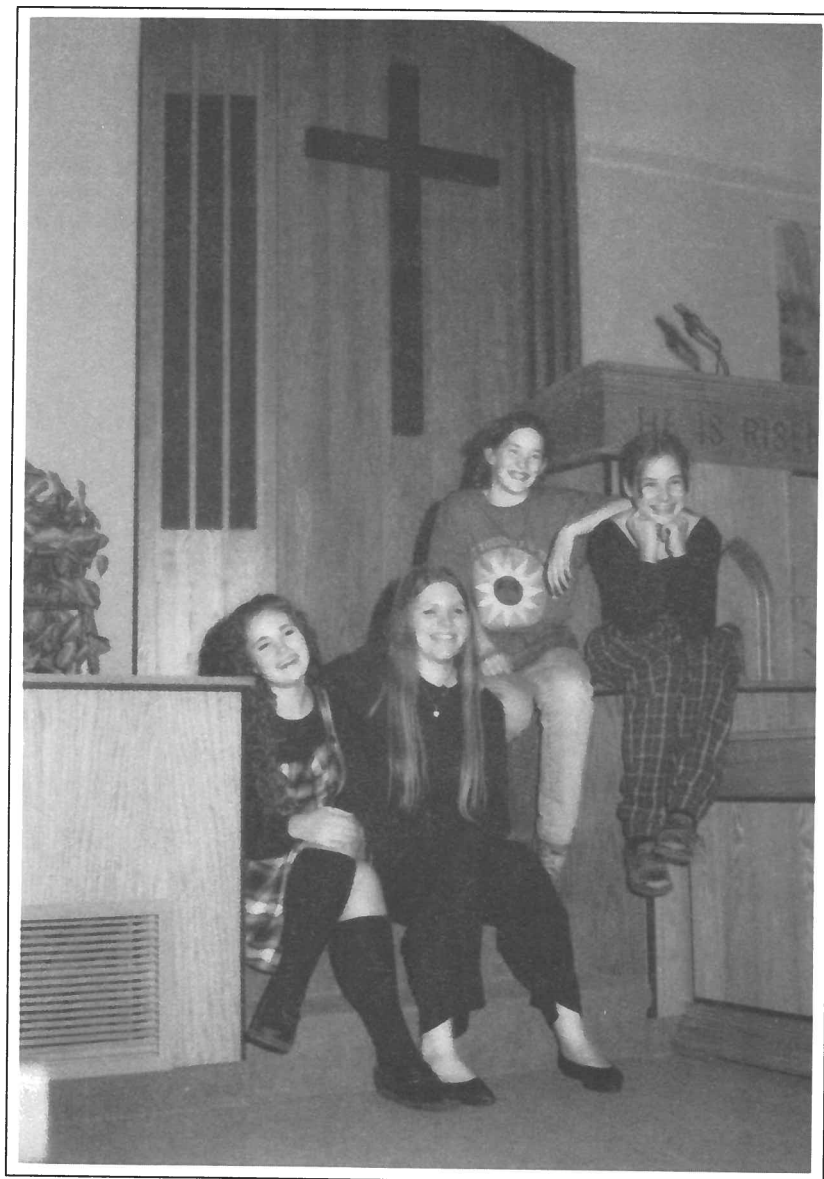


SOPHIA

W I S D O M

*Say to Wisdom, "You are my sister."
Proverbs 7:4a*

5/1



Growing Up in the Church

WINTER 1995 VOLUME 5 NUMBER 1

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SOPHIA: A Greek feminine noun associated with the biblical wisdom tradition, translated "wisdom" and personified in the book of Proverbs; equivalent in the New Testament to logos, the creative word that was with God in the beginning, creating and giving life to the world.

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No Longer Innocent?

by Lydia Harder



I can no longer identify with the phrase “innocent women and children”! This is not because I do not yearn to be innocent, to be pure and righteous before God and others. Nor is it because I am confessing guilt for a specific crime of which I am accused. Rather, I am facing the undeniable fact that I am not a child. I know of the existence of good and evil and must make choices which affect the lives of others. I can no longer hide behind a division of labour in which men are held responsible for the good and evil in the “world out there” and women are assumed innocent because of their sex. I must face my own involvement in determining how the church as the people of God lives in the world.

During times of war and disaster history has often described women as innocent along with children. Because of the division of responsibilities between the domestic sphere and the public sphere it was assumed that women were not responsible for the effects of political decisions. After all they lacked the knowledge to do anything about wars. They were too emotional and irrational to participate in making crucial choices in government or church. They were physically weaker and therefore lacked the ability to change the course of history through brutal strength. Women were therefore seen as wholly dependent on men for their security and well-being. It was the male leaders whose stories were told and whose failures and victories were recorded in the history books of both the nations and the church.

It is now recognized that women read newspapers and books. The resources that they bring to their tasks arise not only out of the particular experience of child-bearing but also out of a more general experience of involvement in the broader community. Women are studying history, politics, economics and theology in both formal and

informal ways. Their eyes can no longer be closed to the issues of our day. They can no longer claim “false” innocence.

I sometimes long for this lost innocence. I remember the security and warmth I felt in my home church during my childhood. There in the front of the church were all the black-suited men sitting on a bench just in front of the choir. There was my mother in the “baby room” in the back of the church taking care of my baby sisters. And there was I, sitting in the front bench with my class-mates under the watchful eye of my Sunday-school teacher. I felt secure in the well-ordered universe in which I was growing up. This was the world as God intended it. I was free from anxiety and care.

As I grew older some subtle changes began to happen in my perception of reality. I became aware of the conflicts and hostility between members who had always presented themselves as good church people. I discovered the pain in the lives of women and men who smiled on Sunday morning. I realized that some children were afraid and threatened by violence in their own homes. Life was not as safe nor as good as I had assumed. There was chaos, oppression, evil.

Growing up has never been easy. Teenage years are a time of insecurity, a time of identity formation, a time of self-differentiation from the nuclear family while forming adult relationships and taking on adult responsibilities. Women are facing a similar time of transition in which

the assumed relationships between men and women are being challenged. This can become the opportunity to re-examine our faith in God as well as our faith in the adults who used to be our assurance. To mature in faith today may therefore be somewhat different from what it was for our foremothers.

The writer of the book of Hebrews gives us some advice for this time of growing up in the church. As we are called to become mature we will need to “train our faculties by practice to distinguish good and evil” as we gain skill in speaking the “word of righteousness” (Heb.5:14). Let us not be afraid to confess our failures nor to experiment with new ways of being interdependent in the work of the church.

Writing this article has given me the opportunity to reflect again on my own response to the challenges facing women today. Having lost my “false innocence,” I now realize that my next temptation may be “false guilt,” a sense of over-responsibility for everything that happens in the church and in the world. That, however, is another theme.

Lydia Harder is interim director of the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre in Toronto. After receiving a doctorate in theology from the Toronto School of Theology in 1993, she spent one year as visiting lecturer at Canadian Mennonite Bible College in Winnipeg. Lydia lives in Toronto with her husband, Gary, who is pastor of the Toronto United Mennonite Church. They have three grown children.

A Half-Dozen Testimonies

*Many of us could cite ways in which the church has nurtured us into greater maturity, deepening or changing our convictions, broadening our horizons, and prompting us to challenge inconsistency and error. For some, a single event has had lifelong impact; for others, a long-followed pattern has acquired new meaning. Sharing and validating such experiences is a primary focus of **Sophia**.*

Each of us on the editorial staff has selected one aspect of her "growing up in the church" to share with our readers. We hope these stories, and the entire issue, will encourage response and further dialogue on this theme.

My most recent "growing" experience has been our congregation's decision to become an inter-Mennonite church. As I thought, read and prayed over this decision I sensed God's call to join affirmatively and joyfully in this new adventure. Still, it's been painful; I felt somehow that I was breaking continuity with my past. Through my grandmother's writings I feel close to the story of my grandparents being baptized as married adults and joining the MB Church. Their decision profoundly influenced my life. Would they, if they were alive, understand mine? I wasn't sure, though it seemed important that they should. Significantly, however, our children encouraged us to support the merger. The obligations of my heart strove between my forebears/parents and my children. I've chosen the latter. Growing up means going forward, not back. I've got to keep going into the unseen future, following the call.

—Dora Dueck



TERRY VATRT: PHOTOWORKS

Clockwise from top right: Dora Dueck, Agnes Dyck, Eleanor Martens, Sarah Klassen, Lori Matties, Linda Penner

Opting for an early retirement from teaching was a scary experience for me. For thirty-some years I had been locked into a school schedule, albeit a different one every year, sometimes with time off for studies or travel. So when I was finally released from clock-watching, I looked around for service possibilities and for ways of occupying my time as creatively and as meaningfully as possible. Needless to say, I prayed. The results have been quite astonishing, to my way of thinking. Volunteering in various community organizations has been a joy.

Certain aspects of my church were a mystery to me, simply because I had shut them out of mind. The Constitution of our local church, for example, was a closed book; so when, to my surprise, I was elected as chair of Christian Education in my church, I discovered that I was to attend Council meetings as a result. Church council meetings were an eye-opener and quite intimidating at first. However, Council members revealed themselves to be human beings with failings and eccentricities like any other group with which I had been associated. (At the moment we have more women serving on our Church Council than we've ever had in the past.)

Then I was asked to serve as a member-at-large on the Personnel Committee of the Manitoba Conference. I discovered that as a church member I had inherited responsibilities I had not helped to organize or shape in any manner. Oh, yes, we always had representatives from our church serving on boards and committees, but had they actually represented me? I had no inkling of the long-term dynamics and networking occurring at the Conference level. At any rate, I felt that Conference activities were for men, especially old men. These experiences are encouraging me to take ownership, albeit sometimes reluctantly.

—Agnes Dyck

One morning after Sunday School, I met a faithful senior member of my congregation in the washroom. She was crying. We had been discussing *Our Daughters Shall Prophesy* in the adult classes, struggling to understand the scripture texts on women in leadership. This exercise pushed into the limelight our differences in thinking about this issue and our diverse interpretations of scripture. I wanted to run from it all.

But I learned there's nothing like an urgent issue to make a faith community turn earnestly to the Word, to search it, to pray over it, to love it and to obey it. I also had to accept that I was responsible for the searching and praying, alone and in community. The process deepened my understanding of the liveliness of the sacred texts and of their enduring power to become God's word for me and for the church, in the time in which we live. I learned that like many a growing up experience in childhood or adolescence, this one involved pain and tears.

—**Sarah Klassen**

When I was young, I was not particularly proud of being a Mennonite. In fact, there were aspects of being "Mennonite" that I strove very hard to resist. When asked by my non-Mennonite friends why I did not "look" like a Mennonite, I made it very clear that not all Mennonite women wore head coverings and no makeup and that my brand of Mennonite was a little more "advanced." I remember endless debates with friends over whether being born into a Mennonite family made one a Mennonite, insisting that it did not. At one young people's gathering a small group of us held a contest to determine who had the least "Mennonite" accent. I was thrilled to come out a winner! Even joining the church had more to do with publicly confessing my faith in the only setting I knew than it did with my becoming a *Mennonite*. Now, so many years later, I find myself reaffirming that part of my identity. As I reread our history, I am inspired by our tradition of faithful discipleship. I see it still being born out in caring and peace-making ventures all over the world. I have learned that following Christ means more than being inwardly pious or outwardly "different." Holiness is practical. It applies to all of life and can be costly. I'm glad I have grown beyond my childish protests to begin to appreciate the faith tradition I have chosen. I am proud to be a Mennonite.

—**Eleanor Martens**

I remember at five a minister with laughing eyes winking at me. I remember him in a sermon being thankful for a little girl who winked back at him. I remember at fourteen joining the church, being allowed to play folk songs and explain to the congregation what was important to me. Only one person walked out. I remember at seventeen, newly converted, convincing "contemporary worship" planners to do a series of services on biblical passages. I remember a Baptist church that fed my soul on Sunday evenings with salvation messages while women in my family church found ways to clothe and house the homeless. I remember at eighteen being told that women were to be silent, take a back seat in church. I remember at twenty-six struggling through a master's thesis in Old Testament, trudging through the desert, God offering water to quench my thirst. I remember at thirty-three struggling through a homiletics class, finding ways to give voice to the gifts within me. I remember at thirty-nine, still struggling, finding affirmation and hope in the church community that still encourages me to find that voice, to share God's gift, to grow up in the church.

—**Lori Matties**

Freshly bathed and vacuum-packed into the family sedan, it was all we could do to keep from killing each other before we reached our destination: once in the doors, presto, chango, happy smiles replacing ugly scowls. No place but church could cause such transformation to take place!

Children were as highly regarded as the drifters, draft-dodgers, refugees, middle-class white people, new Canadians and Dutch Mennonites that congregated in this half-hidden edifice on Danforth Avenue. This diversity told my young heart that God was very big.

If you're ever in Toronto on a Sunday, drop by. You'll meet people you've never seen before but whom you've known all your life.

—**Linda Penner**

Growing up into Ministry

by Lori Matties

When we think of ministry, most of us think of pastors, missionaries and “full-time Christian workers,” not ourselves. In a world where professionalism and specialized training have become prerequisites for almost every job, we no longer see ourselves as able to do the ministry of the church. We want to leave it to those who have been trained. I think at the core of the problem is that some of us are refusing to grow up or are being prevented from growing up spiritually.

Vital spirituality grows out of the ministry that the whole church does through the exercise of the gifts of Christ. Those gifts were given to Christ’s disciples at Pentecost and continue to be given to the members of his body today (see Acts 2:17-18). When we do not take hold of our spiritual gifts and use them for ministry, not only the church suffers but the world suffers, too, because we are unable to witness in a whole way to the vision of the Kingdom God gives us in Christ.

Listen to what the writer of the letter to the Ephesian describes as appropriate for believers:

But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ’s gift. ...The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. (Ephesians 4:7,11-13 NRSV)

This passage is a beautiful description of the goal of the Christian journey. It is written in the context of the writer’s urgent call to unity among the members of the Church. Christian unity is paramount in the

any other human division.

The writer then lists several gifts, all to be used for the benefit of the body. Much ink has been spilled over what meaning should be attached to these titles and how they function. The text is clear, though, that they are given for a very particular purpose toward which all members are to work. They are to be used to prepare all the members of the body for “the work of ministry” and for “building up the body of Christ” (v 12). The gifts are not “the ministry” but are given to nurture the ministry. Those with special gifts are to use them not to perform all the functions of the church themselves but to “equip the saints,” that is, all members, for service. All are called to the work of ministry.

The word *ministry* is the same as that used in Mark 10:45 of Jesus: “For the Son of Man came not to be *served* but to *serve*, and to give his life a ransom for many” (italics mine). It is also used of Peter’s mother-in-law as she ministered to the physical needs of her visitors (Mk 1:31), and in the parable of the sheep and goats of those who ministered to the hungry and needy (Mt 25:31ff). Ministry in this context, then, is the very tangible acts of service to those who are in need, whether spiritual or physical. Such acts build up the body, render it healthy, well-functioning and unified.

In the history of the church one may see that the use of spiritual gifts has been abused in at least two ways: one is to see them as bestowal of power and authority on certain members of the body over others, thus disabling some in the body from doing the works of ministry. The other, following from the first, is not to recognize a gift one has been given because one assumes that these gifts are available only to “leaders” or “ministers” or males. Unfortunately, one can often recognize the abuse by the gender of the abuser. Men have often assumed a role of power rather than using a gift for service. Women have often avoided responsibility by assuming some gifts were unavailable to them. The whole community needs to

Growing up, then, is using our gifts for ministry and the building up of the body rather than focusing on our differences.

writer’s mind both as a goal of Christian growth and as a witness of the presence of God in the Church and the world.

Unity does not mean sameness, however. Each one is afforded grace “according to the measure of Christ’s gift,” that is, according to the same generosity God showed in giving us Christ—a generosity that holds back nothing. This gift of grace is God’s enabling power given freely to each member of the body. It manifests itself in a variety of ways, but it is given to all; none is excluded and no distinction is made according to rank, race, gender or

look in new ways at these gifts of leadership and to discern in new ways how they are to be used. We need to lay aside our abuse of power, both from above and below, and assume a new understanding of servanthood in our use of spiritual gifts. Then perhaps we can get on with the task of building up the body and witnessing to the Kingdom.

For the members of the body, the goal of these works of ministry is "unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God." The writer is referring us to the beginning of chapter 4, where he reminds us that "there is one body and one Spirit, ...one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all." Christians grow together by acknowledging the one true faith and not being distracted by their differences. When they focus on growing in their knowledge of, or intimacy with, Christ, through the work of ministry, then the whole body will become healthy. When we don't do ministry, the body becomes dysfunctional and unity breaks down. Growing up, then, is using our gifts for ministry and the building up of the body rather than focusing on our differences.

The end of unity is "maturity," both of the individual and of the body. Maturity here means being spiritual adults, as opposed to children who are "blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming" (v 14). Maturity means growing toward both individual and corporate intimacy with Christ so that we become "perfect" (another translation of the word for maturity) imitators, "to the measure of the full stature of Christ":

God's goal for believers is that they grow up, that they become responsible, self-disciplined, well-adjusted, spiritually minded, loving and considerate human beings. He wants them to fulfill their humanity, to be the men and women He envisaged when He created the human race in the first place. That is their destination (Richard L. Strauss, "Like Christ: an Exposition of Ephesians 4:13, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 143:260-265 JI-S, 1986, p. 263-4).

toward the body and of furthering the work of the Kingdom that we will end the crisis of ministry in the church. It is not a matter of who is qualified to do the job but of all working together, growing up into the measure of the full stature of Christ. Then the world will see in the church the vision of the Kingdom as it really is.

Lori Matties, a member of River East MB Church, is a freelance writer and editor and the mother of two children. Lori edited this issue of *Sophia*.

When we do not take hold of our spiritual gifts and use them for ministry, not only the church suffers but the world suffers, too.

Each is given a gift, but the goal is that all attain maturity. We're in this together. Many gifts are needed. When we expect one person, the pastor, to carry all the responsibility for nurturing the body, we deny ourselves the privilege of being part of a healthy body working toward maturity in Christ.

All gifts carry with them a certain authority as long as they work toward the goal of nurturing the people in their task of doing the work of ministry and growing toward maturity. It is only when we understand these gifts in terms of service

MISSION STATEMENT: *SOPHIA*

Sophia offers a forum for women in the MB church. Her pages provide room for dialogue, room for women to speak to each other about their place in the family, the church, the work place and the world. She recognizes that the MB sisterhood is rural, urban and suburban; that it represents all age groups; that it includes diverse interests and experiences; that its members speak with various voices.

Sophia offers herself as a rallying place for women in an uncertain, changing world. She is interested in women's stories, in their aspirations and disappointments, their successes and failures. She invites expressions of joy and sorrow, concern and outrage. She encourages women in the use of their gifts in all spheres of life.

Although *Sophia* was conceived and brought to birth by and for MB women and celebrates sisterhood, it is her desire to be inclusive. She hopes to challenge both men and women; she welcomes their voices and invites them into dialogue.

Sophia acknowledges the authority of God, the giver of wisdom, and of the sacred Scriptures, the story of God's dealings with women and men. "Oh the depths of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" (Romans 11:33)

.....

Katie Epp



Lori Matties and Dora Dueck spent a morning last fall listening to three women—Irma Epp, assistant pastor of the Mclvor Avenue MB Church, Sherryl Koop of Youth for Christ, and Katie Epp, retired but still active with her husband in several interim church-related assignments—talk about growing up in the church. All three had generally positive childhood memories of church life. “I got a lot of encouragement,” said one, and, “I felt I was loved,” said another. Parents, grandparents, and women in the church such as teachers and Pioneer Girls guides had been important models.

The conversation was wide ranging and wonderfully inspiring. It also turned out to be much too long to use in its entirety! Here are a few excerpts.

.....

Sophia: *What do you see as your ministry in the church?*

Sherryl: In my 20s my ministry was to my peers. I was heavily involved in our College and Career group. Those were exciting years. Then I went through a time of evaluating my role. Now I’m very involved with young people, particularly Junior High youth.

In my late 20s I agreed to be a deacon. That was a surprising invitation because of my age and the fact I was single and a woman, but I was excited that the church accepted me into that position. I’ve just finished some five years as a deacon.

Sophia: *Whom were you given to care for?*

Sherryl: Young people of the church. That population was growing and the needs were vast. Because of my contacts through Youth for Christ, I was spending time with kids anyway in a diaconate role. I was asked to fulfill it in a more official capacity.

Now I’ve let go of the deacon role, but I’m very involved in being a Junior High sponsor. By virtue of my position, I’m a mentor of younger women. I’m sometimes overwhelmed by what that means. I realize that all the things I do are watched closely. I’m laying down patterns.

Sophia: *What has it been like to pass age 30?*

Sherryl: It’s been freeing. I feel I’m more focused, even in my relationship with Jesus. Things that were huge questions earlier are not that important anymore. Some of the self-esteem questions I had in my 20s are gone. Being single isn’t an issue either, for which I’m truly grateful. I think it’s important to encourage people who are afraid of being single. It’s not something to fear. It brings with it many rich opportunities, if you seek them out and ask God to use you.

Irma: My ministry has been changing ever since I left the Yarrow church as a young woman. We worked in Zaire with Men-

Growing Up in the Church I: *A Conversation*

nonite Brethren Missions/Services for 16 years. My role was the ministry to missionary's children. We had up to 54 children living with us for 9 months of the year. We were teachers, mentors, parents, whatever we could be for them.

When we came back to Canada in 1973 I taught at MBCI. I enjoyed teaching. Also, Rev. Neufeld contacted me soon after I got back and said, "There's a group of young women who don't want to be part of the older women's group. Would you start a Bible study fellowship with them?" So I became a teacher and mentor to those young married women. I didn't have all the answers, but in studying the Scripture together we could arrive at conclusions.

Many of those women today are involved in Sunday school, in teaching, in many different organizations in the city. It's been fantastic to watch them. They are now my support group. They pray for me each week.

Another changing role for me was conference work, first on the Board of Christian Education, then for 6 years on the Committee of Reference and Counsel. My role was not just to serve on the committee but to bring the issues into the church, to make people aware of what's happening in the Conference. For me Conference is important; it isn't "out there." More recently I've been serving on our Seminary board.

Right now I have a new area of work, as an assistant pastor. I feel I'm a bridge builder. I'll be able to evaluate how it's gone later.

Katie: I grew up knowing I had been dedicated to God and his service. I read that in my mother's open diary once when I was dusting in her bedroom. When you see it written black on white it makes an impression.

I had a love for music, so I pursued studies in music. I taught music at MBBC for three years. After my marriage to John—he was involved in Home Missions in Ontario—my role was re-defined. I considered myself a team player with him. I assisted him and prayed for him. We'd

bounce ideas off each other, sometimes we'd agree, sometimes we'd disagree. We shared insights. We became each other's closest confidantes. I used my musical gifts where they were needed, in the church or elsewhere, and not least of all to supplement income because we were sometimes on very meager salaries.

I've served as an unofficial greeter in the foyer. I learned that people appreciate being acknowledged and heard and loved. I've met pastor's wives who have negative feelings about that role, but I've enjoyed it and consider it a tremendous privilege, probably because John and I work well together.

continued on next page



Sherryl Koop

.....

A Conversation

continued from page 9

It was always hard for me when we left a congregation. You've made all those connections and you don't stop caring for the people, but somehow your job changes. There's a certain amount of grieving.

Sophia: *How do you help younger women wrestle with work related issues?*

Sherryl: My heart grieves for women in the early 20s, a lost group as far as the church is concerned. There are major decisions happening during that time. Sometimes they involve career choice but more often they're at a basic level of self-esteem, giftedness, relationships.

We've introduced a mentoring relationship to one of our young women interns at Youth for Christ. She's teamed up with an older staff person to meet weekly on personal matters outside ministry. That could be a niche the church looks at trying to fill.

Irma: I've worked all my life, but in my work overseas the children were with me. When I was a widow I had to go to school. My boys were young, so my relatives at Tabor College looked after my children. My children and I were accepted into the extended family. I didn't have the guilt that a lot of mothers are experiencing today.

Almost all the women in my Bible study work full time. They have to be very selective about how they get involved in the church. You can't say they don't have a loyalty to the church. We have to re-think church with working women in mind. How does one do things so they're part of it?

I'm very happy for those who have the opportunity to stay at home and feel that is their ministry, and I want to encourage them. We have to try to support those who work as well, because either they've chosen that or it's a necessity.



Irma Epp

Katie: Women who have the "luxury" of staying home sometimes have a tendency to be hard on the women who work. We have to be careful not to foster that spirit. Some have careers and want to at least keep their foot in the door. I can understand that. I've taught piano part-time all my life, often over supper hour or when John could look after the children.

Irma: Another thing that's developing through this is that many husbands are beginning to see parenting as a joint venture. It's wonderful to see their involvement.

Sophia: *What advice would you give to women seeking ministry or ways of serving in the church today?*

Irma: I think of what Mary said to those people at the wedding, "Whatever Jesus tells you to do, do it." What Jesus puts on your mind, go ahead and do it, be it ever so

small. Let it grow. You don't have to wait for the big things.

Katie: Be your own person. Do what is right for your personality, your family, the way you work with your husband.

Sherryl: And I would say, don't think there's going to be a better time to be involved. There will always be other things that call for attention and involvement. Decide that now is the best time

Sophia: *How have you handled the criticism that comes with being actively involved in the church?*

Katie: The criticism that's hardest to take, for me as a pastor's wife, is when I feel my husband is being unfairly criticized. Frequently I'm not present to hear it first hand or in context. (He tends to give things a fairly positive slant.) It's often something you can't get hold of, you don't know who to approach. I've handled it with a lot of prayer. I work it through between the Lord and me.

Sherryl: In some criticisms my rebellious nature has risen to the surface and I have continued to do exactly what was criticized. One example was criticism for wearing pants while serving communion. I continued to wear pants. I even wore raggy jeans one time!

Criticisms with a little more edge to them, for them I've asked for guidance from the Lord on what I'm to learn, because some of the criticisms have been valid. I think it's worth my effort to ask God to teach me.

And some things you lay aside, you say that's way outside what's really going on here. I'm just a vehicle of someone's venting. It helps to have people you can work that through with. Prayer is a big, big thing. And shedding of lots of tears so you can wash your soul.

Henri Nouwen's *In the Name of Jesus* is a wonderful book on Christian leadership that I often go back to, in trying to sort out what to learn from and what to let go of.

•••••

Irma: I've always needed approval, I guess, to continue. It really hurts when one is wounded. I think being wounded happens to everyone in ministry, because you're public, you advocate change. I'm still trying to learn to live with it. My father frequently said, it comes with the territory and you'd better be prepared. And where you are wrong, you'd better be very sure that you own up.

Sophia: *What concerns and challenges you most in the church today?*

Irma: For me it's: how do we walk through change in a constructive way? We come from diverse backgrounds. How do we speak with one another, rather than to one another about one another?

Another thing that's concerning me a great deal is, for lack of a better word, individualism. There is loyalty toward the local church but people aren't aware of the bigger picture. How do we develop loyalty to the Conference, our institutions, the colleges, the seminary? To our mission programs? How do we develop the idea that the brothers and sisters in Zaire are brothers and sisters to us?

Katie: I agree with what Irma said. Another thing mentioned earlier was the music issue. It reminds me of growing up with the German/English divisions. That we should be divided over styles of worship and music is painful to me. I just find it so difficult. And I'm sorry we're losing our choral tradition.

Another is the division over the women's issue. We're not showing love and acceptance of each other that allows us to differ on a non-confessional issue. Other concerns I have are the lack of Scripture memory by children today, and the "Freedom 55" mentality of our many well-to-do middle-agers. If we could harness that retiree group!

Sherry: I'm delighted that we have issues that bring controversy. The women's issue is a great challenge. It's opening the way for other issues that will challenge us. The homosexual rights issue will come knock-

ing at our door far quicker than we'd like. We've been very good at letting the world know we're pretty good and we're okay, and it's time to admit we're not.

A concern of mine would be an assumed spirituality when putting people in leadership positions. I'm on our church nominating committee and all we do sometimes is try to fill slots. We don't ask the right questions or pray for discernment as often as we should.

That ties into a second concern, that we model real honesty in what it means to have a life of faith. Good honest day-to-day testimonials need to be at the front of the church more often than they are. The times people have risked to admit to struggles have opened the floodgates for others about those same issues. It's unfortunate that those times are few and far between.

Another concern is that the College and Career age people of many churches feel that if they warm the pew that's enough, because in their life of studies, relationships, part-time jobs, how can the church ask anything more? They flock to places where they aren't known and where they can slip in and out. We need to foster a sense of responsibility and ownership in the church community, and open the doors for even the very young to be involved.

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Growing Up in the Church II:

Another Conversation

Judith Dueck and Kathryn Koslowsky, both 16, were interviewed by Sarah Klassen in July 1994 after a day spent working in the day camp at their church, River East MB. Judith's recent essay, "The Anabaptists: Why they were persecuted during the Reformation," won the high school division in the P.M. Friesen historical essay contest. Kathryn was guest pianist with the Mennonite Community Orchestra last fall, performing a Mozart concerto. Both girls are in grade twelve at MBCI.

Sarah: *This issue's theme is "Growing Up in the Church." The two of you have, literally, grown up in one church, the River East MB Church. How long have you been part of it?*

Judith: Ever since I was born.

Kathryn: When we moved here I was nine.

Sarah: *What memories do you have about being young in the church?*

Kathryn: We had a wonderful Sunday school class. Our teacher made dinner for us once, and I remember we painted our Sunday school classroom pink.

Judith: I remember plays at Christmas, and at other times, too. And we had handbells.

Kathryn and Judith: And Pioneer Girls!

Sarah: *You sound pretty enthusiastic about your early experiences in the church. But now you're teenagers. What does the church offer kids your age?*

Judith: It's a place where people are Christian and supportive. Also the church has a youth group.

Kathryn: Right now our youth group is small. But not all kids, Christian or not, are interested in a youth group, or feel that they need one. Or even feel they need the church.

Sarah: *What problems do you have with the church?*

Kathryn: The church can sometimes try terribly hard to include everyone. "Let's include the teenagers." Sometimes I'd rather just be let alone.

Sarah: *If they offered an inter-generational class, would you be interested?*

Judith: We-e-ll, maybe with a college-age group.

Sarah: *What about worship? We say we go to church to worship.*

Kathryn: Yes, I like the service. I like the singing. Songs shouldn't just be about our relationship to Jesus, which is important, but they should also be about relating to others. They should be about how you should live as a Christian. About being servants.

Sarah: *Who are your models? Do you find models in the church?*

Judith: Yes, I think in my family. And friends, too, who teach me acceptance. And those who take their faith seriously, who take it into life.

Kathryn: My mother and my grandfather are models for me, in the way they work. They can't do anything half-way. I asked my grandfather to talk to the day-camp kids next week about Korea, where he worked for MCC, and right now he's working terribly hard to prepare for it. He takes his Christianity very seriously. My mother does, too.

Judith: I'm more likely to find models in the church than outside.

Kathryn: My piano teacher was a model in the way she taught and related to me.

Sarah: *Is it fair to expect kids your age to take responsibility within the church? What can you do for the church?*

Judith: I don't mind once in a while to play my flute in church. It's okay to participate.

Kathryn: I know it's selfish, but really I don't want to take responsibility. I don't want to think about things like tithing and business meetings. I just want to be there and take things in.

Judith: I appreciate the sharing time in church, even if I'd rather not contribute. But I'm glad it's there. But sometimes all the talking [about responsibility] gets repetitious. It works against, and doesn't push you forward.

Kathryn: It's aggravating to be always conscious of who you are. I have a wicked conscience that keeps reminding me. But, then, usually I'm glad when it's there.

Sarah: *Does your life in the church relate to the rest of life?*

Judith: I think so. When I mention to my friends what church I come from, and we happen to have a woman pastor, they don't all understand. They don't all think that's right. I have to stand up for my church. For the decisions they've made.

Kathryn: Sometimes they say we're radical, so I have to know where I stand.

Sarah: *The MB church is struggling with the question of women in ministry. What is your view on that? Do you see yourself as part of that struggle?*

Judith: My view is that women should be allowed to participate in any ministry. However, many people obviously don't believe that and I often come onto contact with people who don't agree with me, especially during class discussions.



Kathryn Koslowsky and Judith Dueck

Kathryn: I get angry when I learn that the conference wants to stifle the abilities of women. In a way I am part of the struggle because I attend a church that has a woman pastor. I know many people frown upon our congregation and it hurts because I think we're Christians just as they are. I hope someday all women will be able to participate to the best of their abilities, without being looked down on or rejected.

Sarah: Besides the issue of women in leadership, are there other issues you find yourselves defending?

Kathryn: Pacifism.

Sarah: Both of you attend Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute. Is it necessary to defend the peace position there?

Kathryn: Yes, even at MBCI. Even kids from Mennonite churches. When we discuss non-resistance and war, like the Gulf War, I'm usually in the minority when I speak up for pacifism.

Sarah: Should the church do more teaching on this, do you think?

Judith: Yes. Mostly we're not taught that in church. Just at MBCI.

Kathryn: We have to do more remembering of how our parents and grandparents and the others lived. We're forgetting that. The peace way doesn't seem realistic in the world's eyes. But I think we have to keep that dream of peace, that hope, and work toward it.

Sarah: And then there's culture. Does the church help in the way you experience all that culture—music, videos, movies, magazines? Or does the culture overwhelm everything?

Judith: It's everywhere, but I don't think it's overwhelmingly strong. Sometimes a message on TV might sound like what we've been taught, though the reasoning is different.

Kathryn: I know I'm supposed to filter all that, because I'm a Christian. My parents would say I don't filter enough. I take in a lot.

Sarah: As you look to the future, what are some reasons why you'll stay in the church?

Judith: When we were taking baptism classes, our pastor asked us "Could you be a Christian alone?" I think it's important to worship with others, to share and support each other. And also to contribute to the church.

Kathryn: It's easy to stray from what's important. On Sunday when I get up, it would be easy not to go to church. But the church helps me not to lose sight of what's important. It's easy to forget. In church there are people I can look up to.

“My Mom was a Preacher”

Female Religion in the Soviet Era

by Marlene Epp

When Katie Dirks Friesen's father died at home in Gnadenfeld in the Mennonite colony of Molotschna in the Soviet Ukraine in 1934, there was no minister available to perform the funeral. Katie, who was eight years old at the time, recalls that a family friend, Maria Braun, read from the Bible and prayed over her father's body. Most of the friends and relatives in attendance were women and children. With her father's death, Katie's and her brother's religious upbringing was in the hands of her mother. Katie paid tribute to the ministry of her mother in the following way:

“...my brother and I had a devoted Christian mother, who by her example and instruction radiated the love of Christ. She passed her faith on to us. She taught us to love and pray and gave us her very best. I can still see her standing in the corner of the room by the shelf on

which a kerosene lamp stood, reading from the Bible and her book of meditations. After blowing out the light, she would kneel and pray at length and then join me in bed. She instructed us concerning the special celebrations of the church: Christmas, Easter, Pentecost and Thanksgiving” (Katie Friesen, *Into the Unknown*, Author published, 1986. p. 27).

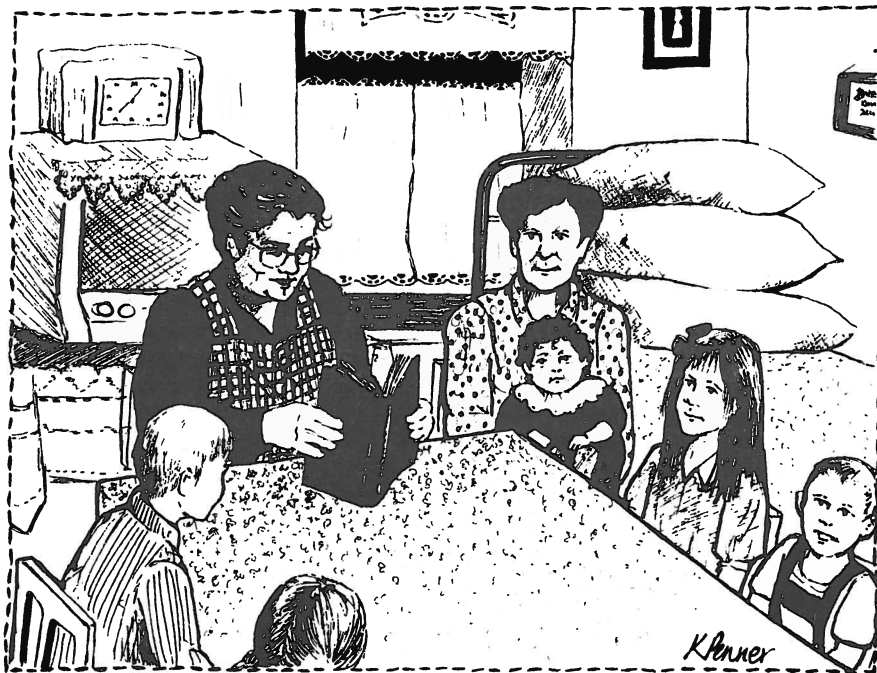
The homage Katie pays to her mother in her autobiography is echoed by many others who grew up in the Mennonite villages of the Ukraine during the Soviet era. The numerous stories of faith and courage upheld by a mother's teaching suggest that spiritual leadership among the Mennonites was at that point taken up and carried by women.

The cultural and religious institutions of Mennonites in the Soviet Union began to erode in the late 1920s as Stalinist policies

of collectivization and russification altered almost every aspect of life. By the early 1930s most churches had been closed and religious practice banned. Ministers, teachers, prosperous landowners and other community leaders were arrested and exiled to labour camps in Siberia and central Asia. Arrests and disappearances escalated through the decade, climaxing in the years 1937-1938 when almost every Mennonite family lost father and/or sons, many never to be heard from again.

The outbreak of war with Germany caused more family fragmentation as most of the remaining men and youth (in some areas women also) were evacuated eastward or sent to the front to dig trenches. The result was a remarkable sex imbalance in the Mennonite villages of the Ukraine. Several estimates state that by 1941 fifty percent of Mennonite families were without a father. In some areas the percentage may have been substantially greater.

The fact that most ordained ministers and other official church leaders were absent from the Mennonite communities has led to historical accounts that summarize the era as one in which morals declined and spiritual leadership vanished. What in fact happened in most households was that religious observance took the form of clandestine ritual rather than public practice. Spiritual leadership consisted of a mother's prayers or Bible-reading in hushed tones with curtains drawn. (See also Pamela E. Klassen, *Going by the Moon and the Stars: Stories of Two Russian Mennonite Women*, MA Thesis, Wilfred Laurier University, 1992, forthcoming by Wilfred Laurier University Press.) Morals and values were passed on by a mother's example, necessarily adjusted to meet the



KATHY PENNER

demands of wartime survival. In crediting his own religious training to his mother's influence, one man said, "My mom was a preacher" (quote taken from a series of interviews conducted by the author). His personal experience, he felt, made him more open to women in the ministry today.

The perpetuation of religious belief within the home was undertaken at no small cost to women themselves. One woman recalled that she had tried to sing a Christmas song with her children at home but someone had been eavesdropping and the next day an announcement on the public bulletin board declared what she had done. Although she was not arrested, the incident had prompted her to be more careful.

The German occupation of the Ukraine from 1941 to 1943 introduced a new openness to religious practice among Mennonites. Churches were re-opened and religion could once again be practised openly. In some cases, church services were led by the few remaining men, but in their absence women frequently took leadership. One memoir observed that sermons were sometimes given by "old Mr. Penner the teacher" or "80-year-old Rev. Boldt," but "most of the time women read a sermon from a book" (Agatha Loewen Schmidt, compiler, *Gnadenfeld, Molotschna, 1835-1943*, p. 35).

Another woman recalled, "we would just have a lady read to us out of the Bible, that was it. We gathered together and would sing spiritual songs." Most memoirs speak of the all-female choirs unconventionally led by women. For children, the first memories of non-covert religious practice were of prayer meetings and song services led by women. Undoubtedly, this left a profound imprint on them.

The Mennonites, mostly women and children, who trekked out of the Ukraine to Poland with the retreating German army in the fall of 1943 continued their prayers, songs and meditations. One group of Mennonite refugees accompanied by no adult males held their own church services on Sundays in the rooms they occupied above a school in Poland. One woman recalled that although there were no ministers among them, "we did the best we knew how" (Debbie Kirkpatrick, "The Story of Mrs. Suse Rempel and her Family," unpublished paper, Mennonite Heritage Centre, 1979, p. 34). It was at crisis points along the journey, often with Soviet tanks close behind, that some young women and men were prompted by their mothers to establish a clear relationship with God. One woman said that when God

spoke to her through her mother she made the decision to be baptized, a ritual that occurred at the Backnang refugee camp.

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At war's end, however, security and stability were also accompanied by reconstitution of gender roles, especially in the church. With the return of some men, including ministers, from military service and prisoner-of-war camps, and the arrival of church personnel from North America, a gendered order of church leadership was resumed in many of the refugee communities. In church-operated camps for displaced persons, public religious rituals such as baptisms, weddings and funerals resumed under the leadership of men.

One Mennonite Central Committee worker described the situation thus: "Wednesday night we discuss the Sunday school lesson, in two separate groups. We divided the men and women because if all together, the women in true Mennonite fashion, did not speak at all (and were not expected to)" ("Mennonite Exodus Notes," Frank H. Epp collection, Conrad Grebel College Archives). One man, who had been a young boy during the war, recalled with anger the manner in which women had to become submissive followers when men resumed their places in congregational life in Germany at war's end. He said: "As I reflect upon those years, I realize that it was the women, not the men, who kept the faith and Mennonite values alive at great risk to themselves. ...and when the men returned after the war, they not only resumed their former leadership in the congregations but made the women feel guilty about how they

had lived during times of hardship" (Harry Loewen, "From Russia to Canada," *Mennonite Reporter* 20:19, 1 October, 1990).

Clearly, the incongruity between women's religious roles during the war and following the war was felt by some individuals. As we continue to hear more stories from those Mennonites who remained or were taken back to the Soviet Union after the war, it is clear that the church stayed alive in that country in great part because of the perpetuation of religious practice and values by women under conditions of severe hardship.

Although some Mennonite Brethren historians have recognized that women were the "spiritual heroes" during this era, the connection has yet to be made between the leadership taken by women under adverse circumstances and their right to be in church leadership today. J.B. Toews, in his recent 130 year history of the Mennonite Brethren Church, pays homage to Mennonite mothers of the 1930s who "preserved the seed of faith so it could be passed on" but doesn't mention the contemporary leadership struggles of women despite a lengthy section on the crisis of modernism facing the Mennonite Brethren (see *A Pilgrimage of Faith: The Mennonite Brethren Church in Russia and North America, 1860-1990*, Kindred Press, 1993).

Perhaps because women were mainly ministering to children, the elderly and each other, and not to very many adult men, their spiritual leadership has not been taken quite as seriously. The experiences of Mennonites during the 1930s and 1940s can lend new perspectives to the issue of women in ministry and, indeed, can alter our definitions of spiritual leadership and even our understanding of religion itself.

Marlene Epp is a doctoral candidate in history at the University of Toronto. Her dissertation, in progress, is titled "Women without Men: Mennonite Immigrants to Canada, 1945-1960." She attends Olive Branch Church (Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada) in Waterloo, Ontario.

Defection of the Cleaverettes

by Doreen Martens

You're going to think I'm making this all up. But it's true. Yes, Virginia, it's possible for women to get involved in every aspect of a church's ministry and to contribute all their gifts in service to the body, and for everybody to be happy with this state of affairs. Well, mostly.

The problem is, what happens when all those gifts come busting out and creativity flourishes and God blesses your endeavors and church life gets all rich and meaningful for everybody?

You get hungry, that's what.

You see, I belong to a very weird church. It's in California, which should tell you something right there. It's in a big city. It's a young, untraditional place, chock full of people in their twenties, thirties and forties brimming with energy and ideas and enthusiasm. It's so stuffed with gifts and talents we're sometimes embarrassed to admit it. In our little congregation of about eighty regulars, just offhand I can think of three psychologists, three graphic artists, an occupational therapist, several nurses, an engineer, two writers, a lawyer, a concert pianist, several social workers, an urban missionary or two, an environmental expert, a couple of teachers and a slew of seminary students. That's just among the women. And in the free and encouraging environment we've found here, each of them seems to have taken her gifts seriously and found some way to contribute them in service to the church. The men think this is great. The women think it's great.

There's just one problem: our Congregational Life Commission. This is a grand name for a church committee (little churches like grand names; it's proof we've got the Vision), but it doesn't fool anyone. Even in California, and yes, even in a largely "non-ethnic" congregation, all exercise of the hospitable gifts revolves in some way around food.

We know that what we're dealing with here is the kitchen committee.

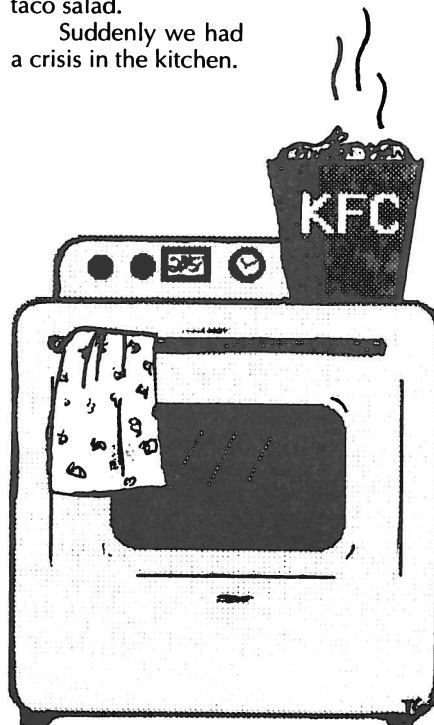
We used to have a kitchen—um, Congregational Life group. They knew what they were about. They called themselves the Cleaverettes, after June Cleaver of "Leave it to Beaver" fame, who brought to the television screen the impossible art of full-time housekeeping in a crisp shirt-waist, heels and pearls. The Cleaverette thing was pretty funny, considering that

the group included a token man or two. (But then, the church men's group is called the Hairy Chested Sensitive Men's Breakfast Club. I told you our congregation was weird.)

For a while we had great events planned by the Cleaverettes: weekend campouts highlighted by campfire-grilled Banana Boats, assembly instruction provided by a burly Cleaverette in a red plaid hunting jacket. Progressive-supper Christmas parties warmed by stone soup (the product of many feverish phone calls made to solicit contributions of two carrots and a bunch of parsley). Baby showers were always graced with the same ritual centerpiece—a cracked and chipped florist's container in the shape of a choo-choo train, gratefully passed on from each appalled new mother to the next.

Worn out by all this exercise of gifts they hated to admit they had, the Cleaverettes gradually dispersed to less demanding jobs, like worship planning and financial caretaking. The head Cleaverette got promoted to chair of the Leadership Commission (translation: grand poobah of the laity, known in some circles as the moderator) and said adios to organizing the taco salad.

Suddenly we had a crisis in the kitchen.



TERRILYNN GOERTZ

Approached by the leadership to fill the empty plate in our table theology left by the defection of the Cleaverettes, one after another candidate humbly stated that she or he had not felt the hand of God nudging in the direction of the stove. One pleaded recent marriage; another, other fields that needed tending. Nobody said she'd just bought a pair of oxen, but it came close. Next to preparing the Sunday sermon, everybody figured serving as the Congregational Life team leader had to be the most challenging, demanding and downright intimidating job in the church, something for which special gifts and perhaps superior biology were required. God has gifted us all for something, but not all of us are intended for the ministry of the soup pot, some felt. Where, oh where, was the worthy one God had anointed to this task?

And so we got hungry. We had half-baked potlucks mostly catered by KFC and the deli at the grocery store down the street. Our church birthday party slipped by without a single streamer in evidence (where did that crepe paper go?). Our annual Palm Sunday brunch was simply forgotten. The joy of our life as a Christian family was threatened by this failure to gather around the table.

At last, a woman of many talents was persuaded that her gifts were equal to the task, and, organizing a small band of disciples around her, she has begun to lead them in the way they should go: turkey with blessings at Thanksgiving; international foods at the peace workshop; a cake that says farewell to a moving family with style. Hallelujah! Our stomachs are sated while our souls are satisfied.

And so, we have learned the hard way that no gift is too commonplace to take for granted; that cooks and bottle washers and people who can make us all feel part of a loved family are as valuable as theologians and treasurers. And (dare I say it?) in their absence we tend to miss them more.

Doreen Martens, a regular columnist for *Sophia*, continues to live, work and worship in California.

Report Appreciated

I received this magazine as a gift and enjoy reading it. Let me thank you so much for including an article by Joanne Klassen: "Family Dynamics: A Conference Report" Fall, 1994 (4.3). My friend, Helen Suderman, also a member at Bakerview, asked me to write to you and ask you to publish the article in *MB Herald*. We feel saddened by this episode, and that it is kept secret. We love our pastor couple dearly and they deserve all the support that church and conference can give. We pray for confession, forgiveness and healing.

Mrs. Katherine Friesen
Clearbrook, BC

Truth with Love

Special appreciation to Joanne Klassen. Conferences are so hard to summarize, but she cut right to the heart of that one, speaking the truth with love. I hope you don't get letters telling you that she should have swept the painful things under the rug. There is no cleansing in that. Honest service grows from facing the truth about ourselves. Forgiveness and freedom depend upon it (I John 1:9).

Donna Stewart
Vancouver

Variety

Your magazine *Sophia* is in a class by itself and I thoroughly enjoyed the variety of topics and articles.

Katherine Harder
Sardis, BC

Blurred Borders

You will have seen this [article from *Saturday Review*, Oct. 29, re: choice of *Sophia* as a name for your MB women's magazine. At best your choice is controversial. Do you intend to put out a controversial publication?

About a different topic altogether, concerning "Artists Among Us" (4.3). Since you freely identify yourself as a magazine for Mennonite *Brethren* women, how do you justify including Mary Klassen Unrau? She was brought up in a Conference Mennonite church. When you write on page 18: "It is significant that in a community where creativity apart from practical use was often viewed with suspicion, none of the leaders in the church spoke any objection." No, they did not in Mayfair (Conference church) or in Saskatoon (Pastor J.J. Thiessen). We belonged to an enlightened church.

Susan Rempel
Chilliwack, BC

Although Sophia is produced by MB women, we can't resist crossing denominational borders in the stories we tell. For instance, the Winter, 1993 (3.1) issue contained stories of several non-MB women, including Sojourner Truth, a black American born in the 18th century and not a Mennonite of any kind. We are sorry if we offended by not mentioning the particular denomination of Mary Klassen, whose story was an inspiration to us.

As for our name, we can refer you to the explanation contained in the Spring/Summer issue 1994 issue (4.2).

Editors

Forum Overdue

I was acutely aware of the relative absence of writer as 'artist' in your last lovely issue. It is great to see your magazine, really fine and so long overdue. I would be a different person if I had grown up alongside such a forum for women's speech.

Eunice Scarfe
Edmonton

We neglected to assure our readers that we hope to feature other artists/writers, musicians in a future issue.

Editors

Change and Growth

On behalf of my girls and myself I would like to thank you for the kind and sensitive way our story was presented. The other articles and artists that you highlighted were very much appreciated as well.

It is obviously a changing world we are living in. Hopefully the freedom and opportunities we have will not be taken away from us, but that we will be allowed to grow and flourish.

May God continue to be with you and may *Sophia* be a blessing to our community.

Erika Koop
Winnipeg



Lonely for Land

by Bonnie Loewen

For a fleeting moment I thought I was in El Salvador. As I looked out the porch window I saw Maria-Elena, her lean copper-skinned hand balancing on her head a large stainless steel bowl filled to the brim with zucchini. A few steps behind her, Martin and Jose pushed wheelbarrows overflowing with uprooted heaps of red bean vines, harvested on our back forty.

Two years ago Mark and I contacted the Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council, whose "host program" helps Canadians establish friendships with new immigrants. Interfaith connected us with a family from El Salvador. At our first meeting in their home, we tasted tamales—a chicken, olive and vegetable mixture wrapped in mashed corn flour and baked in banana leaves. As we ate this special meal, Maria and Marianno Avile told us how their lives had unravelled with the threat of death hovering over loved ones, when the land they worked and lived on came under crossfire between the guerillas and the government army. In 1991 they and their six children left El Salvador.

During our first visit it became obvious to us that this family of eight (a grandchild was born in Canada) were tremendously lonely for land. In El Salvador, Maria and Marianno and their children worked the fields for a large landowner and lived on a yard with chickens and a cow. In Winnipeg, they spend their days learning English and their evenings and weekends in Manitoba Housing. The yards are small. Government rules do not allow them to raise a couple of chickens in their basement or to till their small piece of grass for a tomato and lettuce garden. It is impossible for this family to do what seems to them practical and responsible.

The conversations during our first winter of friendship with Maria and Marianno were often about gardening. That spring (1993), we tilled one quarter of an acre, which lies outside our tree hedge. Maria and Marianno asked if another family could garden with them. Neither family had a vehicle, but they knew of another family who owned a van, and within three weeks, three families were gardening. It soon became apparent that the one-quarter acre was not enough land for these three large families. In the summer of 1994 the plot was extended to half an acre, and that small garden has produced more food than ever before.

Now the three families dream of building a greenhouse. In addition to growing garden produce from seed and harvesting early tomatoes and peppers, they have also offered to grow flowers from seeds, saving me the cost of bedding plants.

Next summer they want to garden two acres. Until now, they have experimented with the Salvadoran red bean, hoping this bean would survive our short growing season. The first summer they started with a small bag of seed sent to them by relatives in El Salvador. Their first crop of beans, grown in that awful gardening year of 1993, suffered an excess of rain and early frost. Enough was harvested, however, to double their seed, which was planted in 1994 and the beans grew wonderfully. Again, they decided to save their harvest to seed the 1995

crop. This fall, as they displayed their 15-litre pail of precious red beans, they told us they hope to have enough seed for one acre. They plan to sell the red beans to the Spanish community.

The discipline, ingenuity and generosity of our friends from El Salvador is humbling. This past summer, while I was very pregnant (our baby boy was born in September), the Salvadorans planted, weeded and harvested our garden. One Saturday afternoon, eight children (including our five-year-old daughter) and seven adults husked a mountain of corn in short order, while the conversation moved around the circle in Spanish and English. The volume of vegetable produced this summer (particularly corn) motivated the three families to purchase freezers. They asked for lessons on preparing vegetables for freezing. That afternoon our kitchen buzzed with activity. As one woman pulled the extra hair off the corn for blanching, two women cut and another bagged. Our corn was soon ready for the freezer.

Over the past summer, we spent many good hours preserving tomatoes, apples and relish. We also exchanged recipes. One Saturday morning Martin observed me pulling out tiny wild portulaca weeds (*fatahan?*) that were beginning to infest the ground around our apple trees. He suggested I let the plants grow larger for portulaca salad or soup. Odd advice; portulaca is the most detested weed in Manitoba gardens. Although I did not allow the weed to grow unchecked, I did allow a small patch to grow. Mature, sorrel-flavoured portulaca leaves are cut into thin slices and mixed in with lettuce, onion and vinegar. Mark likes them.

Our friends bring practical and resourceful attitudes to the farm. They do not waste. Their presence keeps us accountable with food and garbage. Their children must work in the garden for an allotted time before they ride bicycle or play soccer (and that includes the five-year-old). They use our land gratefully, but also offer with confidence

what they perceive we need to learn. They remind us, as tractors and combines rumble through the yard, that working with a hoe and hands is healthy and safe. They remind us, as we feed bales of grass to our cattle, that corn husks and plants are good winter feed. As they bring extended family and friends to help with gardening, they teach us, who live so independently, to nurture relationships.

Gardening with three families has changed us. We rarely have a quiet weekend during the summer. The farm yard is busy with bicycles, soccer balls and children. Buckets of vegetables beg for processing on Saturday afternoons. Cups of coffee, bowls of soup and regular gifts of popoosa—corn tortillas filled with cheese—are consumed. These changes have meant adjustment, but they have also nurtured a quality of friendship that would be hard to give up. I look forward to next summer. Strolling through the sprawling acre of red beans, I may again, for a fleeting moment, think I am in El Salvador.

Bonnie Loewen, her husband Mark and their two children live and farm near Blumenort. Bonnie, who holds a Master of Divinity degree from the University of Winnipeg Consortium, is active in a community house church.

Building the Church in Northern Manitoba

by Mary Goossen



*Above: A few of our ladies at our craft table—Christmas tea.
Left: Mary Goossen*



Our family has lived in northern Manitoba since June of 1985. We live in Cranberry Portage and pastor the Grace Church for ten months of each year. Our summers are spent as directors at Simonhouse Bible Camp, the largest of the few evangelical camps in the north. The camp is located on the scenic Simonhouse Lake in Grassy River Provincial Park.

I'd like to tell you a little about the churches in northern Manitoba. At present we have churches in Thompson, Snow Lake, Cranberry Portage and Flin Flon. Each of our churches is unique, as are our churches in the south. As northern churches, these four have several distinguishing characteristics. They are small—the average attendance in three of them is about forty on a Sunday morning. Flin Flon is slightly larger. Many of the church members and attenders have been transient. A large number of our people live in a community for a few months or a few years.

Their jobs include teaching, working in the mines or for the Government, Manitoba Hydro, local employment and others. People move because of job transfers, cutbacks and sometimes to be closer to their families.

The people in our congregations are diverse in their backgrounds, experiences, needs and expectations of the church. Most of our churches have a few mature and stable Christians who are growing and can give leadership. We have many who need much discipling and nurturing. Many people are struggling in their faith and in their relationships with others, and they need much encouraging and counselling. We also have those whom I may call "pre-Christians." They bring their children to Sunday school and show some interest in church. Some of them come to church during crisis times in their lives.

The women in our churches have a major role. Because our numbers are small, we need leaders, and both men and women are encouraged to take leadership roles. In our own church we have more women than men attending, and a number of these women have non-believing husbands. More than half of our church board members are women. As one woman said to me, "Women have a lot to offer and can be

dynamic in ministry. I'm not advocating that each man or each woman should be in a leadership position. In our church women are very much encouraged to take leadership." My daughter said to me, "Mom, the churches here would be crippled without the women!"

In one of the communities a young mother said, "Women have taken leadership in our church because they tend to be the spiritual leaders. Women have been the backbone of the church. The men would rather work on maintenance or other physical needs of the church." Also, many of the men in a number of our communities work shifts at the mines and commute to mines away from home for several days of each week.

Many of our women are well educated and have excellent leadership skills. We are thankful when we have someone to fill the position of Sunday school superintendent, teacher, church moderator or treasurer. On occasion, we also have women lead worship services or do a teaching testimony. I believe our women feel needed and don't decline opportunities because they are women. I sense a freedom in the church and a deep appreciation for each person who is willing to get involved. When we were being interviewed for the position we accepted in the north, we were told, "Women in the north have to be tough!" I think this has been true many times, whether it means making an eight hour drive south to a conference or taking the responsibilities of worship leader or camp director's wife and hosting dozens of visitors each summer.

Our lives are by no means dull. Sometimes we feel somewhat isolated, but not for long. We have developed many wonderful friendships, we have learned to appreciate our families and we have learned that "nothing can separate us from God's love."

Mary Goossen is the mother of four children. In addition to her duties as a pastor's wife, she is a former Home Economics teacher who is at present substitute teaching.

“Come, Follow Me!”

by Julia Penner Zook



The words of Jesus recorded in Matthew 28:19-20 represent one of the foundational texts to Anabaptism: go make disciples, baptize and teach obedience. I have wrestled with this text throughout my faith pilgrimage. How can I carry out this commission personally? Does faithfulness to it take on a similar shape in each culture? Is taking responsibility for the Great Commission to be equated with the discerning and using of one's gifts in the church?

My reflections could be summed up as follows: The Great Commission does not primarily address the use of gifts in the local church but is rather to be understood as complementing and succeeding the call of Jesus, “Come Follow Me.”

With that statement I do not negate the importance of being appropriately and actively involved in the local church. There are aspects of the Great Commission that are carried out within that context. The assignment Christ gave just before leaving the earth, however, is so broad that it can never be housed adequately within “church” as we express it today.

The concern for discerning spiritual gifts often reflects the underlying question, “Who am I within the context of church structure?” Once our gifts have been discerned we generally spend much time and energy seeking outlets for these gifts within the Church.

Perhaps, like me, you have filled out a variety of gift analysis tests only to have the results reflect someone who isn't “you.” I believe that says more about the tests and our expectations than about the person. Like these tests, we can only discern gifts that fit into familiar categories.

The calling to follow Jesus broadens horizons, creates new categories and releases gifts that correspond to the call. I imagine his first followers never dreamed that their association with Jesus would lead them into ministries of healing, of casting out demons, or of being travelling preachers, for example.

Jesus' call, centered on obedience, is often connected with uncertainty and always requires change. Jews at the time of Jesus lived with rigid religious structure.

Jesus' called ones were not among the feared and respected spiritual leaders, but rather were ordinary people who accepted the existing religious rigidity as normative. It took Jesus three years to prod his followers into discarding their worn, though comfortable, perspectives and to teach them what it meant to live by the spirit rather than by the letter of the law. It was a huge shift, but their obedience and Jesus' patient insistence produced the necessary change, making the carrying out of his commission possible. Jesus still wishes to shape his followers into disciple-makers who can “read” their particular contexts and minister accordingly.

In the culture in which I live, making disciples happens when Katharina, a woman from our church, spends many hours with her friend, Uschi, who is searching for meaning in life. Uschi tells me later, “I'm so grateful for Katharina. She *really* listens to me and responds without giving pat answers.” Teaching people to obey Christ's commands happens one-on-one when someone is helped to identify a behavioral pattern that contradicts Christ's teachings or a perspective that binds rather than frees.

Let me share a few personal experiences. Many years ago I wrote an article that was my first to be published in a religious magazine. I was affirmed as having a gift for writing. Because of a number of circumstances I was unable to do any significant writing for years thereafter.

Later, while in seminary, I received affirmation in preaching and was encouraged to do more. Over the years I have preached quite regularly, but I do not feel it to be a strong gift now.

More recently, in seeking responsible ways to carry out the Great Commission

cross-culturally, following Jesus has taken on unexpected forms. I have been called to be a listener in a culture where forceful speech is regarded as essential. I have been called to offer healing to people who have deep wounds from their past. I have been called to positive and constructive interaction within a society that reflects cynicism and a critical attitude. I have been called to model healthy interdependence in an environment where self-sufficiency and interpersonal distance are highly valued. Each of us must ask the question: “What does it mean to follow Jesus in my unique context?”

I still have gifts of writing and speaking, but gifts are subordinate to calling. Jesus' call, “Come follow me,” includes surprises. It is based on a dynamic, growing relationship with the creative God. It may be that at some point fulfilling the Great Commission will require me to do a great deal more writing and/or speaking. I will only recognize my cue if my one goal remains that of following Jesus.

Defining the call of Jesus in terms of gifts makes for a neat package. As gifts are discovered, one can plan, develop and assess the use of these gifts. And since we tend to equate good management with responsibility, we regard ourselves as responsible followers of Jesus if our gifts are put to good use. We must guard against becoming distracted by secondary concerns, and failing to respond to the primary call.

To follow Jesus is to be continually alert to the significance of each encounter and experience, each thought and prayer; it is to be willing to discard limited perspectives; it is to accept the risks connected with new territory. Following Jesus in obedience will enable us to be responsible in carrying out the Great Commission.

Julia Penner Zook lives in Munich, Germany, where she and her husband Rod, have been church planting with Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services since 1990. She graduated in 1989 from Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary with an MA in Theology.

Miriam's Story, Our Story: Writing Together

by Eunice Scarfe

The first time we wrote in church we called it "Miriam's Story—My Story." The second time we called it, "What we have seen with our eyes and heard with our ears we tell to you," and although the latter was a cumbersome title, it perfectly expressed what we wanted to do. Both times we had difficulty describing what this new Sunday school class was about. But both times the women who came soon knew exactly what the class was about: about telling our stories, to ourselves and to each other, first written on paper and then read aloud. The stories were about naming ourselves, expressing our experience, speaking from image rather than idea, relying on the shifting sand of memory rather than on the firm foundation of fact or energetic posturing of argument.

Wrote at the church? I hear you ask. What do you mean, wrote at the church? This is how it happened.

We were a group of four women who attended the same church. One of us was a member, one had been affiliated since high school, one was from a sister denomination (or since this story takes place in a Mennonite Brethren church, should that be a 'brother' denomination?) and one was from another Protestant background. We met in a home for many months, and when we met we brought words to and for each other from books we were currently reading. Perhaps fiction, perhaps documentary, perhaps poetry. We read aloud, and we listened to each other, and then we ate and we talked. We met in order to share what we were reading, and to say what we were thinking. We met in order to speak of what our experience had been, rather than to hear what our experience should be. We met in order to share the shape of our story.

It was perhaps no accident that we chose to meet outside the church. Each of us was single, and single individuals are outsiders in the church. I can hear you protest. NOT outsiders. But consider, for example, a recent image of

church life which pictured a mother, father and two children. "Where do you see yourself fitting in," one of the women in our group said to me, "as parent or as child?" Where *did* we fit? None of us presently lived with a man. Three of us had. Two of us had children; two of us didn't. None of us felt particularly at home being alone in the church. If you had to label us you would have called us widow, divorcee or single.

We decided if we had to portray ourselves it would be standing with Miriam—a woman who was in no way defined by her relationship to a man, though she might have been delighted by a relationship to a man. But delighted is different from defined. Miriam is a woman for whom the text mentions no father or husband or son—only a brother. The biblical text shows Miriam four times: as a child tending her brother, as a young woman leading the women of Israel in song, as a mature woman sentenced 'outside the camp' for questioning authority, and as a woman so significant that the people of Israel stopped for seven days of mourning when she died. Miriam, we also noted, was an Old Testament woman who had a name. She was not the wife of, or the concubine of, or the daughter of. She was Miriam.

We decided that this sequence of Miriam's story—child, young woman, adult woman and mourned woman—gave us ample opportunity to record our own stories, and to listen each other's stories. In the spring of 1992 we began a series of ten Sunday morning, before church, sessions.

We made a plan. Sessions would be led by a different woman each time. The format would be the same: read aloud a passage from poetry or prose that portrayed the lived experience of women and related to the life history of Miriam—a life history all of us shared in some degree. Invite participants to write for 15 or 20 minutes out of memory or experience, out of wisdom and wonder, out of imagination or invention. Invite individuals to read aloud what they had

written. The passages, and the writing of the women, was not to be read in order to be discussed, but to be heard. And that was that.

For the first session one of us had fashioned an announcement for the Sunday school brochure, one of us bought a dozen stenographer's books, one of us selected a text to read and one of us called women who we felt would be interested in such a class, many of whom had never set foot in this church, but all of whom we wanted to welcome.

For the first several Sundays we looked at our lives as they were lived in relationship to other women: daughters, granddaughters, sisters, mothers, nieces, aunts and friends. The first Sunday we used a passage from Joy Kogawa's *Obasan* which began: *One of the few pictures we have of Grandma Nakane is in the silver-framed family photograph hanging above the piano. Grandma Nakane is gentle-faced, her hair rolled back like a wreath, her plump hands held tightly in her soft lap. Every once in a while, Obasan catches me looking at this photograph and she says, "Such a time there was once."*

We invited women to begin with this last line. Or to begin with the names of their grandmothers. Or to begin with something else entirely. And when we were finished the session, we felt we were in the presence of not just each other but also the women who had gone before—many of whom we knew little about.

In the second session we read from *Gone To Grass*, the memoir of a clergyman's daughter. "My mother washed my hair on Saturday night," the passage began, and so did we. Began writing about preparation for Sundays. About the cleaning and the cooking and the Bible reading. About mothers who made all of Sunday, and sometimes Saturday, year after year, into preparation for and celebrating of the Sabbath. That Sunday we also included the reading of the opening line of Emily Carr's autobiography: "All our Sundays were exactly alike." And we discovered

that none of ours were.

On later Sundays we wrote about the occasions in our lives when we had been asked to lead women—as Miriam had—and times when we had been outside the community—as Miriam had been. At the last session we wrote about our experience of death, the loss and longing and mourning. And some of us wrote out of our experience in a distant past, and some out of the present.

Everyone was always invited to read. We never discussed the content of what was written—we only listened and nodded and asked if there was more of the story to tell. Sometimes we said, “I like the sound of your words,” and echoed the words that the writer had read. We never insisted on more of the story than had been written, but we often heard the writer add more. We never discussed the experience we had heard. We listened in silence to stories that often sounded like various instruments played in harmony.

We wanted to talk about our experience to each other, and we succeeded. As time went on, we also talked about our experience in having proposed this class in the church. About how one woman didn’t want to come because she had heard it was too feminist. About how women came to the class who had never before come to the church. About how women who had lived beside each other in the church for up to 25 years became acquainted in a new way. About how one woman came because she heard us laughing and how one woman came because she had seen our tears. When a man asked if the second series would be open to men, one of us suggested that he lead a similar group for men—but he didn’t. About how one woman—or was there more than one—wouldn’t go to a class where her husband wasn’t welcome. About how a woman who was new to the church found a place between the lines of the collective story for her own individual story to be told.

Not only the women spoke words in this group. Sometimes the walls spoke too. Reminding us that we cannot know a neighbour—and certainly not love a neighbour—without having heard her story.

Speaking in Tongues

(for Vaden and Ruth and D—G,
June 3, 1994)

*When god stutters,
when the syllables stumble
over gaps of
silence, pauses
in the absolute absoluteness,
this is what you must do:*

*In a second, without
thinking, you must
slip into the space between
the stuttering
syllables; you must place
yourself in that
silence in the speech of
god and wait while
she catches her breath.*

*In that moment you must become
utterly empty of
anything but god, you must
be a cup held out
to catch the scalding
tears that fall
from her silence
into your silence.*

*You must stand under
god’s burning tears as under
rain, blessing.*

*and then you must lend her
your tongue.*

Anne le Dressay

Eunice Scarfe is an Edmonton writer.
Recently she has researched the writing of
Norwegian women.

SHELF LIFE

***Prayers of An Omega:
Facing the Transitions of Aging,***
by Katie Funk Wiebe,
Herald Press, 1994 (112 pages)

***Life After Fifty:
A Positive Look at Aging in the Faith Community,***
by Katie Funk Wiebe (ed.),
Faith and Life Press, 1993 (169 pages)

Reviewed by Lorina Marsch



Almost reluctantly I agreed to review *Prayers of an Omega*, feeling like Esther Rose Graber, "I wasn't old enough for this book." It lay there on my night-table, waiting. One day I began reading, tentatively, preliminarily, "...but with her very first prayer the author identified me as an 'Omega,' drew me in, and captured my heart."

This little book is a collection of reflections, organized in five units to make up thirty-four chapters of homespun prayers and psalms. Perhaps it is because I know the author's life story that I found the first two units and some chapters in the last one so movingly authentic. The two units in between contain insights gleaned through observation and listening, but they lack the wonderful pathos of the situations intrinsically experienced.

It is appropriately noted in the preface that "Omega" means "the last in a series." This gem of a word is used in this book to describe people of the oldest generation. The author's goal "to offer the gift of speech to older adults who feel inadequate to speak to God for and about themselves in a challenging situation" may well be accomplished in the lives of many of its readers.

Prayers is not meant to be read in one sitting but to be picked up again and again over a period of time for inspiration, personal comfort, insight and as a focus for prayer. One is often stopped short by the poignant observations it contains.

One example is the reflection on the scriptural statement that "faith without works is dead." Here the author plaintively asks: "Where are the works of old age when I can no longer move about easily and volunteer for projects?" With rueful understanding, many of us read, "Thank you for helping me remember the hidden place I put my wallet to keep it safe." In her chapter "Bald heads and purple hair," the author lets a healthy self-worth shine through when she decides that she will accept herself as an older woman but buy a new coat anyway,

one with red plaid lining that she will like, even though her "old one still fits and is not worn out," but only because it is "almost ancient and styled for the 1970s."

Prayers portrays an acceptance of old age and the final stages of life. There is real comfort in putting the inevitability of the narrowing of a human life into words. It is suitable for short devotional reading and would make a wonderful gift, especially for the elderly, including temporary and long-term shut-ins.



Life After Fifty seeks to "educate and inspire middle-aged and older adults in the faith community to see aging as a process that is both challenge and grace." In his preface, Erland Walter reminds us, that "to inquire into the meaning of aging is to inquire into the nature and meaning of human life."

The book, competently edited by Katie Funk Wiebe, candidly and repeatedly states that mature adults can experience meaningful life. It advocates taking early steps to wellness in old age through diet, exercise, eliminating the consumption of harmful substances and developing peace of mind. According to the authors, growing older is essentially a spiritual journey, a conscious relationship of human beings with God, in which faith, love and hope are strategic elements.

Again and again it becomes obvious that older adults faced with medical decisions should be helped to make clearer decisions through the "teaching, preaching, and guidance in the faith community," and in dialogue with family, pastor and church people. Questions pertaining to long-term care, the stewardship issue of expensive funerals, the making of wills for property and savings, as well as a living will to leave instructions on the use of life-sustaining procedures should all concern the Church, state the authors.

Four chapters of this three-part book make up "The Foundation," six chapters cover "The Challenge," and the final three chapters speak of "Grace: Proven or Demonstrated." There are helpful study questions at the end of each chapter.



Coming Home:
A Thoughtful Resource for
Fathers, Mothers and the Rebirth of the Family,
by Sara Wenger Shenk,
Good Books, 1992 (138 pages)

Reviewed by Agnes Dyck

"Winnipeg has the highest child poverty rate in Canada. We don't have the extended families or the support systems that we used to have. Every night our social services people pick up children who are hungry, afraid and abused" (CBC documentary, Nov. 14, 1994).

Through a series of gentle meditations Sara Wenger Shenk addresses issues related to problems peculiar to contemporary families. The current upheaval in thought and practice in a time of rapid change has led to increasingly alienated individuals who are unable to cope in our world. The reader recognizes the frame of reference often undergirding our actions, as portrayed by Shenk. Each meditation deals with a particular mode of thought that has determined our thinking.

In an age of sexual permissiveness and disposable marriages Shenk offers a hopeful and optimistic alternative. Open about her own family, she offers quiet reflections that could be roughly divided into the diagnosis and the cure.

Shenk counters certain basic assumptions about home: that the real action is out there somewhere; that spectacular experiences are best; that you can have it all—children *and* upward mobility; that the old days were better; that license is freedom; that the traditional family is oppressive and pathological.

Shenk maintains that "The yearning to come home, to be cherished for who we are, is one of the most universal and profound longings experienced by humankind."

The testimonial and anecdotal qualities in Shenk's writing make for a stimulating read. The book would be suitable as a supplement to devotions for busy parents. Currently it's being used in a Moms' program in a local church.

Photographs of the books by Terry Vattr, PHOTOWORKS.

No Advice for a Pastor's Husband

by Richard Thiessen

Several years ago a friend of ours gave us a little gift in jest. It was a book entitled *How To Be A Minister's Wife & Love It* by Alice Taylor. The author had written chapters such as "That Their Home May Be a Haven," "All Work and No Play Make for Dullness" and "The Ministry of the Kitchen." Karen and I found this to be quite a humorous little book, but on the other hand we both know women who are married to ministers and have obviously either read this particular book or others like it, for they are living out the advice in this book quite successfully. But with very few if any role models in the Mennonite Brethren denomination, where does a minister's husband go for advice on how to be married to a pastor and love it?

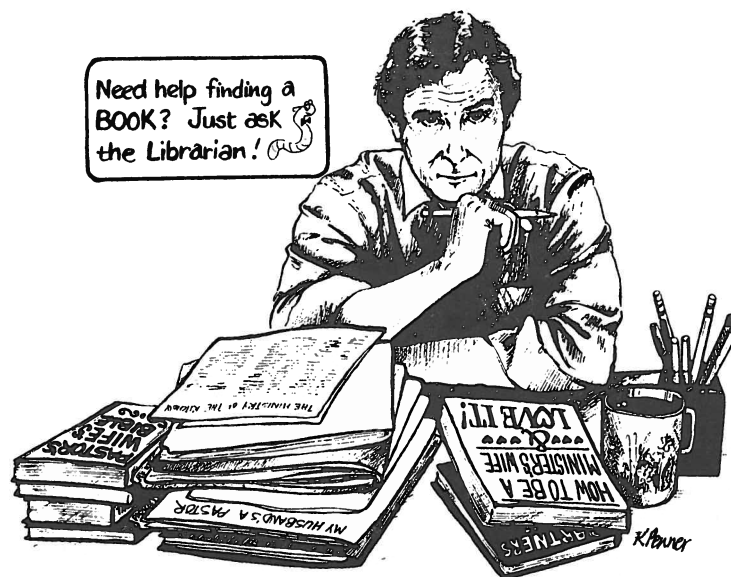
This question needs to be asked because people somehow have different expectations of me from those of a woman married to a pastor. Unlike the women who were the intended audience of Taylor's book, I am not expected to shine in the kitchen, to "be reasonably well groomed and attractive," to "take responsibility, but not so much as to seem bossy" or to "be fun-loving, but only to a degree." I have not been asked to look after the needs of the men in the church, nor am I expected to be at the minister's side while she is performing various ministerial functions. In fact, until I was asked to write this article, I hadn't thought very much about what people expect of me as the pastor's spouse at River East. It seems as though many don't have any particular expectations of me at all, other than to use my gifts and abilities as does any other member of the church.

Does this mean that I have an advantage as a pastor's spouse because I am a man? Yes, I suppose so. As a man people expect me to have a career and to work full-time, and they expect me to serve the church where I am gifted. Many expect the pastor's wife to be at home, raising the perfect family, volunteering for various committees, and fulfilling the role of the unsalaried half of the church's "pastor couple." Some women do these things well, and thrive on serving the church in these roles. Other women do not have gifts or interests in all of these areas, and yet because their husbands are ministers they feel locked into a role in which they are

not comfortable. Some cannot handle the pressure they feel because of the expectations of others.

As a minister's husband I do not feel locked into an uncomfortable role, nor do I feel pressure from the congregation to perform various roles in the church. I feel free to serve where I am called, and I have the freedom to refuse a request to serve on a particular committee or to attend a certain function. I can be myself, knowing that what I do is separate from what my wife does. There may be times when it is politically prudent of me to keep quiet on certain issues, and I know that I probably will never serve on the church council or the stewardship commission as long as my wife is the pastor. However, if that is the worst hardship I have to suffer as a minister's husband, I would say that I have it pretty good.

Richard D. Thiessen is Librarian at Concord College in Winnipeg, Manitoba. He is the husband of Karen Heidebrecht Thiessen, pastor of River East Mennonite Brethren Church.



KATHY PENNER

❖ **Helen Redekopp**, Sargeant Mennonite Church, translated the "Jesus" film into *Plautdietsch*, early in 1994. She was given the 195-page script, with the required number of syllables for each paragraph, early in January, and completed the first draft in six weeks. She read it with Gerhard Friesen of MB Communications, and then flew to Vancouver to "video-fit" the text. "I learned a lot about technology, dubbing and film-making generally," says Redekopp, who has since been interviewed on CHSM and CBC.

Redekopp, 69 and a former school teacher, has raised a family, is active in her church and has served in various capacities in the Mennonite conference. She does not call herself a writer, but she has composed poems in Low German for family events.

The *Plautdietsch* version of the "Jesus" film, a media ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ, will be used in Mexico, Paraguay, Bolivia and Belize, besides in Manitoba.

❖ The first academic conference on **Anabaptist Women's History** is planned for **June 8—11, 1995**, at Millersville University in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. The purpose of the conference is to bring together historians and other scholars of women to examine women's experience in Anabaptist traditions from the 16th to the 20th century (Amish, Mennonite, Hutterite, Brethren, and other communal societies and Pietist groups).

Get a Life
Living Faithfully as Women
MB Women's Conference

Speaker: Irma Epp
 Workshops

Westwood MB Church
 April 8, 1995
 Registration: 9:00-9:30 am
 Cost: \$15

For information call: 338-6592

❖ **Mable Norma Enns** has been named professor of voice and twentieth century music and theatre arts at the School of Music in Hanover, Germany. Formerly of Winkler, Manitoba, Enns is a graduate of Brandon University.

❖ **Cynthia Peacock**, MCC Women's Concerns Director in India, addressed a meeting called by MCC Manitoba Women's Concerns on November 29, 1994. Peacock reported on efforts to help women in India as they address how the caste system, ingrained discrimination and poverty affect women.

She described for the Winnipeg gathering the progress in empowering village women by helping them organize for the purpose of using their resources to enhance their income and to combat alcoholism and abuse. In Calcutta, Peacock has been involved in projects that aim to provide education for children of prostitutes, and to assist prostitutes to find a more dignified way of life.

**Letters, Diaries and Stories Needed
 for a History of Russian Mennonite
 Women's Experience in War, Famine
 and Immigration (1914-1930)**

If you have access to diaries, letters, biographies or journals that reflect the experience of Russian Mennonite women in Russia during the first World War, Bolshevik Revolution, civil war, famine and subsequent immigration to Canada (1914-1930) or if you know of someone who could be interviewed, please contact:

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 5 Beddoe Lane
 Gloucester, Ontario K1B 3X9

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 E-mail az651@freenet.carleton.ca



But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift.... The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.

(Ephesians 4: 7, 11-13 NRSV)