

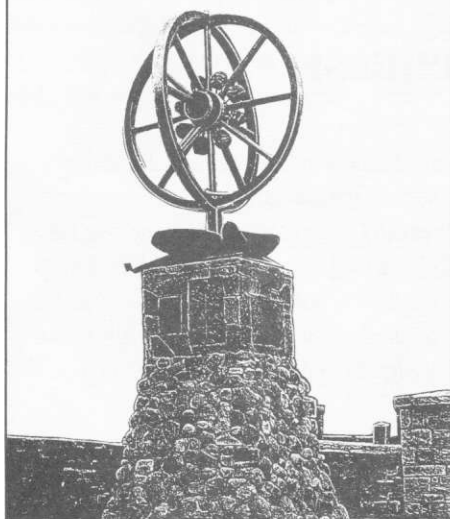
# Ontario Mennonite History

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## A History of Zurich Mennonite Church 1908 - 2008

By Jack Schade

Excerpted from *Zurich Mennonite Church:  
Celebrating 100 years – 1908-2008*

Mennonites have lived in the community around Zurich since the 1830s. The earliest mention of a Mennonite Church in this area is 1837 when Henry Shuh, a minister from Berlin (now Kitchener), made a preaching trip to Hay Township and died while here in January of 1837 at the age of 52.

During the early 1850s, many Amish and Mennonite families moved to Hay and Stanley Townships. Some came from the Grand River Settlement near Berlin and others came from the New Hamburg area. The main reason for moving to this area was cheaper land and homes for their families. It is not known how many families moved into the settlement area. Some of the names included Wideman, Vincent, Detweiler, Lehman, Wambold, Martin, Clemen, Bechtel, Baer, Reesor, Newschwanger and others.

They worshipped in homes for a number of years until a church building was erected in 1864. It was located three miles south of Zurich where our present cemetery is located. After this building was no longer needed, it was sold for twenty-five dollars and moved to a neighbouring farm. The church enjoyed considerable prosperity for a period of time.

Daniel Brundage, an ordained Minister, moved to Hay Township about 1850. He was the first minister of this congregation. Abram Vincent was ordained the first deacon in 1861. Other ministers and deacons who served were: Henry Newschwanger, Daniel Lehman, Samuel Reesor, Henry Baer, Henry B. Detweiler and Daniel Steckle who was ordained deacon in 1882.

With a number of families moving away, no new members and no resident minister, the congregation began a gradual decline. The membership which was 35 in 1883, dwindled to one by 1908, that being a Sister Otterbein. She was the one remaining link between the Hay Church and the soon-to-be established Zurich Mennonite Church.

In 1889, the Detweiler family decided to become part of the Lutheran congregation. Also in 1889, a group from the Wisler



*Zurich Mennonite Church in 1949. The front annex was added in 1948. (Photo Courtesy of Mennonite Archives of Ontario)*

Mennonites, now known as the Old Order Mennonites of Waterloo County, emerged from the Mennonite Conference of Ontario. With most of the Steckle relations being members of that group, Daniel Steckle and his sons, Henry, Menno and John, affiliated with that fellowship, having ministers from the St. Jacobs and Elmira area coming approximately every six weeks to hold services in their homes. Gradually, most of the next generations joined the Zurich Mennonite Church.

In the winter of 1908, Peter Ropp, a minister from Michigan, came to Zurich to visit his wife's parents. While here he conducted several evening meetings at the Amish Mennonite Church on the Bronson Line. This was the first time evening meetings were held in this building. As a result of the meetings, 19 persons asked to be baptized. Part of the tradition of the church at that time required male baptismal candidates to wear the *mutzi*, a traditional Amish frock coat (tailcoat) which was fastened with hooks and eyes. Many men did not wear this coat to regular services, but it was reserved for special occasions such as weddings, funerals and baptisms. Apparently, these young men did not own such a jacket and were unwilling to follow this tradition. The bishop, therefore, refused to baptize them. The parents evidently stood with their children and overtures were made to the Mennonite Churches in Waterloo County to have the converts baptized. As a result, a Mennonite Bishop named Jonas

~ Continued on page 2 ~

Snyder travelled to Zurich and baptized them on the 26<sup>th</sup> of March, 1908.

Those 19 persons, along with Sister Otterbein, became the Zurich Mennonite Church. Another 36 persons were received into membership in the Zurich congregation from the Blake Amish Mennonite Church on June 1 of the same year. The formal organization was held in the summer of 1908 with Jonas Snider, Noah Stauffer and Peter Ropp officiating. Services were held in homes, barns or wherever they could find room. An old Baptist Church in the village was used for a short time. In 1910 land was purchased from Oscar and Nancy Koehler for the sum of \$175 on Goshen Street in Zurich. That same year a brick church was built on this property for a total cost of \$3,600.

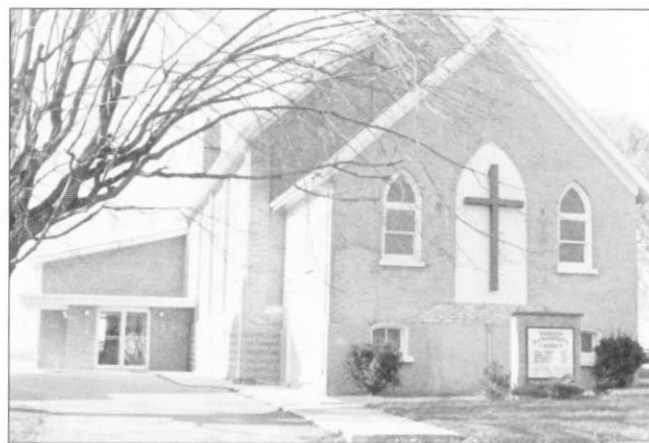
In January and February of 1954 major re-decoration of the Zurich Mennonite Church was undertaken. This included a new sub-floor of insul-board, refinishing benches, painting walls, ceiling and woodwork of the auditorium and counter shelves in the kitchen.

In 1974 an addition on the west end of the Church included a fellowship hall and kitchen. The basement was remodeled for Sunday School classrooms and the sanctuary was completely redone, providing a larger seating capacity, a Pastor's study and a nursery.

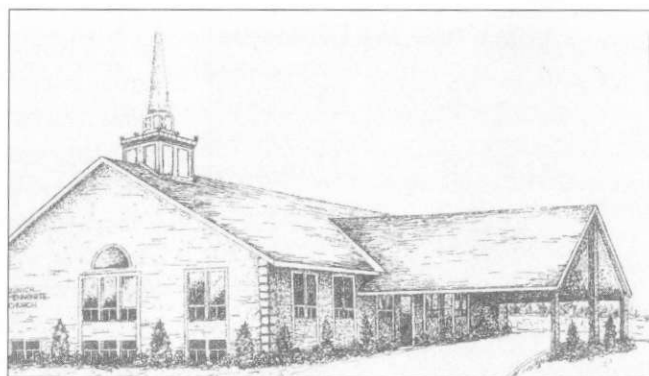
After several unsuccessful attempts to purchase adjoining property for expansion, a parcel of land on the Hensall-Zurich road was purchased from Catherine Letts. This is the site of our present building. It was constructed

in 1988 and 1989 at a cost of slightly under \$1 million. It was built by Don Hockey Construction along with many, many hours of volunteer labour. The building was dedicated on June 18, 1989 and was totally paid for in ten years.

In 2007 a desire to see the Kingdom of God rooted more deeply in Bluewater, Huron County and beyond culminated in the emergence of "Kingsfield." On November 4, 2007 a second Kingsfield church (Zurich Mennonite being the other) took root and formally began meeting in Clinton. Brian Steckle was commissioned as Kingsfield-Clinton's first elder. Joel and Mel Siebert hosted the church in their home and Jeff and Kim Squire were also sent as part of the core group. In early 2008 Kingsfield-Clinton was a missional community of five households bringing the Kingdom of Jesus to relevant reality in the heart of Huron County. \*



*Zurich Mennonite Church on Goshen St., Zurich, as it appeared after the 1974 addition.  
(Photo Courtesy of Mennonite Archives of Ontario)*



*A drawing of the church built in 1989 on the Hensall-Zurich Road.  
(Photo Courtesy of Zurich Mennonite Church)*

## Historical Society receives a bequest

Gertrude Bergey, a member of the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario, left a legacy to the Society of just over \$117,000. The MHSO board of directors has decided to spend some of this bequest on on-going projects supported by our society and to invest the rest so that the interest it can support the publication fund into the future. While \$94,000 will

be invested, \$23,000 has been distributed with \$5,000 to the Detweiler meetinghouse endowment, \$10,000 to the Mennonite Archives of Ontario to purchase furniture for future expansion and \$8,000 will be used to enhance the Ontario content of the Global Anabaptist-Mennonite Encyclopedia Online.

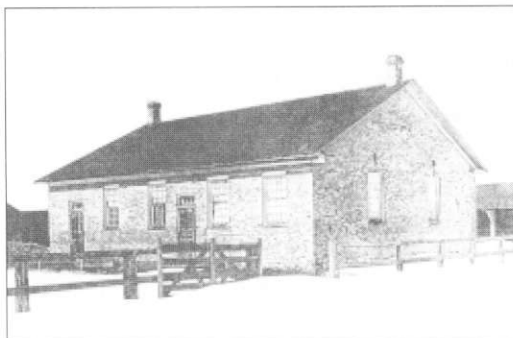
Gertrude was born in 1920 and attended Teachers College in London in 1939. She then

taught school in Goderich and in London. Later she graduated from the University of Western Ontario and taught at the Teachers College in London. She attended the United Church in London and because she was interested in her Mennonite roots she joined the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario. \*

# A Brief History of Breslau Mennonite Church

By Maryanne Szuck

Joseph Hagey is considered the founding leader of Breslau Mennonite Church, which is as old as the community of Breslau itself. The church started in its present locality, probably in 1815, when the Cressman family arrived here from Pennsylvania. For some time the local Mennonites had worship services in their homes, organizing as a congregation in 1826.



*Cressman Mennonite Meetinghouse 1856-1908  
(Photos courtesy of Breslau Mennonite Church)*

During the 1830s, the local Mennonites provided hospitality to their newly arrived German-speaking Catholic neighbours settling in New Germany (now Maryhill). These settlers found shelter and assistance in Mennonite homes until they could locate homes for themselves.

In 1834, the Benjamin Eby congregation in Berlin (now First Mennonite Church in Kitchener) outgrew its 1813 log meetinghouse. The building was disassembled, moved to the Christian Snyder farm in Breslau, and reassembled on an acre of land deeded in 1837 by Snyder to the congregation's first trustees: Abraham S. Clemens, Elias Bowman and John Brech. The selling price was one pound (£), and it was stipulated that the property must

be used solely for a meetinghouse, burying ground, and school for the Mennonites and all people in the area.

This log structure served the congregation until 1856 when a brick building was erected. The log church was moved into the village of Breslau and became the residence of Fred Schaefer, a brick maker who bricked the log building at a later date. The house is still standing at 18 Woolwich Street North. The first language of worship was German, the language of our early settlers. The transition to English occurred in the 1890s.

In 1908 when the church building could no longer accommodate the congregation, a new white brick church was built using bricks from the Breslau brickyard and recycled bricks from the previous church building. This building currently serves as the Christian Education wing. An addition was built onto the front of the church in 1968, and other renovations were completed. In July of that year the name was changed from Cressman Mennonite Church to Breslau Mennonite Church.

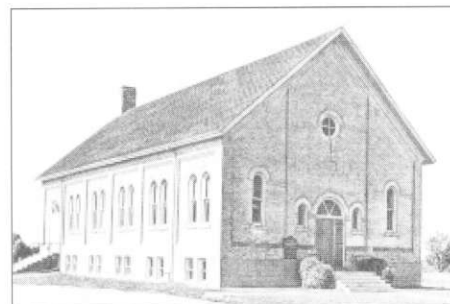
In 1976-77 a building called the Mennonite Arts and Recreation Centre (MARC) was built and used by the church and community. By 1989 there was further need for expansion. The MARC building was torn down in preparation for the new construction, which would add a new main church building to the existing building. The cornerstone was laid in 1990, and by 1991 the congregation moved into the new addition.

This addition consists of a beautiful sanctuary, a gymnasium, a library, a

nursery, three offices and a large, sunlit foyer. It is attached to the original structure where Sunday School classes, a Parish Nurse office and smaller fellowship hall are housed. A bricked outdoor courtyard touches both the old and the new buildings.

Guelph Mennonite Church closed and joined Breslau Mennonite Church in 1997.

As we celebrate our 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, we invite our friends in the community along with all past participants to join the present church family in giving thanks for God's faithful guidance. We confidently anticipate God's continued loving presence in our future. \*



*Cressman Mennonite Church 1908-1968*



*Breslau Mennonite Church 1991 to present*

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# The Conservative Mennonite Movement in Ontario

## Part II: The Effects of Fundamentalism

By Andrew C. Martin

In the first installment of this two-part series (Nov. 2008), we looked at the birth and development of the Conservative Mennonite movement in Ontario. There I proposed that fundamentalism was ubiquitous in North America around the turn of the twentieth century and came to be reflected in the "Old" Mennonite Church. Eventually it was the influence of fundamentalism that contributed to the birth of the Conservative Mennonite movement which began in the 1950s. George Marsden, who wrote the landmark *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (1980), defined fundamentalism as a "loose, diverse, and changing federation of co-belligerents united by their fierce opposition to modernist attempts to bring Christianity into line with modern thought." Marsden believed that fundamentalism "was never a dominant force" in most Mennonite groups; however, a dissertation (1999) by Nathan E. Yoder demonstrates "that the Mennonite Church was in fact dominated by its own variety of fundamentalism." Yoder's study identifies Mennonites who, under the influence of fundamentalism, withdrew from the Mennonite Church into independent congregations in the 1960s and 1970s.

The goal in this article is to trace the influence of fundamentalism, first on the Mennonite Church in the first half of the twentieth century and ultimately to see how fundamentalism continued to resonate and inform the birth of the Conservative Mennonite movement as it began to withdraw from the Mennonite Church in the 1950s.

### *The Rise of Protestant Fundamentalism*

The term "fundamentalism" is problematic because it is often ill defined and used pejoratively. This was particularly true of Mennonite academics that by the 1970s were reacting sharply against fundamentalism given their reading of Anabaptist history and theology. For instance, these scholars tended to deny the influence of liberalism and interpreted the reaction to liberalism as a sign of fundamentalist reaction. They also judged inward piety and the authoritative view of

Scripture as fundamentalist infiltration rather than seeing similarities with early Anabaptism.

Protestant fundamentalism was a reaction against the rise of liberalism/modernism in the nineteenth century. Although revivalism had led to a tripling of Protestant church members in the last half of the nineteenth century, there was a growing influence of German higher criticism, Darwinism, and Freudian psychology that were revolutionizing the thought and practice of American society, as well as a large influx of Catholic immigrants. Immense social changes plus rapid secularization, especially in science and higher education, were eroding Protestantism's dominance. According to Marsden, people brought up to accept unquestioningly the complete authority of the Bible and the sure truths of evangelical teaching found themselves living in a world where such beliefs were no longer considered intellectually acceptable.

Liberals with critical methods of scholarship were questioning the historical accuracy of the Bible. Doctrines like supernatural conversion and penal atonement were rejected, as were miracles and a literal seven-day creation. The influence of evolutionist thinking led to a belief in the essential goodness of humanity and humanity's ability to bring about God's kingdom through human effort. In brief, modernists put a high emphasis on human ability to know objective truth through rational scientific inquiry and rejected more subjective endeavors such as faith, metaphysics, mysticism and supernaturalism. Within a few short decades modernism removed many areas of Protestant thought from society and higher education. Marsden estimated that over half of Protestant publications and around one-third of the nation's pastors were accepting some modernistic teaching. This became the threat against which fundamentalism was to define itself in the fight to preserve the orthodox faith.

Fundamentalism was the product of earlier movements, including revivalism and Pietism. In the 1800s revivalism proliferated in America with numerous variations of

Arminian and Calvinist theologies and in turn combined with a profusion of denominational emphases. On the one hand the Calvinists tended to stress intellect, the importance of right doctrine, and the cognitive aspects of faith. On the other hand, the Wesleyan-Methodist tradition was more pietistic and emotional. These became two streams within fundamentalism.

The holiness movement came from the Wesleyan tradition and exerted a great deal of influence in revivalism and then fundamentalism. The great evangelist Charles Finney synthesized the Calvinist and the Methodist views so that by 1870 a modified holiness teaching was everywhere in America. Further changes dropped the emphasis on the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" and the "second blessing" as well as the Methodist claim that a person can be totally without sin. The new holiness teaching focused primarily "on personal experiences of joy, peace, and 'victory,' with the practical results seen in enhanced devotional life and zeal for missions." According to Marsden,

*The promise was that as long as Christ dwelt in the heart a Christian could be free from committing any known sin. There was therefore no excuse for tolerating any known vice, appetite, or sinful habit.*

The main tenets of holiness teaching focused on living the victorious Christian life and taught "that Christians could attain a life of victory over known sins by yielding or giving up self to Christ and by being Spirit-filled and thus consecrated for a life of service, especially the service of witnessing to others." So while the modified holiness teaching did not explicitly claim sinlessness, the idea was still strongly implied.

The two streams of fundamentalism, the scholastic Calvinist stream and the pietistic Wesleyan-holiness stream, are best illustrated by two important leaders; the first by J. Gresham Machen, New Testament professor at Princeton Seminary, and the



latter by Dwight L. Moody founder of Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. Moody taught the modified holiness teaching that emphasized victory over sin. Unlike later fundamentalists Moody emphasized the love of God, and did not preach on hellfire and God's wrath. Likewise Moody built relationships across fundamentalist-modernist lines with a desire for dialogue.



D. L. Moody

In these ways he foreshadowed the ministry of a later powerful leader, Billy Graham, who was rejected by the even more radical fundamentalism of the post World War II era. Gresham Machen on the other hand was the much less popular face of early fundamentalism. Machen held to a rigorous faith in dialogue with liberalism and "charged modernists with failing to be truly scientific... Machen was convinced that a thoroughly scientific approach to history substantiated rather than undermined the tenets of orthodox Christianity."<sup>1</sup> While hailed by both fundamentalists and modernists as a "fundamentalist," Machen shunned the term. What he did not like in fundamentalism was:

*The absence of historical perspective.*  
*The lack of appreciation of scholarship.*  
*The substitution of brief, skeletal creeds for the historic confessions.*  
*The lack of concern with precise formulation of Christian doctrine.*  
*The pietistic, perfectionist tendencies (for example, hang-ups with smoking).*  
*One-sided other-worldliness (that is, a lack of effort to transform culture).*  
*A penchant for futuristic chiliasm (premillennialism).<sup>2</sup>*

These are all important points for they became even more divisive issues in later fundamentalism. Both Moody and Machen had an influence on the Mennonite Church

through direct contact with Mennonites who studied both at Moody Bible Institute and Princeton Theological Seminary.

The Presbyterian scholastic tradition of Princeton Theological Seminary taught Scottish Common Sense Realism which became the intellectual foundation for American philosophy. In the eighteenth century this philosophy

reinforced the idea that God's truth was a pure unified whole, understandable to ordinary people. Princeton scholars promoted sound intellectual thinking and confidently appealed to rational and scientific truth to confirm Christian claims of Bible truths. The Bible, which had been central to the founding of America, was constantly asserted to be "the highest and all-sufficient source of authority."<sup>3</sup> The most specific contribution of the Princeton school intellectuals to fundamentalism was defining biblical "inerrancy" and "verbal inspiration" which became the hallmark of fundamentalism. But where the intellectuals stood in a tradition of rigorous scholasticism, fundamentalism became largely anti-intellectual and frequently over-simplified issues so that zeal was substituted for critical analysis.

The foundation for the fundamentalist faith became the personal experience of the Holy Spirit and the Bible disengaged from the critical thinking. While the scholastic Calvinist tradition placed a high value on culture, "common sense" fundamentalists concluded that church was separate from culture. Thus they dualistically viewed the government's role "as ordained by God to restrain evil"<sup>4</sup> while the role of the church was spiritual transformation. The influence of the holiness teaching meant keeping oneself pure from the world and moved in the direction of social and political disengagement. Evolution, communism, alcohol, card playing, movies, entertainment, and fashion (including neckties)

all became suspect in the march toward personal holiness. While early fundamentalists envisioned the world becoming progressively better, later fundamentalists understood it as getting progressively worse, so that the only hope was the supernatural intervention of God.

Dispensationalism and premillennialism were the fundamentalist answer to the world's problems. The creator of dispensationalism, John Nelson Darby (1800-1882), a strong Calvinist who came to America later in his life, borrowed from scholasticism the "inerrancy" of Scripture, the belief that the Bible was accurate, reliable and precise in every detail. The central emphasis of dispensationalism was on God's supernatural work rather than the response of humanity. Dualistic separation of holy and secular, good and evil, God and Satan, is predominant in dispensationalism. With its emphasis on supernaturalism and its simplistic understanding of history, it deliberately separates Christ and culture, so that God directs the cosmos and intervenes at will or whim in the world.

Premillennialism, the teaching that Christ will return and establish a literal thousand-year reign of Christ on earth, is integral to dispensationalism. The prophecy movement, which was central to fundamentalism, had its genesis in the Niagara Bible Conference beginning in 1876. These conferences spawned the Bible conference movement which was felt everywhere in America and in turn resulted in the permanent establishment of training institutes such as Moody Bible Institute and later, Mennonite institutions.

In the early twentieth century fundamentalism included a wide spectrum of Protestant groups and attracted people with a diversity of beliefs. The early fundamentalist-modernist controversy peaked in the 1920s when fundamentalism lost some infamous public battles with modernism that ended in a serious loss of public opinion. After World War II, fundamentalism once again became a dominant force in America, but compared to the earlier movement it became narrowly defined by its separatist agenda.

The 1950s witnessed mounting tension in fundamentalism. On the one side were the emerging neo-evangelicals, uncomfortable with what they considered an over-emphasis on the stereotypical vices such as card-

playing, smoking, dancing, drinking, and theatre attendance, while neglecting to teach the fruits of the spirit. They objected to the fundamentalist abandonment of Christian social reform, and the lack of intellectual scholarship. In C. Norman Kraus' words, they criticized fundamentalism for being "too separatist (sectarian) in its ecclesiology, too individualistic in its ethics, too futuristic in its eschatology, too simplistic in its theology, and too combative in its spirit."

On the other side, the separatist fundamentalists reacted to the social gospel of the neo-evangelicals and restricted themselves to preaching personal salvation, disconnecting the gospel from engagement with society and social reform. The most important thing was getting saved. Thus a clear delineating separation was called for. Carl McIntire, a well known fundamentalist, was known to endlessly repeat the Bible passage, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate" so that it came to be widely known as "come-outerism."<sup>5</sup>

During the 1950s no one had more influence among neo-evangelicals than Billy Graham, but his ecumenical openness offended separatist fundamentalists and led to a sweeping division in 1957. From the late 1950s on, the term fundamentalism came to be applied to the group opposed to Graham and its defining characteristic became separatism and dispensationalism. This group understood themselves as the "'remnant' of true believers, not to be confused with the decadent inclusivist organizations that called themselves 'churches.'"<sup>6</sup> This self-identification and language was soon found echoed by Conservative Mennonites.

Some of the main issues we have identified in fundamentalism include: common sense thinking, a modified holiness teaching, the inerrancy of the Bible, suspicion of intellectualism, a definable salvation experience, dualistic separation of good and evil, and the separation from the world and social engagement. These issues were passionately argued in an aggressive and combative spirit by fundamentalists. Many of these issues were echoed by Mennonite fundamentalists, and later, by the Conservative Mennonite movement.

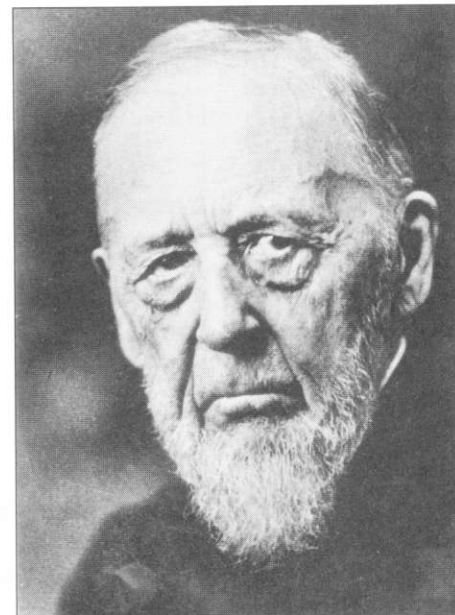
### *The Influence of Fundamentalism on the Mennonite Church*

With the technological progress and population growth of the nineteenth century, Mennonites in North America could not evade the pervasive Pietist and revivalist influences. There were earlier renewal movements and schisms in the Old Mennonite Church, but the largest part of the church did have a major experience of revivalism by the end of the nineteenth century. One of the earliest innovations and influences of revivalism was the Sunday school. The most influential leader in helping to establish Mennonite Sunday schools was John F. Funk. His printing business served the Mennonite church with its publications and periodicals such as the *Herald of Truth* (founded in 1864). Funk was the first Mennonite to be influenced by D. L. Moody when he moved to Chicago, had an evangelical conversion, and participated in Moody's Sunday school work.

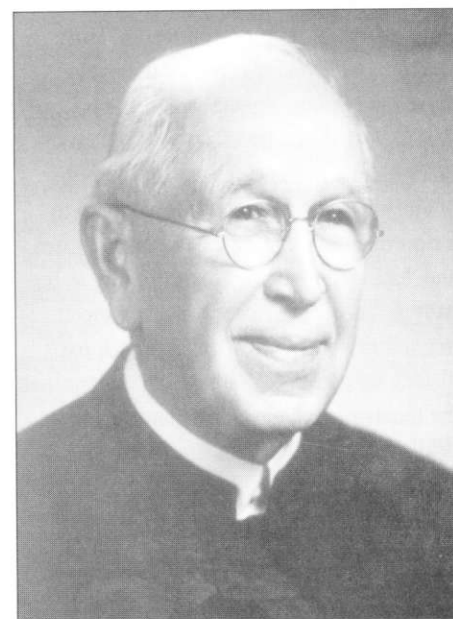
Funk's business as a printer brought many promising young men to his employ in Elkhart Indiana and his position of bishop in the church gave him the opportunity to inspire these men to service in the church. One such man was John S. Coffman, who was a pioneer evangelist in the Mennonite Church. Coffman was not only a gifted speaker but was also a visionary educator and was instrumental in the founding of the Elkhart Institute, which later became Goshen College, and he helped create the first mission board in the Mennonite church. It was the sincere preaching of Coffman that attracted other important leaders such as Daniel Kauffman who became the most influential leader in the Mennonite church in the first half of the twentieth century.

The Mennonite Church at the turn of the century was characterized by the spirit of the age which envisioned a better world through thorough organization. Beside the inception of publications, Sunday schools, revival meetings, organized missions and educational institutes, this era also adopted English preaching, four-part singing, youth gatherings, and prayer meetings.

The fundamentalist-modernist debate in the 1920s was echoed in the Mennonite Church. Nowhere was this more evident than in the closing of Goshen College in 1923 by leaders in the Mennonite Church to purge it of liberal teachers, books and ideas. This action came from the "aggresso-conservative"



*John F. Funk (MAO Photo)*



*S. F. Coffman (MAO photo)*

voices in the church that were overwhelmingly concerned about maintaining distinctive dress. Bishop Daniel Kauffman coined the term "aggresso-conservatism" in 1915 in an effort to bridge the gap between an activism that was not worldly and a conservatism that was not dead. The aggresso-conservative leaders believed that nonconformity, especially in dress, would protect them from worldly assimilation as they moved with new boldness into culture. Mennonite fundamentalists endeavored to rid the church of such vices as smoking, alcohol and dancing, and had tried to enforce a uniform dress code, but even after several decades these issues were never uniformly enforced.

In the 1800s Mennonites were generally more liberal than their Evangelical and Methodist neighbors in allowing such things as baseball games and dancing on the Sabbath, and indulgence of alcohol. The later Mennonites, influenced by Methodist holiness teaching, looked back on the earlier Mennonites as unspiritual and dead, and these accusations could also be directed at Old Order Mennonites. The aggresso-conservatives were reductionist in their conclusions and in Yoder's words "they tended to classify virtually any challenge to their religious authority or the church's uniform nonconformity under the rubric of modernism." With increasing frequency Mennonite identity was defined by doctrines which echoed fundamentalist ideals yet held to some distinctive Mennonite teachings.

The presence of dispensationalism and premillennialism teaching was everywhere in America and Mennonites accepted much of it, yet it was never adopted as official Mennonite Church doctrine. In 1893 and 1894 Mennonites who attended Moody Bible Institute "included A. D. Wenger (1867-1935), S. F. Coffman (1872-1954), Aaron Loucks (1864-1945), E. J. Berkey (1874-1945), and A. I. Yoder (1865-1932)." All these men became prominent leaders in the Mennonite Church and had well known fundamentalists as instructors including "Reuben A. Torrey, James M. Gray, Dwight L. Moody, and Cyrus I. Scofield."<sup>7</sup> Scofield was the author of the Scofield Reference Bible which widely perpetuated the dispensational teaching of Darby. Scofield's influence also came to Mennonites by correspondence lessons. Mennonite Publishing House advertised Scofield's Reference Bible and Mennonite pastors frequently promoted it. C. F. Derstine, pastor at First Mennonite Church/Kitchener and a widely renowned evangelist, was a dispensationalist who used the Scofield Bible. Another Mennonite premillennialist-dispensationalist, J. B. Smith, travelled widely holding Bible conferences in many Mennonite Churches and was influential in establishing this teaching at Hesston College

in Kansas, the other official institute of the Mennonite Church.

In 1914 Smith wrote the chapter on the Bible in the influential *Bible Doctrine* (edited by Daniel Kauffman), and introduced Mennonites to a full-fledged argument for verbal and plenary inspiration. Seven years later the inerrancy language was used in a new statement of faith entitled the "Christian Fundamentals" (1921) which was widely popular but never officially adopted by all parts of the Mennonite Church. This statement



C. F. Derstine preaches at First Mennonite Church in the 1950s. (Mennonite Archives of Ontario photo)

of faith, which diverges significantly from earlier Mennonite statements, was drawn up by George R. Brunk I, A. D. Wenger, and J. B. Smith, and accepted by the Virginia Conference in 1919. These men were squarely in the Mennonite fundamentalist camp and it was Brunk who founded the periodical, *The Sword and Trumpet*, self-described as a "faith-defending drift-opposing religious quarterly" with a mission "devoted to the defense of a full Gospel, with especial emphasis upon neglected truths, and an active opposition of the various forms of error that contribute to the religious drift of the times."

The very first article of faith in the Mennonite "Fundamentals" clearly spells out the fundamentalist agenda of "plenary and verbal inspiration of the Bible...inerrant in the original writings, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice." With this new inerrancy formula the Mennonite Church parroted the fundamentalist concerns of a literal and historic creation account, the virgin birth of Christ, salvation by "grace through faith," the "bodily resurrection of Jesus" and his

imminent return. In Wesleyan Holiness style one article is dedicated to "separation," calling for holy living disconnected from the world. It takes a clear stance against "all movements which seek the reformation of society" and stresses "the merits of the death [of] Christ and the experience of the new birth." Thus what was most important was the inner spiritual experience not the transformation of the world.

Practical holiness was developed further in the section "Of Restrictions," which is basically a synopsis of Daniel

Kauffman's earlier doctrinal writings. The "restrictions," nonconformity, non-resistance, non-swearing of oaths, not going to law, not participating in secret societies and no life insurance, were mostly distinctive Mennonite teaching, but now with the common sense philosophy of fundamentalism and the clear and simple reading of Scripture they could be rationally argued.

While earlier Mennonites were satisfied to work out their salvation with fear and trembling and "hoped" for eternal life, fundamentalist Mennonites now

had an article dedicated to the assurance of salvation adopted from the Calvinist tradition. In the spirit of pessimism prevalent among dispensationalists, there was an article dedicated to apostasy concerns. Inspired by Calvinist "total depravity" this article mentions continual lawlessness and "departure from the faith," including the decline of true believers and the rise of false teachers.

There were leaders who opposed this statement of faith. Ontario bishop, S. F. Coffman, strongly disagreed with the adoption of the "Fundamentals" and urged instead that the Dordrecht Confession was sufficient. Perhaps Coffman recognized that the new faith statement led to much stronger legalism on dress codes. Coffman and other moderate leaders were committed to biblical fundamentals, and affirmed plain dress, but they never saw the need to uniformly enforce these issues.

Probably the most widely experienced issue of Mennonite fundamentalism was the issue of dress, the "come-outerism"



which defined Mennonites in relation to the world. There were roughly 230 dress-related resolutions in the district and general conferences of the Mennonite Church between 1865 and 1950. The influence of fundamentalism is shown by the fact that "in the first seventeen years (1864-1880) of the pioneer Mennonite periodical *The Herald of Truth*, of the thirteen articles on simple dress perhaps only one was written by a Mennonite author." These articles included ones taken from Free Methodists, Seventh Day Adventists, John Wesley, and at least one Baptist.<sup>8</sup> Although nonconformity never became completely uniform throughout the Mennonite Church, during the decades of the 1920s to 1940s virtually all of the ministers adopted the plain coat and most of them discarded the necktie.

Mennonite men had been wearing neckties, but it appears that the aversion to the necktie originated in Kansas from Free Methodist holiness meetings via G. R. Brunk I. For some of those converted from wearing the necktie, this piece of cloth became synonymous with the devil himself. The seriousness attached to such a seemingly insignificant piece of cloth is a mark of fundamentalist zeal. For Mennonite women the issue of dress meant the ban of hats and the wearing of a prescribed type of bonnet and head-covering, but in the early decades it was the bonnet that was the most frequent target of debate.

The head-covering is a good illustration of ways in which Mennonites turned a tradition into a clear fundamentalist teaching from Scripture. The head-covering had long been a custom in the Mennonite Church, but around 1885 J. S. Coffman preached about the head-covering as a biblical teaching based on I Corinthians 11. By the time Daniel Kauffman wrote *Manual of Bible Doctrines* in 1898, he designated the head-covering an ordinance, and thus elevated it to equal status with baptism, communion, feet washing, holy kiss, anointing with oil and marriage. Previously the Mennonite Church had held to two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, in keeping with established Christianity.

Although Coffman preached about the head-covering using a biblical text, his son, S. F. Coffman, later reported that his mother only wore the head-covering to church as was the

practice of the community. It was customary in some parts of the Mennonite Church for women to leave their head-coverings at church for the next Sunday and Albert Keim wrote that before the fundamentalist purge at Goshen College "not one woman student wore a prayer veiling except at worship services."

The monumental changes in society and in the Mennonite Church that came in the early decades of the twentieth century caused concern for virtually all the leaders of the Mennonite Church, but they were not unanimously agreed about how to move forward. There were at least two clear groups. A letter in 1933 to S. F. Coffman from Sanford C. Yoder, president of Goshen College, bears this out.

*As long as we can keep men at the head of our General Conference that are sensible, I think there is some hope that things will go on. However, if the organization should slip into the hands of the George Brunk - A. D. Wenger group, then conditions would become almost intolerable.*

It seems probable that what Yoder refers to as "intolerable conditions" has to do with the universal enforcement of such issues as the "cape dress" for women and the "plain coat" for men and the eradication of musical instruments that was promoted in parts of the Mennonite Church.

The divide in the Mennonite Church can be compared to the early differences in fundamentalism—the scholastic tradition found at Princeton compared to holiness or dispensationalist fundamentalism. Even after the fundamentalist purge of Goshen College it still retained a more open and progressive approach to education and refused to enforce the stringent dress standards held at other Mennonite institutions. This was, in part, the influence of Princeton scholasticism on Harold S. Bender who studied with Gresham Machen and considered him a close friend and the best teacher he ever had. Bender credited Machen with saving him from the grip of liberalism. Machen's strong emphasis on the importance of solid historical research to guide the contemporary church was echoed in Bender's Anabaptist research and redefinition of Mennonitism.

A perceptible shift took place in the

leadership of the Mennonite Church in the 1940s as most of the first generation of Mennonites influenced by holiness and dispensationalist fundamentalism had died. During World War II the fundamentalist concern for "drift" was pronounced in the Mennonite Church and there was tension about a possible split. By the mid-1940s the aggro-conservatives lost their majority influence in the Mennonite Church and a new direction was being defined most clearly articulated in Bender's concise interpretation of Anabaptism presented as the "Anabaptist Vision." The "Vision" became the beginning point for a new theology for Mennonite Church leaders for much of the rest of the twentieth century.

The other major influence on the Mennonite Church during this time was World War II, when perhaps as high as thirty percent of drafted Mennonite men went into active military duty and the remaining resisters were exposed to social and cultural influence through their work on public projects. Academic Mennonites in the post-war years echoed the neo-evangelicals who were emphasizing the need for scholasticism and social engagement in opposition to the fundamentalists who were rallying around the separatist dispensationalist agenda.

By the late 1950s, neo-evangelicalism and the right wing of fundamentalism became two clearly differentiated movements. This was also echoed in the Mennonite Church, as separatist-minded Mennonites began to leave the church. On the one side were Mennonites inspired by historical Anabaptist research and on the other side were Mennonites who echoed the separatist, anti-intellectual, holiness concerns of fundamentalists with their own Mennonite version of fundamentalism. Ultimately these differences led to schism and the birth of the Conservative Mennonite movement.

### ***The Influence of Fundamentalism on the Conservative Mennonite Movement***

In the 1940s and 1950s Mennonite fundamentalism began to falter. When new leaders inspired by Anabaptist historicism began to push their agenda throughout the Church in the same way that fundamentalists had done four decades earlier, some rose up in protest. The doctrinaire practices of the Mennonite Church had been vigorously



promoted by the aggro-conservatives, but now with the anti-historicism of fundamentalism, it became unacceptable to some to promote new ways of thinking. This is typical of fundamentalism for it seeks to bring static permanence to its teachings. Although fundamentalism is almost never discussed by Conservatives and rarely recognized as essential to the birth and development of the Conservative Mennonite movement, there are numerous indications that its influence was vital.

The founding leaders of the Conservative Mennonite Church of Ontario who opposed the growing "worldly" assimilation of the church, appealed in 1959 to the "distinctive, historic, and Biblical faith and practice." They understood their demands for change as being not only in keeping with traditional Mennonite practice, but also as the only response faithful to the Bible. They interpreted the worldly cultural patterns in the Mennonite Church to be "dominated by the enemy of the Cross of Christ" and founded this on the "Scriptural position" grounded in the "the higher authority of the Word."

At the core of their concern were the seven ordinances that had been defined by Kauffman and published in *Manual of Bible Doctrine* (1898), *Bible Doctrine* (1914), and *Doctrines of the Bible* (1928), the most systematic theological writing the Mennonite Church had ever seen. In fairness to Kauffman, his writing and his leadership were a moderating influence and not nearly as separatist, divisive, or shrill as some. Nor was Kauffman a dispensationalist or premillennialist, but just the same he can be considered a fundamentalist because of his interpretation of Scripture and the way it shaped his doctrinal writing. Kauffman's theology reduced biblical principles into ordinances and restrictions with clear biblical support and thus creating a doctrine that became timeless, at least in the minds of some.

When the early leaders of the Conservative Movement referred to "distinctive, historic and Biblical faith and practice," they were referring to the doctrine introduced by Kauffman. They understood their faith to be a timeless tradition transcending history and synonymous with Bible truth. To question this doctrine was to question the veracity of Scripture, and so these doctrines created in a specific historical

setting were lifted to a place above history on par with the Bible never to be questioned. While moderate leaders in the Mennonite Church refused to fully endorse and accept the theological conclusions of Kauffman, it was Kauffman's doctrinal work that set the foundation for the Conservative movement.

At the centre of Protestant fundamentalism was a view of the Bible as the inspired word of God, free from error, and literally interpreted in all its details. A "literal interpretation" rejected every attempt to understand the Bible through historical or scientific methods, but rather insisted on an unshakeable adherence to specific doctrines. It provided ready Bible answers that were manifestly clear for anyone committed to the fundamentalist faith and thus bold certitude came to be a mark of fundamentalism. The fundamentalist reading of the Bible was the rallying point for the rejection of liberalism, but it was an adoption of a literalism that was foreign to Mennonite's traditional reading of Scripture.

The influence of fundamentalism by the Conservative movement is evident in their 1965 *Mennonite Confession of Faith*. In it they copied verbatim the 1921 "Christian Fundamentals" of the Mennonite Church which became the cornerstone for an even more comprehensive enforcing of non-conformity than the earlier Mennonite fundamentalists. With firm conviction informed by the theology of the "Fundamentals," Conservatives criticized the degeneration of the Mennonite Church. In the *Confession*, Conservatives list the prevalence of apostasy in "compromising leadership," "blind denominational loyalty," "unequal yokes," "pursuit of accreditations," "ungodly philosophies," "centralization of power," and "ecumenical movements." All of these issues indicated that the times were "perilous," and it warranted the withdrawal from all such fellowship just like the separatist fundamentalists did in the 1950s. It also supported the eschatological conclusion that "the coming of the Lord is imminent (Matt. 24:29-31, 44)." Apostasy was seen as a constant threat.

To the student of Mennonite history, similar trends are continually apparent among various Mennonite churches. If we only compare ourselves among ourselves,

## J.W. Fretz essay award becomes a publication fund

In 1992, the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario initiated the J. Winfield Fretz awards for studies in Ontario history. The purpose was to encourage original research pertaining to Mennonite history in Ontario and monetary awards were offered at three levels: graduate; undergraduate and local historians; and secondary school. Although a variety of prizes were distributed over the years, it was always a challenge to attract several essays.

In 2009 the MHSO board of directors decided to change the essay contest to a publication fund, still honouring the name of J. W. Fretz who was the first president of the society. The fund is available to any individual or charitable, church or community-based organization that requires financial support to assist in the publication of research—as a book, film or other form of media. Projects should illuminate the experience of Mennonites in Ontario.

Normally up to \$2,000 is available per project. MHSO reserves the right to allocate additional funding to specific publication projects. Applicants must submit a proposal that includes a description of the project, a timeline for its completion and a budget. Proposals will be assessed by the Fretz Publication Fund committee, a sub-committee appointed by the MHSO and applications are accepted twice a year. Deadlines for submission are the first of May and the first of October. Inquires and applications should be submitted to:

**Secretary**

**Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario**  
**Conrad Grebel University College**  
**Waterloo, ON N2L 3G6**  
**or: mhso@watserv1.uwaterloo.ca**

and not by the standards of the Scripture, if we only admonish in vague and general terms and do not lift up a standard in our churches by a clearly defined confession of faith, then we too will drift away from our

moorings and be wrecked on the rocks of worldliness. The current of the world flows downhill, and always pushes against a high and holy standard.

Driven by the clear teaching of the Bible and the vices of sin commonly listed by fundamentalists, one Conservative writer categorically spelled out the ills of the Mennonite Church.

*Sin was being allowed in the church. Members in good standing were attending movies, going to polls, smoking, drinking, holding membership in labor unions, organizing and operating bowling alleys, and playing on ball and bowling teams. Some members had television; some were sponsoring radio programs; some conferences were affiliating with liberal conferences that had ties to the World Council of Churches. Other interdenominational affiliations were also being pursued, especially in the mission and educational programs.<sup>9</sup>*

Given such a radical view of the degeneration all around them it is hardly surprising that Conservatives felt the need to completely separate themselves from the Mennonite Church. They felt they had no option but to divide. As Mervin Baer, an influential Conservative bishop, put it, "in the continued development of these trends toward a Christless Protestantism we would frankly say that it would be a sin not to divide." Ironically, two decades later this same bishop when faced with the threat of members leaving his church wrote, "the work is too great and the eternal cause far too significant to allow our petty carnalities to divide us."

In the second half of the twentieth century, separatism was common among fundamentalists who shunned ecumenism, tolerance or accommodation. The inevitable outcome of this mindset was schism and Conservative Mennonite churches have frequently been afflicted by this problem, especially those churches that enforce the most stringent standards. Conservatives repeatedly echo the "come-outerism" of fundamentalism: "'come out from among

them' is the supreme call of the Scriptures" according to one Conservative church. Clear demarcation from all interaction with outsiders is what came to define the Conservative movement and the "come-outerism" passage in II Corinthians 6:17-18 is a popular and frequently quoted theme.

Virtually all Conservatives have become more uniform in enforcing more stringent restrictions than the earlier Mennonite fundamentalists. While the Ontario Conference had never enforced the cape-dress, Moses Roth set this as the standard at the church in Heidelberg. In other parts of the Conservative movement the rules were even much more demanding. The Eastern Pennsylvania Mennonite Church, a schism of the Lancaster Conference, not only specified a "plain cape dress," but further stipulated "without trimming," "mid-calf length skirt," "three quarter length or longer sleeves," "not...transparent" and "shall be subdued modest colors." Hosiery was required in black "and of a serviceable weight" and dress shoes were required in black "and shall not follow the unhealthful [sic] and sensual designs of the world." The acceptable standard for the men was "the regulation coat, plain hat, and black footwear," and a ban on neckties. Also, in this church, the radio was banned and the dangers of daily papers and magazines were warned against. Conservatives also became increasingly concerned with worldly influences on their children and began their own schools and wrote their own curriculum and made rules for children's clothing and activities.

Using common sense Conservative preachers reinforced distinctive teachings with holiness zeal. As Mervin Baer put it:

*When the girls have a big blob of hair down over their ears, and make sure that their ears are covered, supposedly to make them look nicer, there is something wrong with our idea of separation. Anything that is done on the basis of pride is bypassing God's principles of separation.*

By linking the issue of "hair over the ears" to "God's principles of separation" and "pride," hairstyle becomes a biblical mandate. Common sense simply verifies the obvious truth of such a statement. To question such

logical reasoning can quickly be regarded as rebellion against the leaders, the church, and ultimately the Bible and God. Many Conservatives have devised multiple written and unwritten rules to prevent "drift" and hold to what they understand as the distinctive and historic Mennonite faith. Although some of these issues may be completely unique to Conservative Mennonites, they are created with fundamentalist thinking and are promoted and enforced with fundamentalist zeal.

Conservative Mennonites' simplistic reading of the Bible, steadfast stance on separatism, chronic suspicion and reaction to "apostasy," commitment to a modified holiness teaching, rejection of historical research, use of common sense reasoning, denunciation of ecumenism and the social gospel, and suspicion of intellectual thinking such as systematic theology, all point to the influence of fundamentalism. Conservatives inherited fundamentalist thinking from Mennonite fundamentalism and developed it into a unique stream of fundamentalism. The leaders of the Mennonite Church in the early twentieth century were conscious of the Protestant fundamentalist-modernist controversy and for the most part acknowledged and affirmed their support for fundamentalism. At the same time there was much they did not accept, especially as it developed into a rigid, separatist movement in the late 1950s. The Conservative Mennonite movement has fully accepted the teaching of Mennonite fundamentalism, but on many issues has taken an even more rigid stance. Conservatives have created a "timeless tradition" out of time-bound cultural influences. \*

# Endnotes

Nathan Emerson Yoder, "Mennonite Fundamentalism: Shaping An Identity For An American Context" (Notre Dame: Ph.D. dissertation, 1999), 385-6.

<sup>2</sup> John Piper "J. Gresham Machen's Response to Modernism" accessed September 21, 2009 at: [http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/biographies/1464\\_J\\_Gresham\\_Machens\\_Response\\_to\\_Modernism/](http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/biographies/1464_J_Gresham_Machens_Response_to_Modernism/)

<sup>3</sup> George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of*

## Women in Early Austrian Anabaptism: Their Days, Their Stories

by Linda A. Huebert Hecht. Kitchener: Pandora Press, 2009, 281 pages

by Walter Klaassen, Saskatoon, SK

Linda Hecht has written a ground-breaking book on Anabaptist women for the years 1527-1531. It is important for two reasons. This is a major contribution to the history of the Reformation, describing not the leaders and their writings and theology, but the life and death of women, most of whom were peasants. It is also important because for the first time ever we can read about hundreds of mothers and working women and their struggle to be faithful in the face of loss of home and often life itself.

There are earlier books on women in the Reformation, especially those by Roland H. Bainton, but those women tended to belong

to a higher social group. The judgement of Reformation scholars about the lower class women of the time have until now been based on insufficient evidence. This book provides that evidence, consisting of statements given to government agents by Anabaptist women after they were arrested. Secretaries took down the answers to the questions, and then gave them to the government record keepers. These records have been preserved and the late Dr. Grete Mecenseffy from Vienna transcribed and published them.

This book's excellent general introduction tells the story in broad strokes. Then follow five chapters, one for each of the five years, 1527-1531. Introductions to each chapter survey the records, and give a brief overview of the Anabaptist story in Tirol for that year.



*Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism 1870-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 16.

<sup>4</sup> Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 88.

<sup>5</sup> George M. Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987), 64.

<sup>6</sup> Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*, 241.

<sup>7</sup> Yoder, "Mennonite Fundamentalism," 145.

<sup>8</sup> Melvin Gingerich, "A History of Mennonite Costume," n.p., n.d., 46.

<sup>9</sup> Virgil Schrock, in Mervin Baer, *Marching On* (Crockett, KY: Rod and Staff Publishers Inc., 2001), 176.

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Then follow translations from that year's court records, and the author's interpretation of those records. We read about how the women were interrogated, of the terrible choices they had to make between faithfulness to Christ and the welfare of their families. Hecht tells us that some renounced their faith and how that was done publicly, and of the kind of punishments that were inflicted on them. Many were cruelly tortured to extract confessions. Seventy-seven of them remained faithful through death by fire and drowning. She details the important role of these women in the spread of Anabaptism.

The government in Innsbruck wrote to the officials at Hall nearby: "The mayor should prevent the Anabaptist prisoners from being kept together as a group, for then they sing hymns. When the common people hear this it makes them angry and it strengthens and encourages prisoners to persist in their erroneous, heretical beliefs."

This book is full of touching stories of these courageous, faithful women. The following is one among many:

For the wife of Michel...whose martyrdom was reported February 8, there was no mercy. She left her seven children four hundred Gulden, a sizeable inheritance.... The money would be used to raise her children but would not make up for the lack of her presence in their lives. A similar fate awaited the children of Ursula Kuen.... She joined her husband in martyrdom.

Of these women, too, it is said: "They, being dead, yet speak." This book should be in every church library and every home. \*

## 2010 Spring Bus Tour

Sam Steiner will lead another bus tour in conjunction with the spring meeting of the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario on June 13, 2010. He will do a presentation on how the Evangelical Missionary Church grew

out of the Mennonite Church in the nineteenth century in the morning and in the afternoon he will lead a bus tour in the Kitchener-Waterloo area showing various sites of interest. \*



# Restoration of the Brubacher House remembered



Ken McLaughlin, Lewis Brubacher and Vernon Brubacher chat at the steps of the verandah at the Brubacher House Open House.

At the spring meeting of the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario on June 13, 2009, the society celebrated thirty years since the restoration of the Brubacher House on the campus of the University of Waterloo. Ken McLaughlin, a history professor, was involved in the restoration and spoke about how it all happened.

"The Brubacher House project fell into my lap," he said. He was serving on the Waterloo Regional Heritage Foundation, a new organization of the 1970s and it was here that he got to know Lorna Bergey and J. Winfield Fretz. He dedicated his lecture to the memory of Bergey and Fretz because they had the idea of restoring one of the farmhouses on the campus.

The University of Waterloo is a 1,000-acre campus which had been eight different farms. The University was asked to preserve one house in memory of the Mennonite origins of the community and in 1965 they decided to preserve the Brubacher House. Milton Good and Norman High who were involved in establishing Conrad Grebel College, were very important in giving leadership and foresight. Dr. Hagey, the first president of the University, had a great deal of respect for the Mennonite community without which the Brubacher House restoration wouldn't have happened.

In 1968, before anything much was done, a fire gutted the entire house and it sat that way for several years. By the 1970s there was a surge of interest in local history and the Brubacher House was the first major project of the Waterloo Region Heritage Foundation.

The Brubacher House was designated a "building of historic significance" rather than an official museum because it was not restored to the original specifications with the same rigorous detail as the Schneider Haus ten years later. The Brubacher House cost about \$60 to \$70,000 to restore. The floor plan was based on the memories of people who lived in the house. Simeon Martin, an old-time builder helped with the project. Menno S. Martin Contractors participated in the restoration and the front door came from a house near Chicopee that Mr. Martin was tearing down. McLaughlin also remembers Lorna Bergey finding the bell.

McLaughlin encouraged the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario to be vigilant about maintaining the Brubacher House as an artifact of original Waterloo architecture. He thinks of it as the best example of existing original architecture in the city. The Scots built their stone buildings differently and didn't use the massive cornerstones found in this building.

After the meeting, everyone was invited over to the Brubacher House for an Open House to celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. \*

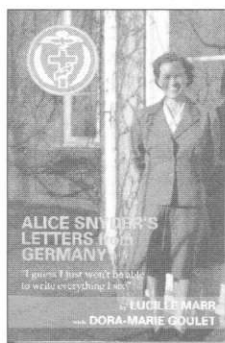
## New Books

*Alice Snyder's Letters Home from Germany.* Lucille Marr with Dora-Marie Goulet. Pandora Press, 2009, 262 pages.

This collection of letters was written by Alice Snyder while she was serving with Mennonite Central Committee in Germany after World War II between 1948 and 1950. Her mother collected the letters and preserved them so that Alice's candid observations provide a great historical resource.

*Lishman Coach Lines 1916 - 1970: Elmira, Kitchener and Beyond.* Marion Roes and Margaret Gerber. Privately published, 2009.

This is a picture book of old photos, newspaper articles and invoices; of early Lishman home-made buses



and later factory-made ones; of early Elmira and Kitchener buildings and bus drivers. Included in the book is the text of "Lishman Coach Lines and Early Elmira Transportation" which was published in Waterloo Historical Society Volume 94-2006. The book will be available in early fall from Marion at 519-883-1448 or mlroes@sympatico.ca

*Mennonite New Life Centre: 25 Years of Walking Together.* Luis Alberto Matta, translated by Jessica Farias, 2008, 20 pages.

This booklet outlines the beginnings and the work of the Mennonite New Life Centre of Toronto which celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2008. In the early 1980s, Mennonites in Ontario recognized that a large Spanish-speaking immigrant population in the city of Toronto had almost no social supports. The Inter-Mennonite mission ministry invited Adolfo Puricelli and his wife, Betty Kennedy to come from their home in Argentina to help immigrants and refugees from Latin America get settled in Canada. Since 1996 the New Life Centre has shared space with

the Toronto United Mennonite Church. The work of the Centre has expanded to include services for Serbo-Croations and Mandarin-speaking immigrants from China. The Mennonite New Life Centre is located at: 1774 Queen St E, Suite 200 Toronto, Ontario, M4L 1G7.

*Worship at 'George Street'—a History of our Transitions, 1924-2009.* Karl Dick. Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church, 2009, 270 pages.

This hard-cover congregational history includes many photos, anecdotes and writings from the Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church located on George Street in Waterloo. The project of compiling and publishing such a complete history would not have been possible without a generous gift from the estate of Herbert

Enns. The book includes a great deal of detail about individuals and does not ignore the difficult times. \*

