knowledge of the truth. Time and again they lay the groundwork and yet they do not have a secure foundation. For this reason Paul admonishes us, "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit" (Hebrews 6:1-3). Behold, my beloved, these words do not lead us to lay anew a foundation when we want to strive for perfection. Paul speaks "of repentance from dead works" who have once been baptized upon the righteous foundation and teaching and have "made good profession before many witnesses" (1 Tim. 6:12).

On the contrary, we should much more cling to the confession and unto prayer without blemish, being blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. As it is stated in our text, "always abounding in the work of the Lord" until "we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). Thus we are to grow and increase in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and not forsake the faith and the baptism once delivered unto us, instead of attempting to lay again a new foundation and a new baptism, etc., which the apostle calls dead works for our faith is not perfected thereby. Otherwise the apostle would not have exhorted us to grow and increase in the faith, but simply to stand firm. It is written, "Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."

This is the renewal of the inner man in whom we are to increase and evermore be cleansed and sanctified. We cannot do this without the help of God and without His drawing our minds unto Himself. "No man can come unto me," says Christ, "except the Father which hath sent me draw him" (John 6:44). For which reason we must sincerely entreat Him with respect to the outwardly forms of our Godly service which we are obligated to practice and to bring the same to perfection, which a natural man who is dead in faith can also exercise in a submissive manner but only in outwardly form and pretence. Hence the apostle calls such a service dead works and says that we are not to lay the foundation again with this, for the outwardly forms are as nothing before God if the person does not first cleanse and purify himself inwardly. Our beloved Saviour says that the kingdom of God does not come with outwardly forms. Nor will anyone say, "Look here or look there, for the kingdom of God is within you."

Therefore the apostle also says, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobate?" (2 Cor. 13:5). Let us frequently examine and prove ourselves to see whether we are in the faith and live accordingly, so as to be worthy, and so that Christ through His Spirit would live in us and has established a presence within us, which will manifest itself in genuine humility and love, yes, in all manner of love towards our fellowman, whether friend or foe. This is the divine nature and piety; we must also accept the same, the way He is. He prayed

for His enemies who inflicted great agony and shame upon Him and Who said, ". . . learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

And this, my beloved, is the only thing on earth which we should desire and search for. This is best sought for by one who has already come into many temptations and who has tasted the fear of hell and who treasures the sweet rest for the soul. Indeed, by comparison, there is nothing else worth having in heaven and in earth. David once experienced this in his fear so that he became anxious for comfort and cried out, "Lord, if only I have but thee, I will ask for nothing more in heaven and on earth, and if my very flesh and heart should fail, for God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever" (Psalms 73:25,26). And in this wise he also found his joy as he says further, "Therefore I cling unto God and put my confidence in the Lord."

Now I wish to close with the words of the poet;

O Seele willst du Ruhe finden,  
so suche sie nicht in der Welt,  
In dingen die wie Rauch verschwinden  
Als Ehre, Wollust, Gut und Geld.  
Denn dieses sind zu schlechte Sachen  
das sie dich koennten ruhig machen.

Oh soul, do you want to find rest?  
seek it not in the world  
in things which vanish like smoke  
honour, pleasure, wealth and gold.  
For these are not good enough  
that they should give you rest.

Ach, eile nich den Schatten zu  
Du kriegst fuer Lust nur Last beschwerden,  
du muszt recht los gerissen werden  
sonst kommst du nimmer mehr zur Ruh,  
Du muszt dir garnichts vorbehalten,  
es heiszt, rein ab und Christi an.

O do not follow after shadows,  
lust will give you only burdens  
you must be rightly freed.  
Otherwise you never come to rest  
you must not hold back, rather  
forsake all and follow Christ.

Kann ein verborgner Bann noch walten,  
wird was man weisz nich abgethan,  
was man noch hegt ist lauter Schmerz,  
es kann bei halb und falschen wesen,  
die Seele unmoeglich recht genesen,

der Herr will unser ganzes Herz.

Should there be any reservation ,  
you will be turned aside  
and if you hide anything,  
only unrest, you will receive, and  
what you retain is but the pain,  
for lack of full submission,  
the soul cannot enjoy its rest,  
for the Lord desires our all and best.

Unlauterer Sinn macht nur beschwerden  
nur dies musz unsere Sorge sein,  
das unsere Seel errettet werde,  
denn laeszt man noch was andres ein.  
So ist das Aug  
ein Schalk zu heiszen.

An unclean heart only  
yields frustration,  
our foremost concern should always be  
that which saves our souls,  
and if we cling to something else,  
our eyes are called deceitful.

It is necessary that we must tear ourselves free from the flesh if we wish to enter into the kingdom of heaven. We must earnestly pursue this, for the struggle will bring with it peace--yes, peace and salvation together. We do not seek for rest and satisfaction through a strict practice of the works of the Law. God today does not want works, and even if He did, we would not know which He would find pleasing. Instead, we must constantly seek only for renewal and strive for that which lies ahead. Even the best of our works are defective and, therefore, we cannot depend upon them, nor find power and peace therein, when God's decree and dispensation fills us with fear.

Oh, that the Lord might make us worthy for this and strengthen us for his eternal Kingdom. AMEN!

## Translator's Comment

The author of the sermon, Abraham L. Friesen, changes grammatical tense frequently. For the greater part I have copied the Bible references out of the Bible and used quotation marks. The poems are merely translated without rhythm or rhyme. The sermon is fundamental, didactic and very well-meaning. It has a message for us today.

*Ben Hoepfner*

## Editor's Comment

The Sermon on 1 Corinthians 15:58, written by Aeltester Abraham L. Friesen in December, 1882 is from the document collection of Margaret and Peter A. Plett, Landmark, Manitoba. Mrs. Plett, nee Margaret F. Reimer, received the original copy of this sermon from her parents, Klaas P. and Anna Reimer, Blumenort, Manitoba. Mrs. Reimer, nee Anna K. Friesen, received the same from her father, Cornelius P. Friesen (1844-1899), the village school teacher, who had made a copy on May 20, 1882. The sermon was appended to the "Sermon on Ephesians 16:10-17" (see Part Twelve, Chapter Two), which was presented to the Manitoba Kleine Gemeinde earlier in February of 1882. The two sermons were presumably companion works to be read and studied together, representing as they did, the major pronouncements of the senior Aeltester of the Kleine Gemeinde at the time. Cornelius P. Friesen was a first cousin to Jakob W. Friesen, Jansen, Nebraska, and formerly Blumstein, Molotschna, the father of Abraham L. Friesen. Peter A. Plett (1898-1990) typed the sermon out in German in 1982. Primary translation of the same was completed by Rev. Ben Hoepfner, 411-20 Valhalla Drive, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R0A 0Y1, in 1992.

# PART FOURTEEN

## GERHARD P. GOOSSEN 1836-1872

### Chapter One

### Biography

A Biography of Rev. Gerhard P. Goossen (1836-1872), Lindenau, Molotschna Colony, South Russia. By Delbert F. Plett, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1992.

---

#### Section One. Gerhard Goossen (1811-1854) and Family.

1 Gerhard Goossen (1811-1854) was the forefather of the Kleine Gemeinde (KG) Goossens and the father of Rev. Gerhard P. Goossen (1836-1872). Unfortunately no information has come to light to date regarding the parents of Gerhard Goossen Sr. One source indicates that Gerhard Goossen was born in Russia.<sup>1</sup> This means that he may be the child of one of the three Goossen families listed in the 1803-4 immigration records.<sup>2</sup> Six Goossen families are listed in the Revisions-Listen of 1808. An Isaac Goossen family is listed on Wirtschaft 14 in Blumstein in 1808, which may be of significance since Gerhard Goossen's oldest son was born in that village. However, the Isaac Goossen family as listed in the 1835 census does not include a son Gerhard.

Another Goossen family--that of Franz--lived in Ladekopp and their son Johann Goossen married into the family of Hermann Neufeld, Muensterberg.<sup>3</sup> Three more Goossen families are listed in Schoensee and a Gerhard Goossen in Blumenort.<sup>4</sup> The research of Henry Schapansky indicates that Franz Goossen in Ladekopp was the son of Jakob Goossen (1713-1785) listed in Stobbendorf, Prussia, in the 1776 Konsignation. Jakob Goossen was also the father of Johann Goossen listed in Tiegenhagen, Prussia, in 1776, whose sons immigrated to Russia and settled in the Molotschna Colony--Johann, Jakob and Heinrich, in Schoensee, and Gerhard in Blumenort.<sup>5</sup> According to the 1835 census, Gerhard had a son Gerhard born in 1811, but a further notation shows that the son moved to Landskrone in 1846 which does not fit the known facts about Gerhard Goossen (1811-1854). Unfortunately there is insufficient information at this point to reach a conclusion as to which one of these is the correct family.<sup>6</sup>

Gerhard Goossen (1811-1854) was married to Wilhelmina Plett (1815-1864), the daughter of Esther Smit and Johann Plett (1765-1833) from Fuerstenwerder, Prussia. The Plett family had immigrated to Russia in 1828 where they settled in the village of Blumstein. Minna Plett was the aunt of Johann Harder (1811-1875), the Aeltester of the Ohrloff Gemeinde. She had one brother, Cornelius S. Plett.<sup>7</sup>

and three sisters whose families were all staunch supporters of the KG.<sup>8</sup>

Gerhard Goossen was a school teacher all his life.<sup>9</sup> He must have taught for some time in the village of Blumstein since his oldest son, Gerhard, was born there in 1836. Quite possibly, he met his wife in Blumstein, and settled there to live near her family. It appears that he was the teacher for the village of Muntau at the time of the "Gemeinde Berichte" in 1848 since a Gerhard Goossen composed and signed the report as the school teacher.<sup>10</sup> The Muntau report is one of the most extensive and complete of all the villages. Goossen also taught in the village of Schoenau, Molotschna Colony, for a number of years around 1851 where the oldest five Johann W. Isaac children had him as a teacher.<sup>11</sup> Gerhard Goossen died in 1854 in Russia.

His widow remarried to Heinrich Enns (1801-1881) of Fischau who was a minister of the KG and became Aeltester in 1866. For a listing of their descendants, see Delbert F. Plett, "Heinrich Enns 1801-1881 Biography," in Part Six, Chapter One. The remainder of this section will provide a brief biography of the brothers and sisters of Gerhard P. Goossen.

2 Son Peter P. Goossen married Justina Dueck from Lindenau.<sup>12</sup> They lived in Lindenau where he and his wife both died in 1922. They eventually became members of the Mennonite Brethren Church. Like his brother Gerhard, Peter P. Goossen was an articulate man who carried on letter correspondence. A letter written to him by cousin Peter P. Toews dated April 3, 1873, is still extant.<sup>13</sup> The Goossens had a Wirtschaft in Lindenau where they lived and farmed for over 50 years. By 1915 they had given it over to their children. Some of their children lived in the Crimea.<sup>14</sup> Mrs. Goossen spent the last years of her life in total blindness.<sup>15</sup> Son Cornelius P. Goossen married Katharina Friesen the daughter of Klaas F. Friesen of Paulsheim.<sup>16</sup> The family lived in Friedrichsthal, Molotschna, from where Goossen wrote a letter to Peter P. Toews on December 2, 1867.<sup>17</sup> The family later moved to the village of Annafeld, Borosenko, where he is listed on a fire insurance record for the year 1874.<sup>18</sup> Goossen married for the second time to Katharina Barkman (1851-1912) whose father Rev. Jakob Barkman, settled in Steinbach, Manitoba, in 1874, and who drowned in the Red River, near Winnipeg, Manitoba, the following year. The Cornelius P. Goossen family settled on Wirtschaft 15 in Steinbach, Manitoba, in 1874.<sup>19</sup> He sold half his farm in 1882 or 1883 and continued farming on a smaller scale but made a good living in spite of it. After 17 years he sold the remaining half of his land to Heinrich Sobering.<sup>20</sup> Son Johann P. Goossen married his first cousin, Susanna P. Toews. They lived in Blumenhoff, Borosenko. Goossen was a respected member of the KG and was a candidate in the ministerial elections of 1868 and 1872. Goossen also served on the building committee as a representative of the Blumenhoff Gemeinde when the group's new worship house was constructed in 1872.<sup>21</sup> Unfortunately a dispute arose regarding a boundary.<sup>22</sup> As the Aeltester having jurisdiction, Peter P. Toews, was called in to mediate the dispute. Eventually Goossen was put out of the Gemeinde because of insufficient acknowledgement. Although he later conceded and was accepted back into the church, Goossen left the KG at the time of the emigration in 1875, and settled in Gnadenau, Kansas.<sup>23</sup> The matter left a lasting estrangement between Peter P. Toews and his sister Susanna.<sup>24</sup> Johann P. Goossen and his wife, Susanna, lived in Gnadenau until the end of their days.<sup>25</sup> They are buried in the Ebenfeld cemetery, near Hillsboro, Kansas.<sup>26</sup> Daughter

**Maria P. Goossen** married **Johann L. Warkentin**, the son of **Johann Warkentin**, **Blumstein**, **Molotschna**, a successful **Vollwirt**. The **Johann L. Warkentin** family settled in **Blumenhof**, **Manitoba**, in 1875, where they farmed in a big way.<sup>27</sup>

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
1	<b>Gerhard Goossen</b>	Sep 23,1811	Jul 9,1835	1854
m	<b>Minna Plett</b>	Apr 13,1815		Jun 25,1864
2	<b>Gerhard P. Goossen</b>	Jun 11,1836	Jul 2,1857	Sep 1,1872
m	<b>Anna Klaassen</b>	Feb 10,1839		
2	<b>Peter P. Goossen</b>	Jan 23,1838		1922
m	<b>Justina Dueck</b>			1922
2	<b>Corn P. Goossen</b>	Nov 30,1839	Dec 12,1863	Jan 8,1916
m	<b>Katharina Friesen</b>	Sep 22,1844		Dec 9,1870
2m	<b>Katharina Barkman</b>	Aug 8,1851	Feb 7,1871	Dec 5,1912
2	<b>Johann P. Goossen</b>	Jan 5,1842	Jun 25,1861	Dec 14,1904
m	<b>Susanna Toews</b>	Jan 10,1844		Oct 14,1912
2	<b>Maria P. Goossen</b>	Feb 27,1848	Feb 19,1867	Mar 18,1888
m	<b>Johann L. Warkentin</b>	Feb 13,1845		Oct 19,1908

#### Section Two. **Gerhard P. Goossen (1836-1872), Biography.**

2 Son **Gerhard P. Goossen** married **Anna Klassen**, the daughter of **Franz** and **Anna Klassen** of **Neukirch**, **Molotschna**. **Anna Klassen** "had five sisters and one brother named **Peter**. He was forced to serve as a wagoner during the **Crimean War** in **Russia** in 1855. He was quite ill when he returned and shortly passed away. Grandfather **Franz Klassen** had also died and both of them were buried the same day. Mother's sisters were **Aunt Schellenberg**, **Aunt Ens**, **Aunt Epp**, **Aunt Fedehrau**, and **Aunt Baergen**.<sup>128</sup>

**Gerhard P. Goossen** served as a school teacher in the **Molotschna** for 17 years.<sup>29</sup> Accordingly, it would seem that he started teaching in about 1853 when he was still in his late teens.<sup>30</sup> **Goossen** was a dearly loved teacher. He was teaching in the village of **Fischau** in 1864 when he was released from his position by the village assembly under circumstances which indicate that some sort of power play had taken place.<sup>31</sup> Since many of the **KG** fellowship in **Fischau** had moved to **Markuslandt** the previous year it is possible that opponents of the conservative pedagogical views held by the **KG** were able to gain the reins of power and remove a teacher who--in their view--stood in the way of progress. **Gerhard P. Goossen** was also a poet and wrote the following poem to express his love and affection for his students who were understandably shocked by what had happened. The poem is entitled, "**Am Schlusz der Schulprufung am 22sten Februar, 1864**" or "**A poem for the close of school examinations, February 22, 1864.**"

1. So musst ich denn bald von euch scheiden  
Von euch ihr lieben Kinder mein  
Und diese Staette gaenzlich meiden  
Und nicht mehr eurer Lehrer sein.

Soon I must from you depart  
from you, dear children 'mine  
and leave this place for all time

and no longer your teacher be.

2. Ich, der ich euch so 'treu geliebet  
Mancher Fehltritt euch verziehn.  
Wer ja so schwer, so sehr betruebet  
Weil ich nun muss bald von euch ziehn.

I who have loved you so dearly  
and many mistakes forgiven,  
it is so difficult and sad  
that soon now, I must be gone.

3. Ja, Kinder, ja es thut mir schmerzen  
Ich weiss ich hab es gut gemeint,  
Ich liebt euch alle recht von Herzen  
Hab oft geseufzet und geweint.

Yes, children, yes, it gives me pain.  
I know my intentions have been good  
I loved you all the more sincerely  
and often sighed and wept for you.

4. Dasz Lieb zu mir und zu euch Kindern  
Doch moecht allein ins Mittel geh'n  
Denn Lieb allein hat's koennen finden  
Dass diese Trennung nicht geschehn.

For love to you children, and to me  
the only means could be  
love alone could have avoided  
that this separation would not be.

5. Nun Gott sie aber zugelassen  
Er, der so gute treue Hirte,  
Woll ich auch Trost und Hoffnung fassen,  
So schwer mir auch der Abschied wird

Since God has allowed this to be  
He, the good Shepherd and true  
my hope to Him I bring in prayer  
How'ver difficult the parting may be.

6. Er kann's mit uns nicht boese meinen  
Nein, Kinder, nie, er meint es gut  
Auch wenn er uns schlaegt, dass wir weinen  
Ist's seine Liebe, die es thut.

He does not intend bad for us

My children, no, He means it well  
Ev'n when He punishes us in pain  
'tis out of love He does so.

7. Nun noch zuletzt ihr meine Lieben  
Will ich auch bitten zum beschlusz.  
Folgt doch nie eures Fleisches Triebe,  
Ja, fliehet Aug und Fleischeslust.

Now, in conclusion, my beloved,  
I want to ask you in closing,  
follow not the evil longings  
Yes, flee the lust of the eye and flesh.

8. Vielmehr befolget Treu der Lehren  
Die ich euch gab als Lehrer hier  
Betet, wacht, und lass't euch nicht verfuehren  
Flieht Suend und Laster fuer und fuer.

Truly follow in the teachings  
which I as teacher have given here.  
Watch and pray, be not deceived  
At all times sin and enslavement flee.

9. Noch bitt' ich, folgt dem neuen Lehrer  
Ja, allem guten treulich nach  
Und er als treuer Hirt und Fuehrer  
Geh euch voran und ihr hernach.

I bid you, heed your new teacher  
in everything that's good and right  
as he, the shepherd and true leader  
leads the way for you to follow.

10. Und werdet ihr, so treu vereint  
Auf Gottes Wegen treulich geh'n,  
So Werd't ihr, wenn der Herr erscheint,  
Zu seiner Rechten dort auch stehn.

And if you truly are united  
and go the ways of God always  
Then, when the Lord appears, you will  
be standing at His right hand as well.

By school teacher *Gerhard Goossen*, February 22, 1864<sup>32</sup>

Gerhard P. Goossen then taught in Liebenau from where he wrote two letters to his cousin and co-minister Peter P. Toews in 1866. On October 10, 1866,

Goossen was elected as a minister of the KG at an all-district brotherhood meeting held in Fischau. The meeting had been called for the purpose of electing an Aeltester and two ministers. The results were that Peter P. Toews was elected with 49 votes and Gerhard Goossen with 33.<sup>33</sup> Heinrich Enns, Goossen's step-father, was elected as Aeltester at the same meeting. Jakob I. Bartel (1891-1982) formerly of Kleefeld, Manitoba, recalled an interesting story about the election as minister of Gerhard Goossen which had been related to him by his father-in-law, Abraham P. Isaac. Apparently Isaac had been walking along the road one day when neighbour and cousin Abram Isaac (1795-1864) of Schoenau pulled up beside him in his carriage and stopped to chat. The elder Isaac was a minister in the Ohrloff Gemeinde but had an interest in what was going on the KG. He related to the younger Isaac that Gerhard Goossen was an intelligent and gifted person and that he had heard there was a chance that Goossen would be elected as a minister. He inquired whether the younger Isaac had heard anything about this. The response was that he had heard the proposal discussed but that he had heard nothing definite yet.<sup>34</sup>

By 1867 the Goossen family was living in Lindenau from where he wrote a number of letters to Toews during the next year. It appears that Goossen was also farming on the side since his cousin Abraham P. Isaac writes that ". . . he found employment on a farm after the harvest with his uncle Cornelius Plett, Kleefeld, until November 11. When this was ended I engaged myself for employment for one year with my cousin Gerhard P. Goossen, Lindenau, also for farm work".<sup>35</sup> Heinrich Enns was coming under censure at this time for his conduct as Aeltester and a rift developed between him and his step-son, Gerhard P. Goossen--who had been functioning as his right-hand minister in the Molotschna. Fortunately this estrangement was eventually healed. In November of 1868, the Goossen family moved to Gruenfeld near the Borosenko settlement northwest of Nikopol on the Dneiper River.<sup>36</sup>

In September of 1869 Goossen wrote a lengthy epistle to Aeltester Jakob A. Wiebe, Annenfeld, Crimea, regarding the question of baptism which was causing a schism in the KG congregation there. In this letter Goossen pleaded passionately that Wiebe should not proceed with his terrible mistake and that even if he had to consider their baptism for naught, he should at least still consider his former brethren as fellow Christians. His ministerial position entailed frequent travelling to the various KG congregations in the Crimea, Markuslandt, and Borosenko. Peter P. Toews has recorded that on January 4, 1868, Goossen and his step-father and Bishop, Heinrich Enns, from the Molotschna, together with a number of brethren from the Crimea, came to Borosenko where Goossen preached a sermon in Blumenhoff on January 6 in preparation for a controversial ministerial election.<sup>37</sup> Goossen worked tirelessly in the service of the Gospel and was happy to preach wherever he was invited. A letter of January 10, 1869, reveals that he made a number of trips to preach on the Fuerstenlandt Colony. The letters of Gerhard P. Goossen are published in Part Thirteen, Chapter Two.

Goossen was a dedicated and open man who was sincerely concerned about the material and spiritual well-being of his brethren in the KG and elsewhere. In a letter to his cousin and fellow minister Peter P. Toews, dated February 12, 1869, he writes as follows:

When I bend my knees before our heavenly Father in my solitude, it occurs to me that perhaps a beloved brother and travel companion on the way to our heavenly abode is also praying at the very hour; perhaps brother Wiebe in the Crimea or you there are also pouring out your hearts before God at the very moment. And then I rejoice over the comforting words of our beloved Saviour that where two or three are gathered to pray, their prayers shall be granted. For even though we are physically so far distant from each other, we are--nonetheless--one in the spirit and intimately bonded together inwardly. Oh, how I do sometimes rejoice over all our faithful brethren, who are so truly beginning to find a true love for our Lord Jesus, and within whom the love for the world and all its pleasures is more and more diminishing and the love for Jesus and of the brethren is continually growing stronger. May the Lord preserve them in His love.

Goossen's wife, Anna, was frequently ill, a fact which weighed heavily upon his heart.<sup>38</sup> In a letter of December 4, 1868, cousin and fellow-minister, Peter P. Toews, writes as follows:

. . . for even though the beloved brother Goossen has already been here [in Gruenfeld, Borosenko] for over six weeks, he has still not had time to drive to Friedensfeld together with me, because his wife has frequently been sick to her death--although her condition varies.<sup>39</sup>

Although Goossen does not dwell on this in his own letters, the situation is referred to in other contemporary correspondence.<sup>40</sup>

Goossen also assisted others as a mentor in his chosen profession of teaching. His cousin, Abraham P. Isaac, writes that in 1869 ". . . the newly established village of Gruenfeld approached me through the recommendation of my former employer, Gerhard Goossen, with the sudden proposition to teach the children of the village." Isaac goes on to describe how discouraged he was but that with the assistance of Goossen--who had taught in the Molotschna Colony for 17 years--he managed the task.<sup>41</sup>

Gerhard P. Goossen only became a full-time farmer during the last years of his life, presumably after the move to the village of Gruenfeld, near Borosenko. Tragically, this gifted and talented teacher and servant of the Gospel passed away in 1872 after he had built a new house for his family during the same year. He died at the young age of thirty-six years, two months and nineteen days. His son-in-law, Johann K. Esau describes his death as follows:

He had been quite ill and often delirious, but there were times when he rallied; in these moments he would declare his joy of having "worked" his salvation in days when he was still well, for he should be unable to do so now. Let us take note of this, for this is important.<sup>42</sup>

Occasionally it happens that a particular individual touches the lives of those around him in a special way. Gerhard P. Goossen was such a person. Through his teaching, his ministry, and by his genuine interest and love for people—and no doubt also because of his tragically early death—he captured the hearts of his fellow human beings. The love and esteem in which he was held is shown by the following testimonials which are found in the *Schriftum* of the KG. Cousin Peter P. Isaac writes ". . . I can give him the testimony that he lived a God-fearing life."<sup>43</sup> Peter I. Fast (1831-1916), Jansen, Nebraska, writes that he ". . . was my boyhood companion, and a right smart lad. He had, however, become converted, and went over to the Kleine Gemeinde. He was a school teacher and since he had very manifest talents, he was elected as a minister, that is to say, in the Toews Gemeinde."<sup>44</sup> Cousin Peter P. Toews writes that "On a Friday, September 1, 1872, the beloved fellow servant Gerhard Goossen died in Gruenfeld. He died after a very severe three week sickness at the age of 36 years."<sup>45</sup> Toews also writes that he and his fellow minister Gerhard P. Goossen ". . . had already often given testimony during public teaching, and especially, that one had to have the witness of being a child of God."<sup>46</sup>

Mrs. Gerhard P. Goossen, nee Anna Klassen, was not left a wealthy widow, nor was she very well physically. Her husband's death was very hard on her so that she was unable to take care of her family. As a result other people took care of her children; daughter Katharina was in the care of the Gerhard K. Schellenberg family; daughter Maria was in the care of the Isaac L. Warkentin family, and son Franz K. Goossen was with the Johann P. Isaac family.<sup>47</sup> In 1874 Anna Klassen Goossen immigrated to Manitoba with the rest of the KG and settled in the village of Gruenfeld. On December 7, 1874, Anna wrote a lengthy letter to Aeltester Peter P. Toews, who was still living in Blumenhoff, Russia, at this time. In this letter she expresses her love for her Saviour and her loneliness and concern for her children who could not live with her.<sup>48</sup>

Her loneliness was alleviated in 1876 when she married for the second time to Johann Hiebert (1816-1890) of Alexanderwohl, Molotschna, and later of Gruenfeld, Manitoba. She had three more children with him.<sup>49</sup> After his death in 1890 she married for the third time to Johann L. Warkentin, a wealthy farmer from Blumenhof, Manitoba, who had been married for the first time to her sister-in-law, Maria P. Goossen (1848-1888). By 1896, Johann L. Warkentin had moved to Kansas, where they lived in Hillsboro, Kansas. She died in 1927 and is buried in the Alexanderfeld cemetery southwest of Hillsboro.<sup>50</sup> The Johann L. Warkentin family belonged to the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite.

### Section Three. Gerhard P. Goossen (1836-1872) descendants.

The balance of this chapter will consist of brief biographies of the children of Anna Klassen and Gerhard P. Goossen and a listing of their spouses.

3 Daughter Anna Goossen was married to Peter K. Hiebert the son of Johann Hiebert (1816-1890) of Alexanderwohl, Molotschna.<sup>51</sup> The family lived in the village of Blumenhoff, South Russia, from where they immigrated to Manitoba in 1875, settling in the village of Rosenhoff.<sup>52</sup> Sometime later they moved to Kansas, where they farmed in the Hillsboro area. Son Franz K. Goossen married Maria Dueck the daughter of Johann L. Dueck, KG deacon, from Alexanderkron, Molotschna.<sup>53</sup> The Franz K. Goossen family lived in Hochstadt and around 1900

they moved to Canada, Kansas, where they lived for about a year. From here they moved to Clearspring, Manitoba, where they lived until 1916 when they moved to Littlefield near Lubbock, Texas, where they lived for one year after which they returned to Canada because of the war conditions. They settled in Steinbach, Manitoba, where they lived for the rest of their days. They were the parents of John D. Goossen, well-known Notary Public and conveyancer in Steinbach, and long-time Secretary-Treasurer of the Rural Municipality of Hanover.<sup>54</sup> Son **Gerhard K. Goossen** was a teenager living in Gruenfeld (Kleefeld) at the time of the Holdeman movement in 1882. His conversion is described in the book *History of the Congregations*:

In the year 1881, brothers John Holdeman and Markus Seiler arrived in Manitoba and conducted meetings in the villages surrounding Steinbach. Gerhard Goossen, being a boy of sixteen at that time, lived in Kleefeld, Manitoba. He was already baptized by Bishop Peter Toews in the Kleine Gemeinde church. Bishop Toews instructed him on the new birth and how it could be obtained and later he testified that he never doubted his experience of conversion. But in time he became discouraged and careless, but while attending meetings conducted by Holdeman, he renewed his vows and was baptised by brother Holdeman. Shortly after, Gerhard Goossen took up a homestead at Rosenort . . .<sup>55</sup>

While in Rosenort, Gerhard Goossen married Anna Froese. She was the daughter of Anna Braun and Franz Froese also of Rosenort, Manitoba.<sup>56</sup> The couple settled down in Rosenort where they made their home. Daughter **Katharina K. Goossen** married Heinrich R. Loewen the son of David Loewen (1836-1915) of Lindenau, Molotschna, and later of Hochstadt, Manitoba. The Heinrich R. Loewen family lived in Fairbanks, Texas, where they both died. They belonged to the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite. Daughter **Maria K. Goossen** married Johann K. Esau the son of Anna Klassen and Heinrich Esau of Nikolaithal, Borosenko, South Russia, and later of Heuboden, near Gruenfeld, Manitoba. In 1907 the family moved from Manitoba to Kansas, and in 1915, from Kansas to Texas.<sup>57</sup> Son **Peter K. Goossen** worked for his older brother Gerhard and eventually fell in love with his wife's sister, Maria. Eventually he bought 80 acres of his own in Rosenort, Manitoba, and farmed.<sup>58</sup> He married for the second time to Maria Penner of Littlefield, Texas.

Gen	Name	Birth	Marriage	Death
2	<b>Gerhard Goossen</b>	Jun 11, 1836	Jul 2, 1857	Sep 1, 1872
m	Anna Klassen	Feb 10, 1839		Feb 16, 1927
3	Anna K. Goossen	Apr 26, 1858	Nov 4, 1877	Nov 20, 1910
m	Peter Hiebert	Sep 19, 1846		Oct 27, 1917
3	<b>Gerhard K. Goossen</b>	Sep 3, 1859		Jun 29, 1937
m	Anna Braun Froese	Jun 21, 1863		Mar 17, 1943
3	Franz K. Goossen	Oct 26, 1862		Apr 28, 1929
m	Maria Dueck	May 20, 1863	Nov 4, 1883	Jan 19, 1940
3	Kath K. Goossen	Oct 28, 1864	Jun 24, 1883	Mar 17, 1943
m	Heinrich R. Loewen	Apr 16, 1859		May 13, 1946

3	Peter Goossen			
3	Maria K. Goossen	Sep 22, 1868	Dec 16, 1893	May 19, 1954
m	Johann K. Esau	Sep 28, 1867		Dec 25, 1946
3	Peter K. Goossen	Aug 23, 1870	Aug 7, 1892	Aug 17, 1944
m	Maria Froese	Oct 2, 1872		Dec 21, 1908
2m	Maria Penner	Jan 24, 1885	Nov 9, 1919	Jan 11, 1977
3	Cornelius Goossen	stillborn		

### Endnotes. Gerhard P. Goossen Biography.

1. Johann K. Esau, "The Esau Family Tree (1740-1933)," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874* (Steinbach, Man., 1987), 200.

2. Benjamin H. Unruh, *Die Niederländisch-neiderdeutschen Hintergründe der Mennonitischen Ostwanderungen im 16., 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Karlsruhe, 1955), 373.

3. Plett, "Peter Neufeld 1697-1769," unpublished paper, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1992, revised May, 1993, 31 pages. Johann Goossen was the father of Heinrich Goossen (1814-1893) who was a charter member of the Mountain Lake Mennonite Gemeinde when it was organized in 1878, and apparently also served as an Aeltester; see Brunno Penner, ed., *First Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake, Minnesota, 1878-1978: A Century of God's Grace Centennial Observance October 8, 1978* (Mountain Lake, 1978), 95 pages.

4. Unruh, 315, 319, 320 and 327.

5. Henry Schapansky, letter to the author August 18, 1993.

6. Information from the 1835 Molotschna census is courtesy of Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba, August 14, 1993.

7. Plett, *Plett Picture Book* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1981), 161 pages, has considerable historical information regarding this family.

8. For an extensive history of the family of Johann Plett, and the various interconnections of this family in the Kleine Gemeinde and with Johann Harder (1811-1875) Aeltester of the Ohrloff Gemeinde, see Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims* (Steinbach, Man., 1990), 214-220.

9. Johann K. Esau, "The Esau Family Tree (1740-1933)," 200. Johann K. Esau was the son-in-law of Gerhard P. Goossen (1836-1872).

10. Woltner, *Die Gemeinde Berichten von 1848 die Deutsche Seidlungen am Schwarzen Meer* (Leipzig, 1941), 94-96.

11. Peter P. Isaac "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," 217, reports that, "... he was only 5 years old when his parents moved to Schoenau in February of 1851, so that he could not personally remember his uncle Gerhard Goossen; even through they had lived close to the school house. ..." Isaac also writes that his oldest 5 siblings had attended school with Goossen as their teacher.

12. John R. Goossen, et. al., eds., *Gerhard Goossen Family Book Born 1811 Died 1854* (Rosenort, Manitoba, 1981), 8.

13. Peter P. Toews, Letter Collection 1870-1877, pages 113-116, as photocopied by the author--courtesy Mennonite Library and Archives, North Newton, Kansas, 67117, 1981.

14. Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," 217.

15. Johann K. Esau, "The Esau Family Tree (1740-1933)," 201.

16. Helena Jahnke, "Lineage of my grandparents, Klaas Friesens, born in West Prussia," Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 209-212, provides the history of Klaas Friesen, Paulsheim, and his siblings.

17. Peter P. Toews, Letter Collection--courtesy of Milton and Margaret Toews, Neilberg, Saskatchewan, 1981.

18. Abraham L. Dueck, "Records"--courtesy of Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba--as published in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph* (Steinbach, Man., 1986), 194.

19. John R. Goossen, eds., 8.

20. Gerhard G. Kornelsen, "Steinbach, then and now," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*,

21. Peter P. Toews, "1872-1878 Diary," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 155.
22. *Ibid.*, 164.
23. Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 325.
24. A considerable correspondence dealing with this whole matter and the impact it had on their mother, Maria Plett (1811-1895)--who also moved to Kansas to be with her two youngest daughters, is contained in the Peter Toews Document Collection.
25. Johann K. Esau, "The Esau Family Tree (1740-1933)," 202.
26. John R. Goossen, eds., 8.
27. Royden K. Loewen, *Blumenort: A Mennonite Community in Transition* (Blumenort, Manitoba, 1983), 320.
28. Johann K. Esau, "The Esau Family Tree (1740-1933)," 201.
29. Plett, *The Golden Years* (Steinbach, Man., 1985), 132, provides considerable detail regarding the numerous KG school teachers and their relationship to the Molotschna educational system.
30. This is based on the information that he retired from teaching at the time of his move to Gruenfeld, Borosenko, in the fall of 1868 or shortly thereafter.
31. Mrs. Martin Barkman, nee Anna Doerksen, writes that Gerhard P. Goossen was a teacher in Fischau in 1864 when he was released by the village assembly. Anna Barkman, "Memoirs," unpublished journal--courtesy of Sidney F. Barkman, Blumenort, Manitoba, 1991.
32. This poem was found in the document collection of Cornelius P. Janzen, courtesy of Mennonite Heritage Village Museum, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1985. Transcription for computer and primary translation completed in November of 1992 by Rev. Ben Hoepfner, 411-20 Valhalla Dr., Winnipeg, Manitoba, R2G OY1. This poem was also included in a journal of fellow teacher Peter L. Dueck (1842-1887), Gruenfeld, Manitoba, unpublished ledger, 80 pages, courtesy of A. D. Penner, Steinbach, Manitoba, June 30, 1993.
33. Peter P. Toews, "Anhang number one," in Plett, ed., *History and Events* (Steinbach, Man., 1982), 40.
34. As related to the author in 1981. What is interesting is that this story made little sense to me at the time. It was only later--through further research--when I realized that Abraham Isaac (1795-1864) had been a minister of the Ohrloff Gemeinde and a cousin of Abram P. Isaac's father, that the story made sense to me. The incident also illustrates that the KG was much more integrated into Molotschna society, and especially relative to the Ohrloff Gemeinde, than people have realized.
35. Abraham P. Isaac, "Reminiscences of the past," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 171.
36. Peter P. Toews, "Anhang number one," 42.
37. *Ibid.*, 41.
38. Gerhard P. Goossen, letter to Peter P. Toews September 17, 1868, published in Part Thirteen, Chapter Two, as letter sixteen.
39. Peter P. Toews, Ein Brief an Baerg und Wiebe in der Krim, Blumenhof, December 4, 1868, in Peter P. Toews, Document Collection--courtesy of Mennonite Library and Archives, North Newton, Kansas, 1982. This letter was contained in a letter book entitled "Thirty most important letters 1866-1870," pages 8-9, as transcribed by Peter A. Plett (1898-1990), Landmark, Manitoba, 1992; cf. Abraham Klassen, letter to Peter P. Toews March 11, 1871, in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 268-269.
40. Peter P. Toews, Ein Brief an die Goosche in Gruenfeld waehrend sie krank war, in Peter P. Toews, Document Collection. The letter is undated but presumably written in 1870 as it the last letter in the collection entitled, "Thirty most important letters 1866-1870."
41. Abraham P. Isaac, "Reminiscences of the past," 171.
42. Johann K. Esau, "The Esau Family Tree (1740-1933)," 201.
43. Peter P. Isaac, "Stammbuch Meiner Voreltern," 217.
44. Peter I. Fast, quoted in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 223, footnote 48. Peter I. Fast, was the father of Martin B. Fast, author and long-time editor of the *Mennonitische Rundschau*.
45. Peter P. Toews, "Anhang number one," 65.
46. Peter P. Toews, "Appendix number two," Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 559.

47. Peter P. Toews, "Genealogy register," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 25, family 50.
48. Anna Klassen Goossen, letter to Peter P. Toews, December 7, 1874, in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 45-46.
49. Albert H. Hiebert and John H. Toews, compilers, *The Family of Johann Hiebert 1816-1875* (Hillsboro, Kansas, 1975), 113-120, have a listing of their descendants.
50. *Ibid.*, 7.
51. *Ibid.*, 57-71.
52. Lenore Eidse, ed., *Furrows in the Valley The Rural Municipality of Morris 1880-1980* (Morris, Man., 1980), 327.
53. John R. Goossen, eds., 187 pages. Franz K. Goossen was the father of long-time Steinbach Notary Public, John D. Goossen. Goossen, in turn, was the father of Steinbach lawyer Ernest R. Goossen who was this writer's partner in the practice of law for 10 years.
54. Telephone call with grandson, Jonas Goossen, Steinbach, Manitoba, December 11, 1992.
55. No author given, *History of the Congregations* (Hesston, Kansas, 1963), 170.
56. Anna Braun (1844-1908) was the daughter of Isaac Braun (1815-1869) and Margaretha Loewen (1817-1883); see Plett, "Cornelius Toews Genealogy," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 223-225; cf. Plett, "Isaac Loewen 1787-1873 Biography," in Part Nine, Chapter One.
57. Johann K. Esau, 199-200.
58. Lenore Eidse, ed., 416.

# Chapter Two

## Letters 1866-1870

Letters written in 1866 to 1870 by Rev. Gerhard P. Goossen (1832-1872), Lindenau, Molotschna Colony, to Aeltester Peter P. Toews, Blumenhoff, Borosenko Colony, South Russia, to Aeltester Jakob A. Wiebe, Annenfeld, Crimea, and to Rev. Abraham Klassen, Pragenau, Molotschna.

---

### Letter One.

Liebenau, 12th January, 1866

To Peter Toews, Blumenhoff  
Beloved brother in Christ!

I have just finished writing a letter to your beloved father, and thought I would direct a few lines to you as well and to forward the same to you at the first available opportunity. In your precious letter you reminded me of our mutual undertakings to write each other. Since I have not complied with this promise before now, I must first seek to obtain your indulgence. But upon what grounds can I convincingly excuse myself? If I should say I was lacking in time and opportunity, or for ideas and material, you would hardly want to believe me, and yet, it is truly so. And yes, beloved brother, since this is the case I must freely express this to you. But why is it so, that I do not have opportunity, time, ideas or material about which to write? It is caused by my indifference and laziness to do good, yes, because I am often too passive in praying--which is the only infallible substance--to receive everything from God, and whereby our spirit is imbued with power and life.

I had written to here when I received your precious letter of the 11th of this month. You also write that you are lacking in inspiration and that you are so poor. Amongst the signs of our contemporary circumstances are certainly very precious times, for almost everywhere there is hunger and only little nourishment; almost everywhere there is thirst but only little water. You also say further that you have received no favourable news from our Gemeinde. Since you have obviously received word of the disagreements within our Gemeinde, I will remain silent in that regard and say together with the Apostle John, "Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink; but I trust to come unto you and speak face to face, that our joy may be full" (2 John 12).

Otherwise, my wish is the same as yours; may the Lord direct everything for the best. One could blame everyone here and there, but I think we will have to start with ourselves, for otherwise, our accusations will become a loveless disintegration. If we start with ourselves and acknowledge our guilt, and if we have heartfelt remorse to the same, we shall receive peace with God, and then, when we have peace with God and within our conscience, then--yes, then--we are sufficient and fit, to cast a concerned and unprejudiced eye upon the Gemeinde and the contemporary circumstances. Otherwise our opinions, views and

conclusions remain merely fleshly, biased, incorrect and false. May the Lord open the eyes of understanding of all of us.

I will not write much more for this time. My heart is very full and downhearted, but words fail me with which to express myself. The damage to our Gemeinde is much more serious than many might think. "Laszt uns beten, laszt uns wachen bis der letzte Tag anbricht; Laszt uns ja nichts schlaefrig machen, bleibe Gott stets unser Licht" (Psalm 18:30-31). Our salvation remain as stated in No. 242, and "Kommt Kinder laszt uns gehen" shall be my motto:

Weicht ein mancher aus dem Wege  
Und vermischt der Himmels Bahn  
Geht man vom schmalen Wahrheits Stege  
Auf die breite Lasterbahn  
Soll es mir nicht irre machen  
Nein, es soll mir noch zum Wachen  
und zum beten muntern an.

Sollt ich auch alleine gehen  
Durch das Thal zur Ewigkeit  
Thut nur Jesus mit mir gehen  
Steht nur Der an meiner Seit  
Fürcht ich nicht, mir ist nicht bange,  
Waeht die Reise auch noch lange  
Komm ich endlich doch zur Ruh.

With the help of God I wish to remain true to this ideal and I hope the same for you, and many others with us. May God grant this.

As I have heard, the *Choralbücher* are still in Odessa. As soon as they are here I will seek to fulfil your request as best I can. I have already made a another one year contract with the village Gemeinde.

A heartfelt greeting to all of you from me and my beloved wife. Keep us in your prayerful remembrance. From your loving friend and brother.

*Gerhard Goossen*

Write us again as soon as you can, for it is very precious to us.

**Letter Two.**

Liebenau, December 17, 1866

Dear brother Peter Toews.

I know you will be wondering that I had not already written a letter to you long ago. But, beloved brother, although I dearly would have wanted to do so, it has been almost impossible for I have had unusually much work this fall; also, I was frequently required to assist the Schulz [village mayor], and then, when I finally did have a little time, I was so impoverished and empty that I did not know what to write you anyway. And this is my experience even today, for I do not know what to write you, but I would dearly love to pour out my anxious heart and troubled soul before you, and to lament of my dire circumstances to you. Perhaps, if this be the will of God, we shall soon be able to do so verbally. We need to continue in prayer and supplication until then and to persevere in the same with

thanksgiving.

But beloved brother, what does the Lord require of us? for Himself? for his Gemeinde? Faithfulness, yes, faithfulness. We are to be an example in word and deed. Yes, I--unworthy one--am supposed to submit myself as a preacher. I find this to be very difficult. I know this, yes, at this time I see and feel how weak my faith and how cold my love is, and how insignificant my understanding is.

I will freely allow myself to admit this to you, my beloved brother; I have previously imagined more within myself than I now find within me. That which I previously imagined to be a simple matter now seems to be almost impossible. I believed it was no great matter to present a sermon and now I find it nearly impossible to put one onto paper. Nevertheless my trust is in God that it will become easier, if only I can become more faithful in following Jesus. Indeed we must practice this, for then the Lord will receive us in grace, and will furnish us with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, in order that in these last sorrowful times, we may propagate His Truth in word and deed, clearly and with purity.

Also I forward to you the *Choralbücher* which were ordered. They are somewhat expensive, the cost is 65 kopek without the name, and 5 kopek more--or 70--with the name. I am sending the other four along in case anyone would need one you may let them have it.

We are presently quite well physically and wish you the same. May all of you, who love the Lord with us, receive a heartfelt greeting from us. May the Lord be with us all, especially the beloved brother Peter Toews, for he is very dear to my heart. May the Lord grant you a patient heart, and lead you upon His way toward the eternal home.

Your dearly beloved friend and brother in the body as well as the soul.

*Gerh Goossen*

### Letter Three.

Lindenau, August 1, 1867

To Peter Toews, Blumenhoff,  
Beloved brother Peter Toews.

By the delivery of this, you are receiving an invitation from father [Heinrich Enns] to an all-congregational brotherhood meeting. However, should it not be possible that many of the brethren are able to come here, then you--beloved brother, Peter Toews, and your beloved brother, Abr. Loewen--yes, the both of you, should come nonetheless. Indeed, the two of you should not allow any material circumstances to keep you from coming, for it is very necessary that you come here. Satan--that perpetual enemy of peace--has been successful in fracturing the bonds of love and unity among us which had only been too weak until now.

Oh you, my beloved brother; yes--you--my beloved brethren Toews and Loewen. How often does my anxious and sorrowful heart not look upon you? And how have I not wished in these our sorrowful and troubled circumstances that I could once again shed out my heart before you? My beloved, this is similar to what the dear Paul says in one reference, "For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state." This is what I also would like to say to you in this our troubled circumstances.

Oh you, beloved Toews; your completely honest sensitivity, your unblemished faith and the sincerity of your love toward our Saviour, allows me to conclude

unequivocally, that you would be obliged to come to our aid in this most serious matter, according to the talents and grace which the Lord has bestowed upon you and will continue to bestow. It is not possible for me to share everything which is weighing upon my heart with you here in this writing. Again and again I must cry out and pray;

Mein liebester Heiland Jesus Christ,  
Gieb einen Blick mir Armen  
sieh wie der Satan sich gerueszt  
dasz ohne dein Erbarmen,  
ich Schwacher unterleigen musz  
Darum fall ich Jesu dir zu Fusz  
und schreie: hilf mir siegen!

Oh, I pray for victory, if only I might become more true to the Saviour. My weak and sinful flesh has seemingly not yet yielded completely in this regard. It is truly like the poet says; "Gefaeellst du Menschen schlecht, das ist ein schlechter Schaad, all genug schon wenn du fast, das ewigen Vaters Gnad." Indeed, if only I might be saved, if only I would be a child of God, and remain as such. Believe me, beloved brother, I seek for nothing more for myself; and if necessary I will even fall silent. God knows very well what is beneficial for me. I have surrendered myself to Him, whether in death or in life. He will do with me whatever pleases Him.

I must finish. Warkentin is here already and is waiting. Remember me in your prayers and receive a heartfelt greeting from me your weak brother.

*Gerh Goossen*

#### Letter Four.

Lindenau, October 24, 1867

Beloved brethren Toews and Loewen;

We have received your precious letter and perceive therefrom your heartfelt concern regarding the well-being of our Gemeinde. Oh, my beloved brethren, we pray that the Lord might fulfil your wishes and that He might bless us and our endeavours. May He enter into our midst and grant us His Holy Spirit in order that the same may lead and guide us in all truth, and thus, to unite and bind together all our hearts through the hand of love and unity, and thereby to free our hearts evermore from all mistrust and anger.

Only He, only He, the Lord, can, and must, and will, work all this in, among and through us; if only we can first truly submit ourselves unto Him, completely yielded and without self-will, and without seeking in the slightest our own selfish advancements; oh, for then matters would soon improve amongst us poor people. Indeed, I trust that our Heavenly Father will allow His gracious paternal and helping hand to reign over us. The Lord has given us His precious promises and says, "I shall never leave you nor forsake you." And even if it may sometimes seem as if God forsakes His own, this is not the case for He leads people through hell and back out again. It is also true what you write, beloved brother, that sunshine follows the rain. We know full well that just as a natural plant cannot truly subsist with only continual sunshine, without storm and rain, so a Christian--as a heavenly

plant--cannot truly subsist without the suffering of the cross. And, therefore, let us not be discouraged, even if a little suffering presses in amongst us, and even if our hard, self-righteous and unsensitive nature often has to bend itself in the winds of the storm; this is true, for temptation teaches us to take note of the Word.

At the same time, unfortunately, it is also true what the Apostle says that we do not consider a chastening to be a joy but rather a sorrow. But, thereafter, he says further, the same will bring forth the peaceful fruit of righteousness within those who are thereby empowered in love, faith and hope. Oh, but if only all of us might increase in faith, love and hope, and this is important above all, my beloved, for those of us who are given the responsibility to pasture, lead and guide the flock. Ah, yes, we must always and above all, present ourselves as models and as fit warriors before the souls who are entrusted unto us.

Oh, how great is our responsibility, how exacting our obligations, and how closely our Shepherd of Shepherds looks upon us and upon our works. One by one He has entrusted His sheep into our hands and we must now see to it that none of them are lost, and if one or the other leaves the flock we must seek the same and help it and entice it back into the fold; we must also shield it from the danger into which it has fallen when it separated itself from the shepherd's fold of Jesus Christ, until it turns back to us or until it turns its back to us and its Saviour and pays no more heed to our callings and enticements. But if one or the other should become unruly we must carefully separate the same until there has been a complete healing and then we must receive such a one back into the fold.

In order that we would always attain that which is best on these matters we truly require the salve of Gilead. Oh, my beloved, let us pray to the Lord that He would make us fit, the He would enlighten our understanding, that together with all the saints we might learn to comprehend the breadths, the height, and the depths, and to come to understand that to have the love of God is better than having all knowledge.

Beloved brethren! I drove away from you full of good hope and strengthened in my faith, by your faith and love which you demonstrated toward me, your lowliest of fellow-servants in the work of the Lord. And even though I did not take leave of you--my beloved Toews--there were, nonetheless, no clouds upon my heart; I felt so united with you in the spirit that we are together spiritually, even though we are separated physically. And with you also, beloved brother Loewen, I feel myself to be in the same fellowship, love and confidence. I know that you sympathize with my pain, with my sorrow and anxiety; for if one member of the body is suffering they all suffer. As you know a great sorrow came upon me during my return journey away from you. But the Lord leads wonderfully, He does not forsake His own and through the suffering of the cross He always seeks for their best.

We have united ourselves in love with respect to that which is past, and both of us are happy that love and confidence among us shall henceforth be stronger. We pray that the Lord might strengthen us and our commitment to carry through with our mutually covenanted promises, and we hope that you and all our beloved brethren would come to our aid with your faithful intercession in prayer. The intention to do good we have aplenty but in the doing we are only too often lacking. Father has presented the foregoing before two brotherhood meetings and asked whether they are able to forgive him, and that he wished to deal more

carefully with me in the future.

Also in the matter regarding Martin Friesen, he has declared himself so that it is sufficient in my view, provided that what he says is truly from within his heart, which I do indeed hope that it is. And all the brethren except J. Penner, J. Loewen and J. Thielmann seemed to be quite pleased to put everything aside which has occurred, and to forgive and to forget. Also the brethren in Fischau have seemingly acquired more confidence and a more favourable outlook. We here presently have good expectations; however, man thinks but God directs. Father has presently postponed the trip to the Crimea until such a time as you can come here for that purpose. If it takes until Advent I believe I will also be able to come along, but I cannot go before Advent. But never mind this, go when it suits you. Father would always be ready, only notify him if possible once the time comes a little closer and you know a little better when you are coming.

The date which has been set for four weeks hence for the matter of our, as well as your, love and unity will not be too long a time during which we can forget all that has occurred in the past, to air everything out in the sunshine, and to forgive everyone. And should it be the will of God that we here have reconciled ourselves in love and in peace we would expect to be able to conduct the holy communion prior to our departure to the Crimea. I am presently feeling the way our beloved Saviour said, "I had truly longed to partake of the passover lamb with you." If only we might come that far with the help of God that we might be able to partake of the love feast together. Much will depend upon us and our works and our faithfulness as stewards of the mysteries of God. Will our hearts and minds overall be standing in unison? Will we allow this truly to be a concern for us? Oh, for then the Lord will not refuse us His blessing. He will help us and also stand by us. He will also give us the means by which to direct the erring brethren back toward the truth and also help us so that His will would occur overall.

I must break off now. Greet all the beloved brethren. I think frequently of my tearful departure from you in Nikopol. May the Lord help all of us together unto His heavenly kingdom where there shall be no more parting.

I also think of you, beloved brother, Johann Warkentin, for your love and exertion, patience and willingness to help. I am filled with good feelings and have a firm hope regarding you that you will help your beloved son-in-law, P. Toews, to carry the burden of his office with a sincere paternal loyalty and concern, and that instead of making the same more difficult you will seek to lighten the load by coming to his aid with fatherly advice. The Lord will repay you and will bless you in due season and in eternity. For everything which we do for each other, we do as if unto Him. If we love each other, we are loving Him and He loves us. And you, beloved Toews, maintain a childlike deportment regarding your father-in-law. Always regard him with an attitude of compromise.

Of course, both of you have been instructed by God so that you already know what the Lord requires of you and certainly you do not have any need for me to write you in that regard. But I do so out of an upright love in order to encourage all of us to run the race which has been set before us, and so that all of us together can more and more cast our sights upon Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. The time is short, brethren; pray for us and remain firm in love. May the Lord be with us all.

And to all of you, a heartfelt greeting from me and my beloved wife and my

father, our beloved Aeltester. The Lord also wishes to furnish him more and more with the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

From your brother who is bonded with you in love and who is your fellow pilgrim to a joyful eternity.

*Gerhard Goossen*

We are quite well. May the Lord be thanked for all the goodness He has demonstrated toward us daily in the body as well as the soul. Do write us if you have opportunity. I have rushed a little with this writing.

Letter Five.

Fischau, November 3, 1867

Beloved brethren in Christ, Toews and Loewen.

The most lamentable disputations in our Gemeinde, which seemingly can still not be put to rest, give us cause to humbly ask for your advice and counsel. We had notified Penner and Klassen to come to the brotherhood meeting, but Penner did not come. So father [H. Ensz] and I drove to Penners' in order that we could talk with him. Penner continued to make accusations even though father already took the blame and acknowledged that he had not dealt carefully enough in the matter of Martin Friesen and that he had trusted too much in his apparently well-fashioned speech; father also wanted to act more prudently in the future.

We offered Penner that he would surely want to come to Landskrone on the next following Sunday, but he did not come. We hardly knew what to do next. It almost seemed to us as if the confessions and acknowledgements of fault would never be enough for Penner; he was never satisfied. When we were at his place he even wanted us to concede that all our deeds and actions, and all our dealings and also the separation which had occurred were of our own doing and only of human origin and consequently of no validity. He has now gone away from us because of one of these dealings with the Gemeinde. Tielmann from Alexanderwohl and Jakob Loewen also seem to be in agreement with him in many respects.

We have talked this over with the brethren here in Fischau today. We came to the conclusion on this matter that the two of you, Toews and Loewen, or also some of the other brethren there, should talk to them, namely, Penner and Loewen, in order to determine their views and intentions. And if they do not declare unequivocally that they would henceforth want to be and remain our brethren, you may then also summon them to come to an all-congregational brotherhood meeting which we plan to hold when you come through here on your way to the Crimea.

Therefore, you over there can set an approximate date, or if possible even a time certain, and then come here together with the brethren, that is to say, with both of the brothers Penner, Jakob and Peter, and Jakob Klassen. Also some of the other brethren should come also if they can and so wish. We will be ready here at any time even if we do not have advance notice.

Now, my beloved. I know you will do as much as the Lord will grant you strength. May the Lord be with you and with all those who have an unblemished love of our Lord Jesus. Together with a heartfelt greeting from all of your fellow servants who love you dearly.

*Heinrich Ensz  
Gerhard Goossen*

## Letter Six.

Lindenau, December 18, 1867

Beloved brethren Toews and Loewen;

When we departed from each other there in Feretschick we drove all the way to Kabbe by nightfall. From there we left early in the morning--as is our custom--and arrived in Melitopol on Sunday at 4 o'clock where we fed our horses for a good two hours. Then we left for home during the night and arrived in Lindenau at 12 o'clock. The road from Melitopol was more or less in the same condition as when we drove there. I presume you did not arrive at home for Sunday, but during Sunday, perhaps?

My experience this time was like what you--brother Toews--experienced when you returned home from here a year ago. My little son, Peter, had been sick for some time already when I left; now when I arrived at home I found him to be deathly ill. At the present time things seem to be somewhat better with him. May the Lord's will be done; His will is the best. The other children and also my beloved wife, were--thanks be to God--quite well. At present, however, my wife is not very well. All the nursing at night for the sick child may be at fault. They are all quite well at Loewens'. Grandfather is once more exerting himself with much reading and writing; he has again written many long letters.

And, how did you find things to be when you arrived at home? What was the situation there by you? And what about the matter regarding which you were carrying such great sorrow and concern? I trust that the Lord will direct everything for the best and that He will bless your faithful endeavours; He will convict all the hearts that are hardened that still have a desire to be awakened. Those that do not want to be softened will be given over to a complete asphyxiation and more of the like; for they go the way of Cain and fall into the error of Balaam and succumb to the destruction of Korah.

Early this morning I will go to Fischau since father and I want to drive to Halbstadt and Prischib. Are the Concordances supposed to be bound? If so I will send them immediately. But if they are not done yet we will have to wait a little longer. I will also get one for you, brother Loewen, at the first opportunity. This past Sunday worship services were held in Kleefeld. I did not drive there as our little Peter was still very sick. They also held a brotherhood meeting. Father said that everything was still in place and we are of the firm hope that it will get better. Still, man thinks but God directs. He will direct everything for the best for those who love Him, for those who are searching for Him, and for those who serve Him with complete earnestness and faithfulness.

Now I must close for this time. Accept these lines in love and receive a heartfelt greeting from me and my beloved wife. Greet all our dear friends and brethren. May the Lord be with you all. This is my heartfelt wish for you, my beloved friends and brethren.

*Gerhard Goossen*

You had also wanted to send me information whether there might not be a suitable property available for me there.

**Letter Seven.**

To Peter Toews, Blumenhoff

Lindenau, January, 1868

Beloved brother P. Toews

You will surely be curious as to how our return journey from you went. Our long wagon broke down on one of the bridges as we were leaving Nikopol which resulted in somewhat of a delay. It was quite late by the time we arrived in Kamenka from where we drove to Ewanenno for the night. From Ewanenno we drove to Michailachec for the night and from there we arrived in Wahrenau around noon. Brother Wiebe left for Halbstadt from Wahrenau. He had been in Halbstadt around 4 o'clock. We arrived in Fischau just before evening. There I found my beloved wife and our two little children well and in good health. It was Thursday evening; our journey had taken four days.

Friday afternoon Wiebes came to our place, as well as father from Fischau. We celebrated the Last Supper and Holy Communion with grandfather [Isaac Loewen] at David Loewens'. Saturday afternoon Wiebes left our place and drove to Lichtenau to Kornelsens for the night. From there they wanted to go to Ohrloff after which they planned to be in Nikopol by Tuesday night. May the Lord accompany them until they reach their earthly home. But much more so, may the Lord lead and guide us, and many others together with us, on the road to our heavenly home.

We still speak often of your love. Brother Wiebe and I have rejoiced very much so that we must say, the Lord has done great things for us. We must always thank God for you. May His grace extend out over us and you in the future as well. We have also rejoiced over the love and hospitality of you parents-in-law. The Lord will reward them richly for all the love and faithfulness which they demonstrated to us and all the brethren and sisters. The One who does not overlook even a glass of cold water will recompense them. May the Lord keep them in His love.

I will have to shorten my writing as my time is too short. May all of you receive a heartfelt greeting from me and my wife. We are actually presently almost minded to move there in spring. My preference would be to live there with you. I would prefer Borosenko even if the one property was as expensive as the other. If Borosenko will be purchased all our doubts about moving there would be lifted; for that is presently where I have fixed my sights. But do understand, I do not want you to do anything for my sake alone. I wish to act in this matter as with everything else, namely, as the Lord wishes. Should the Lord have designated another place for us, I wish to submit my will completely unto His; if only I can achieve this. But God will see that matters unfold as is wholesome.

Again, a heartfelt greeting from your most loving brother and sister and fellow travellers unto a joyful eternity.

*Gerhard Goossen*

**Letter Eight.**

Lindenau, February 12, 1868

Beloved brother Peter Toews;

May the peace of God and the abundant and comforting fellowship of His Holy Spirit rest and abide with you and all who love our Lord Jesus.

I cannot maintain my silence over the great sorrow of my heart in consequence of the matter of Korn. Toews which was related to me by father, our Aeltester. I wish to relate the matter to you clearly and thoroughly in a letter. I have written out an account of the situation but since I wish to keep a copy, and as I do not presently have very much time, I have not rewritten it again. Since cousin Isaac wishes to depart from here early tomorrow morning I will hold the same in abeyance for now. If, however, you wish to have a complete report, let me know and I will forward the same to you. I will also read it to father and obtain his approval of the letter before I send it to you. You may also make inquiries regarding this matter of Peter Friesen; he was also present at the brotherhood meeting in Alexanderwohl and heard everything which transpired.

Oh, you, beloved brother Toews! How will all this finally come to pass if we do not completely place our trust upon the Lord? If we do not allow and want Him to lead and to assist us, we will not achieve the victory; Satan continually seeks to deflect us away from our goal. And the Lord God--unto whose banner of the cross we have sworn our fealty--allows many things to befall us to prove and test our loyalty and our faith. All the crosses--the temptations and adversities--which we encounter in our place of battle, should serve to keep us awake and firmly committed to our calling. Yet, it is so difficult, so sorrowful--indeed, I would almost say, I would be ready to give up, if it is and remains this way, which--as you know--it has been and continues to be.

Oh, if only the Lord might have compassion over us as young and in some ways still inexperienced watchmen upon the battlements of the spiritual Zion. Oh, if only our leader might be for us a true Jonathan, a true support, and a truly awakened warrior leading us against the foe! For then things would be much easier for us. May the Lord's will be done. Be it as it may, our Father in heaven has a solution for every situation. May we commit ourselves into His loving arms with true confidence and faith for He will direct these matters to come about as is beneficial. But we should not decrease in prayer and intercession for ourselves and for all people. Yes, beloved brother, pray without ceasing; when you bring your concerns before the Lord also pray for me--poor wretch--that the Lord might stand by me in order that I could nobly find my way through all the strife and disputation; yes, in order that I might withstand all temptation.

When I bend my knees before our heavenly Father in my solitude, it occurs to me that perhaps a beloved brother and travel companion on the way to our heavenly abode is also praying at the very hour; perhaps brother Wiebe in the Crimea or you there are also pouring out your hearts before God at the very moment. And then I rejoice over the comforting words of our beloved Saviour, that where two or three are gathered to pray, their prayer shall be granted. For even though we are physically so far distant from each other, we are--nonetheless--one in the spirit and intimately bonded together inwardly. Oh, how I do sometimes rejoice over all our faithful brethren, who are so truly beginning to find a true love for our Lord Jesus, and within whom the love for the world and all its pleasures is more and more diminishing and the love for Jesus and of the brethren is continually growing stronger. May the Lord preserve them in His love.

I must close. A heartfelt greeting to all of you from me and my beloved wife. Our beloved God has again permitted us to taste and feel His love in that He has allowed us to carry His cross. My wife is still not well and our two children,

Katharina and Peter, are presently severely smitten with the measles so that they might also die. May the Lord's will be done. He has given them to us and they are His, we have committed them to Him and He may take them if it pleases Him; as long as they remain His, whether they love or die.

May the Lord be with you all. From your dearly beloved,

*Gerhard Goossen*

Your brother-in-law, Peter Isaac, is also familiar with our sorrowful circumstances. Do not omit--and at the first opportunity--to let us know your views, and that of the brethren, regarding this matter. Please also fully disclose your concern to father, our Aeltester, since that can only serve for our betterment. The Lord will give you understanding in all things.

#### Letter Nine.

Lindenau, March 14, 1868

Beloved brother Toews,

Peace be with you and all who love our Lord Jesus. I would much rather speak with you in person than to write you again; and as soon as it will only be possible for me, I will also do so. In the meantime, beloved brother, may we continue steadfast in prayer and be watchful in the same with thanksgiving, for the Lord in faithful and will not allow us to be tested above our ability to endure. He will be sure that our tribulations cease before they become unbearable. Let us be found to be faithful, only faithful; let us be found, and not as those who rule over the people, rather, let us be found as loving examples.

My pain and my sorrow--beloved brother--is very great. But since I know, and since I feel this--that brother Wiebe and many faithful brethren are partaking therein, I also feel the truth which is that pain which is shared is only half the pain. But patience is what we need, and since our beloved Heavenly Father has had so much patience with us and continues to be patient every day, we must also be patient with such brethren as you have come to know amongst us in so far as is possible, and in so far as the word of God and our consciences permit us to concede ourselves to them; and that we must use every means to seek to win them for the Lord.

We must also designate those who wish to be under the Law as such, and those who wish to be without the Law as such who wish to be without the Law. Behold, beloved brother, how I mean this, so that we can win souls for our Saviour in either case; and yet, not so as to call the good bad, and the bad good. No! For we must be very much on guard against the like, for this would be comparable to the manner of the false prophets. The word of God should be and should remain our one and only guide for our entire lives, and it should be the only measurement and test of all our dealings and the only ground and foundation of our faith; then we would not err, for that is one way wherein even fools cannot err.

I confess this, however, that we are no longer governed by the death sentence of the Law, and that--instead--we are standing in grace which is a gift from God. Who is this--though--who confesses and experiences fully the depths of the godly kingdom of grace and compassion among us poor and emaciated sinners? Who among us has truly been freed and released from the Law? It is only those over whom the punishment of the Law has lost its power, namely, those for

whom the Law has been vitiated through the fulfilment of the Law. For they are the ones who no longer live under the Law but who live under grace; and if the Son redeems us, does He not truly make us completely free. Oh, what a great mystery of the kingdom. I think that if we take away more of the legalism and more of the letters of the Old Testament in the way that Christ Himself and the apostles did, I am afraid whether we will truly be conscious of the sustaining grace and the eternal compassion of God. But not of those who preach grace according to the Gospel, but those who pursue the Law and preach revenge and death.

Now, I must stop for this time. May the Lord grant us understanding in all things. You will surely have heard from the brethren how matters are here with us. Do not forget us in your prayers, for often I am so weak that my faith is almost vanquished when the mighty waves rear up before me. Now you, beloved Toews, and all my beloved brethren, may we always strengthen each other with earnest and unceasing prayers for us and all the brethren. We do have the firm promise that God will hear us, and unto those whose prayers He hears, He unlocks His heart and opens the gates of heaven.

A heartfelt greeting to all of you from myself and my beloved wife.

From your dearly beloved,  
*Gerhard Goossen*

#### **Letter Ten.**

Lindenau, March 19, 1868

Beloved brother Peter Toews,

May the brotherly fellowship of the Holy Spirit and the love of God be with you and with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in truth and who earnestly deny themselves to follow Him as the unspotted Lamb.

For sometime already I have waited with inwardly longing for a letter from you and brother Korn. Toews. The intentions of the brethren here are still in the same vein as when you were here; they blame you and Goossen, that you had wanted to direct them away from the simplicity in Christ. Some are of the view that we should govern ourselves by reason, and more of the like.

Oh, what a sorrowful situation! May the Lord have compassion over us; I do not know what will happen with us. You will perceive father's views from his letter; what do you say in that regard, when he says that he intends to view the matter of the ministerial election as if it never took place? Will we thereby win anything for ourselves before the Lord? Will His name thereby be glorified? Can we promise ourselves any benefit thereby? How is Korn. Toews minded in this regard? Do be so kind, beloved brother, and guide us in this matter. Can we find the will of God? This is my wish and—I know—it is yours as well.

Now I must quit. The time is becoming short for me. I have written of brother Goossen regarding our present circumstances.

Receive a hearty greeting from me, *Gerhard Goossen*

#### **Letter Eleven.**

To Peter Toews, Blumenhoff

Lindenau, April 2, 1868

Beloved brother Peter Toews,

I have hurried myself to send you a few lines. The time will not allow for

more at this moment. We have received your letters and the declaration by Korn. Toews. I will remain somewhat silent and only say this much, that perhaps you should hold the aforementioned declaration back a little from the brethren there. In view of the dilemma of our all-congregational brotherhood meeting and in consideration of the cause of the matter in dispute, I would share the following insight with you. Perhaps the greatest part of the damage might be avoided by a withdrawal by Toews even though a complete healing could not be expected. Perhaps the beloved brother Korn. Toews would declare himself--in view of 1 Corinthians 10, 23--that he wishes to regard the many hindrances as a sign of the will of God and that he wants to let the matter be until the call of God is received by him in a more unequivocal way, as expressed by the unified voice of the brethren for that purpose.

But I do not want to present my views too earnestly. More on another occasion. I am expecting--if it be the will of the Lord--that I will come to you for a visit shortly. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you and your spirit. You will learn more about this from brother K. E.

Be heartily greeted,  
*Gerhard Goossen*

Pet. Toews!

In view of the situation presently being experienced, it may become very necessary that you and many others would come here soon. We have spring weather.

#### Letter Twelve.

Halbstadt, April 3, 1868

As an afterthought I must write something more to you brother Goossen regarding the seed grain which I have order from you. Would you give me credit to clean some for me? You can offer the remainder to brother-in-law Enns. Likewise for my part, Enns can also have the chopped feed which D. Loewen does not require.

Also greet D. Loewen and let him know that his wife is in somewhat better health than when he left here. The grandfather has already been in Kleefeld for eight days. Since I cannot do that which I would want, I must do that which I can.

*Gerhard Goossen*

Matters are always becoming worse with the circumstances of our Gemeinde.

#### Letter Thirteen.

Lindenau, May 26, 1868

Beloved brother,

May the love of God and the fellowship of His Holy Spirit be with you and with all those who love our Lord Jesus.

You will have already heard from the brothers and sisters, Goossens, Warkentins and Isaacs, that the brethren Wiebe and Schellenberg from the Crimea arrived at our place on the very same day that you had departed from here. If we had thought there was any possibility of calling you back, we would have sent someone after you. Wiebe was very disappointed that you were gone; they had driven over 100 verst in the hope that they would meet you here--and yet in vain. Brother Isaac will be able to tell you about their endeavours here, since he was also present in Kleefeld where Wiebe spoke to our brethren here regarding our

circumstances. The Crimean brethren and sisters, however, want to remain neutral regarding the situation and to merely observe the same until they are persuaded that a definitive resolution is taking place where only Jesus, where only the Word of God and His Spirit--and not merely human opinions and aged inherited customs--form the foundations of our battle positions.

May the Lord grant that His holy and praiseworthy name might also be glorified by us weakened ones--yes, we poor and miserable sinners, since we are seeking and striving only for His honour, majesty and glory. May the self-glorification and the honour of the world always decrease--and also everything else which remains hidden in our hearts, such as self-will and self-honour. May my Lord more and more diminish and eradicate the like within us. Make as nothing that which does not please You, oh Lord; rise up and magnify, oh Jesus, that which pleases You, and care for the weak, as it please You to strengthen us.

Brother Wiebe held worship services at our place last Friday. At this opportunity he declared himself to father without holding back in any way, and out of brotherly love he shared his well-intentioned advice with him. However, the same was not accepted by father since it came unsolicited from Wiebe and as it was completely contrary to the position that father held. I am unable to tell you in this writing in what direction the entire situation will go. A brotherhood meeting has been called for the forthcoming Friday in Alexanderwohl, but I cannot predict whether a particular faction will lead the same or whether it will end in a united conclusion. May it serve for the glorification of God. Since father so dearly wants to remain as Aeltester, I will leave it up to the brotherhood for my part and firmly hope--if it be the will of God--that things will soon improve or that they cease entirely. I will quote the poet, "Ich will still sein, wirke du, du muszt selbst die Hand ablegen."

Indeed, beloved brother, our endeavours are so weak. But we do want to petition God and true-heartedly remain constant in prayer for He will not reject our pleas. Indeed, He hears and answers our prayers; at times He also varies in how He answers us in order to prove our faith. Yes, He helps when no one else can help; He is truly a friend in need. He leads the battle and cuts a path before us; and when our senses and understanding have come to a standstill and ask, "What shall we do now?" His wise counsel soon provides ways and means. Therefore I hope--therefore we hope--He will also soon lead and guide in our situation. Let us allow Him to rule in all matters, He is a wise Prince and will conduct Himself so that you will be amazed at His wise counsel when He will resolve the matter which has concerned you for so long, says the well-known poet.

More for next time. But until then--yes, until the end of our battle, let us remain steadfast in prayer and supplication for ourselves and for the beloved brethren and sisters--yes, for all people, that the Lord might have compassion over all of us. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you always. Amen.

Receive a heartfelt greeting from us,

*Gerhard Goossen*

#### **Letter Fourteen.**

Lindenau, June 17, 1868

Beloved brother Peter Toews,

In my last letter I wrote you about a brotherhood meeting which had been

called, but I was unable to form any advance opinion as to the conclusions to which we might come. This meeting has taken place and another one thereafter in Alexanderwohl, where, however, the two brethren from there--J. Toews and A. Klassen--were opposed. I hope this and the details of these dealings has already been related to you, and also what the views of the brethren were here. Through the presentations at these brotherhood meetings, father found it within himself, and the next following Sunday in Fischau he made a declaration that he would resign from his office as Aeltester if it would be of some benefit for the well-being of the Gemeinde.

This action by him came as a complete surprise to me and accordingly it was difficult for me to believe that this statement truly represented his inwardly feelings. And it came to pass just as I had feared. A number of days later he apparently regretted the action which he had taken and from all appearances it was obvious that he dearly wanted to remain in his office. He suggested that I should drive to Kleefeld alone on the next Sunday and hold a brotherhood meeting without him in order to perceive what the views of the brethren were. I found it very difficult to acquiesce to this and I pleaded with him that he should rather go himself in order to determine what the feelings of the brethren were. But he rejected this completely for this occasion and so I resolved myself to do that which I found very difficult to do. But with and upon achieving a firm resolve that I would speak and deal only as I would in the presence of the All-mighty and All-knowing God, I found comfort and peace within my soul.

I then asked father that he should tell me how he had come to his previous conclusion; whether he had not felt completely fit and competent within himself to stand before the Gemeinde as its Aeltester. The reply was, "I hardly know how to reply to that, I will leave it up to you and your conscience." Now, however, he believes I have the fault in this regard. I would certainly not say that for I want to cease laying blame. We talked of many things more--yet, as I hope, completely in love. But it was very difficult for me that I should now bear the blame.

I presented all of this to the brethren at the brotherhood meeting and asked that they should investigate the matter between father and me, for it was possible that in and among all my weakness I might have more of the fault than I myself had perceived at first. I desperately want to avoid any fault herein, but will gladly acknowledge it as soon as I can recognize the same. A number of brethren agreed to drive to visit father in order to discuss the matter with him in love.

I also presented to the brethren whether we could find it within ourselves to keep father as our Aeltester since he wanted this so badly. But none of the brethren indicated that they were in favour of this. Much rather they stated emphatically that he should remain by the declaration he had made in Fischau. Yet, brother Friesen, from Landskrone, was not present. This then is the status of these matters among us! Who knows what thoughts the heavenly Father will have regarding us, probably thoughts of peace. Oh, if only we could finally find our way unto greater peace. May the love and confidence among us grow and increase.

Now, beloved brother, I will quit for this time. My heart is too wearied and downhearted, and yet I will hold back. Let us beseech God without ceasing, that he might want to receive us in grace and that He would stand by us in these sorrowful and dangerous times. Now Satan will surely cast his eyes upon both of us in order to lead us away from our goal and that we might stumble and fall. Oh,

beloved brother, we must now truly march into the line of fire of Satan. We--even though both of us are so poor--must construct the forward bulwarks of the battlements whereby we can be secure from all the projectiles of the evil one. For this purpose we must also truly grasp hold of the shield of faith before which all the projectiles and missiles must fall harmlessly away. If only we will remain true, we shall save our souls through the help of the God and many others with us.

Receive a heartfelt greeting from me and my beloved--but sick--wife. Greet all those who love our Lord Jesus. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. From your brother who loves you,

*Gerhard Goossen*

N.B. I think and also the beloved brethren here expressed the wish at the last brotherhood meeting that we also wanted to take into account the opinions and views from there regarding the matter of our Aeltester. Perhaps you will have a brotherhood meeting and send us your conclusions and recommendations through uncle Plett. Lord, may Your will be done.

#### Letter Fifteen.

Lindenau, July 24, 1868

Beloved brother Peter Toews,

Only too gladly I would like to speak again with you in person. Yes, I would dearly like to discourse alone with you there in order that we might be strengthened in the contemporary truth through the faith which we have in each other. But since our coming there before we actually move there does not seem possible, I will have to present my deliberations to you in writing. But I will only write a little for this time, for my time is very limited. I still have to prepare a contract for myself which has to be ready by Friday. I would already have written sooner if I would have had opportunity, for the mail is too time consuming for me during the harvest.

So, how are things there, beloved brother? I might well ask--you, children of the Almighty--how steadfast do you remain standing in love and unity? Has no division occurred in the spirit? How do matters stand regarding the monetary demands of your father-in-law, and the Penners and Loewens. The way it looks to me, the others do not seem to be satisfied with the requirements of your father-in-law. Surely your father will know how to deal with the matter as a Christian.

When he asked me for my opinion if it was wrong if he charged 25 ruble per desjation for his time and trouble in purchasing the land, I told him 'no, I could not say that it was wrong'. And if the others were willing and happy with the situation it would probably not be wrong, although I know too little of the matter. But now that the others are unhappy and the already weak love is thereby becoming even weaker; it would in any case be my view that it would be better if your beloved father-in-law cancelled his demands. The Lord can easily provide him with another situation whereby he can make an even bigger profit than with this land. If only I would have known more about the entire matter then when he spoke to me, I would have advised him to cancel his requisitions. But even now I do not know all the facts of the matter, and yet, it is sufficient if the others are unhappy. He would always do better--and also keep his conscience cleaner--if he could simply acquiesce to the others in this regard.

More on another occasion. May the Lord be with you and with your spirit.

May all of you receive a heartfelt greeting from you weak brother.

*Gerhard Goossen*

**Letter Sixteen.**

Gruenfeld, December 17, 1868

To all the beloved brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus our Lord,

May the love of Jesus Christ and the fellowship of His Holy Ghost be with you and within you all; as your most insignificant brother and fellow-pilgrim toward a joyful eternity, this is my wish for you together with a friendly greeting.

If it would have been the will of our beloved heavenly Father, I would have come there to see you long ago already. I must say it has been my heart's deepest longing to see all of you--beloved, once again, in order that we might be strengthened by each other in our present times of insanity. But it has pleased our beloved God to again place us under the beloved cross, for as you will already have heard, my dear wife fell very ill shortly after our moving here and by now she has already suffered therefrom for nearly seven months; even now she is still confined to bed thereby, and is almost, almost, somewhat less sick. But still, we do not know which way the beloved God will go with this.

For this reason, now, my beloved brethren, we have not yet been able to deal with the Friedensfelders according to our needs and wishes until today. Nor have we been able to make any representations to them, nor to you, nor to the brethren here, regarding our many errors. None of you comes here for worship services or for brotherhood meetings and the illness of my wife has hindered me until now from driving there with the others.

Nonetheless, my beloved, we are of the firm hope that these times will be for us a true time of proving. We have earnestly considered the entire matter and circumstances of our Gemeinde, and amidst prayer and supplication, we are persuaded more and more unto the firm conviction that we have not yet fulfilled the will of the Lord regarding the election which occurred here. And, in addition to God, we are all obligated to ask you--beloved brethren--for forgiveness and for the future receipt of your love and confidence. Yes, we should ask the same of God for ourselves that He might forgive us for these and many other faults, and that He might preserve us from these and many other deceiving spirits in the future. The beloved brother Toews has declared himself somewhat more directly; with which declaration, I and--as I firmly hope--all the brethren here, are in agreement.

I trust that all of you will forgive and pardon me from the bottom of your hearts, that it took so long before I was first able to recognize that we--although without any knowledge and without meaning to do so--had departed from the way of the Lord and that we had thereby gone on our own way, although in the belief that it was the right one. Ah, beloved, it is so easy for us to err, it is so easy to fail, but our beloved God will have patience with us, and will not deal with us--His most insignificant ones--according to His righteousness.

I must cease, more at another opportunity. Do receive it all in love from your insignificant brother who loves you dearly.

*Gerhard Goossen*

Do not forget us in your prayers, and pray unto God that He would receive me and my beloved--but sick--wife in grace, and that He would not test us above our

ability to endure. I would write a good deal more but my heart is burdened and weary.

### Letter Seventeen.

September, 1869

Beloved brother Wiebe.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the abundant comfort of the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you and preserve you in your first zeal of love. This I wish you from the depth of my heart and also plead: Oh, Jesus, shepherd of the faithful flock; ah, do help us that no one might be torn from you, that we might daily rejoice in our faith, and that we would be eternally aware of (false) assurance.

Beloved Wiebe, unprofitable and miserable servant that I am and in consideration of my total insignificance--I find myself to be far too unworthy and too imperfect to allow this writing to be directed to you. But because of the great love which I carry in my heart for you and the Saviour and for all those who love Him as well, I cannot do otherwise but to pour my heart out before you, and to express myself to you.

Both of you, beloved--both you and the beloved brother Baerg, have brought great sorrow through your writing to me--and I can honestly say--also to all of our brothers and sisters. Some time ago we had already received a short writing from Brother Baerg in which we read to our great sorrow that you--beloved Wiebe--were changing your views regarding baptism. As love is to think no evil I continued to hope for the best until now, but the writing from you and from Brother Enns has finally persuaded me to abandon my hopes. But for God everything is possible, He directs the hearts of men like the brooklets of water and can also direct your heart. Yes, brother, He can and will also do so, if only we want Him to do so. But brother, our beloved Saviour has told us so and therefore we also know that Satan will use his great cunning and might because he knows that he has only little time left within which to bring everything unto ruination, and if possible, also to lead astray the very elect.

When I consider the source and origin of the spirit and inspiration through which you--beloved brother--have come to the point that you wanted to renew your baptism, I must extend my heartfelt sympathy to you and to all those who share your views. I must exclaim with the words of the apostle and say, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: For there is none other, except for the ones that trouble you, and that would pervert you from the gospel of Christ." In truth, beloved Wiebe, I find this to be very amazing, that I must hear and comprehend this about you; for I believed that in you I had such a truly gallant warrior and courageous combatant on the road of salvation. I have frequently rejoiced and given thanks unto the Lord that he had granted you such an untarnished faith. I have always believed that Brother Wiebe, he is such a truly loyal brother, for he is completely honest and without falseness and hypocrisy; and I am still unable to abandon these good perceptions which I hold of you.

How then can it be that these things must occur between you and your brethren who are bound together with you in the deepest love? These are the questions which swell up within me so that I hardly know what to think or what

I should say. All you beloved brothers and sisters there weigh heavily upon my heart. I have truly loved all of you from the depth of my being, far more than I have been able to demonstrate to you. Now it shall actually be possible that the evil one is to succeed in disrupting the bonds of love? Ah, but no! He should not be allowed to succeed in this. Oh, let us stand fast in our watch.

Beloved brother, you write how you have noted so many impurities among us and how many among us are so passive, and still appear to be filled more with the affairs of the world than that which alone is beneficial. With a sorrowful heart I must readily admit to you that the condition of our Gemeinde is still far too impure, and even regarding myself, it often seems as if the first zeal is no longer evident. But, my beloved, should all this--our deficiency and failures, our lukewarmness and indolence, not much more inspire you toward a heartfelt sympathy for us and direct and compel you--with complete earnestness and with all the gifts which have been provided, as if you were a herald chosen by God and the Gemeinde, to truly work against the same and to zealously position yourself before the fissure? Instead, you are becoming weak and without trust toward the whole.

You know as well as I do that there are still among us many devoted souls who are as honestly inspired with respect to their Saviour as you and as I would have purported and still claim to be. They have experienced the forgiveness of sins and the spirit of God has granted them witness of being the children of God. They no longer wish to live in the lusts of the flesh for the time they still have remaining, and with complete earnestness they rather wish to work our their salvation with fear and trembling. Beloved Wiebe, you are quite familiar with this, for you have known these souls, you found yourself united with them in the spirit, as you also were with me--as insignificant as I am; and I have known the love which you have shown toward me and through which my heart has experienced yours. Indeed when I recall the bygone times and hours I must exclaim with the words, "Oh, how blessed were those times." Without a second baptism, and for myself I can say with truth, without having felt any need for the same. Oh, that it might be possible that you would still be able to change your apparently very firmly fixed conception and opinion; and that with the apostle Paul you might also allow to grace of God to be all sufficient for you.

I bid you--beloved Wiebe, in case you do not wish to abandon your newly acquired understanding regarding baptism, or if you believe that you cannot do so, then do be so good as to first come here in order that we can personally discuss the matter before you should embark upon such a momentous step and once more allow yourself to be baptised. Had I been able to follow my inwardly inspiration, I would have been there a long time ago; and if I had any indication that this might become possible I would allow no circumstances to stand in my way; I would spare neither expenses nor privation in order to visit you all for whom I possess such heartfelt love. But I am presently unable to do so, as it pleases the Lord to keep my wife in her sick bed.

Both of you--my beloved Wiebe, as well as you--brother Enz [sic], I could refute much of what you set forth in your writings. I could also convince you through a presentation from the Holy Scriptures as well as from the testimonies of our venerable forefathers. But I will allow this to remain undone as the views which you have expressed in your writings make me afraid that you would not

receive the same, and that possibly, you might not even submit it to at least one impartial examination. The beloved brother Peter Toews will present much of this in his writing and will submit it for your study from which you will be able to perceive the principles of his understanding of baptism, which are mine as well. If it be the will of the Lord I will forward to you my views and convictions of the evangelical teachings of baptism in water as well as baptism with water in accordance with the talents which the Lord has bestowed upon me.

I am totally convinced in my soul that no second baptism is required of me by my Lord. Nor of you--brother Wiebe, nor of any of those who are with you. If you would make an unbiased examination of the matter you will also find that no second baptism is required of you for your salvation. If you would be able to forgive me for saying so, I would wish to add that I am of the opinion that if anyone develops scruples with respect to their baptism, that this generally arises because such a soul has renounced the service of the world and of Satan, and has seized upon discipleship to Christ, thereby finding the essence of salvation. Satan sees this and would gladly recover these souls into his clutches, but he does not even try to bring these souls back into their former sins; rather he now attempts to bring these souls upon something whereby the power of the blood of Jesus is vitiated. Satan finds this to be possible through the second baptism of those who have already once been baptised upon their own desire and confession of sins.

Yes, my beloved, is it really so? If you could still be unprejudiced in the matter you would agree that you have come to experience the matter the same as me, that when such a value is placed upon baptism and the mode of baptism, as if everything alone is dependent thereon, this becomes the essence of the discipleship of such a faith. But in the process the crucifying of the old Adam and the denying of self and the world is forgotten, as we have had more than abundant opportunity to observe.

Oh, my beloved, do desist from your intentions, for through this you are more and more departing from the narrow path of simplicity in Christ. And one necessity leads to another; as soon as you have been rebaptised you are already standing in association with the entire family or church of baptists, which you have perhaps not even considered to this point. You receive visitors and accept foreign books for examination and likewise in one matter after another; in the end, your faith will be completely detracted from the simplicity in Christ. The unfolding of history will prove the truth of what I have stated here.

Now I will conclude for this time. If you will receive it from me in love, I will declare my principles and convictions to you in more detail. But for this time I ask of you that you read and examine the declaration of the beloved brother Peter Toews with an unprejudiced heart. I really do not have time for now to write in greater detail. Receive a heartfelt greeting from your loving fellow pilgrim.

*Gerhard Goossen*

## Letter Eighteen.

Gruenfeld, January 10, 1870.

To Abraham Klassen in Prangenau,

It presses so much upon my heart, in this our time, beloved brother how the Lord allows all of us to preach so earnestly about repentance, and how today the same is so precious for all of us for time and eternity. The Sunday after New

Years--upon repeated invitations--I had again driven to Fuerstenlandt in order to tell them of the Word of the Cross. A certain Kroeker lives there; he is the son of Kroeker from Fuerstenwerder, the so-called "large" Kroeker. The previous time when I was there, Kliewer--their pastor there--told me about this Kroeker and how he had come to some strange interpretations of many passages of Scripture. Later, during a visit at my place, Kliewer related to me how his errors were becoming greater. For example, he allows his wife and children to starve in order that they should receive the Holy Ghost, and more of the like.

And while I was there on the Sunday after New Years, that man all of a sudden came to my thoughts. I asked Kliewer, but he said that it was only getting worse with him; he is serving himself with misdealings against his servant, and against his wife and children. After we came out of the worship service at noon and we when had just finished seating ourselves around the table at Kliewer's for the noon meal, Kliewer's cook came and requested that he should quickly come with her for a moment. Both of us immediately stood up, and followed her. When we came there Kroeker was lying flat on the ground and panting with his arms and legs spread far apart. Kliewer went over to him and said, "Neighbour! Why are you lying on the ground, are you sick?" "No! go away," he screamed. He jumped up and ran to the Kleinstube with considerable spring in his stride. He ran against the door with all his might so that it flew open, he ran into the house, and with equally much force he ran against the barn door so that it flew open. Then he ran into the barn, through the barn and outside. This is how he ran around, jumping and leaping with incredible force, and falling to the ground many times.

Suddenly, he jumped up and ran to the stream which flows behind the wirtschaften. Now Kliewer was scared that he would fall into the water and drown. We ran to the stream and as we arrived he was lying on the bank. When he noticed us, however, he jumped up and ran into the water and threw himself in and slid up and down the river bank into the water. Fortunately, there was only a little water in the stream. We made our way to him and Kliewer begged him that he should come inside. He only stared at us with a stunned look and remained quiet. In accordance with his responsibilities as a minister, Kliewer asked him again, "Come Kroeker. Come inside, you are all wet, you'll get sick." "Away, all of you, get away," he screamed in reply and threw himself in the water. In the meantime many neighbours arrived and they went to him, picked him up, and carried him into the house, where they laid him upon the bench.

But soon he jumped up and wanted to outside again which, however, they did not allow. This made him very angry and he hit out with his fist and broke two window panes. He pushed his way through one of them with his head, presumably with the intention of making his escape that way, but they held him fast. After he had sat this way for a time he said to them, they should let him loose. He sat quietly for a time seemingly lost deep in heavy thoughts, rubbing his forehead and occasionally sighing deeply. After a while he straightened himself up and stared around himself with a crazy look, apparently he was very anxious, he was wringing his hands. Next he jumped around the room with a fierce power--once in this corner and then in the other corner--as if he was being hunted. If someone asked him something he gave only a stupid answer. He threw himself down as if he did so against his will and wallowed on the ground.

It was evident from his entire disposition that he was gripped by the fear of

Hell and that Satan had overpowered him. The frightful contortions of his face were a horrible expression of Hell. I drove away and up to today I have not heard anything more of this sad situation. Oh, beloved! What really are we if the Lord should ever draw back his hand from us. Satan tears and jerks about with such a person who finally comes to see the fearful pain of Hell. Oh, for it is awful! Much more terrible than one can even visualize. Oh, my beloved! This is what happens to a person when Satan wakes their conscience so that they feel the guilt of sin.

I was not aware of anything in particular when I started to write, and have written up to here. I wanted to write something to you, beloved brother Klassen, and to inform you of this which I have marked in black, in order that this and all similar circumstances can serve us as an earnest warning. But since this opportunity came about so unexpectedly, the time now will not allow me to write any more, and thus I am sending you this insignificant writing the way it is. Please receive it from me in love.

From your most insignificant brother who loves you all,

*Gerhard Goossen*

More on another occasion. Remember us in your prayers. My beloved wife is presently very sick. Do pray for her unto God that she might bear it faithfully. All of you, receive a heartfelt greeting and also write us something for our comfort and also for our strengthening.

---

## Editor's Note

The letters by Rev. Gerhard P. Goossen (1832-1872) to Aeltester Peter P. Toews (1841-1922) are from the "Peter P. Toews Document Collection." Courtesy of Milton and Margaret Toews, Neilburg, Saskatchewan, 1981, presently Abbotsford, British Columbia. Primary transcription of the Gerhard P. Goossen letters into German type was completed by Peter A. Plett (1898-1990), Landmark, Manitoba, in 1982.

Letter Seventeen, dated September, 1869, by Gerhard P. Goossen to Jakob A. Wiebe, Annenfeld, Crimea, was first published in 1986 in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph* (Steinbach, Man., 1986), pages 213-214. This letter was from a transcription by Abraham M. Friesen, December 24, 1869, and was preserved as part of the Johann P. Friesen Collection. Courtesy of The Archives, Evangelical Mennonite Conference, 440 Main Street, Steinbach, Manitoba. Letter Eighteen was found in the "Miscellaneous Kleine Gemeinde Collection," Mennonite Library and Archives, Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas, 67117, at page 127 as paginated by the editor--courtesy of John Schmidt, 1981.

# PART FIFTEEN

## JACOB A. WIEBE 1836-1921

### Chapter One

### Biography

A Biography of Aeltester Jacob A. Wiebe (1836-1921), Annenfeld, Crimea, South Russia, and later of Gnadenu, Kansas, with particular reference to the Kleine Gemeinde and Krimmer Mennonite Brethren relationships. By Dr. Leland Harder, Box 363, North Newton, Kansas, 67117, 1992.

---

#### Introduction.

With a mixture of gratitude and trepidation I accepted Delbert Plett's invitation to write this biography--*gratitude*, because of the new sources he has made available in his prior five volume history of the Kleine Gemeinde and in heretofore unpublished letters he has provided for this sixth volume; *trepidation*, because he undoubtedly knew that I would have to take issue with some of his own earlier hypotheses regarding Jacob A. Wiebe. In spite of my earlier critique of his profile of Wiebe,<sup>1</sup> we have remained good friends and colleagues in the further pursuit of the truth regarding the churches in which the two of us had our respective roots--the Kleine Gemeinde and the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren (henceforth "KG" and "KMB").

As a charismatic type of personality<sup>2</sup> and a participant in doctrinal controversies between the KMB and the KG in Russia and between both and the Holdeman Gemeinde in North America, Wiebe has been subject to numerous errors of interpretation. I have accumulated a list of some of the more glaring allegations:

1. That Wiebe married the daughter of the notorious Molotschna Colony Oberschulz, David A. Friesen.<sup>3</sup>

2. That Wiebe came from Ohrloff, the progressive church community led by the Aeltesten Bernhard Fast and Johann Harder.<sup>4</sup>

3. That Wiebe considered baptism a necessary requirement for salvation, valid only following an emotional instantaneous conversion experience, and that every baptism other than his own particular form of forward immersion was invalid.<sup>5</sup>

4. That Wiebe's rebaptism took place independently of the KG ministers and

congregations and without prior notice to them.<sup>6</sup>

5. That the KG came into complete disarray in the 1860s and that the KMB was "a deepened and improved extension of the old KG."<sup>7</sup>

6. That Wiebe's 1869 baptismal declaration was not acknowledged or responded to by the KG leadership.<sup>8</sup>

7. That Wiebe was an "apostate" from the "full gospel faith" of the KG due to some "fatal flaw in his character" that made him susceptible to "the winds of radical pietism."<sup>9</sup>

8. That the KG was a shortsighted narrow-minded sect within Mennonitism that sacrificed the Great Commission for the sake of non-conformity and withdrawal from the "worldliness" of the Grosse Gemeinde given to the ultra-conservative "narrowness of viewpoint and legalistic discipline."<sup>10</sup>

9. That the KMB practised forward immersion to avoid identification with the already established Mennonite Brethren in Russia.<sup>11</sup>

10. That the establishment of the KMB was an intentional secession from the KG.<sup>12</sup>

11. That there was no subsequent connections between the KG and the KMB.<sup>13</sup>

12. That Gnadenu, the KMB settlement in Kansas, never had a post office, forbade part singing, and practised trine immersion.<sup>14</sup>

In the course of writing this profile, I will have to argue with most of these allegations. However, the scope of this profile will be delimited by the nature of the assignment. As a part of the broader history of the KG, I will focus primarily on the role of Jacob A. Wiebe in the KG and the factors contributing to their separation in Russia in 1869. I will reinterpret the meaning of that separation in the emergence of the KMB, with particular reference to the continued uncertainty in that group concerning the principle of believer's baptism, the form of immersion versus affusion, and the admonitions received about creating yet another division in the Mennonite Commonwealth in Russia. The story of Gnadenu in Kansas has been so well documented that I can profile that immigrant KMB settlement with fewer strokes of the word processor, focusing instead on the personality of Jacob Wiebe in the context of Gnadenu. Finally, I will portray the renewed relationship between the KMB and KG in North America and also, by virtue of KG Aeltester Peter Toews' conversion to the Holdeman Gemeinde, the relationship between the KMB and this so-called Church of God in Christ, Mennonite.

### Wiebe's Childhood and Youth.

Jacob A. Wiebe (henceforth referred to mostly as simply *Jacob* or *Wiebe*)<sup>15</sup> was born in 1836 of mainline but religiously conservative Dutch-Prussian-Russian Mennonite stock. His immigrant paternal grandparents Dietrich and Aganetha Thimm Wiebe and their six children were part of a group of families that settled in the village of Neukirch, Molotschna Colony, in 1819.<sup>16</sup> His maternal grandparents, Franz and \_\_\_ Friesen Wiens and their family of ten children immigrated to the Molotschna in 1825 (village unknown). Their daughter, Anna Wiens, married Abraham Groening of Halbstadt in 1831, and they had two sons before Abraham died on April 27, 1834. On October 28 of that same year Anna married Jacob Wiebe (Sr.) of Neukirch, the oldest son of Dietrich and Aganetha Wiebe. These were the parents of Jacob A. Wiebe, their oldest of eight children.

As the most important figure in young Jacob's life, his mother, Anna Wiens Groening Wiebe had grown up in poverty. The family dairy farm near Marienburg, Poland, had been plundered by Napoleon's troops in search of food. So "they [had] travelled to Russia on foot with their meagre belongings on a two-wheeled cart drawn by a small horse, and they arrived destitute."<sup>17</sup> Anna had left home at the age of 15 to work out as a domestic, but she was highly motivated to educate herself by constant reading and to prepare herself for an avocation in home nursing and midwifery. Marriage at the age of 21 and remarriage at 24 with nine children by age of 42 had not completely deterred her. During the Crimean War (1853-56), after her second husband died and while she was still pregnant with her tenth child, she got deeply involved as a nurse to wounded soldiers in her own home.

After her second marriage to Jacob Wiebe in 1834 the young couple had bought a Kleinwirtschaft ("small farm", also called "half farm") in the village of Margenau several miles north of Neukirch.<sup>18</sup> Here son Jacob and his younger siblings grew up, helping with all the chores of a struggling agricultural enterprise. Their father was illiterate at the time of his marriage, but Anna taught him to read and write. The children remembered how he took his Testament to the field and read it while waiting for the horses to feed themselves. Jacob was only 17 when his father died, and the onset of the Crimean War caused near destitution for the family. He did his duty transporting supplies to the front not far from their colony, and bringing the wounded back for treatment. His mother's home nursing ministry became so burdensome at times that she told her children that she would give her farm to anyone who could relieve her of these duties. This may have been the inspiration for Jacob's own later avocation as a healer and bonesetter. He may also have gotten his concern for the sick and wounded through contact with a local healer in the nearby village of Lichtfelde. While treating a patient one day, the healer said he needed the fatty substance from a porcupine. Jacob went out and killed one, delivering the fatty parts requested.

In search for an occupation of his own, Jacob apprenticed himself to a blacksmith in Lichtenau, but returned home a year later with broken health. Bedridden for some time, he was nursed back to health by his mother, who also read the Bible to him. Her religious admonitions vied with less wholesome influences in the local village. Margenau was one of 49 villages established in the Molotschna Colony by the time of his father's death. Halbstadt was the oldest, established in 1804, and Margenau was the 21st, founded in 1819. It had a population of sixty families, nineteen of whom lived on full farms, ten on half farms, and thirty-one were landless. At one end of the village was the regional Margenau Mennonite Church, erected in 1832 and attended by conservative Flemish-oriented Dutch-Prussian Mennonites from the surrounding area. It was used primarily for Sunday morning services and otherwise for weddings and funerals. At the other end of the village was the tavern, open day and night. In the middle of the village was the one-room school, which until the reforms of Colony leader, Johann Cornies, was very primitive in teacher preparation, equipment, and methods. The teachers were typically "half farmers" who needed to supplement their meagre income by winter teaching. Consequently Jacob hardly learned to read and write, a handicap that plagued him for the rest of his life.

When Jacob was growing up, there was little perceived conflict between the

three institutions of his community. They all more-or-less served the needs of the people in their own peculiar ways. In Russia the Mennonites were permitted to establish a nearly autonomous theocratic commonwealth, largely self-governing, with specified "privileges", including freedom to administer their own churches and schools and to brew their own liquor. That was all part of the immigration contract. But for a heretofore persecuted minority who had always stood for the separation of church and state, the truly Christian community was never meant to include all members of a totally integrated society--both saints and sinners. The Anabaptist vision rejected responsibility for government which by definition requires the use of force. In the attempt to recover aspects of that vision, there were occasional reform movements that affected Margenau and people like the Wiebes and Wienses. The first began in 1812 when Klaas Reimer of nearby Petershagen and his followers established the KG in protest to the use of physical coercion in punishing deviants in the Mennonite community. Some members of the respective families were attracted to this minority movement pejoratively stigmatized by the Low German slurs, "De Kleengemensch" and "De Kleengemeenta"<sup>19</sup>

Another radical reform effort in the areas of education and agricultural economics was led by the Mennonite entrepreneur, Johann Cornies. It got mixed reviews in Margenau, where the Aeltester Heinrich Wiens (1842-47) was removed from his office by the secular authorities (the joint Russian-Mennonite Guardians Committee) when he opposed Cornies' efforts. It was a political power-play on the part of Cornies and the authorities.

In the area of moral reform, the religious awakening that began in nearby Gnadenfeld when Jacob was a youth, later known as the *Mennoniten Brüdergemeinde* (Mennonite Brethren Church), condemned specific types of conduct associated with the tavern--drinking and smoking, dancing and card playing, partying and lewd conversation. To get a handle on the manifest functions of such behaviour in the villages of the Molotschna, one needs to interpret it in the context of the human predicament in the Colony. Life in the Ukrainian steppes was hard for the majority of the Mennonite people. Disease was everywhere and the threat of premature death was constant. It was not unusual for married couples to experience a 50 per cent mortality rate among their children. How can people cope with that kind of pain and suffering? Most looked to their weekly Sunday church services for hope and comfort. Many turned to the Saturday evening parties for reassurance that life was worth living. Others found solace in both institutions and the way the church seemed to integrate all of the sacred-secular institutions of the community.

The later testimony of Jakob is revealing of the kind of atmosphere and mindset with which he grew up:

It cost the Lord a lot to rescue me and win me over completely, although I was warned about my sins by the earnest admonitions of my dear mother. As much as she knew, she protected us children from being lost. She often prayed at our bedside with her tender gentle hand on my brow, "Dear Children, may we finally all be with the Lord!" But we still had to contend with the enemy, who constantly tries to tempt humankind, for I was unsaved during this

time of my youth and lived in sin. My schooling during that dark time was very poor, so that I could hardly read or write. At one end of our village was the church, where copied sermons were read every Sunday; and I cannot remember ever seeing a Bible or Testament in that church. Edification through the Word of God was unknown, not really fostered. It was like we read in 1 Samuel 3:1, "And the Word of the Lord was rare in those days."

In our village at that time was a tavern, which today we might call a saloon; and that's where many (of us)<sup>20</sup> gathered in the pursuit of drunkenness and godlessness. Moreover, it was not unusual for the youth to gather in homes to entertain themselves with ungodly music and dancing, joking and foolishness. This is how we spent our time, and I have to confess to my sorrow: "I spent my whole youth smoking tobacco, playing and dancing."<sup>21</sup>

The parties mentioned by Jakob might seem like relatively benign diversions, especially for youth "sowing their wild oats," but in the wake of the spiritual-moral renewal of the time, such activity was condemned as worldly distractions from true delivery through radical conversion and commitment to a new life of communal Bible study, prayer, and mutual support and discipline.

### **Young Adulthood.**

The first major shift in Jacob's life, although certainly not a moral one, occurred a year or two after his father died in 1853. He left the support of his mother and siblings in the hands of two older half-brothers and moved to Halbstadt, the administrative centre of the Molotschna Colony. Here he secured employment as the coachman (driver) for the Colony Oberschulz (district administrator or mayor, David A. Friesen). Jacob's brother Peter said that he got the job when he demonstrated his bravery in the annual wolf chase.<sup>22</sup> On his fast steed he overtook a wolf before Friesen and the others caught up and killed it singlehandedly with a swing of his club. Friesen offered him the coachman's job on the spot.

The job had many fringe benefits although it certainly postponed any significant moral change in his lifestyle. As the driver for important persons in Russian government as well as Colony leadership, he was in a position to learn much about the wider world surrounding the provincial village of his youth. Later in retrospect he commented, "I loved this world and this world loved me!"<sup>23</sup> He happened to be working for one of the most ruthless, reactionary and uncaring of the colony administrators. Friesen had little sympathy for the plight of the poor and landless villagers, invariably favoured the wealthy landed class of Mennonites, and hated reform movements with a passion. Thus he reinforced the scandal of economic injustices in a society that could still not forget its Anabaptist ethic, love and fairness, and Jacob was caught in this web.

But the job certainly taught him much about horsemanship, a skill he used in his own later ministry as a circuit preacher. A nephew reminisced as follows: "His horses were always well fed, well groomed, and well trained. Even after his retirement, his horse would stand and wait obediently until he was in the buggy and took up the lines, then take off at a gallup. He trained his horses not with

whip and hard words but with gentle words, patience, and foresight.<sup>24</sup>

Most important of all, through his employment for Oberschulz Friesen, he met his future wife, Justina Friesen. She was not the daughter but likely a relative of the Oberschulz, the fourth of twelve children of his older brother, Johann. The following memory was preserved by Jacob's granddaughter:

There were two brothers, Messers. Friesen. My grandfather was employed by one of them as coachman and my grandmother was the daughter of the brother [or kinsman] who lived across the street. I have no idea which one was the Oberschulz, but both were of the upper echelon, that is wealthy. Grandfather, was busily engaged in taking guests home from a party at his employers house. When he was helping grandmother into the conveyance, she gave his hand a squeeze, which caused him great joy and gave him the courage to court her. When she passed away years later, she fell into a coma; but he said that when he took her hand in his, she gave it the same squeeze, which again gave him great pleasure and comfort.<sup>25</sup>

Jacob and Justina were married on April 11, 1857, but not before Jacob had been baptized, a prerequisite for all couples wishing to be married. Justina had already been baptized in her home church in Petershagen, which was part of the Lichtenau Mennonite Church. It was called the "Grosse Gemeinde" because over half of the population of the Molotschna belonged to it. It was the most routinized of the several regional churches, a contrast to the Ohrloff-Halbstadt Church from which it seceded in 1824. In 1841 the civil authorities known as the Guardian's Committee removed the Lichtenau Aeltester from office together with the Margenau Aeltester for "unauthorized interference in civil affairs," i.e., opposing the reform efforts of the progressive innovator, Johann Cornies.

For Jacob the baptismal rite of passage was accomplished on Pentecost Sunday, 1856, by the Lichtenau Aeltester Dirk Warkentin, who also performed the wedding, but at the home of the bride "with much food and drinking, and folk dancing, the customary way to celebrate such occasions."<sup>26</sup> After their wedding, the couple moved to the village of Ohrloff, 18 kilometres south of Halbstadt, where they purchased a "half farm" and operated an oil mill. Here also, as Jacob later wrote, "we got together with people who strove after a higher aim in this world."<sup>27</sup> This is a curious comment, dropped with no further elaboration. The implication was that a group of seekers began to meet to explore the deeper meaning of life. Did the group include Johann and Elisabeth Harder of Blumstein/Schoenau and Aaron and Anna Schellenberg of Ohrloff, with whom they later regrouped in the Crimea? Did they have the leadership of local ministers like Bernhard Harder and Franz Isaac, both of whom had such a vital influence on the wider Mennonite Commonwealth?

Their spiritual/ethical awakening had barely begun in Ohrloff when the Wiebes and some of their friends decided to move to the Crimea in 1860. The Crimean War (1853-56) had come to an end, and much of the land of the Muslim Tartars was up for sale. The Ohrloff group pooled their financial resources to purchase the small Tartar village of *Schuscha*, which they renamed "Annenfeld". That their first motive was economic rather than religious is indicated by Jacob's

memoirs:

Being still worldly minded we moved with other like-minded people to the Crimean peninsula and bought land there with the idea of becoming rich quickly with earthly goods. However, the gracious God, who does not want us to die in our sin but rather wants each one to be converted and live, also knew us in our sinful pursuits and set another goal for us. Instead of getting rich, we became poor. He allowed us to come to dire need through droughts, grasshoppers, and beetles that ruined our crops. The Lord even sent large poisonous spiders whose bite gave people terrible agony. Some even died from it. Through all of these trials, it pleased the Spirit of God to bring us out of our lost condition. I cried to the Lord for help and had a longing to read the Bible. Even though I could only read very poorly, the hunger after God's word was so great that I taught myself to read. My knowledge was so poor that I did not even know that the teachings of Jesus had been compiled in four Gospels. When I discovered that God set his standards of righteousness by the law that he gave Moses, I was completely lost. I came to great anguish of soul and called upon the Lord for grace and mercy.<sup>28</sup>

#### **Conversion and the KG Connection.**

In his interpretation of the documents, C. F. Plett observed how traumatic experiences were instrumental in leading Jacob to repentance and a firmer assurance of salvation:

Jacob's older half-brother, Abram Groening, had suffered long with gallstones and had found his way with the help of their mother so that he could pass away with confidence in 1862. Four years later, in 1866, a younger sister died as a young wife. She had married into another church where salvation was often preached. She had had an inner experience and was one of the quiet in the land. When she was on her death bed, she witnessed of what she had experienced. She could personally claim Romans 5:1-2, 1 Peter 1:3 and other verses. Here was a Christian's faith that had given confidence and hope over the grave and in their life peace and tranquillity. It was not only possible to know whether one was saved and had a living hope; the gospel demanded that assurance.<sup>29</sup>

By the time sister Helena died (March 1866), Jacob and Justina had lost four of their own infant children; they were to lose three more in Annenfeld. Jacob's spiritual struggle away from his agonizing sense of guilt to a freeing sense of inner peace and trust came to a climax during these years:

One day when I was thinking about my lost condition, my hard heart was so softened that I cried countless tears. The Lord gave me pardon for my life, so that I could acknowledge and confess my lost condition. Later on I saw this as a sign from the Holy Spirit that I

had received rebirth through the Word of God. When I read the Prophet Isaiah 53:4-5 ("Surely he has borne our grief and carried our sorrows . . .") and the call of Jesus, Matthew 11:28-30 ("Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest . . ."), I could begin to understand that Jesus had come just for such sinners as myself to free and to save us.<sup>30</sup>

Jacob's assurance of salvation was confirmed in a subsequent revival meeting led by the evangelist Bernhard Harder somewhere in their area. "My longing for righteousness was so great that the words were a comfort and an answer to so many prayers." Jacob could sing the hymns with abandon: "My heart is light, the clouds have left . . ." Following the benediction, Harder approached Jacob with a word of assurance, "Yes, the Lord has loved you so much that he gave his only son Jesus to you and to all of us."<sup>31</sup> Apparently Justina was not present for Jacob went home with a happy heart and told her all about it.

Jacob was not alone in his spiritual quest. Others like Justina and his dear friend, Aaron Schellenberg, had similar conversion experiences during that time. Justina wrote about hers in a letter to her family in Halbstadt dated April 11, 1866. "Examine your own relationship to Christ," she wrote. "I have examined my life and am trying to change things that are not right . . . I am sorry that I exhibited such pride in the past, especially in my dress . . . I don't want you to change just because of my letter, for each must be accountable for himself."<sup>32</sup>

Meanwhile in Annenfeld, the revival spread to others and midweek meetings were held for Bible study and prayer. "But how now to continue?" Jacob asked. "We felt a yearning for holy communion. I and several others felt the need to receive the 'baptism of faith.'<sup>33</sup> Jacob immediately thought of their prior acquaintances with the KG people in the Molotschna and their attraction to this committed body of believers "who had earlier separated themselves from the coming decline of the Grosse Gemeinde in order to strive for holiness, at least outwardly."<sup>34</sup> According to brother Peter, Jacob "had once been employed by one of the leading [KG] brethren and had observed how they led a quiet and separate life."<sup>35</sup>

Jacob and the Annenfelders might also have been acquainted with the KG Aeltester, Johann Friesen, if not personally, perhaps by reputation.<sup>36</sup> Friesen had a reputation among civil as well as church authorities as a Colony leader. He and Aeltester Johann Harder of the Ohrloff-Halbstadt Church often stood together against the other entrenched elders in the peaceful resolution of Colony disputes, e.g., in support of the Brüdergemeinde secession against the arbitrary prejudices of the Oberschulz David A. Friesen.<sup>37</sup>

It is evident also that Jacob and his group had contact with an existing KG group near them and that persons with KG origin were attending their meetings. As Delbert Plett explains,

A small Kleine Gemeinde group already existed in the Crimea at this time. It is noted that the later Crimean congregation included a good number of members with Kleine Gemeinde roots in the Molotschna. Therefore it is quite likely that the initial settlers in the Annenfeld area also included members of the Kleine Gemeinde who

had settled there individually. In any event it is known that the spiritual awakening was affecting others in the area. This included the Grosse Gemeinde minister, Peter Baerg (1817-1901), who lived in the village of Schwesterthal, which lay some 17 verst [18 kilometres] distant from Annenfeld. Aeltester Peter Toews has recorded that Peter Baerg became a member of the Kleine Gemeinde in 1864, most likely together with a number of other families. These together formed the nucleus of a small congregation . . . It was this Kleine Gemeinde congregation in the Crimea to which Jacob A. Wiebe and his fellow Annenfelders directed themselves for spiritual fellowship and brotherhood.<sup>38</sup>

Their KG Aeltester Johann Friesen visited this little group of believers in the Crimea and indicated that he was willing to organize them as a congregation. Jacob described the meeting as follows: "I discussed many things with the Aeltester concerning the sound teaching of the Gospel. We agreed in most points concerning the atonement, conversion, nonresistance, oath swearing, nonconformity to the world and to the large worldly churches."<sup>39</sup> The only point on which they could not come to agreement concerned "baptism upon our salvation producing faith." Actually, according to Jacob, they agreed in principle but not in practice:

He expressed his regret and said that they [the KG] did not have the [right] way and that the Aeltester before him [Abraham Friesen] had also felt that it [believers' baptism] should be practised; but since the Gemeinde as a whole was not in favour of it, he had finally found his own way, and he tried to console us also about it. The main point was to live a quiet life of sincere faith. Although I was not entirely consoled on this particular point of doctrinal teaching, we left it at that (one part the converted members), so by the hand of fellowship we joined that already longest separated Gemeinde. We observed holy communion and footwashing with them and found much consolation and happiness together.<sup>40</sup>

There was no mention of the immersion mode of baptism in the documents pertaining to this period, nor was there anything in the KG writings at this time to suggest that the question of affusion versus immersion had yet been raised or discussed. The issue was simply baptism on the basis of mature confession of faith, i.e., repentance and commitment. In fact, Jacob's nephew remembered that "the immersion form of baptism was a later development within this group. They considered regeneration of much greater importance, and in fact when they were organized as a Kleine Gemeinde unit *they would have been satisfied with some other form of baptism if upon faith.*"<sup>41</sup> The question of form was not an issue until 1868 at the earliest, several years later. Until then, the only question voiced by Wiebe and his group was whether baptism can have any *ex post facto* validity if it is performed before a person has truly repented. Wiebe seems to have vacillated in his struggle with this question. In his October 4, 1864, letter to his sister and her husband (presumably Cornelius and Helena Wiebe Wedel), he intimated that his

first baptism was not totally discarded:

Through searching and reading in the book of the Lord . . . and then carefully reflecting thereon, I have been convinced through the grace of the Lord regarding that which was formerly unknown to me. Although I had previously let myself be baptized in accordance with the above mentioned faith, to which many have testified with their death and affirmed, I did not have any knowledge of it, and what is more, I did not have this faith within me. . . .

[We] had allowed ourselves to be baptised, but now we have both promised obedience anew with hand and mouth before God and His Kleine Gemeinde, namely, we have renewed the covenant which we previously had made with God not ever to depart therefrom during our life times--neither to the right nor to the left--but to remain true to it unto death.

Delbert Plett appropriately asks "whether the Annenfelders were talking about a violent radical pietist style conversion or the quiet, peaceful gospel submission to Christ of the nonresistant Christians,"<sup>42</sup> but that is a separate question. Plett believes that the Annenfelders were being distracted by the waves of radical German pietism sweeping over the Russian steppes and that they were insisting on an instantaneous emotional-type conversion. That may be true for some of the Mennonite Brethren leaders and for an evangelist like Bernhard Harder, who had gone to the Lutheran pietistic evangelist Edward Wuest for counsel; but Wiebe knew little or nothing about Wuest and his movement. For Wiebe and the Annenfelders, the bottom line was a faith defined by a sense of forgiveness and a new birth experience as filtered through a biblicist understanding, e.g., John chapter 3. For Wiebe personal faith began in Annenfeld, not in Margenau, notwithstanding the nurture of faithful parents, nor in Ohrloff, notwithstanding the temporary association with friends "who strove after a higher aim in this world." One thing was certain to Wiebe: his faith did not begin in Halbstadt when he was baptized in order to be married by the Lichtenau Aeltester. That so-called baptism was *gross-werden*, "growing big" or "coming of age"<sup>43</sup> It was an anthropological rite of passage, not a spiritual rebirth. His was not the experience of persons like the KG leader, Peter Toews, whose baptism was a meaningful ratification of prior faith, although even Toews later voiced the same reservations about the *gross-werden* type of baptism and let himself be rebaptized by Holdeman, as we will note at the end of this chapter. What is important to note here is that Wiebe and the Annenfelders would likely have been content at this stage to be rebaptized by the KG form of affusion, but that the KG elder refused because he had no precedent for rebaptism as such. Plett seems also to sense the significance of the Aeltester's rejection of this simple benign request when he writes:

As they felt that they had not been truly converted at the time of their baptism in the Grosse Gemeinde, the Annenfelders also requested that they first be rebaptized. However, Aeltester Johann Friesen felt that this was contrary to Anabaptist-Mennonite

teaching<sup>44</sup> and to the rules of the Kleine Gemeinde and tried to explain that true faith and regeneration could also come after baptism which was only a sign of an honest desire to be converted to God. Although their request for rebaptism was not granted to the Annenfelders, they did join the Kleine Gemeinde in 1864. The failure to resolve the doubts as to their conversion and need for rebaptism was to have disastrous consequences for the Crimean congregation . . . Furthermore it appears that Aeltester Friesen was in error in holding that it was against the teaching of the Kleine Gemeinde to rebaptize in cases where no faith or conversion had existed at the time of the original baptism. In fact it seems that earlier leaders such as Aeltester Abraham Friesen equated baptism without even a kernel of honest faith with the baptism of an infant, as the sealing of an empty letter which was a total waste of water. *Consequently it appears that Johann Friesen erred in not granting the request of the Annenfeld group for rebaptism.*<sup>45</sup>

#### **Election to the Ministry.**

A new congregation needed a duly ordained ministerial leadership, and a important part of what an Aeltester had to do in forming the church at Annenfeld was to provide for it. However, because of the unfolding controversies in the Kleine Gemeinden in the Borosenko and Molotschna colonies (the so-called "1866 Division") which cast new doubts about Friesen's leadership, this task was indefinitely postponed.<sup>46</sup>

A consequence of these distractions was the postponement of the task of formalizing leadership in Annenfeld. Meanwhile, Peter Baerg and Jacob Wiebe shared preaching-teaching responsibilities. In the absence of a functioning Aeltester, Baerg may even have administered the sacraments as he had previously been elected to the ministry of the Grosse Gemeinde, and he had been a candidate for Aeltester at the time that Heinrich Enns was chosen. Moreover, the sources indicate that even before his eventual election to the KG ministerium, Jacob was repeatedly asked to come to the Colonies to help resolve the dissensions. Apparently his gifts for ministry were widely recognized and some of the participants in the disputes wanted him to take sides. Others wanted him to remain neutral and be a catalyst for reunion.

The first nine of Wiebe's letters in Chapter 2 were written during this period between October 4, 1864, and April 28, 1867. The editor of these letters correctly observes that "the transcription of the Jakob A. Wiebe letters was very difficult because of his poor spelling and handwriting, probably the worst of any of the letters in the Peter Toews collection." This fits Jacob's own self-identity as a self-educated person, trying to overcome near illiteracy as a youth and explains why he sometimes asked a friend or relative to write for him, or at least to edit and correct his letters. The first eight letters, however, appear to have been written by himself. In letter 1, he writes to his sister and brother-in-law (either Johann and Aganetha Wiebe Regehr or Cornelius and Helena Wiebe Wedel) about his recent conversion experience, enclosing a copy of a *Martyrs' Mirror*. In letter 2, he writes back to the "beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord" in Kleefeld and Lindenau in the Molotschna Colony whom he had just visited, particularly, the Gerhard

Goossens. In letter 3, he tried to give support to minister Gerhard Goossen, promising "to help set that which is inside into the light and to call right what is right and to leave in darkness what is dark." In letter 4, he encouraged minister Peter Toews to oppose the separation of Aeltester Heinrich Enns and his followers, declaring that "if they had been of us, they would have remained with us." In letter 5, he admonished his brothers and sisters on both sides of the division, "for how ashamed we must now stand before the world . . . we who were to taste and aspire to something sweet have instead encountered something bitter and sour." In letter 6, he advised Gerhard Goossen that "for the sake of God, no separation should be considered (and that) the beloved Ohm Enns has promised me that he wants to yield himself completely, and that he will submit himself to the judgement of the brethren." In letter 7, he lamented the allegation of Heinrich Friesen that Peter Toews' brother Cornelius, who was elected as minister in the Gruenfeld Gemeinde, "was so completely incompetent," and he encouraged Peter "to be true to your calling and to pasture the flock of Christ which has been entrusted to you." In letter 8, he replied to Peter Toews' letter to the KG Crimean congregation, writing mostly about several named members who were causing conflict over matters of land acquisitions, etc. The conflict had led to disciplinary action, restoration, and congregational renewal. Jakob and Justina were awaiting the birth of their sixth child, Abraham, who died shortly after birth like five of their previous infants. And in letter 9, he admitted to Peter Toews that he nevertheless cannot justify his brother's declaration "that he does not know whether it (i.e., his faith) came before or after his baptism." So Jacob wanted to decline Toews' invitation to come to Borosenko to intervene in the conflict, "for we want to remain unpartisan in the matter; nor are we truly familiar and knowledgeable regarding the same; and it brings in its wake such evil consequences of my being there." The C. Toews matter concerned his having been put under the ban by Aeltester Heinrich Enns. In a postscript, Jacob reconsidered and wrote that "I [still] do not expect to come, but should it be the will of the Lord, I will come on Ascension Day."

Jacob's formal election to the ministry finally occurred on December 3rd., 1867, with Aeltester Heinrich Enns and fellow KG ministers present. Toews wrote as follows:

On my fourth journey from Blumenhoff to the Molotschna since my call to the ministry, Abraham Loewen and I accompanied Ohm [Heinrich] Enns, Gerhard Goossen, and Abraham Klassen on a journey to the Crimea. By this time, through the grace of God, trust in the Aeltester and peace in the Gemeinde had been restored. On December 3, 1867, Jakob Wiebe was elected a minister of the Gemeinde in Annenfeld by a majority of seven votes. On December 5, 1867, the baptism of two young men was performed. The number of the brothers and sisters was 22. On December 6, 1867, we left for home . . .<sup>47</sup>

Several things are not clear in this entry. One is the meaning of "majority of seven votes." As Baerg already had ministerial credentials,<sup>48</sup> it is unlikely that this was a contest between Baerg and Wiebe in which the latter won by seven votes.

Jacob's brother Peter wrote that "the brothers J. A. Wiebe and P. Baerg were [both] chosen as preachers."<sup>49</sup> But were there two KG congregations in the Crimea, one in Annenfeld (where Wiebe was the minister), and one in Schwesterthal (where Baerg ministered)? The assumption has always been that they met as one congregation. In his autobiography, Jacob wrote that "soon it was time for a preaching election, and . . . the lot fell on me."<sup>50</sup> The reference to the use of the lot compounds the mystery. In any case, Jacob expressed some more reservations about his readiness for the ministry:

I again came into great sorrow, whether I had sufficient joy in the Lord following the forgiveness of my sins. The love of God had come into my heart through the Holy Spirit, which had been given me; but in this holy calling I felt my poverty, my weaknesses, and my lack of learning so severely. I cried to the Lord for light, and it came to me to accept in the name of the Lord and to go on from here as the shepherd of our little group.<sup>51</sup>

Some of Jacob's expression of trepidation can be discounted as an effort to highlight God's overruling grace in the face of human weakness, after the example of Moses and Jeremiah. Toews and the other Gemeinde leaders probably read it as proper humility for any minister and hence as in fact reinforcing Jacob's qualifications. Most of the extant letters written back and forth contain similar self-deprecations. Moreover, these self-doubts prompted a mutual support compact described by Wiebe in letter 4 to Peter Toews, "Oh how often I think of the circumstances at the time when you, Goossen, and I promised to come to each other's aid if anyone of us felt like giving up," and again in letter 6, "Oh beloved brother, I think of the time when I sat in my room and was disturbed regarding my ministerial office, so that we promised each other to come to each other's aid."

### Three Events of 1869.

One month after his election, Jacob "and a number of brethren from the Crimea" travelled to Blumenhoff in Borosenko Colony for a Conference called to resolve a dispute there. Cornelius P. Toews had been placed under the ban briefly in 1857 as a young man,<sup>52</sup> and the question now arose whether he could serve as a minister having once been under the ban. On January 5th, 1868, Wiebe preached the sermon using 1 John 3:21 as his text, "Beloved, if our conscience does not condemn us, we can have gladness towards God." On the 6th a ministerial election was held in Gruenfeld north of Borosenko, and C. Toews was elected to the ministry by 18 out of 24 votes in spite of the ban. This action had serious repercussions and the old conflict surfaced anew. In his autobiography, Jacob mentioned a visit to the congregations with which he had had prior connections in the Molotschna and in Borosenko which "he now found in a loveless condition, which concerned me very much."<sup>53</sup> Aeltester Enns offered to resign his office, and although he vacillated in this offer over the next eighteen months, the resignation was finally accepted on August 14, 1868.

During those months, however, three things happened involving Wiebe and the welfare of the KG. The first was Wiebe's election as Aeltester. This occurred at the beginning of 1869, although again the formal ordination service was put off

until the following Easter.<sup>54</sup> Just before Easter Peter Toews wrote that they had received Jacob's request for action and were entrusting the service to Peter Baerg, adding,

... that we also hope that you will now be much more at peace with your conscience through the comfort and conviction of the will of God and that you will feel ordained, and therefore also recognize your obligations, and that you might now amend your stated wishes so that instead of you awaiting a visit from us over Easter, you will not allow us to await for the same from you . . . Indeed, we hope that having once been called as a servant by God and His Gemeinde, you would come to us . . . and in the complete fulfilment of your office . . . serve all of us here with baptism and holy communion.<sup>55</sup>

In his notes on KG developments, Toews wrote that "there were many letters collected regarding this matter [of Wiebe's ordination as Aeltester]", but he failed to elaborate.<sup>56</sup> He did say, however, that Jacob Wiebe succeeded Heinrich Enns as Aeltester, indicating that Enns was already on his way out of the office, even though he had not yet formally resigned.<sup>57</sup> Part of the reason for the delay of ordination had to do with Jacob's request for the presence of the Borosenko/Molotschna leaders: "I would dearly wish to be ordained by you beloved Ohm T[oews], G[oossen] and L[oewen], as well as our beloved Ohm Baerg, so that with the help of God, I can commence work as a duly ordained servant." (Letter 11, below). As of this date, none of these three was an ordained elder, and Jakob argued that "we do not find any grounds in the Scriptures to have the ordination performed by another Aeltester" (Letter 12). That these brethren could not come because of the internal dissensions and let the local KG minister Baerg do it was apparently a big disappointment for Jacob. Toews did say, however, that some brethren from the Molotschna were present.

The second event was the special day of reconciliation of the two major KG divisions, led by their two respective Aeltesten, one the so-called Blumenhoff Gemeinde now led by Jacob Wiebe, and the other the Heubodner (Friesen) Gemeinde led by Abraham L. Friesen.<sup>58</sup> Peter Toews preserved the major documents chronicling this event, including his own April 2, 1869, Epistle for Reconciliation, the Reconciliation Conference of May 6th in Borosenko and May 19 in the Molotschna, and the Deed of Union written at the first conference.<sup>59</sup> According to Toews, Wiebe led out in all three developments, both through his letters and his presence. Although the letters are not extant, Toews recorded sentences from two of them: "Of your joining together I can say little more than that I wish we could all become united and live together with one another in love and peace and fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, this is a serious undertaking". "If it is possible to join together, perhaps we can all remain as ministers."<sup>60</sup> In his Epistle for Reconciliation, Toews addressed Wiebe with the words, "We commit this even more to you, beloved brother Wiebe, for an earnest examination because you have so lovingly counselled us in favour of a reconciliation before you even had an opportunity to personally satisfy yourself of everything."<sup>61</sup>

Indeed, May 6th must have been a significant day of reunion. Delbert Plett writes that,

. . . the reconciliation represents a major retrenchment and strengthening of the Kleine Gemeinde and also demonstrated that the worst of the doubts and demoralization left in the wake of the 1866 division had finally been overcome. This amalgamation also represented the last major ecclesiastical restructuring of the Kleine Gemeinde in Russia so that the group was now represented by the Blumenhoff Gemeinde and the considerably smaller Heubodner Gemeinde in the Nikopol area, and the Crimean and Molotschna Gemeinden, which were closely allied with the Gemeinde centred in Blumenhoff, Borosenko.<sup>62</sup>

While it is likely that the KG leadership attended both conferences, having them in both colonies enabled more of the lay members to participate in the reconciliation. Peter Wiebe, the younger brother of Jacob, was present at the May 19th meeting in the Molotschna and was quite enthusiastic about it:

Br. J. A. Wiebe preached an earnest sermon in a large barn in Fischau using Jer. 3:12-14: "Return, faithless Israel," etc. Many other powerful Bible verses were also quoted, and finally a state of reconciliation came. I, P.A. Wiebe, attended the reconciliation. This day was declared a day of great blessings. For closing, after the reconciliation, holy communion was observed.<sup>63</sup>

The third event of those momentous weeks was the baptism under protest of several young people. This took place during the Conference at Blumenhoff, followed by Holy Communion. Toews recorded that Wiebe "first baptized three young women."<sup>64</sup> In his autobiography, Wiebe remembered that it was "six souls."<sup>65</sup> The significant thing about this event was not the number of baptismal candidates but the fact that he performed the ordinance with "fear and trembling":

Soon I was also elected as Aeltester, ordained and called to unite the separated congregations of the Molotschna and as it turned out, to serve them with baptism and communion. I explained openly, before I performed the baptism by pouring for six souls, that I could do so only with fear and trembling. As it then turned out, I experienced great personal unrest; and after much struggle and prayer, I came to the conviction in this regard not to do this any more until I myself had received a biblical baptism on the basis of my saving faith.<sup>66</sup>

In spite of the fact the Jacob specifically mentioned "pouring" as the baptismal form that was used, the prior issue was still "baptism on the basis of saving faith." He was apparently concerned about the young age of the candidates and whether or not they were spiritually mature enough for this step. The other aspect that bothered him was that he was performing the baptism when he himself

had not yet personally submitted to a true believer's baptism. He made this explicit in a bit of verse he composed for a special meeting in Annenfeld:

Als ich sechzig Malen  
Aufgetreten war,  
Wurd' es mir vor allen  
Offenbar und Klar--  
Was ich ausgestanden  
Wegen meiner Tauf',  
Bis wir endlich fanden  
Wie Jesus ward getauft!<sup>67</sup>

As I stepped up to preach  
For sixty times,  
The truth I had to reach  
Got clear as chimes--  
What I so long had sought  
For baptism norm,  
Was found in what was taught  
by Christ's own form!

After his sixtieth sermon, Jacob kept his congregation together and declared himself free to be rebaptized "upon the foundation that Jesus had laid." He added that "many agreed with me, and the Lord led us on from there."<sup>68</sup> Only after it became crystal clear to the Annenfelders that they should now be rebaptized on the basis of their confession of faith did the question of form seriously arise. Then they proceeded to search the Scriptures for guidance on this secondary aspect of the baptismal issue. The following reminiscence of Jacob's brother Peter clearly establishes the sequence:

The little group in the Crimea finally came to the conclusion not to judge others, nor to demean them, but to adhere to their inner convictions regarding the teaching of Jesus, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be damned!"

Then the question emerged: How shall one baptize? We wanted the form of our baptism to conform to what is taught in the Word of God and the example of the apostolic churches in the time of martyrdom. Paul wrote in Romans 6:3, "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?" We read in John 19:30: "Jesus said, 'It is finished,' and he bowed his head and died." Also in Luke 12:50, as Jesus spoke about his work on earth and the completion of it, he said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how I am constrained until it is accomplished!" The victory in this suffering baptism was obtained on his knees and was clearly recorded for us in Matthew 25:36-46 and Luke 22:41-43. Jesus, as he went for baptism, came to the Jordan. As he was baptized, it was said, "He went up out of the water," Matthew 3:16. We came to the conclusion therefore that as the suffering baptism occurred on the knees, our baptism should also be received on our knees . . . in the water.<sup>69</sup>

### **The Baptismal Disputation in the KG.**

All of the extant correspondence between the Annenfelders and the KG leaders concerning these aspects of the baptismal issue transpired between May and October of 1869. Peter Toews referred to the exchange of many letters on the subject, mentioning specifically the letter from the Crimean KG minister, Peter Baerg, the so-called "declaration" from the Aeltester Jacob Wiebe, a letter from

Cornelius Enns, and many others, adding that "to put all this material together in an orderly manner would comprise a book in itself."<sup>70</sup>

The letter from Baerg arrived in late July. Toews wrote that "he advised us that after the presence there [Annenfeld] of a number of men including the Aeltester of the secessionists [Brüdergemeinde], Peter Hiebert of Liebenau, our Aeltester Wiebe, and a number of members, certain ones wanted to change the baptism to have themselves rebaptised, and in fact wished to allow themselves to be dipped under water." Toews advised his readers to consult the letter for further information. We can do the same, for the letter, dated July 21, 1869, is still extant (see the Baerg letter collection elsewhere in this volume). The letter is somewhat vague but explicit enough to get a picture of the disputational process in the Crimea:

Three men [Brüdergemeinde] came from the Molotschna to serve Abraham Walls with baptism. Ohm Wiebe went over there in order to speak with them regarding temporal matters but not of spiritual matters—which is what he himself told me. On Sunday evening the three aforementioned men went to Ohm Wiebes, and Corn. Enns also went there, and, as I have understood, others from our brethren went there as well.

As I have heard they are to have been there almost until midnight and speaking about baptism, so that Ohm Wiebe said to me that it had been a disputation. Before we separated, he said to me that there would hardly be anyone else who would be as curious to partake of baptism as I! To this I replied, "I hardly think so!" But before they proceeded with the baptism [discussion] they again were at Ohm Wiebe's for almost four hours. Some of our [KG] brethren were also there and set themselves in opposition, the way they said. These men were to have expressed themselves that they had hope for the Annenfelders. But in Johannesruh, they were to have talked to our [KG] brethren that they had made a good beginning and that they would come again. But of the Annenfelders they had said they are factious, other than Corn. Enns—they had hope for him. The one man is to have stayed for night with Enns and they are to have spoken of many things. It happened one time that I came into a discussion with Enns regarding the baptism. He told me that the man had persuaded him with the verse by Peter, Chapter 3:21, when he says, ". . . not the putting away of the filth of the flesh . . ." The man had said that it was to be understood from this verse that the water was also to serve to some extent for the cleansing of the body. Which Enns had also conceded to him. But I replied to Enns, that the baptism could not serve for any cleansing of the body, for Peter says, ". . . not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God." But he believed the man more than me, so that I went away sorrowfully.

The letter further positions Baerg in the disputation as resolutely opposed to any change in the form (from affusion to immersion) and the idea of rebaptism

(whether by immersion or affusion).

The declaration by Wiebe served well to clarify his thinking on the baptismal issue. Although the original document was lost, a copy of the document, or at least the most important part of it, was preserved at Gnadenu and later published in the KMB paper, *Der Wahrheitsfreund*.<sup>71</sup> Jacob began his declaration with a review of events leading up to this decision to be rebaptized--their pre-conversion anxieties, his election as elder, his mission tour through the KG congregations performing the ordinances of baptism and communion, his reservations about baptizing when he himself had never really been baptized on the basis of his faith, and his eventual decision to postpone any further such baptisms until that act had been accomplished.

This recital of developments is followed by his rationale for both believer's baptism in principle and immersion baptism "on the basis of one's saving faith." He asserts (somewhat presumptuously) that their KG founders made a "big mistake . . . in that the directions in the Bible concerning holy baptism were not heeded." By directions he means not just the mode of baptism but primarily the principle of believer's baptism. To make this point he quotes Klaas Reimer, KG founder, who called the Grosse Gemeinde a Babylon. He asks whether the Babel of the unconverted can be truly baptized, implying that it's not too late to restore believer's baptism even now.

Then he moves to a second related issue, the question of salvation assurance. On behalf of the Annenfelders he wants to argue for the doctrine of assurance, not on theological but on experiential grounds, "for God's Spirit has given us a sign that we are children of God, Romans 8:14-16." Jacob acknowledges that this issue has been divisive in the KG, and he laments that fact. But in view of the fact that "Menno taught so seriously about the new birth and that a Gemeinde shall consist of sincere children of God who know their filial relationship to God, Romans 5:1-5, how shall it be then when for pride and haughtiness one part of the Gemeinde is intolerantly opposed to the position we have obtained through much prayer and tears on our knees?"

Finally Jacob wants to express his continuing gratitude for the love the Annenfelders have felt from their KG brethren, "who came forward and preached the Word of God to us, so that we could continue to grow and build ourselves up as living stones, [and] although our desire to be immersed on the basis of our faith was not fulfilled, we still had many blessings with each other and blessed hours in the Lord. We were agreed in the Lord to walk on the narrow path which leads to eternal life."

The last paragraph speaks to the question of who broke fellowship in the KG in 1869. I will return to that question at a later point, but it can be observed here that in mid-year 1869, Jacob was still assuming that they belonged to the same Gemeinde, and he was not wanting to express a break-to-be-faithful attitude. On the contrary he was trusting them to hear him out and to give the Annenfelders a serious response to their concerns so that together they could test the validity of their arguments in the light of biblical authority and go forward together in faith and obedience. What worried him most as he brought his declaration to a close was another division in the Gemeinde:

But how sad are the conditions now with the lovelessness and the

various splits in our Gemeinde in the Molotschna and Borosenko? At one time during one of my circuit tours, things were united in accordance with the Scriptures: "Turn again, you rebellious Israel!" I again took courage and believed that our troubled travels were led by God's grace. But now we hear that the Gemeinde has been split into three divisions. Oh, if only help would come to us! Still we lift our eyes unto the hills from whence our help comes and console ourselves with the words of Jesus, Luke 12:32: "Fear not, little flock, for it is my Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Splits in the Gemeinde are proof that the true signs of the disciples of Christ are missing, John 13:35.<sup>72</sup>

The implication of Jacob's last sentence is that when splits occur, the initiative always comes from the unfaithful side!

The long letter by Cornelius Enns (1832-1879) dated August 15, 1869, represents the Annenfelder position on baptism as viewed by a knowledgeable and articulate layman. Enns was the son of the former Aeltester Heinrich Enns, Wiebe's predecessor in office.<sup>73</sup> It was addressed to his father and siblings, but it apparently circulated among other KG leaders for in their responses to Wiebe's declaration, both Gerhard Goossen and Peter Toews referred to it.

In the opening paragraphs of the letter, Enns laments the new outbreak of conflict among KG elders. He also laments that "Ohm Wiebe" did not intervene more directly to resolve the quarrels. Then he moves into complex issues of baptism "which we have observed from generation to generation without evaluating it in the light of the Old Testament and the New Testament and the writings of the forefathers to see whether our traditional baptism is still a real baptism." He acknowledges that they do not know how much water the martyrs used but the Annenfelders are determined "to go according to the pure Word of God and not accept any man-made rituals, no matter how old or holy they appear to be." He referred to the witness of the "Ausgetretene," presumably the Mennonite Brethren, "who have a baptism more in conformity to the Word of God than ours [and] we have never been able to show them from Scripture that they were wrong." On the contrary, they have clearly demonstrated "that the baptism which we have is no right baptism . . . a sign and a seal and symbol of repentance . . . Of what is baptism to witness when conversion follows it?" Then to show that a biblical baptism requires both repentance and immersion, Enns devotes many paragraphs to various proof texts from the Bible, the Martyrs' Mirror, and the Anabaptist writings of Menno Simons, Georg Hansen, and Dirk Philips.

Accordingly, a person who has been converted and is a disciple of Jesus must be baptized completely in water, and get out of the water of baptism and continue to live the newness of life. But if that newness of life is not there, and even if he were baptized with water by Paul or Peter or Christ Himself, it were of no use, not even if he were baptized from above with the fire of the Lord and Spirit . . . Let each one examine himself in light of the Word of God, whether he is saved and whether he has a baptism based upon faith as we have been commanded. I want to examine myself together with you

. . . In these last and sad days the Lord still wants to have a group of people who have the right form like the first, so as to put to shame and to reject the perverted baptism of Christendom in general.

In a postscript, Enns reports that their wheat has been cut and is ready to be threshed. Having dispatched two major declarations, the Annenfelders now waited anxiously for responses. That they expected dialogue and a mutual discernment process is clear from Jacob's next letter, written on September 3rd, before any response had been received. Although by now he had about made up his mind "to allow myself to be baptized according to the example of Jesus," he hoped that this act would not cause a schism in the Gemeinde, for "I do not know how we could continue if we would actually part company." The decision they are in the process of making seems momentous, and this is "a difficult time," not just "for those who do not look after their soul's salvation," or "for those who continue along carelessly and do not search in God's Word," but also "for those who do not merely search but also do it . . . for woe is upon us if we are in error, but what if we are right?" Jacob would prefer to discuss these things face-to-face believing that then "we will agree on everything." In a postscript he adds the sad news that his daughter Justina died on the 14th of July after a severe 3-day illness. It was the sixth child of Jacob and Justina to die in infancy with only one, now age 10, having survived!

We turn now to the responses to Enns and Wiebe from the KG leaders in Borosenko. We know of at least four responses, three from Borosenko KG ministers Gerhard Goossen, Peter Toews and Gerhard Schellenberg, and one from Gerhard S. Kornelsen, a KG school teacher from Lichtenau, Molotschna.

Gerhard Goossen (1836-1872) was a minister in the village of Gruenfeld on the northern side of the Borosenko Colony. For seventeen years he had been a schoolteacher in the Molotschna villages of Fischau, Liebenau and Lindenau. At the time that Heinrich Enns was elected as Aeltester over Peter Baerg, Goossen was elected as minister. In November of 1868, he moved to the village of Gruenfeld to farm and also subsequently to join the multiple ministry there. Meanwhile for some reason Aeltester Enns developed a mistrust of him, including some grave accusations. Members of their respective Gemeinden in Blumenhoff and Gruenfeld took sides quickly, and a new schism started to develop. Six months later, Enns resigned his office "for the best interest of the Gemeinde."

Now a year later, Goossen has read the letters from Baerg, Wiebe, and Enns, regarding the baptismal disputation in Annenfeld, and he is very upset at what appears to be another emerging schism. He writes in early September and is aware that his colleague Peter Toews is writing from Borosenko at about the same time. He wants above all to stop what seems like a revolt in Annenfeld, but the most telling characteristic of his letter is the way he avoids addressing the issues raised by Enns and Wiebe. Instead he tries to shame Wiebe into recanting by accusing him of pride and disobedience to his call as Aeltester. He admits impurities and failures in the Borosenko churches but asks,

Should not all our deficiencies and failures, our lukewarmness and indolence, much more inspire you towards a heartfelt sympathy for

us and direct and compel you with complete earnestness and the gifts which [you] have been provided, as if you were a herald chosen by God and the Gemeinde, to truly work against the same and zealously position yourself before the fissure? Instead you are becoming weak and without trust toward the whole.

Goossen applies Galatians 1:6 to Wiebe, "I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and turning to a different gospel--not that there is another gospel." The question of obedience to his call as Aeltester was an important question to ask in its own right, but it was just as irrelevant to the Annenfeld questions as the Annenfeld questions must have seemed to Goossen. He claims that he would like to discuss their questions in person and that he could easily refute their arguments in person, but he declines to do so in a letter. Since he cannot travel to Annenfeld now because his wife is sick in bed, he resorts to arguments of another kind. He believes that Wiebe has changed his views about baptism under the influence of Satan, for "we know that Satan will use his great cunning and might because he knows that he has only little time left within which to bring everything into ruination and if possible to lead astray the very elect."

Goossen refers to the blessed times they have had together in the Lord "without a second baptism," and he declares that "I can say with truth without having felt any need for the same." Again the question of the need or appropriateness of rebaptism for a person who grew up in the faith of the forefathers is an important question, to which we will return later in the chapter; but that was not Wiebe's basic question as one whose first baptism was not only meaningless, it was blasphemous. Yet in bypassing Wiebe's question, Goossen has the temerity to tell him that "I am totally convinced in my soul that no special baptism is required . . . of you brother Wiebe, nor of any of those who are with you." Then he repeats his allegations about Satan's subtle influence at work in Annenfeld and brings his letter to a close.

Given the depth of spirituality in the quest for biblical truth in Annenfeld, it is not difficult to imagine how Goossen's argument was received. He refused to take their questions seriously and instead tried to refute them, not by the biblical process of mutual discernment according to Matthew 18:19, but by imputing the integrity of their search for truth. A redeeming feature of Goossen's letter is his announcement that Peter Toews will be writing more specifically to the questions raised by Wiebe and Enns and the implication that their letters should be read together. To read Goossen's letter as a kind of postscript to that of Toews helps to ameliorate some of the above critique.

The date of Toews' letter was August 31, 1869. Peter Toews (1841-1922) grew up in the devout KG home of Johann and Maria Plett Toews. The father's commitment to the Anabaptist-Mennonite vision and to the KG was a wholesome influence on his children. Peter never knew a time when he did not want to be an active participant in the Gemeinde, and he was prepared for leadership at an early age.<sup>74</sup> He was elected to the ministry at the age of 25 (1866) and to the eldership at 29 (1870). His rapid rise to leadership occurred during a time of disharmony in the KG, and he used his charismatic authority to work patiently to reunify the several factions, particularly spearheading the formal events of reconciliation of

May 1869. Although Aeltester Wiebe's participation in Toews' mission helped to bring it about, his declaration on rebaptism created a new shock wave in the Gemeinde within weeks after the new hope for restored unity had barely begun, and it presented minister Toews with one of the severest challenges to his leadership at age 28. Intellectually he was better equipped to deal with Wiebe's questions than Goossen, and he certainly was no theological match for Wiebe; but still he also largely missed the central point of the Wiebe-Enns declaration.

Unlike Goossen, Toews attempted to deal with what he thought to be Wiebe's baptismal questions; but like Goossen, he failed to perceive that what bothered Wiebe most was not the form but the principle of believer's baptism. Consequently he dealt mostly with the form question and gave the question of principle only passing attention. Thus, the letter opens with a gross misunderstanding: "I have read your letter with great sorrow and perceive therefrom your declared understanding for the changing of your baptism, *for the reason that the same had not occurred in a stream according to Scripture.*"

Unfortunately for the rest of the letter, that was not Wiebe's reason for requesting rebaptism. On the issue of form, however, Toews scores repeatedly with numerous source references from the *Martyrs' Mirror*, Dutch Anabaptists Dirk Philips, Menno Simons, Johann Schobali, Herman Schijn, Georg Hansen, and Peter Jan Twisk, some of whom had argued from Scripture and all of whom appear to validate pouring (affusion) as the more common mode of baptism used by the 16th century Anabaptists. Toews readily acknowledged that some biblical and Anabaptist baptism was done in a body of water, but he denies that this necessarily implied immersion. From his New Testament concordance he counted many usages of the verb "sprinkling" but only two of "immersing." While none of these refer specifically to baptism (although Toews asserted mistakenly that Hebrews 9:10 did), he was arguing from comparable Hebrew ceremonial usages, e.g., sprinkling the blood on the altar. His point was that "affusion was also a valid baptism . . . and I would also allow (immersion) to stand as a baptism."

This idea had great possibilities for a breakthrough in the disputation, reminiscent of the Acts 15 compromise that resolved the Jew-Gentile dispute in the early church, and led Toews to make his climactic challenge to Wiebe: "Do at least retract to the point that you would recognize affusion as a valid baptism . . . I might not have written anything at all if you, beloved brother, had not declared baptism by water, namely by pouring, as being so completely worthless." Would that Wiebe had picked up on this admonition, either by denying the charge of rejection and/or by responding positively to the offer of a trade-off. At the very least it would seem that there should have been room for further dialogue and discussion, but apparently the sides polarized, the discernment process broke down, and there was a new division crying out for the same commitment to unity that produced the Day of Reconciliation the previous May.

### **The Rebaptism in Annenfeld.**

But the new day of reconciliation did not come about. On September 21st, there was a service of rebaptism in Annenfeld. A core group of some 17 persons had decided together that Cornelius Enns would baptize Jacob Wiebe, who would then baptize the others. Jacob preached on Jeremiah 6:16, "Thus says the Lord: 'Stand by the roads and look and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way

is, and walk in it, and find rest for your souls."<sup>75</sup> The names of those who were rebaptized were Jacob Wiebe, Justina Wiebe, Cornelius Enns, Katharina Enns, Johann M. Fast, Maria Fast, Peter Wohlgemuth, Helena Wohlgemuth, Aaron Schellenberg, Anna Schellenberg, Gerhard Bushman, Justina Bushman, Gerhard Wohlgemuth, Justina Wohlgemuth, Peter Harms, Frau Harms, and Frau Willems.<sup>75</sup>

Certainly it was not clear whether Wiebe and the Annenfelders seceded from the KG or were angrily rejected and left with no alternative but to comply or to rebaptize. If there was little in the writings of Wiebe to indicate that the Annenfelders were totally rejecting any validity at all in the traditional Gemeinde baptism when the recipient had placed no obstacle in the way of a true discipleship, there was little in the responses of Goossen and Toews to suggest that rebaptism in Annenfeld was not being construed as an act of secession. Reconciliation in that situation required a willingness on the part of both parties to continue the search for truth under the authority of the Scriptures until unity was restored. There were signs, to be sure, that neither party was fully willing to do that; but there were also indications (1) that Wiebe did not want to leave the Gemeinde and (2) that he was the one who felt rejected:

1. In his letter to Toews dated Nov. 19th, after receipt of the responses from Borosenko, Wiebe wrote: "I [still] feel myself to be very closely bonded with you."<sup>76</sup>

2. In his letter to KG leader Johann Enns dated February 19, 1881, Jacob looks back to the autumn weeks of 1869 and reflects: "Oh, what blessed hours I experienced together with some you! I also believe that your love to me at that time was completely true and childlike. But not long thereafter I stood as a driven-out wild animal to you, so that the question of the Apostle Paul to the Galatians came to me, 'Am I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?' Gal. 4:16."<sup>77</sup>

The day before the baptismal service, the KG minister Gerhard Schellenberg wrote a letter to Jacob Wiebe, which arrived some days or weeks later. Schellenberg (1827-1908), originally of Ohrloff, was a brother to Aaron Schellenberg of the Wiebe group. He was a KG minister in the Borosenko Colony, having been elected in 1866. Four years later he and a fellow minister were removed from their offices, the latter for "carelessness in allowing his cattle to stray unheeded and other similar incidents, so that confidence in him had diminished," and Schellenberg for "overstepping of a boundary while harvesting hay and subsequently the inadequate acknowledgement."<sup>78</sup> These charges came a year after the latter wrote his letter to Wiebe, but the first part of the letter was about "my sins concerning which you remind me." There are only two brief references to Schellenberg in Wiebe's extant letters (numbers 2 and 12 below), but one can readily surmise that Wiebe's frequent admonitions about quarrelling and divisiveness in the KG had put him on the defensive. He felt like Peter, "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak" (Matt. 26:41). Then he asked Wiebe to repent also, to repent of his declaration that only baptism by immersion was valid, and that baptism by affusion was not. Like Toews, Schellenberg expressed agreement with Wiebe and Enns that faith should normally precede baptism, but both disagreed that the faithlessness of the minister or recipient necessarily invalidates baptism. Schellenberg cited 1 John 1:10, "If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar,

and his word is not in us." This part of the debate between the Annenfelders and the KG ministers unwittingly revived an old dispute in the medieval church concerning *ex opere operato*, a Latin term designating the Roman Catholic teaching that the objectively administered New Testament sacraments do not depend for their effect upon the subjective factors in the minister or recipient, but are effectual of themselves conferring grace.<sup>79</sup> Although it is unlikely that they had ever heard of this old doctrine, the Annenfelders would certainly have argued against it.

There is one thing about the description of the 1869 baptismal service that is curious. Neither Jacob nor his brother Peter mentions where it took place, whether in the church or in a river or other body of water. Peter's son, David, wrote that "the immersion form of baptism was a later development,"<sup>80</sup> i.e., later than the September 1869 rebaptism. Jacob Wiebe's nephew, Jacob Z. Wiebe, wrote that "it took place in the Karuza River at Baeschcharan, which means, 'wonderful water.'"<sup>81</sup> Although he does not cite a source for this, we can assume that he was correct. Nevertheless, the KMB did not have an explicit confession of faith until 1871, when Jakob wrote one; and it can be assumed that the explication of the immersion form of baptism was not finalized until then and that both cousins were correct.

#### **The Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Church.**

In the years 1869 to 1874, the rebaptized Annenfelders gradually began to think of themselves as a church in their own right with Jacob A. Wiebe as their beloved Aeltester. Within five years there were about fifty members, not counting children. Minister Peter Baerg and a small remnant of known families loyal to him continued to meet separately and remained in good standing in the Gemeinde.<sup>82</sup> Apart from a clearer vision for believer's baptism and their adoption of forward immersion as their baptismal mode, the Annenfelders adhered to most of the doctrines shared in common with the Gemeinde: nonresistance, non-participation in military service, non-swearing of oaths, nonconformity to the world, the Bible as God's Word, the love feast including feet washing and communion, and the practice of church discipline according to Matthew 18. In time there were some innovations such as Sunday school, midweek prayer meeting, a modest mission program, sermons presented extemporaneously, the singing of new hymns and tunes and the reading of obituaries at funerals.<sup>83</sup>

Whether or not the immersion form was used already in September of 1869, one thing is certain. Even prior to 1869 there were several active couples in the group who found the rebaptism norm something of a stumbling-block. One such couple was Johann and Elisabeth Fast Harder, and another was her parents Johannes and Elisabeth Isaac Fast. Fast had been a school teacher in Schoenau for many years and mother Fast was the sister of the well-known Ohrloff minister, Franz Isaac, later the author of *Die Molotschnaer Mennoniten*. The Fast's likely came to Annenfeld with the Wiebe group and he started a school there. Harder had succeeded Fast at Schoenau, and they came to Annenfeld first on a visit to their parents before deciding to move there in 1864. Perhaps with financial assistance from Harder's father, the Aeltester of the Ohrloff-Halbstadt Church, they purchased 35 desjation of land in Annenfeld (94.5 acres) and later acquired another 15 (40.5 acres). Meanwhile they began to attend the meetings led by

Wiebe and found them personally meaningful--especially the earnestness regarding salvation, the cultivation of a personal relationship with Christ, the testimonies of new birth experiences, and especially the sense of assurance of salvation and self-identity as children of God.

There was a big difference, however, between the life histories of Jacob and Justina Wiebe and Johann and Elizabeth Harder. The Harders grew up as faithful Christians and did not find their first baptism meaningless. After the September 1869 rebaptismal service, Johann wrote a series of five letters to his father, the Ohrloff Aeltester, requesting counsel about what he and Elisabeth should do. These letters expressed acute indecision. On one hand, he expressed the beliefs that the biblical references to baptism did indeed imply immersion, and that without rebaptism he and Elisabeth might not feel free to participate in the Annenfeld congregation as they would like. But on the other hand, he lamented the divisiveness that this issue was causing:

When will there be an end to all the dividing into parties and sects? This one calls, "Here is Christ," and that one, "There is Christ" (Mark 13:21). One calls "He is in the desert," and the other, "No, he is in the chamber" (Matt. 24:26). In our faith we are already aware of and assured that the Lord Jesus has only one church, which is the invisible one consisting of all the true and faithful children of God who have lived from the beginning of the world and are living now, but known only to the Lord. This Church of God is scattered throughout the whole world and exists in all Christian congregations, and not, as someone recently said to me, "By baptizing into one body by one form of baptism, namely, immersion." Indeed, one cannot reject this form of baptism, but rather must defend it because Christ, the apostles, and the first Christians used this form in the beginning, as we understand from all the Scriptures; but still one cannot condemn the baptism of others who went to baptism in repentance and faith, for the main thing according to 1 John 3:21 is not achieving the end to the sins of the flesh but the covenant of a good conscience with God.<sup>84</sup>

Between the writing of the fourth and fifth letters to Blumstein, Johann and his brother-in-law, John B. Fast, made a special trip to the parental home to confer in person. While there, they became newly disillusioned about the spiritual condition of the Molotschna churches; and on the return trip Johann sensed the guidance of God to submit to rebaptism as a sign that they truly wanted their Annenfeld Gemeinde to restore the apostolic vision:

When they started with river baptism, my wife and I remained aloof for over a year, for I had no problem about our [prior] baptism. Yet I did consider river baptism to be the more correct form according to the example of Christ and the New Testament. The Spiritless life in the [Molotschna] congregations had prevailed so long, as even brother Bernhard [Harder] writes, "Oh, where are the faith and love of the forefathers? All lies deep in the dust, and there exists a

different spirit.<sup>185</sup> Indeed, the congregations there have lost much of their credibility. When I drove with my brother-in-law, John Fast, to visit my parents, siblings, and friends, and went to Holy Communion there, I was very disturbed on the trip home about the total situation there. I sighed a lot and prayed for light, asking what could be done for us in the future. Finally, when we were almost at home, I received what I believe to be God's disclosure from the Spirit of what I should do: "You should join the despised little group in Annenfeld." For me that was the way of thorns, for it went against my nature. I could see ahead that a hard struggle was coming. My dear father was Aeltester and my parents-in-law were still members of that [Ohrloff] congregation. I esteemed and loved the fathers and had enjoyed much teaching and blessing from them. The struggle was hard for me and my dear wife, for we did not want to make our dear parents sad; and yet that could not be avoided with such a move. But without struggle there is no victory, and without victory there is no promise. When I came home, my dear wife told me how happy she had been in the meetings during my absence and also about a baptism service that had been held. This really corresponded with my experience on the trip home and confirmed my decision that it could be the will of God for us to join this congregation. From then on we attended more of their meetings and were very happy with one another; but we kept our experiences secret. That was in the fall of 1870. At Christmas time, one of their brethren could not abstain from asking us how we were standing towards them. In part he succeeded with his question, and in part not, for we were not yet totally clear on the rebaptism issue. Thus, we had to struggle with this all winter until we decided in spring that we could take that step. So on May 9th, 1871, my wife and I and another brother were taken into the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Church by river baptism. Previously we had vacillated much over this struggle, whether it was right or not to be baptized twice; but with God's Word it became clear to us so that afterwards we were quieted down and content about it. We took this step for the honour and discipleship of Christ according to Matth. 4 (*sic.* 3:15): "Let it be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness."<sup>186</sup>

Apparently, it never occurred to Aeltester Jacob Wiebe that the Annenfeld Gemeinde could receive the Fasts and Harders by the right hand of Christian fellowship and thus launch an even more biblical innovative reformation that held firm to the principle of believer's baptism but affirmed the validity of several forms of the ordinance and thus maintained the unity of the church according to John 17:11, Romans 14:19, 15:5-6, etc. Consequently, Harder's parents-in-law, the Fasts, never joined the Annenfeld Church, although they were considered vital participants, as indicated by their future mandate to serve as the congregation's advance scouts to America prior to the group's emigration. Johann Harder, by virtue of his rebaptism and gifts for ministry, became the congregation's educator and theologian, sharing the preaching ministry with Wiebe, who said at a later

point, "Harder shared my same beliefs and was very helpful in the work [of the church]. He was, as we sometimes say, my right hand."<sup>87</sup> Wiebe's brother Peter wrote that

In Johann Harder the congregation had a great pillar. He was three days younger than Br. Wiebe and had a good school education. His character was strong, especially in the salvation truths of the Bible. His gentle but still earnest demeanour as schoolteacher was a big help to him later in the soul saving ministry. He was elected as preacher of the congregation and he and Br. Wiebe were intimate partners. They worked with united strength in home mission and in the edification of the congregation.<sup>88</sup>

It should be added that Harder's decision to join the church by rebaptism provoked sharp opposition from his father, his brother Heinrich, who was a minister in the church at Neukirch, and his father's cousin, the widely respected evangelist Bernhard Harder.<sup>89</sup> The latter wrote separate letters to Johannes Fast and Johann Harder to answer a question that the Annenfelders had apparently asked him: Why, given his severe indictments of the traditional Mennonite churches in Russia, did he not join one of the renewal movements? He replied as follows:

To your river-baptized brethren I would say the following: If I should withdraw (from my church), I would first like to find a congregation that I would like better than my present one. Now I would like to ask you for advice. Which of the separated congregations that profess to be the Church of God should I choose? I am asking you because among all the directions that are arising through the haughtiness and passions within the Kleine Gemeinde, you cannot commend any of them to me. One could suggest the congregations of Huebert and Peters, and I would have so much to criticize in both that my courage would vanish, even more perhaps in Klaas Schmidt's and the Jerusalem Friends movement. Then also I would feel guilty to live by the advice of others, and I would be repudiated by so many with the same judgment of repudiation I would hear about you; and you would be all the same, and you really are that in my eyes. I would not know which way to go. So I remonstrate, one must follow the Word of God. Yes, following the Word of God I go neither to you nor to the others, but remain in my own church.<sup>90</sup>

When I describe the decline of our people and deplore it (and I do not know a single congregation which would be an exception), there are yet many souls scattered here and there in all congregations who cling to the Saviour in childlikeness and sincerity and will follow him when he blows the trumpet for the departure (Rev. 8:6ff). So always preach repentance in your congregation also, for sooner or later it will prove to be necessary. The two-edged sword hits to the right and to the left (Rev. 1:16, 2:12), etc. Even

among the "pious," among those who want the good, the decision has to come by this sword whether the heart is humble or rebellious against the Word in proud self-righteousness and thinks or asks, "Is such meant for me? Am I like the others?" etc.<sup>91</sup>

### The Exodus to America.

In 1874 the KMB and the two wings of the KG were the first of the various groups of Russian Mennonites to emigrate to North America. In fact, at a meeting held in the Borosenko village of Heuboden, Jacob A. Wiebe was present to participate in the planning.<sup>92</sup> One part of the KG went to Manitoba, another to Nebraska and the KMB to Kansas. Several members of the KG, including the mother and two sisters of Aeltester Peter Toews, decided to join the KMBs in Kansas.

The emigration motives of the three groups were mixed. On the most explicit level, they wanted to leave Russia for reason of conscience. Jacob explained it as follows:

Our grandfathers came from Holland to Germany, and from Germany to Russia, and here received a privilege that they and their descendants should be exempt from military duty . . . Also our fathers were to be model farmers, lay out neat villages, plant gardens, and be a good example in agriculture, in sheep- and cattle-raising, and so forth. But after the course of 100 years this privilege was annulled or abolished, and in the year 1870 Czar Alexander gave orders in his empire to the effect that every one whom the new law did not please and who would not or could not go under the militia, was at liberty to emigrate within ten years with his full property, if he chose to hold fast to his fathers' faith. And this seemed so urgent that we sent deputies to Petersburg to pray for longer freedom; however, all seemed useless. Instead of freedom, military duty was required of everyone with no exception after the expiration of ten years. As that was against Jesus' teaching and against our godly convictions . . ., we sent several elders and deputies to America to see if the newspaper reports and private letters were true, that in America full freedom of conscience prevailed. When the deputies returned . . . and confirmed this, we prepared for emigration and applied for passports, because we wanted to emigrate from Russia as honest people.<sup>93</sup>

The second reason for emigrating was economic opportunity, and in many ways the founding of the new KMB community in Kansas is more interesting for its economic innovations than for its religious convictions. The relationship between faith and economic enterprise in the history of Protestantism has been well documented by social historians.<sup>94</sup> Through hard work and frugal living, godliness is conducive to economic success. Although their first years in the Crimea were difficult, the Annenfelders learned how to prosper; and after their delegates returned from America, they saw greener pastures overseas.

There may have been a third motive for emigrating, which was less explicit

and which for want of a better label we might call "conflict resolution." In Russia they thought of themselves as "a despised little group," as Johann Harder put it; and this sense of conflict within their own Mennonite Commonwealth as well as with the Russian authorities was another motive to emigrate. In the course of the conflict with the KG leadership, Aeltester Peter Toews warned Jacob Wiebe about emigrating to avoid the conflict: "I would also provide the brotherly counsel that none of you would now suddenly decide to move away from there because of this."<sup>95</sup> Indeed, within less than five years, all three groups decided to do just that: to find buyers for their farms, to hold sales of their implements and furniture, to build chests for the few things they wanted to take along, to bid farewell to their relatives and friends, and to depart for the strange new land across the sea.

Under the leadership of Jacob Wiebe, on the unbroken prairies of south-central Kansas, on twelve sections (8,640 acres) of land purchased from the Santa Fe Railroad, the KMB planned and built their new village of Gnadenuau after the Russian Mennonite mode of the interdependent agricultural community. I need not use much space here to retell that story, because it has been well and fully told by others.<sup>96</sup> Rather, I want to highlight several characteristics of the personality of Jacob Wiebe that blossomed at Gnadenuau, explicate the continuing contacts between the KMB and the KG, and close with an impressionistic comment about the acculturation of the KMB in the American environment.

#### **The Personality of Jacob A. Wiebe on the American Frontier.**

The move from a closed society to an open society provided a new milieu for Jacob's leadership talents to blossom. He had a temperament best characterized by the German word, *Gelassenheit*, implying a quiet, calm, sedate, steady pace of life. When used to describe defenseless Mennonites, the word includes the spiritual dimension of submissiveness and meekness. Jacob was all of these things, but also from the start of life in America, he was in touch with people of all kinds around him, reminiscent perhaps of the time in Halbstadt when he served as coachman for the Oberschulz. In the railroad town of Peabody, awaiting the arrival of his people, he got in touch with a local woman who helped him overcome a momentary feeling of depression:

I realized that as soon as our people would be here, they would be discouraged, seeing the wind and dust sweep through the streets of Peabody. All of a sudden I became afraid of the future, whether we would make our living here or not. The great responsibility of having selected a place of settlement for so many poor people rested heavily upon me. In my great grief I sat down on some steps, thinking of the poor families with their children. We had no provisions, no friends in the new world, the winter was nigh at the door, we were devoid of dwellings, agricultural implements and seed. Everything was high in price, some of our people were old, weak and sick, the future seemed so gloomy; there were no prospects of rain, only windy, dusty and very hot. All this fell over me, so that I could not help but let my tears flow freely. While I was sitting there on the threshold weeping, Mrs. Seybold came to me and asked, "Mr. Wiebe, what ails you?" I told her my grief, and she began to console me.

Pointing to the street, she said, "Do you see those stones? They are sometimes entirely under water. It can rain very hard here, and it will soon rain again. Oh! Mr. Wiebe, be of good cheer, people like you will make their living!" And so it was. It soon began to rain.<sup>97</sup>

For this conversation to have happened, Jacob must have been a friendly, approachable person, an important trait of his leadership. That trait helped him to solve many problems in his community. When so many of the Annenfelders wanted to sell their farms at the same time, the bottom fell out of prices offered for their land. Many buyers offered to pay on land contracts with small down payments and later defaulted on their scheduled payments. Jacob signed the contract for the land in Kansas on a similar ten year contract, and then faced the burdens of huge communal indebtedness.

We were all poor people, many families owed their travelling expenses. They had to go into debt for land, oxen, plow, farm wagon, and even their sod house. They had to have provisions for a year. There was no chance of earning something, so they had to go into debt for that too. There was no alternative but to borrow the money. But where? We were strangers with no friends here except Bernhard Warkentin of Halstead, who knew us from Russia; and he helped us through Elder Christian Krehbiel with a loan of a thousand dollars. When that was distributed, I was told, "Brother Wiebe, we also need oxen and plow to break prairie." Then Cornelius Jansen of Nebraska, well known Consul General, loaned us a thousand dollars. When these were distributed I was told, "Brother Wiebe, we have to buy provisions for a year and some lumber to build houses." Then the Elder Wilhelm Ewert loaned us a thousand dollars. When the time for making payment on the land came, Jacob Funk loaned us a thousand dollars. So we sat in our poor sod houses, some two feet deep in the ground, the walls of sod, the roof of long reed grass that reached into the prairie. We were so glad to have progressed so far before the winter that we did not think of the risk of prairie fire. But there we had a dear English neighbour on section 12, John Risley. The good man saw in what great danger we were, because we were some twenty-five families living on one section of land, all in a row as in a village. The dear friend had seen prairie fires in the west and went for his five pair of oxen and big plow. He plowed five or six times around the village, and then said to us, "Now dear people, burn off the grass between the furrows, or all you have may burn up for you." And we followed his advice, thanks to the Lord. The dear heavenly Father has a watchful eye, and has looked down on us with favour.<sup>98</sup>

Their American neighbours were intensely curious about this quaint German-Russian settlement in Marion County. Almost from the start in 1874, they had a high view of these people and the contributions they might make to the larger society, not just in the area of agriculture and capitalistic enterprise, but also

in the area of religion and culture. This high view was expressed not only by leaders in Marion County but also in the state capitol of Topeka and even in the debates of the United States Senate in 1874 on the so-called Mennonite Bill to facilitate the settlement of Russian Mennonites on the public lands of America. One of the early visitors to Gnadenu was Noble Prentis, editor of the Topeka newspaper, *The Commonwealth*. He wrote as follows:

We drove across an immensity of newly-broken prairie before we arrived at the acres of sod corn and watermelons which mark the corporation line of Gnadenu. The houses of Gnadenu present every variety of architecture, but each house is determined on one thing, to keep on the north side of the one street of the town and face to the south. Some of the houses are shaped like a "wedge" tent, the inclining sides consisting of a frame of wood, thatched with long prairie grass . . . Other houses resemble a wall tent, the sides being of sod laid up as regularly as a mason lays brick, and the roof of grass . . . Finally came substantial frame houses. At the east end of the street, in a red frame house with board window shutters painted green lives Jacob Wiebe, the head man of Gnadenu. We found Mr. Wiebe a tall powerfully-built man with a more martial appearance that his brethren. This may arise from the circumstance that the Mennonite church is divided on the question of shaving, and Mr. Wiebe adheres to the bearded persuasion . . . Mr. Wiebe has built a house more nearly on the Russian model. He took us over the structure, a maze of small rooms and passages, the stable being under the same roof with the people, and the granaries over all, the great wheat-stacks being located at the back door. An immense pile of straw was intended, Mr. Wiebe said, for fuel this winter . . . In order to use it, the Mennonites discard stoves and use a Russian oven built in the wall of the house, which once thoroughly heated with light straw will retain its warmth longer than young love itself. Of course we visited the watermelon fields, which in the aggregate seemed about a quarter-section, and Mr. Wiebe insisted on donating a hundred pounds or so of the fruit--or is it vegetable?--fearing we might get hungry on the road . . . When we left the manly and hospitable Wiebe's, the evening was well advanced . . . and so we slashed open a watermelon and drank to the health of Gnadenu.<sup>99</sup>

Another frequent visitor to Gnadenu was the editor of the *Marion County Record*, E. W. Hoch, who later became governor of the state of Kansas. He once wrote that the person living within the county limits who had never visited Gnadenu was like the people who live in the vicinity of Niagara Falls or Kentucky's great cave and had never visited them. Gnadenu was such a novelty in those early years that visitors came from near and far:

Another [visit] seems worthy of mention. This was the visit of a group of noted foreign correspondents and artists in September, 1876. This group of people had come to America to visit the

Centennial exposition in Philadelphia. Desirous of seeing the country, they were taken on a tour of the Middle West as guests of the Santa Fe railroad. They were in Topeka for the week-end and on Sunday, September 3, went to Florence, where they were to spend the night. On Monday the party drove out to the Russian settlement of Gnadenu, called on the bishop [Wiebe], and brought back a large number of prairie chickens. The correspondents were delighted with the country and sent reports to their papers at regular intervals.<sup>100</sup>

Jacob Wiebe and his people had mixed feelings about these visitors from the world around them. On one hand, they tried to be gracious hosts and receive them in a spirit of love as Jesus taught. On the other hand, they wanted to hold on to their faith and communal lifestyle without compromising their ethic of nonconformity to the world. They could not forget that their written *Privilegium* in Russia guaranteed their permanent exemption from military conscription, and one of the first things that Jacob did in America was to petition the governor of Kansas for a similar written certificate for his people. In its eagerness to secure more settlers of the kind at Gnadenu, the Kansas legislature readily passed a law "exempting Mennonites from military duty as an inducement to settle within their boundaries."<sup>101</sup>

When the Santa Fe Railroad wanted to build its Marion to McPherson branch along the northern edge of Gnadenu in 1879, the people of Gnadenu protested this encroachment, expressing "a strong feeling that the new railroad would bring new non-German settlers whose presence would endanger the entity of the Mennonite community."<sup>102</sup> The Gnadenu self-identity continued to be separatist, other-worldly, grounded in a two-kingdom ethic, and characterized by Jesus' words, "Lo, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves" (Matt. 10:16). They were certainly less naive than simply cautious of the ways of the world. They thought of themselves as pilgrims on their way to the heavenly kingdom and did not want to get too close to this world or let this world get too close to them. In this respect, perhaps P. M. Friesen was right when he wrote that "many Kleine Gemeinde characteristics are still apparent in Wiebe's church."<sup>103</sup>

And yet, paradoxically, Jacob had a mystical personality that inevitably attracted strangers as well as his own people. This is well illustrated by his gift for healing, a legacy he undoubtedly inherited from his mother. "He was a 'bonesetter' of no mean reputation--patients coming from near and far. For his expert services he charged nothing and accepted, when pressed, only the cost of liniment and splints. He based his refusal to accept pay on the words of Jesus, 'Go preach, heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: Freely ye have received, freely give.'<sup>104</sup> Strangers would arrive in Hillsboro on the train and ask directions to the house of Jacob Wiebe, the healer. Occasionally, the stranger's quest was not for personal healing but a search for truth. The story of one such person's search was told in booklet form with the title, *Brother Jakob*.<sup>105</sup>

#### **Continuing Contacts Between the KMB and the KG.**

The pressures of acculturation in the North American environment were too

strong to enable either the KMB or the KG to resist changes. Their Aeltesten, Jacob Wiebe in Kansas and Peter Toews in Manitoba, very soon began to discern the threats from inside as well as outside their respective communities, although in very different ways. Within the first six years, the KMB discerned that they could not continue to live in agricultural communes as they had in Russia; it just did not work, or so they thought, in the new environment. Additional factors threatening their internal cohesion caused them to consider merger with other groups, like the Brethren in Christ, Peter Eckert's Gemeinde, the Holdeman Gemeinde and the Mennonite Brethren.<sup>106</sup> A full account of each of these explorations is beyond the scope of this chapter, except for some cursory comments about the renewed contacts between the KMB and the KG.

Mention has already been made of the fact that Peter Toews' mother and two sisters immigrated to Gnadenu, Kansas, rather than to Manitoba with the Toews' group. Gnadenu was a magnet for several other KG families. A KG schoolteacher, Abram Harms, and a KG minister, Abraham R. Klassen, moved to Gnadenu, where they and several additional families formed a new Gnadenu satellite community called Alexanderfeld--a stronghold for KG families. Harms and Klassen both subsequently became ministers at Gnadenu. Harms had taught in Margenau, the Molotschna home of the Wiebes. At Alexanderfeld, Harms opened a school in the home of his KG neighbour, Abraham Klassen.<sup>107</sup> He was rebaptized by Jacob A. Wiebe in 1876 and elected as minister in 1884. Abraham Klassen moved with his group to Manitoba in 1874, where he decided a year later to move to Kansas to join Harms at Alexanderfeld and the KMB at Gnadenu.<sup>108</sup> Although he too became one of the Gnadenu ministers, his motives in relocating were more economic.

The internal tensions within the KG in Russia did not disappear after their immigration: the Heubodner group under the leadership of Aeltester Abraham L. Friesen settled in Jansen, Nebraska; and the Blumenhoff group under Peter Toews settled in Manitoba. Like the KMB, with whom they were more alike than they knew, they were aggressively getting established economically and re-starting their village schools. Also like the KMB, they too were vulnerable here to the encroachments of the wider world. They could have mutually supported each other in their quest for renewal, but while the KMB were making contacts with the Brethren in Christ bishop, Jesse Engel, the Manitoba KG were doing the same with the Church of God in Christ bishop, John Holdeman. The KG quest revolved around the personal spiritual struggle of its Aeltester, Peter Toews; and it had much to do with the two principle issues that had come between the KG and the KMB in Russia: assurance of salvation and believer's baptism.

The story of the developing relationship between Toews and Holdeman has been well told and documented in Delbert Plett's 604-page book, *Pioneers and Pilgrims*. In June of 1881, Peter and his uncle travelled to Kansas to see his mother and sisters, to visit his old Gnadenu brothers and sisters, and especially to learn more about the Holdeman Gemeinde not far from Gnadenu. Fortunately, he documented all of his activities in a detailed report.<sup>109</sup>

Toews asked all of the questions that he had come to ask, and got straightforward answers that led to his conversion to the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite. The questions had largely to do with the old issue of believer's baptism.<sup>110</sup>

At the end of his report, Toews implied that he had almost but not quite decided to join the Holdeman Gemeinde, but one part of his struggle still remained. Having argued so intensely against the views of Jacob Wiebe and Cornelius Enns in 1869 that KG members who were not really converted at the time of their first baptism needed to be rebaptized on confession of true faith, he had now to justify his own rebaptism by Holdeman. The fact that baptism would be by pouring rather than by immersion was irrelevant to the last issue he had to resolve. What was relevant was (1) that he himself had been truly converted at the time of his first baptism, and (2) that if Holdeman required rebaptism of everyone who joined his Gemeinde, the clear implication was that all other baptisms were invalid, the very thing he accused Wiebe and Enns of wrongly proclaiming.

He resolved the first point by reaffirming his own childhood nurture in the KG and the fact that he was indeed converted at the time of his first baptism, denying at the same time that the KG had valid claim to being the united undivided Church of God.<sup>111</sup>

Then he resolved point two by essentially affirming the Wiebe-Enns position that baptism before conversion was invalid:

For the sake of truth I could not refrain from taking a stand against our baptism of so many unconverted ones, so as not to acquiesce therein. The rest is known. Many members of the Kleine Gemeinde, including ministers and bishops, were and are baptized in an unconverted state, and that among many others is the primary reason for our separation. We believe that according to the Word the members of the body of Christ in the Church of God must be baptized by one Spirit into one body.<sup>112</sup>

Now at last Peter Toews could in good conscience submit to rebaptism by John Holdeman.<sup>113</sup> That was sometime in the year 1882. Before that happened, Jacob Wiebe wrote a letter to KG minister Johann Enns, who was the half-brother of KMB Cornelius Enns, and who was destined to be rebaptized by John Holdeman together with Toews and other KG ministers. The letter dated February 19, 1881, pleaded with Enns to consider, before joining Holdeman, the alternative of joining the KMB instead.<sup>114</sup> Unfortunately, nothing came of Jacob's invitation either to consider reunion between the KG and KMB or of his admonitions about John Holdeman's theology and practice. Perhaps if Wiebe had been more conciliatory on the form of baptism, when everything else seemed so propitious for reunion, his overture might have been more successful.

On the other hand, from this writer's perspective, it was fortunate that Holdeman was unable to split the KMB in Kansas the way he split the KG in Manitoba. Jacob's brother Peter tells the story:

John Holdeman visited our Gemeinde and was lovingly received. He also got permission to preach. Then they wanted to have consultation concerning their doctrinal views. Br. J. A. Wiebe and preacher Abr. Klassen, who was at that time still a Kleine Gemeinde preacher, were especially invited. Already during the greetings with Holdeman, the brotherly trust was weakened, which already during

his sermon and in the consultation was wearing thin. The consultation was led in the fear of God. They agreed on nonresistance, conversion, and justification; but the brothers Wiebe and Klassen could not agree with the way Holdeman judged other churches and condemned them as Babel. "Condemn not, lest you yourself be condemned" (Luke 6:37). The brothers Wiebe and Klassen tried to convince Holdeman with the Word of God that Jesus stepped into the water for baptism and that after he was baptized, he again stepped out of the water, and that the apostles later observed river baptism also as we read in Acts 8:36-39. Holdeman said he had come to the conviction through a dream that baptism by sprinkling was correct. Holdeman insisted that until his own withdrawal from the (Old) Mennonite Church to which he belonged, they stood on biblical ground. Holdeman's withdrawal [from that Church] occurred in 1850.<sup>115</sup>

### Concluding Comments.

Certainly, the KG remnant following the secession of Peter P. Toews, the Holdeman Gemeinde, and the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren all preserved vital elements of the 16th century Anabaptist-Mennonite vision, but although they wanted to be faithful witnesses to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, none of them really got a handle on their potential mission in the North American environment. With people coming from far and near to visit Gnadenu, the KMB might have developed a unique evangelistic mission right at home if they had had the vision, but it did not happen.

Jacob Wiebe retired in 1900 and his younger brother Heinrich succeeded him as Aeltester. On April 11, 1907, more than 2,000 persons came to Gnadenu from far and near to celebrate Wiebe's golden wedding anniversary.

In their old age Justina and Jacob moved to Lehigh, where . . . the Wiebe's oldest son and his wife lived. Here their home soon became known as a place both old and young could go for help. One day one of the schoolboys sprained his thumb, and without hesitation he dashed to the Wiebe home nearby to have it fixed.<sup>116</sup>

Justina died in 1916 and Jacob in 1921 at the age of 84. They are buried in a prominent place in the Gnadenu cemetery, together with most of the other KMB leaders. Sometime before he died, the editor of *Der Deutsche Westen* happened to meet Jacob on the Florence to McPherson train and reported the following experience:

He was going from Hillsboro to Lehigh. I complimented him on how healthy and vigorous he looked, despite his old age. With a twinkle in his eye he said, "My body is like an apple that looks red on the outside, but when one cuts into it, it is black and rotten." And in his friendly but almost sad way he continued: "They all die away-- my old comrades and friends of my youth. Your dear father in Nebraska<sup>117</sup> and I are the oldest of those who already were dear

to each other in Russia and were of one faith. Here in my Kansas home almost all of them have been carried to their final resting place. The other day I drove through Alexanderfeld and I could not help but cry out, "There lived the Josts--now dead. There lived the Klassens, also called home. There was the old Peters home--he rests in the cool grave. There lived the Heinrich Penners--he also has finished his pilgrimage down here. Down that entire street the younger generation carries on, but the friends of my youth 30 to 35 years ago have settled down on the cold prairie, all dead. I feel so lonely, so abandoned, and I have to weep for it is the same in my old home village of Gnadenu. The settlers are almost all gone and others have taken their place. And in a little while, I also will be no more.

He squeezed my hand full of love as we parted. Oh, it is great to live like Uncle Wiebe, to be a man whom everybody loves and respects, and who awaits the approaching angel of death, coming ever closer as a friend, not with fear and trembling, but with a smile.<sup>118</sup>

#### Endnotes: Jakob A. Wiebe Biography.

1. See *The Harder Family Review*, 12 (October 1990), 14-15.

2. By "charismatic type personality", I do not mean a magical leadership arousing special popular loyalty or enthusiasm, as in a cult preacher. I am speaking sociologically of a particular kind of leadership authority. Actually, the best image of it comes from the New Testament word, *charisma*, meaning grace-gift or service-ability (Romans 12:6). Whether certain members of the church have charisma depends not on whether they have dynamic personalities but on whether they are leading others with a mutual sense of mission, allowing their talents to be used for the sake of that mission. What makes Christians charismatic is not whether they speak in tongues, etc., but whether they exemplify Romans 12:2; ". . . the transformation of our lives by the renewing of our minds, that we may prove what is the will of God and what is good and acceptable." The German Sociologist Max Weber contrasted charismatic authority with traditional or legal authority. See *Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1947), 328-86. When KG members would say that their confidence toward a certain Aeltester was weak, they were implying that their leader was losing his charismatic authority by lack of attention to spiritual renewal.

3. See David V. Wiebe, *Grace Meadow: The story of Gnadenu and Its First Elder* (Hillsboro, KS: Mennonite Brethren Publishing House, 1967), 18; Esther Jost, "Love in Deed: Justina Friesen Wiebe," Katie Wiebe Funk, ed., *Women among the Brethren* (Hillsboro: MB Board of Christian Literature, 1979), 43; Delbert Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph: The Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde 1850-1875* (Steinbach, MB: DFP Publications, 1986), 212.

4. Harold S. Bender, "Krimmer Mennonite Brethren," *ME* 3, 242.

5. Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 190, 215, 219, 323.

6. In spite of all the correspondence to the contrary, KG minister, Peter P. Toews made this allegation; see Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims* (Steinbach, Man., 1990), 561.

7. See Peter M. Friesen, *The Mennonite Brotherhood in Russia*, (Fresno: MB Board of Christian Lit., 1980), 93-4, 591.

8. This allegation was made by the Gnadenu KMB leader, J. G. Barkman, editor of the KMB source documents in *Der Wahrheitsfreund* (May 22, 1946), 6: "Since there was no visit in response to this writing, neither in person nor in writing, no one had the courage to speak against the clear confession of the Aeltester and his like-minded followers in the Crimea."

9. Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 211-213.

10. See Frank Epp, *Mennonites in Canada, 1786-1920* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1974), 164, 286-7.
11. See David V. Wiebe, 27.
12. Many writers have made this charge, but see especially Delbert Plett, *Storm and Triumph*, 45, 125, 189, 211, etc. Plett uses such verbs as seceded, withdrew, broke away, defected.
13. See C. F. Plett, *The Story of the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren*, (Hillsboro: Kindred Press, 1985), 28; John A. Toews, *A History of the Mennonite Brethren Church* (Fresno: MB Board of Christian Lit., 1975), 177; and H.S. Bender, 243.
14. *Ibid.*, 243, 244. It is hard to believe that an otherwise scrupulously careful historian like Bender made so many factual errors. Trusting this history, Frank Epp, 243, repeats the error.
15. The primary sources for this profile were: Jacob's self portrait, published under the title, "Jacob A. Wiebes Bekehrung," (cited henceforth as "Bekehrung," *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, Apr. 24, May 8, and May 22, 1946; the 27 page biography by his brother, Peter A. Wiebe, *Kurze Biographie des Bruders Jakob A. Wiebe: Seine Jugend, seine Bekehrung, und wie die Krimmer Mennoniten Brudergemeinde gegruendet wurde* (Hillsboro, 1924), cited hereafter as "Kurze Biographie;" David V. Wiebe, *op.cit.*; Jacob Z. Wiebe, "Die Geschichte der Krimmer Brudergemeinde," undated unpublished manuscript at the Tabor College Historical Library, Hillsboro, Kansas. A shorter version of the last source listed is found in ME 4, 945. Notice that all of these were members of the Wiebe family: two brothers and two nephews.
16. Editor's endnote: Some 20 KG-related families have been identified in Neukirch, including the KG elder Johann F. Friesen, Rev. Abraham F. Friesen, deacon Klaas F. Friesen, and brother Martin F. Friesen, who later moved to the Crimea and joined the KG/KMB; see Plett, "Peter Enns 1791-1857 Neukirch," unpublished paper, revised 1992, 4.
17. David V. Wiebe, 13-14; see also Joel A. Wiebe, *et. al.*, *The Groening-Wiebe Family 1768-1974* (Hillsboro: M.B. Publishing House, 1974), 10-11; and Delbert Plett, "Wiens Families in the Kleine Gemeinde," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, Part 4, Chapter 10, Section 9, 512ff.
18. Editor's endnote: There was also an active fellowship of KG-related people here at Margenau, including: the village Schulz, Johann Harms (1798-1887) (father of Abraham Harms, who later was the school teacher in Alexanderfeld, Kansas); schoolteacher Cornelius F. Friesen (1810-1892); Vollwirts Abraham Rempel, Peter Penner, Martin Rempel, Dirk Isaac and David Klassen; Peter Harms (1806-1870)--the brother to Johann and not the Peter Harms living in the Crimea; Franz Kroeker (1798-1853); Peter W. Toews, the cousin to the Aeltester Peter Toews; and others. An interesting possibility regarding the Peter Harms living in Annenfeld, Crimea, is that he was the son of Peter Harms (1806-1870); see Plett, "Johann Harms Genealogy 1771," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 394 and 411.
19. P. M. Friesen, 93; Frank Epp.
20. Lest the reader think that Jacob is talking about others rather than himself, the bracketed phrase "of us" is inserted in keeping with the subsequent sentence, "This is how *we* spent our time."
21. *Bekehrung*. See also his comment in letter #9 (?), Ch. 2, below.
22. The annual wolf chase was an effort to reduce the population of this predatory animal and its threat to domestic farm animals and fowl.
23. *Kurze Biographie*, 4.
24. David V. Wiebe, 19, fn.
25. C. F. Plett, 18-19. Something does not add up in the supposition that Justina's father and the Oberschulz were brothers. We know that the former was Johann Friesen and the latter David Friesen; but in the only extant genealogy of Justina's grandparents, her father Johann had ten siblings, none named David. More research is needed to resolve the relationship. David may have been a cousin, but not a brother of Justina's father.
26. Esther Jost, 43.
27. *Bekehrung*.
28. *Ibid.*
29. C. F. Plett, 26. The sister to whom Plett referred was the mother of Cornelius H. Wedel, the first President of Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas.
30. *Bekehrung*.

31. *Ibid.*
32. Esther Jost, 26.
33. *Bekehrung*.
34. *Ibid.*
35. *Kurze Biographie*.
36. Editor's endnote: Elder Johann F. Friesen lived in Neukirch as did his brothers: Abraham--the minister, Klaas--the deacon, and Martin--who would later also join the KMB. Jakob A. Wiebe would likely have met Johann Friesen in Neukirch. It is quite possible that it was one of the Friesen brothers for whom Wiebe worked in his younger years and which apparently had a great influence upon his future spiritual life.
37. P. M. Friesen, Part D, 201ff.
38. Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 189-90.
39. *Bekehrung*.
40. *Ibid.*
41. David V. Wiebe, 27.
42. Delbert F. Plett, *Storm and Triumph*, 199, fn. 35.
43. *Bekehrung*.
44. It is highly doubtful that Johann Friesen was appealing to Anabaptist-Mennonite teachings in his response to Wiebe's request. He was responsive to the request on a personal level and was not debating the issue except to make a point of deferring to KG tradition. As Plett himself observes, Friesen was largely disinterested in Anabaptist writings.
45. Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 190, italics added.
46. *Ibid.*, 165.
47. Plett, ed., *History and Events: Writing and Maps pertaining to the History of the Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde from 1866 to 1876* (Steinbach, Man., 1982), 40.
48. See Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 45
49. *Kurze Biographie*, 20.
50. *Bekehrung*.
51. *Ibid.*
52. Editor's endnote: Cornelius P. Toews (1836-1908) was a brother to Peter Toews who later became the elder or Aeltester.
53. *Bekehrung*.
54. There is a disagreement about the date of ordination. Peter Toews dated it on Good Friday (Plett, ed., *History and Events*, 49). Jacob Z. Wiebe (*op.cit.*, 6) dated it on ". . . the third Easter Day." In his *Mennonite Encyclopedia* article, he apparently decided on the compromise, "Easter Day of 1869."
55. Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 20.
56. Plett, ed., *History and Events*, 49.
57. Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 561.
58. Plett, ed., *History and Events*, 49.
59. Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 208-11.
60. *Ibid.*, 209.
61. *Ibid.*, 210.
62. *Ibid.*, 210-11
63. *Kurze Biographie*, 11.
64. Plett, ed., *History and Events*, 49.
65. *Bekehrung*.
66. *Ibid.*
67. *Kurze Biographie*, 11.
68. *Bekehrung*.
69. *Kurze Biographie*, 11.
70. Plett, ed., *History and Events*, 50-1. Although some of this correspondence was not preserved, we owe a debt of gratitude to the descendants of the Toews family and others who made so many of these documents available to others.

71. *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, May 22, 1946, 6.

72. See Letter 13, Part Fifteen, Chapter 2.

73. KG Historian Delbert Plett was uncertain about the identity of Cornelius Enns when he published his first volume: "If anyone has any information on the identity of this Cornelius Enns . . . this writer will very much appreciate the reference." Apparently Plett resolved the mystery, for in a personal note to the writer he identified him as "the son of Aeltester Heinrich Enns (1801-1881), Fischau." *The Kurze Biographie des Bruders Jakob A. Wiebe*, page 12, contains the phrase, "Br. Kornelius Enns, sohn des Aeltesten K. Enns und der Molotschna, der ein ernstes Glaubensleben fuehrte." Although the initial "K" should have been "H" for Heinrich, the word "Aeltesten" identifies the father.

74. "From childhood on I believed in a visible Church of God. I was so taught and later also myself taught others to believe in such." See Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 559.

75. KMB Baptismal Record Book at Tabor College Library, Hillsboro, Kansas.

76. Letter 15, Part Fifteen, Chapter Two.

77. Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 563.

78. Plett, ed., *History and Events*, 51-2.

79. Vergilius Ferm, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1945), 268.

80. David V. Wiebe, 27. This seems to be confirmed by a possible eye-witness to the event, Johann Harder, who wrote: "There was deliberation back and forth, leading to the decision that one of the brethren should be elected who should first baptize Jacob A. Wiebe, and then he would baptize the others, *which was done*. Now came the question of how to baptize"--italics added. Johann Harder, "Why the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Left the Kleine Gemeinde," document in the Tabor College Historical Library, Hillsboro, Kansas.

81. See Joel Wiebe, 52.

82. Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 191. Plett knows some of their names and that in 1874 there were eight families in Baerg's Gemeinde.

83. In the KG according to Peter Toews, "The *Abdanken* (funeral oration) was not supposed to follow the customary style, namely, to comfort those left behind regarding the salvation of the deceased without regard to the conduct in life of the deceased whether the same had been good or evil. Rather it was to be an exhortation to watchfulness and virtue . . ." Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 167.

84. See *The Harder Family Review*, 11, July 1990, 16, fn. 36.

85. *Ibid.*, fn. 37.

86. *Ibid.*, 8.

87. *Bekehrung*.

88. *Kurze Biographie*, 16-7.

89. See *The Harder Family Review*, *op.cit.*, 8-9.

90. Bernhard Harder to Johannes Fast, March 29, 1872. Original at Tabor College Historical Library, Hillsboro, KS.

91. Bernhard Harder to Johann Harder, March 29, 1872. Original at Tabor College Historical Library, Hillsboro, KS.

92. Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 249.

93. Jacob A. Wiebe, "The Founding of Gnadenu," in Cornelius Krahn, ed., *From the Steppes to the Prairies* (Newton, KS: Mennonite Publication Office, 1949), 98. This account was taken from G. D. Bradley, *The Story of the Santa Fe* (Boston: Gorham Press, 1920), 199-24. See also L. L. Waters, *Steel Trails to Santa Fe* (Lawrence, KS: University Press, 1950), 229-31.

94. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Protestantism* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1958).

95. Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 217.

96. The most complete review is Alberta Pantle, "Settlement of the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren at Gnadenu, Marion County," *The Kansas Historical Quarterly*, XIII:5 (February 1945), 259-85; see also David V. Wiebe and C. F. Plett.

97. See fn. 99, above, p. 100.

98. *Ibid.*, 101.
99. Noble Prentis, "The Mennonites at Home," in Cornelius Krahn, ed., *From the Steppes to the Prairies*, 17-18.
100. Alberta Pantle, 284.
101. I remember seeing this document but have been unable to locate it before submitting this chapter for publication.
102. Alberta Pantle, 275-76.
103. P. M. Friesen, 94.
104. David V. Wiebe, *They Seek a Country* (Hillsboro: M.B. Publishing House, 1959), 164.
105. Bartel E. Ebel, *Brother Jakob* (Hillsboro, M. B. Publishing House, 1968).
106. David A. Wiebe, 63-66.
107. Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 392. Henry P. Peters, *History and Development of Education among the Mennonites in Kansas* (Hillsboro, 1925), 31-33.
108. Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 307.
109. *Ibid.*, 553.
110. *Ibid.*, 554-56.
111. *Ibid.*, 559.
112. *Ibid.*, 561.
113. *Ibid.*, 560.
114. *Ibid.*, 563-64.
115. *Kurze Biographie*, 22-23.
116. Esther Jost, 53.
117. Johann W. Fast (1837-1921) and his wife, Katharina Letkeman Fast, immigrated to Jansen, Nebraska, in 1877 from Gnadenheim, Molotschna, where he was a teacher. He continued this vocation in Nebraska and in Kansas, where they moved in the early 1880s. In Hillsboro, he and his oldest son started a German family newspaper called *Freundschaft-Kreis*. It was short-lived (1885-1886), but it launched two of his sons in vocations as newspaper editors. Johann also served as a minister in the Mennonite Brethren Church in Hillsboro and in Mountain Lake, Minnesota, where he died in 1921. It is interesting to note Jakob Wiebe's past relationship with him in Russia ". . . in one faith".
118. *Der Deutsche Westen*, January 9, 1908, 8.

## Chapter Two

### Letters 1864-1869

Letters written in the years 1864 to 1869 by Aeltester Jakob A. Wiebe (1836-1922) Annenfeld, Crimea, to Aeltester Peter P. Toews (1841-1922), Blumenhoff, Borosenko, South Russia, and others.

#### Letter One.

Annenfeld, October 4, 1864

Beloved brother-in-law and sister, yes, beloved friends;

My best wishes for you are that these humble and imperfect words may find you well in body and in soul. We are presently well and in this year of crop failures we are quite well and content and at peace. Thanks be to the Lord for what little we did receive. As we live so far apart, beloved friends, and the opportunity to converse together in person occurs only so seldom, I want to share with these few lines my humble thinking and faith which the Lord in grace has revealed to me and allowed me to recognize. With love I am also sending you this small book of the martyrs for you to read, if it pleases you. Many people remain unacquainted with this book and perhaps it has remained unknown to you as well until now. If you read it carefully, you will find the truth to be contained therein--which truth has always been in harmony with our confession of faith until now.

For this reason many, yes, thousands of martyrs suffered and died as witnesses for the truth. They feared the eternal fire of hell much more than the fiendish fires of this earth, which only have to be endured for a short time for the sake of the will of Christ. Although He was without sin, yet He suffered for us sinners much disrespect, pain, beatings and accusations, yes, even the crucifixion of the cross. Through His power he has worked within the weak creatures of God, in the middle aged, in the elderly, yes in children ages 14 to 15 and 18 years old, yes, also in the aged grey heads. He did so that they would be witnesses of the eternal truth, which will never pass away. Just like the Lord Jesus Himself says, "For verily, I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. 5:18; Luke 16:17; 21:33).

Through searching and reading in the book of the Lord in Isaiah 34:16 and John 5:39, and then carefully reflecting thereon, I have been convinced through the grace of the Lord regarding that which was formerly unknown to me. Although I let myself be baptized in accordance with the above mentioned faith, to which many have testified with their death and affirmed, I did not have any knowledge of it, and what is more, I did not have this faith within me. Now, however, the merciful and compassionate God, Who does not desire the death of the sinner but that everyone should repent and be converted and live, has revealed the simple truth unto me, poor sinner, through His grace and fatherly mercy and love, for

which I cannot thank and praise the Lord enough. Oh, yes, even the Lord Jesus Himself thanked the heavenly Father that ". . . because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight" (Matt. 11:25,26).

Which power He has also demonstrated in the lives of other people who were called to His service to preach the Gospel unto all nations. But not as the scribes do it, rather like the poor fishermen who at once left their nets and followed Jesus (Matt. 4:16-20; Luke 5:27,28; Mark. 2:14; Matt. 9:19). Some tax collectors also were called, who followed Him. To all His disciples He has promised to send the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, Who would lead them in all truth (John 16:13; 14:26). Behold, through the anointing of the Holy Spirit and ". . . the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you . . . ye need not that any man teach you . . ." [1 John 2:27]. Behold, this is affirmed by the apostle also that through the anointing of the Holy Spirit you are sufficiently taught without having to be taught by anyone else. If the human instruction were so essential, then the Lord would not have rejoiced in the Spirit nor praised the Father of heaven and earth that He had not revealed it to the wise and prudent but to babes, and that it pleased the Father to do so.

In 1 Corinthians 1:19-21, Paul says, ". . . I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent" (Isaiah 29:14), Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." Isaiah 33:18 and 19; Baruch 3:28. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 1:26-29, "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence."

In the second chapter Paul refers among other things to the anointing of the same Spirit of which John spoke. He says, "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Cor. 2:3), etc. My beloved friends, take note of this simple truth which has been witnessed of by so many, endorsed by the power of God and for which He sacrificed His life. I am become a partaker of this truth through the grace of God and through the conviction of my conscience I have been able to recognize and experience the same, and with the help of God I want to accept and believe it in simplicity of heart.

Whereupon I had previously allowed myself to be baptized without such a faith and of which so many witnesses have testified by their death--but of which I knew nothing, and even less so, did I have such faith within me. Now, however, our compassionate and sympathetic God, Who does not desire the death of a sinner--rather that each one may come to repentance and become converted and live--through His grace and paternal love has revealed the simple truth unto me, poor sinner. Indeed, the Lord Jesus Himself gave thanks to the Heavenly Father, that it was revealed to the babes and hidden from the wise and the prudent (Matt.

11:25,26). Which He also demonstrates through His power within those whom He has chosen for His service to spread the Gospel unto all peoples. Not, however, by the pharisees, but by the poor fishermen, who immediately dropped their nets to follow Jesus (Matt. 4:22; Mark 1:16,20; Luke 5:27,28; Mark 2:14; Matt. 9:4). Likewise a number were also called from among the tax collectors, who became His disciples. For He promised all His disciples to send the comforter--the Holy Spirit--who would lead them in all truth (John 16:13; 14:26).

[We] had allowed ourselves to be baptised, but now we have both promised obedience anew with hand and mouth before God and His Kleine Gemeinde, namely, we have renewed the covenant which we previously had made with God not ever to depart therefrom during our lifetimes--neither to the right nor to the left--but to remain true to it unto death. We are prepared to accept the exhortation of Paul and seek to follow it in our weakness. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving" (Col. 2:6,7). We are also prepared to accept the warning of the apostle when he says, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Col. 2:8). I understand these words of Paul to mean that we are very much to be on guard against the learned, the worldly-wise and the enlightened ones, who lead the innocent astray with sweet words, according to the spirit of the times, as he says in Romans 16:18.

Now in conclusion, beloved friends, receive a truly heartfelt greeting from the both of us. Also with these humble lines we extend our heartfelt greetings to my beloved parents, Abr. Brauns in Margenau. I wish them the best of health physically as well as spiritually. And to you, beloved, I also wish the grace and the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit through our Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour. Please accept these humble and simple lines from me in love. From your beloved friend in the Crimea in Annenfeld on the 4th of October, 1864.

*Jacob Wiebe*

#### Letter Two:

Annenfeld, January 22, 1865

Beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord;

First, I wish you much grace, compassion and the peace of God and our Lord Jesus Christ. Now my beloved, after we had taken our leave from you and arrived in Lichtenau, I was somewhat sad in my mind. And when I observed the snow, how it fell on the earth, the matter was quickly settled that we could not proceed any further. I thought to myself that I would have much rather stayed with you, beloved friend Goossen, in order that together with you I could once more have seen the beloved friends in Kleefeld, and once more to have taken part in the beloved worship service. I felt a longing in my heart for this, and particularly, for the sister, Mrs. Franz Kroeker . . . [two lines indecipherable here] . . . as well as the perishable body. But beloved sister, have patience and be thankful that God considers you worthy to be tried and tested. "For whom the Lord loveth he also chasteneth." . . . [a line indecipherable] in accordance with Hebrews 12:6.

Therefore, allow God to reign. Be ready and willing at all times to kneel

before Him in repentance and sorrow. Follow your calling and do your works, and go forth strong in the confidence that God will be your strength, your comfort and the light of your life [four lines indecipherable]. Now my beloved, I am too preoccupied with our departure from there on our homeward journey. I was concerned regarding the muddy roads . . . but even more so regarding my lack of patience. But do forgive us, my beloved, according to 1 Peter 3:7.

Sunday, we drove to Ohrloff and on Monday we left Ohrloff and arrived in Melitopol quite late. It had remained quite cold and consequently I had a great aching in my finger so that I had to favour my right hand . . . But Tuesday at 10 o'clock, we arrived at \_\_\_\_\_. He relieved my pain considerably. God be praised. We made it to Girke for night where we had fine quarters, a very nice warm room. Wednesday, we made it to Baritt [?] quite late where we had to freeze a little during the night. Thursday, at 7 o'clock in the evening, we arrived in the beloved Annenfeld at our beloved own--we were hearty and well. We found everyone to be alive and quite well. May the Lord be praised for this. Our beloved brothers and sisters all received us with love. Also my loyal servants seemed to be truly glad and had made good use of the time so that I could have stayed away even longer in that regard.

And a heartfelt plea to you, my beloved, that you might continue steadfast . . . [a line indecipherable here] Peter, the words of Christ richly among us. And you, dear Hieberts, how are things with you? Are you still sorrowful? Regarding your previous sins . . . [?] Comfort yourselves with the words of Paul, that they are not condemned who are in Christ Jesus, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the spirit. Indeed, I would comfort all of you who are downhearted and burdened with the words of the poet, number 476, especially verse 8. "Komm nur muehselig und gebueckt, komm nur so gut du weiszt zu kommen, wenn gleich die Last dich niederdrueckt, du wirst auch kriechend angenommen; sieh wie sein Herz dir offen steht, und wie er dir entgegen geht; wie lang' hat er mit vielem Flehen sich bruenstig nach dir umgesehen!", etc.

Now, all you beloved brothers and sisters, I wish to make you aware of something. Sometime ago, it was about eleven years ago during the war time, I was in Simferopol where I saw many wounded soldiers whom we had to haul away. Then the commanding officer came out and spoke to them in a fatherly way. He admonished them that they should help each other, and that those who were feeling better should help those who were wounded. Oh, yes, beloved, since the spiritual . . . in this mortal world is so great, the evil one makes a very concerted effort to attack those souls who are wounded . . . and to bring them into a false Christendom where pride and greed are of no concern. He gives them the letter to read of which the prophet Zechariah laments, the letter of wisdom (Zechariah 5:3). This is the curse which goes out over the entire earth whereby all the thieves are pronounced free . . .

Oh, my beloved, let us consider this very seriously in our present, dangerous and deceptive times. For as already mentioned above, many believe on this false and misleading letter and live in such great pride that it is shameful, and yet, they are pronounced to be free, and give themselves over to a false assurance. Oh, yes, my beloved, wherever possible the evil enemy seeks to bring into doubt anyone who resists the message of the false letter. Therefore, my beloved, it is my most inwardly prayer, . . . [a line is missing at the bottom of the page and top of the

next page] . . . Therefore, do accept this from a poor and lowly soul who has so earnestly battled against the false letter. For he is looking at you in pure love! The true word of God can be related to this from your own experience. Yes, beloved, do consider the words of Paul in first Corinthians, for such will not inherit the kingdom of God. . . . "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled" (Hebrews 12:15).

Now, you beloved K. G.[?], you have made us all very glad with your precious letter . . . [two lines indecipherable]. Beloved sister, heal those who are wounded, comfort those who are heavy-hearted and cast down. And to you, beloved widow and sister Friesen, you write that I should write you, which I will also promise to do. But I cannot do so now as I do not have the time, for the . . . and I comfort you with the words of the poet number 97.

Yes, all you who are widows, I wish to add something hereto for those widows who are poor, remain in the arms of God for He will comfort you if you remain in the circumstances wherein He has placed you and do not depart therefrom for He loves you. All sorrows and burdens will be taken away from you in the lap of heaven. And you, beloved Mrs. Bartel, can you also accept this as Mrs. Friesen has? Now, you beloved brethren at Borosenko, how are things? When we departed from you at the Dneiper we especially felt the words of Acts 20:38. I gave my dreams free rein and it grieved me the most that you had demonstrated such love towards us of which I definitely did not feel worthy.

Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, receive a heartfelt greeting from me and my wife and also from all the other brothers and sisters. Receive thanks for your love. Indeed, I brought much joy with me since I was able to bring almost everyone news of brothers and parents. Yes, I can report to you Jakob Friesen that your children really rejoiced over your letter, also Klassen and Gossen [?], also Esaus' and the elderly Klassen. Harms . . . [a line indecipherable] also for you, beloved G. Schellenberg, your beloved brother greatly rejoiced that I was there with you and also for your letter. Therefore, be heartily greeted from us and also all the brothers and sisters.

And how are things with you, Brauns' and Esaus' . . . Oh, but for the sake of Christ . . . [?] your departure from the evil world through the words of the well-known poet number 248. . . 217 . . . 276. [The letter closes with a song which is indecipherable].

*Jakob Wiebe*

### Letter Three.

Annenfeld, December 6, 1866

A great love compels me so that I cannot omit to write something to you. Firstly, I wish you the words of Peter when he says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3). So my beloved Goossen, how are things or how is everything going? Have you also been able to grasp a little more courage? It is better to seize new courage and be comforted and carry on afresh; for the Lord will be with you and has already been with you for a long time. As one of the most lowly of fellow

pilgrims, I will also be helpful to you to the full extent of my capabilities; over all to help set that which is inside into the light, and to call right what is right, and to leave in darkness what is dark. For the spirit of God gives witness of our spirit that we are the children of light. Yes, the spirit leads us in all truth according to John 1:13.

Therefore my beloved Ohm Goossen, do not be too discouraged for the Lord is near to those who are of a contrite heart. Indeed, I vividly recall how crushed your spirit was at the time that the Lord summoned you out from among the people and said, "Do you love me? Then pasture my lambs." This was certainly a most difficult commission, but those lambs are tame and do not bite. Rather they gladly hear the voice of the shepherd and follow wherever he goeth without investigation. I believe that you can hereby comfort yourself; for as far as I know these are all true-hearted and honest brethren whom the Lord has assembled together in these last times. Therefore consider carefully the words in 1 Timothy 3:13, "For the servants who have used the office of deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and a great boldness in the faith which is in Jesus Christ." Also comfort yourself further with the words of the poet in number 278 [Gesangbuch] and do not be discouraged.

I am writing exactly the way I feel. Do believe me, beloved Ohm Goossen, that I have had great difficulties because of you. I frequently recall your tears when you were so distressed and looked at me so downheartedly. This very much strengthened me in my weakness, and therefore I would advise that you blow the trumpet loud so that those will awake who are sleeping. For everyone must awaken and arise from the dead, otherwise Christ cannot enlighten them. Oh how great is the grace and compassion which the Lord has again permitted to continue over us miserable sinners. Yes, we must rightly say, "Lord, I am not worthy of all the compassion which you have allowed to continue for me poor sinner." As if united, we walked the broad road and followed our evil flesh which we now, however, want to crucify together with our lusts and desires, as we are admonished to do by the beloved apostle.

My beloved brothers and sisters, should I have erred towards you in some way, I do beg you to forgive me in everything. I am still glad from the heart that we did visit you, for it did help very much for the well-being of my soul. Now, my beloved Ohm Goossen, I had in mind to write you at far greater length but as the opportunity crept up so quickly I have had to discount my good intentions. I bid that you accept this love from me.

Yesterday, that is the 7th, we received the letters from Ohm Enns and Ohm Toews, as well as from Isaac Loewen, Lindenau. We have read the same with many tears, especially the aged Ohm Isaac has sent us such a fine memorial for which I certainly return many thanks. My beloved Ohm Isaac, I will definitely attempt--although in great weakness--to emulate that towards which you have admonished us.

You--my beloved Ohm Peter Toews--you have given us such joy and encouragement by your writing. I thank you many times for your love. Please accept this letter unto yourself as if I had written it to you. Also please forgive me, as you have requested a writing from me which I also promised you, and which is also my intention to write you at much greater length, but it will not be possible on this occasion. Therefore comfort yourself with everything which returns to you.

Greetings to your beloved wife and parents, and Johann, together with all the brethren and friends. Also you Ohm Enns, receive a heartfelt greeting from myself and my beloved wife. Also you, beloved Hiebert, A. K., J. Pe., H. Fr., P. D.; yes, all my beloved brothers and sisters. In closing I greet you all with the words of Isaiah 40, verse 11.

*Jakob and Justina Wiebe*

Please write us as soon as possible. Would anyone be coming here shortly? I bid that you also greet \_\_\_ Kornelsen, and the beloved Ohm Eidse and his children. The news from Ohm Johann Friesen always makes us more certain. Therefore do not be discouraged. Ohm Martin Friesen, whoever trusts in God has built on solid rock; and please receive a greeting from us.

#### Letter Four.

Annenfeld, March 3, 1867

Beloved brother Peter Toews as well as all the other beloved brethren.

Since we have had so much grief here with Peter Harms and Elisabeth Warkentin, I cannot do otherwise than to report something in that regard. Although I do so with a very sad and downcast heart for I know that I will not make you happy hereby, for you would much rather that we love one another. But what is to be done for all matters must be brought under the light. Nor can I write everything which has occurred, but I can write enough that it is very sad for they have given themselves over to the world, and they have entered upon the wide road, and it seems as if they are quite happy.

But what does the scripture say? "Whosoever wishes to be a friend of the world, will be the enemy of God. For whosoever loves the world, the love of God is not within them." Oh, no, beloved! Satan works through people as the poet also says, "For he uses the children of mankind for these purposes." We have felt much pain which these persons have occasioned for us, yes, they have brought us into suspicion who formerly loved each other so much. Yes, by their deceptive words they have brought us great abasement, as if they also really meant them.

Beloved brother, I have settled with Elisabeth, for she left without our consent. She was in service with us for 3 months and 6 days for which I paid her 6 silver ruble. She was to receive 40 ruble per year. Since she has deceived us so much here in the village, I am writing this to you for she will probably do more or less the same there. Therefore, prove everything and retain that which is good and do not believe every spirit. I am afraid that if she is hospitably received there that perhaps the Lord's will would not be done. For it is commanded, "The rebellious person avoid."

How does it presently appear, for what reason did you separate from Ohm Johann? It may seem to some to be nothing other than hatred and jealousy, which do not please God; for if they had been of us they would have remained with us. Beloved brother, I had already written a letter to you but I had addressed the same to H. Enns first--since he was to read it also--in which letter I referred to many matters. I feel truly sorry for the poor Gertruda for she will not easily be able to obtain such a position again. I understand that they are leaving here in the morning. I have directed Gertruda to you, for she will have it bad, which I am

against.

Therefore, my beloved Toews, receive her kindly and forgive me for my forwardness. And if I have erred in any way, do forgive the same. And do not lose your confidence in us and believe us; for we are frequently very saddened and anxious regarding the sorrowful situation. In closing, receive a heartfelt greeting from us; my beloved wife also extends her greetings, and we remain your loving fellow-pilgrims to eternity.

*Jakob Wiebe*

#### **Letter Five.**

Oh beloved brothers and sisters. I am almost destroyed by sorrow for how ashamed we must now stand before the world. Oh, for this reason, my beloved, do search the Word of God with all earnestness and truly take it to heart; for nothing more is required of the householder but that he be found faithful. Alas, brethren, what is all included thereby? But we must comfort ourselves with the love which God has formerly demonstrated since He led His people out of Egypt. Indeed, that our courage would not yet fail on this account, even though we who were to taste and aspire to something sweet have instead encountered something bitter and sour. But everything has its own time, and therefore, the godless do not remain in judgement nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous (Psalm 1:5).

Since the opportunity came unexpectedly, I cannot write nearly as much, but do forgive us; and write if possible. The letters from January and March, did you receive them? If anything in the same does not agree with you, do not think that it was meant that way. I bid you once again, write if it is possible. Janzen's children are presently in the Molotschna, and you can write back via them.

And you, my beloved and most worthy Klassen, how are things with you? Will you soon follow as well? Oh, but do not also lose your courage, rather believe that we also mean it well, even though only in our weakness. I would otherwise wish to write much to you, but enough for this time. It is again going much too fast for me, just like my experience with the previous letter. Therefore, my beloved, would you forgive me if I have not reached the mark in something?

A greeting to you from me and my wife; to all the brethren a heartfelt greeting. Do consider and reflect on the words of the poet in number 284. Yes, these are true words. Esau, Adieu. God bless you with Psalm 54.

*J. Wiebe*

#### **Letter Six.**

Beloved brother Peter Toews.

Firstly I wish you the grace, compassion and peace of God together with the comfort-rich fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Amen. I am also sending you both presentations from father, and I return many thanks.

Beloved brother, I was so disappointed when I said, "Hello" at Goossen's and did not get to see you. Indeed, I could have wept out loud as the beloved and downhearted sister Goossen said that you had taken your leave 4 hours earlier with saddened and downcast hearts. Oh, how I wanted to call out after you, indeed, for all of you, "Weep over the downtrodden in Israel, for the walls and

battlements are fallen, the watchmen have fled and the vineyard is being cast down."

Oh, let us consider the prophets such as Amos chapter 8. Oh, let us consider for we might well lament and weep regarding the current times in the Gemeinde of God which are highly sorrowful, and which I--together with the beloved brother Schellenberg, have had to listen to with much sorrow as no one wants to be the foremost debtor. I, in my very great weakness, have advised that--for the sake of God, no separation should be considered; but possibly it had that appearance. The beloved Ohm Enns has promised me that he wants to yield himself completely and that he will submit himself to the judgement of the brethren.

Now, enough of this. Let us commit the matter unto God in so far as we are unable to understand it for He will have counsel and advice. Written in great haste, I have guests who will travel there. I hope shortly to send a declaration for the brotherhood as to my views on the entire situation. But this much I know already, to achieve it is no small matter; however, not for you. Oh, how often I think of the circumstances at the time when you, Goossen and I, promised to come to each other's aid if anyone of us felt like giving up.

Greet all who are lovers of the truth as well as the beloved Cornelius Toews. From your friend and fellow-traveller unto eternity,

*Jakob Wiebe*

#### Letter Seven.

Annenfeld, March 25, 1867

Worthy brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus.

Firstly, I wish you much grace, well-being and blessing and the true simplicity and heartfelt humility of Christ. Beloved brothers and sisters. I had in mind to write a lot to you. In fact, I had already covered half a sheet with writing, but I will not send it to you at this time. I have much anxiety within my heart, but God's great love and compassion comforted me and delighted my soul. We have received some letters, two sets from Heinrich Friesen, which have given us much to work on, especially for me since he makes your brother out to be so completely incompetent. So do think how much it would affect me! But I comfort myself with the veracity of the brotherhood which has agreed to everything.

Therefore I wish to deal truthfully and honestly in my letter in so far as the Lord will grant grace; and wherefore I also give all of you my heartfelt advice to be true to your calling and to pasture the flock of Christ which has been entrusted unto you. Beloved brethren, I wish you also the words of the beloved Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:4-10; also John 15:16. Yes, take it earnestly to heart and forgive me for this time that I write so little. The beloved and faithful brother Enns will relate more to you in person.

Greet all those who love the Lord Jesus; also Johann Isaac together with his beloved wife. And please be kind enough and do write more than I have; that I have written so little has its own reasons. Together with a greeting with Titus 15. Your true and loving brother who wishes you well from the heart.

*Jakob Wiebe*

## Letter Eight.

Annenfeld, March 27, 1867

Beloved brother Toews;

Yes, to everyone who fears, loves, and honours the Lord, whether I know them or not; I wish you much grace, peace, salvation and blessing and the comfort-rich fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

Beloved brother, yesterday--Sunday, that is to say, the 26th of this month--we received the letter from you. Yes, the beloved Ohm Baerg came over with it in the evening, and all of us brethren--including J. F.--came together and we all read the letter with great joy. You write that P[eter] H[arms] related many things there which we had also expected. For I can still remember vividly how he did things when he first came here from Markus and bought the land here. If only we had never seen P. Harms [a phrase added which is indecipherable].

When I think of how things have gone ever since, it often inspires me to a deep lamentation. "Oh, Lord, oh, Lord, do not forsake us. Do not forsake us poor sinners. Even though we have earned this for ourselves by our great sins, be gracious unto us according to Thy great compassion." The experience of the children of Israel in the desert frequently came to my mind. How foreign wives often came among them and disobedience, wherein God could have no pleasure. For at the time that \_\_\_\_\_ [?] and the entire people became discontented and rebelled against Moses, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them in an instant (Numbers 16:32). Oh, that everyone might take this into consideration--that is, everything which has been written for our instruction, for it would be terrible to fall into the hands of the living God.

Now, beloved Toews! I want to give you a brief report of everything, for to describe it all in detail would require much time and paper; and I have only little of either. [A margin note] (Perhaps it is possible that we can discuss this later in person, for we are of the expectation that you will want to come here, so that we can talk about all this in person and to truly build each other up. Perhaps we can also celebrate the holy communion \_\_\_\_\_ [?].)

For when Peter Harms came here to us, he said that he would tell us exactly how things were with him, and that he would only pay us a visit in love. We were very happy for this, since at the time we were hungry for the Word of God. But we have not been able to edify ourselves very much with this elderly man. Indeed, most of our discussion with him has been regarding the misdeeds of others. Yes, he spoke to us so that I often thought to myself, why did you go out [separate yourself] from them, for the way he spoke there was no fear of God in \_\_\_\_ [?]. And finally, he started to deal regarding the land, which we also sold to him. Since we had come into a considerable debt during all the years of crop failures, I felt compelled to sell him some of my land. And on the other hand, I also looked forward to the fellowship, for it [originally] appeared that he very much wanted to do that which was right.

But alas! This was not how things went after they were here. It was not long thereafter that they went around behind our backs and brought things into doubt; indeed, with others as much as among us. Yes, it was truly sorrowful and grieved those brothers and sisters in whom I had the greatest confidence. They were brought into discontent by this, and the first love was thereby extinguished; and the light started to burn very sorrowfully.

In the meantime came the division and the matter continued in this way; things stood very sorrowfully. Yet, I wanted to take upon myself everything that was mine. Nevertheless, they all wanted to start anew and promised and forgave each other. And yet, a number of the brethren carried great doubts which I should have also. But what could we do? We first had to come again into one circle, and many among us \_\_\_\_ [?] and to lock out of the door that which was not righteousness-working in accordance with the Word of God (1 Cor. 5:5-11). Yes, we might well have seized the matter more abruptly, but you yourself know the status of the matter here, that we did not have much power. For the Word of God only has \_\_\_\_ [?] power when all the brethren are of one mind, which was not the case here. After we had again come into confidence with each other--through the help of God--and wanted to start sweeping out the evil disorderly substance, we were lacking in many respects. It seemed as if we had started out in pure unrighteousness. Yet God is our \_\_\_\_ [?].

[A page may be missing here. A line indecipherable at the top of a page] When Cornelius Enns and the other brethren bought the land from Abraham Hram [Wall ?], I also bought 50 desjation since my beloved brothers wanted to move here and I was planning to let them take it over, namely, 50 desjation from Wall and 50 desjation from me. But since he was unable to come to an agreement with \_\_\_\_ [?] and Wall's children also wanted some land, and since Harms was still indebted to Wall for the land, Enns and I discussed the matter and decided that we wanted to let Harms have the land and that we would borrow money for him. Thus Wall's children could have the land and that P. Harms' first transaction should remain valid; and so that we could continue to live among each other in love.

For P. H. and A. W. were not in agreement at all regarding the retraction, and so it was our wish that Harms would concede. When we presented this to P. H., he was in complete agreement with this and commented that now he could sever all ties with Wall. Accordingly, we provided him with the money and bought the land for him, namely, the previously referred to 100 desjation. But he should trade the same with Franz Harder who had earlier also bought 100 desjation but later sold [to] \_\_\_\_, which he also gladly wanted to do. Earlier he had 50 from Wall and 50 from me, namely, at two different locations. Now I gave him the choice, he could take me \_\_\_\_ [Baser ?] or Franz Harder's. But he opted to take Harder's, for which I was quite \_\_\_\_ [?]. So he now had his 100 desjation in one block. There were also some old debts which we also paid for him.

Therefore, his former 100 desjation were fully restored to him, exactly the way he had originally bought. He was also quite satisfied. And so we were quite glad, for now Wall only had his children to deal with. He was also happy that he was rid of Harder. But on New Year's Eve, Harms came to me and said he wanted to transfer it [the land] to me. Harder came to me and said that this was the thanks that we got \_\_\_\_ [?]; earlier during the harvest we had not demanded one kopek from him. Enns and I went and talked to him as to why he wanted to bring these costs upon me and that he should \_\_\_\_ [?]; for we had already exerted so much time and effort on his behalf. But he did not \_\_\_\_ [?] all. This is also what we requested of him but . . . [a line is missing at the top of the last page] and went away from him sorrowful and sad.

The other morning he came and \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ [?] good and commented that

things should remain the way they had previously been agreed. Then he said he had erred grievously, and that we should forgive him; which we also did with full sincerity. But how long did it last before he came back and stated that he had bought the land completely without a house [?]. But 8 desjatien of \_\_\_\_ [?] were included in the deal for which he also gave 10 tschwert of wheat. Overall it appeared as if we had wanted to make him go under and that we had dealt incorrectly with him.

But as God is my witness, at least to the best of my knowledge and intention, we have not dealt wrongly with him, and in respect of which I have a clear conscience. Oh, my beloved brother! It would take much time if I was to enumerate everything which has all occurred in this regard. We have often stopped to consider—in the deepest humility—why things have gone so badly. Yes, it is the way one of the martyrs writes that they were driven about like donkeys and finally had to forsake the assemblies. This is also the way it was here. [If?] they were not of us, they would have been of you [?], and would have remained here with us. Therefore, my beloved, let us not lose \_\_\_\_ [?] this, or that it would weaken the confidence in each other, and in as much as I know, the good intentions are still present in everyone to do better.

We recently held a brotherhood meeting and earnestly admonished everyone of our obligations to come to each others aid, and encouraged each other unto love and good works. Regarding Elisabeth Wark [?], she had also said \_\_\_\_ [?], which really hurt us. She brought forward many unfounded accusations and also, seemingly, some lies among them. She is presently at P. H. She has been sick since the 7th of this month. But she should not lie. I told her that it seemed to me to be disputation [?]. \_\_\_\_ [?] in the manner of truthfulness, which he also took [?] and it seems with force. Although we want to stand by our decision, that you, beloved Toews, have accepted.

In conclusion, a heartfelt greeting to you. Do forgive me for my poor writing. I looked it over quickly but it is quite late already. We are not too well, \_\_\_\_ [?] for my wife is approaching the time of childbirth [entbindung]. \_\_\_\_ [From] your true and loving fellow pilgrim to eternity.

*J. Wiebe*

## Letter Nine.

Annenfeld, April 28, 1867

Beloved siblings in the Lord.

Firstly, I wish you much grace, compassion and peace and the comfort-rich fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

My dearly beloved brother, Peter Toews, in view of the your sincere invitation, I cannot omit to write you something of my views for I am deeply disturbed regarding our sorrowful and lamentable circumstances. Yes, it seems as if even the best and the strongest amongst us will lose their courage on this account. Oh, beloved brother, I think of the time when I sat in my room and was disturbed regarding my ministerial office, so that we promised each other to come to each other's aid; but what is human help in such extremity. Indeed, who helped the disciples when their boat was overcome with waves? Only the beloved Saviour Jesus Christ who alone can help us and He will only do so if we come to Him in

faith.

It may well be our fault that the matters are going so contrary with the beloved Cornelius Toews. Therefore, let us earnestly pray to God that He might forgive us for this careless dealing, for we have probably done it mainly with honest intentions, and let us do only that which serves for the glory of God. But all of us must readily agree with Jesus, that we fail constantly. But let us not thereby lose our courage; let us seek to honour God and not ourselves. Let us not seek to win souls to ourselves, but rather to lead them to the beloved Saviour, Who--after all--has given Himself as a sacrifice for many; He has also suffered and endured for you and for me and until this very day He prays to the Father for us.

As much as I love the beloved Ohm Toews, I still cannot justify his declaration. I find it particularly disturbing that he does not know whether it was before or after the baptism. I am not clear in that regard and it gives me much to consider. But if my experience was the same as his--Toews'--I would probably fall silent. And if only the words--yes, the comfort-rich words of Paul did not stand, "There is nothing unclean for those who are in Christ Jesus"; also when Peter says, "For the times past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries" according to 1 Peter 4:3. For then I would fall silent.

We will decline the invitation to come there for this time, but not because we do not love you or that we do not want to help. Oh, no! For we love you from the heart. Yes, I still think of your love which you frequently demonstrated to me--unworthy one--at that time, and I must well say with the apostle, "How were we so blessed." Do forgive us that we do not comply with your wishes for we want to remain unpartisan in the matter; nor are we truly familiar and knowledgeable regarding the same; and it brings on in its wake such evil consequences of my being there. For these reasons I think it better if I do not come there.

But otherwise we wish to be united with all those who work out their salvation with fear and trembling. Yes, I say again, I love you from the heart, and remain committed unto God with 2 Peter 1:5. Amen. Esau is again outside the fold. May the Lord find him worthy of repentance.

Greetings from your fellow-traveller to eternity,

*Jakob Wiebe*

Beloved brother. I wanted to write a lot more yet, today--Monday morning, before the letter went on its way. But because I spent so much time in finding your address, little will become of it. I have found all the other letters from January but I cannot find the addresses. Evidently I have placed them somewhere in safekeeping. I believe we can write to you in Karazubasar?

Oh, my beloved Toews, if only you could now look into my heart and see how sad I presently am regarding the matter of Esau, in part because he is angry at us. Brother Enns does not gladly wish to keep him any longer, which I can also understand. For in some respects it is also quite difficult, especially in these circumstances. On one occasion we were holding a prayer meeting [Erbauungsstunde] where he was at the window. We saw that someone was under severe conviction just at that moment as we were on our knees and praying for help. He says he did not do it, but he was at the window. For eight days I had very difficult nights as I could not sleep. It always seemed as if he was there with me.

But thanks be to God this has all changed.

Now beloved siblings. With regard to my material circumstances I would gladly come, for I would disregard the resting. When I reflect regarding your circumstances, how severe it is regarding our Cornelius Toews, I feel that I cannot say much in that regard. We are hearing different things from our Aeltester. Oh, beloved, here we have an example? I wish to encourage you with the Apostle Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:1. Prove everything and the good retain. I do not expect to come but should it be the will of the Lord, I will come for the day of Christ's ascension. If I am not there by then, we won't be coming; Baerg and I.

Otherwise I commit you unto God and His Word and grace, and receive a heartfelt greeting from me and my wife. Come and visit us together with your beloved wife. A greeting with Titus 3:15. Greet all who love the Lord Jesus. Greet also Jakob Friesen from me. Amen.

#### Letter Ten.

Annenfeld, September 1, 1868

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus;

First of all I wish you much grace, compassion and peace together with the comfort-rich fellowship of the Holy Spirit. The great love which I have towards all of you compels me to write a little something; even though I feel myself to be completely incapable therefore, I cannot omit to do so. Oh you, my beloved, if one truly takes to heart the current times and the great greed among those who still wish to follow in the footsteps of Christ; oh, for then one must cry out with the prophet David in Psalm 12, "Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men. They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak. The Lord shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things."

But what is the solution, my beloved? What are we taught by Paul? "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" according to 1 Corinthians 16:13. And in addition those who are called by the name Christian are departing from righteousness as is seen in 2 Timothy 2:17. Yes, my beloved, in the scripture above referred to, he--however--speaks, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." Indeed, the Lord knows His own and He also knows me and the rest of us here in the Crimea and also those there in the Molotschna Colony, also the beloved brethren there in Borosenko. Yes, God knows His own, He knows every heart. God knows whether or not we are walking uprightly before Him. God knows if we are seeking His honour or merely our own. Yes, God hears, God disciplines, God knows. You will not avoid Him, the thought stands before Him as the actual deed. Yes, He Himself holds His hand around our hearts.

God Himself has created us, so how can we think that we can keep something hidden from Him. Oh, no, my beloved! We cannot do that. God is the judge of our thoughts and the very conceptions of our hearts. Therefore, my beloved, it is the most inwardly bidding of my heart to all of you, whether you are in the Colony of Kleefeld, Alexanderkron, Prangenaus, Landskrone, Alexanderwohl, Fischau or Lichtenau, and also those of you in Borosenko--and wherever else you are all living, which places I cannot even all remember, all of you; do love one

another and pursue peace and maintain a fervent love with each other, the way Paul admonishes us in all his epistles. Yes, you beloved brethren in the Molotschna Colony, you who are standing there so forsaken, as if without a shepherd, yes, like sheep without a shepherd. Do not give up, God has not forsaken you, He does not want to forsake us nor leave us. He is true to those whom He hath chosen into a fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. 1 Corinthians 1:7.

Yes, yes, my beloved, I know that many will agree with me, oh, how the Lord invites us so lovingly, oh, how much has He not loved us, what has He not all done for us? Yes, His anxious frightful words are always the most important to me, yes, these words frequently pierce my heart. Our Saviour is so loving, yes, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Who has never done any evil nor has He hurt anyone, nor has any deceit crossed His lips. Yes, this same Lord had to undergo so much scorn and mocking, and finally even the bitter death of crucifixion on the tree between heaven and earth, as a curse for my sins and yours, yes, for all the sins of the world. Wherefore He has also cried out so fearfully, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me."

Behold my beloved. This is what He has done for us; out of grace He will also forgive all our sins. But because He is such a Holy and sanctified God, He also wants us to be holy as well, for the spirit of God does not live in an evil soul nor in a body which is the servant of sin. Therefore, I advise all of you--my beloved--with the words of the holy apostle Peter (1 Peter 2). I ask that you would reread the entire chapter and follow the same with all diligence; it is well worth the effort, even if you might thereby find something to be sour. And if there should be any souls that have not yet found forgiveness of sins, I do bid them to read earnestly in the word of God and also to live and walk according to the same. Furthermore, I wish to comfort you with the words of Paul in Romans 8:13 to the end. Oh, if only we could truly reflect on the words of Paul and also to accept the same for ourselves when he says in Philippians 3:17, "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample."

Oh, if only we all could live so blamelessly and without fault the way He lived and taught us. Oh, how glorious and blessed would things then be among us. Oh, let us commence today, from henceforth; for today is the day of grace, even today the householder goeth forth to engage more workmen for the vineyard. Yes, glory to God; God be praised. Yes, unto Him be honour, glory and majesty, which can serve to all our empowerment during this--for us--sorrowful time.

If you have disputation \_\_\_\_ [?] Namely, three brothers together with their wives, Cornelius, Abraham and Jakob Kornelsen from Johannesruh, do remember them in prayer. In closing I again greet all of you many times from the heart, and I repeat the words of Paul, "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice" (Philippians 4:4). Your sincerely loving fellow-pilgrim to an endless eternity,

*Jakob Wiebe*

Now I have written to all the brothers and sisters. I bid that you might receive it in love from a very weak and incompetent servant. And if you have love towards me, you will forgive me for my writing. Yes, brothers and sisters, write as best as each one of you is able, for it will serve to strengthen me and all of us here. But you must not forget \_\_\_\_ . The way things appear at this time our assemblies cannot increase. Remember us all in prayer, especially me, poor sinner.

## Letter Eleven.

Annenfeld, February 27, 1869

Beloved brethren, Toews, Goossen and Loewen, as well as all the brethren and sisters. Grace be with you and the peace of God, our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Beloved siblings, we were hindered yesterday--Wednesday--by material circumstances, so that we were unable to hold our prayer meeting [Erbauung]. We held the same today--Thursday, the 27th of February--where we read the 19th chapter of Luke, whereby we were enlightened and brought into remembrance of the parable of the faithful servant. We were just ready to finish and close, whereupon we receive letters from the Molotschna Gebietsamt; we looked through them and there was also one from you--dearly beloved brother--which we read with great interest.

Therefore, I ask you for forgiveness, that I have not written for such a very long time. I have written a little regarding the Molotschna to you--my beloved--but do forgive me if I have thereby written anything offensive or contrary to scripture. I was ill at the time with a severe headache and so, it could easily have happened. Yet, I have the confidence in you that you will consider it all in love.

Beloved brethren, Toews, Goossen and Loewen, I would so dearly like to speak with you in person, but it does not seem to be possible at this time. Therefore I will declare myself to some extent to you. I am frequently very afraid in my present lamentable and very sorrowful circumstances, so that I hardly know where to turn. For often it seems as if I should give up regarding the office and ministry which has been placed upon me.

Oh, my beloved and faithful brethren, I can hardly say how often I am discouraged so that I seek various means whereby to humble myself before God. Yes, how much grievous sighing and how many fervent tears have I not already shed over my circumstances. Yes, even now tears could very well be the seal for this letter. Yes, what counsel do we have? For the Lord wishes to strengthen us, yes, he wants us to take off our filthy rags and to put on our wedding garments; indeed I appropriate the words of Zechariah as a comfort, Zechariah 3:3,4,5 and 6, where it says, "Behold I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." It is stated likewise in Isaiah 6:7.

If I could not comfort myself that this is truly the will of the Lord, and if the faithful brethren and sisters did not demonstrate their compassion towards me, I would hardly be able to accept this office. But I comfort myself with your and their intercession for me and that you would come to my aid in my very great weakness; oh, so that the Lord might more and more wish to strengthen me and that I might do everything unto His honour and for the edification of all of us. My beloved brethren, I wrote in an earlier letter of the ordination in which respect I have already come to a greater clarity. Although, quite honestly, I cannot agree with the other Aeltester even though we seemed to be of one mind when we were speaking to each other.

Wherefore, we continue to need a refuge to be named in the ark; this cannot happen without hurt and damage--for which reason it is so difficult for the flesh. We heard from I. Peters that he was very fervent to preserve the house of the Lord and that he wanted to drive here for the sake of Christ. But the good confidence which we once confessed towards Ohm Peters has been taken away by

Ohm P. Friesen. For my part, I have been persuaded enough, and so, I ask of you--for the will of Christ--do take this matter from me seriously; for God is a God of order who wishes to have everything judged according to His Word and will.

Now, it is my plea to you that you would advise me regarding this matter as soon as possible; this is my wish in this matter for I always feel compelled--for the sake of Christ--to help you in whatever way I can; also there in the Molotschna. Consequently, I would dearly wish to be ordained by you, beloved Ohms T., G. and L.--as well as our beloved Ohm Baerg, so that with the help of God, I can commence work as a duly ordained servant. Perhaps you could designate a time for which you can come here for this purpose. Perhaps you could come just before or just after Easter, but only if it suits you. Do not wait too long if you are advising me by post. We will be expecting you soon. And let the Molotschna brethren know when you come, since some of them may have the desire to come here also in order to take part in the proceedings. But advise us if everything should seem different to you. And with the will of God and His gracious support, we also wish to advance the matter by serving ourselves with the love meal.

When I got home I was very sick for 2 days, but now I feel better. The seeding time is almost finished here but only for some. Greet the other Ohms for me and from Ohm Baerg. If possible get together, perhaps you can all continue as ministers. A greeting to you from all the brothers and sisters as well as myself as the least of all. Greetings, many thousand times, from your fellow traveller to eternity,

*Jakob Wiebe*

It is 12 o'clock, everyone is sleeping.

#### Letter Twelve.

Early April, 1869

To all fellow pilgrims unto an endless eternity;

I wish you grace, compassion, and the peace of God our Lord Jesus Christ. Beloved friends in Christ Jesus. I have written you twice without having had time in my opinion to review the matter with my brethren regarding your reunification and also regarding our Aeltester ordination--although I did do so with some brethren individually. With respect to your reunification, beloved brethren, we would love to see nothing more than that we could have one love and become one soul, just as it was in the time of the apostles. Oh, for how much reason will we thereby not give our beloved Redeemer to rejoice if we as obedient children would want to receive them as teachers [ministers] and as those who are truly united in one mind and one spirit. [a number of illegible phrases] . . . [who] . . . holds our hearts and our lives in His hand . . ., for He does not dwell in a sinful soul nor in a body that is subjected to sin.

Therefore, we advise all of you from the innermost being of our hearts, for the sake of the Will of Christ, do not in any manner allow the selfish "I" to reign, for Jesus Christ does not dwell there where the selfish "I" rules. For the beloved Lord says, "He that is not with me, is against me". . . Therefore, my beloved Ohms, according to my view the others are more indebted then we are since they occasioned these incorrect dealings. But we cannot regard it as being a wanton opposition; only they cannot see it in that manner. Even if they have changed their

view to some extent that their dealings were not entirely according to Scripture, they cannot completely concede that we were right in every respect since the dealings from our part regarding them were not always inspired by the love of Christ either.

I do not hereby want to say that our views were false and that their dealings were contrary to Scripture. Oh, No! No way! But I rejoice that the Lord has had mercy upon us, as revealed in a number of the matters regarding which those Ohms and brethren had lost their confidence in us. Yes, our compassionate God had mercy upon us and wishes to lead His people so that light and darkness can always be distinguished. We cannot give any affirmation to such a misguided zeal as was to have occurred from our part during the separation and cannot believe that these dealings were done according to the will of Christ, since it says, ". . . all things shall be done in love". Certainly the foolishness of those on our side who agitated with such misguided zeal has been made manifest before all men; likewise those who taught so incorrectly and contrary to Scripture, for their foolishness has also been made apparent. May the Lord be gracious unto them and again allow them to experience His grace, and thereby, my beloved, remedy the damage with which we have both struggled. And much is thereby accomplished, that is to say, if we reinforce the same with righteousness-working repentance and confess and acknowledge our mistakes, for God does not want the death of a sinner rather that every man would be converted and live. Therefore, my beloved, it is our view that if both sides wish to allow the love of God to rule, yes, if only for the sake of Christ, both parties would want to be the least significant and we would be able to forget that which lies behind us and direct ourselves towards that which lies before us, towards the treasure which is mindful of the heavenly calling.

Therefore, my beloved, you should understand our meaning to be that neither side has always dealt according to the love of Christ. But we are still in the time of grace and we can make everything right, as long as we are not yet on the way [to the judge] with each other. How much will we not thereby beat back the evil enemy who wishes for nothing more than when he can stir up a dissension, and who loves nothing more than when we continue to live in disputation and shame. Indeed, we would put him to shame if we could make everything right and to wait upon the Lord in the love of Christ so that He would find us all awake. Oh, that none of us would be found sleeping; rather that all of us might be able to say, "Come Lord Jesus, I am ready." Indeed, my beloved, we have good reason to lament together with the prophet Joel;

The wine is dried up and the fig tree languishes, . . . and yourselves, Lament ye priests; howl ye ministers of the altar; come, lie all night in sackcloth, ye ministers of God: for the meat offering and the drink offering is withholden from the house of your God. Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land unto the house of the Lord your God and cry unto the Lord.

Indeed, if we could truly bring this before the Lord with a humble, contrite and fearful heart, for then we will also receive help and come together again in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit in love and peace with each other . . . and live with

each other. Indeed, if you are all united there I believe that you have been inspired therefore by the spirit of God, and that you will have proven everything according to the Word of God. Accordingly, we also extend our hand of brotherhood and our heartfelt invitation for you to attend our Aeltester ordination—all of you ministers and also all of you beloved brothers and sisters who can make it possible for themselves to undertake the long journey. For we do not find any grounds in the Scriptures to have the ordination performed by another Aeltester. I hope that you will already be aware that Abraham Klassen, Prangenau, made the effort to meet with myself, brothers Enns and Wohlgemuth, and counselled us regarding this matter so that we have come to a better understanding. Nonetheless, we would gladly accept more good advice in this regard. According to our view, it would be most convenient if you could come here for the third day of Easter to carry out this ordination. We trust that the Lord will let us know if this is not in accordance with His Holy Will.

I admonish you also in closing with the words of Paul, "Prove everything and retain the good." Yes, my beloved, when I truly reflect upon everything and how great a sinner I am, I frequently do not know where to turn. Yes, when I think that the Lord God will require from me the blood which has passed through my hands! Oh, for then a fear and trembling arises within me and I know of no other counsel but to commit myself completely unto the will of the Lord. If in some way you, my beloved brethren, should feel that the views which we are reporting to you are false in some respects, my courage would not fail me because of that. I do not doubt that if you would judge me according to the unadulterated Word of God that we would be able to come to an agreement in all matters, for we strive for nothing else but to follow the Word of God and to practise the same.

We hereby commit all of you unto God and His word and grace. Beloved brethren, time will not allow me to rewrite and edit my imperfect writing, which is obviously very necessary. But I trust that you will forgive me and receive it as such from me in love, and that you will excuse me for the zeal which I have obviously expended in good portion, and that you will not reject our request for it is intended for the honour of God and for the salvation of all of us. Consequently you should accept it as an obligation to gladden our hearts by coming here for a visit for Easter and to present a sermon for the ordination. And for this purpose you, beloved Ohms, with the help and gracious assistance of God, shall establish the protocol, for a Gemeinde without . . . regulations cannot continue to stand.

And also you, so dearly beloved Ohms Abraham Friesen, Neukirch, Gerhard Schellenberg and Isaak Friesen, and also to all of you, beloved friends: I advise you from the innermost depths of my heart, that you sincerely accept the reunification as an obligation as the matter is not trite. Oh, my beloved Ohm Abraham, how will we not rejoice if we could once more personally receive you together with your wife, as brothers and sisters. Oh, this should truly give us reason to think of the former days of our enlightenment, when you visited us for five years out of Christian love. Oh, my beloved Ohm Abraham, how were we then so blessed? Yes, I frequently think of the blessed time, often it felt as if we were in heaven while we sang many a beautiful song together with each other; how many a sacred Scripture we read? We continued for the entire time in the Lord, and now we have become such enemies? Let us now forget that which is behind us and

direct ourselves to that which is before us. I gladly confess that I have frequently erred. But I have never done so intentionally. Although I wanted to do better, I too have often struggled. Oh, my beloved, when I reflect thereon, how at that time we were strengthened and inspired by you, I can hardly refrain from tears.

Oh, and it gives me great sorrow over our beloved Ohm Johann to see that he has come to stand so much by himself. I ask that you would greet him with 2 Samuel 7:14. And you also, my beloved Ohm Schellenberg, what joy it creates and gives me that we can again be united as one in the spirit. Indeed I could actually cry for joy. Oh, my beloved, yes, very beloved friends, who would have thought that we would once more have this experience. I have no doubt that we would not have believed it if someone had told us so ten years ago. Indeed, the counsel of the Lord is miraculous and in the end He allows matters to come to a glorious conclusion.

Perhaps, we can talk in person as well if it would be God's Holy Will that you could come here for Easter. For this is the heartfelt wish of all of the brethren here that you would come here in love and unity of the spirit. We are hoping that you would not decline our request, and that you would be reunited in love as soon as possible. We commit you unto God and His grace and remain your true and loving fellow pilgrims to an endless eternity.

*Jacob Wiebe  
Peter Baerg*

### Letter Thirteen.

August 1, 1869

Declaration to the Kleine Gemeinde of Borosenko and Molotschna:

We as a small group of pardoned sinners who have united ourselves with you feel it is our duty to declare to you in a loving way how it is with us in that the Lord has brought severe trials to us and especially to me. After I was called as Aeltester I was on a mission tour through the congregations of the Molotschna and Borosenko on the urgent wish of the congregations to serve them with baptism and communion. You will remember that I told you that I felt like Paul in 1 Corinthians 2:1-5. I did it with fear and trembling because I was still not content with my baptism, which I received before I was really converted. So after much struggle and prayer, I have come to the conviction that I cannot continue to serve in this way any more unless the [Kleine] Gemeinde can resolve to accept the biblical baptism into the death of Christ according to Romans 6:3. All clear proofs in the Holy Scriptures show us this, like [the baptism of] Jesus (Mark 1:9-10), also the eunuch (Acts 8:27-40) and others who were baptized in the water. Menno Simons himself taught this: "The baptism of the first Christians took place in plain water, and all who feel this need should be baptized on the basis of their saving faith." During the distribution of the holy communion, I have seen dear brethren in tears. They wanted to step back because they were not comfortable about their baptism in an unconverted state. I was supposed to comfort them when I myself was not comfortable with my baptism. Behold, dear brethren, we should look into this, that through the withdrawal of our Kleinen Gemeinde, a big mistake was made in that the directions in the Bible concerning the holy baptism were not heeded. Klaas Reimer called the [Grosse] Gemeinde from which he withdrew a

Babylon. That means a confusion! Can the work, the Babel of the unconverted, find allowance by the Lord? O dear brethren, if only our first brethren had gone one step further, how much labour, difficulty, agitation would have been prevented! But I beg you today: Will we not subordinate ourselves in the fear of the Lord?

Secondly, it is well known by everyone that the question has arisen in our [Kleine] Gemeinde whether or not one can be aware of one's forgiveness of sin. One part of the Gemeinde, among which I also am, is sure of this; and our little group here in the Crimea is clear about this, for God's Spirit has given us the sign that we are children of God (Romans 8:14-16). Oh, how great an affliction this has made for me! Menno taught so seriously about the new birth, and that a Gemeinde shall consist of sincere children of God who know their filial relationship to God (Romans 5:1-5). How shall it be then when for pride and haughtiness one part of the Gemeinde is intolerantly opposed to the position we have obtained through much prayer and tears on our knees? To this I say with the poet:

Aber, ach leider  
Wie verkehrt es geht!  
Nicht in schlechte Kleider  
Man vor Gott besteht:  
Sondern nur die Liebe  
Deckt de Sunden Meng',  
Nicht, dass man sich uebe  
Ausserlich und streng',  
In Gesetzes Werfen--  
Doch dabei vergisst,  
Dass all unsre Werke  
Koth and Unflat ist.

Thirdly, we want herewith also to express our thanks for all of the love which has been bestowed on us by many brethren, who came forward and preached the Word of God to us, so that we could continue to grow and build ourselves up as living stones. Although our desire to be immersed on the basis of our faith was not fulfilled, we still had many blessings with each other and blessed hours in the Lord. We were agreed in the Lord to walk on the narrow path which leads to eternal life.

But how sad are the conditions now with the lovelessness and the various splits in our congregations in the Molotschna and Borosenko? At one time during one of my circuit tours, things were united in accordance with the Scriptures: "Turn again, you rebellious Israel!" I again took courage and believed that our troubled travels were led by God's grace. But now we hear that the congregation has been split into three divisions. Oh, if only help would come to us! Still we lift our eyes unto the hills, from whence our help comes, and console ourselves with the words of Jesus, Luke 12:32. "Fear not, little flock, for it is my Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Splits in the Gemeinde are proof that the true signs of the disciples of Christ are missing (John 13:35). Therefore there is a desire awakened among us to organize ourselves completely according to the Gospels. Oh, may all

of us who love the Gemeinde become committed, to deepen the truth of salvation in us and to totally submit ourselves to the Word of God in all love and meekness. Oh, how happy we would be! And God alone shall receive the glory. We look to Jesus, who began a work with us; he shall also be the fulfilment of our faith.

*Aeltester Jakob A. Wiebe*

#### Letter Fourteen.

Annenfeld, September 3, 1869

Beloved in the Lord.

Firstly, I wish you much grace, compassion and peace from God, the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ. Beloved brothers and sisters, I feel constrained--at this time--not to write you and this for the reason that I had not yet received any answer or information from you. But I cannot refrain from writing something to you, for when I consider the great love with which we have nourished each other then I do not know how we could subsist if we would actually part company. But the words of our heavenly Father remain immutable, "He who will not confess me before men, I will not confess before my heavenly father."

Oh, what a difficult time this is for those who do not look after their soul's salvation. But it is even more difficult for those who continue along carelessly and do not search in God's word; indeed, and for those who do not merely search, but also do it. For the beloved Saviour says, "You are my friends if you do as I have commanded you." Yes, the disciples who suffer for the sake of Christ and who endure mocking and spite can comfort themselves and rejoice that they are saved, for faith shall maintain them, and the Spirit of God gives them the testimony that they are the children of God.

In Hebrews 11, chapter 6, the Apostle Paul says, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Behold, my beloved, for this reason the highly enlightened apostle says that it is impossible to please God without faith. The meaning here is not of a faith which is verbal or internal only, for Jesus says, "You believe that there is a God, you do well, for even the devil believes likewise and trembles." Rather the meaning here is of a faith which is sufficient through love unto all good works, the way Peter says in 2 Peter 1, verse 5-8, referring to diligence, virtue, temperance, patience godliness and brotherly love, "For if these things be in you, and abound, they make that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Behold, my beloved, true and sincere love has all of these characteristics and whoever has such a faith will also increase in knowledge whereby they shall seek to fulfil all of that which we have been commanded to do by the Word of God. Oh, that we might receive the assurance in our hearts for the apostle says, it is a precious thing whereby the heart becomes firm, which occurs only through grace. Upon this faith is born within the hearts of believers an inwardly beautification through the warmth and power of the world which is yet to come. From this follows joy and a secure peace of mind within the spirit of the Father and whereby they may be uplifted in all the fallen aspects of their nature. For this they trust in their beloved Father and do not doubt, in as much as the substance of the promises does not appear before the eyes of mankind, and for which reason it

seems to struggle with the nature of man and to fly in the face of all understanding and reason; for the believer does not always see the things which are constituted in the nature, understanding and power of the creation and work of God. Rather the believer looks foremostly upon the goodness and unlimited power of the One Who has given the promises, including everything in nature and all the power within creation in heaven and earth and the sea, yes, whereby death itself must give way. Whereupon the believer stands steadfast with Abraham, the patriarch, particularly, where God proves many believers and the pious through many trying circumstances, for it is certain that God cannot and will not lie.

But this true and earnest faith is best known to God who knows all our hearts. Since He is the arbitrator of all the counsels and conceptions of our innermost being, He is the one who will judge the characteristics of the faith within our being. And since He will make a judgement whether the same is right or false within us, therefore, my beloved, do not judge us too quickly the way it appears to have occurred [?]; do not believe everything which you hear about us, rather prove everything with the Word of God. For woe is upon us if we are in error, but what if we are right? Do give thought to what the Lord requires of us, for we must practice everything which He has commanded us. We must turn neither to the left nor to the right. Rather we must heed the voice which we hear saying to us, "This is the way ye must go, remain upon it and turn neither to the right nor to the left," the way it has occurred for us and a number of you.

And yet there is some very evil talk going around about us, which must have also echoed all the way to you. But I bid all of you, do not believe it; rather examine and prove the same, for I am certain that He has loved me much sooner than I loved Him. Therefore let us love Him for He has first loved us. Yes, I wish to love Him and to pursue all righteousness and will allow myself to be baptised according to the example of Jesus. I am convinced that I must do this purely out of obligation and obedience, for I became a child of God through faith; and through the symbol of baptism, we put on Christ.

How can a person who still lives completely in their old nature, make a covenant with God, or be freed from sin by baptism? [\_\_\_\_\_] For just like an unborn child can be born dead and must be washed from the afterbirth, it is also so before a child is born and brought to life. It is likewise with a Christian baptism which is comparable to a death and the new birth, and which--in accordance with the will of God--is given to no one, other than only those who have departed from their sins and who shun the same, and those who have been resurrected from a life of sin unto a new life and walk, and who practice everything which Christ has commanded them.

And the same cannot be recognized by anyone as a brother or sister in the Church of Christ and be allowed to partake in the Christian order, unless they have first undergone the Christian baptism as above set forth; this is the first regulation and beginning of the Christian community whereby one submits and commits himself to really practice all the laws and regulations of God, which they have received by faith through the Word of God. And just as there is only one God and only one faith, so is there only one baptism. Thus far from the martyrs, first volume, page 416.

Do examine it for yourself, my beloved, and compare the same with the Word of God, whether a baptism like the one I and many others have received can

be considered as such a baptism? It is no small matter to enter into a covenant with God. And what can I say in this regard since this is how the Kleine Gemeinde accepted me as a member. You yourself very well know what kind of an evil life I was living before, which a number of persons--who did not think within their hearts that it was right, have repented with great sorrow; and which I should say--my beloved, was severe enough both before and after the baptism; yes, it was fleshly, earthly and satanic, and constituted the eternal death. Therefore, I say with Peter, it is not enough merely not to contravene the scriptures, rather I must live according to the scriptures. A martyr writes or has written that the baptism of heretics and unbelievers was not to be regarded as a valid baptism; and that therefore, those who have received such a baptism must be rebaptised. In short, that it was not a valid baptism unless it was within the true church and upon a true baptism.

Behold, my beloved, what then shall we say? The beloved Ohm Abraham Friesen has stated in his writings--namely, in a published book, that these were the servants of destruction and that if it was not true they would not have gone out of them [?]. Behold, for they had the correct articles of faith and baptism, and yet, they baptised many who were completely without faith, in the Grosse Gemeinde as well as in the Kleine Gemeinde, which is openly practised in the light of day so that there can be no doubt. I will not say that it is not a valid baptism, to baptise the unbelievers together with the believers, but how can it be understood in any other way? In this regard, read 1 Corinthians 6:13 to the end, and prove everything and the good retain.

Many greetings to all of you from us and do not become discouraged regarding us, for I love you all dearly. And do not think that we want to do something which is not right. Visit us if it is possible. I think that we will agree on everything; oh, do remain \_\_\_\_\_. But do write, for love comes thereby. I commit you unto God and remain your truly loving brother and fellow pilgrim to a timeless eternity.

*J. Wiebe*

I advise you also that our daughter Justina died on the 14th of July, after a very severe 3 day illness. Again a heartfelt greeting to you, and do not forget to visit us. Forgive me for my poor writing; this was written in great haste.

#### **Letter Fifteen.**

Annenfeld, November 19, 1869

My dearly beloved P. Toews.

I wish you and your family, firstly, the true peace of God, together with the comfort-rich fellowship of the Holy Spirit, and also a truly childlike, obedient and unpartisan spirit. Because of my inner compulsion I cannot refrain from writing something to you even though I had made up my mind not to enter into a battle of words with anyone. Since love thinks no evil, I cannot do otherwise and because of the conviction of my soul, I must direct a few very imperfect lines to you, for I feel myself to be very closely bonded with you in the spirit. Even though it seems that we presently do not agree very much, this must be only an outward appearance; it cannot be so inwardly, as I have not felt anything from you--beloved Toews--other than an unblemished faith and a truly sincere love.

Now, my beloved Toews, you have come down somewhat harshly with your

fellow ministers regarding the step which we--through the grace of God--have been able to achieve and which I also gladly forgive you as well as the others. For we, ourselves, neglected to follow the footsteps of the Saviour in this regard for so long. But perhaps you did not take our well-meant advise to heart very seriously, rather you relied on reports and the advice of others to immediately consider us to be dangerous and heretical. This cannot be understood in any other way from your writing, but perhaps you have not sufficiently taken into consideration the words of the prophets, "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein" (Jeremiah 6:16).

Oh, wherefore, my very beloved, do understand the Word of God in simplicity and with an upright heart, for the word of God is not to be mocked. According to Jeremiah 23, verse 29, it is a hammer which crushes the arrogant hearts. Oh, yes, according to Hebrews 4, verse 12, ". . . the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Yes, my beloved, this sword has been mightily in evidence among us, so that the weakest of women became the strongest heroes, so that we could not do otherwise but simply follow the footsteps of the loving Saviour and to take up His cross.

Therefore, my very beloved, consider this correctly and reflect thereon, and do not allow yourself to be deceived that we are articulated by a false spirit, rather prove the spirits whether they are of God. I am very much saddened by the fact that you have allowed yourself to believe that we are together with those who have seceded so angrily or that we have taken up their books, first to examine them, and thereafter, to be deceived by the same. I say no! For our compassionate God and Father--who preserves and cares for the upright--will also save and protect us from all evil. We comfort ourselves with the words of the beloved Saviour when He says, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

Oh, beloved, do also consider everything correctly from the scriptures regarding baptism; firstly, according to the faith of the heart, and secondly, the mode as prescribed by the Word of God. I really cannot understand why you are so unequivocally set against this, for it is only the least of all commandments which our Lord Jesus has commanded us. For it is a much more difficult assignment for us that we love our enemies and daily crucify our flesh together with all of our lusts and desires. Even if you might think so, one does not do this out of mockery, for it is clearly written in the Word of God, or "buried" as Paul says in Romans chapter 6. Also read further in John 3:23, Acts 8:3-38 and chapter 22:16, Romans 6:4-55, Ephesians 5:26. I could easily refer to many more scripture passages, but the foregoing should suffice if you will study the same with an impartial spirit. Study this further in the Peter Peters book, pages 64-65, and in the Abridged *Martyrs Mirror*, at the back in the last section, where they set forth Paul's teachings.

The step which we have taken, it is correct; and with the power of the Holy Scripture, it will also remain so. But all the lack of peace which I have caused there, that is not right. Therefore I ask you for forgiveness for all our sins. Should I have offended anyone in some other way, or have expressed myself too forcefully, I do ask all of you to forgive me. Your brother,

*J. Wiebe*

I recently heard from Peter Baerg that you had asked him to pass your greetings on to me. He did not give me your letter, yet, I thank you for the same. I am returning the book to you with Martin Klassen. Unfortunately, I have not yet been able to copy the same. May God bless you and grant you peace. Greet all who love us and also the deeply convicted Mrs. Reimer, Mrs. Dueck and Mrs. Wiebe.

---

## Editor's Note

Letter One was contained in the "Familienbuch" of Heinrich Reimer (1791-1884), Muntau, Molotschna, pages 291-298, unpublished journal, courtesy of Milton and Margaret Toews, Abbotsford, British Columbia, November 9, 1992; cf. Part Eleven, Chapter One. Letters Two to Twelve, inclusive, and Letters Fourteen and Fifteen by Rev. Jakob A. Wiebe (1836-1921) to Aeltester Peter P. Toews (1841-1922) are from Peter P. Toews, Document Collection--courtesy of Milton and Margaret Toews, Neilburg, Saskatchewan, 1981, presently Abbotsford, British Columbia. The reader will note that Letter Two was extremely difficult to decipher and that many lines were left out. Letters One and Two were not necessarily addressed to Peter P. Toews (1841-1922) although Letter Two was contained in his document collection. Letter Eight was very difficult to decipher. It was contained in a separate miscellaneous collection of letters of Peter P. Toews--courtesy of Mennonite Library and Archives, Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas, 1982.

In a foreword to the packet containing correspondence received in 1869, Aeltester Peter P. Toews has noted that a number of letters were gathered in a special collection and in a larger format, especially letters from Wiebe which dealt with baptism. It is not known whether this special collection has been preserved. A number of letters in this regard have been preserved and/or published elsewhere, e.g. Gerhard P. Goossen, "Letter to Jakob A. Wiebe, September, 1869,"

and Peter P. Toews, "Declaration to the brethren in the so-called Kleine Gemeinde in the Crimea," published in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph* (Steinbach, Man., 1986), 211-219. The letter by Gerhard P. Goossen to Wiebe of September, 1869, has been republished in Part Thirteen, Chapter Two, as Letter Seventeen, and the letter by Toews has been republished in Part Sixteen, Chapter Four, as Letter Seven. Three letters in this regard remain unpublished: Kornelius Enns (1832-1879), "A letter to Father [Heinrich Enns] and siblings August 15, 1869"; Gerhard Schellenberg, Blumenhoff, Borosenko, "A letter from me Gerhard Schellenberg to Jakob Wiebe, Annenfeld, in the Crimea September 28, 1869; and Gerhard S. Kornelsen, "A writing sent to the Crimea regarding baptism and immersion December 15, 1869."

Primary transcription into German type of Letters Three to Seven, Nine to Eleven, and Fourteen and Fifteen, was completed in 1982 by Peter A. Plett (1898-1990), Landmark, Manitoba. The transcription of the Jakob A. Wiebe letters was very difficult because of his poor spelling and handwriting, probably the worst of any of the letters in the Peter Toews collection. Therefore the transcriber felt constrained to note that the German typed version was questionable in places, particularly Letters Eleven and Twelve. This made the translation work considerably more difficult and less reliable. Letter Twelve of this chapter is signed by both Rev. Jakob A. Wiebe and Rev. Peter Baerg and is the only document presently extant which appears to be written as an official statement by the ministerial of the Crimean Kleine Gemeinde. Although the letter is written in the handwriting of Wiebe, some of the phrases and terminology used indicates that Peter Baerg was also involved in the drafting and preparation of same.

Letter Thirteen, a "Declaration To The Kleine Gemeinde of Borosenko and Molotschna from their Aeltester Jakob A. Wiebe," was published in *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, May 22, 1946, pages 5-6, by J. G. Barkman, who wrote; "After the Gemeinde had come to more light through the awakening in the Crimea and Brother Wiebe had gotten the firm conviction that the biblical baptism must follow a true saving faith, which he had longed for when joining the Gemeinde, but which was not granted him. The original of this declaration plus other notices were apparently burned by the scribe, Abram Harms, when during their first years in America their house and barn were burned through lightning and all the contents were lost. Still, the contents were as follows, perhaps somewhat shortened." The reader is indebted to Leland Harder, Box 367, North Newton, Kansas, 67117, who uncovered this document in the course of his research for the biography of Jakob A. Wiebe, and translated the same for publication with the other Jakob A. Wiebe letters. I am also indebted to Dr. Harder for his comments regarding the dating of Letter Thirteen. The letter has been inserted into the Wiebe letters in the sequence as suggested by him. Leland Harder, Letter to the editor December 16, 1992.

# Chapter Three

## Response

**A Response to Dr. Leland Harder's Biography of Aeltester Jakob A. Wiebe (1836-1921), by Delbert F. Pleff, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1993.**

---

### **Introduction.**

All students of Russian Mennonite history will be grateful to Dr. Leland Harder, North Newton, Kansas, for his well-written biography of Aeltester Jakob A. Wiebe, Annenfeld, Crimea, South Russia, and later Gnadenu (Hillsboro), Kansas. Harder has done a masterful job of combining new sources such as the fifteen letters by Wiebe recently discovered in various Kleine Gemeinde (KG) document collections with existing historical materials in the traditional Krimmer Mennonite Brethren (KMB) historiography, to create an intriguing biographical portrait of Wiebe which will likely stand as a benchmark for years to come.

At the same time, it is clear that Harder has chosen to write this biography from a pro-KMB perspective, maintaining that most things Wiebe did or wrote were correct and bringing into question the actions of the KG and its leaders. I would like to respond to Dr. Harder's treatment of the KMB and KG.

### **The Rebaptism Issue and Other Errors.**

In establishing his thesis, Dr. Harder has made some errors in interpretation which cannot be justified and which will be misleading to the reader. For example, in the section entitled "Young adulthood" (page 746), Harder quotes Jakob A. Wiebe saying, "[In Ohrloff] . . . we got together with people who strove after a higher aim in this world."<sup>11</sup> This was a statement made just prior to the time that the Wiebe family decided to move to the Crimea. Harder assumes incorrectly that the reference here is to spiritual pursuits. However, Wiebe's own stated goal in moving to the Crimea was to become wealthy. The Ohrloff community, where the Wiebe family lived, was very oriented to financial success and the pursuit of wealth as seen in its leading members such as Johann Cornies was idolized. KMB historian David V. Wiebe writes; "After their marriage the Wiebes soon moved to the Simferopol area in the Crimea . . . They expected to prosper quickly."<sup>12</sup> It was the total failure of this objective which inspired Wiebe's quest for spiritual renewal as he writes:

Being still worldly minded we moved with other like-minded people to the Crimean peninsula and bought land there with the idea of becoming rich quickly with earthly goods. . . Instead of getting rich, we became poor. He allowed us to come to dire need through droughts, grasshoppers, and beetles that ruined our crops. The Lord

even sent large poisonous spiders whose bite gave people terrible agony. Some even died from it. Through all of these trials, it pleased the Spirit of God to bring us out of our lost condition.<sup>3</sup>

It must be concluded, therefore, that the reference to "higher aims" refers to economic success as opposed to someone living merely for the day to day enjoyment of life. This is verified by Wiebe himself on September 3, 1869, when he writes, "You yourself very well know what kind of an evil life I was living before [joining the KG] . . . it was fleshly, earthly and satanic, and constituted the eternal death."

Another error occurs at the end of the section entitled "Conversion and the KG Connection" (page 751) where Dr. Harder quotes from my 1986 book *Storm and Triumph*; "Consequently it appears that Johann Friesen erred in not granting the request of the Annenfeld group for a rebaptism."<sup>4</sup> Harder conveniently does not mention that this statement is made in the context that it was not contrary to Anabaptist and KG theology to rebaptize where no faith was present at the first baptism. In fact, Aeltester Abraham Friesen (1782-1849) compared baptism without genuine faith to the sealing of an empty letter. On October 8, 1843, Friesen wrote; "Without this inward baptism through the Holy Spirit and the fire [genuine faith], the outward and determinable water baptism is like unto the sealing of an empty letter, void and in vain (Romans 2:28)."<sup>5</sup> This principle would apply to infant baptism as well as to adults who had no faith at the time of their first baptism. Presumably there could be situations where adults were baptised who had neither a belief in God nor a wish to be saved, or where the theology could not be identified as normative Christianity.

But this is hard to imagine within the context of the Mennonite church in Russia where baptismal candidates had to go through weeks of special religious instruction and to acknowledge their beliefs at the time of baptism. There could, of course, be cases where a baptismal candidate lied at the time of the reading of the Articles of Faith prior to baptism and answered in the affirmative and claimed to have faith when in fact it was not so. This is the case to which the above quoted principle is clearly meant to apply and where a second baptism would be appropriate. Very few of the readers would be very impressed with the trustworthiness of such a person, especially if that person later joined another church, claiming for a second time, a lack of faith. It seems strange that grown men would deny a covenant which they had solemnly made in their late teens or early 20s, i.e. you then have a problem with the veracity of these people if they can say 10 years later that they had not made a conscience decision to the best of their knowledge at the time to follow Jesus at their first baptism. In a moment of weakness Rev. Peter Baerg expressed his frustration in this regard as follows:

For he [Wiebe] frequently allowed himself to be heard that we were united; the way one brother put it to me that he had said to him, "If we both say 'yes', then it definitely means 'yes'." This is surely how it should also be with a disciple of Christ; and then he throws his promises into the echoes of the wind (page 669).

### **The Teachings of Separatist-Pietism.**

There is obviously no suggestion anywhere that Wiebe lied at the time of his first baptism, stating that he had faith when he was consciously aware that he had no faith. The real problem here is that Dr. Harder refuses to acknowledge that the founding of the KMB was articulated by the adoption of radical Separatist-Pietist teachings. One of these teachings was that to have "true" or genuine faith the believer had to go through a legalistic, emotional "conversion experience." This teaching, of course, was unevangelical and contrary to Anabaptist-Mennonite theology.<sup>6</sup> There are numerous examples of people leaving the traditional Mennonite faith, whether KG or some other Gemeinde, in favour of Separatist-Pietism (of which there were many brands--each claiming to be the ultimate repository of truth), who now said that they had not had faith at the time of their first conversion and that, therefore, they needed to be rebaptised.

The meaning is that they did not have the separatist-pietist style of faith which could be evidenced only by going through the proper legalistic "bells and whistles" formulae and protocol as established by each particular sect and that without such a faith their baptism was invalid. Harder refers to Wiebe's first baptism as "not only meaningless, it was blasphemous." This of course is fine, if this is what people genuinely believed. It hard to believe that a man of Wiebe's genuine sincerity would have callously acknowledged that he had faith, when in fact he did not have faith. Surely, he had faith, but only of the conservative "old order" Mennonite kind. It would seem to be more desirable from the perspective of a helpful dialogue to acknowledge these differences and to add to the historical record rather than to turn everything on its head simply to be able to make a point.

### **Baptism as "Grosswerden".**

One might also question Dr. Harder's claim made in the section entitled "Young Adulthood" (page 746) and again in the section entitled "Conversion and the KG Connection" (page 750) that Jakob's first baptism was nothing more than an anthropological rite of passage or a "Gross-werden"--a growing big, experience. In fact, for the majority of young people who were baptised in the "old order" Gemeinden it was a genuine spiritual experience and religious ordinance. Numerous examples of this could be cited from historical documents and family books which would stand as passionate witnesses for the genuine spirituality found in these churches and which Harder himself acknowledges in the section entitled "The Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Church" in the case of his own ancestor Johann Harder. Here again, terminology is at fault. If one accepts separatist-pietist terminology as outlined above, then of course these people were not saved or did not have faith because they had not gone through the exact "politically correct" legalistic formulae prescribed by the particular separatist-pietist group in question. It would have been more helpful if Professor Harder had acknowledged these theological differences rather than arguing from the position that separatist-pietist thinking was normative and that everyone else in the world should be judged by their narrow-minded standards.

Harder aggravates the situation by arguing that the KMB left the KG because the latter group did not believe in believer's baptism (pages 749 and 758). The suggestion that the KG did not believe that believers should be baptized only

upon genuine faith is preposterous. The documents published in the Six Volumes of the Kleine Gemeinde Historical Series suggest otherwise and so too do the tens of thousands of pages of KG writings found in archives and private collections. This type of statement resounds with the pejorative allegations made by historian Peter M. Friesen in 1911 when he referred to the KG as unchristian ("lacking a spiritual joy") and being against education, etc.,<sup>7</sup> or the suggestion by Dr. Frank H. Epp that conservative Mennonite groups like the KG came from a lower socio-economic chaste.<sup>8</sup> These type of categorical statements generally do little to expand historical knowledge and often contribute unnecessarily to prejudice and discrimination between religious groups.

In a similar vein is one of Harder's most incorrect claims that Wiebe did not secede or defect from the KG (page 763). In his letter of August 1, 1869, Wiebe in fact resigned his position as Aeltester of the KG fellowship. Wiebe then set about to organize a separate Gemeinde which conducted its own ordinances such as communion and baptism. The new group did not recognize their former brethren in the KG as Christians. It is rather difficult to maintain that this does not amount to a secession or defection--especially so when KMB historiography has proudly trumpeted this position for almost a century. Historian C. F. Plett, for example, writes ". . . he [Wiebe] resigned his place as elder and also a member. He organized the KMB Church on September 21, 1869, with the baptism of nineteen members."<sup>9</sup> Harold S. Bender wrote "This [the act of baptism on September 21, 1869] is considered by the K.M.B. group as their founding date. . . The act of rebaptism constituted in effect a withdrawal of the Wiebe group from the Kleine Gemeinde."<sup>10</sup>

In spite of the fact that there clearly was a secession or defection from the KG, and notwithstanding that Wiebe shunned his former brethren--refusing to recognize their baptism--i.e. refusing to recognize them as Christian brethren, it would be Wiebe, ironically, who would later complain about his treatment by the KG. In his letter of early April, 1869, Wiebe writes, "We continued for the entire time in the Lord, and now we have become such enemies?" Even 12 years later on February 19, 1881, Wiebe would write, "I cannot agree with nor endorse anyone who wants to cast doubt on the baptism of the Lord Jesus [immersion baptism]." But in the beginning of the same letter Wiebe again complains, "But not long thereafter I stood as a driven-out wild animal to you. . . I received nothing but accusations and reproaches."<sup>11</sup> This may have been Wiebe's perspective, but the evidence suggests that he had chosen to regard his former brethren as non-Christians, whereupon their desire for fellowship with him and his supporters diminished.<sup>12</sup>

In the section entitled "Conversion and the KG connection" (page 750), Dr. Harder also states that Wiebe "knew little or nothing about Wüst and his movement" referring to the separatist-pietist proselytizer whose fiery zealotry inspired several major factions of the movement in the Molotschna in the 1850s including the Brüdergemeinde. But again the facts do not support such a view. In a letter of February 27, 1869, Wiebe already writes "We heard from I.[saac] Peters that he was very fervent to preserve the house of the Lord and that he wanted to drive here for the sake of Christ. But the good confidence which we once confessed towards Ohm Peters has been taken away by Ohm P.[eter M.] Friesen. For my part, I have been persuaded enough, . . ." It is clear from Peter Baerg's

letter of July 21, 1869 (see Part Twelve, Chapter Two) that the final act of secession and rebaptism was directly attributable to Brüdergemeinde proselytisers from the Molotschna. Gerhard Goossen in his letter to Wiebe refers to the connections of the Crimean group with Baptist religious groups as follows:

Oh, my beloved, do desist from your intentions [rebaptism], for through this you are more and more departing from the narrow path of simplicity in Christ. And one necessity leads to another; as soon as you have been rebaptised *you are already standing in association with the entire family or church of Baptists* [italics added], which you have perhaps not even considered to this point. You receive visitors and accept foreign books for examination and likewise in one matter after another; in the end your faith will be completely detracted from the simplicity in Christ. The unfolding of history will prove the truth of what I have stated here.

Since the Brüdergemeinde was directly inspired by Wüst it is not correct to say that Wiebe knew nothing about him. In fact, in his letter of November 19, 1969, Wiebe feels obligated to defend himself from the charge that his little group was associated ". . . with those who have seceded so angrily or that we have taken up their books, first to examine them, and thereafter to be deceived by the same." This is an unmistakable reference to the Separatist-Pietist missionaries who were wreaking so much havoc among the Russian Mennonites at the time. Although there is no indication that Wiebe knew Wüst personally, he undoubtedly would have heard a great deal about him during his employment with the Colony Oberschulz David A. Friesen in Halbstadt. The actions of Wiebe and his supporters were very directly articulated by the religious dogma propagated by Wüst and it is misleading to claim that Wiebe "knew nothing . . . about him or his movement."

### **Mode of Baptism.**

Harder ignores the salient cause of the separation of the KMB which was the separatist-pietist teaching that a believer could only be saved or become a Christian by going through a particular prescribed mode of baptism, namely, immersion as opposed to affusion or baptism by sprinkling as was customary among the Mennonites in Russia and in the KG. The official act of secession of the infant KMB was heralded by Wiebe's letter of August 1, 1869, published as Letter Thirteen in Chapter Two, Part Fifteen (page 800). It is clear from this letter that Wiebe resigned as KG Aeltester because of the mode of baptism. He writes "I have come to the conviction that I cannot continue to serve in this way any more unless the [Kleine] Gemeinde can resolve to accept the biblical baptism unto the death of Christ according to Romans 6:3 . . . like Jesus . . . and others who were baptised in the water."

The reference in this statement to "unto the death" refers to the immersion baptism issue as it was part of the Baptist/Pietist nomenclature used to justify the exclusive validity of such a mode. Since this is the opening point of his letter of abdication, it is clear that this was Wiebe's fundamental reason for seceding. This is evidenced by Wiebe's attempt to quote Menno Simons in support of his view:

"The baptism of the first Christians took place in plain water . . ." As KG Aeltester Peter P. Toews pointed out in his reply to this letter, Wiebe, unfortunately, had misunderstood and misquoted the teaching of Menno Simons on this point. In accordance with separatist-pietist theology, the mode of baptism was seen as an essential element of the salvation process by the KMB. This is admitted by Harder himself in the Section entitled "The Rebaptism in Annenfeld" (page 764) when he states that the KMB ". . . would certainly have argued against it [the *ex opere operato* principle]." This was ". . . [the] teaching that the objectively administered New Testament sacraments do not depend for their effect upon the subjective factors in the minister or recipient, but are effectual of themselves conferring grace." In other words, the Annenfelders took the position, not necessarily that they did not have faith at the time of their first baptism, but that the Aeltester--in some cases it was Johann Friesen of the KG who administered the baptism--did not have genuine faith or the correct conversion experience in their view. Apparently it was the view of the KMB that this would break the chain of validity, so-to-speak, and invalidate the baptism and the salvation-yielding efficacy that the baptism was supposed to have.

Any doubts as to the KMB position that baptism in a specified form (immersion) was essential for salvation--namely, that such a baptism had a salvation yielding power--are laid to rest by Wiebe's letter of September 3, 1869, where he writes:

For just like an unborn child can be born dead and must be washed from the afterbirth, it is also so before a child is born and brought to life. It is likewise with a Christian baptism which is comparable to a death and the new birth, and which--in accordance with the will of God--is given to no one, other than only those who . . . practice everything which Christ has commanded them. And the same cannot be recognized by anyone as a brother or sister in the Church of Christ and be allowed to partake in the Christian order, unless they have first undergone the Christian baptism as above set forth;

That the KMB considered rebaptism by their newly discovered mode to be a requirement of salvation was confirmed to Peter Baerg, the KG minister at Annenfeld, by Jakob Wiebe, who told him, "that we had been deceived regarding baptism as we had practised it for so long. . . He [Wiebe] said, 'It is no baptism, rather immersion--that is baptism.'" The exclusivity of Wiebe's position is revealed in his subsequent statement to Baerg that, "Even if he remained completely by himself, he would remain firmly in this position" (See Part Twelve, Chapter Two, Letter Three, page 667). In any case, the KG leaders in Borosenko and the Molotschna clearly responded on the basis that Wiebe was seceding over the baptism issue. (See letters published in Parts Twelve, Fourteen and Sixteen.) It seems that Dr. Harder takes the position that the mode of baptism was not an issue contrary to the unequivocal position of all the principals involved in the matter.

Instead he tries to eliminate the damning evidence of these letters, particularly those of ministers Gerhard P. Goossen and Peter P. Toews, by challenging the integrity of the writers and by impugning their character. He

introduces Gerhard Goossen to the reader by mentioning that his step-father Heinrich Enns had "developed a mistrust of him, including some grave accusations." Nowhere is it mentioned what these grave accusations were (I am not aware of any such accusations) nor that the rift was due to Goossen's tireless effort to convince Enns to resign for the good of the Gemeinde which he eventually did. Harder impugns Goossen and his letter to Wiebe of September, 1869 (page 761), for ". . . the way he avoids addressing the issues raised by Enns and Wiebe." He claims further that Goossen instead ". . . tries to shame Wiebe into recanting by accusing him of pride and disobedience to his call as Aeltester." When Goossen writes "I am totally convinced in my soul that no special baptism is required" and refers to Satan's subtle influence at work, Harder accuses him of "temerity" or foolhardiness. He alleges that Goossen "refused to take their questions seriously and instead tried to refute them, not by the biblical process of mutual discernment . . . but by imputing (sic) the integrity of their search for truth." It is difficult to deal rationally with such a myopic statement. Perhaps the best response is simply to refer the reader to Goossen's writings published in Part Fourteen, Chapter Two, and the testimonials of this great Christian leader reproduced in Chapter One, Part Fourteen, which clearly speak for themselves. The statements made by Harder might influence those who will not bother to read the documents themselves, but they can hardly be taken seriously by those who will.

Harder uses a similar approach with Aeltester Peter P. Toews' letter of August 31, 1869 (pages 761-762). He starts with the rather puzzling analysis of Toews that ". . . intellectually he was better equipped to deal with Wiebe's questions than Goossen, and he certainly was no theological match for Wiebe, but still he also largely missed the central point of the Wiebe-Enns declaration." First, it should be stated that such statements are hardly helpful to genuine historical dialogue. Furthermore, the suggestion of lack of intelligence on the part of either Goossen or Toews is questionable, especially when Harder himself admits that Wiebe, his protege, is barely literate. In contrast, Goossen was a school teacher and minister of sound reputation.<sup>13</sup>

Toews was a leader and historian of considerable talent. In time he would be the author and publisher of numerous books and poems, and he contributed frequently to various journals. The soundness of his scholarship on the mode of baptism as presented in his letter is admitted by Harder himself. Toews, in fact, expressed his willingness to accept Wiebe as a fellow brother in spite of his changed view of baptism if only he would retract his position that his former brethren in the KG were not Christians because they had not been baptised the "right way." Wiebe, because of the eternal one-mindedness and self-righteous fanaticism of separatist-pietism, could obviously never acknowledge this; and so the matter remained. It is hard to imagine why the generous gesture by Toews did not impress Dr. Harder, except that it does not fit his thesis of the KG as a narrow-minded unsaved group of reactionaries.

Wiebe had already claimed "saving faith" and "assurance of salvation" at the time of his joining of the KG, and therefore, it is clear that mode of baptism was his primary reason for secession or defection from the KG. On October 4, 1864, Wiebe wrote "I did not have any knowledge of it [genuine faith], and what is more, I did not have this faith within me. Now, however, the merciful and compassionate God . . . has revealed the simple truth unto me, poor sinner . . . [we] had allowed

ourselves to be baptised, but now we have both promised obedience anew with hand and mouth before God and His Kleine Gemeinde, namely, we have renewed the covenant which we previously had made with God, not ever to depart therefrom during our lifetimes." Even 5 years later Wiebe reminisces fondly about the wonderful spiritual times which he experienced upon joining the KG. In his letter to "To all fellow pilgrims . . ." of early April, 1869, he refers to the pastoral visitations of Rev. Abraham F. Friesen (1807-1891) of Neukirch, Molotschna, as follows:

Oh, my beloved Ohm Abraham, how will we not rejoice if we could once more personally receive you together with your wife, as brothers and sisters. Oh, this should truly give us reason to think of the former days of our enlightenment, when you visited us for five years out of Christian love. Oh, my beloved Ohm Abraham, how were we then so blessed? Yes, I frequently think of the blessed times, often it felt as if we were in heaven while we sang many a beautiful song together with each other; how many a sacred Scripture we read? We continued for the entire time in the Lord.<sup>14</sup>

These are hardly the statements of one who felt lost, damned and unsaved. In fact, they sound like the heartfelt testimonies of one who had come to a genuine faith in Jesus Christ, and who was firmly committed to following his Saviour in humility and discipleship: this is exactly the kind of evangelical conversion and Christian life which the KG stood for.

By 1869, something had changed in Wiebe's thinking. In the *Bekehrung*, Jakob A. Wiebe states that "I performed the baptism by pouring for six souls" and felt "great personal unrest; and after much struggle and prayer, I came to the conviction in this regard not to do this any more until I myself had received a biblical baptism on the basis of my saving faith." It is evident that Wiebe now believed that immersion baptism was the only biblical baptism and that it was a requirement of "saving faith."

Harder further tries to obscure the issue by arguing that Wiebe had concerns that the baptismal candidates were too young or not spiritually mature enough. This is course is pure speculation for there is not one hint anywhere in either KG or KMB sources to justify such an interpretation. If there is any doubt in Wiebe's position he makes it abundantly clear in the poem which he composed for a meeting in Annenfeld in 1869 when he writes "What I so long had sought, for baptism norm, was found in what was taught by Christ's own form!" In my view the foregoing clearly rebuts Harder's interpretation that the mode of baptism was only an ancillary issue to that of the faith issue.

### Conclusion.

Harder has done an excellent job of presenting the issues and of arguing his thesis that Wiebe was a man without fault and that the KG was comprised of reactionaries.<sup>15</sup> But surely it is incorrect to argue that the five KG leaders from whom writings are extant all completely misunderstood the meaning of Wiebe's letter. For to do so is to question Wiebe's own written reason for resignation from the KG. Furthermore, Wiebe's concerns in this regard had existed over a period

of several years--from the day he joined the KG--and he had frequently discussed them with his KG brethren; they were not conjured up in a last minute emotional tidal wave as Harder seems to suggest.<sup>16</sup>

Perhaps there is no shame in admitting that Wiebe adopted the teachings of separatist-pietism and that in the course of so doing he repudiated his former KG brethren. In fact, many descendants of Wiebe's followers would be very proud of this fact. No doubt, much of the success which Wiebe's KMB group later had in attracting new members in the American mid-west was due to the fact that they had chosen to adopt more modern and popular forms of religious discourse. The KG, by comparison, tried to cling to the "old order" evangelical truths and suffered the consequences, namely, a steady loss of members. However, with the restoration of more conservative values a century later, the roles are probably reversed today. Only in the modern society of the 1990s do the conservative values and traditional beliefs of the KG leaders of 100 years ago once again appear more normative and biblical than that of their Separatist-Pietist adversaries.<sup>17</sup>

This is not the forum to debate whether the actions taken by Wiebe were morally justified or not. But as Leland Harder himself wrote in 1970, "Schism is always a power struggle in the church. . . Both sides appeal to the faith of the fathers, or some similiar norm. . . One or two leaders emerge and enough power is accumulated to challenge the original group. . . If a schism between faithful and unfaithful members must occur, the initiative must come from the side of the unfaithful. It is the faithfull members who "stick in there," and through admonition, conversation, and forbearance work toward the renewal of Christ's church."<sup>18</sup> The evidence seems clear that in this instance the KG was the faithful group working in love and forgiveness to retain Wiebe and his followers within the fold. As Dr. Harder himself writes, "Perhaps if Wiebe had been more conciliatory on the form of baptism, when everything else seemed so propitious for reunion, his overture might have been more successful" (page 774).

In closing, I stand on my argument that the faith of the KG was genuine and that their actions were motivated by a sincere search for what they understood to be a deeper understanding of Christian truth. The letters and writings published in this book unequivocally show this to be the case. As history has demonstrated over the past century, KG faith was based on deeply held and sound evangelical principles. The secession of the KMB was motivated not by a lack of faith on the part of the KG but rather by the adoption of a different faith by the KMB.

Although I have taken issue with my friend and cousin, Leland Harder, for certain aspects of his paper, I do so in genuine love and solely for the purpose of providing a balance in the historical record. I salute him for his masterful presentation of the story of Jakob A. Wiebe who was a great man of God with a passion and concern for the lives and souls of his people. Harder has demonstrated that Wiebe was a man of whom all descendants of the KG should be proud and who they will wish to claim as a spiritual forefather and model even though his responses to certain spiritual issues may have been different from theirs. It has been consistently acknowledged that many of the best aspects of KMB faith and practice came from their KG roots and of this we can all be proud.

## Endnotes: Commentary.

1. Peter A. Wiebe, *Kurze Biographie des Bruders Jakob A. Wiebe: Seine Jugend, seine Bekehrung, und wie die Krimmer Mennoniten Brüdergemeinde gegruendet wurde* (Hillsboro, 1924).

2. As quoted by Harder from Peter A. Wiebe, *Bekehrung*. See David V. Wiebe *Grace Meadow: The Story of Gnadenu and Its First Elder, Marion County, Kansas With Illustrations* (Hillsboro, Kansas, 1967), 21, for additional discussion of this point; cf. Plett, *Storm and Triumph* (Steinbach, Man., 1986), 189.

3. As quoted by Harder from Peter A. Wiebe, *Bekehrung*.

4. Plett, *Storm and Triumph*, 190, italics added.

5. Abraham Friesen, "Letter to the Chairman of the Molotschna Mennonite Society for the Advancement of Agriculture and Trade, Johann Cornies in Ohrloff," in Plett, ed., *The Golden Years* (Steinbach, Man., 1985), 294.

6. Anabaptist-Mennonite theology held that anyone looking to Jesus for salvation, even the thief on the cross, was saved. No particular legalistic forms or formulae were required. Genuine faith, of course, would soon evidence itself in the person's life, i.e. the fruits would establish the veracity of a person's claim to faith, not the self-serving bragging of a believer. There are indications in the KG correspondence that they felt the KMB people were possibly lacking in this regard and that for some early adherents this was one of the factors motivating them to join.

7. Peter M. Friesen, *The Mennonite Brotherhood in Russia (1789-1910)* (Fresno, Cal., 1978), 592-594.

8. Frank H. Epp, *Mennonites in Canada: The History of a Separate People 1786-1920* (Toronto, Ont., 1967), 195.

9. C. F. Plett, *The Story of the Krimmer Mennonite Church* (Hillsboro, Ks., 1985), 28-29.

10. Harold S. Bender, "Krimmer Mennonite Brethren," ME 3, 342-344.

11. Jakob A. Wiebe, "Letter to Johann T. Enns, Rosenort, Manitoba, February 19, 1881," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims* (Steinbach, Man., 1990), 563-65.

12. This is a very typical attitude found among religious fundamentalists and particularly within Separatist-Pictist circles. First a leader adopts an entirely new religion and then he tries to convert his former brethren to these alien teachings. Then, when some or all of them refuse to abandon everything which they and their forefathers have believed since the time of Christ, the newly enlightened convert condemns his former brethren as unchristian and refuses to recognize their baptism and other sacred ordinances. Then when his former brethren try to pick up the pieces of torn apart families and friendships left in the wake of the secession and quietly reconstitute their spiritual fellowships, as well as moving from one continent to another rebuilding their communities in the process, they are branded as inward-looking and narrow-minded for their lack of fellowship with their former seceded brethren. When considering these facts it is truly a miracle of God that any remnant of the traditional evangelical Mennonite faith has survived to this day at all. For a further discussion of this dynamic of religious renewal which I have called "spiritual terrorism" see, Plett, *Storm and Triumph*, 218-19, 222-24.

13. See the testimonials of Goossen given even by respected KMBers such as Peter I. Fast--father of *Rundschau* editor M. B. Fast--in Part Fourteen, Chapter One.

14. Abraham F. Friesen settled in Jansen, Nebraska, during the 1870s.

15. In terms of a general critique, Dr. Harder has also failed to adequately portray and illustrate the powerful influence of family ties in the dynamics of church membership and secession. For example, the letters of Baerg and Wiebe mention that Aeltester Isaac Peters had come to minister to the Crimean group. He fails to mention that Abraham Wall, one of the original land buyers, supposedly was a brother-in-law to Peters.

16. This is perhaps where Aeltester Johann Friesen (1808-1872) made his mistake; he should not have accepted these people into the Gemeinde when they had such concerns. But who can judge people when they profess to have found "true" faith, as Wiebe himself states in Letter One, Part Fifteen, Chapter Two.

17. This in contrast to the small "f" liberal philosophies and ideals which were paramount during the later part of the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries.

18. Leland Harder, *Steinbach and its Churches* (Elkhart, Ind., 1970), 99-100.



## PART SIXTEEN

### PETER P. TOEWS 1841-1922

#### Chapter One

#### Biography

---

A Biography of Aeltester Peter Plett Toews (1841-1922), Fischau, Molotschna, and later Blumenhoff, Borosenko Colony, South Russia, Gruenfeld, Manitoba, Canada, and Swalwell, Alberta. By Delbert F. Plett, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1992.

---

##### Section One. Childhood and Marriage.

Pastor, bishop, churchman, poet, songwriter, historian, confidante, spokesman to the Czar, emigration leader, farmer, nature lover and horticulturalist--the list goes on and on. In his own way, Peter Plett Toews (1841-1922) was truly a renaissance man; a person of immense talent and charisma. Several stanzas from his poem "The Refiner", better than anything else, set the stage for a look at Toews, the man and his life's work;

The Master Refiner with quiet intentness  
is watching the silver and tending the fire--  
not a twitch of His eyelids! With hand sure and steady  
He knows just the heat that the process requires.

Now if speech be of silver, and silence be golden,  
Lord, stoke up the fires and purify me.  
Help me discern what is sanctified silence  
And, with equal discernment, speak gladly for Thee.

O Master Refiner, I pray do not spare me!  
Trusting Thy wisdom, I yield to the flame,  
Till, pure of all dross, I reflect Thy bright image  
And, moulded for service, I'm stamped with Thy name.<sup>1</sup>

These verses raise the picture of a devout man of God--perhaps comparable to the leader of some monastic order--who had dedicated his entire life and being to the

work of Jesus Christ. What shaped the man and made him what he was to become? The answer to this and other similar questions is found at least in part in his cultural and genetic background.

Peter Plett Toews was born in the village of Fischau, Molotschna, on July 24, 1841. His parents were Johann Toews (1793-1873) and Maria Plett (1811-1896). His father was the son of Cornelius Toews and Margaretha Loewen--Molotschna pioneers--who had settled on Wirtschaft 10 in the village of Lindenau in 1804. Johann Toews joined the Kleine Gemeinde (KG) in 1817 as a young man still living with his parents. He had purchased a Wirtschaft or village farm in Fischau in 1838, after having lived on an Anwohner property in Schoenau for the previous eight years. Toews was a successful farmer who was mentioned in the German-language newspaper, the *Unterhaltungsblatt*, for achievements in the silk industry.<sup>2</sup> (For a biography of Johann Toews see, Part Ten, Chapter One.)

Johann Toews was widowed twice before he married Maria Plett, the daughter of Johann Plett (1765-1833). Plett came from a wealthy family in Fuerstenwerder, Prussia, but had been disinherited by his parents and lived in considerable poverty as a result. In 1828 he and his family immigrated to Russia and settled in Blumstein, where their oldest daughter, Elisabeth and her husband Johann Harder (1789-1847) were living on Wirtschaft 16. The poverty and careless living which Maria Plett experienced in her parental home as a young girl, undoubtedly impacted on the lives of her children and the future choices they would make. The Plett family was well connected in the KG as one of Maria's sisters married the minister Klaas Friesen (1793-1870) and another married Heinrich Enns (1801-1881) who would later be Aeltester. As already mentioned, Maria's oldest sister--a half sister--was married to Johann Harder, also of Blumstein, and they were the parents of Johann Harder (1811-1875) well-known as the Aeltester of the Ohrloff Gemeinde in the Molotschna Colony. These family connections were to have important ramifications in the later development of Peter Toews' career.

Even as a young lad Peter Toews was conscious that his parents and Gemeinde were set apart from the world around them. His parents read the standard works of the Mennonite faith, and his father owned a copy of *Der Kleine Menno*, an abridged edition of the writings of Menno Simons, which he had purchased in 1828. In 1850 his father had suffered from a severe life threatening fever, as a result of which he composed several poems and wrote his memoirs as an admonition to his children to lead a godly life. Johann Toews also purchased several devotional books which were being published by the KG during the 1860s and gave copies to his children. This home atmosphere--undoubtedly--encouraged reading, studying, and writing, especially if it was related to religious concerns as it almost always was in the aesthetic KG.

The KG encouraged a strictly disciplined but loving home life and the careful nurturing of children and young people was given great emphasis. This manifested itself in the boyhood of Peter P. Toews and especially in his school life. Toews writes that he endured the spiteful teasing of his school mates who belonged to other Gemeinden, and that this strengthened his beliefs, namely, when they called him *Froamskotuks*, the godly one, or the pious one, because he was held back from carrying on in mischief during the night and from taking part in godless associations, use of tobacco, playing of cards swearing, etc. Toews also

writes that the witness of his parents was such that he believed in the Gemeinde or Church of God from an early age, and that the Mennonite KG--to which his parents belonged--was such a church.<sup>3</sup>

The close family ties--which were common among conservative agrarian groups such as the KG--also played an important role in the life of Toews. From reading the family records and correspondence one has the picture of a caring home, well-ordered and managed by a loving mother. The children--certainly those of the third marriage, were a tightly knit group. This closeness also had another side, not always positive. Understandably there existed also a definite sibling rivalry which was to be a factor in the lives of all of the Toews children.

Peter Toews admired his older brother Cornelius who--like himself--was intelligent, sensitive of nature, and possessed of a natural charm which readily gained him friendships and respect wherever he turned. A dark event in the Toews family occurred in 1857 when Cornelius fell into what may have been a moral lapse and which, at the best, was certainly a serious error in judgment. The details are sketchy, but some information is provided by the ministerial journal of Johann Dueck (1801-1866), Muntau, who reports that at a brotherhood meeting in Rosenort on August 18, 1857, "The brotherhood dismissed Corn[nelius] Toews from the Gemeinde as he had entered the room of a woman through the window and stood before the husband as if he had been carrying on with the wife, which he later denied."<sup>4</sup> Cornelius himself later wrote of this misdeed that "because of a frivolous and careless life and an overly hasty confession and [it was] considered worthy of the ban by the same [the brotherhood]." Cornelius was dismissed by Gemeinde and reaccepted on September 15, less than a month later. Peter was undoubtedly very concerned about what was happening to his older brother, who had been his role model. The fallout from this event would resurface twice in the years to come, affecting the lives of both brothers in a unique way.

An even more tragic event occurred on May 21, 1859, when Peter's younger brother Jakob, only 20 years old, died of small-pox. The burial took place two days later with a large group of mourners in attendance. The tragic death affected Peter as well as his father deeply, and they were both constrained to write poetry to express their feelings in this regard. It is likely that this event brought new depth to Peter's already meditative and reflective nature, and resulted in what was probably his first written poetry. The poem entitled "Ein Gedicht über das Absterben unseres Bruders Jakob Toews, 1859," shows that the death of Jakob made Toews conscious of the need to live one's life in unity and oneness with family and community. One stanza of the poem reads as follows:

Doch lasst uns dieses denken nach--  
Wie er so frueh gestorben:  
Und wie viel Thraenen Ach und Ach--  
Wie uns dadurch erworben  
Das wie hier nicht in dieser Zeit  
Uns haben in der Einigkeit  
Befleissiget zu leben.

May our minds reflect  
how he died so young,

and how much pain and woe  
to us have come, and tears,  
in our time, because we here,  
have not sought enough  
to live as one in unity.

The foregoing events had considerable impact on Peter P. Toews and helped to mould his character. They also convicted him, and made him pursue the meaning of Christian truth all the more zealously. Peter Toews was baptised and accepted into the KG by Aeltester Johann Friesen on June 4, 1861. Toews later described his spiritual journey as follows:

I believed that I was converted, even though I was not instructed in the aspect of being consciously aware of the forgiveness of my sins through faith. The emphasis was more on the living of a life of discipleship. I overcame a special experience in the summer of 1863, through the reading of Menno Simons' *Meditation on the twenty-fifth Psalm* which was my favourite devotional reading at the time. A spurned proposal of marriage was the cause as I had followed the influence of friends instead of seeking the counsel and countenance of God. I came into distress and temptation, and learnt what it meant to be tried and tempted face to face by Satan; but much more so I also learnt to seek the Lord and to experience his friendly countenance and to be secure for one's self as the Saviour says, "I have prayed for you", etc. The experience was so wonderful, especially for a few days, that it was like bathing in the peace of God. As the poet says in the song; "Fort, fort, mein Herz, zum Himmel" and so on. "Hier kann dein Herz sich Baden, schnee weisz in Lämmleins Blut . . ." When I married in the knowledge of God's leading later in fall, my heart was still in this precious peace.<sup>5</sup>

In the summer of 1863, Peter P. Toews had the rare privilege of accompanying Isaak Harms (1811-1891) on a journey to investigate settlement opportunities in what was to become the Markuslandt Colony some 15 verst (or 10 miles) east of the village of Einlage in the Old Colony. In a letter to the *Rundschau* of 1913 he reflects on his experience and writes as follows:

My parents may also have expected that the trip would have a healing effect for me as my physical strength had very much deteriorated from my first salvation experience.

Toews was always a lover of nature and horticulture, something which becomes evident from reading further in his reminiscences:

As we drove through Snamenka we marvelled at the well-tended vineyards of the Russians, which were not yet to be found among the German people in the Molotschna at the time. I have always loved gardening and trees, and my thoughts still frequently return to the

many fruits in my father's garden in Fischau. The exact location of the many different fruit trees remains a very fond memory for me.

Toews goes on to describe how a six year lease was entered into with the owner of the property where the village of Friedrichsthal was settled that fall and a second village--Andreasfeld--the following spring.<sup>6</sup>

On November 12, 1863, Peter Toews entered into the bonds of matrimony with Anna Warkentin, the daughter of Johann Warkentin, a well-to-do Vollwirt from the village of Blumstein, Molotschna, the same village where his mother had lived from 1828 until her marriage in 1835. It was quite common for village connections to influence subsequent marriage patterns in this way. Johann came from a prominent family; his grandfather, Martin Warkentin (1764-1853), was one of the original Molotschna pioneers, settling on Wirtschaft 6 in Blumstein, in 1804. The parents of Martin Warkentin had lived in the village of Tiegenhoff, in Prussia, which was only several miles from Tiegenhagen and Fürstenwerder, where Toews' grandparents had lived. Johann Warkentin was married to Anna Loewen the daughter of Isaac Loewen (1787-1873) one-time KG deacon in Lindenau. In later years Toews came to treasure his wife's Loewen grandfather dearly as is evident from reading the letters which Loewen wrote to him during the 1860s. (See Part Nine, Chapters Three and Four.)

Johann Warkentin was an aggressive farmer who was cited in the *Unterhaltungsblatt* as being "the owner of the second most productive dairy herd in the Molotschna." It was reported ". . . that he owned three cows whose average milk production came to more than 14 Russian quarts a day."<sup>7</sup> Warkentin was very involved in the immigration of the KG out of the Molotschna during the 1860s and purchased or leased parcels of land which he resold to other settlers. In 1872 he purchased an estate called Hochfeld a short distance north of the Borosenko Colony.<sup>8</sup> Another son-in-law, Abraham B. Klassen describes this operation as follow:

To diligently press forward was the style of my father-in-law who had owned a so-called *chutor* in Russia, where a considerable number of Russian workers had always been kept busy. For this reason, my wife, who had grown up among the Russians, could speak Russian very well; and could also read Russian which she had learned in school.<sup>9</sup>

Ironically--considering the great volume of his writings--Toews wrote little about his wife's family, or for that matter about his mother's family. This was unusual in the matriarchy respecting KG where some family clans, such as the distinguished von Riesens, savoured and vaunted their matriarchal connections.<sup>10</sup> Toews did write a poem entitled "Der Mutige behält das Feld, Aus den Jugend Erlebnissen unsers Grossvater", regarding his maternal grandfather, Johann Plett, who "exorcised" a ghost from a house in Prussia so that the owner could sell it. In 1905 Toews also wrote a poem entitled "Zur Hundertjährigen Erinnerung, Im Interesse der Familie Isaak Loewen von Lindenau, Südruslandt", dealing with his wife's maternal side, the Loewens, and the one-hundredth year anniversary of the establishment of the family Wirtschaft in Lindenau.<sup>11</sup>

Peter Toews and his bride lived in Fischau--presumably with his parents--until Tuesday, Pentecost, 1864, when they moved to Markuslandt where they established a home on rented land in a village which became known as Andreasfeld. Here they joined his older brother Cornelius who had sold his *Wirtschaft* in Hierschau and settled in the sister village of Friedrichstahl in September of the previous year.<sup>12</sup> Less than two years later they purchased a property in the Borosenko Colony northwest of Nikopol and settled in the village of Blumenhoff, which was to become the headquarters--so to speak--for some 10 KG villages in the area.<sup>13</sup> Father-in-law, Johann Warkentin, had been involved in the settlement of the village where he himself had purchased a large block of land and no doubt encouraged his children in this move.<sup>14</sup> The Toews family settled here on a farm of 140 acres where they were joined a few years later by Peter's aunt, Carolina Plett, the widow of minister Klaas Friesen of Rosenort, Molotschna, who settled on a *Wirtschaft* next door. It seems that the Peter Toews family must have left Markuslandt early--probably by 1866, since there is no record that he was involved in any of the disputes which took place on the *Pachtlandt* settlement at Markuslandt.

The unfortunate fall of his brother Cornelius again came to the fore at this time. It seems that in about 1860 Cornelius came under a grievous conviction in his conscience regarding his earlier misdeed. He writes, "In secret I have carried on in my loneliness and certainly not in reverence for God but rather for man. Nor did I obtain any acknowledgement and remorse for the same until after I had been married for approximately two years, when in a certain opportunity through 3 or 4 elderly and experienced brethren, I was inwardly convicted and punished for the same and came under a great fear and distress so that I fell upon my face and pleaded with God for forgiveness of all my sins, and received peace and forgiveness in my conscience over the matter."<sup>15</sup> Peter obviously was deeply moved by his brother's remorse which seemingly took several years to work through and was constrained to write several poems for him. In one of these poems written in 1863 he expresses his feelings of compassion and sympathy as follows:

Nun meine Lieben! die wir  
 doch schon einmal sind erkauf't,  
 So lasst uns dies zu Herzen  
 nehmen und bedenken;  
 Ja unsrer Noth den Herrn  
 bitten und nicht kraenzen:  
 Erwaegen dass wir ja selbst sind  
 in seinem Todt getauft;  
 Bedenken dass er unser Leiden  
 in lauter Freud und Lust  
 kann lenken.<sup>16</sup>

Now, my beloved, we who  
 were once bought,  
 let us take it to heart.

Yes, in our pain, to pray  
to the Lord, and not be  
weary, and know that we  
ourselves, were baptized  
in His death, and  
remember, that He  
came to resurrect us from  
our pain, unto joy and happiness.

## Section Two. Ministerial Career, 1866-1870.

Peter P. Toews had been interested in the ministry from an early age. As Toews had become older his natural talents and abilities were becoming more and more evident. He was a sensitive man who was warm and outgoing. Although only a small man in height, he was handsome and bore himself with a sense of self-assurance--a man who knew what he wanted. One source describes him as follows:

He was very active, and had a keen mind, an ability to be precise and sure of himself. Short of stature and erect, he made a commanding figure. His gifts of communication and expression no doubt lent themselves well to occasion . . .<sup>17</sup>

As had already become evident, Toews was also a deeply spiritual person, and thus, it was probably not unexpected that Toews would soon be a candidate for the ministerial office.

This, in fact, came to pass on October 10, 1866, when at the young age of 25 years Toews was elected as a minister of the KG at an all-congregational brotherhood meeting held in Fischau, Molotschna. Also elected was his older cousin, Gerhard P. Goossen. Another purpose for the meeting was the choosing of a new Aeltester for the Gemeinde, the result being that Heinrich Enns (1807-1881), Fischau--who also happened to be Peter's uncle by marriage--was elected for that office. It should be clarified here that the KG in 1866 was in the process of a division where approximately one-half of the membership withdrew from the oversight of Aeltester Johann F. Friesen, Neukirch, Molotschna, and constituted themselves as a separate branch of the KG with their own ministerial and deaconry. The reform group eventually came to be referred to as the Blumenhoff KG and the other group, which came under the leadership of Abraham L. Friesen in 1869, was referred to as the Heuboden Gemeinde. The names had their origins in the villages where the respective Church Bishops lived.

In a letter written in Blumenhoff, Borosenko, during October, 1866, Toews wrote to the brethren in the Molotschna, Crimea and Markuslandt about his feelings as a newly elected minister; he described, "the sorrowful and heavy heart with which I covenanted with you and the Lord to enter into the service for which I was elected with a majority of votes."<sup>18</sup> The ministerial election had been held in the Molotschna and it took Toews several days to return home. Here he faced a difficult situation as he found his young son mortally ill. This turn of events convicted Toews anew as he writes:

Here my pride and joy, my only child lay prostrated and on the

death bed, and also died after having preached repentance to me for two days and two nights, suffering in all parts of the body. It was not the death of the child, rather the sorrow and loneliness of my wife and the acknowledgement of my sins in the suffering of the innocent baby which grieved me so.<sup>19</sup>

Toews concludes his meditative letter by stating that "I am of the firm resolve that in the future I will conduct myself more blamelessly in the daily walk than has been the case in the past, and I will seek to demonstrate my faith through my works."

Journeys of spiritual visitation now became a way of life. In a letter of December 1867, Toews mentions that he returned from one such journey to the Crimea having driven from the 7th of December until the 10th when they reached the banks of the Dnieper. These trips were not without their dangers: Toews mentions that they had to wait until a vessel had passed by in order to break the ice on the river before they could cross over: "This did not occur until after sunset and it was eleven o'clock in the evening before we arrived at home; we found all our loved ones to be well."<sup>20</sup>

One of the first difficult issues which faced Peter Toews in his ministerial office was the election of his brother, Cornelius P. Toews, as a minister. This election took place on January 4, 1869, in the village of Blumenhoff, Borosenko Colony, and Bishop Enns and minister Goossen from the Molotschna, and minister Jakob A. Wiebe, from the Crimea, were in attendance to assist the local ministers. Toews and others accompanied the visiting ministers on their return journey up to Nikopol. However, the brethren in the Molotschna were not satisfied with this result because Cornelius had been excommunicated in 1857 and there was a teaching in the Gemeinde that an excommunicated member could not hold ministerial office.<sup>21</sup>

Peter P. Toews explains that the dissatisfaction of some of the brethren "had its origin in the fact that through the instigation of a number of brethren, the Aeltester, and we, ministers, were persuaded to declare as invalid a number of earlier actions, namely, the excommunication of a number of Brethren", one of whom was Cornelius P. Toews. "In addition, the Aeltester had not put this matter to the Brethren prior to the election." The result was that Cornelius never functioned as a minister and resigned his position shortly thereafter. By this time, however, the brethren had lost confidence in Aeltester Enns, who eventually resigned from his office; this was confirmed by the brotherhood at a meeting on August 14, 1868. Peter P. Toews and a handful of other relatively inexperienced ministers were now left to lead a congregation which had come through a major schism less than two years earlier, and with considerable bad feelings still lingering. One of the unfortunate results was that Heinrich Enns developed a mistrust of Gerhard P. Goossen, his step-son, who had been functioning as his leading minister in the Molotschna.<sup>22</sup> Enns, fortunately, was eventually able to overcome these feelings.

In a letter to the Gemeinde in the Molotschna written in December of 1868, Toews writes that he agrees with the general proposition that a member once excommunicated cannot later serve as a minister. He confesses that he had defended the election of his brother too strongly the previous winter and asks for

forgiveness. In dealing with this problem Toews reveals a willingness to admit his mistakes, to look at a problem from a new perspective, and not to be governed strictly by previous precedent and custom in the conduct of his ministerial office. He writes as follows:

We all truly wish to live in accordance with the Lord's commandments. If in some matters our fathers have not achieved this goal, let us believe that they failed because of human weakness--which only too much clings also to us--rather than with intention and premeditation. Even had they done so purposely, we do not have to die for the sins of our fathers if we follow the Lord's commandments and walk in his righteousness.<sup>23</sup>

The end result of this episode was a growing respect for the leadership abilities of Peter Toews within the Blumenhoff KG. Because of his meditative and reflective nature Toews seemingly did not crave any higher office. His writings indicate that he would very much have preferred to remain with his family. Most of all he enjoyed his writing and collecting of historical documents producing an incredible volume of material during this time. However, it seemed that after the sometimes single-minded dealings of the previous Aeltester--some of which must have appeared self-serving even at the time--these characteristics were exactly what the brethren were looking for. All too quickly the unfolding of events would bring to Toews the highest office of his religious community.

It must be remembered that these events took place within the context of the most turbulent time ever experienced by the Molotschna Mennonites. Religious dissension and fanaticism were on all sides; German Pietists were making heavy inroads and were all too often successful in tearing apart families and churches without giving mercy or quarter. At the same time the hegemony of the established socio-economic elite in the Molotschna was being challenged by upstarts such as the land reformer Abraham F. Thiessen--a one-time member of the KG. Thiessen successfully lobbied for a redistribution of Colony lands, which resulted eventually in an active program for the resettlement of the landless on daughter colonies. Toews, himself, had several older half sisters who married outsiders, although from the conservative and theologically somewhat-related Alexanderwohl Gemeinde. Although at first the adherents of the new Brüdergemeinde were mainly from the poorer immigrants who came to Russia in 1818 and after, by the mid-1860s some disgruntled KG people also started to see this as an option--such as occurred in the KG village of Friedensfeld, north of Borosenko.<sup>24</sup>

Certainly dissatisfaction was simmering in the KG congregation in the Crimea which had grown considerably under the successful leadership of the ministers Jakob Wiebe and Peter Baerg--both relatively recent converts to the KG. The dissatisfaction had its basis in the concerns of some of the brethren whether they should have been rebaptised since they felt they had not been converted at the time of their original baptism. This, however, was not the policy of the KG which believed that ". . . a true heartfelt remorse and repentance is a presentable reformation upon which we are promised salvation, and which is the foundation of every conversion."<sup>25</sup> Although affusion was regarded as the evangelical and historically correct form, the mode of baptism was not seen as being that

important.

In any event there was a growing desire among the Crimean brethren to be somewhat more independent and to elect their own Aeltester. In a letter to the Crimean Gemeinde of January 14, 1869, Toews mentions that they have heard of their plans from the Molotschna brethren that they were planning to have a vote for an Aeltester between the two ministers Baerg and Wiebe on the Sunday after the New Year and that they were anxiously waiting to hear whether the Gemeinde has "a new Aeltester".<sup>26</sup> In the same letter Toews also reports that a reconciliation between the Blumenhoff Gemeinde and a large part of the Gemeinde under Johann F. Friesen was taking shape and that a meeting between the ministers of the two groups had already taken place on December 28, 1868, with very positive results.

The Crimean Gemeinde, in the meantime, had elected Jakob A. Wiebe as its new Aeltester. The immediate concern was now the matter of his ordination. It appears that he had considered having himself ordained by an Aeltester from a different Gemeinde, possibly by the leaders of the *Ausgetretene* or Mennonite Brethren secessionists who visited Annenfeld only a few weeks later. The idea was frowned upon by the congregations in the Molotschna and Borosenko. In a letter of March 16, 1869, Peter Toews writes that such an ordination would also to some extent symbolize a union or bond of some kind with the outside Gemeinde. Instead Toews gave Wiebe the advise to follow the dictates of his conscience;

. . . if you are chosen by the Lord for this calling, then also take up this position for the sake of the Lord's will, and believe that it will also be sufficient ordination before God and his Gemeinde; the faithfulness of your parishioners--for whom you have been called--will be a sufficient seal of your office (1 Cor. 9:2). For we believe that the Lord will shortly direct your way towards us--and that also as an Aeltester chosen by Him for His Gemeinde, after Ohm Baerg--who is currently our senior minister--has ordained you for that purpose by the laying on of hands.<sup>27</sup>

Wiebe, evidently, decided to take Toews' advice and allowed himself to be ordained into his office by Ohm Baerg some time later.<sup>28</sup>

The major reconciliation already alluded to was finally achieved on May 6, 1869, at an all-congregational brotherhood meeting held in the village of Blumenhoff, Borosenko. At the same time the Gemeinde was served with communion by the newly elected Aeltester Wiebe after he had first baptised three women upon the confession of their faith. This was followed on May 20, 1869, with a ministerial election for the Molotschna congregation. Some time earlier, the separated members of Johann Friesen's Gemeinde were successful in reorganizing themselves, and on May 7, 1868, they elected Abraham L. Friesen (1831-1917) of Heuboden, Borosenko, as their new Aeltester.<sup>29</sup> Shortly thereafter Friesen was ordained by Johann Harder (1811-1875) Aeltester of the Ohrloff Gemeinde and a first cousin to Peter Toews.

To Toews and his fellow ministers, it must have seemed as if 1869 would be a good year for the KG and that many divisive matters and disruptive influences would finally be resolved and put behind them. But this was not to be. Only a few

weeks after the reconciliation and the return of Wiebe to the Crimea, Toews received a letter from Peter Baerg advising "that after the presence of a number of men, including Peter Hiebert of Liebenau, the Aeltester of the secessionist [Ausgetretene], our Aeltester Wiebe and a number of other members wanted to change the baptism and have themselves rebaptised, and in fact, wished to allow themselves to be dipped under water."<sup>30</sup> A great volume of correspondence was now exchanged between the brethren in Borosenko, Molotschna, and the Crimea, and many of the major epistles have been published elsewhere in the book.<sup>31</sup>

The response of Peter P. Toews to this tragic turn of events was to counsel love and understanding towards Wiebe and his fellow secessionists. In a letter to the minister, Abraham Klassen, Prangenau, Molotschna, of August 11, 1869, he quotes Ohm Peter Baerg to the effect that a declaration can shortly be expected from Wiebe that the baptism of the entire KG would no longer be regarded as a valid one, namely, that they would no longer be considered as Christian brethren by the Krimmer group.<sup>32</sup> This was followed on August 31, 1869, with a lengthy letter by Toews to Wiebe in which he convincingly outlines Biblical teaching and historical precedents to Wiebe. After quoting extensively from Scripture and the writings of Dirk Philips, Thielmann Janz von Bracht, George Hansen, Peter J. Twisk, Johann Philip Schabali and Hermann Schijn, Toews makes one final attempt to convince Wiebe that he should continue to regard his former brethren as Christians;

Perhaps you will revoke your judgment and perhaps you might still change your mind, when you give thought to the earnestness of those holy testimonies of blood and to their zeal for the house of the Lord and also to their baptism. Are they to have erred so terribly? Are they to have been the ones who allowed their bodies to burn, without the love? But oh! I repeat my plea one more. Do at least retract to the point that you would at least recognize affusion as a valid baptism. Does it not also seem to you, as if you are offending one of the least of the Lord without Scriptural grounds? and that you are perplexing the conscience of many? and disturbing the Gemeinde? why should you have to require the same of me and others?

Toews concludes his convincing and well-reasoned epistle by stating sadly that he could not allow his friend and former brother to come to such iconoclastic views without making one final attempt to communicate with him;

I also bid you, finally, that you might forgive me for having written to you at such length. I might not have written anything at all if you, beloved brother, had not declared baptism with water, namely, by pouring, to be so completely worthless . . . I merely wanted to remind you and draw your attention that we had somewhat more knowledge and faith than do innocent children when they are baptised.<sup>33</sup>

However, there was no stopping the secessionists at this stage and on September 21, 1869, Wiebe was rebaptised by Cornelius Enns, the son of Aeltester Heinrich

Enns (1807-1881), Fischau, Molotschna, after which he in turn baptised some 20 others. The secessionists now organized themselves as a separate Gemeinde under the name Krimmer Mennonite Brethren. A group of 6-8 families under the leadership of Ohm Baerg remained true to their covenants and continued as a KG congregation in the Crimea.<sup>34</sup> Toews was very discouraged by this turn of events. In a letter to Baerg, he expresses himself as follows:

Yet, I hope--the way you write--that you will not think it ill of us, that we must be anxious [regarding the loss of the Aeltester], when we think of the love which he poured out upon us only such a short time ago and the many blessed hours, regarding which many a one would surely say with the Galatians, that they would have torn their eyes out for him, had it been possible, and given them to him [Wiebe]. Oh, for it is such a difficult matter. Indeed, even until this very hour, I cannot bring it across my heart that I must now act so knowledgeably and unequivocally--as I have already done--against the secessionists, who I had always seen as being a great distance ahead of me [in their Christian piety]; and that I must now declare them as being in error, and thereafter to experience that one impurity after another is revealed amongst us, and that among those who were previously seen as a salve within the Gemeinde.<sup>35</sup>

It is trite to say that when individuals deny the validity of their former conversion--and their own honesty in accepting the same--and feel constrained to be converted according to a Pietist inspired understanding of Christian truth and then organize themselves as a new Gemeinde and have themselves rebaptised in a different mode and deny the faith and the baptism of their former brethren--which is the norm with such emotion-based religiosity--that this creates a heart-wrenching sorrow for those who are left behind to deal with the torn-asunder family relationships and other human wreckage caused by such a secession. At the same time one senses a certain resignation in the correspondence of the time, recognizing, perhaps, that there was a certain inevitableness in all of this given that Wiebe had been unhappy with certain aspects of KG faith and practice right from the start.

Certainly Toews grieved over the matter but not as one without hope. He found comfort in the fact that it was not he who occasioned the separation and that it was Wiebe who had the awesome responsibility of giving an account for what he had done. Although the loss of Wiebe and his many capable associates in the Crimea was a tragedy, Toews undoubtedly also looked at the positive events which had taken place in the Borosenko and Molotschna congregations which, after all, still had 80 per cent or more of the total KG membership. A major reconciliation had been effected with the result that two fully functioning Gemeinden had emerged finally from the disarray of the 1866 division. Toews writes as follows:

Yet, I will seek to comfort myself, in that I was innocent in this matter, and that it is not I who left him, but he who has left us, as has commonly become known, and I will allow him to be, the way

he stands before his God and the Lord--Who has said that He will not leave us as orphans.<sup>36</sup>

As alluded to in the above letter the Blumenhoff Gemeinde was now very much in need of an Aeltester. To ensure that such an action would not again be taken by one congregation on its own--as had been the case with Wiebe in the Crimea--an all-congregational brotherhood meeting for this purpose was called on September 10, 1870, at Rosenfeld, Borosenko, where Toews was elected to this office with a large plurality. He was ordained by Ohm Peter Baerg on October 26, 1870, as the sixth Aeltester of his denomination. At the age of 29, he was by far the youngest man ever to hold this position.

As the shepherd of his flock, the KG, Toews now faced numerous issues and challenges. Within the coming year three ministers were removed from office, cousin Johann P. Isaac was charged criminally for having despoiled an Orthodox statuary, the last ten members of the Gemeinde of Aeltester Johann Friesen (1808-1872) joined the Blumenhoff group, and numerous pastoral and disciplinary issues came about which required the Aeltester's attention. These matters are detailed in the many documents of the KG already published and will not be further dealt with here.<sup>37</sup>

One issue, however, which was directly relevant to the Toews family was the dissatisfaction of Johann P. Goossen--who was Toews' cousin and brother-in-law, being married to his younger sister Susanna--regarding a boundary dispute which had arisen in the village of Blumenhoff, Borosenko.<sup>38</sup> As the Aeltester having jurisdiction, Peter P. Toews, was called in to mediate the dispute. Eventually Goossen was put out of the Gemeinde because of insufficient acknowledgement. Although he later conceded and was accepted back into the church, he left the KG at the time of the emigration in 1875, and settled in Gnadenu, Kansas.<sup>39</sup> As will become evident later the matter left a lasting estrangement between Peter P. Toews and his sister Susanna.<sup>40</sup>

### Section Three. The Immigration Movement 1872-1875.

The issue over which the KG under Aeltester Klaas Reimer had originally seceded from the Grosse Gemeinde in 1812 was nonresistance. It was ironic that the departure of the denomination from Russia would be sparked by similar concerns. Questions regarding nonresistance had troubled KG leaders throughout the course of its Russian history. In his *Sammlung . . . zur Historie der Kleinen Gemeinde*<sup>41</sup> Peter P. Toews has noted his view that the Mennonites and particularly the KG, had gone too far in the contravention of their faith during the Crimean War.<sup>41</sup>

Similar awkward questions were arising by the 1870s and with the reorganization and retrenchment of the KG there was no mood to compromise with these issues as had been the case earlier. In the Molotschna, the minister Abraham Klassen was given orders to serve on a jury, something which the KG did not approve of since it was felt that it was just as bad to give an order, orally, whereby someone would be punished, as to physically mete out the punishment.<sup>42</sup> A related issue arose when the Mennonites in the Borosenko area were told that they would have to form a Vollost District--a form of municipal or county government--and also take part in juries and hold other positions of authority.

Toews felt that it was hypocritical for his co-confessionists to agree to this, while at the same time sending one delegation after another to Petersburg, the Russian capital, to plead for exemption from the proposed conscription laws.<sup>43</sup> It seemed that many of the delegates regarding freedom from military service had no trouble making representations in Petersburg in that regard while their fellow Mennonites in the Molotschna were arresting people and building jails to hold them.<sup>44</sup>

Toews followed closely the representations which his co-religionists were making in the Russian capital collecting relevant documentation under the title, "Akten die Deputeren von den Deputationsreisen . . .", 72 pages; another collection of historical materials pertaining to the one year period commencing in March, 1871, was gathered under the title, "Bericht über die Deputationsreise nach S. Petersburg. Verfertigt von L. Suderman, Berdjansk, zugehörig, Peter Toews," 36 pages. The collection of these historical writings illustrates a sense of historical consciousness very much evident in the life of Peter Toews and in the KG generally.<sup>45</sup>

Concerns regarding the military service issue were discussed at a brotherhood meeting held in Blumenhoff, Borosenko, on June 25, 1872. It was decided that it would be dangerous to rely on the delegates of other denominations and that the KG would have to make its own representations to the Russian government. By July 19 a petition had been prepared to be forwarded to Petersburg and on August 27 a decision was made to send delegates to the capital together with the Heuboden Gemeinde and on September 11, 1872, the delegates--Abraham Klassen, from the Molotschna, Abraham L. Friesen, for the Heuboden Gemeinde and Peter P. Toews--left for Petersburg. Ironically, the day before they left, Toews' congregation held its first worship service in a fine new brick church building which had just been built at considerable cost--something which the KG had previously refused to do in all its 60 years of existence in Russia.<sup>46</sup>

Peter P. Toews describes the delegation to Petersburg in his "1871-1878 Diary" as follows:

On the morning of September 11th, A. Klassen, I, and Ab. Friesen, the Aeltester from Heuboden, departed on our journey to Petersburg by way of Ekatherinoslav, to Kremenschug, by water on the steamer. From there we went by rail to Petersburg (close to 2,000 verst) where we arrived on Sunday, the 17th. On the 19th we spoke with Lord Hahn who gave us little encouragement and very much advised us against submitting a petition to the Czar. In his words, 'Everything has already been said and written and His Majesty, the Czar, fully informed regarding our circumstances, and that through the submission of a petition we could achieve nothing other than that we might perhaps come into disagreeable circumstances with the police.' Nevertheless he did conclude with the words, 'That everyone is responsible for their own conscience.'

On the 28th we went to the General-Adjutant of His Majesty the Czar, Baron von Magendorf. He advised that we should speak with Minister Wolujeff. The Aeltesten from the Molotschna, Volga, and Poland had arrived in the meantime. They had already talked with Prince Heiden, and had also been directed to Wolujeff by the

same. Accordingly the two Aeltesten, Dietrich and David Hamm from the Volga and Samara, and B. Peters, Goertz, and Isaac from the Molotschna, had gone to speak with him. By his demeanour, Wolujeff allowed it to be understood that he had more hope for the continuation of our freedoms than Hahn in that among other things [Wolujeff] had said 'That only the laws given by our beloved God stand firm and unchangeable.'

In the meantime, Klassen and I spoke with Pastor Dalton, the pastor of the Reformed Church, because he had indicated to the Secretary of the Board of Directors of the Evangelical Bible Society that he would like to speak to us. He was friendly and sympathetic in his reception of us and assured us that he had opportunity to make intercession for us with the Minister, for which we were grateful. He gave us a written commendation to his Bishops who had more opportunity to speak to the Minister. We tried to attend to this but as we already had announced the day of our departure and had telegraphed for a vehicle to receive us in Ekatherinoslav, we were unable to look up the latter. We did arrange, however, that Goertz and Peters would do so and make these Bishops aware that because of our Confession of Faith, we would also be unable to perform medical service [military corp]. At an opportune time, they--the Bishops--could bring this to the attention of the Minister.

We left Petersburg in the evening of the 29th and boarded the train; we arrived in Krementschug on the evening of October 2nd. From here we travelled to Ekatherinoslav by Post where the brethren, P. Penner, Rosenfeld, and Johann Toews, Gruenfeld, were already awaiting us. . . . N.B. In Petersburg we also met two Aeltesten from Poland, one with the name, Tobias, and the other with the name, Stukke. We also met two men from Hutterdorf by the name of Hofer.<sup>47</sup>

Naturally Toews must have been disappointed since nothing had really been achieved by the delegation other than to make their concerns known in the Russian capital. Within a month another attempt would be made to petition the higher authorities, this time the intention was to go directly to the Czar himself. Information was received from the Molotschna that a deputation was to be sent to Yalta where the Czar was staying at his summer palace on the Black Sea, and Toews was again delegated to represent his Gemeinde there. He describes this journey as follows:

Together with A. Friesen from Heuboden, I left on the 13th of October by way of the post coach. It took until Tuesday the 17th to arrive there. The other delegates were Bern. Peters and Peter Goertz, from the Molotschna; Aeltester Gerhard Wiebe from Bergthal; Gerhard Dueck and David Epp, from Chortitz; and Friesen, the honorary Justice of the Peace, from Berdjansk. The Governor-General was sick when we arrived and for this reason we could not obtain an audience with the Czar as the latter also wanted

to leave shortly. However, we were able to appear before the Governor-General and he told us that he was aware of our concerns, and that he regretted that because of his sickness he was unable to be of much assistance to us on this occasion. He also told us that we would not be able to remain totally unaffected [by the new laws]. We would have to take up lesser duties; but he could not yet determine what these would be as he was not the Czar. He did say, 'I assure you that I am your representative, this believe me.' On Sunday the 22nd, we attended at the 4 verst distant Lodwadu, the Imperial castle, in order that we might yet see the Czar. But we did so in vain, and left for home during the evening, arriving at home at 12 midnight, Wednesday, the 25th.<sup>48</sup>

On the 29th of October, Toews reported to the brotherhood regarding his experiences in Yalta and on December 24th the sending of a delegation to America was discussed for the first time. On January 21, 1873, Toews, Abraham Loewen and Johann Harms, accompanied by many other brethren drove to the Molotschna, where they were joined by Abraham Klassen to attend a conference in Pordenau. Here the representatives from the various Gemeinden recommended that a delegation be sent to America. On January 29th Toews and his associates attended another conference in Alexanderwohl. He was deeply influenced at the meeting through a presentation made by his cousin, Johann Harder, the Aeltester of the Ohrloff Gemeinde. One of Toews' sons--Isaac--later quoted his father as follows:

One of the Aeltesten made a powerful presentation at the close of our later conference in the Alexanderwohl church--it was Johann Harder. This address made a deep impression upon me--and apparently also on many others as well--for at the close of his talk everyone rose to their feet, and moved by the earnestness of the occasion, a few verses of the song, "Herr, floesz mir diesen Trostgrund ein, dasz bei dir soll mein Wohnhaus sein . . . ", etc, echoed forth.<sup>49</sup>

On February 4, 1873, Toews was back in Borosenko where he reported to the brethren. It was decided that the Gemeinde should send its own delegate and Cornelius P. Toews, Peter's brother, was elected as the delegate with a large plurality. On the 10th the commission of Toews setting out his objectives was approved and a collection held which provided the necessary funds for the journey. After a false start on February 15, Cornelius Toews and David Klaasen--the delegate for the Heubodner Gemeinde, finally left for America on April 15, 1873. Peter and his brother communicated regularly during the journey, and their letters provide a poignant portrait of the close relationship shared by the two men. On July 31, 1873, Peter wrote to his brother, referring to the death of their father on May 15, 1873, as well as the death of his own child and his wife's grandfather, Isaac Loewen, who had been his mentor. He writes as follows:

. . . the day before yesterday, we received your letter of May 31,

which you had written in Fargo. Thus we had both written each other on the same day and in like manner our prayers will often have come before God at one and the same time . . . In the previous letter you will first of all have read the news that our beloved father has gone home to his rest. While I was in the process of writing my previous letter we were planning to travel to the Molotschna. Here the Lord again provided us with an opportunity to watch and pray. First of all, my beloved wife became sick and then our Anna and also our little Johann. Anna also died after two days. The pronouncement 'to thrust in thy sickle and reap' of the Revelation of St. John has also found application among us. For after you have rushed home on the post wagons, you will find that many friends are no longer in our midst and are now in the grace of God. Four sisters have died in Steinbach. Also we have already buried our beloved grandfather [Isaac Loewen]. He died, old and at a peaceful age; he was also tired of living. The Lord has finally provided him with his release for which he--as well as our father--had truly longed for from the heart. They have gone on to their rest in the land of true freedom and are now enjoying blessedness and peace at the right hand of the Saviour in the eternal fatherland, where they will nevermore grow weary.<sup>50</sup>

In the meantime the almost crushing demands of leadership of a large Gemeinde with congregations in three distant locations continued unabated. On May 7, 1873, Toews--accompanied by the ministers Kroecker and Loewen--left on another trip to the Crimea in order to deal with certain problems there and where he also preached three times. Just as Peter Toews had once enjoyed a trip to Markuslandt as a young man, he now gave opportunity to his nephew to accompany him. Johann F. Toews (1858-1931)--the oldest son of his brother, Cornelius--was asked to accompany the Peter Toews family as a baby sitter. Young Johann describes this journey as follows:

My uncle Peter Toews was the Aeltester of the Kleine Gemeinde, which also had members living in the Crimea. Since a number of them had submitted themselves to submersion baptism in the belief that sprinkling was not valid, my uncle was notified to go there to investigate the circumstances and to resolve the matter if possible. As painful as the journey may have been for my uncle, it was a joy for me as I was allowed to accompany them as a baby-sitter for the journey. I was very interested in the huge burial mounds which lay before the entrance into the Crimea at Otschagon. Here were buried the soldiers who had been mowed down by sword and bullet during the Crimean War. Also noteworthy to me were the deep wells out of which water was drawn with huge leather hoses by camels. The trip was a real experience for me. Finally, we again returned home safe and sound to revert back to our daily routine.<sup>51</sup>

A continuous stream of young people were being baptized and received into

the KG by Aeltester Toews; in addition, there were the normal discipline problems to deal with. Although the denomination suffered a steady outflow of members during these turbulent times, there was also a steady flow of people who were leaving other groups for various reasons to join the KG to seek spiritual solace and rest for their souls; these people all had to be counselled and ministered to. The travelling continued unabated and on May 31, Toews--accompanied this time by his wife and children--left for the Molotschna for another journey of spiritual visitation. On July 8, he was in the Province of Gherson where he preached in Nikothal.

On August 7, Peter Toews and his brother Johann were at the dock in Nikopol to greet brother Cornelius on his return from America. Toews describes the reception that Cornelius received when he got home:

He [Cornelius] arrived in Gruenfeld at his beloved own [family] safe and sound at 2 o'clock in the afternoon on the same day, and was greeted with joyful tears. One daughter had died from small pox during his absence. The beloved brothers and sisters in Gruenfeld all gathered together there, and we gave voice to the song of love, 'Grosz ist Herr deine Gute'. With respect to the news which he has brought, we believe that the proposal is favourable.<sup>52</sup>

As the Aeltester, Toews sought to drive home to his parishioners the idea that they should not think only of their comfortable circumstances in Russia when considering their next move. In a report to the Gemeinde in the Molotschna of August 8, 1873, Toews is philosophical regarding the emigration; he admonishes his parishioners that spiritual concerns should be their first priority. He pointed out that ". . . Christ preceded us to the place where there are many mansions . . . If only all the beloved brothers and sisters would gladly surrender their hearts to Him in order to decide whether we are also willing to sacrifice the necessary capital . . . for certainly we are not slothful in our material life. . . But what is the status of matters pertaining to our spiritual harvest."<sup>53</sup>

On August 12 the brotherhood discussed favourably the terms which had been offered by the Canadian Government. Nor was the fear of a universal military conscription abating. On August 19, Toews accompanied Heinrich Wohlgemuth to Ekaterinoslav, to have a certificate issued that Wohlgemuth--who had been drafted in his home province in Poland--was indeed of Mennonite birth, and therefore exempt from these laws. In order to fully appreciate the position of Toews and the KG regarding religious freedom it should be noted that their concerns regarding the formation of the Nikolaithal Vollost District had only been very narrowly resolved in their favour on November 24 of the preceding year. The writings of emigration proponents Abraham F. Thiessen and Consul Cornelius Jansen--both of whom were closely related to the KG--also had considerable impact. These writings addressed rather dramatically the wider issue of equity and social justice within Russian society--the lack of which was made painfully evident to the members of the KG because of their almost constant travelling across Southern Russia in order to visit family and friends in the various congregations.

On August 10, 1873, Toews met with the Aeltester and ministers of the Heuboden Gemeinde--at their request--to discuss a possible union with them. On

August 18, the proposal of the Heubodner was presented at a brotherhood meeting but did not come to fruition. On August 30, 1873, Toews had a meeting with the Aeltesten, Abraham L. Friesen, Heuboden, and Jakob A. Wiebe, from the Crimea, where it was decided that the land grants as provided for by the authorities in Canada would be accepted, namely, for all men and women over 20 years, as it had earlier been considered that only the male persons be utilized for this purpose.<sup>54</sup> It was also discussed that it would be beneficial for outstanding debts to be paid in advance, before the debts and demands had to be published. On November 7, Aeltester Friesen and Toews were summoned to appear at the Vollost office in Nikolaithal in this regard, where they made representations which exonerated the KG from a claim for damages by Abraham F. Thiessen, a disgruntled member.

An important meeting took place on April 17, 1874, when Toews, together with his fellow ministers, was summoned to appear before General-Adjutant von Totleben, in Halbstadt. Toews describes what took place:

On the night of the 17th to the 18th, I was especially brought over the Dneiper. However, I was only summoned to appear before General von Totleben on Saturday the 20th. He advised us and all the other Mennonite Aeltesten and ministers that his Majesty, the Czar, had sent him to us in order to advise us against the emigration and in order to advise us how he [the Czar] had reconsidered our faith . . . . On Thursday evening, the 25th, we were required to appear in Chortitz where we were again given the same presentation and earnestly exhorted to remain in Russia. And finally we submitted to him a letter of thanksgiving for the freedom which we had enjoyed in Russia until the present time and a petition for a favourable disposition for those who would emigrate.

On the 29th of April, Toews, together with a number of those who had not yet sold their properties, were summoned to attend in Ekaterinoslav. This included Cornelius S. Plett--Toews' uncle, and Heinrich Reimer (1818-1876)--his brother-in-law. Here von Totleben repeated the presentation which he had already made in Halbstadt and Chortitz. The emigration passes of the KG people who had already disposed of their properties were being held up in an obvious last ditch attempt to dissuade the emigrants. Toews took the opportunity to plead on their behalf since they would soon be without places to live. He also requested that Totleben present the KG "Letter of Thanksgiving" directly to the Czar which Totleben promised and also that the emigration passes would soon be issued.

About a month later, on May 30, 1874, the first group of KG-immigrants left for Canada. Toews together with a group of some 30 families remained in Russia until May 1875 to ensure the orderly completion of the emigration. He provided considerable direction to his Gemeinde through an extensive correspondence with his ministers and parishioners in Canada and with various officials and leaders involved in the emigration. Still for a man of his immense administrative and organizational abilities he--for once--had some time to pursue other interests. He took the opportunity to complete the publication of a book *Das Friedensreich Christi auf Erden* which will be referred to in more detail later. He also took

advantage of the time to write a brief history of the KG from and after the 1866 division under the title "Anhang N. 1" which he appended to the already completed *Sammlung*.<sup>55</sup> He organized his collection of personal documents and church papers which he would take along to America and which would later form the key to any study of his denomination.

Toews was also given some books by his widowed aunt and neighbour, Mrs. Klaas Friesen, nee Carolina Plett, who did not want to ship them all the way to America. One of these books by a Dutch Bishop, Claas Gangloffs, entitled *The United Undivided Church of God*, spurred Toews' interest in the concept of a true church which would have fateful consequences for the KG over the coming years.<sup>56</sup> Toews also took advantage of the time to reflect and meditate, something which he had not had much opportunity to do during the preceding seven years. His love of nature and intense spirituality is evident in the following excerpt from a letter which he wrote in the fall of 1874 to the part of his Gemeinde already in Manitoba:

In the evening of the previous day of our journey we arrived in Fischau. The following morning I went into the woods in order to refresh myself from the journey. These were the woods which my father had once planted in his time. I wanted to again see the place where I had frequently passed back and forth; it was the time of which the Apostle speaks, ' . . . in which we were enlightened and endured a great battle of affliction'. Many a tree was still completely familiar to me as if I had never gone. I remembered at that moment what the beloved Saviour says; 'Every plant which our heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted out'. Then in prayer to God the groaning in my heart came forth, 'Lasz mich niemals die Kreuzes Dornen fliehen, weil sie das Zeichen deiner Freundschaft sind, wobei der Geist doch Kraft und Liebe sind, So werd ich der wie eine Rose blühen, die wenn gleich Thau und Südwind drueber weht, doch in der Kraft in deinem Garten stehn'.<sup>57</sup>

The foregoing seems to be an appropriate farewell by Toews to Russia, his Motherland, which he obviously loved dearly. The nonresistance crisis and the subsequent immigration from Russia were the most important leadership tasks which he would ever face, and he met the challenges bravely and successfully. In his role as the Aeltester of the larger branch of the KG, Toews--the philosopher and historian--had truly become history maker.

#### Section Four. Settlement in Manitoba, 1874-1880.

In 1875 the Toews family migrated from Russia to Manitoba, arriving in the village of Gruenfeld, later known as Kleefeld, on the evening of June 29, 1875. Most of the very basic work relating to the organization of the pioneer villages had already been looked after. Villages had been laid out, roads and drainage started and the first crop was in the ground; the church and village communities were functional. In fact, Cornelius P. Toews--who had gained an immense stature as a visible delegate and leader during the actual journey and transshipment to North America--played a very important role during this first year demonstrating that his

leadership abilities were more than equal to those of his brother.

The immigration period brought forth some interesting dimensions in the close and sometimes symbiotic relationship between Cornelius and his younger brother, Peter. In talking with various descendants of Cornelius one senses that there was also an element of jealousy there regarding the phenomenal success of his younger brother. History has added an ironic twist to this normal and probably healthy sibling rivalry in that it is Cornelius who has been recognized as a pioneer leader of the Province of Manitoba, with his picture prominently displayed in almost every history book which mentions the Mennonite presence there. In contrast--and for reasons to be discussed in Section Eight--it has still not become quite respectable to refer to Peter and his work.

Another family related matter which had arisen during the immigration, was the fact that his mother, Maria Toews, and his two younger sisters, Maria--still unmarried at the time and presumably living with her mother, and Susanna--married to Johann P. Goossen, had left the immigration party in Liverpool taking the Inman Line to New York. From New York they went to Gnadenau, Kansas, where they made their home. Peter Toews was not happy with this decision but was unable to do anything about it.

In his determined and forthright fashion Peter P. Toews plunged right back into the thick of his leadership duties immediately upon his arrival in Manitoba. His experienced hand at the helm was very much in need. He found the fellowship in a state of grief and shock over the drowning, only a week or so earlier, of the minister Jakob Barkman and his companion Jakob Friesen, from Steinbach, who had been in Winnipeg to purchase supplies for their community. On the next Sunday he preached the sermon in Blumenort, where another minister, Abraham Klassen, from Rosenort, announced that he was moving to Kansas. Klassen was one of a dozen or more families who would make this decision to move to warmer climes in Nebraska and Kansas in 1875. In October Toews baptised young people and accepted six new members by transfer.

Toews moved quickly to lead the Gemeinde to formalize and reconstitute social and economic structures such as schools and Waisenverordnung in Manitoba. Their development was more important for the KG than for other groups since in the Molotschna they had shared these institutions with up to twelve other denominations. The Bergthaler, for example, had simply been able to transplant their existing school, Brandordnung and Waisenverordnung, from Russia to Manitoba. At a brotherhood meeting on Rosenfeld on November 19, 1875, resolutions were passed that the leadership of the Gemeinde, or ministerial, would simultaneously act as the Board of Directors of the school system, that all the children without exception were to be educated and that the financial arrangements proposed by Hespeler were to be accepted. In a letter to all the teachers of the Molotschna Mennonites of the East Reserve of January 3, 1876, Peter P. Toews let it be known that the church through the ministerial would be in complete control of the school system, that all school age children were to receive the appropriate education regardless of the financial means of the parents, teachers were expected to support and attend teachers conferences and seminars and all curriculum was subject to their approval. In a tersely worded edict, Toews wrote as follows:

Teachers shall instruct their children by example in word and deed in such matters as manners, etiquette, obedience, attention, love and friendliness to everyone. No teacher shall adopt a new innovation without the support of their colleagues and the approval of the school authority.<sup>58</sup>

There is little doubt that the school system implemented under the leadership of Toews was the most advanced in Manitoba during the 1870s.

In December the first ministerial election in Manitoba was held in Rosenort, and in January, 1876, another ministerial election was held in Blumenort. Soon it was the turn of the Waisenverordnung or orphans trust office. At a brotherhood meeting in Steinbach on January 6, 1877, a resolution was passed that the institution should continue as it had in Russia with the amendment that leadership would be provided by the ministerial instead of the Gebietsamt.<sup>59</sup> The brethren were to withdraw any deposits they had made with banks and directions were also given with respect to charging interest. On December 27, 1877, it was resolved to build three meeting houses for the East Reserve, one each in Gruenfeld, Steinbach and Blumenort. The preparation of a systematic set of school regulations was commissioned at the same meeting; these were in fact prepared by the veteran Molotschna school teacher, Gerhard S. Kornelsen of Lichtenau.<sup>60</sup> On January 11, 1878, the specifications for the dual purpose school and worship houses were finalized, they were to be 50 feet long and 30 feet wide and no less than 7 feet high. This protocol is again recorded under the signature of Toews. It seemed that Toews was intent on giving the church a much wider oversight than it had ever had in Russia.

There were also signs that not everyone was happy with the direction in which Toews was leading the Gemeinde. The previous discussion regarding the payment of interest was not sitting well with everyone--presumably those who had money to lend were not enthused with the idea. The situation was magnified early in the new year, when Toews preached a sermon against the charging of interest. The issue was discussed at a meeting at the home of Peter Toews on June 8, 1878, where he managed to persuade everyone except Jakob L. Dueck who openly spoke against his position. Others were not happy with Toews' openness to outside ideas. These issues came to a head at a brotherhood meeting held in Gruenfeld on July 2, 1877. Toews describes what took place:

A number of brethren were not fully satisfied with my sermon, principally, my uncle Cornelius Plett. This opposition served my uncle in so far that a brotherhood meeting was called for that purpose in Gruenfeld where many brethren from the Scratching River were present. I expounded repeatedly against the charging of interest [Wücher] from the books of the Pentateuch, Psalms, and the Prophets, as being wrong and an abomination before God; I referred, similarly, to the words of Christ (Luke 6). At the brotherhood meeting I was also unanimously instructed to discontinue the reading of magazines, at least not to subscribe to any more. The *Herald* [der Wahrheit] was approved by the voice of the majority.<sup>61</sup>

There seems to have been a clear message to Toews that he could only take his reform and organizational efforts so and so far. But the organizational agenda went forward nonetheless. The school regulations previously referred to were now ready and on September 29, 1878, they were read to the brethren and approved by them effective immediately. On November 6, the ministerial had a meeting with the Protestant School Authority at William Hespeler's office in Winnipeg, where financial support was offered for the KG school system. On March 10, 1878, the Kleine Gemeinde school teachers were examined in Chortitz by a panel consisting of William Hespeler, Jakob Friesen, Tannenau--for the Berghthaler, and Abraham P. Isaac, Schoenau (Toews' first cousin) for the KG.

The foregoing indicates that an inordinate amount of Toews' time during the years 1875 to 1878, went into the establishment of proper school and village facilities and other social systems such as the Waisenverordnung. Of course, Toews still had to deal with all the other normal Aeltester duties of preaching, counselling, baptising and disciplining. One has a picture of the pioneer Bishop at this time, driving off his yard with his sleigh and a team of horses during a snowstorm on his way to preach in Blumenort or perhaps Rosenort, or sitting by the light of a coal oil lamp late into the night studying in an ancient *Martyr* book or writing a sermon, while his beloved Anna sat nearby, working on some sewing, and pausing occasionally to exchange a few endearing words or reflections regarding the Gospel. Toews' leadership was so all-pervasive that his personal story from the time of his election as a minister in 1866 until 1881, in reality, was also the history of the Manitoba KG.

#### Section Five. The Holdeman Attraction 1881-1896.

Johann Holdeman, a revivalist minister from Ohio with "old" Mennonite roots, was to have a devastating influence on the Manitoba KG during the 1880s. Although they had apparently corresponded since 1876, the first reference to Holdeman in Toews' personal diary is on April 2, 1879, when he records that he sent Holdeman 9 books which he had requested. The list of these books provides an interesting insight into Toews' thinking; 1. *Das Biblische Namen und Chronikbuch* by P. J. Twisk, Hollaendisch, 2. *Das Friedensreich Christi* by Twisck, 3. *Spiegel des Lebens*, by George Hansen, 4. *Fundamentebuch*, by George Hansen, Hollaendisch, 5. Also by Hansen, *Confession* in Latin and German, 6. and 7. Two volumes of *Geschiedenis der Christen . . . Mennoniten Genant*, by Hermann Schijn edition of Gerhard Maatschoen, 8. *Ein Confession oder Glaubensberichten der Alten Flemischen Taufgesinnten*, German, 9. The work of Peter Peters, Hollaendisch. Toews' next entry in the "1871-1878 Diary" is in November of the same year, "Johannes Holdeman came from Ohio to learn to know our Gemeinde. He also preached many times and on the 13th of November he travelled to the Scratching River." The final entry is of a brotherhood meeting held on January 16, 1880, where the "differences between our Gemeinde and that of Johann Holdeman were put forward."<sup>162</sup>

From here on the biography of Peter P. Toews as it relates to his work as a church leader, becomes very much the history of the founding of the Holdeman church in Manitoba. Toews was not satisfied with the spiritual life within his Gemeinde. From reading the book by Claas Gangloffs, already referred to earlier, he had become fascinated with the idea of a united church, a church which was the

one and only visible true church of God. At the time of his visit in 1879 Toews was under the impression that Holdeman too was looking for such a true church. Because of his fatigue from the herculean leadership role which he had played since 1870, he did not realize, perhaps, that Holdeman was not in the process of an unprejudiced search for truth as was he; rather, Holdeman had in mind a very specific goal which was nothing less than a dissolution of the KG and the absorption of its membership into his own denomination. This topic will be dealt with separately by Dr. Clarence Hiebert in a paper entitled "The Holdeman attraction for Peter Toews" published in this work as Part Sixteen, Chapter Five.

The remainder of this section will simply endeavour to outline the chronology of events which followed. When Holdeman returned to Ohio in 1879, after preaching among the KG in Manitoba, he wrote back to Toews that union with the KG as had been originally contemplated would not be possible because it was "too schism-ridden, too formal, too quick to baptise anyone and not spiritual enough to constitute the 'True Church'. What was needed in the KG was a complete new start, with each person being rebaptised and then individually joining the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite."<sup>63</sup>

There were serious reservations within the KG brotherhood in Manitoba regarding Toews' ideas of closer union with Holdeman. According to the diary of Cornelius W. Loewen--the uncle to Toews' wife--the matter was again discussed at great length at a brotherhood meeting in Gruenfeld on February 27, 1881. Another brotherhood meeting was held in Rosenfeld regarding the differences in the Gemeinde regarding baptism.<sup>64</sup> Wisely the brotherhood decided to commission Toews and his uncle, Cornelius S. Plett, to go to Kansas to investigate the state of Holdeman's church. Since Plett had stood up to Toews earlier on the issue of charging interest, he was probably chosen to placate those in the brotherhood who did not appreciate Holdeman and the American style revivalism he represented.

Cornelius W. Loewen records in his diary that on June 7, 1881, "my brother-in-law, Cornelius Plett, and brother Peter Toews, left for Kansas. On June 28, 1881, Peter Toews returned home." Shortly thereafter Toews presented a report to the brotherhood in Manitoba the full text of which was published in 1990.<sup>65</sup> Loewen goes on to record that, "My brother-in-law Cornelius Plett came home from Kansas and Nebraska on July 2, 1881." It appears that the two men came back from Kansas with very differing views of what was going on. Peter L. Dueck, a school teacher and intellectual, who was originally favourably inclined towards the Holdeman view has provided some information regarding their respective reports. In his "Writing regarding the Holdeman Secession," he reports that ". . . when Ohm Plett returned from Kansas he did not give a favourable report as had Aeltester Peter Toews who had declared himself that he had found affairs in the Holdemans' Gemeinde to be above expectations." Plett was apparently quite concerned about incidents of loveless conduct within the Holdeman group which did not seem to square away with the profession of being the one and only pure church. Dueck writes that ". . . Ohm Plett . . . related to me in Toews' presence, how Mrs. Schmidt had tearfully lamented to him how lovelessly her brother Abraham Hiebert had treated her." This apparently had a deep effect on many people, including Peter L. Dueck, who writes further, ". . . this made me realize that Toews was no longer impartial in the matter."<sup>66</sup>

An interesting anecdote in this regard was recalled by Johann W. Reimer (1861-1952) of Blumenhof, Manitoba. Reimer overheard a conversation between Holdeman and Cornelius S. Plett sometime during 1881. Plett was the father of Reimer's step-father Johann L. Plett. Plett had apparently confronted Holdeman regarding the strife and family divisions which he was causing among the KG. Holdeman had replied that he was not pressuring anyone and that he received only those into his church who came voluntarily. This conversation had a favourable impact upon the young Reimer, who until that point had not been very impressed with Holdeman.<sup>67</sup> Toews was also opposed by Rev. Peter Baerg of Gruenfeld, Manitoba, who had once been his faithful lieutenant in the Crimea. Baerg was particularly concerned about Holdemans' emphasis on visions and dreams.<sup>68</sup>

In November of 1881, Holdeman and Markus Seiler, a co-minister, visited Manitoba again "conducting a series of meetings that stretched well into 1882."<sup>69</sup> Peter P. Toews describes what he experienced the day that he made his final decision regarding Holdeman:

Directly before my acceptance into the Church of God, after many of my fellow church members had already been admitted, when I had prayed much and occasionally also fasted, and had pleaded with the Lord for a renewed testimony by the Spirit of being a child of God, and thereby to recognize His godly will and pleasure in my intentions; the following happened. A number of persons, about 14 or 15, were together in our house one evening. There was a prayer and singing, brother Markus [Seiler] was among us, and he led in prayer. During the prayer a special power gripped me which made my whole body shake and tremble that I thought the place moved beneath us, and I instantly received a great joy. Having arisen from prayer, the trembling and movement still continued throughout my body.

I looked up the song which I had wished and desired to be able to sing from the heart for a long time: 'Enough, you now this grace have found, my heart, God is not angry with you,' etc. No. 326. Because of being so strongly moved, I could hardly pronounce the words before the group. Later I became aware that several of those present had more or less felt some of this strange power and received great joyfulness. The happening brought to my mind Acts 4:31 and Romans 8:16, '... the Spirit itself beareth witness within our spirit, that we are the children of God.' Although having formerly believed, experienced, and thus taught and testified, I had never before experienced it in such perceptible power. God be the Glory! It never leaves my memory. The following evening, my wife and I, and others of those gathered the previous evening were together with brother Johann Holdeman, who came from Morris during the day, and through baptism and laying on of hands, we were received into the Church of God.<sup>70</sup>

Peter Toews now resigned his position as Aeltester of the KG and was rebaptised by Holdeman and approximately one-half of the Manitoba membership

of the KG followed his lead. This process is vividly described by Johann B. Toews, a young relative from the nearby village of Blumenort:

After the visiting ministers J. Holdeman and M. Seiler had held a meeting at each of the four different meeting places, brother Toews arose in an open assembly and acknowledged his incapability, or rather unworthiness of continuing to stand before the church as leader and bishop, and openly announced that he was resigning from his position and turning the further leading over to the visiting ministers, which they undertook to do and held some more meetings. Besides brother Toews, another two ministers resigned from their office. The decision for this resignation by brother Toews was not as insignificant as it might appear to be. From his side this decision was not hastily arrived at for he had already for many years inquired and sought for a way, ' . . . and it shall be called the way of holiness' (Isaiah 35:8). During his search in the old writings, foremostly the Holy Scriptures and likewise those of the martyrs and other men of faith, he saw the necessity of a renewal of the church's ways.

His resignation was not an easy matter, he loved his church, he did his best to instruct her, to build her; he sacrificed strength and health. There we see him in an open vehicle, wagon or sleigh, with a poorly looking horse hitched to it, in rain or snow, travelling the ten mile road to the place where he had to fulfil his official duties. Under such circumstances he exerted himself, yet saw no other way before himself but to lay everything down. The Gemeinde had confidence in him. Many, in sincere love, clung to him. Some had also repented and received forgiveness, and others had gone through a partial heart experience. On the one side the opinion was to stay with what they had, and with grief, the bishop saw as inevitable, a division - a separation ahead.<sup>71</sup>

On January 11, 1882, Peter P. Toews, Abram P. Isaac (his cousin), and Martin Penner (who was married to Toews' cousin), were ordained as ministers in the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite.<sup>72</sup> Peter P. Toews now became a passionate advocate of the Holdeman church. He poured his immense talents and energy into his cause with renewed enthusiasm. Johann B. Toews describes the effect of Peter Toews' preaching as follows:

One Sunday, when it was his turn to preach, he chose as a text the words, "The spirit and the bride say: Come," etc. This had such a drawing and convincing effect on a certain youth that it brought about a decided change in his life. He pleaded with God for an understanding of His will, confessed his failings, made restitution, and after considerable time he would also claim for himself by faith that he was at peace with God. May the Lord grant strength and courage to wage the battle through to victory. More similar results could be mentioned . . . .<sup>73</sup> His [Toews'] quotation, 'Come', had penetrated my young heart very deeply, and 'Whosoever will, may

take the water of Life freely', became a real balm to me. I was quite determined. The bountiful grace of God strengthened my willpower that I could overcome. I remember so well, how I implored the Lord, to grant sufficient spiritual light to me. I confessed to my parents and friends, where I thought, I might have failed.<sup>74</sup>

Although he avoided positions of formal authority, Peter Toews, nonetheless, played an active role in the subsequent development and growth of his church. He continued to be a major figure in the village of Gruenfeld. In 1900 Peter Toews and his family moved several miles to the southeast to the village of Hochstadt where they lived until 1911. The role that Toews played in the development of Gruenfeld will be dealt with at greater length in the study of that community being written by historian, Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba, and therefore that aspect of his life and career will not be dealt with here.

This is probably an appropriate place to consider the impact and role which extended families played in the life of Peter Toews and the major congregational decisions which impacted on him. The most powerful family within the KG, of course, was that of Abraham Friesen (1756-1810), Ohrloff. Until 1866 this family was predominant in filling positions of authority such as bishops, ministers and deacons. As was to be expected, the Friesens tended to support Aeltester Johann F. Friesen (1808-1872)--their clan member--and remained within his fellowship after the 1866 division. The reform group, on the other hand, represented the rising prominence of three lesser clans--the Pletts, Loewens and Toews', and between Peter Toews and his wife, they were members of all three. Many of the ministers of the reform group, or the Blumenhoff Gemeinde as they came to be known, over the next decade were Loewens, Pletts and Toews'.<sup>75</sup>

These dynamics again applied during the emigration when many members of the Friesen clan followed the lead of their relative, Consul Cornelius Jansen of Berdjansk, in going to Nebraska whereas the other families tended to opt for Manitoba. The same held true during the 1882 Holdeman division with the exception that for the first time Toews' uncle, Cornelius S. Plett, refused to follow his lead, and remained in the KG with his large family. In fact, oral tradition holds that when Plett's favourite son, Johann L. Plett, joined with his brother-in-law, Peter Toews, in the Holdeman move, his father apparently disowned him. This estrangement was not reconciled until a few days before the tragic death of the two men in 1900, when Cornelius S. Plett embraced and accepted his son in love notwithstanding his turning away in religious beliefs.<sup>76</sup>

The Holdeman connection also increased the estrangement between Peter Toews, and his mother and two sisters in Kansas. It has already been mentioned that they had settled in Gnadenau, Kansas, where the Goossens became members of the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren. Sister Maria married the widower Kornelius Doerksen, of Alexanderthal--also a former KGer--and they too, joined Jakob A. Wiebe's church at Gnadenau.<sup>77</sup> Since Maria Toews lived with her daughter Susanna and her husband, Johann P. Goossen, it was natural that they would encourage her to join their denomination, which she did. This was not acceptable to Peter who chastised her for being rebaptized by Wiebe and insisted that she withdraw. Her brother, Cornelius S. Plett, presumably also admonished his sister for her changing views, since she was to have said after moving to Kansas, albeit

jokingly, ". . . that at least she was rid of one thing, namely, her beloved brother."<sup>78</sup>

But when Peter Toews joined with Holdeman he, of course, was rebaptized himself. He now insisted that his mother also join the Holdemans which she did. Later she changed her mind--presumably there was considerable lobbying being done by sister Susanna--and again went back to Wiebe's Gemeinde. Nephew Johann F. Toews, described these events in quite unfavourable terms:

When my grandmother received the second baptism from the Krimmer Brethren Gemeinde this action was condemned by her son Peter. Later he allowed himself to be baptized as a member of the "true" Gemeinde of God. Now he considered it to be necessary that his aged mother be rebaptized for the third time in order to also be able to join this one and only salvation-giving Gemeinde. When, however, she returned to the Brethren Gemeinde after her third baptism, she was banned by Holdeman's Gemeinde; and her son Peter deemed it to be right.<sup>79</sup>

The estrangement between Peter Toews and his mother and sister became quite open when Mrs. Johann Toews asked her grand-nephew, Franz K. Goossen, to inquire of her son as to why he was not paying the money which he owed her. In a letter to his mother of June 28, 1892, Toews mentions that he has been asked by Goossen to pay his debt which amounted to \$84.00 in 1889; he enclosed a payment of \$8.00 and requests that the balance be allowed to continue by credit.<sup>80</sup> The letter did not achieve its purpose. Shortly thereafter Toews received a terse postcard from his brother-in-law, Johann Goossen, writing on behalf of his mother-in-law since she did not write. Goossen wrote that she had requested him to write: "write . . . she said, you are so capable, meaning thereby, as good [a writer] as Cornelius, that I am demanding my money; failing which [payment by Toews] I shall direct myself to uncle Cornelius Plett." In a reply dated April 28, 1892, Toews writes that he hopes to pay his debt soon and mentions his concern that his previous letter was not read to his mother and that the Goossens have thereby cut off his means of communicating with her."

Apparently the members of the Johann P. Goossen household were quite sensitive and one inappropriate word said was too much for them. In a postcard by sister Susanna herself, she writes ". . . I want it [to be paid] so that mother does not need to upset herself so much over this; she says, 'he treats me like an animal.'" This was obviously no longer merely a private matter between Toews and his mother; by now the hint of a family scandal was known in wider circles. On September 14, 1893, Toews wrote a letter to Johann Nickel, Inman, Kansas, who was married to a cousin of his wife. In the letter Toews advises of the situation and that he still owes his mother \$40.00. He asks Nickel to pay the debt on his behalf since he does not have sufficient money to do so, explaining that his mother is rather adamant. Nickel complied with the request and went to Goossens' to pay the debt where he also read Peter Toews' letter to them. In his reporting letter to Toews, Nickel writes that his mother ". . . had said that she gladly forgave him [Toews] regarding the money, but that with respect to the anxiety and sorrow which he had caused her by his letters he himself would have to give answer before

the Judge on the last day."

Peter Toews was deeply grieved by the entire affair and on February 8, 1897, he wrote a letter to his mother wherein he expresses his regret that she had originally joined the Gemeinde in order to please her children and then had withdrawn in order to please Susanna and her husband Johann P. Goossen. In Peter's view she would have been better off ". . . to have remained in Wiebe's Gemeinde instead of taking such a serious step merely to please people, meaning the Goossens; and to come and then to go again, as if it were a light matter. You have heard how deeply this has affected me . . ." Although somewhat lessened, it seems that the family estrangement was permanent to some extent.

### Section Six. Historical Writings and Publications, 1897-1912.

It was during his Holdeman period that Toews was finally free to devote energy and talents to his first love of writing and publication. It should be mentioned by way of background that in the Gemeinde where Peter P. Toews grew up, the ancient writings of the Anabaptist-Mennonite faith were revered and collected as spiritual treasures. It was seen as a great achievement for someone to come across such writings--perhaps from a relative in Prussia or from the long forgotten papers of some deceased brother in Russia--and to translate the same from Dutch to German. Handwritten copies were then circulated among the brethren in the Gemeinde and community; this was a common activity not only among the leadership but also within the laity.

Toews collected these writings as well and also translated them from the Dutch to the German. He was an historian by nature and saved many of the letters organizing them carefully; his love of reading, reflection, and writing combined here with his innate organizational talents. Like many others in his denomination--but in a much more systematic and organized way--he also enjoyed making copies of letters written in former times especially if they shed light on the history of his Gemeinde. By 1874 Toews had gathered what he considered to be the most important materials into a substantial volume of 502 pages of historical writings which he entitled "Sammlung von Briefen und Schriftliche Nachrichten zur Historie der Kleinen Gemeinden der Mennoniten an der Molotschna." This was probably the most important collection of historical documents in the Molotschna at the time.<sup>81</sup>

Toews was also interested in what was happening beyond the borders of his own community and country. He was certainly interested in what was happening in America and by 1872 he was subscribing to the *Herald der Wahrheit* put out by the Mennonite publisher John F. Funk, Elkhart, Indiana. But this was not all. It says something of Toews' constant probing for truth that he also entered into a personal correspondence with Funk in 1872.<sup>82</sup> Toews ordered a considerable quantity of devotional books from Funk for distribution among his parishioners.<sup>83</sup> During 1873 while his brother Cornelius P. Toews was in the United States and Canada as a delegate for the Gemeinde, Toews corresponded regularly with him and other leaders in the immigration movement. Considering all the demands upon leadership occasioned by pastoral duties and the exigencies of organizing an emigration of 1,000 people and their resettlement in some 10 villages in a new country, Toews produced an incredible amount of writings--poetry, historical, theological and pastoral--during this period.

The KG had also been the pioneers in the field of book publication among all the Russian Mennonites. The first—a book by the Dutch Bishop Peter Peters—was published in 1827. Peter's uncle by marriage--Heinrich Enns--was the principal promoter of the KG publication effort of 1860 to 1865 which resulted in three major devotional books being reprinted and distributed.<sup>84</sup> No doubt Enns served as a role model. Toews was a quick study and soon learned all about editing and publishing a book. As soon as the circumstances in the Gemeinde--such as the congregational reorganization which occurred prior to 1871--had settled down to allow for this, Toews himself, got involved in publishing. He became the principal promoter of the last work to be published by the KG in Russia. Unfortunately the process of obtaining the approval of the Russian censors protracted the work so that the immigration to America was almost completed by the time that the book was finally printed in spring of 1875--just shortly before Toews was to leave for Canada. The book was an exposition of the Anabaptist-Mennonite understanding of the millennium by the Dutch Bishop Peter J. Twisck, entitled *Das Friedensreich Christi oder Auslegung des 20. Capitels in Offenbarung St. Johannes* (Odessa, 1875), 31 pages.<sup>85</sup> Toews was assisted in this endeavour by his cousin, Johann Harder--the Aeltester of the Ohrloff Gemeinde in the Molotschna, who subscribed for a certain number of copies of the book.<sup>86</sup>

The immigration to America and the efforts required to reorganize schools, churches and related social and economic institutions in a new country, followed only 7 years later by a life changing union with Johann Holdeman, seems to have absorbed Toews' energy. Toews remained active in writing, engaging in correspondence with various Mennonite leaders and government authorities--not the least of which was a active correspondence with Holdeman, as well as writing frequently for periodicals such as the *Mennonitische Rundschau*. However, he did not get actively involved in publication work again until the late 1890s.<sup>87</sup> It is noteworthy that although Toews did switch his entire religious allegiance to the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, there is no evidence that he collected historical writings regarding this denomination in any sort of formal way, keeping only copies of minutes of meetings that he was personally involved with.

In 1897 he, together with Johann Holdeman, commenced to publish the *Botschafter der Wahrheit*, as a monthly paper for their denomination, the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite.<sup>88</sup> This was the first denominational paper sponsored and edited by a Russian Mennonite. The achievement seems somewhat more impressive considering that the entire body of Mennonites in Russia--often said to be more educated, more cultured, etc., did not manage to establish their own newspaper until 1903.<sup>89</sup> In his capacity as co-editor, and later as a contributor, Toews wrote and published volumes of material in the *Botschafter*.<sup>90</sup>

Another significant event in the area of publication for Peter P. Toews was the completion of a 430 page songbook for the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite in 1906 published under the title *Unparteiisches Liederbuch: Eine Sammlung geistreicher Lieder zum oeffentlichen and häuslichen Gottesdienst, zur allgemeinen Erbauung und zum Lobe Gottes, Herausgegeben von Gemeinde Gottes* (Elkhart, Ind.: Mennonitischen Verlagshandlung, 1906). What makes this publication all the more remarkable is the fact that some 50 of the songs were written by East Reserve members of the denomination; over half of these composed by Toews himself.<sup>91</sup>

A number of family and historical booklets were published by Bishop Peter P. Toews and his co-religionists shortly after the turn of the century. The first was by Johann Toews (1793-1873), Fischau, Molotschna, the father of Toews, and was written in 1854 as an admonition to his children to lead a godly life.<sup>92</sup> The 24 page booklet, Johann Toews, *Das Wachsame Auge Gottes: Aus den hinter-lassenen Schriften des Johann Toews* (Elkhart, Ind., 1908), was published by Peter P. Toews in 1908. During the same time Toews published an 8 page devotional booklet entitled *Biblische Speisekarte der Altväter*.<sup>93</sup> The *Speisekarte* consists of a series of seven poems dealing with the ancient biblical patriarchs.<sup>94</sup> In 1910 Peter P. Toews published a ten stanza poem entitled, *Wie Gott das Gebet einer Mutter erhört*.<sup>95</sup>

The next year, 1911, saw the publication of a 27 page booklet by Peter P. Toews entitled *Eine Seltsame Begebenheit Angehen der durch Peter von Riesen von Schidlitz bei Danzig in Preuszen in Druck gegebenen Menno Simons Schriften*.<sup>96</sup> This more serious work dealt with the 1833 efforts of Peter von Riesen and his brothers Klaas and Abraham in Russia to publish the "Foundation of Christian Doctrine" by Menno Simons in a three volume edition.<sup>97</sup> It has been suggested that this well written historical work may have been written in response to the publication of Peter M. Friesen's *Die Alt-Evangelische Mennonitische Brüderschaft in Ruszland (1789-1910) im Rahmen der mennonitische Gesamtgeschichte* which provided mainly false information about the KG and other conservative Mennonite groups.<sup>98</sup> In 1912 Peter P. Toews published his last work, a book of poetry in the form of song lyrics under the title *Der Köstlichere Weg in Liedern*.<sup>99</sup>

#### **Section Seven. To Swalwell and Retirement, 1911-1922.**

By 1910 Toews and his beloved wife Anna were no longer in very good health. In a letter published in the *Messenger of Truth*, Toews describes the difficulties they encountered during a trip they made to Alberta during that year:

We left early July 6, for Otterbourne, where we boarded the train for Alberta. But as we were to board the train it seemed a great undertaking considering our age and the feebled condition, the long siege of typhoid fever has left us in, and to this yet my wife being nearly robbed of her sight, and our third companion, Margaretha Warkentin, needed the crutches for her support. But we undertook the trip with Jesus for our staff and guide.<sup>100</sup>

In view of their physical condition it is not surprising that they would seek lesser responsibilities. What is surprising is that after retiring from active service in 1911, Peter P. Toews--by now some 70 years of age--moved to Swalwell, Alberta. This community, also referred to as Linden or Sunnyslope, was founded in 1904-5 by members of the Holdeman denomination from Rosenort, Kleefeld and Greenland, where it was seen for many years as a place of opportunity where young people could still get into farming on their own. One writer has given the reason for the move by Peter and Anna that four of their sons--John W., Cornelius, Peter and Isaac--had sought their fortunes at Stern, Alberta: "The year was 1911. Isaac had gone back to his birthplace in Manitoba to get a wife. His parents were getting on in years and they decided to go west with their son to retire there. So it was that Peter and Anna Warkentin Toews sold their home at

Gruenfeld (Hochstadt), Manitoba, and went west with Isaac and his new bride.<sup>101</sup>

Although tired and somewhat weary Peter Toews continued doing what he loved the most—writing and ministering to his people. He collected poetry and his journal for this period is filled with clippings of poems—invariably of a religious and devotional nature—which he considered worthwhile saving. He continued to write poetry for special occasions such as funerals, weddings and anniversaries, and for his many friends and parishioners to whom he had ministered for many years and who obviously loved him dearly.<sup>102</sup> He contributed frequently to the *Rundschau* where he published many letters filled with historical details and reminiscences.

Peter Toews also had a sense of humour, a characteristic which probably remained hidden for the most part because of the serious spiritual responsibilities of the ministerial office which he served for most of his adult life. In 1919 he wrote a lengthy poem about the automobile entitled "Aus der Zeit fuer der Zeit" in which he refuted certain criticism of the automobile in a humorous vein. He compared the same with the transportation of the prophets writing, "Man denkt an den Propheten, Den nahm man bis Aegypten mit". He predicted that the use of the motor car would soon be in general usage and that it was not wrong if used properly. He also made a prophetic comment that during the lifetime of his children it might be commonplace for people to be sailing through the air:

Nur wenige hatten ein Pferd  
Nach den Einwanderungsjahren  
Es war nur das Hornviehgefuehrt  
Mit dem alle gefahren  
Ist es das Automobil heut  
Wird bei der Kinder Leben  
Wohl schon nicht ueber lange Zeit  
Man durch die Luefte schweben?<sup>103</sup>

Although his health was failing more and more Toews enjoyed tending to his flowers and working in his garden. His unidentified elegist adds a further perspective in this regard writing as follows:

Although he came to Stern [Swalwell] to retire, Peter Toews led a fruitful and active life. Always a lover of horticulture, he soon had a flower garden flourishing around the little house where he lived. It was located on the premises where Terence Toews now lives. He was busy in the work of the ministry, and carried on an active correspondence with many, in particular the church leaders of his day. Thus he was very instrumental in shaping church policies. He was a prolific poet. Many of the songs used regularly in the church services then were written by him. By this time his wife had become almost blind from cataracts. A surgery was performed, but instead of improving her sight, it made her completely blind. His eyes also became poorer, till toward the last he, too, was practically blind.

One imagines that Toews' once erect bearing was becoming more hunched and bent by this time; that his once keen mind was slowing down and his speech more hesitant. Toews did not approve of photography and, therefore, no portrait picture of him is available as is the case for his brother Cornelius, even though Cornelius died some 14 years earlier. A picture from the time--probably the only one in existence--shows him from a distance sitting on a son's yard and watching a hog being butchered. His handsome features are only partly visible under a dark heavy cap and behind a white flowing beard. He is wearing a dark fall coat and his hand is holding what appears to be a cane. The picture illustrates that even in his old age, Toews never lost the quality which had destined him for leadership; although he was almost blind and could hardly see what was going on; he still insisted on being with his family and people in the midst of their day to day activities.

Peter Toews apparently loved the imagery of the mountains and one thinks of him visualizing in his mind the scenery which made up his landscape in Southern Russia--the land of his birth; perhaps he thought of the reddish "iron ore" hill outside the village of Blumenhoff, near Nikopol, where he had once made his home, or the steep inclines and valleys on the way to Berdjansk when they hauled their wheat to the seaport. In his last years he had a wish to see the Rockies which was no longer possible because of his near blindness:

Their latter days were often spent on their rockers on the veranda of their home, facing westward. In the distance he knew were the Rockies outlined in crystalline starkness against the livid white-blue under the curve of the Chinook arch. He loved these mountains and often expressed the regret that he would probably never see them. Trips to the Rockies were simply not taken in frivolous uselessness.

Peter Plett Toews died on November 2, 1922. His death occurred as he was sitting on the veranda of his home with his wife facing westward, towards the beautiful Rockies. His unknown eulogist describes this as follows:

On November 2, 1922 he and his wife of almost sixty happy years were sitting companionably in their rockers. A granddaughter was home with them. Practically all the people in the community were at church paying their last respects to a cousin of his, also a Peter Toews. Suddenly his wife heard a thud.

"Peter," she cried!

But her husband lay silent. The moment of triumph for which he had spent a life of preparation, was his at last. Through the mundane door of a failing heart he had gone to be with his Lord. The community was difficult to alert to the crisis in the Toews home. The granddaughter tried vainly to phone, number after number, but no answer. To her and her blind, helpless grandmother the hours were very long until help arrived to lift his body off the floor.<sup>104</sup>

#### Section Eight. Legacy and Assessment.

Peter P. Toews has always been an enigma in the annals of history. He was

an important figure in the story of the Russian Mennonites but has received little recognition within that context. This was largely because of the lack of understanding among historians--particularly those of Mennonite background--of the significance of conservative, middle-class groups such as the KG to the development of the larger community.<sup>105</sup> Fortunately this situation is changing with the more balanced work of recent historians such as Dr. James Urry of Wellington, New Zealand.<sup>106</sup>

From the material presented in Section Six, it is also evident that Peter P. Toews made important contributions to Russian Mennonite historiography and religious literature in a number of fields, including poetry, history, genealogy and record keeping. He was certainly the leading figure in the development of a print culture for the East Reserve Mennonites in Manitoba for the period prior to 1910.<sup>107</sup> As the leader of an immigrant group whose people made up some 5 per cent of the population of Manitoba during the 1870s, Toews will eventually be recognized by social historians as a founder and builder of the Province; he was a man who left a permanent imprint upon its people and culture. Not the least of his accomplishments was his leadership in the establishment of a progressive and universal system of education for his people, something which was unheard of at the time.

Toews, of course, was also a critical figure in the denominational history of the KG. Although in one way his decision to join with Holdeman sounded the death-knell of the KG in its Russian Mennonite configuration and mode, his importance as a leader and historian ranks him equal to Klaas Reimer, the founder; Abraham Friesen, the builder; and Heinrich Balzer, the theologian. To the members of the KG--or Kleingemeinde, as it perhaps should be called to distinguish its decidedly altered format after 1882--at least those who personally remembered the shocking and disillusioning events of 1881 and 1882, Toews would always be seen as a traitor. No matter how brilliant and unselfish his earlier service of the Gemeinde had been, he could never be recognized or credited in any way. He, personally, had brought about the downfall of the church and could never be forgiven.

At the same time, although the Holdeman people revered and respected Toews for his boundless talents and abilities--and for making the right decision in spiritual terms, they could never really credit him as a founder as they did Johann Holdeman. Firstly, he was simply too modest a man--he shunned any credit or office of authority--as opposed to Holdeman who seems to have thrived on it. But secondly, and more importantly, Toews would always have to remain somewhat suspect for after all he had at one point been the passionate advocate of an alien teaching; he had been the leader of a different church--all of which must have seemed very foreign and strange to those of his followers who were too young to personally remember anything of those events--somewhere in the distant murky past, somewhere before Holdeman. The result was that a man who had contributed more than many recognized leaders--not only in one field but in several--could not be fully recognized by anyone. This is more to the shame of his posterity and historians than any deficiency on his part. Certainly the recent availability of sources, and particularly of the sources preserved and written by Peter Toews himself, now makes it possible to come to a new and more balanced appreciation for the contribution which he made to all the communities which he touched with

his life.

Such a view might well follow the lead of historian Peter G. Hiebert who wrote the biography of Peter P. Toews for the *Mennonite Encyclopedia*:

Endowed with a keen craving for knowledge, Toews read and studied constantly and prayerfully, comparing the scriptures with the works of earlier writers. With a large part of his flock he joined the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, in 1882, and was ordained anew to the ministry on January 11, 1882. His sermons were clear and sound, as were also his many articles of Scripture exposition published in the *Botschafter der Wahrheit*. For many years he was the editor of this publication, the official German language organ of the denomination. Many of his poems and pamphlet articles were published in periodicals. Many of his hymns are contained in the *Liederbuch der Gemeinde Gottes*, the first two editions of which he edited. He translated several works from Dutch into the German language. He corresponded with a number of leaders of his day. He was a moderator of the General Conference (of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite).<sup>108</sup>

The unidentified eulogist provides a parting picture of Peter P. Toews--reflective and somewhat mystic as he was. He had a last wish to have an evergreen tree planted over his grave, a wish that he aptly expressed in a poem:

Should you erect a monument  
to mark my grave, when I am spent?  
Place no granite, cold and bare,  
but from the forest's fringes wild  
fetch an evergreen  
and plant it there.

Shortly after the death of his beloved Anna--who died two and a half years after his death--his sons took pains to honour Toews' wishes, planting the tree which he himself had chosen as a symbol to represent his memory. In fact, his sons did more than plant just one tree; they planted eight trees--itself a symbol of how their father's vision and noble spirit had grown and multiplied within the hearts of those whom he had loved and served. The eulogist writes as follows:

They planted two evergreens at the head of each of their parents' graves. For good measure . . . for evergreens were not easily nurtured, and lacking a certain amount of faith . . . they planted two more at their feet. Today in the cemetery at Linden [Alberta] sway eight tall evergreens, alive and flourishing. Somehow they seem to be a fitting tribute to a man who was so instrumental in shaping the spiritual destiny of his posterity.<sup>109</sup>

## Endnotes. Peter P. Toews Biography.

1. Peter P. Toews, "The Refiner," trans. and ed. Margaret Penner Toews, *Five Loaves and Two Small Fishes* (Neilburg, Saskatchewan, 1976), 13; republished in Plett, ed., *History and Events* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1982), vi.

2. Royden K. Loewen, "Family, Church and Market: A History of a Mennonite Community Transplanted from Russia to Canada and then United States, 1850-1930" (doctoral dissertation, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1990), 34.

3. Peter P. Toews, "Appendix number two," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims* (Steinbach, Man., 1990), 558-559.

4. Johann Dueck, "Ministerial Journal 1848-1862," Muntau, Molotschna, unpublished journal, 205 pages--courtesy of Levi Dueck, Box 25, R.R.1, Morris, Manitoba, R0G 1K0, October 30, 1989.

5. *Ibid.*

6. Peter P. Toews, Letter to the *Rundschau* July 9, 1913, published in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph* (Steinbach, Man., 1986), 186. I am indebted to Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba, for sharing this letter with me and allowing me to publish and excerpt therefrom.

7. Royden K. Loewen, 34.

8. Abraham B. Klassen, "Life's experiences," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874* (Steinbach, Man., 1987), 177.

9. Peter P. Toews was an avid genealogist and collected information regarding his Toews ancestors. But nowhere is there evidence that he collected similar material regarding his maternal ancestors or that of his wife's family.

10. A good example is found in Johann P. Friesen, "Family records," unpublished ledger, in which he lists not only his von Riesen/Friesen cousins--including female members--but also his mother's family, the Pletts, who were very clan conscious. The Plett family maintained a distinct identity within the KG. Amazingly, considering the times, Friesen also recorded the family of his wife--Eidse, and particularly that of his mother-in-law's family--Enns.

11. These poems are published in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 53-55.

12. Johann Toews, "Das Wachsame Auge Gottes," unpublished journal, Fischau, Molotschna, 90 pages, as collected and edited by Peter P. Toews in 1866; family history and genealogical notes collected and attached thereto by Peter P. Toews, pages 66-90.

13. In his handwritten manuscript copy of *Das Wachsame Auge Gottes*, Peter P. Toews has noted that son Johann was born in Andreasfeld on April 14, 1865, and that he died in Blumenhoff, Borosenko, on October 18, 1866. Therefore, the family must have moved to Borosenko sometime in the fall of 1866.

14. It appears that Johann Warkentin must have owned at least 480 acres of land in Blumenhoff, Borosenko, since his own farm was later sold to his brothers-in-law, Johann Loewen and Cornelius S. Plett, who presumably each purchased a Vollwirtschaft, as well as his nephews, Cornelius L. Plett and Peter Hiebert, who each bought 25 desjatien, some 60 acres. Cornelius L. Plett, "Familienbuch," as quoted in Plett, *Plett Picture Book* (Steinbach, Man., 1981), 18 and 53.

15. Cornelius P. Toews, letter to the brethren in the Molotschna March 1868, published in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 205.

16. This poem entitled "Ein Brief an K. T., Fischau den 7ten April, 1863," is published in its entirety in Part Sixteen, Chapter Two, of this work. Another poem in this genre, entitled "Expectoration," is found in the Johann P. Friesen Document Collection--courtesy of Jake P. Friesen, Blumenort, Manitoba, 1982. The poem in part goes as follows: "Will ich vor euch nun recht enthuelen, Mein Herz, dasz es sich euch entbloszt." The poem of six stanzas is dated May 3, 1864, Fischau, Molotschna.

17. No author given, "Peter Toews," in H. Gratz, ed., *Footprints on Mi-Chig-Wun. Memoirs of Sunnyslope Pioneers* (Sunnyslope, Alberta, n.d.), 441-444.

18. Peter P. Toews, letter to the brethren in the Molotschna, Crimea and Markuslandt, October, 1866, published in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 202.

19. *Ibid.*

20. Peter P. Toews, letter to Wiebe in the Crimea, December 1867, published in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 203.
21. Klaas C. Penner, ed., *Zwei Briefe zur Frage der Lehrwahl* (Steinbach, Man., 1931), 8 pages.
22. Peter P. Toews, "Anhang N. 1," in Plett, ed., *History and Events*, 42.
23. Peter P. Toews, letter to the Gemeinde in the Molotschna December 1868, published in Plett, ed., *History and Events*, 43-47.
24. Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 194-196, for a discussion of the disputation and strife which racked the Mennonite Brethren congregation in Friedensfeld during the early years.
25. Abraham L. Friesen, "Epistle to the Gemeinde in Manitoba January 10, 1882," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 569.
26. Peter P. Toews, letter to the Crimean Gemeinde January 14, 1869, in Peter Toews, "Thirty most important letters," Peter P. Toews Collection, pages 13-14, as transcribed by Peter A. Plett (1898-1990), 1982.
27. Peter P. Toews, letter to Jakob Wiebe in Annenfeld, March 16, 1869, in Peter Toews, "Thirty most important letters," Peter Toews Document Collection.
28. Peter P. Toews, "Anhang N. 1," 49.
29. Henry N. Fast, "The Kleine Gemeinde in the United States of America," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 91.
30. Peter P. Toews, "Anhang N. 1," 50.
31. Toews has written: "Dear reader: To put all this material together in an orderly manner would alone make up a book. It may also occur that sooner or later (if it is the Lord's will) a collection of all noteworthy writings pertaining to this matter can be published." Peter P. Toews, *ibid.*, 51.
32. This position was later apparently amended so that the KG were sometimes considered as half-brothers and sisters.
33. Peter P. Toews, letter to the so-called Kleine Gemeinde in the Crimea August 31, 1869, published in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 215-217.
34. The correspondence by Baerg to Toews is extant and the contents of same are critical to an understanding of the Crimean division of 1869; some of these letters have been published in Part Twelve, Chapter Two.
35. Peter P. Toews, letter to Ohm Baerg in Annenfeld October 25, 1869, in Peter Toews, "Thirty most important letters," 24-25.
36. *Ibid.*
37. The reader is referred particularly to Peter Toews, "1872-1878 Diary," in Plett, ed., *Profile 1874*, 151-171, which contains a basic record of most of these type of events for the period indicated.
38. Peter P. Toews, "1872-1878 Diary," 164.
39. Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 325.
40. A considerable correspondence dealing with this whole matter and the impact it had on their mother, Maria Plett (1811-1895)--who also moved to Kansas to be with her two youngest daughters, is contained in the Peter Toews Document Collection.
41. Peter P. Toews, *Sammlung . . . zur Historie der Kleinen Gemeinde* (Blumenhoff, South Russia, 1874), 324.
42. Abraham Klassen, Prangenu, letter to Peter Toews, March 11, 1871, published in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 268-269.
43. Peter P. Toews, letter to the Gemeinde in the Molotschna, November 28, 1872, published in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 270-271.
44. Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 275.
45. Toews' collected writings include a number of such collections dealing with issues relating of the history of the Molotschna.
46. Peter P. Toews, "1871-1878 Diary," 157.
47. *Ibid.*, 157-158.
48. *Ibid.*, 158.

49. Isaac W. Toews, "Aus und Einwanderung," in John C. Reimer, ed., *75 Gedenkfeier der Mennonitischen Einwanderung in Manitoba, Canada* (Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1949), 33.
50. Peter P. Toews, letter to Cornelius Toews July 1, 1873, published in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 301.
51. Johann F. Toews, "Remembrances," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 157. This is translated from the book by Johann F. Toews, *Aufzeichnungen aus meiner Jugendzeit, dreissig Jahre in den Klauen des Bannes, und vier Jahre im juristischen Kampf mit der Gemeinde Gottes in Christo* (Steinbach, Man., 1928), 36 pages.
52. Peter P. Toews, "1871-1878 Diary," 162.
53. *Ibid.*, 303-304.
54. This was a mistake as the 1872 Dominion Lands Act required that only males were eligible. I am indebted to Royden K. Loewen for drawing this to my attention.
55. Peter P. Toews, "Anhang N. 1," is published in its entirety in Plett, ed., *History and Events*, 35-81.
56. This again illustrates the influence of the matriline in the KG.
57. Peter P. Toews, "Epistle to the Gemeinde in Manitoba 1874," in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 333.
58. Quoted by John C. Reimer, "Our schools," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 236.
59. A brief history of the KG Waisenverordnung as it was organized in Manitoba is provided by Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 119.
60. These regulations are published in their entirety in John C. Reimer, et al., eds., 237-238.
61. Peter P. Toews, "1871-1878 Diary," 169.
62. *Ibid.*, 170.
63. Royden K. Loewen, *Blumenort: A Mennonite Community in Transition* (Blumenort, Manitoba, 1983), 180.
64. Cornelius W. Loewen, "Journal," unpublished ledger, quoted in Plett, *Plett Picture Book* (Steinbach, Man., 1981), 24-25.
65. Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 553-558.
66. The full text of Peter L. Dueck, "Writing regarding the Holdeman Secession," has been published in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 542-544; see also Johann W. Dueck, "Historie und Begebenheiten aus früherer Zeit und hder Gegenwart," unpublished journal, Rosenort, Manitoba, 414-419.
67. This incident was related to the author by Don Toews, Kleefeld, Manitoba, 1986. Dick P. Loewen, Blumenort, recalled another story in a similiar vein. Apparently Cornelius S. Plett was a gifted speaker and debater. He was extremely competent in an argument and could quickly have any adversary cornered. During the Holdeman division he came out early and forcefully against the move. His favourite son, Johann L. Plett, had married his cousin, the widow Heinrich Reimer, nee Margaretha Warkentin, who was a sister to the wife of Aeltester Peter P. Toews. Apparently Mrs. Reimer was also a very strong willed person and very supportive of her brother-in-law Toews and the Holdeman union. On one occasion she had argued forcefully with her father-in-law, Cornelius S. Plett, until he had finally told her that she was too pushy and coming on too angrily. He said, "If they wanted them [the KG] to join Holdeman, they would have to come meekly in love and try to persuade them." When she had come to him in tears some time later Plett is to have told her that they were just crocodile tears.
68. Royden K. Loewen, *Blumenort*, 182.
69. No author given, *Histories of the Congregations* (Hesston, Kansas, 1963), 176.
70. Peter P. Toews, "Appendix number two," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 560.
71. Johann B. Toews (1865-1967), "For the 50th Anniversary Commemoration," a series of articles published in the *Botschafter der Wahrheit* (No. 14, 15, 17, 19 and 21-23, Volume 32, 1931), trans. Otto Isaac, Fort Vermilion, Alberta, published in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 583-587.
72. Clarence Hiebert, *The Holdeman People: The Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, 1859-1969* (South Pasadena, California, 1973), 143.
73. Johann B. Toews (1865-1967), "For the 50th Anniversary Commemoration," 585.

74. Johann B. Toews, "Memoirs," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 167. It has been assumed that the two references refer to the same event and therefore they have been combined into one more descriptive report. Johann B. Toews was actually the son of Peter Toews' cousin, also a Peter Toews of Blumenort, Manitoba.

75. E.g. Abraham Loewen and Johann Loewen (Loewens-they were uncles to Peter P. Toews' wife), Gerhard P. Goossen and Peter P. Toews (Pletts), and Isaac Friesen and Jakob Wiebe (married to Peter P. Toews' cousins).

76. The account of the disinheriting of Johann L. Plett is recalled by Rev. Don Toews, Kleefeld, Manitoba, as told to him by his mother, a granddaughter of Cornelius P. Toews, 1988. Apparently one of Johann L. Plett's step-sons had overheard the conversation between the two men unbeknownst to anyone else. The entire story of the tragic separation of the two men and their equally tragic yet noble reconciliation is found in Plett, *Plett Picture Book*, 83. Johann L. Plett in his time was the wealthiest farmer in the Blumenort area north of Steinbach, Manitoba.

77. A letter written by Kornelius Doerksen, Gnadenu, Kansas, written in 1881, has been published in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 565-566.

78. Heinrich Enns, "An epistle from Gnadenu, Kansas, January 16, 1877," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 535.

79. Johann F. Toews, "Remembrances," 161.

80. Peter P. Toews, "A letter to my mother in Kansas, June 28, 1892," as transcribed in a journal entitled, "Copie Verschiedenen Briefe gemischter Inhalt," unpublished letter book, Gruenfeld, Manitoba, Peter Toews Collection Three, courtesy of Milton and Margaret Toews, Neilberg, Saskatchewan, 1981. The letter book contains various letters which Toews wrote regarding his decision to join with Holdeman, as well as various letters to his family in Kansas.

81. Peter P. Toews, "Sammlung von Briefen und Schriftliche Nachrichten zur Historie der Kleinen Gemeinden der Mennoniten an der Molotschna" (Blumenhoff, South Russia, 1874), 502 pages. Other collections such as those of Franz Isaac, Peter M. Friesen and J. J. Braun, were only assembled much later.

82. These letters are published in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 291.

83. Peter P. Toews, "1871-1878 Diary," 156-157 and 159.

84. Plett, ed., *The Golden Years*, 318-335, provides a history of the various publications of the KG from 1827 to 1875.

85. This work found wide interest among the "old" Mennonites in North America where it was reprinted in German in 1888 by John F. Funk, Elkhart, Indiana. It was translated and published in English by Funk in 1913. This work was most recently reprinted in English by the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite and is distributed by its publication arm, Gospel Publishers, Greenland, Manitoba.

86. The events relating to the publication of this book are described in considerable detail in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 307-310.

87. Clarence Hiebert, 217.

88. Abe Warkentin, *Reflections on our Heritage: A history of Steinbach and the R. M. of Hanover from 1874* (Steinbach, Man.: Derksen Printers, 1971), 119.

89. Al Reimer, "The Print Culture of the Russian Mennonites 1870-1930," in Friesen, ed., *Mennonites in Russia Essays in Honour of Gerhard Lorenz* (Winnipeg, Man., 1989), 229.

90. A good example of this is a series of articles published in the *Botschafter der Wahrheit* in 1910, which have been translated and edited by Otto Isaac, Fort Vermilion, Alberta, and published in a book format as follows: Peter Toews, *By their fruits shall ye know them* (Roblin, Man.: C. W. Friesen, 1983), 47 pages.

91. Bishop Peter P. Toews was the great-great uncle to Patrick Friesen of Winnipeg, a well-known Canadian poet. Patrick Friesen is also a relative of Bernhard Harder (1832-1884), the famous Russian Mennonite evangelist and poet. The great-great grandfather of Patrick Friesen was Rev. Klaas Friesen (1793-1870) who in 1833 was the co-publisher of the Menno Simons', *Foundation of Christian Doctrine*, together with his brothers Abraham Friesen, Ohrloff, Molotschna, and Peter von Riesen in Danzig.

92. This booklet has been translated by Mr. Cornelius L. Toews (1891-1982), Steinbach, Manitoba; see Part Ten, Chapter Two.

93. Peter P. Toews, *Biblische Speisekarte der Altvaeter* (Kleefeld, Man., n. d.), 8 pages. I am indebted to Irene Enns Kroeker, St. Anne, Manitoba, for referring this booklet to my attention, 1992.

94. Unfortunately the name of the author of these poems is not given. In all likelihood the author was Peter P. Toews himself, since he was a gifted poet.

95. Peter P. Toews, *Wie Gott das Gebet einer Mutter erhört* (Hochstadt, Man., 1910), 7 pages. I am indebted to Henry N. Fast, Steinbach, Manitoba, for drawing this work to my attention.

96. Peter P. Toews, *Eine Seltsame Begebenheit Angehen der durch Peter von Riesen von Schilditz bei Danzig in Preussen in Druck gegebenen Menno Simons Schriften* (Hochstadt, Man., 1911), 27 pages.

97. Menno Simons, *Die Fundamente der seligmachenden Lehre unsers Herrn Jesu Christi aus Gottes Wort kurz zusammengefasst* (n.p., Prussia, 1833-1834), in three volumes.

98. Peter M. Friesen, *Alt-Evangelische Mennonitische Bruderschaft in Ruszland (1789-1910)* (Halbstadt, Taurien, 1911), 773 and 154 pages; an English edition was published in 1978.

99. Peter P. Toews, *Der Köstlichere Weg in Liedern* (Stern, Alta., 1912), 14 pages. I am indebted to Rev. David K. Schellenberg, Steinbach, Manitoba for referring this work to my attention, 1992.

100. Peter P. Toews, "Trip of Peter Toews and wife," *Messenger of Truth March 1910 to December 1911*, Volume 8, September, 1910, No. 9, (Rosenort, Manitoba: Prairie View Press, 1984).

101. No author given, "Peter Toews", in H. Gratz, ed., *Footprints on Mi-Chig-Wun. Memoirs of Sunnyslope Pioneers* (Sunnyslope, Alberta, n.d.), 441-444.

102. See Abraham B. Klassen, "Life's experiences," in Plett, ed. *Profile 1874*, 184, for a sample of such a poem, written by Toews as a tribute to Klassen's deceased wife, who was also his sister-in-law.

103. This poem has been published in its entirety in the *Mennonitische Post* (December 4, 1992), 3.

104. No author given, "Peter Toews," in H. Gratz, ed., 443.

105. For my comments in this regard see, Plett, "Emigration for principle or profit? Socio-economic considerations of the 1870s Russian Mennonite emigration to Manitoba," in Plett, ed., *Pioneers and Pilgrims*, 261.

106. James Urry, *None but saints: The transformation of Mennonite life in Russia 1789-1889* (Winnipeg, Man., 1989), 328 pages.

107. For a further discussion of this point see my paper "The Print Culture of the East Reserve Mennonites 1874-1930," unpublished paper, Steinbach, Manitoba, 1992.

108. Peter G. Hiebert, "Peter Toews (1841-1922)," *M.E.* 4, 736. This biography in turn seems to be based largely on the work of John M. Penner, *A Concise History of the Church of God* (Ste. Anne, Manitoba, 1951), 84-85.

109. No author given, "Peter Toews," in H. Gratz, ed., 443-444.

# Chapter Two

## Five Poems 1859-1865

Five Poems written in 1859-1865 by Aeltester Peter P. Toews (1841-1922)  
Fischau, Molotschna, and later Blumenhoff, Borosenko Colony, South Russia.

---

### Ein Gedicht ueber das Absterben unseres Bruders Jakob Toews, 1859

1. Als bei Gott war erfuehlt die Zeit  
Von uns hier weg zu nehmen,  
Den Bruder in die Ewigkeit  
Ja unter vielen Traenen  
Das war im schoenen Monath Mai  
Und das der zwei und zwanzigsten  
Von dieses Monaths Tagen.
2. Am Tage Christi Himmelfahrt  
Da er einst aufgefahren  
Er der ihn hat von uns gefuehrt  
An diesem Feier Tage  
Um zwoelf Uhr Mittags gaben auf  
den Geist und Hauch der Krankheit  
Nach zwoelftaegiger Plage Lauf.
3. Mit seinem Leben ist er hier  
auf zwanzig Jahr gekommen  
Drei Monathe und noch fuenf Tag'  
war er als er genommen  
Von uns und unsrer Aeltern Seit'  
Zu unser aller Herzeleid  
Die wir ihn noch beweinen.
4. Nach dreien Tagen wurde er  
zum Grabe schon getragen;  
Zwar sehen wir ihn hier nicht mehr  
In unser'n Zukunfts Tagen  
Doch wollte Gott in jener Zeit  
Der Sehnsuchtsvollen Ewigkeit

Uns alle samt erfreuen.

5. Doch lasst uns diese denken nach---  
Wie er so frueh gestorben:  
Und wie viel Thraenen Ach und Ach---  
Wir uns dadurch erworben  
Das wir hier nicht in dieser Zeit  
Uns haben in der Einigkeit  
Befleissiget zu leben.
6. Doch von ihm hoffen wir das er---  
Gemacht ein seelges Ende  
Wir baten alle das der Herr---  
von ihm den Zorn abwende  
Und wer da bittet den wird er  
nie von sich gehen lassen leer--  
Wenn's glaubend nur geschiehet.

Von Peter Toews in der Kolonie Fischau, 1859

---

## **Ein Brief an Kor. Toews und Regehren in Hierschau**

1. Paulus vermahnt zum Frieden  
einst seinen Bruedern dort  
das sie sich solten lieben  
und halten (ueber) Gottes Wort  
Nach seinem Wort mit Freuden  
In Lieb' und Furcht zu geh'n  
geduldig in den Leiden  
und stets bereit zu steh'n.

2. Ein Glied von jenen Gliedern  
Wo Christus ist das Haupt  
Ist jeder von uns Brueder  
Fuerwahr selbst seine Braut  
Drum lasst uns dies bedenken  
Und stets bereitet steh'n  
(nur auf ihn sehn)  
Einander niemals kraenken  
Und in dem Wege stehn.

3. Tracht' stets nur uns zu lieben  
aus einem heiligen Trieb'  
aus Lieb nur ist geschrieben  
Von mir an euch dies Lied  
Erfuellt mit heisses Sehnen  
nach eurer Gegenwart  
geruehrt fast bis zu Thraehen  
Haar ich noch einst fuerwahr.

4. Erfuelt mit dem Gedanken  
Ob ihr auch noch gesund,  
oder vielleicht erkranken  
moeget zu jeder Stund'  
Richt' ich an euch die Bitte  
Das wenn ihr dieses lies't  
Ihr auch aus eurer Mitte  
Mir schreibet einen Brief.

5. Recht bald wuensch ich im stillen  
von euch besucht't zu sein,  
dies maechtet ihr erfuellen  
doch bald ihr lieben Freund'  
ja, kommt! ja lass't uns hoffen  
das ihr bald komm't nach Haus  
denn euch steht alhier offen  
des Vaters ganzes Haus.

6. Theuer geliebte Freunde  
wie halt' ich euch so werth  
wie gross ist meine Freude  
wenn ihr bei uns einkehr't  
und eure liebe Kinder  
Die ich besonders lieb'  
D'rum sind sie auch nicht minder  
Erwaehrt in diesem Lied.

7. O! wie gross war die Freude,  
der lieben Kindlein Schar  
ja eurer lieben Kleinen  
als ich juengst bei euch war  
Wie waren sie so froehlich  
und so der Freude voll  
hilf, Gott! das sie so seelig  
stets bleiben ueberal.

8. Er der fuer uns gestorben  
und auferstanden ist,  
hat auch fuer sie erworben  
des himmels Paradies  
doch ihr muess't sie erziehen  
zu seines Namens Preis'  
So werden sie einst bluehen  
in seines Vatersreich.

9. Wie selig sind zu preisen  
Die in dem Herrn ruh'n  
Und hier gelebt als Weisen  
wie wohl wird's ihnen thun  
Ach! wenn wir doch auch koennen  
zu Jesu in sein Reich  
wenn wir hier Abschied nehmen  
Das wuensch ich allen auch.

10. So will ich nun beschliessen  
mit meiner Versen Reim  
zum Schluss thuh ich noch gruessen  
euch allen in's gemein  
geliebte Freund und Brueder  
habt auf euch selbst wohl acht  
Ade wir seh'n uns wieder  
Nun sag ich gute Nacht.

Von *P. P. Toews*

---

## Zum Frohen Erntefeste

*Lass meinen Mund deines  
Ruhms und deines Preises  
voll sein taeglich.*  
Psalm 71 verse 8

-----

1. In unsers Vatters Haus  
zum frohen Erntefeste  
Sind wir versammelt jetzt,  
als eingeladen Gaeste\*  
Vielleicht zum letzten mal  
(Das Er in unsrer Mitte)  
hat er uns noch bereit,  
ein Mahl nach alter Sitte.

2. Wir haben abermal  
das End der Ernt erreicht  
Die Gott uns dieses Jahr,  
nach segensvoll erzeugt.  
Drum danket alle Gott  
der uns stets danken hiesz  
Fuer unser taeglich Brodt,  
das er gedeihen liesz.

3. Es sei so viel es sei  
was er uns nur bescheret,  
Bleibt es doch einerlei  
was er von uns begehret,  
Nur das kein Murren nicht  
noch einiges findet statt,  
Wir werden taeglich doch  
noch ueberflieszig satt.

4. So gieb denn lieber Herr,  
das wir doch deine Gaben  
Die wir in unser Haus  
jetzt eingesammelt haben  
Anwenden nur zur Noth,  
und nicht zum Ueberflusz,  
Und dasz den Armen sie  
auch werden zum Genusz.

5. So laszt uns denn mit Dank  
was wir bisher genossen

Ja unser Lebenlang  
und dasz ganz unverdrossen  
Von ganzem Herzen dem  
der alles gute schafft,  
Ihn preisen fuer und fuer  
so viel in unsrer Kraft.

6. Wenn wir vereint, O Herr!  
auf deinen Vorhoff treten  
Verberge dich doch nicht  
von unser Flehn und Beten.  
Der ist nicht angenehm  
viel Opfer Speis und Trank  
Du willst von uns allein  
nur haben Lob und Dank.

7. So schafft doch, lieber Herr,  
uns Wollen und Voll bringen  
Das auch moeg jedes Werk,  
zu unsrem Heil gelingen,  
Auch wie dein heiliger Rath,  
die ganze Welt regiert.  
Gieb auch das unser Weg  
zum ew'gen Leben fuehrt.

8. Auch ein gehorsam Herz,  
verleih, o Herr, uns allen  
Was ohn Parthei und Scherz  
Dir moege wohlgefallen,  
Zu folgen deine Lehr  
die uns noch wird zu Theil  
Das wir sie nehmen auf  
zu unserm ew'gen Heil.

9. Doch laszt uns ja auch nicht  
wies heute pflegt geschehen,  
Von Kinder dieser Welt,  
zum Bachustempel gehen,  
Alwo des Herrn Gnad  
und Segensvolle Hand  
Zu einem ew'gen Fluch  
und Zorn wird verwandt.

10. Durch Undank wuerden wir  
die Nothdurft uns gefaehrden,  
Das Ueberflusz und Glueck  
von uns genommen werden  
Drum laszt uns Demuthsvoll

Gott bringen Lob und Dank  
Jetzt und zu jederzeit,  
Ja unser Lebenlang.

11. Hoer' doch, o Gott! vor dem  
wir unsre Haende falten  
Gieb dasz wir dein Gebot  
fuer dein Wort, ewig halten  
Und lasz uns deinen Rath  
empfindungsvoll verstehn,  
Die Wunder vom Gesetz---  
im Wort vom Kreuze sehen.

12. Verleihe auch, o Gott!  
wenn der von aller Plage,  
Dein Volk erquickten wirst  
an jenem groszen Tage,  
Gieb denn dasz auf den Ruft  
zum seelgen Himmelsaal  
Wir auch betheilt sind  
an deinem Hochzeitsmahl.

13. So schaue doch herab;  
sei in uns Schwachen maechtig  
Wie du versprochen hast  
zu sein im Schwachen kraeftig  
Denn wie von einem Heer,  
wir dicht umlagert sind,  
Und suchet wie es leicht  
auch zu uns eingang findt.

14. O Gott, wie wird dein Volk  
durch Menschen Saetz verkehrt?  
Von dem du deutlich sprichst,  
den Vaetter nichts gelehret,  
Doch was uns deinen Knecht  
nach allen Sonntag lehren.  
Haelt sie in steter furcht  
dein Wort nicht zu verkehren.

15. Sie scheuen keine Mueh'  
um nach dasz Wort des Herrn  
Uns fuer des Feindes Heer  
zu warnen und zu lehren  
Nicht wie ein traeger thut,  
der auf sein Volk nicht acht  
Und allem sich entzieht  
und wenn es auch verschmacht.

16. Wir koennen nicht genug  
des Herrn Gnad ausbreiten,  
Dasz er uns ausgefuehrt  
von denen losen Leuten.  
Und dasz er uns zum Heil  
noch heute Waechter stellt,  
Die uns nach Canaan  
geleiten durch die Welt,

17. Die uns wie Jehova  
es ihnen hat befohlen  
Schon fruehe von der Welt,  
und aus der Wueste holen;  
Sie sind das Licht der Welt  
und bleiben immerdar  
des Herrn Prediger---  
bei seiner kleinen Schar.

18. Drum laszt mit sie vereint  
mit ihnen stets im Kreise,  
Wenn wir versammelt sind  
nach der Apostelweise,  
Anhalten im Gebet,  
und treu sein bis zum Tod.  
So fuehrt uns sicherlich  
der Herr aus aller Noth.

\* Am 25ten Juli waren seine lieben  
Geschwister zu Hause anwesend.  
Am 25ten Juli, 1863  
P. und C. Toews  
[Verses 2, 4, 9, 16-18 have the initial  
"P" added at the end. Editor]

-----

## Ein Brief an K. T.

Fischau den 7ten April, 1863

Liebe Freunde!

1. Pruefend werf ich auf mein ver-  
ganges Leben einen Blick,  
Erhebend war mein Thun und  
eitel mein beginnen.

Traeg aber war ich stets das  
gute zu vollbringen.  
Erschrocken denke ich der Tage,  
der verlornen Zeit zurueck.  
Ruehmen kann ich nichts; ich  
suchte nur die Welt (wie sie  
mich) zu gewinnen.

2. Trachten wollt' ich zwar am er-  
sten nach dem Himmelreich,  
O Herr, ich liebte dich! jedoch  
nicht aus dem Grunde,  
Es war bis weilen nur geheu-  
chelt aus dem Munde;  
Wieviel mal, o Herr! hab' ich  
betruebet deinen Geist.  
So hilf mir doch zurecht, o Herr!  
Ja hilf mir noch zu dieser Stunde!

3. Ich will auf Wucher legen das  
mir verliehene Pfund,  
Nimm hin mein Leib und Seele!  
dir zum Eigenthume,  
Dein sei sie, mir zum Heil  
und dir zum Ruhm.  
Erhalte mir, o Herr, mein' Leib  
und Leben fernerhin gesund!  
Regiere du es doch o Herr!  
sonst welk ich hin gleich ei-  
ner Blum.

4. Koemmt und lasset uns ihr Freunde  
frei hintreten zum Thron,  
O kommt! ermuedet dicht im taeg-  
lichem Gebete;  
Laszt doch der Herr nicht ab, ihr  
wisst ja wie er flehte;  
O kommt! - mich duerstet rief

er aus in seiner Angst, der theure Sohn  
Nach unsre Seelen war sein  
Durst, an jener jammervollen  
Staette.

5. Ja kommt! und laszt uns kei-  
ne Muehe sparen; jederzeit,  
Er wuerde ja gewisz uns heute  
noch annehmen,  
Faelt es auch schwer dem Fleisch  
wir muessen uns bequemen,  
In seinem Wandel ihn zu  
folgen, den Weg den er uns hat bereit,  
Sein Kreutz das er uns will  
auflegen, nicht weigern  
es auf uns zu nehmen.

6. Christus Jesus der aus Lie-  
be zu uns, vom Himmel kam,  
Aus Liebe und Erbarmen tilgte  
unsre Suenden,  
Und der sich heute von uns will  
lassen finden,  
Der war es, der zuerst das Kreutz  
auf seinen heiligen Ruecken nahm  
Er war es! den wir selbst ge-  
hoehnet, Ach dasz wir es noch  
nicht empfinden!

7. Nun meine Lieben! die wir  
doch schon einmal sind erkaufft,  
So laszt uns dies zu Herzen  
nehmen und bedenken;  
Ja unsrer Noth den Herrn  
bitten und nicht kraenken:  
Erwaegen dass wir ja selbst sind  
in seinem Todt getauft;  
Bedenken dass er unser Leiden  
in lauter Freud und Lust  
kann lenken.

8. Es lieget mir in dieser letz-  
ten so betruetzten Zeit,  
Nach so viel selbst verdienten  
Lohn und Suendenschmerzen  
(Tiefbetruetzt) meiner Seele  
Seeligkeit am Herzen;  
Erwaegend und bedauerend meine Schuld und

Unbestaendigkeit.  
Ach ihr Geliebten! lasset  
uns doch nicht der Seelen  
Heil verscherzen.

9. Plage ist alles in dieser kummer-  
vollen Welt.  
Reu und Leiden einst der Suen-  
den Lohn und Ende.  
Ich befehle nun euch und mir  
in Gottes Haende.  
Lasset niemals ab zu dienen  
dem, der mich und euch erhaelt  
Lebet wohl! und werd't nicht  
muede, Laszt uns be-  
harren bis ans Ende.

*Peter Toews*

---

## **Ein Brief an Kornelius Toews, mein Bruder in Friedrichsthal.**

Im Januar 1864 geschrieben,  
Peter Toews in Fischau.

Lieber Bruder K. Toews

*Wes das Herz voll ist, des geht  
der Mund ueber, Matth. 12:34*  
Melody: O wie selig sind die Seelen

1. Laengst schon dachte ich bisweilen  
Aufzuschreiben diese Zeilen,  
die in meiner Brust erwacht.  
Sie entquiten einem Herzen,  
das von seines Bruders Schmerzen  
Oft getraeumt in stiller Nacht.

2. Nun denn, nimm von meinen Haenden  
Alles was ich dir kann spenden,  
Freilich sonst nichts als ein Brief;  
Und die reine Herzensliebe,  
die mich zu dem Schreiben triebe,  
Wenn schon alles ruhig schlief.

3. Hier in diesem Jammerleben, Hiob 19:1,2,5  
hat Noth, Todt, und Angst umgeben, Ps. 34:56  
Jedes fromme Christenherz. Johannes 16:33  
Ja den Lohn fuer unsre Suenden  
Muessen wir schon jetzt empfinden;  
O wie beugt mich oft der Schmerz!

4. O wie seufzet meine Seele!  
Wenn ich meine Tage zaehle,  
Und die Suend die ich gethan,  
Doch ich danke Gott der Gnaden  
Das er diesen Seelenschaden,  
Mir auch nicht will rechnen an. Ps. 34:5,7

5. Drum ist dieser Zeiten Leiden, Roem.8:16  
Garnicht werth der Himmllichkeiten,  
Die uns Gott dort schenken will.  
Unser Leiden sammt den Plagen  
Kuerzet ab mit jedem Tage;  
Drum laeszt uns Gott halten still.

6. Denn er laeszt ja unsre Suenden  
In des Meeres tiefste Gruenden,  
Wenn wir wollen gleich hinab.  
Denn als wir nicht treu geblieben  
Blieb er uns doch treu im lieben,  
Und er bleibt es bis ins Grab.

7. Ja bis in die Ewigkeiten  
Will der Treue uns begleiten,  
Bis zu seinem hohen Thron.  
Will abwischen alle Thraenen, Off. 7:17,21,24  
Derer die sich nach ihm sehnen,  
Und nach seinem lieben Sohn.

8. Ach es gilt fuerwahr kein Scherzen,  
Dass wir es doch recht von Herzen  
Koennten fassen in der Zeit.  
Lasz uns doch nicht laenger traemen,  
Und den Tag des Heils versaeumen, 2. Cor. 6:2  
Denn es gilt die Ewigkeit.---

9. Lasz uns auf die Zeugen sehen,  
die uns zum Exempel stehen,  
Wie man heut noch lesen kann, Heb.11  
Die den Todt so standhaft litten,  
Wie so tapfer sie gestritten,  
Lasz ihr End uns schauen an. Heb. 12:4.

10. Lasz uns folgen ihn', im Glauben, Heb. 12:4  
Und das ihm der Feind nicht rauben  
Und ihm uns entwenden thun;  
Fleiszig sein zur Schrift geneiget,  
Denn "Sie ist's die von mir zeuget." Joh. 3:16  
So preizt Gott sie selbst uns an. Joh. 5:39

11. Denn sein Wort wird nicht vergehen  
Sondern ewiglich bestehen;  
Wenn auch alles einst vergeht, Matth. 24:35.  
O so lasz es uns betrachten,  
Sein Wort stets fuers Beste achten,  
Darin unser Glueck besteht.

12. Denn die Zuege wieviel Wunden  
Hat nicht mancher schon empfunden?  
Durch ihr toedlichs Seelengift. Jak. 3:8  
Alles was sich regt auf Erden  
Kaum von uns gezaehmet werden,  
Nur das boese Uebel nicht. Jak. 3.

13. Durch sie loben wir den Herrn,  
Singen, Beten, Danken, Ehren;  
Fluchen auch das Ebenbild  
Das euch Gott dem Herrn geschaffen. Jak. 3  
Merken nicht auf seine Strafe  
Die ein solch Verbrechen gilt.

14. Narrentheidung, Scherzen, Lachen, Lk. 6:25  
Und viel andre boese Sachen, Sirach 28:28-30  
Lasz doch ferne von uns sein. Kol. 1:6  
Lass uns unsre boese Glieder, Kol. 3:5  
Tödten, unter Christi Glieder  
Soll es ja nicht also sein. Jak. 3:16.

15. Lasz uns pruefen ob die Liebe, 1 Joh. 4:1  
Und ob alle Geistes Triebe  
Nur auf unsern Heiland gehen  
Und ob unser Thun und Lassen  
Ist gericht die Welt zu hassen  
Und auf Gott gerichtet steht.

16. Lasz uns stets einander lieben, 1 Joh. 3:18  
Und auch stets am Naechsten ueben  
Eine Liebe die da brennt.  
Was vom Herzen wir begehren  
Woll er andern auch bescheren  
Jede Luege sei ihm fremd. Kol. 3:9.

17. Bei der Wahrheit stets zu bleiben, Ps. 29:2  
Dahin wollen wir es treiben  
Auch an Bruedern wo es fehlt.  
Ja, und Nein. - das was darueber  
Sei uns ekelhaft zuwieder  
Und nicht von uns mitgezahlt.

18. Lasz uns auch nicht Brueder stoeren  
Wenn wir auch bisweilen hoeren,  
Was nicht stimmt mit Christi Sinn; L. 9:71  
Was nicht zukommt einen Christen,  
Sondern die im Augenluesten, 1 Joh. 2:16  
Sich der Welt gleich stellen hin.

19. Nein da lasz uns Sanftmuth ueben, L. 2:71  
Und vom Geiste angetrieben,  
Und aus reiner Lieb und Treu  
Sie erinnern an die Zeugen  
Gottes, und zur Demuth reichen, Heb. 11  
ihr Herz, dasz es werde neu.

20. Aber ach! hier musz ich klagen  
Das in diesen letzten Tagen,  
Was der Feind zu dem bald zaehlt,  
die sich wollen ihm ergeben;  
Denn er zeigt ein'ge ihr Leben  
Das Gottes Geist sie nicht beseelt.

21. Lasz uns Gott den Jammer klagen  
Und in diesen letzten Tagen  
Unser aller Herz erfuehlt.  
Unsre Augen muessen weinen, Klage. 3:48,50  
Wenn wir vor dem Herrn erschienen,  
Bis der Herr den Jammer stillt.

22. Hebe an mit mir zu weinen  
Bis der Herr uns thut erschienen,  
Und auf unsre Schreien merkt;  
Bis er Zion Hilfe sende,  
Und von uns den Feind abwende,  
Und uns Schwachen hilft und staerkt.

23. Als vor nicht viel Jahr und Tagen  
Da wir nakt im Blute lagen,  
Uns der Herr vorueber ging,  
Und uns wusch von unsern Suenden  
Liesz uns Trost und Ruhe finden  
Und sein Kleid uns selbst umhing. Hes. 16.

24. That uns Schuh an unsre Fuesze,  
Das es jeden sehen mueszt;  
Waelhte uns, zu seiner Braut;  
Liebte uns, vor andern allen, Hes. 16  
Doch wie ist sie jetzt gefallen! Off. 2:4,5  
Herr, die, die du dir vertraut.---

25. Ach die Braut! die du erworben,  
Und den Todt fuer sie gestorben,  
Ja fuer sie, den Kreuzes Todt.  
Ach ist das nicht zu beklagen, Ps. 42:4  
Wenn jetzt unsre Feinde sagen, Ps. 42:10, Joel 2:17  
Wo ist denn nun euer Gott? Ps. 115:2.

26. Herr, gedenke wie's uns gehet, Klage. 5  
Schau wie es mit uns stehet,  
Siehe doch an unsre Schmach!  
Unsre Erbe scheint den Feinden,  
Bald zu fallen in den Haenden,  
--Er strebt mit Gewalt darnach.

27. Ja der Wiederwaertge stehet,  
Vor dem Thor; - und ach ergeheth  
In Jerusalem - bald ein, Klage 5:16  
Und die Kron von unserm Haupte  
Wird dem Feinde dann zum Raube,  
Herr, hoer' unsers Herzens Schrein!

28. Um des Berges Zions willen, Klage. 5:18  
Herr du kannst den Jammer stillen  
Herr, du wollst uns gnaedig sein.  
Ach du wollst uns nicht vergessen, Klage. 5:18  
Uns nicht nach Verdienst zumessen;  
Du wollst unsre Tag verneuen. Klage. 5:21.

29. Lasz uns nicht zu Schanden werden  
Sondern bessre uns auf Erden,  
Heute noch, der Ungewisz  
Sind der Zukunft Tag und Stunde,  
Morgen schon vielleicht verschwunde  
Denn Erfahrung lehret dies.

30. Einen Hunger wollst du schicken  
Und die Mueden dann erquicken, Amos 8:11  
Einen Hunger, nicht nach Brodt,  
Sondern nach die Seelenspeise,  
Herr, die gieb uns auf der Reise  
Jederzeit bis an den Todt.

31. Das sie unsre Seelen stricke  
Und den Geist zu guten Werken,  
Hier auf unsrer Lebensbahn.  
Das wir koennen dahinkommen  
Zu den auserwaelhten Frommen,  
Unter'm Altar ruhen dann. Off.

32. Um den Glauben zu vollbringen  
So wie die die von uns gingen,  
Die uns zum Exempel stehn,  
Lasst uns sehn auf ihre Werke  
Auf die Treu und Glaubensstaerke  
Und stets auf ihr Ende sehn. Heb. 13:7

33. Denn die Vaeter die einst glaubten  
Denen man das Leben raubte  
Schliefen unter Marter ein.  
Wo wuerd man heut Christen finden,  
Die auf ihres Glaubens-Gruenden  
Koennten leiden solche Pein.

34. Lasz uns dieses selbst stets fragen  
Ob wir wenn man uns wuerd tragen  
Morgen in die Gruft hinein,  
Koennen frei von allen Plagen  
Ruhem, und an jenem Tage  
Uns der Seligkeit erfreun.

35. O lass uns doch herzlich beten  
Wenn wir vor den Herrn treten  
Das dies doch geschehen mag.  
In der Asch und Sak gehueltet, Ps. 35:13  
Lass uns fasten bis Gott stillet  
Unsre Noth und Jammerklag.

36. Auch fuer unsere Gemeine  
Das der Herr ihr doch erscheine  
Und sie bauen helfen moecht.  
Das er selbst in unsre Mitte  
Treten woll' auf unsre Bitte  
Und uns helfen noch zurecht. Ps. 7:8

37. Auch fuer Waechter und fuer Hirten  
Die da suchen das verirrtten,  
Lasz uns auch nicht schweigen still, Heb. 13:18  
Guerte, o Herr, ihre Lenden,  
Dasz sie allen Fleisz anwenden.  
Staerken das was sterben will. Off. 3

38. Wenn sie rufen lasz uns hoeren, Heb. 13:17  
Ihre unverfaelschtes Lehren,  
Denn so spricht des Herrn Geist:  
Heute so ihr ja noch hoeret  
Meine Stimme, so bekehret  
Euch weil es noch heute heiszt.

## Ein Gedicht ueber die Auswanderung

Ein Gedicht Ueber die Verhaengnisvolle Auswanderung der Kleinen Gemeinde. A Poem regarding the difficulties of the Kleine Gemeinde immigration out of the Molotschna Colony. Written by Peter P. Toews, Markuslandt, October, 1865.

*Herr, dein Wille geschehe. Lord, May Thy Will Be Done.*

1. Es geschehe, Herr, dein Wille! Thue  
was dir wohlgefaellt,  
So wie droben in dem Himmel,  
So auch hier in dieser Welt.  
Wenn dein vorsichtsvolles Walten, uns  
auch oft nicht laesset sehn,  
Was du ueber uns in Zukunft  
Laesst ergehen, und gescheh'n.

Thy will, Lord, come to pass! Do  
what Thou thinkest best.  
as in heaven above,  
so do here on earth as well.  
When Thy careful providence  
often we do not behold,  
what You do for our future  
allow to take place.

2. Ja, dein Wille, Herr, geschehe! Und  
wir sehn es er geschieht,  
Wenn trotz banger heisser Sehnsucht  
Dennoch aus einanderzieht,  
Bruder, Schwester, Aeltern, Kinder  
die so nah verbunden sind;  
Und ein Bruder von dem andern  
Abschied vielleicht fuer immer nimmt.

Yes, Thy will, Lord be done! And  
we see it as it is done  
in spite of great fear and desire  
we are now separated,  
brother, sister, parent and child  
who were united so closely;  
one brother from the other, says  
farewell--perhaps--forever.

3. Während ein'ge unsrer Freunde  
fern verfolgen ihren Sinn,  
Nach dem warmen, Sueden Russland,  
Nach der weitberuehmten Krimm;  
Bleiben andre ruhig wohnen in dem  
theuern Vaterland,  
Während noch an andern Orten, mancher  
seine Heimat fand.

While some of our friends  
carry out their plan  
to go to the warm South Russia-  
the well known Crimea;  
others peacefully stay dwelling  
in the previous Fatherland,  
and others, have found a home  
in other places yet.

4. Nach Borsenke ueberm Dniper  
ohnweit Nikopol der Stadt  
War schon eine kleine Zeitlang, mancher  
lieben Freundes Pfad.  
Doch die Krimm, (der schehre Stanne)  
zieht wohl manchen noch zurueck;  
Um zu suchen, und zu gruenden, in  
Ihr ferner Heil und Glueck.

To Borsenko across the Dniper  
near Nikopol, the city,  
many a well traveled road  
already led to it.  
Yet the Crimea (captivating charmer)  
draws many a one back home;  
to seek and to establish  
their further joyous welfare.

5. Auch auf Markusland, im Thale  
hat es ein'ge tief bewegt,  
Nach der Krimm hin, aufzubrechen,  
Fuer der schon das Herz nun schlaegt.  
"Da wo keine Maeuse fressen, das  
so schwer erstrebte Brot;  
Die auf Markusland als Plage  
oftmals schon Verherung droht."

Also in Markusland, in the valley  
some were profoundly moved  
to embark and go to the Crimea,  
for it their hearts do yearn;  
"there where no mice do eat, the  
hard earned gathered bread.  
which were a plague in Markusland  
and often threatened much destruction."

6. O doch die Mehrheit hat auf  
Markus dieses alles nichtsbewegt.  
Sondern hat auf dessen Boden  
Einen grossen Werth gelegt.  
Leben will man hier, und sterben:  
Wie es Gottes Wille fuegt.  
Gluecklich wollen alle werden, und  
auf Hoffnung jeder pfluegt.

Oh the majority on Markusland  
were not greatly inspired by this  
rather, on this their land  
they placed a good value.  
Here they want to live and die  
according to God's Word;  
they all want to be blessed,  
and plow their fields with hope.

7. O Friedlich gehts noch bei den Bruedern  
wo kein Hass, kein Neid sich regt.  
Ruhig wie vor einem Sturm rings, kein  
Blaettchen sich bewegt.  
Ach koennt ihr von uns Geschiednen,  
dort in wahrer Seelenruh,  
Bringen eure letzten Jahren Dort in  
Gebet und Frieden zu.

Peacefully the brethren are  
without hatred and jealousy,  
like the calm before the storm  
with no leaf astir.  
Oh that you, who are departed, might  
have genuine peace of heart, and  
spend your last years on earth  
in peace and reverent repose.

8. Ach und koenntet ihr im Weinberg, den  
der Herr dort selbst gepflanzt  
Immer eines Reises Zweigen,  
Er erzogen und umschantzt.  
Euch als edle Reben stellen, die auf  
seine Hand gepflegt.  
Und die stets sein Geist bethauet auf die  
er noch Hoffnung hegt.

Oh could you in the vineyard,  
which the Lord Himself planted  
be like the swaying sprigs  
nurtured and protected.  
may you be as precious grapes  
which He cares for with His hands  
constantly pruned by His Spirit  
you whom He nurtures with hope.

9. Ach und duerft mans auch erfahren, dasz  
es Gottes Schickung war  
Das gezogen ein'ge Brüder nach Borsenko,  
Ja, O Herr!  
Das es ein Schlusz deiner Weisheit  
und ein hoher Rathes sei.  
Es geschehe, Herr, dein Wille! Und  
dein Friede sei dabei.

Oh and might one experience, that  
it were God's providence, to Borsenko  
some brethren moved on.  
Yes, Oh Lord!  
as a sign of Thy wisdom  
and of higher counsel above.  
Thy will, oh Lord, be done!  
and only Thy peace prevail.

10. Ach wie hat nicht gegen diesen, manche  
bittre Saat gekeimt,  
In dem tiefen Friedrichstal die dort  
eingestreut der Feind.  
Und so tief ins Herz des Menschen  
das Verderben eingesenkt  
Das mit Reuerfuellten Herzen  
Mancher noch daran gedenkt.

O against this peace Divine  
many evil seeds have sprouted  
in the depths of Friedrichstal  
which the enemy sowed out there,  
so deep into the hearts of man;  
destruction came to germinate,  
but with genuine repentance,  
many may still think thereon.

11. Doch ach dasz nicht ganz entfahle, dieses  
kleinen Haeufleins Muth  
Schlug das Herz so manchem Freunde  
fuer das zart und junge Blut.  
Aus dem Herzen der Gemeinde  
kamen tief betruebt herbei  
Seelenhirten; zu versuchen, ob der  
Schmerz zu lindern sei.

But Oh that not completely fails  
the courage of this small flock  
the heart of many did beat  
for the sensitive, young blood.  
From the heart of the church, came  
shepherds with much care and  
concern, to investigate whether  
this pain could once again be healed.

12. Doch ach! eine Thraenenquelle  
zeigt des Hirten Angesicht  
Bei dem Untersuchs-Geschaefte, fast  
vor Leid sein Herz ihm bricht  
Alles ist voll Eiterbeulen, von den  
Kopfe bis zum Fuss,  
Fast unheilbar sind die Wunden,  
"Brueder, thut - ach thuet Buss!"

But Oh! A fountain of tears  
are seen on the shepherd's face  
through the investigation.  
Sorrow nearly breaks his heart,  
everything is a hideous mess, from the  
head to the feet, the sickness has spread,  
the wounds are almost beyond healing.  
Oh, brethren, repent--oh repent!

13. Also strafend zu den Bruedern,  
jetzt die Hirtenstimme rief:  
"Weh den Argen! weh den Boesen!  
Derren Herz verderbt so tief."  
Und ein mancher tief erschuettert, von  
Gewissenangst erregt,  
Zitternd vor dem Zorn des Herrn  
Schuldbeladen in sich schlaegt.

Thus punishing to the brethren  
the voice of the Shepherd called,  
"Woe to the evil! Woe to the bad!  
whose hearts are corrupt to the core."  
Many are shaken profoundly, by  
their consciences, awakened  
trembling before the wrath of God  
convicted by much guilt within.

14. Doch auf Thraenen tiefer Reue,  
ist die Gnade taeglich neu;  
Und sie folgt ihr auf dem Fuesze,  
wie gross auch die Suende sei  
Um auf Zaehren tiefer Reue, tiefen  
Leidgefuehls benetzt;  
Ist auf Hoffnung eines Bessern  
jeden Gnad und Heil ersetzt.

As a result of tearful remorse  
grace is new each day;  
and closely follows after remorse,  
in spite of the countless sins  
to repent upon profound remorse, deep  
feelings of regret they do weep  
the prayer for better days  
to all saving grace is given.

15. Doch von unserm lieben Hirten,  
und den lieben Bruedern all.  
Wird erwogen und beschlossen, dasz nun-  
mehr zu einer Wahl  
Eines Hirten wird geschritten; fuer das  
Haeuflein, dasz entbloeszt,  
Das aufs neue nun mit Aengsten, sie  
geboren und geloest.

Yet our beloved shepherd  
and beloved brethren all,  
considers and concludes  
that steps now will be taken  
to elect a shepherd again.  
for the flock is impoverished,  
and again with fear should hope,  
to be redeemed and born again.

16. Und dasz, Herr, dein sei die Ehr  
und das Los zum Segen fiel.  
Nun ein Hirt uns treulich weidet  
dem sein ein'ger Zweck und Ziel  
Mutbeseelt nun zu versuchen, ob  
die hingschwund'ne Kraft,  
Ob des Geistes Knecht zu heben  
Die der Feind dahin geraft.

And, Lord, Thine be the glory  
You choose to bless us so.  
For the Shepherd who now feeds us,  
it is his only aim and goal,  
with energetic courage, he tries,  
though strength be exhausted,  
to uplift the servant of the Spirit,  
whom the enemy has cast down.

17. Ach das Siechthum seiner, Bruder  
tief in Trauen ihn versenkt,  
Wenn mit tief betruetzten Herzen  
er nun in die Zukunft denkt.  
"Brueder, Zeit ists zu erwachen!" ruft  
es ernstlich allen zu.  
"Zeit ists Schranken nun zu setzen,  
eurem Zwist, der stoert die Ruh!"

Oh the passion to rule of the brethren,  
casts him into much misery.  
And when with saddened heart,  
he now looks into the future:  
"Brethren, it's time to awaken!" he calls;  
he proclaims it earnestly to all:  
"It's time to set some rules,  
your dissension disturbs the peace!"

18. Wohl gefiel das Wort den Bruedern  
Obs auch unvollkommen war.  
Fuer das Himmelreich zu kaempfen  
stand bereit die kleine Schaar  
Ach wie segnen da die Brueder, die  
gewuenschte Hirtenwahl!  
Ach wie danken sie dem Herrn, aus dem  
Grund des Herzens all!

Well the brethren esteemed the  
Word, imperfect though it be.  
To fight for the kingdom of heaven  
the little group stood prepared.  
Oh how the brethren bless  
the desired shepherd's election.  
Oh how they thank the Lord,  
from the bottom of their hearts!

19. Doch der Tugendreiche Hirte, viel  
zu frueh fuer Friedrichthal:  
Ohne es selbstrecht zu wollen, ohne  
selbstgemachten Wahl.  
Nach Borsenko zu den Bruedern  
wandt er fuerbasz seinen Schritt  
Es geschaehe, Herr, dein Wille! Seine  
Pflicht bringt es so mit.

Yet the competent shepherd, left  
Friedrichthal much too soon  
was it self-righteousness to have  
an election without consultation?  
To Borsenko to the brethren  
in passing-by he went.  
Lord, Thy will be done!  
His duty thus demanded it.

20. Und beseelt mit kuehnem Muthe  
lehrt er dort der treue Hirt.  
Denn so schwer ihm auch der Abschied  
und der neue Anfang wird,  
Ruft er doch mit ernster Stimme; "Bruder,  
ach, stellt euch zur Ruh;  
Dient doch nicht den schoeden Mammon,  
gebt doch nicht dem Geitz gehoer".

And filled with good courage, the  
the faithful shepherd teaches there  
difficult though the parting  
and the new beginning, may be,  
yet he calls with a sincere voice,  
"Brethren, Oh reconcile yourselves in peace.  
Do not serve the evil mammon.  
do not follow greed!"

21. Herr, erhalte diesen Boten, staerke  
ihn bei jeden Schritt,  
Und lasz niemals ohne Segnen, sei-  
-nen Eifer, seine Bitt',  
Sei uns alles Schutz und Dekke, Gott,  
du unser Hort und Schild!  
Der du uns bis diesen Tage, hast  
beschuetzt so treu, so mild.

Lord, uphold your messengers,  
strengthen them step by step.  
May their endeavour and prayers,  
never be without blessing.  
Be our protection and shield,  
God, our love and majesty!  
Thou who until this day,  
hast protected us so kind and true.

22. Ja, lasz alle unsre Brueder: den  
Molotschnaer, immerhin!  
Und auf Markus, und Borsenko, wie  
auch in der fernen Krimm:  
Allen lasz ein Salz der Erde  
Bleiben, und ein Licht der Welt.  
Es geschehe, Herr, dein Wille! Thue  
was dir Wohlgefaellt!

Yes, let all our brethren: the  
Molotschnaer at all times,  
and those of Markus and Borsenko  
as also those in far away Crimea,  
let all remain salt of the earth  
and light of the world.  
Lord, let Thy will be done!  
Do what is well pleasing for Thee!

*By Peter P. Toews*

## Editor's Note

The first four of the above poems were taken from a 95 page "Journal" in which Aeltester Peter P. Toews (1841-1922) had copied ten poems. Three of these were written by his father, Johann Toews (1793-1873), and are published in Part Ten, Chapter three, of this work. Four of these poems--written by Aeltester Peter P. Toews himself--are published in this chapter. Three of the poems in the "Journal" were written by others, namely, "Ein Gedicht zum Mennostift" by Prediger Ellenberger in Friedelsheim, pages 6 to 16; "Ein Gedicht ueber die Amur-Reise", no author given, pages 25 to 29; and "Reisen Pass eines Christen", by Carl von Pott, Canfor, pages 46 to 64.

The title pages of the "Journal" bear the following inscriptions: "Januar 15, 1861"; "Peter Toews in the Colony Fischau 1860"; "The first and fourth letters of Mattheis Servies an Aeltester and teacher of the Gemeinde are very important and beneficial. These letters were written out of prison to his brother in the Lord and all fellow believers. Servies was beheaded in Colln in the year 1565. His letters can be found in the unabridged *Martyrs' Mirror*, pages 335 to 351"; and finally, "Perhaps we can provide some interest which the poor will also enjoy; we are the poems". The "Journal" above referred was received by the editor courtesy of Milton and Margaret Toews, Nielburg, Saskatchewan, 1981. Mr. Milton Toews is a grandson of Aeltester Peter P. Toews (1841-1922). Transcription for computer by Rev. Ben Hoepfner, 411-20 Valhalla Drive, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R2G 0Y1, 1992.

The last--and longest--poem published in this chapter, "Ein Gedicht Ueber die Verhaengnisvolle Auswanderung der Kleinen Gemeinde" was contained in a separate 11 page booklet. The same was in the possession of Milton and Margaret Toews, Abbotsford, British Columbia, who were kind enough to share the same with the editor during a visit to Steinbach, Manitoba, on November 9, 1992. Transcription for computer and primary translation of the same were completed by Rev. Ben Hoepfner in November, 1992.

# Chapter Three

## Easter Sermon, 1867

Sermon for Easter on the text 1 Thessalonians 4:14, by Peter P. Toews (1841-1922), Blumenhoff, Borosenko Colony, South Russia, written in March, 1867, and presented on April 16 in Blumenhoff and on April 17 in Gruenfeld.

---

Ausz: J. K. Predigten

Belebe Denken, Herz, und Sinn.  
Regiere unsere Glieder  
Nimm von uns alles Eitle hin  
Und reisz was weltlich nieder  
Hilf ringen uns in dieser Zeit  
Auf dasz wir in der Ewigkeit  
Ewiglich mit dir leben.

Renew our thinking, heart and mind  
rule over our entire being  
take from us all vanity  
and free us from our sins.  
Help us to battle here in time  
that in eternity we may live  
and be forever Thine.

---

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all!

Oh Jesus come and give life  
within us, as You have 'risen  
and persevered in the face of suffering  
and in the grave's cruel bondage lay,  
You have conquered sin and death,  
and from the gates of Hell  
with triumph have arisen.

Oh most beloved Saviour Jesus Christ; You who have not only saved and redeemed us from sin, death, devil and hell, through Your suffering, death and resurrection, but have also established for us an eternal, incorruptible life in glory. Oh may we as those whom You have redeemed and purchased for a great price, thank You sincerely, and may we diligently set forth upon our efforts to more fully

become partakers of this dearly bought salvation. Grant to us all, beloved Saviour and Redeemer, grace so that we might carefully evaluate the reasons for which You suffered, died and arose again.

Victoriously arise, Oh Prince of Life, Lord Jesus Christ! Strengthen us weak and miserable mortals with Your divine power in our faith in You, as You have already loved us and given Yourself for us to live and to die, so that when you are seeking the fruits of Your precious salvation, we would not need to stand before you in shame; rather that as those who have arisen with you, we may be transformed unto your glory.

Let us, therefore, precious Saviour, ever bear in mind Your suffering, dying and resurrection, and the power of Your service, so that we might become partakers of the precious salvation which has been instituted for us in this time of grace; so that at the expiration of our mortal time we may look forward with joy to death which separates our body and soul.

Yes, Jesus let Your resurrection  
empower us from within  
to arise from death with You,  
and, if we retain the treasure,  
the precious gift which You  
have given as seal and measure,  
that we may enter unto life;  
this grant us through Your love,  
to reach Your glorious home above. Amen!

---

Beloved brethren and sisters in the Lord! We begin our present meditation with the words with which we concluded on Friday; these were taken from the First Epistle of Peter:

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you. Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Peter 1:18-25).

Beloved friends, we note that Peter says, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye

were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold from your vain conversation . . . But with the precious blood of Christ." Therefore we should consider what and how much our salvation has cost and how we are to respond to it if we are not readily to lose it again. For in the second chapter he continues, "Wherefore laying aside all hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speaking", and again in verses 21-25 of the same chapter;

For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

This Shepherd who sacrificed His life for a precious refuge, this Bishop of our souls, Christ Jesus, has borne our sins, the Righteous for the unrighteous, so that He might offer us to God; He was killed according to the flesh, but made alive according to the spirit, and God has raised Him from the dead, as John, the evangelist, and the other apostles testify.

Very early one Sabbath morning, when it still was dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone was rolled away. They had placed a great stone in front of the grave where they had buried Jesus. When Mary Magdalene saw that the stone was rolled away the following occurred:

Then she runneth and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. So they both together ran: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie. And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead (John 20:2-9).

Such weakness held sway at that time among the disciples, although Jesus had often told them clearly; yet they did not believe until Christ revealed Himself to them. The Saviour said to Thomas, ". . . blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20:29).

In view of the glorious resurrection of the Redeemer, let us in this worship service today seek to renew ourselves and to follow Him faithfully, so that on the

day of the resurrection we may be glorified with Him. The love and mercy which He has bestowed upon us is so great that we cannot but treasure the same above all else. For in Jesus we have a loving Friend and Brother who has delivered us from our great burden of sin by taking our guilt upon Himself. Oh, how great the love and mercy of God!

Beloved brethren and sisters! What if anyone of us should come into unbearable circumstances such as the loss of all means so that he would be unable to pay his creditors and to free himself from their clutches into which he has fallen, and if in this state of indebtedness another brother would take upon himself all these debts--indeed, would even become his surety--and thus save him from all his lamentation; how much would not the debtor rejoice? how grateful would he not be? Likewise, we miserable people, who through sin had given ourselves over to Satan, should much more give thanks and render due obedience to our Redeemer--who literally snatched us from out of the mouth of hell unto which we would otherwise be given over as an eternal sacrifice! We must, therefore, agree with the poet;

We had woe, sin and suffering,  
for freedom, neither thirst nor longing;  
yet, He has set us free  
He searched for us and sought us  
and through His mercy  
salvation He has bought;  
for us, who were in flight,  
He came to set the sinner right,  
to turn darkness into light.

Yes, He has sought us in spite of all of our rebelling against Him; He surrendered Himself up to the cruel cross for us in order to save our souls from the death which we so abundantly deserved. Yes, He died in our stead, voluntarily and of His own free will. Without Him the entire human race lay subjected to the bondage of death, and would have remained so into all eternity, had He--as our substitute--remained therein; but He is arisen. Neither bonds nor scourging will threaten Him again, nor will any cross ever draw Him before the judgment seat again.

But, beloved friends, we have already spoken of our thanklessness and unrighteousness which separate us from God. This separation must hurt Him very much. Sincerely consider for once what Christ has actually done for us; for it is exactly as the poet says that we were entirely enslaved to sin and had no longing for freedom. But the beloved Saviour continued to seek us; yes, even followed us and pleaded with us that we should receive His solicitation. And now that He has found us and reconciled us with God and we have promised to be true to Him--we should also do so.

Oh, therefore, all who would know Him,  
should seek to please and show Him;  
Oh, let our hearts be burning  
in love for the world above.

Indeed, I say with the Apostle Peter;

Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; That ye no longer should live the rest of this time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries (1 Peter 4:1-3).

Should we not, beloved friends, who have made a covenant with the Lord and promised Him all of these things, put off everything? Should we continue to do the deeds of the flesh through which we crucify the Lord Jesus anew? Oh, I ask and exhort you that no one would consider the blood of the New Testament--through which he has once been sanctified--a common thing and do spite to the Spirit of grace. "For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of affliction" (Hebrews 10:30-32).

Yes, beloved friends, remember, prove and examine how you once were enlightened and made a covenant with God through baptism. Each and everyone who violates this covenant and who is accused by his conscience and everyone who is convinced within his heart that he never has genuinely repented until now, let him be stricken in his conscience regarding the precarious state in which he finds himself. Let him turn unreservedly unto the Lord Jesus, so that He would truly convict him of his sinfulness and awaken within him a sincere remorse and sorrow concerning his sins, whereby he would become a partaker of His grace and the blessed resurrection of the soul.

But as long as a person is not disturbed or anxious because of his own sin, he will not have any concern about forgiveness from the same. In the evening he casts the sins which he has committed during the day into the Lord's prayer--so to say, and prays, "Forgive me my trespasses", and thinks everything is made aright thereby, whether or not he continues to sin again the very next day. But once the human heart has truly experienced a genuine remorse, he can no longer acquiesce in this, to bow in prayer with an empty heart. Rather he thinks, what will finally be the end result of continuing in such evil, and of saying, "Forgive me my sins", and yet, continuing to offend God anew time and again? What will happen with you during the hour of death? Yes, how will you one day appear and stand before the judgment seat of God? Therefore when a person comes to a genuine knowledge of sin and his precarious condition, then he is sincerely concerned about forgiveness for his sins.

Beloved friends, in what state do we find our hearts? And what do we confess--after we have sincerely examined ourselves--regarding the extent of our sins? Oh, with a sincere heart and great concern for the eternal salvation of the souls of each individual as well as mine, I ask that we look within our hearts in order to prove the matters with which our hearts are preoccupied and as to the

circumstances which we are in. Let us examine whether we have considered our misery and the fallen state of our mind, and let us meditate and take it to heart so that a proper concern would arise within us. In the 38th Psalm, David says, "For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me." Let each one ask himself, do we have a proper concern and a sincere remorse regarding sin? For if this is not there then what preparation have we made for the kingdom of God? Did not our Saviour say when He began to preach in Matthew 5, "Blessed are the poor in spirit; . . . Blessed are they that mourn . . . Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness"? Let each and everyone examine himself with respect to his poverty of the spirit and the mourning over sins.

Oh, that none of us present would fail to submit himself to this examination, who would harden his heart and not wish to give room therein to the beckoning voice of the Spirit of God. Oh, that all of us unitedly might set forth in our efforts to be found among those who some day will be raised unto the eternal, blessed hope; so that with the poet we might gladly say:

Jesus lives! And I too with Him;  
Oh, death! where is your sting?  
Yes! He lives and will also  
awaken me, from the realms of death,  
and glorify me in His light:  
this is my blessed hope and confidence  
Jesus lives, and now for me  
death is the entrance into life;  
what comfort in the time of death,  
will be given to my soul!  
When in faith herein we say,  
"Jesus is my blessed hope!

But beloved friends! We must render the faithfulness which is required and incumbent upon us. Through a living faith in our Redeemer we must seek to claim His sacrificial work and become partakers thereof. The time which we have to live here in the flesh we must live in faith to the Son of God. Yes, with godly conduct we must prove that our walk already is in heaven (Phil. 3). Then we shall also joyfully await our Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ, Who will transform our mortal bodies so that they will truly become like His glorified being; yes, for then we may quietly--yet joyfully, meet death, and await the hour which God has appointed and ordained wherein to raise us up.

And in conclusion of my introductory remarks, I say with the poet:

Oh, Jesus, when time is done  
grant that to Thee we come  
with sweet spices of remorse and woe,  
which flow from the depths of our soul,  
let us hasten to Thy salvation  
in genuine faith and admiration  
to purchase the salve of repentance.  
Receive us with compassion and grace

when tears of remorse we shall sow,  
let us behold the sacred peace  
upon Thy precious loving face;  
and that we too, O Hero,  
may celebrate Easter  
and glory at Your birth  
and call ourselves Christians on earth.

---

The words chosen for the text of our service will give us occasion to speak further regarding the work and resurrection of Christ. Oh that the Lord Jesus Himself might grant us power to present these truths for the edification of all our souls. Yes, for this reason we humbly wish to beseech Him with the words of our text:

*For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. (1 Thessalonians 4 verse 14).*

The words of the apostle as they have been presented provide a fine introduction for our meditation. Firstly, our faith must always be based thereon, namely, on the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Secondly, we must ask how we can become partakers of His precious sacrifice, and as to the wonderful blessings we may receive thereby.

---

Beloved friends! The entire human race was cast into a most miserable, woeful and highly saddened state through the lamentable fall of our first parents! This is not only clearly described in the Holy Scriptures but we also see and experience this great woeful state daily in our lives within ourselves as well as in other people. Not only the physical death, but also the eternal death, has gained power over all mankind. Because of the fear of death we would have been enslaved for our entire lifetimes had not Jesus our Mediator and Redeemer through His death "destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Hebrews 2:14).

But our Redeemer allowed Himself to be moved in compassion by our great plight so that He reconciled us with God. He brought to Him the ransom money, namely, He gave His blood as payment for our sins whereby He eternally set us free from all our guilt and punishment. No other means was there to be found under heaven or on earth through which we could be helped, alone through the suffering, shedding of blood and death of the only begotten Son of God the Lord. The death of Christ or His blood is the only ransom which the righteousness of God would find acceptable as a payment for our sins.

Peter, the fellow-bishop and witness of sufferings in Christ and partaker of the glory to be revealed, testifies about this Redemption in 1 Peter 1:18,19. "Know," he writes, "that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:18-19). No angel, human being, nor the blood of oxen or

other animals is able to take away sin; only the precious blood of Jesus Christ is able to reconcile us. Oh, Father, during these festive days of Easter, we repeatedly cast our eyes in the spirit upon Your bloodied wounds which are there because of us;

Oh blood for all evil!  
Oh blood for all people!  
Oh riches enough to redeem!  
Infinite money for ransom!  
This is the act, which for millions  
the debt of our sin shall pay  
forgive all these, Lord of heaven  
according to divine grace  
and Thy miraculous wonder!  
Thy holy blood which flows  
upon us sinful beings  
and mortals here below,  
my heart to the very depths doth stir,  
just as it was in Gilboa.  
Oh God! Anoint my fallen heart  
with Thy precious redeeming blood.

Oh, that this might also leave a deep impression upon the hearts of all of us, so that we would at all times consider the difficulty and the means whereby our Redeemer wrought and established for us His worthy service, after His holy and blameless body had been wounded with scourging and stripes, so that even Pilate was moved in the presence of the people to call out, "Behold the man." After this He was nailed to the cross. He was subjected to the most excruciating pain outwardly as well as inwardly. Finally He cried out, "It is finished" (John 19:30); and then He died.

But our beloved Redeemer provided us with His precious service not only through His suffering and dying, but also through His victorious resurrection whereby He wrought and established our redemption. Our reconciliation with God has indeed been constituted through the death of our Redeemer, but our faith--whereby we appropriate this redemption, is based primarily upon the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Without the resurrection our faith could not more and more aspire to assurance and joy. For this reason the Apostle Paul writes to the Corinthians, and says:

And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ; whom he raised not up, If so be that the dead rise not . . . And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the

resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive (1 Cor. 15:14-22).

Indeed, our text shows that our faith must be based solely upon the resurrection of Jesus. "If we believe," he says, "that Jesus died and arose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him" (1 Thes. 4:14). This truth is also taught to us in the important words of the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, "Who (Jesus) was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for (our) justification" (Rom. 4:25). Accordingly the resurrection of Jesus must be the unshakable foundation of our faith which rises from the death of Jesus. Yes, the resurrection of Jesus gives us the desired assurance that the precious redeeming blood with which our eternal and perfect High Priest has entered into the most holy, comes from God, the Judge over all that exists, and that He has accepted the same as a fully efficacious sacrifice, and that thereby the redemption of all mankind—which would otherwise be impossible—has been fulfilled by our loving Saviour.

We now come to deal with the question of how we can accept this precious service which has our eternal salvation as its consequence. The answer is provided by the apostle in our text who tells us that it is only through faith in the Lord Jesus. He says, "If we believe that Jesus died and arose." A genuine faith, therefore, is the real means—indeed, the only means—whereby we can receive eternal salvation. God has clearly prescribed the way unto salvation for all humanity to see. Without this faith we are not well-pleasing unto Him, for He himself is "the way, the truth and the life" (John 14:6).

We, however, must not merely confess with our mouth and say, "I believe." For this the devil does also with fear and trembling (James 2:12). No, we must believe from the heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. The Apostle Paul clearly testifies, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9,10). Accordingly it is not enough to confess only with the mouth, for the same must also live in our hearts.

In this regard we should realize what our Redeemer has done for us manifold sinners and take note of the unspeakable love which He has demonstrated towards us in taking all our sins upon Himself and in eradicating the same, by making everything good and by reconciling us to God; so that God—for the sake of our Advocate—has forgiven us all our sins and has promised unto us eternal salvation if we remain true until the end. We must acknowledge this from the very depth of our being. We should not allow ourselves to remain indifferent as to whether this is true or not; or whether we believe this merely because it is believed by others; or whether we delude ourselves that we do already believe it—if only we do not speak against it, or merely say that we believe it. Nor should we think that the doing of good works alone is sufficient, or the giving up of some of our works which are easy for us to do without and which have their roots in an outwardly legalism.

No, my beloved friends, all this is not enough. The Scripture says that the righteous shall live by faith. Our faith must come from within our hearts; indeed, it must be a living faith, so that we are in a position to confess and to give an

answer as to what we believe and the substance of our faith. For in certain things which to some extent are visible to our own human understanding, many a person very strongly judges his brother who is holding back somewhat in such matters, and esteems himself to be righteous. But when they have to give an answer in the way that the Apostle Peter says, ". . . and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15), then the experience of such a one unfortunately is the way the poet says:

In fact, Christians mainly say,  
their faith is from the heart  
Alas! if only they knew as well  
that faith is not founded in words,  
but always in our deeds must dwell.

Yes, beloved friends, as long as our faith lies only in our mouth, conduct, thinking, and speaking will be about external things. We will only seek to please the people outwardly and when we stray in something we seek to excuse ourselves by saying, "Oh, if only the heart is not founded thereon". Only too often our gatherings are the way the Lord laments through the prophets, that they are for the sake of wine and feasting. Our fellowship and our speech deals with seeding, ploughing, harvesting, learning, marrying, and other things of the like. And should there be some talk about the genuine faith and something which serves for edifying ourselves in our most holy faith, then we--unfortunately--are often too quiet and acquiesce too readily regarding spiritual matters, etc. And with these fruits we demonstrate that we are still too much bounded by earthly things, whereas we should be minded towards spiritual concerns, and our conduct based thereon.

Therefore, beloved friends, let us sincerely strive to claim the Lord Jesus by a true faith, because our faith must be based solely and alone on His death and resurrection. If this is really to help us in any way and actually come to pass, a twofold experience must come to a full power within us; namely, that we have been awakened and raised from our spiritual death in which we were according to our old or natural self, and that we have been seated in the heavenly places and life through a genuine faith in Christ, so that we actually confess this with our hearts, and that through the resurrection of Jesus Christ we are born again to a blessed hope (1 Peter 1:3).

"Born again!" Nicodemus asked the Lord Jesus, "How can a man be born again when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" (John 3:4). We now wish to reflect upon the words of our text upon which our faith must be founded if it is truly to be efficacious, and therefore, I consider it necessary to explain that genuine faith in Christ must be preceded by a righteousness-working repentance, which is the new birth. And this new birth cannot take place without suffering, for the person must first experience the judgment of God within his soul and His wrath upon the godless life which he has lived must first become manifest. He must first come to a foundational knowledge of sin within his heart; not only that which he has done openly, but that wherein lies the root of sin--his old birth--and the disbelief in which he was enslaved and that which he does not readily acknowledge. It may well be that his eyes must first

be opened by God so that he sees his precarious state in the light of God. His heart must cast off all his sinful ways and he must be converted to a genuine remorse and sorrow regarding his sin. He must realize that the Lord is to be feared and that sin is not justified by the fact that in all our sinful ways we can always rely on the great grace of God. Instead we must acknowledge that a day of judgment is coming where everyone--without respect of person--will be judged according to their works, whether good or evil. Even our hidden thoughts will be judged (1 Kings 4).

Whereby everyone may prove himself whether such has taken place in his heart to see if the wrath of God regarding the evil in which he has lived has been made manifest and whether he has received the same; to see whether he has properly realized his sin and experienced remorse and whether he has thereby been converted to a true sorrow and repentance regarding his sins. If such a remorse is not to be found within the heart, then the repentance is not genuine before God.

Let us not think that we can simply bypass repentance and that we can depend solely upon the grace of God the way it has become customary among our people, the Mennonites. In fact, it sometimes seems as if it has already become an article of faith amongst us that repentance is to be done between Easter and Pentecost in that one possibly foregoes some things, like strong drink and other such all too common practices; and when the time is over they are free people again, and they once more walk the way which they walked before in all their incontinent customs and practices. The one who wants to see this need not go far, says the prophet, for he can see it during the festivities and Sabbaths. A poet has described this kind of faith when he says:

All seems nearly lost  
in the entire Christendom  
faith and love have died,  
everything in vanity abides.

Now-a-days Christians in general live in sin and smug indifference just as it was in the days of Noah. But should we not much rather earnestly consider why Christ died and arose? Should we continue to live in the sin to which we have died by virtue of the power and efficacy of the death of Christ? In Romans Chapter 6, verse 10, the Apostle Paul says, "For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." Whereupon he concludes, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Through the death of Christ according to the counsel and judgment of God the power and the authority of sin regarding our salvation has been taken away. But we, ourselves, must not wish to live in sin any more, for as long as a person continues to live in open and determinable sins, he thereby denies the death of Christ and its power and purpose; and if he does not truly repent from the heart, he cannot claim the benefits of the work of Christ.

Therefore, beloved, friends, as those who are redeemed and set free from sin, let us deny all ungodly works and the world. Instead, let us live righteously and in the fear of God. Let us live as those who have been baptized in Christ Jesus unto His death and through baptism have been buried with Him in death. But let

us also live as those who have been resurrected together with Jesus unto a new life in accordance with the admonition of Paul (Rom. 6:3,4).

---

Secondly, let us consider how we can benefit through this life which we receive through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus. In Chapter two of his letter to the Colossians, the Apostle Paul exhorts those who come to faith:

As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving" (Colossians 2:6,7).

A new and holy life, beloved friends, is the proof of a living faith, for without good works which flow from a godly life, faith in itself is dead. In the second chapter of the First Epistle, the Apostle James says, "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" (1 James 2:17).

This is affirmed by the Lord Jesus himself in Matthew chapter seven, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). Those will not enter into the kingdom of heaven who speak much about Christianity, but do not do the will of the Lord, but those that live well pleasingly unto Him and keep His commandments, as John teaches in his first epistle, chapter two. Therefore let us demonstrate a real sincerity in our Christian life, and in so far as we live in our flesh--namely, in our time of grace--that we would expend this time in a new life in accordance with the will of God in true righteousness and holiness and to seek for our salvation. Let each and everyone take care for his own soul and for the sake of his salvation truly consider his condition, so that when he must take that crucial and completely inescapable step from this life into eternity, he may fall asleep or die in Jesus and again be made alive through Him and be transposed with Him unto the heavenly ways, and in the fullness of joy to be raised to the eternal blessed life.

It is my heartfelt desire that all of us might truly be anxious to obtain for ourselves the eternal salvation which the beloved Saviour has provided for us through His suffering and dying.

No one among us, beloved friends, lives so securely in the world that he does not occasionally think that sometime his days here on earth will come to an end, as this life is filled with evidence that everything is perishable. Yes, we hurry daily towards the grave and the end time of our life draws ever closer. Oh that we would always be mindful of the need to separate ourselves from the world in a wholesome way. But this cannot happen except that we fall asleep in Jesus, which means that we must fall asleep in His fellowship. Therefore, already in this world, we must live in the faith of the Son of God and serve Him in His righteousness and holiness and remain true unto the end. Yes, we must be mindful regarding the destination of our souls when death shall sever the bond between body and spirit; for our souls have been entrusted into our hands as a precious gift and the same belong to the *Lord Jesus*. Wherefore we must commit our souls into His beloved hands and speak with David, "Into Thy hand do I commit my spirit. Thou, Lord,

hast redeemed me, Thou faithful God." For hereby we can be assured that we will fall asleep in Jesus and that we will die in the Lord; yes, that we will leave this world embraced by salvation.

Those, therefore, that have sincerely converted themselves and have come to faith in Christ, and thus are already in fellowship with Jesus, will have a great consolation in our text which states, "*For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him*" (1 Thes. 4:14). Indeed, they will see death as the way to a much better land than the one in which we now live, where we have to eat our bread with tears and the sweat of the brow. We see death as the end of our labours and suffering which pursue us from the cradle to the grave; yes, we shall see death as a peaceful sleep until the blessed resurrection in our glorious Jesus. Yes, there are those who even in the days of health can imagine themselves standing at their own grave and see their body buried and be comforted and say with the Apostle Paul, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). Should it not also be our foremost concern and greatest care that at the end of our days we may fall asleep in Jesus in order to live with Him eternally? For His resurrection from the dead is a seal of the fulfilment of our redemption. "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain."

If, therefore, we have otherwise truly converted ourselves from the heart, faith may now work in us such a blessed assurance which death, grave and corruption can neither overthrow nor cast down; yes, such a joyous assurance which will enable us to say together with Paul, "Neither height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." The old covenant, "man you must die", must take its course and be applied so that our mortal being experiences corruption for a season in order that the perishable and mortal--which cannot enter into the kingdom of God--may arise and be transposed unto a blessed immortality (1 Cor. 15:54). For on the day of the revelation of Jesus, the Redeemer will demonstrate to His saints through the resurrection and glorification of the body that He has arisen from death for this purpose, that He will open the graves of His own and lead them forth in glory and take them unto Himself, so that they would be where He is for evermore (John 14). Oh, what an exceptional and glorious comfort for all true believers who can sincerely say, "Jesus lives! Now death is merely the door into life". Oh, yes, we should believe that He will awaken us and that we shall see God--indeed, not merely that we will see Him, but also that we will be raised up and be glorified with Him, and that we will enjoy the same forever more.

This great and important promise He has given to His disciples and to all true believers (Luke 22). He told them, "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me" (Luke 22:28,29). For this reason He prayed unto His Father with great intensity according to the testimony of John, chapter 17, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am." If, therefore, we live here in the fellowship of Jesus--take note, beloved friends, in the fellowship of Jesus--and die thus, then we will also be made alive with Him and be seated in heavenly places, where there shall be fullness of joy, pleasure abundant, and a blessed life at His right hand for eternity and evermore.

In the resurrection of the righteous we will see those of our own friends and

relatives who have gone on before us who with patience finished the course and whom we dearly loved. We will also see our innocent children, for they are those "which follow the Lamb withersoever he goeth; these were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb" (Rev. 14:4). Indeed, and all those "which came out of the great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the lamb" (Rev. 7:14); yes, and all those who have fallen asleep in the faith and in the fellowship of Jesus, being in fellowship with Him; we will see all of these people again and they will be renewed, transposed and glorified. We will rejoice together with them and be united before the throne of God and be with the Lord forever where there will be no more tears or parting.

O what great and glorious joy which Thou Almighty, Honourable and Loving Redeemer, hast provided through Thy suffering and dying and especially through Thy resurrection. Great is Thy goodness which You have bestowed upon us poor sinners. Grant that through Thy grace and power we would praise and thank Thee with a holy and divinely blessed conduct here in this world and thereafter that we might receive our deified and glorified body.

---

Well, beloved friends, especially beloved brethren and sisters in Christ! In conclusion, I wish--indeed, I ask you with a sincere and loving heart, without exception--that all of you would daily die to sin and that through a righteous conduct you would seek to demonstrate, in the fear of God, that you would live in Christ and Christ in you. Oh, that your mouths might be filled with praise and that in praise of your Redeemer you could say, "Jesus has done great things for us for which we rejoice." When you can do this cognitively, your faith will grow stronger and your love for the most worthy Redeemer will continue to increase.

When you will be on your death bed--which no person can avoid; when the godless souls, the world and sin in all their various forms, shall instill fear into the hearts of all manner of loving people, and cause them to tremble with anguish--your faith in Jesus will give you peace, and you will fall asleep in Jesus and then be raised up unto eternal glory. Oh, that all of us would become partakers of this blessed and everlasting joy! Yes, that all of us might see and meet each other again on that great day at the right hand of Jesus. Indeed, that no one would fail to be there on that day when it will be said, "Come . . . inherit the kingdom prepared . . ." We are always sad if someone from our brothers and sisters is missing from our assemblies. How much more will it not be so when someone will be missing up there? Indeed, it would result in an eternal sadness. Here it can be remedied but no excuse will be accepted if someone will be missing there.

Therefore I cordially and sincerely bid of you, oh, but do diligently set forth in order to enter unto that heavenly rest so that no one of us would remain behind. Rejoice with gladness but also go forward to greet the blessed eternity with the power of God. If you have been truly converted and are faithful unto the end, await death as your desired time of redemption. Yes, if you remain in the faith, then Jesus who arose will also resurrect your body unto eternal joy. But you must always set forth your efforts to be there where you would like to be eternally, and

you must live in Christ Jesus here and now and your conduct must be in heaven;

This is your citizenship  
to live here in earthly turmoil  
unknown, righteous and upright.  
From all enslavements to flee  
your soul to keep free;  
to God may we cling,  
living as strangers below.

To receive this grace  
be not sparing in prayer,  
with tears on your face  
until it breaks God's heart.  
Call unto Jesus, as He  
called out from the cruel tree:  
"Father, when all is done  
into Thy hand, receive us".

Indeed, let us continue fervent in faith until our time has ended in death, until the day of the coming of the LORD. Oh what a blessed state for all the souls who are made blessed through the blood of Jesus. Blessed are we when clad in His attire, which is our righteousness; this cloak is a precious apparel, given to us by the Lord. This cloak, this robe of righteousness, has also been given to us by Jesus. Let us take care that we do not soil it. We must wash this white linen in the blood of Jesus and make it shine before the cross of Jesus in the midst of great tribulation; and then God will wipe away all our tears, and the Lamb will feed us in green pastures and lead us unto the fountain of living waters.

Oh, what a salvation and peace! Should these not entice us? Indeed, we should passionately long for and desire the same. No, nowhere else, but in the blood of Jesus are we able to wash this linen, this cloak of righteousness. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief"; and "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

Oh, therefore, let us always hasten to Jesus, so that we would not be put to shame by His reappearing; rather that we might also take up the cross of Jesus and endure the sufferings of this time which are not worthy to be compared with the glory up yonder. Oh, let your soul fall silent before God, which is beneficial for you. If your heart should grow weary in restlessness and impatience because of the long journey, then renew your spirit with David in the words of Psalm 42:

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.

In conclusion, beloved friends, I exhort you sincerely with the Apostle Paul according to 2 Timothy 2:1; "Thou therefore, be strong in the grace that is in

Christ Jesus . . . Thou therefore, endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 2:1-3). Truly appropriate the grace that is given to you in everything that is needful for you in your conduct and walk in the keeping of the commandments of the Lord. We must realize that the one who has received something and uses it faithfully, that one shall receive more and will have the same in abundance. But the one who does not have anything, namely, the one who does not use that which has been entrusted to him, from him will be taken what has been given.

If you do this and cling tenaciously but with a silent spirit to Jesus, the living vine, and if you do not allow the grace which you have received to be given in vain, then you shall have a great comfort. You will please God in all your deeds. Your Christianity will be built upon a rock, so that no storm of temptation and tribulation can overthrow it. Indeed, neither extremity, nor fear, nor danger nor anything else, will be too difficult for you; nothing will be able to separate you from Jesus, your Head. Through His Spirit you will be strengthened in your spirit and be lifted up to be steadfast in every good work until the end.

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." Amen (2 Cor. 13:14).

In the name of Jesus.

---

## Translator's Comment

1. Some sentences are unclear and direct quotations were sometimes hard to decipher. 2. Poetry is merely translated without rhyme and rhythm. 3. There is a change of grammatical person at times. 4. Run-on sentences occur every so often in the translation. 4. There is a strong and good emphasis on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and righteous living. 5. The sermon has a good message for us today. Primary translation completed by Rev. Ben Hoepfner, 411-20 Valhalla Dr., Winnipeg, Manitoba, R0G 0Y1, 1992.

The "Sermon for Easter, 1867. 1 Thessalonians 4:14" was included in a collection of some 20 sermons by Peter P. Toews (1841-1922), Swalwell, Alberta, which are in the possession of Milton and Margaret Toews, Abbotsford, British Columbia. They were kind enough to share the same with the editor during a visit to Steinbach, Manitoba, on November 9, 1992.

# Chapter Four

## Three Letters, 1869

Three Letters Written by Aeltester Peter P. Toews (1841-1922), Blumenhoff, Borosenko, South Russia, to Jakob A. Wiebe, Annenfeld, Crimea, in 1869.

---

Letter One: A Letter to the Crimean Gemeinde at Annenfeld.

February 14, 1869  
Blumenhoff

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Our beloved Saviour said, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" and, therefore, I cannot omit to write you something in love. At the same time we must acknowledge that the letters we send by post are very unsafe, and that occasionally, it is like writing into the wind since our letters do not always make it there and yours do not arrive here. Although we have not yet received any this winter, we hope that these lines will get to you. May God send them to you and grant that they find you in good health and with peace in your soul.

We believe, beloved, that the Molotschna Brethren will have fulfilled their promise and will also have reported to you regarding their attendance here, and regarding the reunification and reconciliation which we have also received from all the brethren as we had wished--with the exception of the beloved Braun. And accordingly, we three--Goossen, Loewen and myself--recently spoke in that regard, that we should write something of this to you; since the opportunity for so doing availed itself so unexpectedly, this is happening sooner than I thought.

We understand from the Molotschna Brethren that you wish to hold a vote between the two ministers, Baerg and Wiebe, on the first Sunday after New Years, to elect an Aeltester. We are daily waiting for word with great curiosity whether we again have an Aeltester. For if this is the case, we believe that the Lord will also send him to us, and consequently to also fulfil all the necessary ordinances amongst us to which he has been called by God, and in accordance with His Will.

We also wish to seek your counsel and that you would share your advice with us regarding the present circumstances, for in our view it is also a matter in which your views are relevant to us. The minister Abraham Friesen--not the Aeltester, Isaak Friesen and Gerhard Schellenberg, and the deacon Jacob Wiebe, together with one part of the remnants of the Gemeinde of Aeltester Johann Friesen, wish to be united with us. And upon their request we have already held a meeting with them for this purpose in Gruenfeld on the 28th day of January. They also appear to be united with us in matters of the faith. The greatest hindrance on our part seems to be the loss of confidence which occurred during the separation and, in particular, with regard to the ministers Abraham Friesen and Isaak Friesen. Since you have experienced the division as well as we did, we

would anxiously wish to be informed of your thoughts in that regard.

Otherwise we do not wish to write you much regarding all the events which have occurred here among us and among the others. We will only write that we love you. We also ask that you would remember us in all your circumstances with your prayers to God--so that the Word of the Lord may become applicable and be glorified, as we are also doing for you, and that we might be saved from all uncouth and unreasonable people. We are also mindful of all the love which you have demonstrated towards us--the brethren as well as the sisters--when we were there with you. Indeed, we can well say, "We are mindful of your tears." Wherefore we are not only anxious to hear something of how things are going for you, but much more also to see you again in person. Which was not possible up until now from our part--as you know--not only because of sickness, but much more, because of the unfortunate and seemingly unsurmountable hindrances. Therefore, we hope that sooner or later we shall at least receive some written news from you, and for which we are anxiously awaiting--with a greeting to you. Since the 6th of February when all of us, the brethren, were all together regarding Braun's request to Ohm Enns to again exercise and serve his office, we do not know otherwise but that we are all well physically. We are unable to report anything further than what we have written as to how things stand with Braun and the brotherhood meeting on Thursday. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

*P. Toews*

**Letter Two: A letter to Jacob Wiebe in Annenfeld in the Crimea with respect to His Election as Aeltester.**

Blumenhoff, March 16, 1869

I received your precious letter of February 27, on Thursday, March 13, exactly at dinnertime, as I came in from the field. This was fourteen days after we considered your letter from the Molotschna regarding your ordination as Aeltester at a brotherhood meeting here in Blumenhoff. Similarly we have today--Sunday--considered your present writing at our brotherhood meeting here in Gruenfeld. We have decided regarding the same that an ordination by an Aeltester of another Gemeinde must simultaneously indicate some form of a union with the same; if it is done in the fear of God and is supposed to please the Lord. Furthermore, in accordance with 1 Corinthians 4, such dealings are a significant matter for us, just as if we would allow our youth to be served with baptism by a different Aeltester. However, since we have not wanted to be their co-confessionists for reasons with which we, and all of us, are quite familiar, and for the sake of the Word of God, we would also do better not to share such an important dealing with them. Rather, beloved brother Wiebe, if you are chosen by the Lord for this calling, then take up this position for the sake of the Lord's will, and believe that it will also be a sufficient ordination before God and his Gemeinde; the faithfulness of your parishioners, for whom you have been called, will be a sufficient seal of your office (1 Cor. 9:2). We also believe that the Lord will shortly direct your way towards us and that as an Aeltester chosen by Him for His Gemeinde, after Ohm Baerg--who is currently our senior minister--has ordained you for that purpose by the laying on of hands. For we are also obligated to fulfil the office in this manner.

In as far as our coming there is concerned you do not need to expect us for

the next two months. Your coming here, however, would bring great joy to us, especially if we can all believe that you wish to remain impartial and yet are willing to help. For in the current situation, you would affirm the truth of this by coming here, and certainly you would diminish the suspicion, which is increasing in many here, because of your own repressing and holding back; and no one would have reason to believe that they had to inquire further into the veracity of your already frequently demonstrated love. Well, the Lord will allow it to happen the way He wants it to be, and we can always take refuge in His will.

Yes, my beloved brothers and also you sisters, do allow the proposed and prospective reunification with the others who have become strange and unfamiliar to us, to penetrate deep into your hearts, and pray with us to God that He would reveal His sacred will to us. For we shall be unable to come to a final decision in this regard until we have received similar decisions from all the Gemeinden who are living scattered so far apart. Alas, pray also for us incompetent and unworthy servants, that the Lord might wish to give us more light in all matters, and if you, beloved brethren, including Wiebe and also Baerg, or also anyone else, are thinking of coming here, please notify the Molotschna Brethren immediately; possibly they would then come here as well. For the entire Gemeinde must be gathered together for the sake of the reunification, as it affects all of us. Please notify us by mail as soon as possible.

Now, a little more regarding the beloved Braun. He has only attended our assemblies once since the reconciliation of this past winter and he has since forsaken us and resigned in writing. May the Lord have compassion on him. Today, Sunday, Unger and Johann Klassens from Nikolaithal joined our Gemeinde. May the Lord preserve them on their intended journey to you by his blessing and may the peace of God be with them. Please receive them as your beloved brothers and sisters (Phil. 17). Now, beloved brother Wiebe, forgive me that I am writing so little; hopefully, I can soon write more at another opportunity. Do receive this insignificant letter in love, and yet, I know that you will do so. Do not delay in visiting us, if not personally, than at least in writing. I greet all of you brothers and sisters with the blessing, "May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit."

Your insignificant servant,

*P. Toews*

**Letter Three: An Epistle on Baptism, 1869. A Declaration to the Brethren in the so-called Kleine Gemeinde in the Crimea.**

Blumenhoff

August 31, 1869

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, beloved brethren. Beloved brother Wiebe, I have read your letter with great sorrow and perceive therefrom your declared understanding for the changing of your baptism, for the reason that the same had not occurred in a stream according to Scripture.

Oh how lamentable this appears to me. Indeed I can hardly believe that you no longer consider to be a baptism that for which we have so many testimonies of our forefathers, the martyrs who went to their end amidst great privation and tribulation and for whom the world held no attraction and who for the sake of Christ did not consider their own lives to be precious. They rather offered their

lives unto God and their Saviour in the fire and death as a sweet smelling sacrifice. Even these holy and bloody witnesses to the truth practised their baptism with water, namely by pouring [affusion], which is demonstrated to us in numerous places in the so-called *Martyrs' Mirror* by Thielmann Jan von Bracht, as for example where it states that the servant of the Word (minister) baptized him by pouring a dish of water over his head, and in another place where the servant of the Word allowed water to be brought to him and then baptized the believers. In a third case the persecutor of a believer insisted that he had been baptized in such and such a house, etc.

Even the question of Peter in the time of the apostles, "Can any man forbid water", etc. also testifies for baptism by affusion. In like manner all of our venerable forefathers since the time of Menno Simons came to one mind that affusion also constituted a baptism. This is what Dirk Philips—who was a contemporary, fellow Aeltester and beloved brother of Menno—writes in his so-called *Confession or Handbook of Christian Doctrine* on page 18 of baptism saying; "With his blood Christ has also sprinkled (aspersion), washed, and cleansed his Gemeinde from all their sin, and has poured the water of the spirit over them of which baptism is a sacramental sign."

George Hansen—a later servant and Aeltester to the children of the Gemeinde of Philips—said as follows in a reply in his so-called *Foundation of Christian Doctrine* at pages 230-231; "Just as the pouring out of the Holy Ghost over the apostles through Christ is called a baptism of the Holy Spirit, we also believe and confess that the baptism must take place in the Lord, but not by immersion in water in the manner that the Lord Jesus dipped the bread in his dish which he gave to Judas Iscariot; indeed no, for just as the Holy Ghost was poured out over the apostles, in like manner the water must be poured over those who wish to be baptized in the name of Jesus."

In his *Biblishe Namen und Chronik Buch*, page 536, Peter Jan Twisk writes, "John did not actually baptize in the water but with water as the following texts demonstrate, Matthew 3:6,11; Mark 1:5,8; Luke 3:16; John 1:26,31; Acts 1:5, 11:16 and 19:4". On page 408 of *The Wandering Soul* John Philip Schobali writes likewise, "the large [or high] worship service where the water of baptism was poured out over them cannot be described", and again where he writes, "thereupon the baptismal water was poured out over them as young plants on the banks of a stream", page 411. One might also mention Herman Schijn, the Aeltester of the *Taufgesinnten Gemeinde* at Amsterdam and the writer of the history of the ancient Mennonites of Holland which can be relied upon, which not only speaks for fact that affusion was a valid baptism but also that it was practised in that manner.

All of these lived in a time when they publicly confessed their faith and baptism before judge and Pope. Far be it from them, that had the mode of immersion been such a holy duty to them as brother Enns writes, that they would have drawn back or been inhibited because of a clashing with the world, i.e. the fear of the cross. Indeed no. They did not shy away from the cross of Jesus in this manner, rather they sacrificed estate and property, and gave their very lives, before they would concede in even the least important teaching.

Alas, where am I to commence should I not wish to recognize your baptism as a valid baptism? And how do you reason, beloved brother, now that you do not consider it to be a baptism? Where does this leave you with your baptism? For it

is certain that you have not been immersed as you have been baptized by pouring. Indeed what if I also thought this way and said that it was no baptism? Would I then not also have to say together with Asaph, "I had also almost said the same, but behold by doing so I would condemn all the generation of your children" (Psalms 73:15).

Oh beloved brother, without regard that you will think that I am merely inflating myself if I am not of one mind with you in this matter, I will become even more intimate and earnest. I plead with you, yes, I beg of you that you give the matter careful thought and consideration. Perhaps you will revoke your judgment and perhaps you might still change your mind, when you give thought to the earnestness of those holy testimonies of blood and to their zeal for the house of the Lord and also to their baptism. Are they to have erred so terribly? Are they to have been the ones who allowed their bodies to burn, without the love? But oh! I repeat my plea one more. Do at least retract to the point that you would at least recognize affusion as a valid baptism.

Does it not also seem to you, as if you are offending one of the least of the Lord without Scriptural grounds? And that you are perplexing the conscience of many? And disturbing the Gemeinde? Why should you have to require the same of me and others? That I should renew by baptism because, as you say, I had so often lamented of myself, which is also true. And even though I can present myself before God together with the poet and say, "It is sufficient that you have found grace for your soul; the fury of God is not within me", etc., I must nevertheless daily concern myself for my sins and in great weakness lament, that I have supplicated to the Lord not only three times together with Paul but in fact numerous times, that this, so great a weakness, would at least more and more depart from me--even if not completely. I know all too well that I need only to allow His grace to be sufficient for me. For it shall always remain true that, "Of myself I am nothing but sin; but in you, oh God, and through you, righteousness is imparted to me".

But no second baptism will avail to help me in any way, for this weakness would overtake me nevertheless. Rather even when I feel as I do now, that the chastisement of the Lord is coming upon me, because I seem to be losing the first inspiration and love for the Saviour, I would nonetheless again have to hear, confess, and repent. Indeed, I think that I would far more have to lament since I would have abused baptism, through seeking my liberty and reconciliation with God therein, when in fact baptism shall constitute a covenant with God and not the removing of filth from the flesh. Finally even if those men, or even if only one of them who had baptized one and another of us, would have been spiritually dead together with the angel of the Gemeinde at Sardis, although they had the name that they lived, what harm would this occasion to us, if only we were being led in all truth by the Holy Spirit? Surely none of us would have such unbelief that we only have our hope in Christ for this life. Instead we also believe that just as Christ has arisen from the dead, likewise He will also awaken us through His majesty on that day and reward us according to our works, either for good or for evil.

Indeed, the fear of eternal death which is a fruit of faith was in us a long time prior to our baptism. Is this not true, beloved brother? Surely we thought much further at the time of our baptism than merely, "Now let us eat and drink for tomorrow we will die". Why would we not want to or be able to allow the

earnest practice of the acclamation of Paul to be sufficient for us when he says, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15). Or even if one or another has first received the water, namely baptism, and has thereafter received the Holy Spirit so that as in John 5 the three witnesses, spirit, water, and blood, were not all present at the baptism; why should he not allow this to be sufficient for him together with the believers in Samaria where this was also the case, Acts 8, if only he is now wholly led of the Holy Ghost?

I have now written something with respect to baptism, but I do not hold that the Saviour and also many others have not been baptized in water. For to do so would be contrary to the Holy Scriptures. Rather it is for immersion that I fail to find any scriptural basis. If one wishes to compare the dipping under of Naaman with baptism then one can also understand many other matters in this way where Paul refers to various baptisms of which many instances would much more bring to mind a sprinkling rather than dipping. The word dipping [tauchen] only appears twice in the New Testament and even then does not refer to baptism but rather to the dipping of a morsel in a dish and of the dipping of the tip of the finger in water. In contrast the word sprinkle [bespringen] which the apostle mentions many times, especially in Hebrews, where he also speaks of baptism in chapter 9 verse 10, truly has the examples of the old covenant in mind, such as the many washings and sprinklings. For example, the preservation of eight souls from the deluge and the passing through the waters by the children of Israel are referred to as a baptism (1 Peter 3; 1 Corinthians 10).

I stated that I did not want to argue contrary to the Holy Scripture that baptism has not taken place in water. Rather I merely seek to demonstrate to all those who are somewhat innocent that affusion is also a valid baptism. Indeed, that in fact many, many, including those who were holy bearers of the cross of Jesus Christ, considered pouring or affusion (or sprinkling for those who prefer this term) to be a valid baptism. And beloved brother Wiebe would you not also want to retract to the point where you could allow pouring to stand as a valid baptism? Especially when we may also conclude that Cornelius and his household, Acts Chapter 10, and similarly the jailer, were not baptized in a stream.

Nor will I argue that there never was a time when there was a preference for the immersion of the body during baptism, and I would also allow the same to stand as a baptism. But to hold that the pouring with water, namely sprinkling, is no baptism, degenerate, contrary to Scripture, and for naught and that a rebaptism is therefore necessary, I cannot understand in that way. Rather I fear much more that through this judgment the Gemeinde, even if only lukewarm and one of the least Gemeinden of the Lord, has been offended without there being reason for so doing, and that the unfortunate pronouncement of our Lord Jesus Christ in Luke 17 might be applicable. No one should understand me as if I did not believe that one should first repent, and first have faith, and first be inspired by the spirit of God, before one is baptized. And for as long as the spirit of the Lord will in fact lead me, I will allow it to be my earnest responsibility in the future, to first direct the growing youths towards righteousness-working repentance before they are baptized upon their faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Enough regarding baptism for this time. I will also write a few words to you,

beloved brother, as I have great concern that you might all be truly unprejudiced and circumspect, and that you would not too quickly give up the fellowship one with the other. Rather I would encourage you that he who would prevail might be more and more holy. I would also provide the brotherly counsel that none of you would now suddenly decide to move away from there because of this, unless you already stood in agreement to do so. For we do not have good examples of such a moving about from past experiences, which is neither praiseworthy nor the will of God.

Oh, may we pray to the Lord that He might grant us the gifts to examine the spirits for there are many which would that they could direct us away from our goal. Some of them come with humility and spirituality, but are inflated and without substance since they say you shall not touch this or that. Others again come with the freedom of the flesh as if we might utilize the liberty of Christ as a cove for evil. In short all around us we hear the echo, here is Christ and there is Christ. Many in fact say that Christ is in the chamber of their hearts. And for this reason John says "Prove the spirits whether they be from God" which we must also give careful consideration in these times of ours.

I also bid you, finally, that you might forgive me for having written to you at such length. I might not have written anything at all if you beloved brother had not declared baptism with water, namely by pouring, as being so completely worthless. In accordance with my conviction I merely wanted to demonstrate from the writings of our venerable forefathers that when they received the covenants through faith, they also confessed and practised baptism in this manner. Do not understand what I have written about the fear of death as being a fear from faith as if I thereby wish to justify the general faith of the world, for even the devil believes and trembles. Rather, I merely wanted to remind you and to draw to your attention that we had somewhat more knowledge and faith than do innocent children when they are baptized. We have also had more faith than those Corinthians who did not believe in a resurrection but who were nevertheless baptized.

Otherwise I endeavour to look to you for the best and hope that you will receive this insignificant and yet well meant writing from me in love; and should I have been wanting in anything that you would not forget me in my error and far rather that you would seek to teach me of something better. Perhaps opportunity will yet present itself that we shall be able to discuss many matters in person as I very much prefer to discuss such matters orally with you, beloved brother Wiebe, rather than to write regarding the same with pen and ink. I still have so much left to write about and have not declared nearly all of my concerns. For example, with respect to your letter, beloved brother Wiebe, when you advise that the brother Johann Dueck should consider and follow the inspiration of his beloved wife. As there are many brothers and sisters including she whom I do not know so intimately and as you perhaps have more conviction with respect to the inspiration of her spirit, I will leave this with you for you to reflect on in the fear of God.

Finally, I bid you once more; I ask of all you beloved brothers and sisters, that you would truly be circumspect and that you would not too quickly or at inconvenient season, abandon the fellowship one to the other. You are all aware of the lessons which we as well as you have already learned from other lamentable experiences. Therefore beloved brethren, be patient and strengthen your hearts for

the coming of the Lord is nigh. May the God of patience and peace direct your hearts and minds towards tolerance and the love of Christ and provide that you might be as one with Him through the salve of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Which I wish you with heartfelt greeting.

Your most insignificant brother,

Peter Toews

---

Copied by *Abraham M. Friesen*, Kleefeld, Molotschna, 1869.

---

## Editor's Comment

Many of the letters of Peter P. Toews have already been published in the previous five volumes of this historical series and it is left to the reader to review the same. The reader is asked to note in particular four of these epistles which deal with the process of reconciliation within the Kleine Gemeinde during this time: a) "A Letter to the Gemeinde in the Molotschna regarding the Election as Minister of Cornelius P. Toews," in Plett, ed., *History and Events* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1982), pages 43-47; b) "Letter for Intercession, October, 1866"; "An Epistle to the Molotschna Brethren, A Pastoral Letter"; and "An Epistle to the Gemeinde in the Molotschna and in the Crimea in Annenfeld regarding the Forthcoming Reconciliation"; in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph* (Steinbach, Manitoba, 1986), pages 202-203, 207-210 and 215-217.

Letters One and Two have been published here in order to provide an insight into Peter Toews' way of thinking and writing. The originals of Letters One and Two are recorded in Peter P. Toews, "Thirty Most Important Letters Written (Letters 11 and 12)," Peter P. Toews Document Collection, courtesy of Milton and Margaret Toews, Neilberg, Saskatchewan, 1981. It would have been unfair to Toews' leadership to publish the writings of Jakob A. Wiebe regarding the Crimean secession without publishing Toews' own and very impressive "Epistle regarding baptism". Letter Three originates with the Johann P. Friesen Document Collection--courtesy of Jake P. Friesen, Blumenort, Manitoba, 1982, and was previously published in Plett, ed., *Storm and Triumph*, 215-17.

# Chapter Five

## The Holdeman Attraction

**The Holdeman Attraction for Peter Toews, by Professor Clarence Hiebert, Tabor College, Hillsboro, Kansas.** Based on a paper presented at a Symposium sponsored by the History Committee of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference at the Steinbach Bible College, Steinbach, Manitoba, on March 13 and 14, 1987.

---

### Introduction.

What was the attraction that pulled Peter Toews, who was a respected and leading elder of the Manitoba Kleine Gemeinde (KG) in the early 1870s, to shift to the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite--which is the official name of the Holdeman people. Or stated another way, what frustrated Toews enough about the KG experience to look for something else and then to defect from them?

### The "True" Church.

Peter Toews had been programmed in the KG: theologically, ideologically, existentially and psychologically to the concept of and the existence of and the desire to be a part of the "true" church and the "true" church lineage. That understanding of the concept of the church is cardinal in realizing Toews' mentality, his mindset and his spirit. Now for him, such a church must be historically traceable. Some of you may be aware of the Southern Baptists who do this also and they do that through the *Martyrs' Mirror*. This was very important for John Holdeman and others in the conservative Mennonite tradition. It must also be a church that is theologically unique and clearly distinguishable. It must be church. What distinguishes a church from a club? That is the kind of question legitimately asked.

The church must also be existential reality--not simply something that is theoretically talked about but something that one is faithful to and it must be biblically defensible. This was important for Peter Toews and this was what he was looking for. In his own experience with the KG, he perceived that they had by 1880 or before that, perhaps in the 1860s, come to a point of spiritual decay and with all their talking about the pure church he wondered whether they were really what Klaas Reimer, Heinrich Balzer and others had said they were. The historical evidence of his own problems in this regard is prominent in the last few pages of his *Sammlung . . . zur Historie der Kleinen Gemeinde der Mennoniten* where he had recorded the KG struggles. The bulk of the material included in this work are letters and descriptions of people in leadership disputing--or infighting; they were fighting among each other--there were squabbles. Which in itself was the flashpoint or part of the reason for the KG making a new beginning more than a half a century earlier. No doubt Peter Toews asked himself the question, "If that is what they said they wanted to be, why aren't they that?" They could no longer see the

glory of that beginning anymore. Or I should say, Toews could not, since his own parental homelife--as described by the historical records--indicates that they might have glorified that for him, namely, the ideal of what Klaas Reimer and others said they were.

We read something of this in the *Sammlung*. After becoming a Holdeman, Toews recalled his childhood and strong schooling in the concepts of there needing to be a true church of God;

I thought the Kleine Gemeinde, as my parents had taught me, was that church. I took a lot of guff from my school comrades for holding to that. They called me names like "Fromskotuks".

Does anyone know what that is? You who understand Low German better than I do might know what that Kleingemeensch expression might be. Well, in any event, we know that it was a nasty word or a put down.

I also felt some nudging at that time [Peter Toews was] about becoming a preacher [this is when he was still a child] and a love for the Kleine Gemeinde. I believed I was converted before I was baptised and I desired to live a holy life. I went through a difficult experience in relation to a hoped for marriage that frustrated me. I was greatly helped during this time of need and testing by reading Menno's Meditation on the Twenty-fifth Psalm. I married in the fall of that year. . . In 1866 the church split . . .

Toews then reports extensively in that regard. At the age of 25 he was elected to the ministry. So much for an elusion to this time of his life.

Peter Toews' added dilemma was, after he was elected as minister, he began reading rather avidly. This seems to have been the case for all of the KG leaders--Klaas Reimer, Abraham Friesen. They read the works of Menno Simons, Dirk Philips, the Martyr's Mirror, etc. But then something else happened. When the first emigrants left Russia in 1874, Toews decided to stay and see to it that the entire immigration would be wound up properly. It was at this time that one of his widowed aunts said she was casting off many of her husband's books because she did not want to take too many things along; she offered them to Toews. One of the books was a work in Dutch by Claas Gangloffs. The English title was "The United Undivided Church of God". It was written in Dutch and Toews began reading it. He apparently understood Dutch. We know that the Mennonites in Prussia talked Dutch for 250 years, not German. They shifted to German while they were in Prussia. And reading this book by Claas Gangloffs began to trigger doubts in his mind about the reality of the KG being that true church. We will come back to this again a bit later.

### **The New World.**

Peter Toews was personally oriented to be progressive in some of his thoughts. He did not seem to be in as much of a rut of tradition as some of his colleagues were, namely, those who were always wearing the sackcloth, saying, "Well is this what Menno wrote, or Dirk wrote or the Martyr's Mirror?" He was not

quite as defensive as his other colleagues. Settling with the most conservative of the 8000 that came to Manitoba, he seemed to have felt the need to move beyond a posture of defensiveness towards the world around himself and his people, to come to understand and to come to grips more with the new era he had been reading about in the *Botschafter der Wahrheit*--the Old Mennonite paper--and the innovations and reported awakenings of the new world. By this I am referring to the Sunday School movement--which the Old Mennonites resisted very fiercely. I am also talking about revival meetings, evangelists, camp meetings, bible schools, missions, bible and tract societies, testimony giving, the explosion of literature, the use of gospel songs--or as some of you might refer to it, the entire movement known as revivalism.

The *Herold der Wahrheit* and other German periodicals reported many new things being afoot in the world of his time and the response to these reports varied. Some said it was a terrible thing and thought it worldly, others thought it something that was a diversion to what Menno, Dirk and others would approve of. Still others were looking at it in more friendly ways. So there were those who were defensive and furious, critical, selective and innovative; for some it prompted a new kind of release.

North America was a new setting that stimulated innovation. There was a frontier spirit here not only in acquiring land and farming opportunities and methods, but also in the whole realm of ideas and maybe, more particularly, of methods of being churchied. Hearing about the possibility of vital and significant Christian experiences, as over against constantly being defensive about their history and their theology, or theological religion, probably intrigued him. Where were these things going on and why? And what were these people saying and what were their points of reference? What realities of newness and authenticity were evident where people had these kinds of experiences and were doing these kinds of things? Could any or all of these be matched and related to Mennonite moorings?

It was this kind of thinking and his relationship with John Holdeman that incorporated much of this. John Holdeman could marry these factors--put them together and say, yes, that fits, because he also was very much into Menno Simons and Dirk Philips and the Martyr's Mirror. Toews discovered that Holdeman was doing the same thing in an upswing sort of way and that is what Peter Toews apparently felt he needed--not only he, but also his fellow KG people. He began a correspondence with John Holdeman about this within 6 months of his arrival in Manitoba; the first letter was written in 1876 by John Holdeman from Enterprise, Kansas, and he began to have a very intense correspondence with him. Finally hearing from Holdeman, he made a trip to Kansas and during this trip, Holdeman said, "Well, you can come and see for yourself what is going on here." We will refer to Peter Toews' report in this regard later. Classical Mennonite-oriented renewalism, revival with a charismatic leader clearly in charge, was what John Holdeman was about and this intrigued Peter Toews.

#### **Particular issues for Peter Toews.**

A question which I raise, for which I have no particular answer, maybe Del Plett or others would, is, were there some personal agendas that Peter Toews was trying to resolve? For example, when he came to Manitoba here, was he in a merry-go-round regarding the Manitoba situation, such as insolvable, relational

problems with fellow elders? Was there such a thing? I do not know the answer. Jakob M. Kroeker did not go along with this revivalism. Was the Steinbach and Jansen, Nebraska, split felt to be so intolerable and so intense and his own determination that it had to be resolved so difficult for him that he finally said, "I must find a way out of this? I do not want to be in an endlessly squabbling group."

Another thing he may have thought about is, "Who is in charge anyhow? Is that clear? Am I or is somebody else? Who does things when things go this badly?" Were there family polarizations in (as you can tell even in the meeting here) of relationships and of defending one's own relationship to the people who are in charge? That has sometimes been the case. Did he feel himself hamstrung by having to give himself constantly to these kinds of matters? He was doing it in Russia, would he have to do it now in Manitoba as well? For what he really loved to do was to write hymns and poetry, preach and reflect; he meditated, and I understand from someone here this morning, that he loved to do this in his garden and to see and observe things which God had created in nature. So if he was having to constantly deal with squabbles, with dissension, it conflicted with what he was all about as an individual.

There is one other issue over here that is very clear and John I. Penner, John M. Penner, Peter J. B. Reimer and others have alluded to this, and that is an issue of theology, namely, the assurance of salvation issue. There were KG people--I don't know if it was true of all of them--who simply felt it to be self-evident that "ringen and beten" was the only way that one could make it into the kingdom. "Hast du durch gebeten? Have you prayed your way through?" Some people--no doubt--thought of this as sort of becoming kind of a joyless expression. When do you finally say, I know that my Redeemer lives? I have a relationship with God. It seems from some of the writings that this assurance of salvation was something that may have depressed them. Was Peter Toews questioning the theology and practice of this kind of depression-producing way of being a Christian? So there were those who were espousing this assurance of salvation.

Another observation--John Holdeman was a very shrewd person and when he wrote to Peter Toews, when you read the letters, he would say, "You are one of the finest persons I have ever met. I think about you, I pray a lot. I just hope we can be together often. What do you have in your library? What to you think of this, that and the other?" Now just think about what that does to somebody, who, when he is with his own people was constantly asked, "Well how are we going to take care of that thing up there in Jansen, Nebraska?" When you finally throw one kind of acceptance and appreciation for who this person is as over against the dissension-oriented experience, then, I think some of us know where we might come down.

There are those people who like to be in the middle of squabbles, but Peter Toews was not cut out that way. And so here he discovers Holdeman talking about things that he liked to talk about, "What is a pure church? When is a church really true?" Toews was an avid reader of history and the lineage teaching intrigued him also. That must really have felt good to him and I think that when he discovered the book by Claas Gangloffs on the undivided church he told Holdeman about it. Holdeman was just writing his massive *Spiegel der Wahrheit* at the time, and concluded, "There is another one there, see?" In other words, Peter Toews was feeding him the material he wanted and Holdeman was telling Toews how much

he appreciated that kind of discovery and that kind of help.

Another thing that helps to understand why Toews went to the Holdeman movement is that John Holdeman was at the ripest part of his life. John Holdeman was rejected, basically, by his own people for some fairly good kind of reasons--the same reasons that you and I might reject somebody if we knew what kind of person he had been in his younger years and perhaps some of the kind of arrogance with which he went about the early stages of forming the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite. By this time he was 40 and he had mellowed. Furthermore, he had started writing and he had read more and he had learned something about having relational finesse and knowing how to deal with people.

His own people, namely, the Old Mennonites and the Old Order Amish and the people in that setting of Ohio where Holdeman came from--those not of the Russian background--these people just said, "Oh, he is another one of those and we have had 25 of them in our backyard." He certainly was one of many and one of the observations that I make in my writings is that Holdeman's movement would have died had it not been for the Manitoba response--the KG--and the McPherson County, Kansas, response. Holdeman would have gone the way of many other movements of the 1800s. But it was this acceptance in Manitoba by Peter Toews and KG people and in Kansas by the forty to fifty per cent rather poor Volhynian Polish Mennonite groups that gave him a following. But Peter Toews did not know this history at the time. John Holdeman came here in 1875. He was travelling and evangelising; he was writing books and talked German. That was important because that was Peter Toews' language and they talked the same line. This was clearly the right time for Peter Toews to meet John Holdeman.

There was also an apparent readiness for about half of the KG people here to join in with this experience, to experience something new. There must have been a feeling of tiredness and bankruptcy at that point in KG history. They also trusted Toews implicitly. This is a little like people listening to Billy Graham, coming to faith in Christ through what he said, and then saying, "We will trust Billy Graham for everything." Finally in a situation like that you do not ask any other analytical or critical questions about "What has Billy Graham said about non-resistance?" which would be very important to them. Similarly with someone like Toews whom they loved and trusted, they would have said, "We like to hear him preach; we like to sing his kind of songs. We will go where Toews goes." I think that the mass going over should not surprise us in the midst of this fairly strife-torn group. Thus, trust and faith in his pursuits and goals, his desires, his renewal and yearnings are something that struck them.

### Other Choices.

This raises another interesting question: why does Toews choose Holdeman? Virtually everybody else in North America who knows Holdeman calls him a disturber; they write him off. You can read some very stern things in this line written among the Old Mennonites regarding Holdeman and his group.

There are at least five different options that Toews might have considered. One was the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren, the K.M.B. group, because after all, it came out of the KG with Jacob A. Wiebe. But the Kleine Gemeinde really saw the business of baptism by immersion as a terribly negative kind of mode. Nowhere, after all, do you really read about that style of baptism in the classical

writings of Mennonite and Anabaptist faith. Undoubtedly that rubbed them the wrong way. I do not know what other obstacles there may have been but the rimmer Mennonite Brethren could have been one logical group.

The Mennonite Brethren would have been another possibility but I think the steamier side of that movement has already been described. We are all aware of the kind of in-fighting that brought it into being in Russia and the continual tension between it and the Grosse or Grote Gemeinde so that certainly was not something that would have attracted Toews.

The General Conference Mennonite Church, which had similar beginnings in Oberholzer, might have been an option. But the KG probably would have said that the people who were in the Grosse Gemeinde in Russia, after all, were joining them and we are not them. So they would have been written off because of the close identification of Grosse Gemeinde--or Kirchen Gemeinde--with the General Conference Mennonites.

There are two other possibilities. When Toews came to Kansas he could have met the nearby Brethren in Christ movement which was really quite close in their interest in holiness, in living a pure life, plain clothing and these kinds of things. This would have been preached, but they were not Mennonites so maybe that was a point for which he would have written them off. They did not refer to Menno Simons and Dirk Philips, though they were later connected with Mennonites through MCC, because they were related and connected in so many ways. The Old Order Mennonites might have been a fifth choice. The reason Toews would have written off the mainline group of Mennonites in North America--namely, the so-called "old" Mennonites--is that they were anti-John Holdeman; they were anti-revival, anti-Sunday School, and they were perhaps too much in a conservative holding pattern.

#### Letter correspondence.

The kinds of interests which Holdeman shared with Peter Toews can be rather vividly seen in Holdeman's letters to Toews. There are more than 300 of them written between 1876 and 1900 and they are very lengthy and in the Gothic German script, some of which is quite difficult to decipher. But the letters reveal a great deal about their common points of reference. Both men were undoubtedly the most widely read in their constituencies--KG and Church of God in Christ, Mennonite--and for that matter, among the mainline Mennonites in the United States. They were quite widely read in specific reference to their own historical heritage. Both were avid collectors of Mennonite writings and quoted freely from their work. It is evident that their specific interest in choice of Anabaptist-Mennonite writers and writings reflected the same kind of moorings and of bringing the attention of people back to the issue of Christian faith as they had come to view it. Their goal became to restore a decaying church--decaying church being language frequently used by John Holdeman--to its true foundation and to really be the church as they felt it was meant to be according to their understanding of the New Testament.

The constantly recurring theme in the exchange of letters, particularly in the early years of Toews' and Holdeman's expanding efforts, was to find the true remnant thread of the church in the historic milieu of the apostolic church. It seems that every new discovery that fed into this theme was shared with Toews by

Holdeman or by Holdeman with Toews and in each instance, Holdeman seemed to be saying, especially in the early years of correspondence, "You see, Toews, we are now that true church lineage that you keep wanting to be part of and if you were really concerned to be in the right stream, you and your flock would join us and then you could be assured of acceptance in God's sight." The approach that Holdeman used to relate to Toews was, psychologically speaking, a very convincing one. The initial contact--a letter dated December 29, 1876--is an inquiry about Anabaptist writings which Toews might have in his possession and that he would like to see them.

### **The Holdeman attraction.**

The concern to be the true church in the midst of a decaying Mennonite church of South Russia was Toews' agenda but Holdeman had the same agenda in North America. One senses that Toews was attempting to find an authentic understanding of the church in the midst of the following set of circumstances and influences which had converged on him:

1. The internal tension in the KG and the growing disunity for more than half a century after its founding as the true church.
2. His own restudy of the classic Anabaptist-Mennonite writings in which the true church concept was so prevalent.
3. The stirrings of renewal which are evident in various denominations in the Western hemisphere and in South Russia as well as North America.
4. The settling of North America where there is greater permissiveness of examining and looking at things and saying, "This is something we need."
5. His interest and encounter with John Holdeman, a German-speaking Mennonite who had similar interests.

Holdeman must have seemed very attractive to Toews in this period of re-evaluation. Holdeman had dared to challenge his past and to break with his own people; he was no longer intimidated by others like himself who were also going through this rethinking and who also, like himself, were searching with a great finality about what the church should be and what it should not be. Holdeman corresponded extensively with other "come-outers". This is a term commonly used by people who study separatism or secessionists. The term comes from the Bible verse, "Come ye out from among them and be ye separate." That is the favourite text of all denominations that start from what is called "come-outery".

Holdeman also visited several of the leaders and read their manifests. His major writings quote these encounters rather extensively in letters and in documents, all to prove that his movement was the only faithful church amidst the decaying church. There were many confusing denominations starting but they were all coming to false conclusions in their re-study process. In many instances, the approach that Holdeman used in his encounters with others was to appear, initially, to be interested in knowing whether they were coming out where he did, and he says, "I am eager to join you if you are the true church or you will join us." But then he becomes frustrated and says, "Well, I have proved (a favourite word of his), I have proved and discerned that you are not where you should be." This is also what he did with the KG here in Manitoba. He came here, visited, and then wrote a long letter back to Toews telling him on which points they could not possibly be considered the true church. In each instance, each group he studied is

written off as not being valid for one reason or another. He uses the same tactic with Toews in the correspondence when he addresses Toews not as "Brother" Toews, but always as "Friend" Toews. Only when Toews joined him, does he become "Brother" Toews.

Holdeman made his first trip to Manitoba in early November, 1879, and he said he was coming here to prove the KG. Toews, interested in Holdeman's preaching of renewal, was probably not keenly aware of his insistence upon radical separation from one's own church affiliations. Toews probably thought, "Well, I like some of what I see--Holdeman is spiritually rich, Holdeman is doing good work. A revival is going on in Kansas; people who were dead, spiritually dead, in need of life, that nobody else could do anything with, are becoming a new people in Christ through the work of Holdeman. That is what we need also." Toews hoped for a renewal but did not realize that when Holdeman would come, he would disprove him; this was going to be something that Holdeman would finally say, "The only way you can really be renewed is to join my group."

I doubt that Toews was aware of this agenda. It is likely that Toews simply wanted Holdeman to introduce the KG people to the idea and experience of revival and the concept and experience of conversion within the context of the classical Anabaptist-Mennonite teachings which he himself loved. Toews probably hoped that this, coming from one who believed in a conservative, disciplined church, would help to bring the KG out from its bickering and dilemma. Perhaps Toews also felt that affiliation with Holdeman's movement was a live option and could lead to a new vitality within the ranks of the KG. But it did not turn out that way. No conversions are reported in the visit of November 1879. It is likely that this encounter in fact, was predominantly between John Holdeman and Toews and a few KG leaders. Toews appears to have invited Holdeman to prove the authenticity of the few other groups which had historical associations with the Manitoba group, namely Jansen, Nebraska, and Jacob A. Wiebe and Krimmer Mennonite Brethren in Kansas. Within several weeks, Holdeman visited these groups.

Holdeman's first letter to Toews following the Manitoba visit was a continuation of Holdeman's previous emphasis--authenticity of baptism. But now he also added one thing that really troubled Toews and that is, "Not only must your baptism be based on a conversion experience but the one who baptizes you has to be from the true lineage." This was a real dilemma, because Toews said, "I was converted before I was baptized, so let's not quibble on that one." And then Holdeman replied, "But that is not the only issue. The issue is were you baptized by somebody who was of the true lineage?" It was at that point that there was a problem.

#### **Peter Toews' visit to Kansas, 1880.**

Let me refer to a number of matters which will help us understand how Toews responded to this. This comes from John M. Penner's book on the Holdeman Church, namely, 'Toews' report of visiting the Kansas church in McPherson County:

June 1881, Sunday, I, with the brethren John and Abram Hiebert and also Jacob Harms went to a meeting at the Holdeman church,

a distance of about 18 miles [he would have been at Gnadenu so he went 18 miles]. Here a large assembly was gathered. A minister by the name of Schmidt was preaching. The building was built by the congregation who expected to hold services. We were told that members had come to the meeting from as far as 20 miles in the opposite direction. Also three brethren from Michigan were present.

We must remember that John Holdeman has gone to many states and provinces with his preaching.

. . . Afterwards, I was introduced to the minister, who in turn, introduced me to the assembly, also announcing the reason for my coming. Early Friday morning we went to the appointed meeting where three ministers, Schmidt, Voth and Toews, and with them a large assembly were gathered. After the opening song, it was announced that instead of preaching, I would be given the privilege to explain myself and ask such questions as perplexed me. This appeared to be, and I think to be as unexpected to the church as it was to me. Yet, I was glad for the opportunity for questioning.

The foremost topic in my mind was concerning baptism--whether they rebaptised or whether they would baptise a person a second time if he was found to have been unconverted at the time of his first baptism. They answered me in the affirmative. They had such a case, whereupon they called upon a certain brother to relate his experience. He had repented in a certain measure. . . He gave false testimony of having a good conscience toward God (1 Peter 3:21). Minister Voth administered the baptism, but this brother, instead of receiving peace with God, felt as though the curse and condemnation of God was poured upon him. His intention to hide his plight had come to naught. A few days after he met John Holdeman, he went to him and the other ministers to reveal his plight to them. He then received peace and remission of his sins and had an irresistible desire to be rebaptized. Nothing could satisfy him except a baptism upon his true conversion. Afterwards, Minister Voth told of his confession of his guilt before God and how his faulty proving, due to inadequate grace, had humbled him. It occurred to me, "Has no one in the audience acquired a feeling of guilt and doubt of his baptism while hearing this story?" . . .

During this discussion my mind was somewhat relieved of my prejudice to baptism. Perhaps, thought I, it would serve them as a lesson to exercise greater care in proving applicants for baptism. I would thank God if Holdeman and his fellow ministers would have grace not to baptize anyone without true conversion again, and that they would have fear like Menno and die rather than baptize the unpenitent. And I thought if God, in that church, revealed such displeasure when only one person was baptized without being converted, what would become of our baptism? How many of us in the Kleine Gemeinde had also received baptism on false testimony?

There is something to be learned from the divine severity thus displayed. I felt impressed to inquire concerning the use of tobacco for, thought I, could tobacco users still remain among them? If so, how could they feel the peace of God? They replied that it was neither permitted nor in use. I was reminded that amongst us, some justified the use of alcohol, claiming they became sick without it. Therefore, a close proving is necessary to recognize the spirit of false-justification, lest it eventually justify the lust of the flesh. I told the assembly that personally, the use of tobacco would hinder my conscience and if ever it were prescribed to me as a medicine, I would not use it in the presence of others, to avoid all appearance of evil. I was supported in this.

Then Toews goes on to talk about firearms, excommunication, feet washing, divine dreams and revelations. Finally, towards the end, he says,

I believe that the church [talking about the Holdeman church] is more entitled to be the Church of God than ours, insofar that they have more experience in the peace of God and forgiveness of sins. They are baptized into one body by one spirit and have a firm rule by which they take only the born again children of God into their church, through baptism. The indications of the Church of Christ and God are also more evident.

This was Peter Toews' critique of the KG with which he had been associated. I will conclude this segment by saying here that the result of Holdeman's subsequent return to Manitoba in the winter of 1881-1882, when he had been invited back, was that 136 people were baptized. It is not to be assumed that there were 136 from a total of 700 (approximately, counting infants) souls in the Manitoba KG, for about 100 or so would have been members and the other 36 or so, were children of members who had never been baptized and then became followers of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite.

#### **The 1881 Secession and Its Aftermath.**

What were some of the responses in the KG to these events? Jacob M. Kroeker of Rosenort, Manitoba, who was the one elder who remained with the KG and refused to join this exodus with Toews, reported that the churches did not enjoy peace for long after moving from Russia. He refers to Holdeman's involvement with them and he writes, and this is quoted from the *Christlicherfamilien Freund* in 1963,

At first it appeared as though he [John Holdeman] wanted to join us. But after making thorough investigation of us, he assessed us to be too lax and our baptism invalid since he did not consider it to be according to the Gospel. There was an important meeting with Holdeman and Syler [Syler was the minister who travelled with John Holdeman] in the winter of 1881. But the majority could not be convinced to accept their beliefs. But finally, Elder Toews gave

## Holdeman his church.

This is the way it is usually referred to in the KG writings: that Toews gave Holdeman his church, the KG. That was the insider's viewpoint. Kroeker writes further:

Then our faith was severely tested, whether he had done what was right and if he could stand before God, for when an elder and leader leaves his congregation, then it seems as though all the sheep will go astray. At that time I had been serving for only three years. That which hurt me particularly and penetrated my heart, since we loved each other dearly and held each other in high esteem, was that we had to part from each other since we could not accept their beliefs and allow ourselves to be baptized again.

A century later, Peter J.B. Reimer described the division and its aftermath in the following way;

There was much heartache and bitterness in this division. Families were separated and close relatives and friends estranged from each other. For a good many years, it was unthinkable, even at funerals, to come to each other's meetings. It was very unfortunate for the future progress of the Kleine Gemeinde, to say the least, because of the nature of this division. We can safely assume that it was the most progressive-minded and spiritual-minded group that left the Kleine Gemeinde.

I will conclude with that. I also want to say I know there are many of you here who know a lot more about parts of this story than I do. I have taken it from one standpoint, which is what I think was expected of me. Delbert Plett has a lot of information; he shared a piece with me in the break here, about an incorrect family genealogical connection--that Peter Toews was born not of his father's first marriage but of a third marriage to Maria Plett.

### **Peter Toews' Role in the Holdeman Movement.**

Peter Toews' profound ability and contribution to the Holdeman movement was in the area of pastoral care. In fact, I think he served as Holdeman's personal pastor. Sometimes Holdeman did not know what to do with his head, his heart and his emotions. You can read about this in his letters when he says, I need to unload on somebody and you are my pastor, Toews. Holdeman became the triggering person to invite Toews to an upbeat new way, another way of looking at things. Toews, in turn, became a pastor and served Holdeman. Beginning in March, 1885, and through the rest of his final 15 years, Holdeman wrote frequently to Toews, speaking with more frankness about his personal struggles than to anyone else whom I know of. The letters deal with his frustrations about the slowness of God's work progressing among them, the inroads of sweeping materialism which was taking hold both in Manitoba as well as in Kansas, and problems with those who were defecting from the Holdeman movement--people who had been a vital part

in the early part of the work, and so forth. And, above all, there was the increasing financial indebtedness that was building up in Holdeman's own records.

Beginning in 1897, Toews joined Holdeman to issue the *Botschafter der Wahrheit*--their church periodical. It is evident that Toews did not wish to nor aspire to be in an administrative leadership type of position. That was simply not in his nature. When Holdeman died, he refused to accept the editorship of the *Botschafter der Wahrheit* and it went to Johann D. Dueck. Dueck actually wrote very little but Toews continued to contribute most of the writing, mostly lengthy series by the classical, traditional, and historic writers who were considered to be representatives of the true church, of the true lineage; that was a strong theme. Toews also wrote devotional meditations, poetry and hymns. He was the editor of the first official Holdeman hymnal in 1906 under the title *Unparteiisches Liederbuch*, which included about 20 of his own hymns, in a total collection of 353 hymns. The songbook also included some songs by Wilhelm Giesbrecht, Steinbach, Manitoba.

Following Holdeman's death, no conference was held among the Holdemans for nine years because nobody agreed to take the leadership. There were a total of thirteen years where there was no meeting of the church, though they had had seven before 1896. Finally in 1909, nine years after Holdeman's death, and thirteen years before Toews' death, he consented to take the initiative in seeing that a conference would be scheduled and he wrote an article about what the mood of this conference should be and what the issue should be. But he did not show up at that conference; I think that Wilhelm Giesbrecht was the moderator at that time. This is very interesting. It is possible that he was in ill health, but he was not really, in a sense, very much of a conference kind of person. As always, however, his sensitive expression bore considerable weight in shaping the tenure of the Holdeman constituency. Unity, spiritual sensitivity, desire for truth, the making of wise and not hasty decisions, the nature of youth, sober and careful leadership that avoided selfish ways, being careful not to be trapped with contentious people, ideas and knowledge, these were the important elements of having a conference. And this is what Toews underscored.

Toews never travelled much--he never travelled extensively to evangelise as John Holdeman did. He was seen as an arbitrator sometimes between factions, but not if the case was too tough or was basically, legalistically oriented in the factions of the church, although one had seen him in that role in the Russian setting. In fact, John Holdeman, occasionally writes him and says, "Toews, you just have to get hold of this problem and get in there and work with the need here to practice more church discipline and see that things are cleaned up." Toews seems to have been a sensitive counsellor to individuals, something of a theologian and certainly a journalist. He was an expositor and a poet; he was also somewhat mystical. Toews himself, it seems, was not a stern person--he was not harsh or dogmatic or argumentative.

### **What about Holdeman's Emphasis on Dreams?**

Though Holdeman's arguments were usually supported by reference to Scripture, occasionally he referred to revelations or dreams or visions and that was kind of different for many Mennonites--although in and among the "old" Mennonites this was not completely unheard of. Some of you will have read about

the minister who went to church and fell asleep and then began to preach in this coma state, while his parishioners would frantically write every word he said. But are these kind of revelations to be kept on the same level with the Bible? If God is speaking directly, what do you do with that? This is one method whereby John Holdeman settled a number of critical points. When he went to a conference he used the revelations, the visions and the dreams, as a way of saying, "Well brethren, we do not have to discuss this anymore. God told me last night." And, of course, you do not argue with God. If Holdeman had a dream, vision or revelation no further study of the Bible really seemed necessary.

### **What about Holdeman's Baptism?**

Holdeman makes a point of baptism by someone of the correct lineage. Yet he has been accused of ignoring the problem this creates with his own baptism because he called the Old Mennonite Church, where he was baptised, a decayed church. He responded to this criticism by saying it was still okay in the year and day that he got baptized. He said the minister who baptized him was faithful up to such and such a date. So if you take that kind of an argument you come out okay, whatever date it might be. I do not know if he gives an exact date but he says, "When I was baptized, it was still not totally decayed." What I think he might have said was, "When I came along and started telling them and they resisted the truth of God, then their response indicated that they were now decayed but at the time of my baptism they were still a true lineage, and my association of baptism at the time, was still valid." Now the other question for the KG people that would be interested in the same sort of logic is, who ordained John Holdeman? The answer is that he was never ordained by any other minister. The Old Mennonites, in writing about this, found it to be very troubling and so did somebody here from Manitoba--I forget the name of that person. Holdeman's answer to that was, "God calls and chooses and ordains people by two ways: One is directly by the agency of brothers--it would not be sisters yet at that point--brothers among us and then hands are laid upon them and they are duly ordained. Or like the Apostle Paul, they are called of God and never formally ordained by a body of believers." This explains why John Holdeman never had hands laid on him in an ordination.

### **Was "true lineage" a Kleine Gemeinde Concern?**

I have not seen much about true lineage in the KG material I have read. It was a big issue for John Holdeman but I do not see it much in KG writings.

#### **Editor's comment**

The foregoing paper has been extracted from a tape recording of Professor Clarence Hiebert's lectures given at the Steinbach Bible College, Steinbach, Manitoba, on March 13 and 14, 1987. I acknowledge my indebtedness to Professor Hiebert for graciously allowing us to reproduce and publish his talk. Dr. Clarence Hiebert is a Professor of Biblical Studies and Historical Christianity at Tabor College, Hillsboro, Kansas, and is the author of a book on the Holdeman Church entitled, *The Holdeman People. The Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, 1859-1969* (South Pasadena, California, 1973), 663 pages.

## Index

Note: Unless otherwise designated references to place names refer to the Molotschna Colony, Russia.

### A.

Andres, Peter (born 1765) Lichtenau....66, 72.  
Andres, Johann, Grossdorf, Prussia.....50.

### B.

Baerg, Jakob (1777-1845) Molotschna....77, 647.  
Bearg, Johann (1813-1892) Nikolaidorf/ Mountain Lake, Min., ....77, 647.  
Baerg, Peter Bearg Rev. (1817-1901) Prangenu/ Nikolaidorf/ Kleefeld, Man ... 77, 377, 387, 389, 412, 447, 523, 556, 641, 647-672, 736, 749, 751, 754, 756, 760, 764, 790, 797, 806, 809, 811, 813, 827-31, 843, 902, 903.  
Baerg, Peter Neumann Rev. (1856-1933) Swalwell, Albt..... 523, 656.  
Balzer, Heinrich Rev. (1773-1842) Grossweide ....51, 65, 66, 229, 295, 349, 449.  
Balzer, Heinrich Rev. and theologian (1800-1846) Tiege....47, 50, 106, 117, 152, 293, 295, 305, 315, 331, 345, 348, 539-44, 587, 851, 910.  
Balzer, Heinrich (1810-1895) Alexanderwohl/ Goessel, Kan., ....347.  
Balzer, Heinrich (1820-1896) Hierschau/ Alexanderkrone/ Mountain Lake, Minn....345, 618, 626-27.  
Balzer, Jakob Heinrich Rev. (1861-1948) Mountain Lake, Minn....346, 627.  
Balzer, Johann (1851-1930) Inman, Kan., ....303, 350.  
Balzer, Peter Rev. (1827-1902) Paulsheim/ Inman, Kan., ....350.  
Barkman, Jakob Klassen merchant (1820-1902) Waldheim, ...623.  
Barkman, Jakob (M.) Regier Rev.(1824-1875) Waldheim/ Steinbach, Man... 66, 483, 515, 708, 839.  
Barkman, Jakob (J.) Wiens Ohm (1794-1875) Rueckcnau/ Blumenort, Man... 51, 65, 66, 267.  
Barkman, Johann (M.) Regier (1826-1879) Jansen, Nebraska....470.  
Barkman, Martin (J.) Wiens Schulz (1796-1872) Rueckcnau....51, 65, 66, 75, 78, 82.  
Barkman, Peter (M.) Regier (1845-1904) Gnadenu, Kansas....66.  
Bartel, Heinrich (1834-1867)....487, 488.  
Bartel, Jakob (1808-1872) Neukirch/ Marienthal....66, 451, 456, 471, 472.  
Bartel, Jakob Fast (1858-1929) Jansen, Neb....66.  
Bartel, Johann minister (1764-1813) Kronsgarten, Russia...51, 66.  
Bartel, Johann Fast (1864-1937) Jansen, Neb....66.  
Bergen, Elias von (1742-1808)....50.  
Boschmann, David (1767-1850) Rosenort.....51, 59, 403, 410.  
Boschmann, Gerhard (1827-1895) Gnadenu, Kan., ..447, 635, 763.  
Boschmann, Heinrich (1828-1907) Fischau/ Gnadenu, Kansas....290, 381, 447, 635.

Brauel, Jakob teacher (1803-1866) Rudnerweide, ...444.  
Brauel, Johann teacher (1835-1907) Ohrloff, ....444.  
Brandt, Heinrich Reimer (1838-1909) Prangenu/ Steinbach, Man.... 484, 621.  
Brandt, Jakob Fast (1858-1924) Jansen, Neb.....621, 633.  
Brandt, Klaas (1813/1817-1857) Tiegenhagen, ....68, 450, 463, 481, 518, 620-21, 632.  
Brandt, Klaas Reimer (1845-1901) Rosenort, Man... 405, 621, 628.  
Brandt, Maria (1843-1927), Friedensfeld /Steinbach, Man., ....617, 646.  
Brandt, Peter (born 1779) Blumenort...67, 74.  
Brandt, Peter (1810-1897) Rueckcnau....632.  
Brandt, Peter Reimer (1848-1930) Jansen, Neb....621.  
Braun, Abraham, Margenu,....783.  
Braun, Isak, Lindenu, ....478-9.  
Braun, Isaac Thews (1815-1869) Mariawohl...69, 514, 918.  
Braun, Isaac Wiebe (1795-1831) Schoenu, ...69, 514, 597.  
Braun, Jakob patriarch (born 1769) Schoenu,....67, 69.  
Braun, Jakob (born 1760) Tiegenhagen....69, 77.  
Braun, Jakob (1788-1855) Tiegenhagen....69, 71.

### C.

Cornies, Johann chairman (1789-1848) Ohrloff, .....26, 85, 151, 226, 298, 743, 744, 808, 817.  
Cornelsen, see Kornelsen.

### D.

De Veer (Fehr), Johann, Muntau, ....428, 444, 473, 615.  
De Veer (Fehr), Johann (died 1862).....452, 465, 474, 496.  
De Veer (Fehr), Maria Giesbrecht Regier (1800-1855) Muntau, ....473.  
Doerksen, Bernhard (1797-1874) Fischau....381.  
Doerksen, Cornelius (1824-1888) Alexanderthal/ Hillsboro, Kan ....454, 845, 857.  
Dueck, Abraham Loewen Aelt. (1841-1899) Gnadenthal/ Kleefeld, Man....359, 438-440, 618, 622.  
Dueck, Bernhard "Bochrend" Loewen deacon (1837-1894) Schoenu/ Friedensfeld, Borosenko....436, 467, 469, 482, 493.  
Dueck, Bernhard Rempel (1879-1969) Rosenhof, Man., ....438.  
Dueck, Heinrich Rempel Rev. (1873-1944) Kleefeld, Man., ....438.  
Dueck, Jakob (born 1766) Ohrloff.....53, 69, 124, 135, 149, 154, 225.  
Dueck, Jakob (1800-1868) Muntau,.....427-28, 442.  
Dueck, Jakob Loewen Rev. (1839-1893) Gnadenthal/ Kleefeld, Man....437, 618, 622, 675, 840.

- Dueck, Jakob Rempel Aelt. (1865-1924) Kleefeld, Man.....438.
- Dueck, Johann Rev. (1801-1866) Muntau.....48, 76, 154, 364, 405, 407, 427-507, 511, 518, 615, 618, 638, 640, 821.
- Dueck, Johann Dueck Rev. (1865-1918) Alexanderfeld, Kan, ....435, 921.
- Dueck, Johann Loewen Rev.(1833-1894) Alexanderkrone/ Kleefeld, Man...435-436, 460, 474, 617, 618, 630, 641.
- Dueck, Johann Rempel (1863-1937) Kleefeld, Man...359, 361, 439, 446, 622.
- Dueck, Johann Rempel deacon (1860-1901) Steinbach, Man., ....437, 514.
- Dueck, Johann Wiebe teacher (1865-1932) Rosenort, Man.....85, 433, 441, 448, 618.
- Dueck, Peter (1801-1842) Blumstein.....78, 435.
- Dueck, Peter Harms (1837-1931) Blumstein/ Rosenort, Man.....492.
- Dueck, Peter Loewen teacher (1842-1887) Gnadenthal/Kleefeld, Man.... 431, 437, 440, 448, 451, 498, 510, 520, 622, 787, 842, 856.
- Dueck, Peter Rempel Aelt. (1862-1919) Steinbach, Man...438, 447, 676.
- Dueck, Peter Wiebe (1870-1942) Gretna, Man./ Spokane, Wash., ....441, 448.
- Dyck, John "P", Springstein, Man., genealogist .... 427, 444.
- Dyck, John, researcher and historian Winnipeg, Man., ....499-507.
- Dyck, Klaas (1743-1826), Muntau .....53, 67, 69, 427-428, 499, 615.
- E.**
- Eidse, Abraham Spenst (1811-1891) Fischau/ Rosenhof, Man.....382.
- Eidse, Cornelius patriarch (born 1770) Fischau, .....53, 69, 381, 597.
- Eidse, Cornelius Spenst (1800-1860) Lindenau, ....593.
- Eidse, Cornelius Enns (1840-1914) Rosenhof, Man...433, 519.
- Ens, Adolf historian.....16, 148.
- Enns, Cornelius patriarch (1743-ca.1806) Fischau .....53, 63, 352, 379, 381.
- Enns, Cornelius (1832-1879) Blumstein/ Gnadenu, Kan., ...383, 386, 465, 468, 493, 556, 666, 737, 757, 759, 763, 774, 779, 791, 799, 829.
- Enns, Heinrich F. Aelt.(1807-1881) Fischau...63, 357, 364, 369, 379-386, 387, 406, 408, 411, 450, 454, 474, 511, 520, 580, 674, 708, 712, 721, 725, 751, 752, 754, 759, 760, 786, 793, 814, 820, 825, 826, 829, 848.
- Enns, Heinrich Plett (1859-1935) Rosenhof, Man.....383, 386.
- Enns, Jakob Aelt. (1763-1818) Tiegenhagen, ....29, 32, 115, 119, 124, 131, 149, 154, 157, 269.
- Enns, Jakob Sr. (1817-1889) Pordenau/ Jansen, Neb.....568.
- Enns, Jakob Driedger (1843-1917) Annafeld, Borosenko/ Jansen, Neb....385.
- Enns, Jakob Plett deacon (1856-1942) Rosenort, Man..... 383.
- Enns, Johann Toews Rev. (1850-1917) Rosenort, Man., ....383, 763, 774.
- Enns, Peter Rev. (1791-1857) Neukirch....51, 66.
- Enns, Peter (1822-1896) Neukirch/ Steinbach, Man., ....66, 487.
- Epp, Cornelius Rev. (1728-1805) Petershagen....37, 68, 74, 114.
- Epp, David Aelt. (1750-1802) Chortitza .....29, 53, 69.
- Epp, David Aelt. (1781-1843) Chortitza.....499, 506.
- Epp, Frank H. historian.....233, 236, 811.
- Epp, Peter Claussen Aelt. (1725-1789) Neunhuben, Prussia.....34, 68, 74, 78, 114, 122, 127, 139, 352.
- Epp, Jakob "D" Thiessen diarist (1820-1890) Judenplan....406, 499, 506.
- Esau, Cornelius Stammvater (born 1778) Fischau, ....53, 57, 381.
- Esau, Johann Cornelnsen (1805-1855) Fischau, ....385.
- Esau, Johann Klassen memoirs (1867-1946) Alexanderfeld, Kan.....713, 715.
- Esau, Johann Peters (1832-1904) Brandaeltester Fischau/ Rosenfeld, Man.....69, 75.
- F.**
- Fast, Berend (1758-1838) Lichtenau.....53, 55, 68, 79.
- Fast, Bernhard Baergen Rev. and teacher (1809-1878) Schoenau/ Rosenort, ...67, 69, 77, 403, 411, 449, 450.
- Fast, Bernhard Bernhard farmer (1823-1898) Rosenort, ...403, 411.
- Fast, Bernhard Harms (1790-1854) Lichtenau, ... 69, 72.
- Fast, Bernhard Neufeld Aelt. (1783-1861) Halbstadt...35, 69, 77, 135, 152, 229, 244, 246, 291, 356, 741.
- Fast, Cornelius Warkentin teacher (1840-1927) Steinbach, Man....657.
- Fast, Daniel Stammvater (1753-1829) Tiegenhagen.....53, 59, 68, 77, 150, 152.
- Fast, Heinrich (1826-1890) Steinbach, Man.....70, 98.
- Fast, Heinrich Loepp (1865-1963) Steinbach/ Kleefeld, Man.....438.
- Fast, Henry N., historian, Steinbach, Man., ....70, 243, 448, 631, 716, 845.
- Fast, Jakob (1772-1820) Aelt. Halbstadt.....116, 131, 134, 135, 150, 152, 157.
- Fast, Jakob Warkentin (1831-1885) Ohrloff/ Jansen, Neb... 462, 471, 674.
- Fast, Johann (born 1770) Blumstein.....53, 68, 70, 72.
- Fast, Johann Baergen teacher (1813-1892) Schoenau/ Gnadenu, Kansas ....764.
- Fast, Johann Harms (1794-1864) Blumstein.....55, 70, 72.
- Fast, Johann Johann (1851-1934) Korn, Ok./Schafter, Cal., ....765, 767.
- Fast, Johann M. (1837-1906) Annenfeld/ Hillsboro, Kansas...763.
- Fast, Johann Warkentin teacher (1837-1924) Gnadenheim/ Jansen, Neb....70, 72, 522, 780.
- Fast, Peter (born 1780), Muntau .... 53, 70, 155, 443, 444, 615.

- Fast, Peter Isaac (1831-1916) Rueckenau/ Jansen, Neb.....314, 358, 627, 714.
- Fast, Wilhelm (born 1773) Fischau.....53, 70, 817.
- Fehdrau, Abraham (born 1761).....53, 70.
- Fehdrau, Wilhelm (born 1799) Tiege, .....70, 350.
- Friesen, Abraham patriarch (1752-1810) Ohrlöff.....53, 68, 155, 223, 379, 401, 592, 845.
- Friesen, Abraham Friesen Rev.(1807-1891) Neukirch/ Jansen, Neb.....79, 357, 395, 403, 411, 449, 556, 641, 777, 778, 799, 815, 817, 902.
- Friesen, Abraham Loepp Aelt.(1831-1917) Jansen, Neb .....100, 234, 243, 293, 350, 377, 493, 597, 654, 673-706, 754, 773, 825, 828, 832, 836-37, 851.
- Friesen, Abraham Mathies Schutz (1834-1908) Kleefeld/ Blumenort, Man.....77, 409, 477, 493, 740, 909.
- Friesen, Abraham Rempel teacher (1846-1884) Lichtenau/ Blumenhof, Man.....91, 98, 484, 492.
- Friesen, Abraham Siemens businessman (1848-1916) Steinbach, Man...92, 360, 439.
- Friesen, Abraham Wiebe Aelt. (1782-1849) Ohrlöff.....36, 53, 63, 64, 77, 82, 100, 139, 151, 223, 237, 244, 268, 296, 367, 401, 405, 410, 546, 673, 809, 817, 849, 911.
- Friesen, Abraham Wiebe (1812-1889) Rueckenau/ Jansen, Neb...68, 450, 466.
- Friesen, Bernhard (1849-1921) Lichtcnau/ Kronswiede, Man., ...656.
- Friesen, Cornelius Friesen teacher (1810-1892) Margenau/ Blumenort, Manitoba...71, 155, 443, 444, 620, 777.
- Friesen, Cornelius Loepp Rev. (1841-1923) Jansen, Neb...377, 496.
- Friesen, Cornelius Plett teacher (1844-1899) Blumenort, Man... 409, 677, 691.
- Friesen, Daniel (1752-1826) Petershagen ... 55, 70, 71.
- Friesen, David A. Oberelnitz (1807-1893) Halbstadt...154, 741, 745, 748, 812.
- Friesen, Heinrich (1815-1856) Rueckenau, .....454.
- Friesen, Heiorich Brandt (1836-1900) Jansen, Neb...676.
- Friesen, Heinrich Delesky (1827-1877) Landskrone/ Manitoba...76, 787.
- Friesen, Heinrich Loepp (1851-1910) Rosenort, Man...234, 438, 439.
- Friesen, Heinrich Plett (1857-1889) Jansen, Neb.....409.
- Friesen, Isaac (born 1748) Altonau.....55, 70, 404.
- Friesen, Isaac (1788-1814) Altonau.....70, 71.
- Friesen, Isaac (1834-1898) Rev. Fischau/ Gnadenau, Kan...368, 387, 526, 567, 569-570, 580, 641, 882-83, 902.
- Friesen, Isaac Dueck (1865-1951) Rosenhof, Man...234, 799.
- Friesen, Isaac Mathies (1816-1886) Waldheim.....77, 404, 618, 625.
- Friesen, Jakob (born 1775) Muensterberg..... 55, 70, 79, 81, 132, 139, 151, 429, 445.
- Friesen, Jakob (1817-1894) Ohrlöff/Gnadenau, Kan....71.
- Friesen, Jakob Friesen (1820-1888) Kleefeld/ Rosenort, Man.....483, 485, 492, 512, 514, 555.
- Friesen, Jakob Klassen (1822-1875) Nikolaital, Kherson/ Steinbach, Man.....839.
- Friesen, Jakob Loepp (1837-1902) Nikolaidorf /Jansen, Neb.....479, 493, 649.
- Friesen, Jakob Schellenberg editor (1862-1931) Steinbach, Man....520.
- Friesen, Jakob Wiebe Schutz and deacon (1808-1889) Blumstein/ Jansen, Neb...76, 82, 234, 377, 407, 466, 673, 691,
- Friesen, Johann (1783-1816) Altonau.....71, 77, 403, 626.
- Friesen, Johann Rev. (1758-ca.1830) Schoenau/Rosenort.....32, 53, 55, 70, 136, 149, 152, 247, 355, 360, 403, 411, 597.
- Friesen, Johann (1797-1875) Halbstadt.....71.
- Friesen, Johann Friesen Aelt.(1808-1872) Neukirch/ Rosenfeld, Borosenko.....70, 72, 85, 152, 229, 355-361, 377, 362, 383, 388, 411, 431, 439, 449, 474, 477, 495, 511, 514, 556, 580, 618, 623, 673, 748, 749, 750, 751, 777, 778, 787, 800, 813, 817, 822, 825, 828, 845.
- Friesen, Johann Klassen teacher (1812-1884) Marienthal/ Harvey County, Kan., ...484.
- Friesen, Johann Klassen Rev. (1857-1934) Rosenort, Man....359.
- Friesen, Johann Plett genealogist (1847-1920) Rosenort, Man.....330, 360, 377, 389, 400, 409, 426, 659, 740, 854, 909.
- Friesen, Johann Wiebe (1789-1840) Ohrlöff.....57, 74.
- Friesen, Karolina Plett (1823-1887) Rosenort/ Jansen, Neb...409, 824, 838, 911.
- Friesen, Klaas (1774-1839) Lindenau.....55, 71, 140, 154, 515, 593.
- Friesen, Klaas Beargen (1838-1922) Steinbach, Man...444, 494.
- Friesen, Klaas Friesen deacon (1818-1871) Neukirch.....356, 366, 462, 470, 674, 777, 778.
- Friesen, Klaas Friesen (1813-1856) Paulsheim.....475, 476, 515, 708.
- Friesen, Klaas Mathies (1825-1853), .....467.
- Friesen, Klaas Reimer Rev. (1870-1942) Steinbach, Man.....439.
- Friesen, Klaas Wiebe Rev.(1793-1870) Altonau/ Rosenort.....77, 106, 156, 226, 293, 315, 390, 401-426, 449, 497, 820, 637, 646, 849.
- Friesen, Maria Enns (1837-1855), Neukirch...474.
- Friesen, Patrick poet Winnipeg, Man., .....227, 857.
- Friesen, Peter von (1779-1847) Schidlitz, Prussia...137, 142, 143, 146, 155, 224, 254, 262, 405, 458, 849.
- Friesen, Peter (1846-1931) Nikolaidorf/ Mountain Lake, Min., ....648, 658.
- Friesen, Peter Brandt (1838-1900) Neuanlage, Man.....234.
- Friesen, Peter Friesen Rev. and teacher (born 1812) Marienthal/ Mountain Lake, Min., ...357, 358, 360, 450, 454, 462, 485, 648.
- Friesen, Peter Martin historian (1849-1914) Halbstadt, ...14, 17, 85, 118, 233, 437, 587, 811, 849, 857.

Friesen, Peter Mathies (1827-1892) Hutchinson, Kan., .....409, 461.  
 Friesen, Peter Wiebe Rev. (1815-1892) Tice/Jansen, Neb. ....234, 267, 304, 350, 364, 430, 446, 450.  
 Friesen, Martin Friesen (1823-187\_) Neukirch/Goadenau, Kan., ....356, 777, 778.  
 Froese, Franz (1825-1884) Rosenort, Man....460, 515, 527.  
 Funk, John F. publisher (1835-1930) Elkhart. Ind....233, 847, 857.

## G.

Giesbrecht, Gerhard (born 1747) Muntau.....55, 71, 428, 442, 444, 615, 631.  
 Giesbrecht, Gerhard (1816-1863) Prangenaue.....494.  
 Giesbrecht, Jakob (born 1771) Muntau, .....79, 428.  
 Giesbrecht, Jakob (born 1765) Blumstein.....55, 614.  
 Giesbrecht, Peter (1794-1842) Muntau.....71.  
 Giesbrecht, Wilhelm Thiessen Rev. (1849-1917) Steinbach, Man.....921.  
 Goertz, Franz (1779-1834) Aelt.....116, 134, 296.  
 Goossen, Anna Klassen widow (1839-1927)...580-81, 788.  
 Goossen, Cornelius Plett (1839-1916) Steinbach, Man...387, 439, 515, 559, 568, 708.  
 Goossen, Franz (born 1752), Ladekopp ....55, 71, 707.  
 Goossen, Franz Klassen (born 1862) Kleefeld, Man., ....435, 447, 635, 714-5, 718, 846.  
 Goossen, Gerhard teacher (1811-1854) Schoenau.....382, 428, 707.  
 Goossen, Gerhard Plett Rev. and teacher (1836-1872) Lindenau/Gruenfeld, Borosenko....97, 381, 389, 406, 412, 515, 583, 629, 707-740, 752, 754, 759, 760-61, 763, 786, 796, 812, 813, 825, 826, 902.  
 Goossen, Gerhard Klassen (1859-1937) Rosenort, Man, ...715.  
 Goossen, Heinrich Aelt. (1814-1893) Mountain Lake ..... 71, 716.  
 Goossen, Peter Klassen (1870-1944) Rosenort, Man., ....715-6.  
 Goossen, Peter Plett (1838-1922) Lindenau.....559, 708.  
 Goossen, Johann (1779-1864) Fuerstenau...71, 707.  
 Goossen, Johann Plett (1842-1904) Gnadenu, Kan....390, 395, 708, 831, 839, 845, 846.  
 Goossen, Wilhelmina Plett (1815-1864) Fischau, ....471.

## H.

Hansen, George (1636-1703).....18-24, 281, 286, 762, 829, 840, 905.  
 Harder, Bernhard Heide Evangelist and poet (1832-1884) Halbstadt.....66, 71, 494, 512, 746, 748, 750, 767, 857.  
 Harder, David teacher (1872-1930) Hillsboro, Kansas...369.  
 Harder, Isbrandt Plett (1817-1840) .....72.  
 Harder, Isbrandt Stoesz (born 1792) Muntau .....376.  
 Harder, Isaac (died 1870) Muntau....428, 444, 457, 475, 615.  
 Harder, Johann (1733-1803) Sandhof, Prussia....55, 70.

Harder, Johann Classen Stammvater (1764-1826) Blumstein.....55, 71, 593, 603, 820.  
 Harder, Johann Plett Aelt. (1811-1875) Blumstein.....78, 358, 385, 442, 593, 741, 748, 768, 820, 828, 834, 848.  
 Harder, Johann Johann teacher and Rev. (1836-1930) Blumstein/ Gnadenu, Kan., ...746, 764, 767, 768.  
 Harder, Leland historian....17, 741-780, 808-817.  
 Harder, Margaretha (1820-1896)....15, 63, 384.  
 Harms, Abram Giesbrecht Rev. and teacher (1833-1909) Margenau/ Alexanderfeld, Kansas....443, 773, 777, 807, 917.  
 Harms, Cornelius Sawatsky (1835-1928) Schoenau/ Reedley, Cal....478.  
 Harms, Gerhard Warkentin (1849-1911) Heuboden, Borosenko/ Rosenort, Man....515.  
 Harms, Isaac Neudorf Ohm (1811-1891) Alexanderkrone/ Jansen, Neb.....408, 409, 412, 484, 560, 822.  
 Harms, Isaac Sawatsky (1837-1866) .....484.  
 Harms, Johann Stammvater (born 1771) Blumstein.....55, 71, 79.  
 Harms, Johann Fast Schulz (1798-1887) Margenau.....71, 79, 443, 614, 777.  
 Harms, Johann Sawatsky Rev.(1839-1884) Jansen, Neb....490, 514, 834.  
 Harms, Peter (born 1764) Blumstein.....55, 72, Harms, Peter, Annenfeld, ... 763, 787, 790, 791.  
 Harms, Peter Neudorf (1806-1870) Sparrau/ Borosenko....477, 777.  
 Harms, Peter Sawatsky (1849-1924) Jansen, Neb.....515.  
 Harms, Wilhelm (1808-1846) .....72.  
 Heidebrecht, Cornelius (born 1764) Muntau, .....428, 615.  
 Heidebrecht, Cornelius (born 1780) Lichtenau, .....55, 72.  
 Heidebrecht, Cornelius Schulz (1808-1890) Lichtenau/ Nikolaidorf...72, 649.  
 Heidebrecht, Jakob (born 1776) Lichtenau, .....55.  
 Heidebrecht, Peter (1782-1862) Lichtenau.....72, 81, 446, 597.  
 Heidebrecht, Peter (1815-1896) Blumstein/Jansen, Neb....72, 446, 450, 482, 674.  
 Hespeler, William Consul....841.  
 Hiebert, Abraham (born 1790) Neukirch.....72, 150, 444.  
 Hiebert, Abraham Knelsen (1839-1895) Alexanderfeld, Kan....842, 917.  
 Hiebert, Clarence Rev. and historian....17, 842.  
 Hiebert, David (born 1764) Muntau .....72, 428, 444, 615.  
 Hiebert, David Rev. (1775-1852) Lindenau, ....32, 124, 129, 139, 149, 593, 597.  
 Hiebert, David Knelsen (1853-1900) Neb.....515.  
 Hiebert, Johann (born 1760) deacon Halbstadt .....55, 72, 82, 125, 150, 444.  
 Hiebert, Johann Sr. (1816-1890) Alexanderwohl/ Kleefeld, Man, ....150, 435, 444, 465, 515, 517, 617, 714.  
 Hiebert, Johann Knelsen (1843-1923) Hitchcock, Ok., .....517, 854, 917.  
 Hiebert, Peter Knelsen (1846-1917).....433, 714.

Huebert, Peter, Liebenau, ....757, 767, 829.  
Hoepfner, Ben Rev. Steinbach, Man.,....148, 190,  
330, 344, 526, 611, 691, 717.  
Holdeman, Johann Aelt.(1832-1900) .....100, 629,  
653, 675, 677, 773, 841, 843, 846, 848, 851,  
856, 910-922.

#### I.

Isaac, Abraham (born 1775) Lichtenau,....55.  
Isaac, Abraham Guenther (1819-1909) Tiege... 79.  
Isaac, Abraham Krocker Rev.(1795-1864) Tiege/  
Schoenau...79, 252, 712, 717.  
Isaac, Abraham Plett Rev.(1852-1938) Schoenau,  
Man....72, 520, 712, 841, 844.  
Isaac, Anna Plett, widow (1813-1887) Schoenau  
/Kleefeld, Man., ....396.  
Isaac, Diedrich (1819-1879) Ohrloff/ Paulshein/  
Jansen, Neb....451, 452, 622.  
Isaac, Diedrich (1831-1902) Fischau/ Rosenfeld,  
Man...381, 385.  
Isaac, Franz Schroeder (1784-1853) Tiege/  
Marienthal,....55, 72, 349, 352.  
Isaac, Franz Plett (1838-1928), ... 493.  
Isaac, Franz Wiens Rev. and historian (1816-1900)  
Tiege....14, 17, 72, 267, 358, 359, 746, 764,  
833, 857.  
Isaac, Jakob Andres (1813-1881) Rosenort/  
Contenniusfeld..72.  
Isaac, Johann Plett (1836-1920), Gruenfeld,  
Boroscnko/ Kleefeld, Man., .... 789, 831.  
Isaac, Johann Warkentin (1809-1864)  
Schoenau....267, 453, 481, 482, 520, 522,  
708.  
Isaac, Peter Plett author (1846-1924)....72, 389, 510,  
516, 624, 714, 716, 729.  
Isaac, Peter Reimer (1732-1809) Burwalderfelde,  
Prussia, .....55, 70.  
Isaac, Peter Schroeder (1780-1857) Tiege,....55, 63,  
72, 349, 352.  
Isaac, Philip Stammvater (1694-1753).....71, 349,  
352.  
Isaac, Philip Guenther (1825-1859) Blumenort..522.  
Isaac, Philip Schroeder (1769-1813) Tiege.....55.

#### J.

Jansen, Cornelius Consul (1822-1894) ....405, 674,  
770, 836, 845.  
Jantzen, Abraham (born 1747) Petershagen,  
.....56, 73, 74, 150.  
Jantzen, Cornelius (1718-1793) Broeske,  
Prussia....56, 73.  
Jantzen, Cornelius Bergmann Rev. (born 1780)  
Petershagen....29, 32, 56, 116, 133, 139, 149,  
150, 164, 227.  
Jantzen, Heinrich Aelt.(1752-1824) Kronswiede,  
Chortitza...75, 116, 132, 152, 164.  
Jantzen, Jakob (born 1784) Petershagen....57.  
Jantzen, Johann (1752-1823) Petershagen...56, 74,  
148.  
Janzen, Cornelius (1812-1864) Neukirch...74, 79,  
450, 466.  
Janzen, Cornelius Siemens (1848-1869)  
Steinfeld.....91.  
Janzen, Johann (born ca.1777) Reinland,  
Prussia.....57, 73, 74, 78, 428.

Jost, Peter Schulz (1829-1891) Prangenu/  
Alexanderfeld, Kansas....443.  
Jung-Stilling, Heinrich Separatist-pietist and  
chiliasat, Wuerttemberg, Germany...226.

#### K.

Kasdorf, Johann Fuerstenwerder ....57, 73, 74.  
Kasdorf, Peter (born 1775) Blumstein.....74.  
Klassen, Abraham Stammvater (1766-1813),  
Tiegerwiede, Prussia.... 74.  
Klassen, Abraham Brandt Rev.(1850-1935)  
Swalwell, Albt., ..516, 823.  
Klassen, Abraham Regier Rev.(1828-1906)  
Prangenu/ Alexanderfeld, Kan....74, 352,  
641, 670, 723, 738, 752, 773, 774, 787, 799,  
829, 832, 834, 839.  
Klassen, David delegate and Brandaeltester (1813-  
1900) Rueckenau/ Margenu/ Rosenhof,  
Man....47, 57, 69, 73, 74, 357, 449, 457, 674,  
777, 834.  
Klassen, Johann (1758-1812) Tiege....57, 73, 74,  
352.  
Klassen, Johann Oberschulz (born 1781) Rosenort/  
Halbstadt....32, 153.  
Klassen, Johann Oberschulz (1785-1841) Tiege  
/Tiegerwiede..... 74, 78, 153.  
Klassen, Johann (1811-1887) Rueckenu/ Sparrau/  
Steinbach, Man....460.  
Klassen, Johann Harms (born 1838) Sparrau/  
Steinbach, Man ..495, 904.  
Klassen, Martin (1770-1845) Rudnerwiede.....57,  
73, 74.  
Klassen, Martin Harder (1823-ca.1888) Fischau/  
Paulshein/ Hoffnungsfeld, Kan.....75, 439,  
453, 662.  
Klassen, Peter (born 1753) Petershagen.....57.  
Klassen, Peter Epp (1775-1844) Petershagen,  
.....57.  
Koop, Andreas (1773-ca.1806).....57, 73, 75, 76,  
443, 444, 615, 631.  
Koop, Heinrich (1806-1859) Landskrone.....75,  
444, 450, 453, 458.  
Koop, Johann (born 1741) Muensterberg.....67,  
429, 444.  
Koop, Johann Patriarch (born 1766) Muntau,  
.....57, 73, 75, 76, 428, 443, 615.  
Koop, Johann (1801-1831) Muntau.....75, 443.  
Koop, Johann Barkman (1863-1935) Neuanlage,  
Man...657.  
Koop, Johann Martens (1831-1897) Muntau/  
Neuanlage, Man...75, 469, 518, 657.  
Koop, Klaas (1825-1916) Jansen, Neb.....460, 463.  
Kornelsen, Abraham Barkman (1769-1831)  
Lichtenau.....57, 61.  
Kornelsen, Abraham Eidsc deacon (1846-1893)  
Heuboden, Man.... 563.  
Kornelsen, Gerhard Schellenberg teacher and  
Brandaeltester (1816-1894) Lichtenau/  
Steinbach, Man.... 382, 454, 450, 727, 760,  
840.  
Krocker, Franz (born 1773) Muensterberg ... 57,  
75, 429.  
Krocker, Franz Sr. Tiegerwiede.....75.  
Krocker, Franz (1835-1913) Tiegerwiede/ Jansen,  
Neb....75.

- Kroeker, Franz Kroeker (1799-1853) Blumstein/  
Margenau...75, 82, 466, 493, 777.
- Kroeker, Franz Martens (1827-1905) Kleeefeld/  
Steinbach, Man...438, 472, 518, 555.
- Kroeker, Julius Patriarch (1747-1799)  
Blumstein.....57, 74, 75, 82.
- Kroeker, Jakob Martens Aelt.(1836-1913)  
Rosenhof, Man...75, 82, 441, 480, 654, 835,  
913, 919.
- Kroeker, Martin, Margenau, ....468, 478.
- Kroeker, Peter Martens Rev. (1840-1915)  
Rosenort, Man...491, 515.
- Kroeker, Peter, Lindenau.....593.
- L**
- Loepp, Cornelius (born 1781) Blumstein.....59, 75,  
82.
- Loepp, Cornelius Cornelius (1810-1891)  
Muntau.....82, 428, 444, 615, 628, 631, 635.
- Loepp, Cornelius Cornelius Schulz (1833-1916)  
Muntau/ Halbstadt.....635.
- Loewen, Abraham Dueck (1864-1961) Rosenort,  
Man., ...433, 519.
- Loewen, Abraham Thiessen (1856-1944) Kleeefeld,  
Man., ....523.
- Loewen, Abraham Wiens Rev.(1833-1886)  
Hierschau/ Kleeefeld, Man...397, 470, 523,  
569, 583, 634, 725, 752, 754, 796, 834, 835,  
902.
- Loewen, Cornelius Bartel (1863-1928) Steinbach,  
Man.....439,521.
- Loewen, Cornelius Dueck (1866-1939) Rosenort,  
Man., ...433, 519.
- Loewen, Cornelius Wiens (1827-1893) Gruenfeld,  
Borosenko/ Steinbach, Man...93, 469, 511,  
521, 525, 528, 583, 842.
- Loewen, David Reimer (1862-1945) Hochstadt,  
Man./ Swalwell, Albt., ....524, 629, 631.
- Loewen, David Wiens (1836-1915) Lindenau/  
Hochstadt, Man, ...395, 444, 475, 511, 516,  
524, 525, 529, 560, 629, 631, 727, 731.
- Loewen, Elias (born 1764) Muensterberg.....59,  
429, 445.
- Loewen, Harry, professor Winnipeg, Man., ...314,  
527, 530, 585-90.
- Loewen, Heinrich Fast (1862-1935) Jansen,  
Neb.....522.
- Loewen, Heinrich Reimer (1859-1946) Fairbanks,  
Texas, ...524, 629, 715.
- Loewen, Heinrich Wiens (1830-1863) Tiegenhagen,  
.....483, 512, 522, 530, 586.
- Loewen, Isaak (1759-1834) patriarch  
Lindenau.....59, 76, 509-10.
- Loewen, Isaac Bartel (1865-1938) Swalwell, Albt.,  
...521, 529.
- Loewen, Isaac Ens deacon (1787-1873) Lindenau,  
....63, 76, 83, 293, 432, 448, 449-450, 461,  
462, 509-590, 592, 635, 786, 823, 835.
- Loewen, Isaac Enns teacher (1850-1925) Kleeefeld,  
Man/ Jansen, Neb.....520.
- Loewen, Isaac Reimer (1860-1953) Winkler, Man.,  
...524.
- Loewen, Isaac Wiebe (1845-1926) Rosenort,  
Man...514.
- Loewen, Isaac Wiens (1815-1856) Schoonau.,  
...466, 476, 514.
- Loewen, Jakob Bartel (1862-1919) Hillsboro, Kan.,  
....520.
- Loewen, Jakob David Reimer (born 1871)  
Sunnystope, Albt.,...524, 629.
- Loewen, Jakob Penner (1855-1941) Hillsboro,  
Kan., ....517.
- Loewen, Jakob Ratzlaff (born 1885) Swalwell,  
Albt., .....523.
- Loewen, Jakob Wiens (1820-1901) Waldheim/  
Gnadenau, Kansas.....517, 521, 725.
- Loewen, Johann (1738-1797) Tiegenhof,  
Prussin.....592, 596.
- Loewen, Johann Dueck (1862-1934) Rosenort,  
Man., ...433, 519.
- Loewen, Johann Ratzlaff (born 1878) Swalwell,  
Albt., .....523.
- Loewen, Johann Wiens deacon (1823-1881)  
Kleeefeld/ Rosenhof, Man ...432, 488, 519,  
569, 854.
- Loewen, Margaretha Wiens (1790-1861) Lindenau,  
...495.
- Loewen, Peter Dueck (1860-1927) Rosenort, Man.,  
....433, 519.
- Loewen, Peter Penner (1850-1929) Hillsboro, Kan.,  
....517.
- Loewen, Peter Wiebe Rev.(1853-1917) Neuanlage,  
Manitoba...514.
- Loewen, Peter Wiens (1825-1887) Hierschau/  
Hochstadt, Man, ...382, 440, 520.
- Loewen, Royden K. historian .....16, 83, 525, 526.
- Loewen, Solomon professor, Hillsboro, Kan....517.
- N**
- Neufeld, Abraham Friesen (1819-1899)  
Nikolaidorf, ...649.
- Neufeld, Gerhard Boschmann (1795-1869)  
Lindenau, ....81, 597.
- Neufeld, Gerhard Peter Aelt. (1827-1916)  
Mountain Lake, Min., ....77.
- Neufeld, Heinrich Rev. (1791-1865) Rosenort,  
....66, 77, 150, 403, 411.
- Neufeld, Hermann Rogalsky Schulz (1760-1835)  
Muensterberg.....59, 66, 67, 77, 129, 150,  
410, 429, 445.
- Neufeld, Isaak (1849-1922) Waldheim.....404, 626.
- Neufeld, Kornelius Peter (1869-1950), Schoenfeld/  
Mersia, Ont., ...81, 444, 635.
- Neufeld, Peter Stammvater (1697-1769).....76, 360.
- Neumann, Jakob (1780-1849) ....59, 76, 77, 647,  
649.
- Nikkel, Johann (1852-1936), Alexanderfeld, Kan.,  
....524, 629, 846.
- M**
- Mathies, Abraham (1797-1860)....77, 404.
- Mathies, Jakob (1760-before 1808) Altonau,  
.....59, 76, 401-404, 410.
- P**
- Penner, Archie Rev. and theologian.....16, 100,
- Penner, Aaron Rempel (1852-1892) Blumenhof,  
Man., .....516.
- Penner, Abraham Reimer (1874-1956) Blumenort,  
Man., ...155, 441, 446, 525, 527.
- Penner, Jakob Peter estate owner Prangenau/  
Friedensfeld, Borosenko.433,455, 493, 725.

Penner, Jakob Penner (1867-1956) .....435.  
 Penner, Martin Rempel (1849-1928) Blumenort, Manitoba....844.  
 Penner, Peter Rev. Prangenau.....152, 449, 455, 517, 529.  
 Penner, Peter Harms (1839-1916) Blumenort, Man....435, 491.  
 Penner, Peter Loepp (1816-1884) Margenau/Blumenort, Man....151, 455, 477, 777, 833.  
 Penner, Peter Penner (1875-1949) Ridgewood, Man....436.  
 Penner, Peter Peter (1826-1894) Prangenau/Friedensfeld, Borosenko, ...456, 521, 725.  
 Peters, Abraham (born 1762) Petershagen.....59.  
 Peters, Isaac Aelt. (1826-1911) Fuerstenau/Henderson, Neb.... 675, 796, 811.  
 Peters, Jakob (born 1775) Schoenau .....59.  
 Plett, Abraham Loewen (1859-1934) Blumenhof, Man.,...518.  
 Plett, Cornelius F. historian Hillsboro, Kansas....747, 777, 811.  
 Plett, Cornelius Loewen Rev. (1846-1935) Kleefeld/Blumenhof, Man.....383, 518, 660, 854.  
 Plett, Cornelius Smit Schutz (1820-1900) Kleefeld/Blumenhof, Man....47, 85, 385, 435, 450, 472, 511, 517-19, 521, 559, 569, 593, 707, 837, 840, 842, 843, 845, 846, 854, 856.  
 Plett, David Loewen (1863-1953) Blumenhof, Man.,...518.  
 Plett, Gerhard Aelt. (1860-1933) Hierschau, ...647, 658.  
 Plett, Harvey, Rev. and historian.....15, 18.  
 Plett, Heinrich Enns entrepreneur (1870-1953) Blumenort, Manitoba.....528.  
 Plett, Isaac Loewen (1844-1871) Friedensfeld, Borosenko....439, 518.  
 Plett, Jakob Loewen (1864-1931) Blumenhof, Man.,...518.  
 Plett, Johann Stammvater (1765-1833) Fuerstenwerder, Prussia/ Blumstein ...48, 59, 78, 405, 412, 518, 707, 820, 823.  
 Plett, Johann (born 1786) Halbstadt....67.  
 Plett, Johann Loewen (1855-1900) Blumenhof, Man., ...435, 516, 518, 624, 843, 845, 856, 857.  
 Plett, Michael (born 1760) Halbstadt....59.  
 Plett, Peter Abram historian (1898-1990) Landmark, Man. ...7, 691, 706, 717, 740.  
 Plett, Peter Loewen deacon (1858-1944) Satanta, Kansas....518.

**R.**  
 Ratzlaff, Adam (born 1783) Franzthal.....61, 78.  
 Ratzlaff, Heinrich (1810-1864) Blumstein....78, 489.  
 Ratzlaff, Heinrich Harms Schutz and Rev. (1848-1922) Blumstein/Jansen, Neb....48, 78, 675.  
 Ratzlaff, Susanna Voth (1846-1905) Waldheim, ...523.  
 Reddig, Wilhelm (1859-1939), Lehigh, Kan., .....517.  
 Redekopp, Alfred teacher .....436, 447, 528.  
 Regehr, Johann (1834-1919) Margenau /Gnadenau, Kan.,...751.  
 Regier, Isaac (1791-1840) patriarch Muntau.....61, 78, 428, 442.

Regier, Jakob (1832-1906) Hierschau/ Kleefeld, Man....78, 428, 435, 442, 466, 630, 860-862.  
 Regier, Cornelius Aelt.(1743-1794) Rosenort, Prussia...148, 159.  
 Regier, Johann "Hans" (born 1759) Kronsgarten....37, 61, 68, 78.  
 Regier, Johann Epp Oberschulz (1802-1842) Schoensee.....78, 153.  
 Reimer, Aaron Fast (1826-1902) Muntau/ Mountain Lake...627, 649.  
 Reimer, Aaron Warkentin (1865-1944) Blumenhof, Man., ....624.  
 Reimer, Abraham (born 1773) Muensterberg....61.  
 Reimer, Abraham Friesen (1808-1892) Rosenort/Blumenort, Man....79, 85, 94, 98, 403, 411, 451, 455, 488.  
 Reimer, Abraham Plett (1882-1961) Clearsprings, Man., ....438.  
 Reimer, Abraham Rempel deacon (1841-1891) Kleefeld/ Blumenort, Man....156, 173, 485, 492, 624.  
 Reimer, Abraham Warkentin (1875-1959) Linden, Alb.,...625.  
 Reimer, Al professor Winnipeg, Man.,...113, 857.  
 Reimer, Bernhard (1832-1893) Inman, .....79.  
 Reimer, Duerk (born 1782) Muntau.....61, 78, 79, 428, 442, 613, 615, 631.  
 Reimer, David Plett Aelt. (1894-1963) Blumenort, Man....148, 526, 528.  
 Reimer, Heinrich, Petershagen, Prussia....78, 114, 148, 379.  
 Reimer, Heinrich Ohm (1791-1884) Muntau/ Kleefeld, Man....61, 65, 70, 76-79, 346, 352, 404, 407, 431, 432, 440, 442, 446, 455, 524, 613-646, 675.  
 Reimer, Heinrich Fast (1818-1876) Prangenau/Blumenhof, Man...79, 490, 516, 616, 623, 837.  
 Reimer, Heinrich Friesen Rev.(1845-1900) Prangenau/Blumenort, Man....624.  
 Reimer, Heinrich Reimer, Rev. (1876-1959) Landmark, ...441.  
 Reimer, Isaac Warkentin (born 1864) Blumenhof, Man., ....624.  
 Reimer, Jakob (1779-1871) Tiege.....61, 349, 352.  
 Reimer, Jakob Fast (born 1833) Muntau, ....616, 628.  
 Reimer, Jakob Warkentin (1873-1956) Linden, Alb.,...523, 624.  
 Reimer, John Aaron (1865-1952), Delft, Min., .....628.  
 Reimer, Johann (born 1774) Muensterberg.....61, 69, 72, 429.  
 Reimer, Johann Rempel Schutz (1848-1918), Steinbach, Man....91, 94.  
 Reimer, Johann Warkentin (1861-1952) Blumenhof, Man., ...624.  
 Reimer, Klaas Epp Aelt.(1770-1837) Petershagen....15, 29, 32, 37, 42, 53, 61, 65, 68, 79, 82, 100, 156, 157, 174, 191, 204, 224, 231, 236, 270, 356, 406, 429, 507, 673, 744, 758, 800, 851, 910, 911.  
 Reimer, Klaas Friesen deacon (1812-1874) Tiege....120, 144, 156, 304, 349, 364, 449, 454, 463-4.

Reimer, Klaas Johann Barkman **historian** (1899-1966) Steinbach, Man....148.

Reimer, Klaas Rempel **merchaant** (1837-1906) Kleefeld/ Steinbach, Man....91, 93, 98, 621.

Reimer, Maria Loewen Plett (1850-1934), Blumenort, Man., ....513, 518, 654, 660.

Reimer, Peter (1808-1886) Muensterberg/ Contentiusfeld....79.

Reimer, Peter J. B. **Rev. and teacher** Rosenort, Man., ....358, 913, 920.

Reimer, Peter Plett Aell (1877-1949) Blumenort, Man.....438, 439, 528.

Reimer, Peter Rempel **Rev.** (1845-1915) Blumenort, Man.....92, 93, 518.

Reimer, Peter Warkentin (1875-1926) Linden, Albt,.....625.

Rempel, Abraham **Ohm** (1798-1878) Margenau/ Blumenort, Man....98, 154, 777.

Rempel, Gerhard (1843-1879) Jansen, Neb.....497.

Rempel, Gerhard Beargen (1816-1888) Mariawohl/ Jansen, Neb.....454, 457, 474.

Rempel, Heinrich Reimer (1855-1926) **teacher** Kleefeld, Man., ....437, 616, 623, 632, 633.

Rempel, Johann, ....465, 487.

Rempel, Martin (1823-1874) Margenau.....777.

Rempel, Peter (1792-1837) Muntau.....61, 79, 154, 428, 444, 460, 471, 615, 622.

Rempel, Peter Beargen (1814-1872) Paulsheim, ....488, 491, 617, 622.

Rempel, Peter Reimer (1844-1915) Hillsboro, Kan,.... 623.

S.

Sawatzky, Cornelius (1781-1840) Ohrlhoff, ....53, 61, 70, 72, 79, 144, 231.

Schapanaky, Henry **researcher/historian** New Westminster, B. C.,...15, 41, 64-82, 150, 303, 442, 592, 631.

Schellenberg, Abraham Reimer (1839-1924) Tiege/ Kleefeld, Man....350.

Schellenberg, Aron Reimer (1773-1853) Blumstein,....61.

Schellenberg, Aron Kasdorf (1833-1885) Ohrlhoff/ Gnadenu, Kan.... 556, 731, 746, 748, 763.

Schellenberg, Anton Reimer (born 1774) Muntau ....428, 443, 615, 631.

Schellenberg, Gerhard **Stammvater** (1725-1802) Tiegenhof, Prussia...60, 592.

Schellenberg, Gerhard Kasdorf **Rev.** (1827-1908) Ohrlhoff/ Rosenfeld, Man....74, 79, 641, 654, 760, 763, 785, 799, 902.

Schellenberg, Gerhard Klassen (1759-1813) Blumstein.....61.

Schellenberg, Gerhard Neubauer (1797-1837) .....74.

Schellenberg, Jakob Braun (1799-1872) Tiegenhagen.....61.

Schellenberg, Jakob Reimer (born 1772) Tiegenhagen.....61, 125, 149.

Schmidt, Anna Hiebert (1841-1907), Canton, Kan., .....842.

Siemens, **Clasz Stammvater** (born 1758) Rosenort .....61, 67, 69, 78, 79, 80, 403, 411.

Siemens, Gerhard Friesen (1805-1877) Rosenort/ Rosenort, Man....61, 79.

Siemens, Gerhard Thiessen (1834-1908) Rosenhof,

Man.....498.

Siemens, Peter (died 1864) .....490.

T.

Thielmann, Jakob (1810-1862) Neukirch.....435, 450, 518.

Thielmann, Jakob Jakob (1841-1894) Friedensfeld.....518, 522, 569.

Thielmann, Johann (1845-1912) Friedensfeld, Borosenko .....514, 583.

Thielmann, Martin (1812-1856), Nikolaidorf, ....476, 478, 649.

Thiessen, Abraham Friesen **Land reformer** (1832-1889) ...81, 98, 151, 234, 369, 497, 560, 674, 827, 836.

Thiessen, David (1834-1906) Neukirch/ Rosenhof, Man.....568.

Thiessen, Dirk (born 1770) Muensterberg....63.

Thiessen, Franz (born 1772), Schoensee.....81, 229, 244.

Thiessen, Heinrich (died 1782) Rosenort.....63, 67, 81.

Thiessen, Isaac (1763-1835) Muensterberg.....63, 76, 429, 445.

Thiessen, Klaas Siemens (born 1790) Rosenort...77, 81, 82, 352, 403, 410.

Thiessen, Johann Peter **State Senator** (1852-1920) Jansen, Neb....81, 234.

Thiessen, Johann Wiens (1813-1888) Jansen, Neb .. 77, 81, 82, 352, 403, 410, 454, 470, 486.

Thiessen, Peter (1775-1839) Rosenort....63, 71, 80, 81, 151, 403.

Thiessen, Peter (1798-1881) Muntau....442, 444, 617, 631.

Thiessen, Peter **Born Rev.** (1808-1873) Schoenau...81, 151, 410, 458, 674.

Thiessen, Peter Peter **Rev.**(1832-1898) Neu-Halbstadt/ Jansen, Neb.....466.

Todleben, Eduard Von **General**..... 624, 837.

Toews, Cornelius (1737-1800) Ladekopp, Prussia, .....591.

Toews, Cornelius (1829-1884) Fischau/ Gnadenu, Kan....381, 385, 395, 435, 630.

Toews, Cornelius Loewen (1891-1982), Swalwell, Alberta /Steinbach, Man., ....7, 595, 606, 857.

Toews, Cornelius Plett **delegate** (1836-1908) Hirschau/ Kleefeld, Man...267, 481, 515, 568, 594, 730, 731, 752, 753, 793, 821, 824-25, 826, 834, 838, 847, 851, 860-862, 866, 867-875.

Toews, Cornelius Regebr **Stammvater** (1766-1831) Tiegenhagen, Prussia/Lindenau....59, 63, 81, 510, 591, 597, 820.

Toews, Maria Plett **widow** (1811-1895) Fischau/ Gnadenu, Kan., ...717, 820, 845, 846, 855.

Toews, Peter Penner (1838-1882) Kleefeld/ Steinbach, Man....92.

Toews, Peter Plett Aell (1841-1922) Kleefeld, Man....48, 75, 78, 81, 82, 102, 148, 150, 245, 302, 350, 359, 382, 387, 400, 406, 431, 440, 507, 511, 513, 516, 560, 618, 651, 661, 708, 711, 719, 742, 749, 751, 753, 755, 756, 759, 760-61, 763, 768, 773-75, 778, 786, 792, 813-4, 819-922.

- Toews, Peter Wiebe (1831-1922) **Bränduelfester** Prangenau/Blumenort, Man...463, 596, 777.
- Toewa, Jakob Pleit (1839-1959) Fischau, ....486, 606, 821, 859-60.
- Toews, Jakob Barkman (1855-1938) Swalwell, Albi, .....523, 524, 629.
- Toews, Jakob Loewen (1805-1873) Margenau...82, 559.
- Toews, Jakob Wiebe (1836-1920) Prangenau/Rosenort, Man....630.
- Toews, Johann Barkman **teacher** (1865-1967)....630, 844.
- Toews, Johann Friesen **businessman** (1858-1931) Steinbach, Man.....835, 846.
- Toews, Johann Harder (1826-1895) Alexanderkrone/ Kleefeld, Man...477, 733, 820, 833, 836.
- Toews, Johann Loewen **patriarch** (1793-1873) Fischau....71, 85, 381, 387, 412, 559, 591-611, 761, 835, 849, 885.
- Twisk, Peter J. Aelt.....579.
- U.
- Unger, Peter H. (1841-1896) Blumenhof, Man.....155, 495, 904.
- Urry, Dr. James, **historian and anthropologist**, ....84, 116, 149, 152, 236, 295, 352, 852.
- V.
- von Niessen, see Niessen.
- von Riessen, see Friesen.
- W.
- Wall, Abraham, Ohrloff/ Annenfeld, Crimea/ Hillsboro, Kansas.....666, 757, 791.
- Warkentin, Cornelius Aelt. (1740-1809) Rosenort, Prussia...133.
- Warkentin, Cornelius (1777-1847) Blumstein...41, 63, 64, 80, 81.
- Warkentin, Dirck (1788-1837) Altonau....82.
- Warkentin, Dirck Aelt. (1815-1881) Petershagen...70, 71, 82, 746.
- Warkentin, Gerhard (1848-1900) Steinbach, Man/ Jansen, Neb....381.
- Warkentin, Heinrich (1833-1888) Lichtenau/ Rosenhof, Man.....359, 382.
- Warkentin, Heinrich Warkentin (1798-1891) Blumstein.....156.
- Warkentin, Isaac Loewen **doctor** (1845-1929) Blumenhof, Man./ Lubbock, ....516, 568.
- Warkentin, Jakob Aelt. (born 1783) Altonau....136, 138, 152.
- Warkentin, Johann **Stammvater** (1760-1825) Blumenort...63, 70, 72, 75, 80, 125, 149, 403, 410, 510, 592.
- Warkentin, Johann Goossen (1867-1947) Greenland, ....345.
- Warkentin, Johann Loewen (1845-1908) Blumenhof, Man.....516, 709, 714.
- Warkentin, Johann Neufeld (1817-1886) Blumstein/ Blumenhof, Man....85, 399, 450, 516, 518, 519, 569, 624, 629, 641, 823, 824.
- Warkentin, Martin **Stammvater** (1764-1853) Blumstein...63, 80, 81, 154, 410, 467, 592, 823.
- Warkentin, Martin Warkentin (born 1806) Blumstein....452.
- Warkentin, Peter F. (1820-1894) Fischau/ Inman, Kan., .....79.
- Warkentin, Peter Warkentin (born 1789) Blumstein...69, 72.
- Wedel, Cornelius (1836-1900) Margenau /Goessel, Kan., ... 749, 751.
- Wedel, Heinrich, Waldheim....461, 469.
- Wedel, Peter Aelt. Alexanderwohl .....116, 134, 136.
- Wiebe, Dietrich, **patriarch** Neukirch....742.
- Wiebe, Gerhard Aelt. (1725-1796) Ellerwald, Prussia....123, 149, 224, 499.
- Wiebe, Gerhard Aelt. (1827-1900) Heuboden, Berghal/ Chortitz, Man...380, 833.
- Wiebe, Heinrich (born 1746) Blumenort, Prussia....62, 82, 380.
- Wiebe, Heinrich Rev. (born 1773) Ohrloff.....69, 82, 140, 150, 154, 225.
- Wiebe, Heinrich A. Aelt. (1845-1910) Margenau /Hoffnungsthal, Kan., ...775.
- Wiebe, Heinrich Friesen **deacon** (1851-1876) Blumenort, Man....82.
- Wiebe, Jakob (born 1764) Ohrloff.....63, 82.
- Wiebe, Jakob (born 1776) Blumstein....63.
- Wiebe, Jakob (1805-1853) Margenau....742.
- Wiebe, Jakob A. Aelt.(1836-1921) Annafeld, Crimea/ Gnadenau, Kan....47, 82, 383, 391, 556, 641, 651, 666, 712, 731, 736, 741-817, 826, 827, 829, 837, 902-909, 914, 917.
- Wiebe, Jakob Peters (1829-1901) Prangenau/ Blumenort, Man...82, 453, 454.
- Wiebe, Jakob Toews **Elder** (1872-1965) Greenland, Man....624.
- Wiebe, Jakob Siemens (1799-1856) Schoenau...476, 526, 616.
- Wiebe, Jakob Z. Rev. and **historian** (1869-1952), ...764.
- Wiebe, Johann (1766-1823) Aelt. Chortitza....124, 131, 149, 158, 270.
- Wiebe, Johann (1841-1909), Steinbach, Man., .....529.
- Wiebe, Johann Isaac (1862-1884) Blumenort, Man....657.
- Wiebe, Peter **patriarch** (born 1755) Schoenau....63, 81, 514.
- Wiebe, Peter (born 1765) Lindenau....63.
- Wiebe, Peter A. (1847-1926) Springfield, Kan., ....745, 748, 755, 764, 817.
- Wiebe, Peter Peters **deacon** (1835-1902) Blumenort, Man....82, 481.
- Wiens, Abraham (1779-1844) Altonau/ Rosenort....72, 82.
- Wiens, David **Stammvater** (1775-1838) Schoenau...63, 80,
- Wiens, Franz **patriarch** (1773-1838) Marienburg, Prussia/ Grossweide....63, 80, 82, 742,
- Wiens, Franz Rev. (born 1779) Petershagen....57,
- Wiens, Franz (1802-1881) Jansen, Neb.....460,
- Wiens, Heinrich Aelt. (1800-1872) Margenau /Rosenort...82,
- Wiens, Heinrich Frederich (1830-1901) Fischau/ Inman, Kansas...594, 598,
- Wiens, Jakob (1758-1820) Lindenau.....593,
- Wiens, Johann (born 1748) Altonau....63,
- Wiens, Johann (1800-1881) Schoenau....82,

Wiens, Johann Regehr (1753-1816) Tiege.....59,  
 63, 72, 76, 77, 82, 349, 352,  
 Wiens, Klaas Oberschulz (born 1767) Altonau...32,  
 34-35, 116, 124, 132, 149,  
 Wittenberg, Abraham (born 1760)  
 Muensterberg.....63, 81, 82, 429,  
 Wittenberg, Paul (born 1793), Muensterberg.....82,  
 152,  
 Wohlgenuth, Heinrich Ewert Rev. (1849-1899)  
 Blumenhof, Man...518, 836,  
 Wohlgenuth, Peter patriarch (1805-1873)  
 Annefeld, ...763, 799,  
 Wohlgenuth, Gerhard, Annefeld, ...763,  
 Wolf, Gottfried, Krebsfeld, Prussia.....62,  
 Wuest, Edward.....750, 811.

