Peoplehoods of the Past: Mennonites and the Ethnic Boundary

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Ethnicity is most often explained in terms of group identity. An ethnic group is made up of individuals who share to a greater or lesser extent some common characteristics: a common history; a similar or closely related language; a shared ancestry and an identification with its corollary, a homogeneous race; a common religion. The list is necessarily too simple. The degree and textures of commonness vary widely and each of the major themes in the list is accompanied by a myriad of sub themes. Individuals cobble together ethnicities that defy such simple categories and may have multiple identities whose expression depends on a particular social context. It is clear, however, that we are talking about cultures and boundaries, systems of meanings and practices, and ways in which we know who belongs to 'us'.[1]

Ethnicity has become problematic for Mennonites. For much of their three hundred year North American experience, Mennonites spun the webs of both religious and ethnic identity into a sense of peoplehood without specifically acknowledging differences between these categories. The result was an ethnoreligious identity that for some has become an embarrassing chapter of their history. The confluence of mission impulses and globalizing external forces has called into question the utility of ethnic identity in the minds of the many now urbanized and integrated Mennonites. As Daphne Naomi Winland puts it, these modern Mennonites are "trying to articulate a new, more meaningful contemporary peoplehood, one which, in effect, eliminates ethnicity altogether from their definition of peoplehood."[2] The discussion that follows has three aims. A brief review of the concept of ethnicity is followed by a review of how ethnicity has been part of recent histories of North American Mennonites. Finally, I offer some tentative suggestions for framing a new story of the North American Mennonite experience from a point of view of ethnicity and in the context of a global Mennonite history.

The concept of ethnicity has offered writers of North American history and other scholars a vast and productive field of inquiry. Most often connected with the study of immigrant groups, early studies of ethnicity were preoccupied with its loss. The Robert Ezra Park school

of sociologists in the 1920s described the cultural change experienced by immigrants as assimilation, a loss of their ethnicity in the face of the onslaught of a dominant, urban culture in which they had to live and work. The Park school of thought had its proponents in Canada as exemplified by Carl Dawson's work that included a chapter on the Mennonites of Western Canada. The assimilation school was sharply criticized during the social history turn of the 1960s as being too linear and progressive, and for assuming a recognizable host society identity into which immigrant groups were being assimilated.[3]

Beginning in the 1960s scholars such as Rudolph Vecoli, Werner Sollers, Kathleen Neils Conzen and in Canada, Robert Harney, retold the story of ethnicity using new conceptual tools. First they pointed out that it could persist. Then they suggested that ethnicity could be invented or reinvented as a symbolic identity used by groups to achieve certain social and political objectives.[4] In Canada, the rebirth of ethnicity had political implications. When faced with attempts to recreate the nation as a bilingual and bicultural entity, the resurgent ethnic consciousness of non-English, non-French groups was of sufficient political strength to formally make a multicultural identity a part of what it meant be Canadian.[5]

Most recently the forces of global economics, large-scale migration, new communication technologies, and the differences of race and gender, have combined to change the emphasis from examining the nature of ethnicity to that of exploring the implications of diversity. Instead of migration consisting of a process of exchanging all or parts of one national identity for another, the new immigrants of the post World War II era brought even greater racial, religious and cultural 'foreignness' and maintained identities in more than one geographic, political and social space. Transnational and diasporic identities have emerged as preferred concepts to describe this sense of belonging and relating to more than one nation state at the same time. Initially finding application for only post Second World War migrations, scholars have recently found the concepts also have value in explaining earlier migrations.[6]

Race and gender have also garnered increased attention in explaining the nature of diverse societies. Analysis of race as a socially constructed identity rather than only as a visible and biological reality has become commonplace. Historical analysis has begun to address questions about the specifics of how race came to be 'made'. Accompanying these questions is the realization that the claiming of 'whiteness' by European immigrants was also situated historically and geographically.[7] If in modern diverse societies ethnicity cannot be examined separately from race, scholarship has also had to acknowledge the intersection of ethnic and gender identities. Joy Parr cautions the historian, however, to pay heed to the "inherent instability

in identities—that being simultaneously a worker, a Baptist, and a father, one is never solely or systematically any of these."[8]

Let us then turn to the contours of Mennonite ethnicity as they have emerged in the writings of North American Mennonite history. Sheer volume would suggest that the recovery of Mennonite ancestry, a key component of ethnic identity, captures the most historical interest among large numbers of Mennonites. From note cards and file folders on kitchen tables to sophisticated databases, many of which are publicly accessible on the internet, genealogy is a flourishing hobby — some would argue an obsession — among Mennonites. The advent of easily used computer text and graphic manipulation technology has decentralized the publishing of the products of this research and most library and archival catalogues offer only a hint of the volume of historical writing that is thus produced. Along with individual family histories, usually replete with extensive genealogical tables, there are volumes of more formally published transcriptions and compilations of passenger, census, and church membership lists. For a group whose 'Great Tradition' has assumed the voluntary entry of persons into a faith community through a conscious choice as adults, the preoccupation with ancestry is indeed striking.

It is worth reflecting on this trend from the point of view of the North American Mennonite story. Recovering the past through family history is an activity popular mostly among Mennonites who have otherwise been transformed into fully participating members of their societies, to use T.D. Regehr's characterization of the recent Mennonite past.[9] The discovery of an ancestral past as Mennonites, however, holds little interest for first or second generation Mennonites of Latino, Asian or Aboriginal descent, or those who found their Mennonite home through conscious choice or with the gentle coercion of primary associations of marriage and family. For those, however, whose histories include an exclusively 'Mennonite' past, usually a rural past that has become an urban and diverse present, the quest is not only nostalgic, but also an attempt to recover an ethnic connectedness at risk of being lost. Their family histories betray the perceived threat. Mennonite genealogists have been forced to accommodate the diversity of their families by finding new ways of organizing genealogical tables to account for interracial and intercultural marriages, adopted children, divorce and remarriage, and blended families.

Language has received much less attention in recent North American Mennonite histories, but both Pennsylvania Dutch and Mennonite Low German have been of great interest to students of language. In addition to the attempts to create orthographies and dictionaries, sociolinguists have been interested in language as a marker of social and cultural change, particularly among the Amish and the Old

Colony Mennonites.[10] Kelly Hedges' study of Old Colony Mennonites of Chihuahua, Mexico concludes that their identity is "fundamentally linked to language." Marion Lois Huffines concludes that the Amish are on the threshold of giving up Pennsylvania Dutch, realizing as their German American neighbours have, that language is no longer needed to express cultural separateness.[11]

Gerald Ediger's study of the language transition in Mennonite Brethren Churches in Canada is an exception to the above in its historical approach and its specific focus on language as an ethnic boundary during a period of transition from German to English between the 1940s and the 1970s. During these years Mennonite Brethren churches in Canada made the switch from German to English amidst conflict and tension. Ediger's history aims to enhance the historical understanding of the ethno-religious nature of Mennonite Brethren identity by examining this language transition. He concludes that moving to English as the language of church altered Mennonite Brethren identity with the "boundary markers of language and ethnicity becoming increasingly subordinate to more purely religious considerations." It resulted in more openness to diverse languages, cultures and ethnicities and allowed Mennonite Brethren churches to capitalize on the mission opportunities presented by their increasing urban presence.[12] Ediger's analysis provides important insights into the historical contribution of language to the 'faith versus ethnicity' debate.

The more formal syntheses of the Mennonite story produced by professional historians, T.D Regehr in Canada and Paul Toews in the United States, have been less driven by the need to address an ethnic Mennonite past. Completed in the 1990s, they both told the story of how Mennonites remained somehow Mennonite even though they increasingly became part of mainstream North American society.[13] Toews concluded that Mennonites had moved "from the margins of society to more participation in society's institutions, its culture, and its values," but also "maintained their own discernible community."[14] Commenting on his book, Regehr claims he gradually had to acknowledge that Canadian Mennonites "accommodated themselves and became active participants in Canadian life, while not only retaining, but in many cases strengthening and redefining their own Anabaptist heritage."[15] Both histories were criticized for their preoccupation with elites and institutions, failing to provide a sense of the texture of Mennonite ethnicity as expressed in daily life by ordinary people.[16]

The challenge has been met by nuanced stories of the contours of everyday Mennonite ethnic life. Royden Loewen's forays into the intricacies of Manitoba, Nebraska, and Ontario rural Mennonite society portray their ethnicity as dynamic and creative. Mennonites in Hanover fashioned a new, "particular and localized culture" in the face

of the "homogenizing structures" that engulfed them.[17] Both Nebraska and Manitoba rural Mennonites "employed different schemes...to reorganize traditional patterns of life."[18]

Steven Nolt, has also used a comparative perspective to uncover the patterns of American Mennonite ethnic identity. He sketches a Pennsylvania Mennonite sense of ethnicity that found "a comfortable cultural niche," among its Pennsylvania German neighbours, a Russian Mennonite ethnicity that saw itself as "part of a German diaspora in an uncultured and religiously degenerate land," and a more resilient ideological and institutional ethnicity that emerged in the late nineteenth century among Mennonites who moved from the Pennsylvanian German pale to the Midwestern states.[19] This institutionally-supported ethnicity — a Mennonite Central Committee kind of ethnicity — becomes an even more prominent feature of Mennonite culture after the Second World War. The recent proliferation of institutional history and biographies of church leaders memorializing this 'Golden Era' of Mennonite institution building may signal the end of the coherence of this kind of ethnicity. [20]

The use of frameworks that consciously tell the Mennonite ethnic story in terms of transnational, transcultural and diasporic identities appear to be just emerging and point to a combining of these concepts of migration with gender and racial difference. Marlene Epp's four stories of Mennonite women: a nineteenth century Amish migrant, a Second World War-era displaced Mennonite from Ukraine, a 1980s political exile from Central America, and a contemporary migrant with homes in Canada and Mexico, concludes that each carried a "complex web of identities" that was Mennonite in a localized meaning of the label but that the "strongest elements of [their] shared identity" were diasporic and transnational, and "their sense of (dis)placement within patriarachal systems." [21] Robyn Sneath used the concept of diaspora to analyze the imagined community of conservative Mennonite readers of the *Mennonitische Post*, for whom the paper provided a "tangible space where they ...[could] visit, share news of hope, of loss and tragedy and of the arbitrarily chosen facts of everyday monotony" and where "women's voices are given at least as much space" as men's. [22] Conference papers yet to be published and works underway point to increasing use of the concept of diasporic identity to tell the story of the diverse meanings of Mennonite peoplehood. The intersection of ethnicity and gender has also garnered increasing interest by Mennonite historians with interests beyond the immigrant or migrant experience. Most notable is the collection of essays emanating from the 1995 "Quiet in the Land" conference that sought to advance the topics of religion and ethnicity through the exploration of Amish and Mennonite women's history.[23]

These new ways of texturing the ethnic experience reflect the challenge to ethnicity posed by the addition of new, racially-diverse Mennonites, those not of Swiss-South German or Dutch-North German origins. Internationalization has complicated the Mennonite ethnic experience. Those on the faith side of what has emerged as a faith-ethnicity dichotomy have embraced this development by pronouncing the end of history as it relates to Mennonite ethnicity. As Steven Nolt puts it, mainline Mennonite circles "downplay ethnicity publicly and insist that personal faith trumps corporate culture." He suggests that this tendency is often linked with "missional language and is said to be a more faithful approach to Christianity itself."[24] Others have been harshly critical of the privilege given to traditional ethnicity in Mennonite churches, claiming Mennonites have "perpetuated a kind of ethnicity that is perceived as elitist, exclusionist, and arrogant."[25] The indictment necessarily weighs heavily upon the shoulders of ethnic historians.

Although ethnicity is much more complex and broadly based than the brief outline above allows, the writing of the North American volume of a global Mennonite history requires that the new realities of Mennonite diversity be addressed. If its aim is to create a new 'useable past' that will foster a sense of peoplehood among a global community of Mennonites, the North American volume will need to tell its story in ways that will resonate with non-European Mennonites. Let me offer some tentative suggestions for a North American Mennonite history from an ethnic point of view. The examples illustrating these themes will come from my own research which has focussed on the Dutch-Prussian-Russian Mennonites of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Our stories need to focus more on the boundaries of ethnicity as opposed to the explication of Mennonite ethnic traits. My research has focussed on postwar ethnic German immigrants from the Soviet Union and shows how they integrated into new urban environments in Canada and Germany. By the time the Canadian-bound Mennonites arrived at refugee camps in Western Europe their identities had been seriously compromised by the ravages of Stalinist repression and the turmoil of war. They had virtually lost all Mennonite ethnic traits. Although language and family names still made them recognizable to their Mennonite resettlement workers, their integration into Canadian society was assisted by their reintegration into a Mennonite ethnic culture. They had to relearn Mennonite ways. Women had to relinquish the informal leadership of religious observance to the formal leadership of male pastors. The apparently flagging work ethic exhibited by immigrants had to be rekindled by settlement workers. Boundaries sometimes became more porous, such as in the case of Mennonites who

had married Catholic spouses in Germany and who were offered the resources of Mennonite ethnic settlement agencies upon demonstration of Canadian Mennonite ways.[26] At other times the boundary was reinforced; this was the case for refugees who were not allowed to marry until the church had grappled with the problem of missing partners. Many of those found the Lutheran church more inclined to give them a new religious, if not ethnic, home.[27]

We need new stories of how language influenced the creation and maintenance of ethnic boundaries and how such linguistic boundaries both preserved the faith and excluded others from becoming Mennonite. Language remains an inescapable boundary creating feature of cultural identity that globalization will not erase. Mennonites arriving in Winnipeg in the late 1940s and early 1950s brought with them the treasure-trove of the German language which they believed could be preserved in their new home in Canada. Their recent history had brought them into contact with Nazi Germany and provided strong reinforcement for the German they had preserved for over a hundred years in Russia and the Soviet Union. They made their homes in the existing Canadian Mennonite churches where their presence briefly held up the march to an English language church.

The postwar Mennonite immigrants also came with much more broadened horizons than did their predecessors. They had experienced collectivization, religious persecution, mass arrests, atheistic culture, exile and many other things during the Stalinist period and the years of war and turmoil thereafter. While they fully expected to maintain the German language, they were also firm in the knowledge that they were coming to an English speaking country. The realities of postwar Canada made agricultural pursuits difficult and their almost universal move to the cities contributed to the assault on the German language.

Mennonites attempted a number of approaches aimed at maintaining the German language. One response was to create a promotional organization. Its representations to Mennonite pastors were explicit in formulating the boundary role of language. The organization insisted that religious life of Mennonites would become shallower and even expose the faith community to "false religious teachings" if it gave up its German mother tongue.[28] The Saturday German School movement was another approach to maintain the German language. The arrival of postwar Mennonites gave new energy to the establishment of German language schools in many Mennonite church basements. For a ten-year period between the mid 1950s and mid 1960s the Saturday German School movement enjoyed success but then quite suddenly experienced dramatic drops in enrolment when the many postwar baby boom children reached adolescence. Both approaches faltered as Mennonite parents and church leaders acknowledged that the conditions

necessary to keep the young in the faith were not compatible with those required to maintain the ancestral German language. Here the sense of peoplehood had to sacrifice some of its familiar features in favour of others deemed more important in the context of urban realities.

Our stories must recognize that peoplehood is an imagined construct that is future oriented. Even in a globalizing and shrinking world, ethnicity is shaped not only by perceptions of a shared religious and cultural experience but also the perception of a shared future. Mennonites in the Soviet Union had developed an imagined identity as Germans by the end of the Second World War. A series of identity forming events that began with the attack on all Germans in the Tsar's empire during the First World War and culminated with their brush with Nazi Germany gave powerful reinforcement to an identity as Germans. The powerful desire to escape as far as possible from Stalin combined with family connections and Mennonite Central Committee relief and resettlement efforts in postwar Germany brought a re-imagining of peoplehood. By the time postwar immigrants took their places in the church pews of Winnipeg's Mennonite churches their anticipated future life trajectories were aligned with Canadian patterns of Dutch-North German ethnicity. The power of 'imagined communities', to use the term popularized by Benedict Anderson,[29] is most clearly illustrated by their counterparts who would migrate to Germany in the 1970s. For them, further labelling as Fascists and as pariahs in Soviet society gave them a diasporic identity as Germans with a refashioned Baptist/Mennonite faith identity. Casting their lot with a modern, secular and Americanized Germany of which they had little knowledge illustrates the dynamics of the future orientation of ethnic identity. The *Aussiedler*[30] Mennonites who arrived in Germany from the Soviet Union in the 1970s and 1980s could not visualize a future in close fellowship with their more liberal German Mennonite coreligionists. Discordance between the romantically imagined 'homeland' of Germany with the realities of a secularized and bureaucratized modern Germany drove them to defensive ethnic preservation strategies.

Our histories should avoid the temptation to cast those groups and periods of the North American experience where Mennonites were more separate, more exclusive, and more inward looking as a kind of 'Dark Ages', or to limit the story to an analysis of their conflict with modern society. To do so not only marginalizes contemporary conservative and 'old order' Mennonites, it questions the power of daily modelling of peoplehood as a way of bringing children to faith, a reality of communitarian culture described by Mennonite theologian David Schroeder.[31] It is also ahistorical, in that it makes subsequent realities appear as if they were known outcomes.[32]

Research begun this summer on the history of the railway town of Winkler, in the heart of the Mennonite West Reserve in Manitoba has heightened my awareness of the sense of presentism that pervades our stories of conservative Mennonites. Much of the scholarly effort directed at the conservative Mennonites has been preoccupied with fitting them into a modernization framework. In these histories conservative groups are analyzed with the intent of cataloguing their tension with modernity and often explicitly predict the demise of their ethno-religious identities. Winkler's origins in 1892 came at the height of the fracturing of West Reserve Mennonite life. The railway, market agriculture, municipal government were outside challenges to Mennonite conceptions of a peoplehood based on the unity of the village system, church practice and Christian life. These external challenges, together with alternative visions of the believing community as presented by arriving Bergthaler Mennonites and American Mennonite missionaries conspired to break down conservative Mennonite understandings of faith and life. The Mennonite farm villages south of Winkler, with their rhythms of agricultural life, structures of mutual support, egalitarian use of the land, and inconspicuous religiosity represented Mennonite understandings of the peoplehood of a faith community. Although they readily used the improved market access of a railway town, the idea of moving to Winkler was the antithesis of the village-based faith community. Within the first few years of the town's existence, Mennonites expressing a seemingly more individualistic and presumptuous faith moved to Winkler and built churches in town. They represented specific alternatives to the village-based faith community. Practices such as the rebaptism of its members and the disruptions caused by the sale of village lands helped to propel more conservative Old Colony Mennonites to take a posture of defensive separation and ultimately migrate, first to the frontiers of Canada's Northwest (present-day Alberta and Saskatchewan) and then later, when the state proved inflexible in its imposition of educational demands, to Mexico.

The small Mennonite cosmos of Winkler, Manitoba also illustrates how Mennonite boundaries began to stretch. With the exception of the Chinese restaurant typical of prairie towns and a small contingent of Jewish merchants, Winkler's Mennonites had little interaction with other visibly different people. The village, however, was on the leading edge of mission efforts to those outside the community and in foreign countries. The more experiential faith that accompanied the evangelical thrust of the 1890s was accompanied by a sense of mission that went well beyond traditional Mennonite white ethnicity and patriarchal conceptions of public ministry. In the 1920s, the newspapers of the nearby town of Morden reported on a succession of missionaries sent to India by the local Mennonite Brethren Church.

They also reported on the missionaries' faithful return to report and promote greater missionary zeal in Canada. In this endeavour the lives of Mennonite missionary women became publicized; Miss Helen Warkentin, for example, was the subject of a number of local farewell celebrations before she left to minister to the 'heathen' in India in the 1920s. The church's young people showed their awareness of a larger world through their missions fests in which they read biographies of missionaries who had died while on the mission field in India. Broadening horizons in Canada were revealed when local minister Johann Warkentin became instrumental in establishing a Mennonite Brethren mission in Winnipeg in the 1920s and when the local General Conference Bergthaler Church established the Mennonite Pioneer Mission to the province's Aboriginal people in the 1950s.[33]

Although imbued with the baggage of cultural superiority and imperialism characteristic of the mission emphasis of the day, the missionary zeal of the women like Helena Warkentin would push the boundaries of North American Mennonite membership beyond the confines of European origins. This cultural expansion occurred both in terms of the world outside of North America and in terms of the children in the neighbourhood Daily Vacation Bible School classes, the family next door, and the visitor to a city mission or church planting effort. A history of Mennonites in North America needs to unpack the story of the mission impulse and how it both empowered women and marginalized indigenous cultures, how it challenged existing notions of the intersection of ethnicity and faith, and how ethnicity was reinvented within an increasingly pluralistic world.

It is certainly premature to proclaim the end of Mennonite ethnic history. A history of North American Mennonites written in the context of the Global Mennonite History Project will help create a new common history and possibly a sense of Mennonite peoplehood with diverse national, racial and ethnic origins. It may foster yet another version of Mennonite ethnicity. Telling stories about the edges of Mennonite ethnicity, about the intersections of ethnic and gender identities, about transnational and diasporic cultures, and about emboldened conservative and 'old order' groups, may help make the story resonate with a global Mennonite community.

Notes

[1]   Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 5 and Frederic Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, (Boston: Little Brown, 1969), 15.
[2]   Daphne Naomi Winland, "The Quest for Mennonite Peoplehood: Ethno-Religious Identity and the Dilemma of Definitions," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 30(1) (1993): 117.

3   Carl A. Dawson, *Group Settlements: Ethnic Communities in Western Canada* (Toronto: MacMillan, 1936). For the origin and development of the assimilationist school see: Stow Persons, *Ethnic Studies at Chicago*, 1905-1945 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 33-36.

4   Rudolph J. Vecoli, "Contadini in Chicago: A Critique of the Uprooted," *Journal of American History* 51(June 1964- March 1965): 404-417; Timothy L. Smith, "Religion and Ethnicity in America," *American Historical Review* 83 (1978): 1155-1185; Kathleen Neils Conzen, David A. Gerber, Ewa Morawska, George E. Pozetta, and Rudolph J. Vecoli, "The Invention of Ethnicity: A Perspective from the U.S.A.," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 29 (1992): 3-41; Herbert Gans, "Symbolic Ethnicity and Symbolic Religiosity: Towards a Comparison of Ethnic and Religious Acculturation," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 17(4) (1994): 578-592, Werner Sollers, *The Invention of Ethnicity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Robert Harney, "Men Without Women: Italian Migrants in Canada, 1885-1930," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 11 (1979): 29-47.

5   The policy of multiculturalism arose out of the work of a Royal Commission created to examine Canada's two founding peoples. Ukrainians and other ethnic groups were instrumental in expanding the discussion to one of multiculturalism. See: Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. *The Cultural Contributions of the Other Ethnic Groups, Final Report Volume IV* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1970).

6   Brenda S.A. Yeoh, Katie D. Willis and S.M. Abdul Khader Fakhr, "Introduction: Transnationalism and its Edges," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 26(2) (2003): 207-217.

7   Paul Spickard, "Comtemplating Multiraciality," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 24(1) (2004): 110-115 and Russell A. Kazal, "The Interwar Origins of the White Ethnic: Race, Residence and German Philadelphia, 1917-1939," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 23(4) (2003): 78-131.

8   Joy Parr, "Gender History and Historical Practice," *Canadian Historical Review* 76(3) (1995): 361.

9   T. D. Regehr, *Mennonites in Canada, 1939-1970: A People Transformed* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

10   See for instance: Kelly L. Hedges, "'Plautdietsch' and 'Huuchdietsch' in Chihuahua: Language, Literacy, and Identity among the Old Colony Mennonites in Northern Mexico," (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1996); Jack Thiessen, *Mennonite Low German Dictionary: Mennonitisch-Plattdeutsches Wörterbuch* (Madison, WI: Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies, 2003), and Kathryn Burridge, *Pennsylvania-German Dialect: A localized study within a part of Waterloo County, Ontario* (Waterloo, Ont.: The Pennsylvania German Folklore Society of Ontario, 1989).

11   Hedges, 332 and Marion Lois Huffines, "Amish Languages," in James R. Dow, Werner Enninger and Joachim Raith, eds. *Old and New World Anabaptists: Studies on the Language, Culture, Society and Health of the Amish and Mennonite* (Essen: University of Essen; Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University, 1994): 28.

12   Gerald C. Ediger, *Crossing the Divide: Language Transition among Canadian Mennonite Brethren 1940-1970* (Winnipeg: Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies, 2001), 2.

13   Paul Toews, *Mennonites in American Society, 1930-1970: Modernity and the Persistence of Religious Community,* (Scottdale, Pa. and Waterloo, Ont.: Herald Press, 1996).

14   Toews, 342.

15   T.D. Regehr, "Many Voices, One Story?: Accounting for Diversity in Canadian Mennonite History," in *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 15 (1997):100.

16   See Royden Loewen's review of the Toews volume in *Journal of American History* 84(4) (March 1998): 1552-1553 and A. Ross McCormack, "Mainstreaming Men-

nonites: T.D. Regehr, Group Identity and Ethnic Studies," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 15 (1997): 112.

[17] Royden Loewen, "Rurality, ethnicity, and gender patterns of cultural continuity during the 'Great Disjuncture in the R.M. of Hanover, 1945-1961," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* (1993): 161-183.

[18] Royden K. Loewen, *Family Church and Market: A Mennonite Community in the Old and New Worlds* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 262.

[19] Steven Nolt, "A 'Two-Kingdom' People in a World of Multiple Identities: Religion, Ethnicity and American Mennonites," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 73(3) (1999): 485-502.

[20] A partial list includes: Helmut Harder, *David Toews was Here, 1870-1940* (Winnipeg: CMBC Publications, 2002); Esther Epp-Tiessen, *J.J. Thiessen: A Leader for His Time* (Winnipeg: CMBC Publications, 2001); Adolf Ens, *Becoming a National Church: A History of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada* (Winnipeg: Mennonite Church Canada, 2004); Paul Keim, *Harold S. Bender, 1897-1962* (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1998); John L. Ruth, *The Earth is the Lord's: A Narrative History of the Lancaster Mennonite Conference* (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 2001); Anna Ens, *In Search of Unity: Story of the Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba* (Winnipeg: CMBC Publications, 1996); T. D. Regehr, *Faith, life and witness in the Northwest, 1903-2003: Centennial History of the Northwest Mennonite Conference* (Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press; Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 2003) and Holly B. Yoder, *The Same Spirit: History of the Iowa-Nebraska* Mennonites (Freeman, SD: Central Plains Mennonite Conference, 2003).

[21] Marlene Epp, "Pioneers, Refugees, Exiles, and Transnationals: Gendering Diaspora in an Ethno-Religious Context," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, 12 (2001): 153.

[22] Robyn Sneath, "Imagining a Mennonite Community: The *Mennonitische Post* and a People of Diaspora," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 22 (2004): 217-218 and 208.

[23] Kimberly D. Schmidt, Diane Zimmerman Umble, Steven D. Reschly, eds., *Strangers at Home: Amish and Mennonite Women in History* (Baltimore: John Hopkins, 2002), 4-5.

[24] Steven Nolt, "Ethnicity and the Faithful Church," in *Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage* 26(4) (October 2003):4.

[25] Paul Keim, "Mennonite Identity: One Mennonite's Perspective," in Dale Schrag and James Juhnke, eds.., *Anabaptist Visions for the New Millenium: A Search for Identity* (Waterloo, Ont. and Scottdale, Pa.: Pandora Press, 2000), 227.

[26] G. Friesen to Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, 5 August 1948, Mennonite Heritage Centre, CMBC collection, Vol. 1355 file 1165.

[27] Marlene Epp, *Women Without Men: Mennonite Refugees of the Second World War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

[28] "An die Altesten und Leiter der mennonitischen Gemeinden in Canada," November 1952, *Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization Collection*, vol. 1334, file 1020, Mennonite Heritage Centre and Archives. The organization was called the *Mennontischer Verein zur Pflege der deutschen Muttersprache in Canada*. It was established in September 1952 in Winnipeg.

[29] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections of the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1991).

[30] *Aussiedler* is the German designation for ethnic German immigrants returning to Germany from areas of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. In Mennonite circles they have also been called *Umsiedler*.

[31] David Schroeder, "Evangelicals Denigrate Conservative Mennonites: Understanding the Conservative Wing of the Mennonite Church," in Delbert Plett, ed. *Old Colony Mennonites in Canada, 1875-2000* (Steinbach, Mb.: Crossway Publications Inc., 2001): 33-34.

32   See: James Urry, "Of Borders and Boundaries: Reflections on Mennonite Unity and Separation in the Modern World," in *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 73(3) (1999): 503-524.

33   See for example: *Morden Times*, May 27, 1920, April 8, 1920, August 12, 1920, October 21, 1921, September 9, 1925, May 29, 1929. See also William Schroeder, "A Essay on the Historical Background of the Churches of Winkler,"unpublished, South Central Regional Library, Winkler, vertical file.