Call of the City: Rediscovering Anabaptism

Leo Driedger, *University of Manitoba*

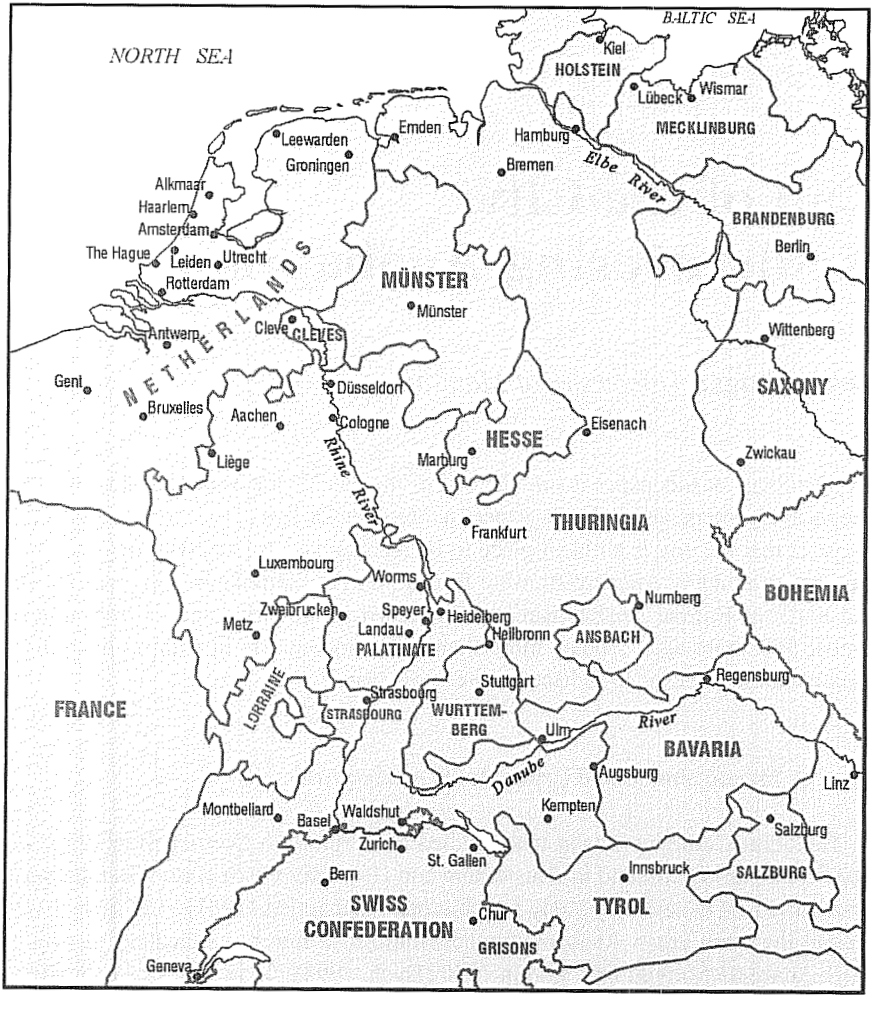
The focus of this paper is on "the call of the city."[1] We assume that God calls people everywhere, and in North America three fourths live in the city. The subtitle suggests that the city is an ideal place to be Anabaptist. Anabaptism began in the city, but soon many Anabaptists were forced into the hinterlands.. In Amsterdam and northern Europe Anabaptism has flourished in the city since its beginnings, almost 500 years ago. Today, more than ever, Anabaptists in Canada have also been called to the city, to rediscover the "new way."[2]

Menno Simons and Urban Dutch Anabaptists

Historian Cornelius Krahn who studied at Berlin with Dietrich Bonhöffer, in Bonn with Karl Barth, and in Amsterdam and Heidelberg with Harold Bender was among the first to seriously study Dutch urban Anabaptists (1981). In Figure 1 we present the main urban Anabaptist concentrations in Europe, indicating in which cities Anabaptists could be found in 1550 (Dyck, 1993). In the north, Anabaptists worked in Gent in the eastern Netherlands, and stretched this work westward to Antwerp, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Gröningen, Emden, Hamburg, Lubeck, Danzig, Königsberg and southward to Münster, Cologne, Strasbourg and Zurich.

The gateways through which news spread in those days were the cities of trade, of shipping, and of fairs, such as Antwerp, Deventer, Gröningen and Emden. The university and ecclesiastical centers of Louvain, Cologne, Utrecht and Münster were significant as information and clearing centers (Krahn, 1981:32).

Figure 1: Anabaptists in Cities in Europe. Modified from C.J. Dyck, *An Introduction to Mennonite History* (Scottdale PA, 1993), 132



Most movements have a range of participants that include radicals. Martin Luther was not especially radical when he nailed the theses on the Württemberg church door, but still his books were publicly burned at Louvain in 1519, Antwerp in

1521 and 1522, Gent, Utrecht, and Amersfoort in 1521 (Krahn, 1981:42). Much more radical forms of reformation took place in Münster, not far southeast from where Menno Simons was a Catholic priest. It is believed that his brother died in a Münster-related incident. Melchiorism, named after the Anabaptist leader Melchior Hoffman, had spread throughout northern Europe, from Emden to Antwerp, from Strasbourg to Münster, from Cologne to London, from Amsterdam to Danzig. A "New Jersualem" was set up in Münster, the local Bishop put the well fortified city under siege, and in 1535 the city of about 10,000 fell. Armed radical Anabaptist New Jerusalem had not lasted long. It took non-violent Anabaptists like Menno Simons who "received the call", to further the work in northern Europe. Following a Paulinian style of missionary work, he visited a range of urban centers. Thus, while Menno Simons himself emerged out of rural Friesland, he nevertheless served Mennonites in many urban centers of the sixteenth century.

Cornelius Krahn (1980:6) reports that "the Anabaptist Mennonite Movement started primarily in larger cities....In the Swiss, South-German and Austrian cities, the Anabaptist movement was crushed and survived only in remote areas. It was different in the Netherlands." Of the thirteen cities Krahn lists, the majority were North European trading ports of the commercial Hanseatic League, which flourished in the Baltic Sea region for centuries. While Anabaptists in Central Europe fled the cities, in the northern cities they survived, first as an underground movement, later, as a tolerated minority; and finally, as a recognized religious group (Krahn, 1981:92; Snyder, 1995:143-58). Urbanism among Mennonites of the Low Countries is, thus, as old as Mennonitism itself. By the late twentieth century there were more than one thousand Mennonites in Amsterdam, and many more in a number of other cities (Krahn, 1980:6).

Further evidence on the urban nature of Dutch Mennonites can be found in W.L.C. Coenen's (1920:1-90) study of the Anabaptist martyrs in the Netherlands. He found that not one of the 161 martyrs was a farmer. Among the 59 occupations identified were 27 weavers, 17 tailors, 13 shoemakers, 6 sailors, 5 carpenters, 5 goldsmiths, 5 hatmakers, 4 bricklayers, 3 bakers, 3 leather dealers, 3 teachers, 3 saddlers, and 3 potters (Krahn, 1980:8). Most of them, as craftspeople, industrial workers and businessmen, were part of a more urban commercial society, although it is true that there were also Mennonites in rural areas in North Holland, Friesland and Gröningen. True, too, persecution drove many Mennonites eastward into Prussia's countryside, but many of these migrants also located in the suburbs of cities such as Altona, Hamburg, Danzig, Marienburg, Elbing and Königsberg (Penner, 1978). Many became middle-class citizens.

Paul Peachey's (1954:102-27) study of the social origins of the Swiss Anabaptists listing 762 Swiss individuals who were connected with the Anabaptist movement in Central Europe, also identifies 150 of these, 20%, as urban. There were 612 villagers and peasants, or 80 %, whom he classified as rural, and peasants made up about three fifths of the total number of persons listed, or about 460. Of the 150 who were urban, 20 had been clergy (14 priests and 6 monks), 20 were urban lay intellectuals (including Grebel, Manz, Denck and Hugwald), 10 came from the

nobility, and 100 were citizens and urban craftspeople. Among those who were in the crafts, tailors and bakers were most common. Most of the urban leaders of clerical, intellectual and noble background within two years (1525-7) were martyred or died early natural deaths, recanted, were exiled, or succumbed to some unknown destiny (Moore, 1984). Thus, the Swiss Anabaptist movement was only one fifth urban to begin with, and almost completely rural two years later and thereafter (Snyder, 1995:1-23). Severe persecution made an urban foothold impossible. The early Anabaptists were more urban in northern than in southern Europe, and these differences can also be found in North America, as we will see.

The Rural, Agricultural Retreat

The persecuted Anabaptists in Switzerland, Austria and South Germany were indeed much safer as they fled up the mountainsides and into the valleys of the rugged Alpine regions (Snyder, 1995:51-64). Mountains tended to serve as barriers to social interaction when transportation was undeveloped; even today the various segregated valleys have some distinctive customs. In Switzerland four official languages (including German, French, Romansch) still survive. The terrain supports residential segregation, tranquil rural life and parochial ethnocentrism.

These conditions prompted the Swiss Anabaptists to develop a stronger separatist doctrine than that observed by their Dutch counterparts. The Swiss experience contributed to the development of a "two-kingdom" ethic, emphasizing the separation of Church and State. The Swiss Anabaptists believed that the followers of Christ were called out from "the world", to live lives of holiness as members of the Kingdom of God. Anabaptists asserted the primacy of the claims of God over the claims of government. This separation was later expressed in the United States in the form of a general avoidance of participation in the political process; the separatists viewed the rural environment as a retreat from involvement with the secular and morally compromising world of commerce, industry, politics and entertainment typical of the city (Driedger and Kauffman, 1982:270-5).

Conversely, the Anabaptists of the north emerged, during the pre-industrial age (1500-1785), as craftspeople in this commercial region of northern Europe, during the time that Max Weber claimed that capitalism emerged. With the invention of the steam engine in 1790, the revolution of modern technology began. Machine power increasingly replaced animal and human muscle power. Industry moved from small "Gemeinschaft-like" (face to face) settings into larger factories. Because its coalfields, the source of energy, gave England an enormous advantage, it began to dominate industrial technology. By this time the Anabaptists had moved eastward into the Danzig (Gdansk) area, in what is now Poland (Klassen, 1989). Nationalism also grew with industrialization of the northern Hanseatic League trading area. The pressures of the Prussian state, of which Danzig was then a part, forced large numbers of Mennonites to move farther eastward into present-day Ukraine, even though Mennonites stayed in the Netherlands and the Danzig area.

Northern Europe, especially the Vistula Delta, was the area from which most Russian Mennonites came. They began to leave Prussia in 1789 and 1803 to form the Chortitza and Molotschna settlements in New Russia. Here they became largely farmers on the interior steppes, but their commercial and industrial skills led them also to develop business and commerce related to agriculture (Toews, 1981). Many Mennonites left Russia less than a hundred years later, emigrating to Canada and the United States in the 1870s. Others followed in the 1920s. Still others emigrated to Canada in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Their early Dutch urban proclivities lasted through the Russian agrarian period, making them prone to urbanization in Canada (Urry, 1989).

Of the two major Mennonite branches that emerged in Europe -- the Swiss and South German farmers, and the North European entrepreneurs -- we would expect the North European Mennonites to move into cities in North America (Driedger and Kauffman, 1982).

The Canadian Rural-Urban Shift

The earliest Anabaptists came to Canada from eastern United States, roughly 200 years ago and settled on farms in southern Ontario, where for many decade they remained relatively rural. Mennonites who came later to the prairies in the 1870s, also settled mostly on farms. It was Mennonite immigrants from Ukraine who came in the 1920s, some 75 years ago, who began to follow the call to the city on the prairies. They boosted mission work which had begun earlier. And like the craftsmen of the early church Christians, and like Anabaptists during the Reformation, immigrant young women in the 1920s whose parents settled in rural Manitoba, came to Winnipeg to work for well-to-do Winnipeggers to pay for their *Reisechult* (travel debts). Anna Thiessen (1991) was the houseparent of the first Mary-Martha Home begun in 1925 in Winnipeg.[1] By 1925, in Saskatoon, young women domestics were also meeting, so that soon J.J. and Tina Thiessen were called to a ministry of these women starting a *Maedchenheim*, a girls' home (Epp-Tiessen, 2001:112). Thus, missionaries to the city, not named Paul and Menno, but Thiessen, enhanced the work of Mennonites in two western Canadian cities. These urbane immigrants with relatively high levels of education and exposure to industrialization, institutional development and organizational savvy, provided much needed resources to deal with the city.

In 1941, 91% of all Mennonites in Canada were rural (most of them farmers), only 9% were urban. In 1991 there were more than twice as many urban Mennonites in Winnipeg (21,900 in 1991) as there were in all of urban Canada in 1941 (9,446). Mennonites have always been more rural than any of the twenty largest religious denominations in Canada. However, by 1991 over half of all Canadian Mennonites lived in cities of more than 1,000 inhabitants, and less than 20% were rural farm residents. This rural-urban shift began in earnest after World War II, and escalated in the 1950s and 1960s.

Table 1. Mennonite Population in Canadian Metropolitan Areas (100,000 plus)

	Mennonite Population						
Metropolitan Centres	1991	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991
Winnipeg	646	1,285	3,460	13,595	17,850	19,015	21,900
Vancouver	1,584	559	1,624	5,260	8,880	9,515	14,496
Saskatoon	208	871	1,663	4,765	5,697	5,380	10,665
Kitchener/Waterloo	353	1,472	1,645	4,480	5,235	9,760	10,645
St. Catharines	360	200	510	2,515	5,955	5,985	6,525
Calgary	748	91	233	1,220	2,650	3,635	3,735
Toronto	3,863	326	267	1,375	2,540	2,950	2,585
Edmonton	832	29	85	455	1,590	1,920	2,145
Regina	189	87	90	240	520	685	1,125
Montreal	3,091	54	65	140	580	750	1,015
Hamilton	594	41	66	250	425	420	745
London	377	13	45	115	645	485	635
Ottawa-Hull	912	12	28	60	230	285	555
Victoria	284	10	14	45	145	320	405
Sudbury	156	13	7	55	160	-	210
Windsor	259	62	49	85	210	-	165
Halifax	318	-	1	7	40	-	180
Thunder Bay	123	22	13	34	70	-	95
Oshawa	238	-	-	-	-	-	80
Quebec	638	-	1	-	20	-	70
Sherbrooke	137	-	-	-	-	-	15
St. John's	170	-	-	9	10	-	10
St. John	124	-	16	1	5	-	-
Chicoutimi	160	-	-	-	5	-	-
Trois-Rivieres	135	-	-	-	-	-	-
Totals	5,147	9,888	34,706	53,462	61,195	78,000	

Sources: 1941, 1951, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991 Census of Canada Catalogues.

Between 1941 and 1961 the urban Canadian Mennonite population more than quintupled from a mere 9,446 to 52,643. The urban escalation clearly happened in the 1950s and 1960s, and although the urban percentage will continue to rise, it is evident that it began to slow somewhat in the 1970s and 1980s, and will likely continue at a slower pace in the future. Such enormous demographic shifts have profound impacts on style of life. Because Mennonites have also entered new occupations, their social mobility rises, and higher education and income affects beliefs and attitudes which result in a new way of life (Kauffman and Driedger, 1991; Driedger, 1995).

Mennonites in Metropolitan Areas

While in 1941 only 5,147 Mennonites lived in larger urban metropolitan areas (100,000 plus), by 1991, fifty years later, 78,000 lived in such larger urban complexes. In 1941, about one half (5,147 or 55 %) of the 9,446 Mennonites lived in larger metropolitan areas of over 100,000 people. Almost one third of these lived in Waterloo-Kitchener (1,472) and a fourth in Winnipeg (1,285). Ontario Mennonites established mission churches as early as 1807, in Kitchener-Waterloo (1837), Toronto (1897), and St. Catharines (1899). The first Mennonite church in Winnipeg was started somewhat later, in 1907. These early Ontario beginnings are reflected in the larger 1941 Mennonite concentration in Waterloo-Kitchener (Driedger, 1995).

By the 1940s and 1950s, Mennonites who had settled in Southern Manitoba in the 1870s and 1920s had begun to move to the city. Between 1941 and 1951, the Winnipeg Mennonite population tripled, and another decade later it had quadrupled again, so that by 1961 the Winnipeg population had multiplied more than ten times in twenty years. For the first time, Winnipeg emerged as the largest core center of Mennonites in Canada, and very soon it became the largest concentration of urban Mennonites in the world, eclipsing Amsterdam (Driedger, 1990). While the Waterloo-Kitchener Mennonite population also tripled during the two decades (1941-1961) from 1,472 to 4,480, Mennonites who had moved to the West Coast in the 1930s also moved to the city. The Vancouver Mennonite population increased 25 times in the fifty years after 1941, to become the second largest (14,490) concentration of Canadian urban Mennonites in 1991. By 1991, Saskatoon, with a population of 10,665, became the third largest Mennonite center, surpassing Kitchener-Waterloo. We might think of these four centers as the dominant core of the metro Mennonite "Big Four," with Winnipeg on the Prairies at the center, and Waterloo-Kitchener on the east flank and Vancouver and Saskatoon on the west, creating a foundationary forward line, using football as our model.

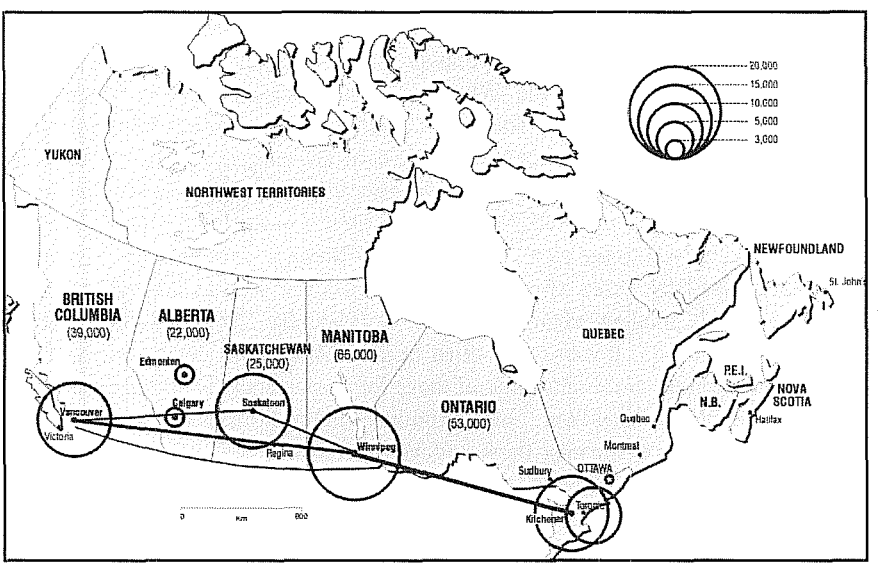
We see in Table 1 that there were many more metropolitan players in 1991, including St. Catharines, Calgary, Toronto and Edmonton, each of which counted 2,000 or more Mennonites, and serving as a semi-periphery to the Canadian urban Mennonite world. It is interesting to note that the five largest Mennonite metros were also located near the four largest Mennonite rural settlements: in the Manitoba Red River Valley (66,000 population), Ontario Peninsula (53,000), British Columbia Fraser Valley (39,000), and Saskatchewan Valley (25,000) areas. The Calgary, Toronto, and Edmonton Mennonite hinterlands were smaller in comparison, and the rest of the Canadian cities had little rural Mennonite hinterland from which to draw.

A Mennonite Metro Model

To place all these numbers into a demographic model which is easier to follow, we have plotted the Canadian metropolitan areas in Figure 2 (Driedger, 1995). Again,

using a football analogy, we can think of these major Mennonite metro centers as the offensive line, and the minor centers as other members of the team. Demographically, Winnipeg is clearly the quarterback in the center (supported by Saskatoon), with the older Waterloo-Kitchener on the right (supported by eastern St. Catharines and Toronto), and the younger Vancouver on the left (supported by westerners like Edmonton and Calgary). As in Canadian football, the East used to dominate, but the West is getting stronger all the time, and Winnipeg in the center sometimes belongs in the West or the East. Using Immanuel Wallerstein's (1979, 1987) categories of dominance, Winnipeg is the central core, Vancouver, Saskatoon and Kitchener the semi-core, other Mennonite metros on the semi-periphery, and rural farms villages, towns and small cities on the periphery.

Figure 2: ***Mennonite Metropolitan Areas of Canada: The Big Four Axis***



This urban Mennonite model will likely continue in the foreseeable future with some changes. Four rural Mennonite hinterlands have contributed to the emergence of the four dominant core Mennonite metros in Canada. These four core metros are centered by Winnipeg, and we need to examine the power and complexity of these new Mennonite urban networks and institutions which support their dominance.

Mennonites established churches in Canadian cities fairly early, so we shall trace the planting of churches, social institutions, the media and business, to better understand how Mennonite urban networks have developed over time. We suggest that the period before World War II was a period of incubation, in preparation for an urban explosion of institutional power which followed the war.

Forming Metro Churches

At least seven churches were established in four major metropolitan centers before 1920, mostly as missions before Mennonites themselves moved to the city (Epp, 1982:269-91). Three were established in Berlin (present-day Kitchener-Waterloo) between 1807 and 1889 by Swiss Mennonites who moved into Waterloo area after 1800. Two churches were begun in Toronto by the Swiss Mennonites between 1897 and 1097, and one in St. Catharines (Epp, 1982:269-91). In 1940 the early Winnipeg Mennonite missions had a combined membership of 1,945, the result largely of an earlier mission strategy before Mennonites moved to the cities themselves.

Table 2. Mennonite Churches and Membership in Canadian Metropolitan Centres

	Number of Churches Established in								Total Menn. Church Cong.	Menn. Church Mbshp.	Menn. Can. Census
Metropolitan Centres	Pre-1920s	20s	30s	40s	50s	60s	70s	80s	1990	1988	1991
Winnipeg	1	2	1	2	8	11	7	5	47	9,352	21,900
Vancouver			2	2	3	5	6	6	24	4,780	14,400
Saskatoon			2		4	3	1	4	14	2,555	10,665
Kitchener/ Waterloo	3	3			1	1		3	11	2,725	10,645
St. Cath.	1			2	1	1	2		7	2,189	6,525
Calgary				1	2		3	3	9	1,193	3,735
Toronto	2		2	1				5	10	826	2,585
Edmonton					2	1	1	2	6	654	2,145
Regina				1		1		1	3	366	1,125
Montreal						1	1		2	200	1,015
Hamilton					1	1	1		3	170	745
London											630
Ottawa					1			1	2	139	565
Victoria							1		1	48	405
Quebec								1	1	25	70
Totals	7	5	7	9	22	26	23	41	140	25,223	77,155

Sources: Frank Epp, *Mennonites in Canada*, Vol. 2, 169-89; 1988 Survey of Metropolitan Mennonite Churches by the author; Leo Driedger, *Mennonites in Winnipeg*, 1990, 85, 87; 1991 Census of Canada.

Another twelve Mennonite churches were established in the 1920s and 1930s in five cities, mostly by Russian Mennonites who arrived in the 1920s (we shall refer to these churches as inter-war immigrant Mennonite churches). In 1940, the membership of these twelve immigrant churches numbered 2,416. Thus, before 1940 there were 19 urban Canadian Mennonite churches located in six cities with a combined membership of 4,361, representing 13% of all Mennonites in Canada.

As shown in Table 2, 31 Mennonite churches were established in the next two decades (1940-60), more than had been planted for the entire period preceding World War II. More new churches were planted in the six cities where Mennonite

churches already existed (Winnipeg, Kitchener, Vancouver, St. Catharines, Saskatoon, Toronto), and new churches were also planted in Calgary, Edmonton, Regina and Hamilton. This was the era when promising young pastors from seminary and the Mennonite colleges started city churches as the new frontier. The two Canadian colleges (Mennonite Brethren Bible College and Canadian Mennonite Bible College) began in the 1940s. These increases of growth were fed largely by Mennonite immigrants from Europe in the 1950s and 1960s, and a strong migration from rural areas which continued into the 1970s (Driedger, 1995).

A score of new Mennonite churches were established in the decade of the '50s, which continued unabated through the decades of the '60s and '70s. In the 1980s 41 Mennonite churches were started, which shows the shift to urban institutional power along with increased urban demographic mass. New Chinese and Asian Mennonite churches, as well as new suburban churches, seem to provide new incentives for growth. The early pre-1920 mission vision, linked with traditional Mennonite immigrant and rural influxes, were the driving force in the decades soon after World War II.

Our survey of Mennonite churches and membership in Canadian metropolitan areas in 1988 shows that there were 136 churches, located in 14 metropolitan centers with a membership of 25,000. A third of these churches and members were located in Winnipeg, the center core, with a membership of 9,352 in 47 churches, showing the continued dominance of Winnipeg (Driedger, 1995). The 24 Mennonite churches in semi-core greater Vancouver, one fourth planted in the 1980s, shows the vibrant growth of Mennonites in that city, which makes Vancouver the second largest urban semi-core Mennonite center in the 1990s.

Extending Educational Urban Supports

While large proportions of Mennonite populations and churches shifted to the city, the same occurred with schools. Private high schools were established early in small Canadian towns in similar fashion to the founding of early Mennonite colleges in small American towns. (These educational institutions were started in small towns, at a time when churches were still often located in the open prairies). Numerous Bible schools were later started in small Canadian towns, especially in the 1930s, but many of these have since closed. At that time few Mennonites went to college or university. However, after World War II, with some Mennonites entering the city, instruction on a higher level was required.

In 1944 and 1947 two colleges were established in the central core city of Winnipeg, an unprecedented first step to a larger metropolitan center in North America. The establishment of these two colleges in Winnipeg by Mennonites who had arrived from the Ukraine in the 1920s gave Winnipeg an enormous boost. J.A. Toews (1975, 279) summarized the influence of Mennonite Brethren Bible College (now renamed Concord College) in Canada:

> The spiritual impact of the Mennonite Brethren Bible College on the growth and development of the Mennonite Brethren Church can be seen, at least in part from the following statistics...In missionary service 106, in the preaching ministry 102, in the teaching ministry 241, are active in church and Sunday School work. Practically all missionaries who have been commissioned by Canadian Mennonite Brethren churches for service in foreign fields during the last 25 years have received a part or all of their training in the Bible College.

Furthering demonstrating the dominance of core urban centers is the fact that of the six Mennonite colleges established in Canada since 1944, three were located in the central core of Winnipeg and one in semi-core Waterloo-Kitchener. Between 1970 and 1993 four of these colleges were located in Manitoba where the largest concentration of 66,000 Mennonites lives.[3] In 1993 these included the Canadian Mennonite Bible College (full time equivalent [FTE] students in 1993 of 190), Concord College (FTE of 120), and Menno Simons College (FTE of 53) located in central core Winnipeg and later combining to become Canadian Mennonite University. Steinbach Bible College (FTE 70) located in the small city of Steinbach was supported by three of the more rural conservative churches which still preferred a small-town atmosphere. Conrad Grebel College (FTE 358 in 1993) located in Ontario in the eastern wing, is located in the semi-core metropolitan center of Kitchener-Waterloo. Columbia Bible College (FTE 256), located in the small city of Clearbrook, British Colombia on the western wing, was formerly two Bible schools. These schools were amalgamated and upgraded into a college with heavy support from more recent immigrants in British Columbia, many from South America.

Metropolitan Mennonite Media

Like the American Mennonite colleges and Canadian Bible schools, Mennonite newspapers and periodicals also began in small towns. *Die Steinbach Post* began in Steinbach, Manitoba in 1913, and *Der Bote* in Rosthern, Saskatchewan in 1924 (Toews, 1975:290). However, increasingly, the Mennonite media are moving to metropolitan areas in Canada. Winnipeg, as the central core city in the Mennonite world, has become the dominant urban center for the offices of Mennonite periodicals. To a lesser extent, this is also happening in semi-core Waterloo-Kitchener. Like concentration of Mennonite population, churches and institutions of higher education, there is a convergence on these several dominant Mennonite urban centers. John A. Toews writes that in "1923 the publication of the two German-language weeklies of the Mennonite Publishing House in Scottdale, Pennsylvania, *Die Mennonitische Rundschau* and *Der Christlicher Jugendfreund*, were transferred to Winnipeg," making them the first urban Mennonite newspaper in Canada (Toews, 1975:290). By 1940 the *Rundschau* Publishing House was reorganized into Christian Press, one of two Mennonite Brethren publishing

agencies. In 1962, Rudy Wiebe became the first editor of the *Mennonite Brethren Herald*, the official English newspaper of the Mennonite Brethren in Canada, located in Winnipeg, and by the 1960s, *The Canadian Mennonite* which began to publish in 1953 in Altona, Manitoba, also moved its offices to central core Winnipeg in the latter >Sixties.

In 1970 *The Canadian Mennonite* stopped publication, but now *The Mennonite Reporter* began as the national English Mennonite newspaper in Waterloo, a major coup for Waterloo where it is still being published (it has a regional office in Winnipeg). However, central core Winnipeg continued to be an attractive center for several Mennonite papers. *The Mennonite Mirror* began in 1971 (stopping publication in the 1990s). The editorial office of *The Mennonite*, the official periodical of the North American General Conference published out of Winnipeg between 1971 and 1986. And *Der Bote*, the German General Conference paper moved its editorial office from Rosthern to Winnipeg in 1977. Most recently, in 1983, the *Journal of Mennonite Studies* and the *Conrad Grebel Review*, two academic Mennonite journals, began publishing in Winnipeg and Waterloo respectively. The location of national and North American Mennonite papers in Winnipeg especially, illustrates the influence of central core Winnipeg, the largest urban center in the Mennonite communications world. Institutional interlocking into a larger system is taking place.

In addition, the national conference offices of the two largest Canadian Mennonite groups (Mennonite Brethren and Conference of Mennonites in Canada) also located in central core Winnipeg in 1960 and 1961 respectively, as well as their Manitoba Conference offices, and the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference national office. Radio and television programs operated by the two major Mennonite conferences are also located in central core Winnipeg, another example of additional influence emanating out of Winnipeg. The demographic Mennonite mass in Winnipeg, its central geographic location, the large clustering of churches in the city, and the concentration of leaders, all tend to attract additional opportunities like a magnet. A system of institutions and organizations has clearly emerged, centered in Winnipeg with its eastern and western semi-core wings in Kitchener-Waterloo and Vancouver. The two universities and many colleges in Winnipeg, for example, have scores of Mennonite teachers and professors, who contribute at various levels to Mennonite society.

Other Catalysts

Other factors, including business enterprise, the dispersion of men during World War II, the Mennonite Central Committee service expansion after the war, and a flood into the service professions add to increasing urban dominance.

While the Mennonites who came to Canada in the 1870s made it a practice to stay on the farm, the Mennonites from Russia who came in the 1920s had already entered industry extensively, something well documented by J.B. Toews (1981).

C.A. DeFehr and his sons, and now grandsons, who came to Winnipeg in the 1920s have now expanded into numerous forms of business for example. Their influence is described by J.A. Toews (1975:292) as constituted of an ability to make money and the possession of a faith that was invested in church-related enterprises (continuing to this day in many cities of Canada). Driedger (1990:48-55) describes hundreds of Mennonites in furniture and appliances, metal works and products, transportation, woodworks, building and real estate in Winnipeg. Kauffman and Driedger (1991) found that while in 1972 5% of North American Mennonites were in business, by 1989 this had doubled to 10%. Recently, Redekop, Krahn and Steiner (1994) illustrated the extent of Mennonite business, and Driedger (1994; 2000) expanded research on types of entrepreneurs, and especially the Mennonite family contract in central core Winnipeg.

While the Mennonite Central Committee began in 1920, it was focused largely on relief and immigration services to Mennonites in Europe. The aftermath of World War II expanded Mennonite Central Committee services to fifty countries of the world, and inevitably it increasingly also included non-Mennonites. By the 1990s, there were 1,000 workers in fifty countries focused on both relief and development. Various relief and peace organizations existed in the various regions, all organized into Mennonite Central Committee Canada in 1963, with headquarters located in central core Winnipeg. Provincial Mennonite Central Committees were also formed, located in semi-core Kitchener and Saskatoon, and in Edmonton and Yarrow (Epp, 1983). Again, British Columbia chose the peripheral small town of Yarrow in the rural Fraser Valley rather than semi-core Vancouver. Mennonites have been in British Columbia only since the 1930s, so the rural hinterland still has more influence.

With increased Mennonite exposure to a variety of needs, it is natural that Mennonites entered into the service professions. Large numbers of Mennonites have gone into social work, offsetting the traditional lure of teaching and nursing. In each of the eight cities with populations of 2,000 or more Mennonites, there are universities where Mennonites teach, and in each of the "Big Four" Mennonite centers, there are several universities where scores of Mennonites teach (Driedger, 1993:304-22). The same is true for the political profession which includes Mennonites at every level; Winnipeg, Vancouver, Toronto, Edmonton and Regina each are provincial capitals where Mennonites are active in government. Of the 229 candidates running in the Manitoba provincial campaign in 1998, 24 or 10% had Mennonite surnames. Demographic mass, churches, schools, media, business, agencies and political power are increasingly converging in select Canadian urban centers where the core metropolitan "Big Four," especially Winnipeg, dominate. A dominant urban core has emerged (Wallenstein, 1987; Chirot, 1986).

Our Personal Call to the City

The convener of this conference insisted that I add some "flesh and blood"

from my personal experience in the city. When J.J. Thiessen began his ministry in Saskatoon, an infant bearing the family name, Driedger, was learning to walk and talk twenty miles to the north, near Osler. His parents had been married by David Toews, the founder of Rosthern Junior College and the father had attended the school, a school from which J.J. Thiessen, or "J.J.", had just graduated himself. Both Toews and "J.J." visited the Driedger home many times. This infant eventually attended school and became a high school dropout after grade nine. He shovelled manure on the farm for three years (going nowhere), and then "received the call" to study for sixteen more years. Five degrees later, a graduate of three Mennonite schools and two universities, this person "received the call" to come to Winnipeg in 1964. I have now spent over half of my life in Winnpeg.

Like Abraham, it was far from clear "what land God would show him," and the promise that a "nation would follow" was even less clear. What was clear in the first "call to study," was that education would be needed, and this was a very clear task until more "calls" came. That is exactly what happened. Following the call to study another sixteen years brought experience in Rosthern, Winnipeg, Newton, Chicago and East Lansing. Rosthern Bible School offered exposure to more open, educated urbane leaders and mentors like David Toews and John G. Rempel who came from Kansas and Ukraine in the 1920s. This opened new vistas and firm grounding in biblical Anabaptism. My focus had been changed from cows to books.

Winnipeg, an urban center of about 350,000 in 1950, provided a new experience. I can still see my mother who had gone to school for only six years, at the bus depot, deeply worried about what would happen to her eldest when he left for the big city 500 miles away. Canadian Mennonite Bible College (CMBC) became a launching ground into multiple networks which have supported my journey ever since. At CMBC were seven roommates, including Frank Epp (editor), George Wiebe (musician), my brother Otto (social worker), Paul Peters (medical doctor), Peter Kehler (missionary), and Edgar Epp (criminologist). Each one, as I, would spend the rest of his life as a professional in the city. We met in many service capacities constantly, as part of an informal social network.

The launch into Chicago, a metropolis of four million, was even more world-changing. At Bethel College two graduates of the University of Chicago (Ed G. Kaufman and J.Winfield Fretz) changed my focus of studies from theology to the social sciences. Cornelius Krahn who had studied in four urban universities (Berlin, Bonn, Amsterdam, and Heidelberg), also encouraged me to study at Chicago. Living in the heart of the "Black Belt" while in the Master of Arts program at the University of Chicago, stretched this farmer's son's need to finish also seminary training at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS). This expanded the social nets because leaders -- S.F. Pannabecker, Don Smucker, Henry Poettcker, David Schroeder, C.J. Dyck, Elmer Neufeld , Howard Kauffman, John Oyer, Calvin Redekop -- who later became college presidents, professors and the like were also studying there. Darlene, my wife, and I were married in an African American church in 1956. There, we, together, experienced this rich network of people with whom we would later link with again and again. Chicago profoundly influenced a whole

generation of ministers, teachers, service workers who fanned into Mennonite communities and churches to this day.

During the four years (1957-61) that I worked at the General Conference headquarters in Newton, Kansas, I "received the call" to get a doctorate and Darlene and I came to Winnipeg in 1964. At the time there were only six Mennonite churches in Winnipeg, and two small Mennonite colleges, so it was not at all clear that Winnipeg would become the Mennonite Mecca with the 50 Mennonite churches, a Mennonite university, and 25,000 Mennonites that it is today. In fact, we were quite worried about the pervasive German culture, and wondered what we would do there to survive culturally, intellectually, and physically (we had no money, although we had been promised a $5,500 annual salary). Forty years later, having spent over half of our lives here, it is clear that that was an important call to the city, and we are glad we followed it. We have always loved the city. We are in the midst of one of the great Anabaptist experiments here, where we need to ask many hard questions, which it is time to do now: are tents being enlarged to include the "others", the non-Mennonites?; is there a Paulinian outreach to others in the cities?; are Mennonites gathering the sick and downtrodden in cities as Menno their leader did?; has the early urban faithfulness of the Thiessens in Canada been heard?'; are many heeding the call?

I sense that Mennonites have moved to the city and have spent little time asking why. What are we doing here? Historians will ask, "what did this pile of 25,000 Mennonites in Winnipeg do?" This question is what I am exploring in my next book.

Endnotes

[1] The paper I presented at the "Mennonites and the City" conference held in Winnipeg, December 1, 2001, began with two parts titled "Ur: Abraham's Call to Move," and "Rome: Paul's Call to the Urban Hellenist World." Unfortunately, we had to cut the paper in half, which left out the two parts related to biblical Old Testament and New Testament beginnings. When I taught Urban Sociology at the University of Manitoba for 35 years, we always began with Sumer, where writing and cities first began. We were fascinated by the archaelogy, geography, history, urban social settings, the beginnings of human civilization. We plugged in Abraham and Sarah, so that students found this convergence fascinating, and many wanted to do term papers related to these beginnings.

In 1964-66, I taught the writings of Luke, including the Gospel of Luke and the Acts at CMBC, and found this an exciting opportunity to delve into the writings of Wayne Meeks and later Gerd Theissen, which provided the historical and sociological grounding of the Hellenist world of Jesus and Paul. I also sat down with Old Testament scholar Waldemar Janzen and New Testament scholar Peter Fast, to explore the extent to which Abraham, Jeremiah and Paul were influenced by their Hebrew and Hellenist roots.

[2] It is difficult to know who should be the lead person for this contemporary last section, because there are so many to choose from. Since Esther Epp-Tiessen (2001) has just done a biography of J.J. and Tina Thiessen of Saskatoon, there is good ready material there. Since

Anna Thiessen (1991) also wrote up her city mission work in Winnipeg, that too seemed appropriate, so that "The Thiessens" in two of the major cities where Mennonites live, seems like a good way to start. Besides we get some women into the mix, which is overdue. Many others could have been chosen.

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