

# Wealth and Poverty in the Mennonite Experience: Dilemmas and Challenges

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This article presents a comparative analysis of the Mennonite experience of wealth and poverty in the Dutch Republic from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, and in the Russian Empire in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Other Mennonite groups will be mentioned in passing, especially those who migrated to North America from Russia, and their descendants. My own expertise is in the field of Russian-Mennonite studies, not Dutch-Mennonite history, and for the latter I am dependent on the research and writing of others. However, since nearly all Mennonites of the Russian experience were descendants of Dutch Anabaptist settlers to the Polish/Prussian region, where connections with their Dutch brethren – although they weakened over time – were maintained for a long period and continued in Russia, my comparison might be best described as “controlled”.<sup>1</sup> A wider comparative approach dealing with other Christian groups would help place the Mennonite experience in a broader perspective; this is, however, beyond the scope of this article.<sup>2</sup>

The Dutch-Mennonite experience is illuminating in a number of ways.<sup>3</sup> In the context of the emerging modern world some Dutch

Mennonites were the first to face the challenges and dilemmas brought about by the rapid development of wealth within their communities, including social differentiation and in their relations with the wider world. Although the circumstances were very different, the Mennonites who settled in Russia from the end of the eighteenth century faced challenges and dilemmas very similar to those of their Dutch brethren at an earlier period. These included a rapid increase in wealth that resulted in internal and external social differentiation and changed relations with the world. Those who migrated to North America – even if they believed they had escaped such influences – also had to face similar challenges that continue into the present.

Although both the Dutch and Russian Mennonite situations initially developed in contexts where agrarian societies were dominant, both developed in emergent industrial economies associated with trade and commercial production, urbanization, increasing state centralization and eventually nationalism.<sup>4</sup> Dutch and Russian Mennonites became increasingly dependent on economic exchanges involving money as a form of moveable capital rather than on fixed assets such as land. The challenges created by this increasing dependency on capital as well as an urban emphasis, created new forms of social relationships within and beyond the Mennonite communities. This marked a major difference from Mennonites living in more isolated rural locations who depended more on self-sustenance through small-scale cultivation rather than on commercial agricultural and craft production. The pursuit of money and capital accumulation generated more wealth – more quickly for a minority of Mennonites exposing other members of the community to increased risks of poverty and alienation. Involvement in trade, commercial production for external markets and the need to secure finance and credit from beyond their own communities also brought the Dutch and Russian Mennonites into increasing contact with the wider world, and new experiences of wealth and poverty.

### **Biblical Injunctions and Anabaptist Responses**

Throughout Mennonite history from the Anabaptists onwards, the Bible has been a major guide in the formulation of Mennonite ideas, attitudes and practices, even if interpretations of biblical texts have varied. But the Bible has not been the only source of guidance. Customary social practices, some that existed prior to the formation of Mennonite communities and others that were developed in particular historical contexts following their formation, have also contributed to Mennonite ideas and practices, or added particular nuances to those interpreted through a reading of the Bible. So it is for matters

involving wealth and poverty. Whatever their source, however, as a Christian people whose faith is based on the Bible, particularly the New Testament teachings found in the Gospels and letters to the early churches, the ideas, proper attitude and practices Mennonites are to assume towards issues of poverty, the poor, to money, forms of wealth, and the wealthy are not difficult for readers to discern.

Wealth, involving possessions in the form of money, goods and property, might be interpreted as a sign of God's blessing, but only a foolish person would read too much into that prosperity (Mark 10: 24). Being wealthy certainly cannot ensure salvation, even if the wealth is used for good purposes (Matthew 19:24; Mark 10:25; Luke 18:25). Since wealth is a concern of this world, the Bible instructs Christians not to pursue it, hoard it or use it as a means to gain power and influence. Instead, they are to concentrate on other-worldly issues involved with their own salvation and that of fellow believers (Matthew 19: 21; Luke 12: 33-34). Wealth is not to be used for personal aggrandizement, and true believers should ultimately redistribute their wealth among the poor and needy (Luke 18: 22, 19:18; Acts 20:35). The poor, who in God's eyes are more deserving than the rich, are to be assisted. While poverty is always to remain an unfortunate feature of earthly existence, wherever and whenever encountered it is the duty of a Christian to alleviate poverty and assist the poor (Matthew 11:5; Luke 4:18). From these passages a fairly unambiguous message can be read, one that directs human ideas, attitudes and actions.

Early Anabaptist writers were well aware of these Biblical teachings and in a variety of ways incorporated them into their own ideas. The early Anabaptists read the Bible not just as a guide to proper Christian conduct, but also to identify appropriate forms of social community in which such conduct could enhance a person's hopes of salvation. This is because salvation was to be based on the life lived rather than on a momentary spiritual experience, and a proper Christian way of life had to be lived in its entirety, separate from worldly non-believers, among others who could support and enhance a person's chances of salvation in the world to come. In the early period some Anabaptists, believing that they were living in the end-times, exhorted people to: "Leave the world! Leave your possessions! Leave your goods and your money!"<sup>5</sup> A true believer ultimately had no need for "worldly" goods, money or property; wealth and poverty were soon to be irrelevant.

The reality for many early Anabaptists, however, was rather different. Facing severe persecution and the loss of mothers and fathers, husbands and wives through martyrdom, the future promised a life of extreme poverty. The *Martyrs Mirror* provides moving testimony of such destitution, even if those facing death attempted to reassure

members of their family. For instance, in 1569 Jan van Hasebroeck of Antwerp, sentenced to death with other believers, wrote to his wife:

My dear wife and sister in the Lord, always be of good cheer, comfort yourself with the words of the Lord... [t]hough He now comes to visit you with tribulation, suffering or poverty, think that Christ, when He was rich, for our sakes became poor, that through His poverty He might make rich us who were poor. II Cor. 8:9. And James, also, says that God has chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him. James 2:5 ... think of old Tobit; when all his goods had been taken from him, and he had to flee with his wife and his son, he said, "And fear not, my son; true, we are poor, but we shall have much wealth, if we fear the Lord, keep his commandments, shun sin, and do good." Tobit 1:20; 4:21.<sup>6</sup>

Although the slaughter of Anabaptist believers would ease and eventually cease, the survivors had often been forced to give up their homes and abandon their way of life to face exile to distant locations where they had to start anew. This was a pattern that was to become all too common for many Mennonites in subsequent centuries. However, while religious persecution leading to expulsion or other forms of emigration, voluntary and involuntary, continued until well into the nineteenth century, the most common causes of loss leading to poverty were something Mennonites shared with their neighbours - war, famine and disease – often interrelated miseries.<sup>7</sup> Of particular significance was the devastating impact of wars, most notably the Thirty Years War (1618–1648), a struggle for power involving Protestant and Catholic states for the mastery of mainland Europe. This long, terrible conflict affected many communities besides Mennonites and brought with it the additional scourges of famine and disease. Wars continued to be a major source of disruption in the lives of many Mennonites in Europe and the Americas in the following centuries, resulting in loss of life, land and property, decline in trade and industry, forced migration and renewed persecution.<sup>8</sup>

Migration could easily plunge Mennonites into poverty – at least in the short term. Beyond the early years of persecution in the sixteenth century, most Dutch Mennonites found relative toleration in the new Republic. But the experience of Mennonites elsewhere was often different. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries entire communities were expelled from their homes in Switzerland and southern Germany; others chose voluntary emigration. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a complex series of voluntary, semi-forced and forced

migrations of Mennonites from Prussia occurred, first to Russia and later to the Americas. From Russia waves of emigration followed each other starting in the 1870s, and continued in a series of spasms until the present, not just to the United States and Canada but also to South America. Descendants of the 1870s migrants from Russia to Canada have migrated on to Mexico and Paraguay and their descendants have moved on to Belize, Bolivia and elsewhere.

Each movement has varied in cause and in different circumstances, but each has involved a pattern of initial economic loss, the risk of poverty and in the long term a degree of relative prosperity. Scholarly and popular interpretations of this pattern have varied. Interpretations of moves from Russia have a tendency to “borrow” aspects of cause from other migrations.<sup>9</sup> For instance, some accounts of the 1870s migration suggest it was a forced migration with Mennonites being driven out of Russia by Tsarist officials with great economic loss. In fact, except for a few individuals, no Mennonite was expelled from Russia by officials and a number of emigrants took with them considerable capital and in some cases moveable property such as wagons and farm equipment to Canada and the United States.<sup>10</sup> There was, however, variation between the sums transferred, and in many ways the differences between the rich and poor in Russia were reproduced in the New World.<sup>11</sup> But compared with later migrants, all the early settlers had to face an initial period of pioneering previously uncultivated land, building houses and dealing with an underdeveloped local economy. Aid from native Mennonites in the eastern United States and Canada helped ameliorate the early difficulties.

Most of the Mennonites who migrated in the twentieth century were at the mercy of larger economic and political forces than those of the 1870s, who had to contend mainly with local challenges. While almost none of the first 1920s refugee immigrants from the Soviet Union to Canada could bring much with them in the way of capital or goods and arrived poor and in debt, the land most of them settled had usually been cleared and farmed and housing was also usually available. Within a short period of their arrival, however, they all had to face the worst economic depression of the twentieth century that plunged them deeper into debt and poverty. The end of the depression, the Second World War and the economic prosperity associated with the post-war world would bring them relative security, but often too late for many to enjoy for long. The post-Second World War Mennonite refugees from the Soviet Union and Prussia – mostly to Canada – had even less than their predecessors of the 1920s and 1930s, but fared better as North America’s post-war economic boom, especially in urban areas, provided employment and a means of re-establishing a degree of prosperity.

## **Mennonite Society and Poverty**

The forces of persecution, war, famine and disease, that often resulted in forced migrations and poverty for many Mennonite groups, were largely external and beyond their control. The reality of everyday existence for individual Mennonites and their families, however, could create conditions of poverty or prosperity without the dramatic intervention brought by external forces. When these differences cut across generations they could establish long-term social inequalities within Mennonite worlds and present major challenges to a sense of unity and the practice of religious community. Once the confused early years of Anabaptism passed by and functioning communities were established, the Bible again provided some guidance as to how to structure a community of believers and manage social relations between its members. As with the Gospel's teachings about money, wealth and poverty, the letters to the early churches provided important models for organizational conduct that often conflicted with customary ideas and practices as well as with the emergent social structures of Western Europe in the Early Modern period.

In the New Testament the authority of age, gender and social status is directly challenged. The idea of fatherhood is downplayed, children are made blessed along with the poor and the destitute; women are given status, as are slaves, and hierarchical relations are reversed.<sup>12</sup> These potentially radical ideas involve the promotion of an egalitarianism that has challenged Mennonite communities throughout their existence. At one level the challenge is to established patterns of authority, status and role in the production and reproduction of social life; at another level the challenge has come from the tendency of Mennonite communities to become internally socially differentiated on the basis of the wealth and poverty of their members. In the case of the latter, such forms of social differentiation are founded in part on economic differences, based on property, goods and money, their possession (who owns what), exchange (who gets what), its excess (wealth) and its shortage or non-existence (poverty).<sup>13</sup>

The most radical manifestation of egalitarianism among the Mennonites' Anabaptist ancestors involved the promotion of the idea of a community of goods among members which, although widespread in a number of early communities, was to survive in practice only among the Hutterites.<sup>14</sup> All other Anabaptist communities and their descendants, including those who identified themselves as Mennonites, accepted the principle of private property in terms of land and moveable goods, both of which could be inherited and transferred from generation to generation mainly through kinship connections and marriage alliances. This fundamental difference over attitudes and

practices with regard to property among the heirs of Anabaptism, created a basis for the development of very different social forms. In principle the Hutterites' commitment to maintaining community of goods across generations established a greater potential for social equality, at least within their own colony systems, than it did for Mennonite groups who continued to recognize the possession of private property. The possession of property on a private basis among Mennonites opened the way for internal and external social differentiation resulting in wealthy and poor individuals, families and communities, at least in relative terms.

Some ideas and practices concerning property and inheritance among Mennonites, however, involved a continuation of local social customs not derived directly from Biblical or Anabaptist teachings. Nothing is surprising about this, but it is often a factor overlooked in studies that stress the discontinuities rather than the continuities caused by the impact of the Reformation on social life, and emphasize the Biblical bases for social conduct at the expense of local custom. Some social customs are better seen as not uniquely Mennonite but instead as a continuation of ideas and practices found in many peasant communities where social and material exchanges are closely interconnected. However, Mennonite customary practices were also undoubtedly informed by religious ideas, and in time these became further intensified by the Mennonite practice of turning away from "the world" and threats of renewed persecution.

As in all social groups prior to the development of welfare states, for Mennonites the simple facts of demography – birth, patterns of morbidity and death – could suddenly, and unexpectedly, produce economic advantages and disadvantages within and across generations. Disease and accident sometimes robbed a family of a husband and father, usually the main breadwinner, or a wife who sustained the domestic unit where food was prepared and where children were raised. In societies marked by a strong gender division of labour, it is little wonder that widows and widowers, especially those with young children, remarried soon after the loss of a partner, as life depended on maintaining a successful social unit. But too many young children born into an environment with limited resources could result in difficulties even if in the long run many hands made work light. An absence of children, either through infertility, death or migration, could result in parents living their twilight years in poverty. Surviving Mennonite diary entries from nineteenth century Russia, and correspondence between kin in North America following immigration in the 1870s, reveal the delicate balancing act between supporting the family unit over time, attempting to establish offspring in financially secure households, and the need to ensure sustenance in one's own old age. Such subjects often dominate

discussion over concerns about money, including loans, debts and inheritance; the threat of poverty was never far away.<sup>15</sup>

Among mainly agrarian groups a number of strategies developed to care for the poor, the weak and the needy. And these issues were seen as a community and not just a family concern. In Mennonite writing such strategies are often glossed under the term “mutual aid”.<sup>16</sup> Mutual aid operated mainly within Mennonite rural communities and meant extending to the members of the congregational-community systems and strategies of everyday exchange associated with the obligations of kinship. It operated across the lifespan of members and further supported the principle of communal self-sufficiency among a religious people already separated from the world. It also acted as a kind of insurance for when the unexpected occurred; in time some actually developed into insurance systems required to meet legal requirements. The unexpected occurrences it covered included property damaged or destroyed accidentally, or when the sudden, unexpected death of key members of a social unit required the congregational community to secure the property rights of the survivors and to manage their continued support, at least until any children reached their majority.

In Russia the first Mennonite settlers negotiated an agreement with the Russian authorities that allowed them to follow their own inheritance customs, and this was incorporated in the Mennonite Privilegium of 1800. This included a system of care for widows and orphans known as the Orphan’s Office (*Waisenamt*).<sup>17</sup> Although possibly based on practices linked to Prussian customary law, in Russia the Office developed into a complex system that played not just a role in safeguarding widows and orphans from falling into poverty, but also a critical financial role in the development of the colonies.<sup>18</sup> In what was initially a frontier region of a backward empire there was a serious shortage of capital for economic development, so the Orphan’s Office became a kind of bank lending money at interest to secure borrowers. At the same time members of the Office acted as “guardians” of young orphans or children from needy homes whom they often assigned to more prosperous households where they provided a source of cheap labour; boys took-up farm work or apprenticeships while girls fulfilled domestic duties as servants. In the later nineteenth century the system of orphans’ offices was transferred to the Americas by immigrants from Russia. The system persisted longer in Canada than in the United States, where the economic and legal system resulted in rapid changes in Mennonite attitudes to wealth and social well-being.<sup>19</sup>

In Russia individual congregations continued to care for their own poor members, as had been the practice in the Dutch Republic and Prussia. This care was the responsibility of deacons, a tradition justified by the Bible. The poor and needy were supported by levies on the



more well-off members of the congregation, sometimes in the form of money, but also through contributions of food.<sup>20</sup> This practice continued until the Revolution. One Mennonite from Molochna pointed out to me that while no monetary collections were taken during church services before the Revolution, there was a box near the entrance door “for those who wished to contribute” to the support of the congregation and its poor. He added that it “was not used too much.” After the harvest the church attic was stocked by the farmers with wheat and rye, and once milled there was both flour and also money from the sale of the grain to be distributed by the deacons to any members in need. While no members of the congregation were very poor, little effort was made to help the poor beyond their immediate needs: “I think we kept them poor, but would not let them suffer.”<sup>21</sup>

From the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, in prosperous, mainly urban areas of the Dutch Republic, Mennonites established specific institutions to assist the poor and needy. These included separate orphanages, homes for the aged and hospitals. Similar institutions would not be realized in Russia until the end of the nineteenth and the start of the twentieth century. In the Dutch Republic the institutions reflected urban influences and were developed in association with the rapid increase in prosperity among sections of the Mennonite community, an indication of the increasing importance of money in the social life of communities.<sup>22</sup> Such institutions were founded in contexts where the Calvinists and other religious groups which like the Mennonites were tolerated in the Republic, were required to provide institutionalized care for their own confessional members. The forms of such institutionalized care, however, often varied according to the beliefs of the religious groups, as they did elsewhere in Europe where similar institutions developed.

In areas of Europe under Catholic control, or where Catholic charitable institutions continued in Protestant-controlled areas, welfare services were delivered in ways that reflected older, medieval charitable traditions. When Protestant groups became the dominant force in many areas following the Reformation, they took over the charity and welfare institutions previously the responsibility of Catholic religious orders. In urban areas of the Dutch Republic Protestant church leaders sometimes assisted, and occasionally were at odds, with city magistrates who wished to capitalize on the political advantages of being seen to help their citizens.<sup>23</sup> In time, however, attitudes hardened. All across Early Modern Europe, as the numbers of the poor and destitute increased, some fleeing the religious wars others economic changes, negative categories emerged such as vagrants and beggars. This is reflected in depictions of the poor in paintings, prints and literature.<sup>24</sup> The authorities in cities and states formulated legal

sanctions to control the poor, who were increasingly seen as a curse on polite society.<sup>25</sup> This was a major change from the practice of religious beneficence and charitable institutions that had existed before the Reformation.<sup>26</sup> The regulations produced by the authorities were often supported by members of the new Protestant churches, and ideas and practices, often seemingly at odds with fundamental Christian teachings and values, were justified by carefully selected Biblical passages, often drawn from the Old, rather than the New Testament.<sup>27</sup> These were enforced with almost religious fervour. The most rational, bureaucratic, legalistic systems – and often the most restricted with the harshest controls – were those of the Reformed (Calvinist) church. In some areas of the Dutch Republic “welfare” institutions became more like prisons and places of punishment than sites of refuge and charity.<sup>28</sup>

Generally, the support Dutch Mennonite congregations provided for their own poor, such as accommodation, food and work, as well as the care given to the elderly, the orphaned and the sick, was informed by New Testament teachings. Over time, however, Mennonites were also influenced by ideas and practices from outside their tradition. These included changes in their attitudes to the poor and to poverty, which brought them more into line with Calvinist views. Different categories of the poor were distinguished – some more deserving than others – and disciplinary strategies were introduced to ensure that the needy were not just provided for, but were also reformed so as to become useful citizens. This often meant poor people being assigned to a workhouse. In the 1770s, the Mennonite Cornelis Ris established a “Factory House” in Horrns so that the needy could partake in useful labour and, hopefully, not become a burden on the community. He had the following words engraved above the workhouse door:

Whoever seeks, in dire straits, to toil to get ahead  
To fortify his family by earning honest bread  
Let him apply to me forthwith in this his hour of need  
Both big and small may diligently labor to succeed.  
In Morals and Religion too our youth I'll educate  
To make them into useful members of our Town and State.<sup>29</sup>

This gradual shift to an acceptance of ideas and practices closer to those of the dominant religious group in society, was in part a sign of the increasing integration of Dutch Mennonites into the larger life of the Republic. It also was a reflection of the increased inequalities that had emerged among Mennonites themselves. The more prosperous became increasingly critical of the less successful members of society. Wealth was the source of power, poverty a sign of the powerless. The same pattern of critical social differentiation, minority wealth intensification

and condemnation and exclusion of an increasing number of poor people would occur, although in very different circumstances, among Mennonites in Russia during the nineteenth century.

### **The Pursuit of Money and Wealth**

In environments where their faith was tolerated and their way of life allowed to flourish, Mennonites, both as communities and as individuals, became economically successful; in fact, many became extremely wealthy. Such was the case in the Dutch Republic, in Russia and more recently in North America. One explanation of Mennonite success might point to the Mennonite commitment to living a pure way of life focussed on an ascetic existence in the hope of salvation.<sup>30</sup> The first Mennonites who experienced relative toleration in the Dutch Republic were usually committed to an ascetic way of life involving simplicity, withdrawal from “the world” and a denial of social inequalities based on differences in wealth. Paradoxically, such commitments served to further enhance economic success by removing wasteful and indulgent consumption. Yet the Dutch Mennonites’ success must be related also to their location within the Dutch Republic during what is often referred to as its “Golden Age” – roughly most of the seventeenth century. This was a period when, mainly through commercial enterprise involving trade and industry, the Republic became the richest state in Europe.<sup>31</sup> Although Dutch Mennonites were restricted or even excluded from certain occupations and business activities on account of their faith, the rapid development of a complex economic system meant that Mennonites in the right place with the right resources and eager to make money, could do so with relative ease. Essentially, those who succeeded lived mostly in, or close to, the major urban areas that underwent rapid change from the end of the sixteenth century. Mennonites were involved in a multitude of commercial operations ranging from overseas trade dealing in foreign merchandise such as grains and timber, particularly with the Baltic region, textile manufacture, brewing and distilling, printing and publishing, and for certain periods trade in art works and even tulip bulbs.<sup>32</sup>

In Russia similar developments occurred during the nineteenth century, although in somewhat different circumstances. The wealth of Dutch Mennonites was founded in the early period of Western Europe’s global commercial expansion and connected to its immensely valuable overseas trade and consumer, value-added industries, all of which required the skilful use of capital. Other Mennonites in urban centres of northern Europe, often linked to the Dutch Republic and Dutch Mennonites, also prospered through such commerce and industry. These

included such urban centres as Friedrichstadt, Emden and especially Altona/Hamburg and later areas around Danzig, Elbing and finally Koenigsberg.<sup>33</sup> The prosperity of the Russian Mennonites, initially based in the colonies established by the Russian authorities, was founded primarily on agricultural production. Situated on Europe's eastern margins, the Mennonite economy prospered rapidly during the nineteenth century in the context of an expanding European industrial world that demanded raw material to sustain its industry and food to feed its workers.<sup>34</sup> The commercial production of agricultural products, first wool, silk and later wheat, formed the basis for the initial prosperity of the main Mennonite colonies, so that at first land ownership, rather than just giving access to capital as in the Dutch situation, was critical to success. In Russia this meant that cultivated land became a major source of wealth and a measure of social status once commercial markets were secured for agricultural produce.

Land in Russia, however, generated not only wealth but also became a potential source of poverty for Mennonites. The growth of populations within the founding colonies and policies that prevented the subdivision of farm plots, meant that an increasing number of Mennonites became landless and persons of low social status. The landless poor were exposed to exploitation by landowning Mennonites who saw them as a source of cheap labour.<sup>35</sup> The land struggles that began in the 1850s involved a number of factors that combined to create major social and economic inequalities that challenged the principles and practices of Mennonite communal equality.<sup>36</sup> The "resolution" that overcame the worst of the land crisis was achieved more through the intervention of the Russian state and "secular" Mennonites than through the actions of religious leaders. It was also secured through legal and bureaucratic changes that enforced collective responsibility upon all Mennonites through a scheme where funds raised through taxes and rents were used to purchase new land for future population increases. It was not realized through an appeal to religiously informed ideas of "mutual aid."<sup>37</sup>

It became clear during and after the landless crisis that future prosperity for all Mennonites involved not just ownership of land, but also access to land, commercial markets and sufficient capital to invest in agriculture and enterprises connected with agriculture. After 1860 the growing economic complexity of the Russian Mennonites was reflected in the increasing wealth of individuals and communities. Eventually, this resulted, as in the Dutch Republic, in the creation of new institutions to provide aid to the less fortunate in society. But the capital needed to develop and support such institutions largely came not from the colony farmers or small craftsmen but instead from a minority of really wealthy Mennonites. These Mennonite magnates, as they might be called, were involved not just in large-scale farming

on extensive privately owned estates, but also in commercial and industrial production. Once again, the Dutch had already experienced similar developments.

### The Rise of Mennonite Magnates

As well as being involved in general commercial activities, a number of Dutch magnates were also involved in manufacturing, often of luxury goods. The most prominent of these was silk weaving, and the textile industry remained a major source of wealth into the nineteenth century.<sup>38</sup> Outside the Republic, as in Krefeld, other Mennonites flourished through silk weaving.<sup>39</sup> From the profits of such activities, a number of Dutch-Mennonite silk manufacturers invested in property, thereby raising their status in a society where land ownership was still a major measure of status. In the seventeenth century some had built grand houses with elaborate gardens. For instance, an area of such fine properties was situated between the cities of Amsterdam and Utrecht along the River Vetch, known by the nickname “Mennonite Heaven” (*Menistenhemel*).<sup>40</sup> Obviously, very few Dutch Mennonites became rich through being plain farmers living in remote rural areas; the real money lay in commerce and industry associated with urban conurbations.

The wealth generated through trade and the textile industry among Dutch and German Mennonites between the seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries, was paralleled among Mennonites in Russia in the early nineteenth century by a woollen cloth factory in Halbstadt, Molochna and a prosperous silk production and processing industry in the colonies. But the real wealth of Russian Mennonite magnates was mostly generated through the commercial production of agricultural products, at first wool and later wheat, and through the development of closely related industries, mainly the manufacture of agricultural machinery needed to expand agricultural production, and processing industries, of which the most important was milling.<sup>41</sup> The investment in landed estates was linked directly to the production base of the sources of wealth, first wool then wheat. Russian Mennonites who purchased such private estates, however, never indulged either in the fine houses, gardens or in the pursuit of the arts, as did their earlier Dutch cousins.<sup>42</sup> Mennonite estate owners sometimes purchased houses originally owned by Russian nobles, but the first generation continued to live the simple life.<sup>43</sup> In time, however, their descendants developed a taste for fine furnishings, clothing, horses and carriages, and adopted a life-style more typical of wealthy non-Mennonites than their colonist brethren.<sup>44</sup>

Where differences in wealth developed and were transferred across generations, they created an increasingly diversified and divided social structure, whether in the Dutch Republic, in prosperous German states and cities or later in Russia.<sup>45</sup> The wealthy consolidated their wealth and attempted to pass it on to their descendants. Besides controlling inheritance, another means to assure such inter-generational transfers involved making strategic marriages. This meant the rich tended to marry the rich, or at least the children of the rich married partners of their own kind.<sup>46</sup> Necessarily, this implied avoiding forming alliances with the less wealthy and the poor. Strategic marriages helped secure wealth, but they also tended to intensify any social differences in the community. This was further reinforced by what anthropologists call hypergamy – selecting a spouse of a higher social status – that further restricted choice, and this encouraged the wealthy to seek non-Mennonite partners of the correct social status and wealth. In this way wealth and social difference weakened the ties of congregational community in terms of relationships and inter-generational transfers. Wealthy Mennonites tended to drift up socially and occasionally out of their community of faith; in Russia a few marriages of Mennonites with Russians of similar social status had begun before 1914 although such unions were constrained by the potential loss of Mennonite privileges. Similar trends were apparent at the bottom of the system, where persons born into poverty not only had fewer opportunities than their better-off brethren, but often also inherited their family's negative reputations. Potential marriage partners were thus restricted and the poor had a tendency to fall out of the community and their faith.<sup>47</sup>

### **The Development of Personal Philanthropy**

As personal wealth developed in Mennonite worlds extending from the Dutch Republic in the seventeenth century into neighbouring German states in the eighteenth century and on into Russia and the Americas in the nineteenth century, so did traditions of charitable philanthropy. Much of this wealth, founded on commerce and forms of proto-industrialization, involved the use of capital assets measured in the possession of money rather than land. This development of Mennonite capitalism and the emergence of extremely wealthy magnates established traditions of personal philanthropy both within and beyond the Mennonite world, although possibly with different motives and aims in different countries.<sup>48</sup> The availability of liquid assets meant that philanthropy often involved the gifting of large sums of money to help the development of Mennonite society, as in education, or for support of institutions to assist the poor and needy. Indeed, in order

to secure their positions in a society in which status was increasingly defined by financial assets as much as by land and lineage, the newly wealthy were expected to express philanthropic concerns and make gifts as a social duty.

In 1815 a British publication reported the death at age 73 of Daniel Zimmermann, a Koenigsberg merchant described as originally “a native of Dantzic ...[who] was the sole maker of his own fortune.” The report claimed that Zimmermann “rivalled, in charitable donations, many of those characters for which England is so famous”:

During the course of his life, among other acts of liberality, he had given 12,000 florins to the Church School of the Old Town of Koenigsberg; 12,000 florins to the Reformed Church School, and another sum of 12,000 florins for the erection of a school on the Haberberg. He also gave 4,500 florins to the community of the Old Town church, for the purchase of a burial-ground. By his last will, he increased the capital of a hospital for widows, established by his wife, with a sum of 15,000 florins: he left also to the poor of the Mennonite community, of which he was a member, 15,000 florins; and to the city poor-chest 2,000 florins. His other legacies were a bequest of 220,000 florins to the Old Town Merchant Society, towards a foundation, out of which might be paid annuities of 300 florins each to fifteen widows of decayed merchants; and annuities of 130 florins each to forty poor men or widows of other classes.<sup>49</sup>

Zimmermann belonged to a group of Prussian Mennonites who had prospered during the eighteenth century and – in spite of losses in the Napoleonic Wars – well on into the nineteenth century. From the 1830s, a group of merchants from around Danzig and Koenigsberg, related through descent and marriage, helped to open new trading networks in Russia. They established an urban community in the newly founded port of Berdiansk on the Sea of Azov, which dealt in the expanding agricultural production from neighbouring Mennonite and German colonies.<sup>50</sup>

In Russia, before the Revolution of 1917, the ancient system of social estates (*soslovie*) between which it was difficult for individuals to move, combined with the special privileges Mennonites received as Mennonites (the most important of which was the right to alternative service for young men), bound all Mennonites together in a shared destiny, irrespective of their wealth or poverty. This situation also meant that Mennonite magnates, however rich they might become and whether or not they lived away from the colony centres of Mennonite life, had a continued interest in the condition of their brethren, rich

or poor. Most were eager to maintain ties with the communities either they or their parents had come from, and were willing to help raise the standard of community services. As a consequence colony leaders drew upon the wealth of magnates to support community endeavours. These included improvements to Mennonite meeting houses, but increasingly they helped with building a range of social institutions – particularly founding higher schools – teacher training and a range of “welfare” institutions. By 1914 the latter included hospitals, a school for the deaf, an orphanage, an old peoples’ home, a mental institution and, in a slightly more bourgeois move, a health spa.<sup>51</sup>

The establishment and running of these extensive and costly institutions was dependent on the philanthropic gifts of wealthy Mennonites, mainly estate owners, millers, factory owners and merchants.<sup>52</sup> The Forestry Service, the Mennonite alternative to military service, founded in the early 1880s, was funded largely by the Mennonites themselves through a property tax. In principle this meant wealthy Mennonite estate owners, millers and industrialists paid a greater share than the average colony farmer and a great deal more than a poor cottager.<sup>53</sup> Compared with Western Europe, by 1914 Tsarist Russia possessed only a very basic state system, and what aid was available from the state for charity was channelled mainly through the Orthodox Church. Mennonites were dependent therefore on their own resources to provide the kind of community infrastructure that befitted their standard of living and future expectations of continued prosperity.

In spite of increasing Russian nationalism and pan-Slavic sentiments which often excluded Mennonites on account of their alleged “German” origins and sympathies, Mennonites in late Imperial Russia were able to create what some referred to as a “state within a state.”<sup>54</sup> This involved broader strategies than just the provision of a Mennonite welfare system, as it included the promotion of a higher education system controlled by Mennonites that in the long-term would have been unacceptable to the state.<sup>55</sup> The entire Mennonite world collapsed following the 1917 Revolution and its aftermath, although some Mennonites who emigrated or escaped from the Soviet Union continued to dream of a separate Mennonite state in exile.<sup>56</sup>

### **From Morality to Human Rights**

In his writings Menno Simons condemned the pursuit, possession and exhibition of wealth. He wrote that those who “love the world more than heaven,” delight “in covetousness, avarice, pride, pomp, gold, silver, money and possessions; in buying and selling.” As such “they cheat and deal treacherously,” leading lives spent in the pursuit of



pleasure where “they defame and seek the calamity of their neighbor, his dishonor, disgrace and shame.”<sup>57</sup> Later Dutch Mennonite leaders had even greater reason to address this issue as Mennonite prosperity increased in the Dutch Republic. One reason the seventeenth-century Dutch minister and writer Thieleman van Braght gave for producing his *Martyrs Mirror* was to remind a generation of Mennonites more secure and prosperous than their Anabaptist forebears of the sufferings of the first martyrs. The persecuted, he noted, “had to abandon their secular business, and submit to despoilment of their money, goods and everything they had, so that outwardly they were very poor.” Yet these martyrs “possessed great riches within themselves through the grace of God ... received through the consolation of the Holy Spirit and the word of the Lord, which was more precious to them than many thousand pieces of gold and silver.”<sup>58</sup> For van Braght, however, such comments were just a start to an extended and vitriolic attack on the corruptions that money and wealth had brought to individuals and the Mennonite community:

[T]he world now reveals itself very beautiful and glorious, more than at any preceding time, in a threefold pleasing form - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. Almost all men run after her, to worship her as a queen supreme ... Numerous large, expensive and ornamented houses, countryseats of splendid architecture and provided with towers, parks magnificent as a paradise, and other embellished pleasure-grounds, which are seen on every hand, indicate this in no small degree. Dan. 4:29, 30. The wearing of clothes from foreign countries, whether of foreign materials, uncommon colors or of strange fashions as obtain in the course of time according to the custom of the openly worldly-minded (which are as changeable as the moon), and which custom is followed by many humble and seemingly plain people, confirms greatly what we have before said. Gen. 35:2; Zeph. 1:8; Isa. 3:16-24. The giving and attending great dinners, lavish banquets and wedding-feasts ... where everything is in profusion ...<sup>59</sup>

And as if to drive his point home, van Braght contrasts this pursuit of wealth with Mennonite neglect of their duties towards the needy, where “the beneficent gifts of the Lord which should not be used otherwise than with great thankfulness, and of which a portion naturally belongs to the poor, are squandered and consumed without the least necessity, even by those who are considered sober and temperate.” The proper Mennonite attitude to wealth he summarized in rhetorical terms in

a footnote to the longer passage quoted above: "Surely no man in the world can derive advantage from the abundance of his temporal possessions over and above the necessities of life."

From an early period those involved in commerce were not unaware of the moral and ethical risks of their trade and of wealth viewed in religious and moral terms.<sup>60</sup> But it is perhaps an indication of the changing face of Dutch Mennonitism that by the end of the eighteenth century a retired Dutch Mennonite minister, Cornelis van Engelen, would question the ethics of wealth and luxury by an appeal not to the Bible or the experiences of Anabaptist martyrs, but instead to the secular writers of the enlightenment, such as Rousseau and others.<sup>61</sup> He condemned peoples' "indulgence in pleasure" where, "driven by self-centred passions, neglecting the social ones," they faced "a complete impossibility of living happily." He agrees with Montesquieu that "happiness" lies in peoples' hearts, not in their material possessions. But his view of the ideal society is not based on Biblical passages but on current philosophical ideas concerning the creation of a society without inequalities:

Luxury is the sworn enemy of virtue [...] and therefore destroys that principle of life that should rule all ranks and orders in a commonwealth. It chases the simplicity, the honesty and good faith that distinguish a republic [from other forms of government]. It creates a greater distinction of ranks, a greater distance between citizens, and a greater slavery than is compatible with this form of government, which necessarily must degenerate into absolute rule, be it aristocratic, oligarchic or monarchical. For that reason, those who aspired control over a free people always aimed at introducing luxury in order to ruin the morals [of these people].<sup>62</sup>

In Russia, as Mennonites exploited the advantages offered by the economic environment and some grew wealthy, thereby increasing social differentiation in the community, the pursuit of money and conspicuous consumption soon found critics among some religious leaders. The criticisms followed established arguments expressed earlier by Dutch ministers. Not surprisingly, it was the conservative religious leaders who most clearly articulated concerns about the dangers of wealth for the future of community and the salvation of individual souls. The surviving sermons of a number of nineteenth-century *Kleine Gemeinde* ministers contain criticisms of the pursuit of money, misuse of wealth as well as exhortations to support the needy, and for individuals to live simple lives.<sup>63</sup> The *Kleine Gemeinde* leaders also distributed in German translation copies of a book by the seventeenth

century Dutch Mennonite writer Pieter Pietersz [Peter Peters in German] entitled *The Mirror of Greed (Spiegel der Gierigkeit)*. Peters had criticized the state of contemporary Dutch society and argued that Mennonites were not owners but merely stewards of their earthly properties and material goods. As Christians it was their duty to apply their wealth to “the necessities of the poor” and not to hoard it for personal advantage.<sup>64</sup> For the Kleine Gemeinde ministers the link between the situation of seventeenth-century Dutch and nineteenth-century Russian Mennonites was not just a matter of history, but was also an assertion of the continuity of the basic principles of Christian Mennonite faith.<sup>65</sup>

The emigration of the Kleine Gemeinde and other conservative groups from Russia to the Americas in the 1870s meant that many Mennonites who remained in Russia no longer looked to older Mennonite traditions and texts for guidance on matters of wealth and poverty. This does not mean that all concerns over issues of wealth and poverty ceased, but until the early years of the twentieth century concerns are not easy to discern. Public expressions of concern appear to have been restricted, not just because of social control in Mennonite colonies but also because of official restrictions on open critical debate in society, including the censoring of publications. The voices of criticism that emerged in the early twentieth century came as political restrictions were lifted and Mennonites were able to publish their own newspapers. The voices tended to come not from the religious establishment but from younger people situated outside the established political system of colony and congregation. This trend reflected in part the rapid increase in the number of young people educated in higher centres of learning, and their exposure to ideas concerning political rights and models of ideal societies from outside the Mennonite tradition. Once again there is a parallel to the Dutch situation in the eighteenth century, when some Mennonites had been at the forefront of demands for constitutional reform and some had even taken direct, revolutionary action.<sup>66</sup>

A proper examination of the changes occurring in late Imperial Russia has still to be carried out, obscured as the picture has been by later events involving the Russian Revolution, the Soviet seizure of power and the subsequent Soviet terror that destroyed the earlier Mennonite way of life. One example of criticism is that of the wealthy estate owners and their use of hired, armed guards to protect property following peasant disturbances in 1905/06. Partially couched as a concern with non-resistance, the discussion also contains an implicit criticism of wealthy Mennonite landowners.<sup>67</sup> Following the fall of the Tsar and the promise of a new society, the discussions held at Mennonite conferences of 1917/18 included criticism of the old order

and expressions of socialist ideas.<sup>68</sup> Finally, those Mennonites who eventually gave support to the Soviets expressed severe criticism of the wealth of the Mennonite landed and industrial elite and the neglect of the lower social orders, Mennonite and non-Mennonite, prior to the Revolution. Although expressed in the highly politicized and secular language of Communist rhetoric, the criticisms of David Penner in 1930 reveal a divided society dominated by “false consciousness”:

Under the spell of religion and the distinctive Mennonite self-conceit, the Mennonite village poor were totally alienated from their Russian and Ukrainian class comrades. Their “struggle” for an improvement in their economic conditions did not draw them any closer to the revolutionary movement. The only aim in life that the religiously befuddled and politically unenlightened Mennonite poor and middle peasant classes had in mind was to become wealthy. Standing between the poor and middle class Mennonite peasants and their Russian class counterparts were the numerous and special privileges the Mennonites enjoyed. In addition, poor Mennonite peasants could invariably rely to varying degrees on the support of the Mother Colony, which, through thick and thin would be willing to help them “raise” their standard of living. Rather than struggling with the Russian peasantry under the leadership of the proletariat and using revolutionary tactics to achieve their liberation, most poor Mennonite peasants preferred to sit at the low end of the prosperous Mennonite table and accept whatever crumbs the profligate bourgeoisie might throw them. In practice this was the attitude of the majority of the Mennonite village poor. The larger peasants (*kulaks*) and the estate owners were thus regarded as ‘Brothers in Christ’ and conceived not as class enemies, but instead as people to be envied and emulated.

Religion sustained the illusions of the poor peasants and contributed greatly to conceal class differences. Religious prejudices also contributed substantially to the support of the larger peasants, estate and factory owners. Indeed! Almost all administrators, supervisors and other small employees who worked in Mennonite plants were drawn exclusively from the middle ranks of the impoverished Mennonite peasant classes. Raising the wages of these employees by a mere pittance was viewed as treating them as advantaged people. When members of the wealthy class attended Mennonite church with Mennonites of the lower orders, they knew that they were assured of the support of these fawning lackeys

(*huendischnue Lakaien*) who were willing to betray their class comrades.<sup>69</sup>

While Penner's is an extreme view of pre-revolutionary Mennonite society, his criticisms undoubtedly mirror some that pre-dated the establishment of Soviet power.<sup>70</sup> A German national interned as an enemy alien with Mennonites in the Orenburg settlement during the First World War, found his "hosts" so focussed on material concerns that he suggested they be called "Mammonites" instead of "Mennonites."<sup>71</sup>

In both the Dutch and the Russian experience, therefore, concerns about wealth and poverty moved from being informed primarily by religious concerns and phrased in the language of the Bible and the religious books of the Mennonite tradition, to drawing on the ideas and texts of a modern secular world. As in nineteenth-century industrial England, concern for the poor became less of a moral concern and more of a political issue; religious morality gave way to secularized ethics.<sup>72</sup> In taking this path Mennonite opinion has been increasingly linked with the ideas and concerns of the wider world, defining human rights in terms of political rhetoric rather than theology, a reflection of the impact of modern states and their increased involvement in generating wealth and caring for the poor.

The development of nation states in Western Europe and the Americas during the nineteenth century and the idea of rights which extended the provision of social services to all citizens challenged Mennonite ideas of communal responsibility and their existing aid systems. The most obvious area of dispute involved schooling. Both Mennonites and state officials viewed education as essential for the future of their populations. For Mennonites pupils were future members of their congregational community, obedient and faithful; for state officials, they were future citizens, loyal and productive. Both shaped their policies to achieve these ends. On some educational matters the two parties could agree, but on many they could not. Unresolved disagreements over these issues resulted in a succession of Mennonite migrations from Russia to the Americas and within the Americas.

In terms of social welfare, matters were more complicated. Existing Mennonite institutions and customary practices were often regulated within the new legal codes of nation states. The Orphan's Office in Russia was but one of a number of Mennonite institutions that had developed in a space between the religious congregations under the authority of religious leaders and the secular institutions established by an emergent Russian state bureaucracy. In the first half of the nineteenth century the administration of Russian regulations was handled indirectly by religious and non-religious Mennonite elites at

the local level. Following extensive governmental reforms in the 1870s and 1880s the Orphan's Offices were made to conform to provisions in Russian legal codes. In Canada similar changes occurred, regulating the functions of the Office and its officers. Mutual aid organizations were also regulated, in Canada according to provincial law and in the United States with regard to state law. Some were eventually incorporated into general insurance and other benefit schemes and many eventually lost their distinctive Mennonite identity. Wealth was regulated by state taxes intended not just as sources of revenue but also as tools of social policy, aiming to ensure a degree of social equality and justice among citizens. Welfare became a concern of the state, at least in the Netherlands and Canada, if somewhat less so in the United States. In most industrial states the poor and needy are now protected by an appeal to secular rights informed by rational principles rather than by religious rules informed by moral principles.<sup>73</sup>

### Conclusions

One of the central tropes of Mennonite story-telling involves tales of past suffering on account of their faith, a suffering that resulted in loss: loss of life, loss of home and economic losses leading to social and economic insecurity. But a sub-text, often developed out of the persecution theme, hints that where Mennonites have been tolerated and permitted freedom of faith they have prospered not just in terms of faith but also economically. Once beyond persecution, Mennonites have re-established, rebuilt and succeeded as individuals, religious congregations and social communities. While the trope of suffering remains central to Mennonite accounts of their pasts, details of poverty remain largely implicit in comparison to more explicit accounts of Mennonite prosperity. The "bad news" of Mennonite suffering is balanced against the "good news" of Mennonite success. Ironically, prosperity is often seen more as a measure of success than poverty, whether or not the latter is a consequence of suffering.

News about Mennonite success, however, especially if measured by considerable prosperity, also seems to bring with it a sense that something is wrong in matters of faith; wealth engenders guilt, poverty creates sympathy. But poverty also hints of failure. This complex contradiction of wealth and poverty has been assuaged in Mennonite historical accounts by invoking a number of additional tropes. Mennonites are a simple people, withdrawn from the world of money, profit and consumerism; conspicuous consumption is countered by excessive exhibitions of conspicuous plainness. Another strategy has been to emphasize Mennonite agrarianism, depicting a people close to the land,

producing their own food through agriculture, a society built on mutual aid. This is presented in opposition, sometimes implicit, occasionally explicit, to those engaged in commerce, industrial production and unequal exchanges, all activities suggestive of worldly contacts and economic pursuits associated with urban life. Such views can even receive academic endorsement from Mennonite scholars. In a recent sociological analysis of Mennonite entrepreneurs, the authors argue that “Mennonite society has never been able to adapt to the urban centers, nor has an urban critical mass developed a strong cohesive core of tradition.” In order to be “religiously based and justified,” Mennonite “religious and ethical centers” must “normally” be “rural.” Quoting J. Lawrence Burkholder, they state that the “Mennonite community ‘has been able to perpetuate itself only in agrarianism.’”<sup>74</sup> I might suggest that the evidence I have presented of the Dutch and Russian Mennonite experience clearly refutes this statement.

From their Anabaptist origins Mennonite communities in northern Europe have included urban congregations; their members have engaged in trade and industry, dealt with money as capital, accumulated wealth, invested in property, prospered and become wealthy. Many communities have developed strategies to deal with the consequences of wealth, social inequalities and poverty within and beyond their congregational-communities. Such communities are not historical anomalies, aberrations to be explained away as accidents of history or to be dismissed as somehow deviations from some narrowly defined Anabaptist “norm.” They deserve closer study, not relegation to footnotes or to the margins of Mennonite history. In this spirit Mary Sprunger, in her criticisms of the “Bender” approach to the Anabaptist/Mennonite experience, has suggested the need for a reconsideration of the northern Mennonite experience.<sup>75</sup> Piet Visser has more recently appealed for a less dogmatic approach to Mennonite history, one that might see the Dutch/North German path of dynamic transformations, mobility, flexibility, appropriation and accommodation as alternatives to the rural/agrarian, non-industrial, non-commercial views of Mennonite development that have tended to dominate much of North American scholarship. Such ideas require further study and should include the Russian Mennonites, heirs of the Dutch and North German traditions<sup>76</sup>

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> This is a much revised version of my address “Wealth and Poverty in the Mennonite Experience: Challenges and Dilemmas” presented to the Conference “Mennonites and Money: Wealth and Poverty in the Past

and Present,” held at the University of Winnipeg, 9 and 10 October 2008. In anthropology a controlled comparison involves peoples connected in time and space; on the importance of this method see Fred Eggan, “Social Anthropology and the Method of Controlled Comparison.” *American Anthropologist*, (1954), 56, 743-61.

- 2 The most obvious place to begin would be the Quaker experience; for instance, on wealth see James Walvin, *The Quakers: Money and Morals*. (London: John Murray, 1997) and on the broader issues, the essays in Peter L. Berger (ed.), *The Capitalist Spirit: Toward a Religious Ethic of Wealth Creation*. (San Francisco: ICS Press, 1990).
- 3 Recently the Dutch Mennonite scholar Piet Visser has drawn a distinction between Mennonite and Waterlander congregations as Doopsgezinden in Dutch Mennonite history, but for the purposes of this article I will refer to all Dutch Mennonites as simply “Mennonite”; see his “Mennonites and Doopsgezinden in the Netherlands, 1535–1700.” In John D. Roth and James M. Stayer eds, *A Companion to Anabaptism and Spiritualism, 1521-1700*. (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 313-14.
- 4 Although the Mennonites’ Russian situation is often presented as an agrarian world, from the outset of settlement Mennonites focussed on urban markets and this only increased as Russia developed economically; see James Urry, “Growing up with Cities: the Mennonite Experience in Imperial Russia and the Early Soviet Union.” *Journal of Mennonite Studies* (hereafter *JMS*), 20 (2002), 123-54.
- 5 The words of Othmar Roth from Saint Gallen, Switzerland in 1532 from Number 58 in the *Ausbund*; quoted in Peter Hoover, *The Secret of the Strength: what would the Anabaptists tell this Generation?* available at <http://www.homecomers.org/mirror/ausbund.htm> (accessed November 15 2008).
- 6 Thieleman Jansz van Braght, *Bloody Theater or Martyrs Mirror of the Defenceless Christians who Baptized only upon Confession of Faith, and who Suffered and Died for the Testimony of Jesus, their Saviour, from the Time of Christ to the Year A.D. 1660...* (Translated from the original Dutch or Holland Language from the Edition of 1660 by Joseph F. Sohm). (Scottsdale: Mennonite Publishing House, 1964), 772; Tobit’s sufferings were referred to in other letters, see for instance the comments of Joost de Tollenaer, *The Martyrs Mirror*, 1074-75.
- 7 Andrew Cunningham and Ole Peter Grell, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: Religion, War, Famine and Death in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
- 8 Eighteenth century wars affected Polish-Prussian Mennonites and the struggles for power following the French Revolution and subsequent Napoleonic campaigns affected most European Mennonites. The nineteenth century was a time of relative peace in Europe, especially in comparison to previous centuries and the horrors of the century to come. The twentieth century would witness the destruction of many prosperous Mennonite communities in Germany and Russia.
- 9 For the 1870 migrations see James Urry, “The Russian State, the Mennonite World and the Migration from Russia to North America in the 1870s.” *Mennonite Life* (hereafter *ML*), 46 (1991), 11-16.
- 10 On economic factors involved in the migration see P. Albert Koop, “Some Economic Aspects of Mennonite Migration: with Special Emphasis on the 1870s Migration from Russia to North America.” *Mennonite Quarterly Review* (hereafter *MQR*), 55 (1981), 143-56; on the transfer of capital see Delbert F. Plett, “Poor and Simple? The Economic Background of the Mennonite Immigrants to Manitoba, 1874-79,” *JMS*, 18 (2000), 114-28.
- 11 Royden K. Loewen, *Family, Church and Market: a Mennonite Community in the Old and the New Worlds, 1850-1930*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 84-85. 114 etc.
- 12 For an interesting discussion of these ideas see Richard Bauckham, “Egalitarianism and Hierarchy in the Biblical Traditions.” In A. N. S. Lane ed., *Interpreting*



*the Bible: Historical and Theological Studies in Honour of David F. Wright.* (Leicester: Apollos, 1997), 268-72.

- 13 To further complicate matters, ideas of what constituted wealth, being wealthy, poverty and being poor have also changed: "The idea of poverty combines three ideas. One is lack, the second is asymmetry of possession, and the third is the person who is in poverty. 'Poor' is always relative. 'Poor' also carries a judgement on distribution; hence it also involves equity. Lacking the means of subsistence is not intrinsic to the idea, because we can be poor without being on the brink of starvation. Over the course of two centuries ... the idea of poverty has acquired a new meaning: Not just lack but potentially lethal lack, to the point of destitution, means having so little that our physical subsistence is endangered." Mary Douglas and Steven Ney, *Missing Persons: a Critique of the Social Sciences.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 5.
- 14 On the idea of holding property in common among a number of Anabaptists groups see James M Stayer, *The German Peasant's War and Anabaptist Community of Goods.* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991). For differences in views among Anabaptist groups see Donald Sommer, "Peter Rideman and Menno Simons on Economics." *MQR*, 28, (1954), 205-23 and on wider issues, Peter James Klassen, *The Economics of Anabaptism, 1525-1560.* (The Hague: Mouton, 1964).
- 15 For examples of these diaries see David and Jacob Epp in *The Diaries of David Epp 1837-1843*, trans. and ed. John B. Toews (Vancouver: Regent College, 2000); *A Mennonite in Russia: the Diaries of Jacob D. Epp 1851-1880*, trans and ed. Harvey L. Dyck (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991); for letters from Kansas, Jill Quadagno and J. M. Janzen, "Old Age Security and the Family Life Course: a Case Study of Nineteenth Century Mennonite Immigrants to Kansas," *Journal of Aging Studies*, 1 (1987), 33-49; for Canada see the letters and diaries used by Loewen in his *Family, Church and Market.*
- 16 J. Winfield Fretz, Harold S. Bender and Laban Peachey, "Mutual Aid." *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online.* 1989. Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online. Retrieved 30 June 2008 <http://www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/contents/M88ME.html>.; see also the papers in Willard Swartley and Donald B. Kraybill eds, *Building Communities of Compassion.* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1998).
- 17 Jake Peters, *The Waisenamt: a History of Mennonite Inheritance Custom.* (Steinbach: Mennonite. Village Museum, 1985).
- 18 On the possible Prussian origins of these see E. K. Francis, "Mennonite Institutions in Early Manitoba: a Study of their Origins," *Agricultural History* 22 (1948), 144-55.
- 19 For interesting analyses of some of these changes see Jeffrey Longhofer and Jerry Floersch, "Old Age and Inheritance in Two Social Formations: the Alexanderwohl Mennonites in Russia and the United States." *Journal of Aging Studies*, 6 (1992), 93-112; Jeffrey Longhofer, "Toward a Political Economy of Inheritance: Community and Household among the Mennonites." *Theory and Society*, 22 (1993), 337-62
- 20 See the 1840 entry in *The Diaries of David Epp 1837-1843*, 121.
- 21 Personal communication, J. P. Dyck, Springstein, Manitoba, April 11<sup>th</sup> 1975; the congregation to which he refers was the Petershagen Kirchliche group.
- 22 Mary Sprunger has written a number of important essays on Dutch Mennonites' wealth and poverty – see her "Waterlanders and the Dutch Golden Age: a Case Study on Mennonite Involvement in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Trade and Industry as one of the Earliest Examples of Socio-Economic Assimilation". In Alastair Hamilton, Sjouke Voolstra, and Piet Visser, eds, *From Martyr to Muppy: a Historical Introduction to Cultural Assimilation Processes of a Religious Minority in the Netherlands: the Mennonites.* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1994), 133-48; "Dutch Mennonites and the Golden Age Economy: the Problem of Social Disparity in the Church." In Calvin Redekop, Victor A. Krahn, and Samuel

- Steiner, eds., *Anabaptist /Mennonite Faith and Economics*. (Lanham: University Press of America; Waterloo: Institute of Anabaptist and Mennonite Studies, 1994), 19-40; "Entrepreneurs and Ethics: Mennonite Merchants in Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam." In C. Lesger and L. Noordegraaf eds., *Entrepreneurs and Entrepreneurship in Early Modern Times: Merchants and Industrialists within the Orbit of the Dutch Staple Market*. (Amsterdam: Hollandse Historische Reeks, 1996), 213-21; "Mutual Aid among Dutch Waterlander Mennonites, 1605-1668," in Willard Swartley and Donald B. Kraybill, eds., *Building Communities of Compassion* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1998), 144-67; "Mennonites and Sectarian Poor Relief in Golden-Age Amsterdam," in Thomas Max Safley ed., *The Reformation of Charity: the Secular and the Religious in Early Modern Poor Relief* (Boston and Leiden: Brill, 2003), 137-53.
- <sup>23</sup> See Charles H. Parker, *The Reformation of Community: Social Welfare and Calvinist Charity in Holland, 1572-1620* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
- <sup>24</sup> Tom Nichols, *The Art of Poverty: Irony and Ideal in Sixteenth-century Beggar Imagery* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).
- <sup>25</sup> Bronislaw Geremek, *Poverty: A History*, trans. Agnieszka Kolakowska (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994); see also essays in Ole Peter Grell and Andrew Cunningham, eds., *Health Care and Poor Relief in Protestant Europe 1500-1700* (London: Routledge, 1997); Ole Peter Grell and Andrew Cunningham with Jon Arrizabalaga, eds., *Health Care and Poor Relief in Counter-Reformation Europe* (London: Routledge, 1999).
- <sup>26</sup> See Brian Pullan, "Catholics, Protestants, and the Poor in Early Modern Europe." *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 35 (2005), 441-56 where he re-examines earlier debates on this issue.
- <sup>27</sup> This different emphasis extended to other areas of theology and practice, fundamentally separating most Mennonites from the dominant Reformed (Calvinist) churches; see Sjouke Voolstra, "Mennonite Faith in the Netherlands: a Mirror of Assimilation," *Conrad Grebel Review*, 9 (1991), 282-84.
- <sup>28</sup> Philip S. Gorski, *The Disciplinary Revolution: Calvinism and the Rise of the State in Early Modern Europe*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).
- <sup>29</sup> Quoted in Joost Kloek and Wijnand Mijnhardt, eds., *Dutch Culture in a European Perspective, Vol 2 1800: Blueprints for a National Community* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 265. In 1777 Ris was involved with the founding of the important educational and literary society *Vaterlandesche Maatschappij* which aimed to spread education through the general population.
- <sup>30</sup> I do not intend here to address Max Weber "thesis" (or more correctly "theses") on the connection between Protestantism, the development of rational economic thought and action and the emergence of modern capitalism, or the extensive literature on this subject. The English translations of Weber's work, long dominated by Talcott Parson's version, have been greatly criticized and resulted in new translations; see Peter Baehr and Gordon C. Wells, *The Protestant Ethic and the "Spirit" of Capitalism and other Writings* (London: Penguin Books, 2002) and Stephen Kalberg, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism with other Writings on the Rise of the West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); see also Hartmut Lehmann and Guenther Roth eds, *Weber's Protestant Ethic: Origins, Evidence, Contexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). Weber included reference to Anabaptists, Mennonites and related groups and others have examined the value of his arguments, see Paul Koch, *Der Einfluss des Calvinismus und des Mennonitentums auf die Niederrheinische Textilindustrie. Ein Beitrag zur Max Weber: "Die Protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus*. PhD Diss., University of Munich, 1928; Estel Wayne Nafziger, "The Mennonite Ethic in the Weberian Framework," *Explorations in Entrepreneurial History* 2 (1965), 187-204 and Frank Konersmann, "Studien zur Genese rationaler Lebensführung

- und zum Sektentypus Max Webers. Das Beispiel mennonitischer Bauernfamilien im deutschen Südwesten (1632-1850)." *Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, 33 (2004), 418-37.
- <sup>31</sup> On the Dutch Republic in general see Jonathan I. Israel, *The Dutch Republic: its Rise, Greatness, and Fall 1477-1806* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995); on the Golden Age, Maarten Prak, *The Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century: the Golden Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); specifically on Dutch economic success, Jan de Vries and Ad van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy: Success, Failure, and Perseverance of the Dutch Economy, 1500-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) and on the impact on social and cultural life of prosperity, the classic account of Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: an Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (New York: Knopf, 1987).
- <sup>32</sup> On Mennonites and the tulip trade see the recent work of Anne Goldgar, *Tulipmania: Money, Honor, and Knowledge in the Dutch Golden Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).
- <sup>33</sup> See for example Michael D. Driedger, *Obedient Heretics: Mennonite Identities in Lutheran Hamburg and Altona during the Confessional Age* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002); Hans-Juergen Goertz, "Non-Conformists on the Elbe River: Pious, Wealthy and Perplexed," trans. Jacob Just and John D. Roth, *MQR* 76, (2002), 413-30; H.G. Mannhardt, *The Danzig Church: its Origin and History from 1569 -1919* (North Newton: Bethel College, 2007 [originally 1919]).
- <sup>34</sup> For an overview of these economic developments in the wider Russian context see James Urry, "Mennonite Economic Development in the Russia Mirror," in John Friesen ed., *Menmonites in Russia: Essays in Honour of Gerhard Lohrenz* (Winnipeg: CMBC Publications, 1989), 99-126.
- <sup>35</sup> A divide between landowners and a dependent Mennonite labour force already existed in Prussia prior to settlement in Russia and was to be recreated after the Mennonite emigration from Russia to Canada. In Russia the exploitation of a non-Mennonite, mainly Ukrainian and Russian peasant labour, and in Canada cheap immigrant labour, overcame labour problems in the short term; the long term solution involved the introduction of labour-saving machinery in both Russia and the Americas.
- <sup>36</sup> For a recent debate on interpretations of the crisis, see John R. Staples, "Putting 'Russia' Back into Russian Mennonite History: the Crimean War, Emancipation, and the Molochna Mennonite Landlessness Crisis." *ML*, 62 (2007) (online at <http://bethelks.edu/mennonitelife/2007spring/staples.php>) and James Urry, "Context, Cause and Consequence in Understanding the Molochna Land Crisis: a Reply to John Staples," *ML*, 62 (2007) (online at <http://www.bethelks.edu/mennonitelife/2007fall/urry.php>).
- <sup>37</sup> See James Urry, *None but Saints: the Transformation of Mennonite Life in Russia, 1789-1889* (Winnipeg: Hyperion Press 1989), Chapter 11.
- <sup>38</sup> Col Trompeter, *Agriculture, Proto-Industry and Mennonite Entrepreneurship: a History of the Textile Industries in Twente, 1600 – 1815* (Amsterdam: NEHA, 1997).
- <sup>39</sup> Peter Kriedte, *Taufgesinnte und grosses Kapital. Die niederrheinisch-bergischen Mennoniten und der Aufstieg des Krefelder Seidengewerbes* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007).
- <sup>40</sup> See Erik de Jong, *Nature and Art: Dutch Garden and Landscape Architecture, 1650-1740*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), especially Chapter 5. There was also a fascination with collecting rare and valuable objects, ranging from paintings to plants.
- <sup>41</sup> For accounts of these industries written before World War One, see David H. Epp, *Sketches of the Pioneer Years of Industry in the Mennonite Settlements of South Russia*, trans. Jacob P. Penner (Leamington, Ontario: the Author, 1972); David H.

- Epp, "The Emergence of German Industry in the South Russian Colonies, trans and ed., John B. Toews, *MQR*, 55 (1981), 289-371.
- <sup>42</sup> On the Dutch experience and its contradictions for Mennonites see Yme Kuiper and Harm Nijboer, "Between Frugality and Civility. Dutch Mennonites and their Taste for the 'World of Goods' in the Eight aperi presented to the Seventh European Social Science History Conference, Lisbon, 26 February - 1 March 2008.
- <sup>43</sup> Some never escaped their peasant origins; one of the wealthiest Mennonite estate owners, Wilhelm Schroeder, would search through "the slop pails with his bejewelled hands to see what had been thrown out" and he only contributed money to the mental hospital (Bethania) because his own daughter was a patient. (Irmie Wiebe, pers. comm.)
- <sup>44</sup> James Urry, "Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth and the Mennonite Experience in Imperial Russia." *JMS*, 3 (1985), 7-35; Al Reimer, "Peasant aristocracy: the Mennonite Gutsbesitzertum in Russia." *JMS*, 8 (1990), 76-88
- <sup>45</sup> And in America; Mennonites who were prosperous in Russia often became even richer in the Americas. For Canada see Loewen, *Family, Church and Market*, 155-56 and the United States see the career and philanthropic contributions of the miller Bernhard Warkentin in David A. Haury, "Bernhard Warkentin: a Mennonite Benefactor," *MQR*, 49 (1975), 179-202.
- <sup>46</sup> On the rise of a wealthy Mennonite family in Krefeld that also assumed titles of the Old Order, see Peter Kriedte and Isabelle Kalinowski, "La Dynastie des von der Leyen: une Famille de Soyeux au XVIIIe Siècle entre Mennonisme et Monde Moderne," *Annales HSS*, (1995), 725-52; for the Dutch see Harm Nijboer and Yme Kuiper, "Merchants, Mennonites and Marriages: Commercial, Religious and Kinship Networks in the Dutch Port Town of Harlingen in the 17th and 18th centuries." [http://www.harlingerrijkdom.nl/merchants\\_mennonites\\_marriages.pdf](http://www.harlingerrijkdom.nl/merchants_mennonites_marriages.pdf)
- <sup>47</sup> James Urry, "Prolegomena to the Study of Russian Mennonite Society 1880-1914," *JMS*, 8 (1990), 52-75; for comments on social differences, marriages, land and local politics with regard to wealth and poverty, viewed from one village in Khortitsa, see David G. Rempel with Cornelia Rempel Carlson, *A Mennonite Family in Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union 1789-1923*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002).
- <sup>48</sup> It has suggested that there are differences between English and American traditions of philanthropy, the former stressing "paternalism and security" and the latter "linked with progress and individual achievement"; see John Hamer, "English and American giving: Past and Future Imaginings," *History and Anthropology*, 18 (2007), 443-57.
- <sup>49</sup> "Chronicle (January)," *The Annual Register*, 57 (1815), 1-2 (also in the *The Gentleman's Magazine* (April, 1815), 378-79).
- <sup>50</sup> Some details on this community, its origin and subsequent history of some of its members in the United States are provided in G.E. Reimer and G. R. Gaeddert, *Exiled by the Czar: Cornelius Jansen and the Great Mennonite Migration, 1874* (North Newton: Mennonite Publication Office, 1956); on the connections between the merchant elite in Prussia and Russia see especially Appendix 1 of this source.
- <sup>51</sup> An account of these is included in a separate section (XXXIX) of P. M. Friesen's, *The Mennonite Brotherhood in Russia, 1789-1910, 1911* (Fresno: Board of Christian Literature of the Mennonite Brethren Churches, 1978) entitled "Welfare Matters [Wohltätigkeitssache]"; see also "Wohlthätigkeitsanstalten in den Molotschner Mennonitenkolonien," *Odessaer Zeitung*, 10-11 (14/27-16/29 Jan. 1901), 3, 1-2 (reprinted in *the Monatsblätter aus Bethel College*, 1-3 (Jan.-March 1903)).
- <sup>52</sup> James Urry, "The Cost of Community: the Funding and Economic Management of the Russian Mennonite Commonwealth before 1914," *JMS*, 10 (1992), 22-55.

- <sup>53</sup> I say “in principle” because there were widespread rumours of tax avoidance by some wealthy Mennonites.
- <sup>54</sup> Some historians have termed this development a Mennonite “Commonwealth,” see David G. Rempel, “The Mennonite Commonwealth in Russia: a Sketch of its Founding and Endurance, 1789-1919,” *MQR*, 48 (1974) see also Urry, *None But Saints*, Chapter 13.
- <sup>55</sup> James Urry, *Mennonites, Politics and Peoplehood: Europe – Russia – Canada, 1525-1980*. (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2006).
- <sup>56</sup> James Urry, “A Mennostaat for the Mennovolk? Mennonite Immigrant Fantasies in Canada in the 1930s,” *JMS*, 14 (1996), 65-80. Refugees in Canada and Paraguay also attempted to establish separate welfare institutions although in Canada economic conditions and the state placed limits on their plans.
- <sup>57</sup> From Menno Simons, “True Christian Belief” in *The Complete Works of Menno Simon*. (Elkhart, Ind., 1871), 115-16
- <sup>58</sup> Van Braught, *Martyrs Mirror*, 8; entry dated 27 July, 1659.
- <sup>59</sup> Van Braught, *Martyrs Mirror*, 8-9.
- <sup>60</sup> See Sprunger, “Entrepreneurs and Ethics: Mennonite Merchants in Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam.”
- <sup>61</sup> On the Dutch enlightenment and its political radicalism, as well as Mennonite involvement, see Jonathan I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650-1750*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); *Enlightenment Contested: Philosophy, Modernity, and the Emancipation of Man 1670-1752* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); see also Michael Driedger, “An Article Missing from the *Mennonite Encyclopedia* ‘The Enlightenment in the Netherlands.’” In C. Arnold Snyder, ed., *Commoners and Community: Essays in Honour of Werner O. Packull*. (Kitchener: Pandora Press, 2002), 101-20.
- <sup>62</sup> Van Engelen, *Brieven over de weelde; als hoogst nadeelig voor deugd en geluk, en verderflijk voor de burgerstaat*. Haarlem, 1791, 48, quoted by Hans W. Blom in “The Republic’s Nation: the Transformation of Civic Virtue in the Dutch Eighteenth Century,” in Paschalis M. Kitromilides, ed., *From Republican Polity to National Community. Reconsiderations of Enlightenment Political Thought*. (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2003), (Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century, 9), 31-32; Blom notes that van Engelen composed his ‘letters on luxury’ in response to the Abbe Pluquet’s *Traite Philosophique sur le Luxe* (Paris, 1786). On van Engelen (1722 – 1793) see his entry by Nanne van der Zijpp in the *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, 2, 214.
- <sup>63</sup> Delbert Plett collected many of these sermons and summarized their teachings; see for instance Chapter 18 “Socio-economic policy” in his *The Golden Years: the Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde in Russia, 1812-1849* (Steinbach: D.F.P. Publications, 1985).
- <sup>64</sup> See quotations from Piertisz in Plett, *The Golden Years*, 335-39; see also Neff, Christian and Nanne van der Zijpp. “Pietersz, Pieter (1574-1651).” *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*. 1959. Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online. Retrieved 14 September 2008 <[http://www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/contents/pietersz\\_pieter\\_1574\\_1651](http://www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/contents/pietersz_pieter_1574_1651)>
- <sup>65</sup> The Kleine Gemeinde in Russia and North America republished and arranged for the distribution of a number of texts in German derived from the conservative Dutch Mennonite traditions re-establishing links to their religious roots.
- <sup>66</sup> Urry, *Mennonites, Politics and Peoplehood*, 57-65; see also Michael Driedger, “Anabaptists and the Early Modern State: a Long-Term View,” in John D. Roth and James M. Stayer, eds, *A Companion to Anabaptism and Spiritualism, 1521-1700*. (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 507-44.
- <sup>67</sup> Helmut-Harry Loewen and James Urry, “Protecting Mammon: Some Dilemmas of Mennonite Non-Resistance in Late Imperial Russia and the Origins of the Selbstschutz.” *JMS*, 9 (1991), 34-53.

- <sup>68</sup> Urry, *Mennonites, Politics and Peoplehood*, 134-35.
- <sup>69</sup> Reinmarus [David Penner], *Anti Menno: Beitræge zur Geschichte der Mennoniten in Russland*. (Moscow: Zentral Voelker Verlag, 1930), 58-59; I am grateful to Professor Jack Thiessen for assistance in translating this passage. On Penner (1904-1993) see Peter Letkemann, "David Johann Penner [A. Reinmarus]: a Mennonite Anti-Menno." In Harry Loewen ed., *Shepherds, Servants and Prophets: Leadership among the Russian Mennonites, 1880-1960* (Kitchener: Pandora Press, 2003), 297-311.
- <sup>70</sup> In very similar terms a later Soviet Mennonite writer, Peter Klassen, would extend Penner's critique, see Peter Klassen, *Das Mennonitentum und die Mennoniten*. (Alma-Ata: "Kasachstan", 1989) especially 32-34, 74-79 and 81-82; I am grateful to Professor Peter Penner of Calgary for pointing this out to me and lending me a copy of Klassen's book.
- <sup>71</sup> Conrad Mueller, "Die Mennoniten und wir," *Der Auslandsdeutsche*, 3 (1920) quoted in Adolf Ehrt, *Das Mennonitentum in Russland von seiner Einwanderung bis zur Gegenwart*. (Berlin: Julius Beltz, (1932), 19; Ehrt also cites American Mennonite Relief Agency reports of the 1920s published in the *Mennonitisches Rundschau* of some Mennonite farmers being more eager to keep their livestock alive than people, in case even their own children. I am grateful to H. A. Regier of Ontario for drawing this passage to my attention.
- <sup>72</sup> On changes in English thought and practice see Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1985).
- <sup>73</sup> Sigrun Kahl has recently suggested that the very different forms of welfare systems take in Western states can be attributed to their once dominant religious confessions, and idea that challenges the assumption that they are based on purely rational principles; see her "The Religious Roots of Modern Poverty Policy: Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed Protestant Traditions Compared". *Archives Europeennes de Sociologie*, 46, (2005), 91-126; see also Philip S. Gorski's "Comment on Sigrun Kahl", *Archives Europeennes de Sociologie*, 46, (2005), 371-77.
- <sup>74</sup> Calvin Redekop, Stephen C. Ainlay and Robert Siemens, *Mennonite Entrepreneurs*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 193; the Burkholder quotation is from his *The Problem of Social Responsibility from the Perspective of the Mennonite Church*, (Elkhart: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 1989), 133.
- <sup>75</sup> Mary Sprunger, "The Anabaptist Vision: Reflections from Dutch-Russian Mennonitism." *Conrad Grebel Review*, 12 (1994), 299-307.
- <sup>76</sup> Piet Visser, "Die Krefelder Mennoniten im Rahmen die niederlaendischen Mennonitengeschichte," *Mennonitische Geschichtsblaetter*, 63 (2008), 9-31.