

Cars, Commerce, Church: Religious Conflict in Steinbach, Manitoba, 1905-1930

Royden Loewen, St. Paul's College, University of Manitoba

I

Historians agree that the immigrant church in North America successfully adapted to a new social environment and that it remained a relevant institution in the ethnic community.¹ They also agree, however, that the immigrant church was severely tested in the New World. As John Bodnar has described it, "in nearly every locale deep fissures and ferocious battles shook the church community...."² Where historians disagree is on the nature of that conflict. Historians of specific immigrant groups seem inclined to isolate particular phenomena, especially important to the group's ethnic self-consciousness, as causes for religious conflict. Thus Italian Catholics in Chicago vigorously defended the noisy, imaginative Italian piety of *campanilismo*; Russian Jews in Toronto battled to keep the Old World chanting of the *Haftarah* in informally structured synagogues; Orthodox church leaders in Alberta debated the merits of Ukrainian nationalism; Doukhobors in Saskatchewan quarrelled over issues of communalism and mysticism.³

Historians of smaller, sectarian, "group immigrant" churches, such as the Mennonites, have similarly written about religious conflict. Like those of other groups, Mennonite historians have pointed to what they have seen as the unique features of religious conflict in their particular group. Mennonites are said to have

suffered "Täuferkrankheit," the proclivity of Anabaptist churches to schism and lasting "organizational scar[ring]." ⁴ It has been suggested that the particular Mennonite teachings on non-resistance, the simple life, the ban, and adult baptism often invited petty disputes. ⁵ Moreover, a tradition of religious voluntarism and anti-clericalism made Mennonite churches especially vulnerable to serious personality clashes. ⁶ Finally, historians have argued that, given their value of separation from worldly society, North American Mennonites often were the targets of social pressures from Anglo-conformist host societies; these pressures divided Mennonite communities, compelling traditionalists to battle progressive Mennonites who accepted Protestant church methods, the English language and mainstream civic behaviour. ⁷

This paper argues that historians of particular immigrant churches, such as the Mennonites, have too often painted their subjects in a hue of exceptionalism. It is clear that church conflict was not unique to sectarian groups such as the Mennonites; it is equally clear that the context in which Mennonite church conflict occurred was not unique. Timothy Smith and others have argued that religious conflict in North American immigrant communities occurred within a context of an urbanizing and industrializing society; they argue that although this context in North America did not erode the relevance and power of the immigrant church, it did force major adaptations and in the process resulted in unprecedented levels of conflict. ⁸ This view has been provided with a theoretical framework by social scientists like Clifford Geertz, who have defined religion as a system of thought that interprets and gives meaning to existence in a particular time and place, and who have argued that religiousness necessarily shapes itself to a particular society. ⁹ In this interpretation tensions arising from petty theological disputes, clashing personalities, or even pressures of Anglo-conformity, are less important than the changing nature of the wider society—that is, whether it is ordered by a rural and agrarian experience, or an urban and industrial one. Thus, religious tension arises most profoundly when the "phenomena of existence" that it interprets and orders are disrupted. William Westfall has recently documented the rise of conflict within nineteenth-century Ontario Protestantism during a time in which "the province was undergoing a process of capitalist economic development that changed...every aspect of society and undermined the cultures that attempted to explain the character and meaning of...life." ¹⁰

The experience of a second generation Canadian Mennonite community—Steinbach, Manitoba—between 1900 and 1930 reflects this context of religious conflict. Steinbach's experience suggests that the most significant religious upheaval among Mennonites came as a direct result of different strategies of accommodation to an increasingly urban, industrial society. Here old communal-oriented religious ideas were severely challenged and forced to adapt to the individualism, consumerism, and pluralism of an urbanizing world.

The Steinbach district in 1900, like other North American Mennonite communities, was represented by several opposing Mennonite church bodies. Steinbach, located in the Mennonite East Reserve, 35 miles southeast of Winnipeg, Manitoba,

had been founded as a homogeneous community in 1874, the year of the Mennonite migration from Russia to Canada. Like its sister villages of Blumenort and Gruenfeld, Steinbach's single Mennonite church had been the Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde, a representative but distinct Mennonite church with roots in Russia. Between 1882 and 1893, however, a series of church schisms resulted in three Mennonite churches: the old Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde; the reformist Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, popularly known as the Holdeman Church; and the United Mennonite Brethren of North America, more commonly designated the Bruderthaler Church. The first generation schisms that devastated the old Kleine Gemeinde were dramatic: family members were separated, church elders denounced one another, secessionists were rebaptized, and institutional homogeneity was broken.¹¹

For all the public posturing, however, the religious conflict of the first generation was in a sense less significant than the conflict of the second generation. It was as if despite the schismatic warring, there was an ideological consensus in Steinbach in the years before 1900: each of the three churches attempted to revitalize what members saw as a "true" Anabaptist faith; each venerated and published the writings of sixteenth and seventeenth century teachers; each worked to ensure a high degree of "institutional completeness" by supporting a common *Brandordnung* (fire insurance agency), *Waisenamt* (estates administration agency), and *Schulzenbott* (village council); each negotiated judiciously and carefully a limited participation in a market economy, a public school system, and an elementary acquisition of the English language. Most significantly, the three bodies were commonly opposed to Pietistic ideas of immersion baptism and the "progressive" notion of premillennialism. Each group was committed to a farm-based, communal-oriented, church life rooted in old Anabaptist ideals of separation from the world and simple lifestyles.¹²

Ironically, it was during the second generation, when such events as World War I solicited a common response from the three Steinbach churches and when there was no new actual schism, that the most far-reaching religious conflicts occurred.¹³ Usually these conflicts were internal, within the bodies of the three church groups themselves, as each was forced to interpret a new society. For each of the three bodies, the test was not primarily how to keep the militarism of the Dominion government at bay or how to stave off the English language; it was how to adapt to an increasingly urban and industrialized society. This new society had several related components: the new social agenda of capitalism and commerce that brought a new logic to economic activity and that resulted in sharper socio-economic division within the ethnic community; consumerism, that introduced individualizing technologies like the car; and political integration as the community marched unhaltingly and voluntarily into the civic culture of the wider society. In this context, old ways of explanation were undermined and new approaches tested. Church groups jockeyed for new ideological positions and an intense dialogue followed. What religious teaching, ethical base, or church structure would best preserve religious commitment, maintain social cohesiveness, and provide an

“overarching explanation of existence” in the new society?

It was in the context of the rise of a new urbanizing world after 1900, then, that the homogeneity of ideology, religious meaning, and social boundary maintenance in Steinbach came undone. The divergence pitted conservative ideas of the *Aeltesten*, the Elders of the communitarian churches, against progressive ideas of the Revivalists, the preachers in the more individualistic and open churches. The old *Kleine Gemeinde*, the largest of the three churches with some 940 souls in 1920, became the undisputed guardian of conservatism after 1900. It espoused a simple lifestyle, strict social boundaries, humility as an avenue to salvation, and a communal approach to religious quest. However, it was also the church that confronted and lost its bid to keep the new society at bay. The bane of the old church was the tiny *Bruderthaler Church* comprising fewer than 200 adults and children in 1920.¹⁴ It went through a remarkable change after 1900 and became the champion of American Protestant evangelicalism, including personal religious experiences and a host of new church programs that encouraged such experiences.¹⁵ Charting its own course, somewhere between the conservative *Kleine Gemeinde* and the progressive *Bruderthaler*, was the *Holdeman Church* with about 500 persons in its Steinbach and area churches.¹⁶ It, too, used Protestant church methods, but during the second generation it tightened social boundaries and placed a new emphasis on outward symbols of social separation. By 1930, the new society had led the *Holdeman Church* to reverse itself, and it had overtaken the *Kleine Gemeinde* as the steward of old ways.

II

Historians have noted that Canada at the beginning of the twentieth century was “a country being transformed” and that western Canada in particular was rapidly developing a rural, capitalist economy.¹⁷ It was a world characterized by unprecedented immigration, new technologies, improved transportation links, more integrated market economies and the disappearance of agricultural frontiers. There were signs that this transformation was all pervading, excluding not even the conservative Mennonite enclave of the East Reserve in Manitoba. Indeed, the increasing associations of the East Reserve with the “outside” world during the second generation read like a progress report. By 1898 the Reserve was being served by two railroads. Ten years later Steinbach connected to Winnipeg by telephone. In 1910 the car made its debut. By 1913 the establishment of a local newspaper brought weekly summaries of world news and a new forum for advertising. In 1919 a twice-daily mail service with Winnipeg, and with it the arrival of the “daily paper,” increased the ties with the outside. By 1930 daily bus service linked Steinbach’s “Tourist Hotel” to Winnipeg and plans for a provincial trunk highway raised speculation about even closer links.¹⁸

With the shifting boundaries came new life styles. The great houses and new cars of the time did more than reflect economic well-being. They served as new symbols of social differentiation and indices of a gain mentality. When the *Steinbach Post* announced that two Steinbachers had purchased "Gray Dort" cars in 1917 it also added that "rich people still make it possible for others to spot them."¹⁹ The car also shaped new attitudes towards leisure; traveling increased sharply. Often the trips were extensive month-long events to visit relatives in the Kleine Gemeinde, Bruderthaler or Holdeman settlements in Nebraska and Kansas; frequently the travellers took the long way between Manitoba and Nebraska, traveling west from Manitoba to Saskatchewan and Alberta, south to Oregon and California, then northeast through Kansas and Nebraska, back to Manitoba. But increasingly travel also included vacations and sightseeing trips.²⁰ There were reports in 1914 of multi-week trips to Banff Hot Springs in Alberta and ads in local newspapers for "summer excursions, via the Great Lakes, to Eastern Canada."²¹ Steinbach people reported Sunday excursions to the "various parks" in Winnipeg in 1917, spread the word of the "especially fine roads that lead to...Winnipeg Beach, our bathing resort" in 1919, and told of outings such as the one in 1920 in which a "whole group of people...went to the city [Winnipeg] for the bonspiel."²²

Increasingly, pleasure seekers and sports lovers brought their enjoyment to the Steinbach district itself. The new view of pleasure brought with it a host of activities: attendance of a Ringling Brothers' circus featuring "hootchy kootchy dancers and gamblers" by 1911; a rented aeroplane to give rides to Steinbach's youth by 1921; a hockey team that played in Winnipeg by 1931.²³ Especially significant was the founding of the co-ed Steinbach Sports Club in 1923. Its expressed aim was to promote "general sports in the village" and with a membership fee of "\$2.00 for men, \$1.00 for ladies" to seek "to provide funds for the promotion of skating, hockey, snow shoeing, baseball, tennis and other sports." Symptomatic of the nature of the club was that its president was 24-year-old J.J. Reimer, the married son of a Kleine Gemeinde merchant, and that the first vice president was an Anglo-Canadian lawyer, N.S. Campbell.²⁴

The new society also brought heightened participation in politics and civic organization. Although the Steinbach Mennonites ran for neither federal nor provincial office, local newspapers noted a growing interest and support for Liberal French-speaking candidates. When the Manitoba Legislature representative, Albert Prefontaine, visited Steinbach in 1914 the local newspaper noted that it was obvious that "he has his followers here as elsewhere."²⁵ Most revealing, however, of a new willingness to enter the wider civic world in Manitoba was the hiring in 1914 of a police officer, young Willy Christian, for Steinbach.²⁶ It was a move that town fathers deemed necessary after a local newspaper reported an incident in which a "provincial police officer, who had been on his way to the Galicians, had to be rerouted to Steinbach...where, at a particular dance, things had gone too far and someone had collapsed with a head wound...from a gunshot..."²⁷ After Steinbach was granted "Unincorporated Village District" status in 1920, civic action such as

the hiring of policemen no longer seemed incongruous with the town's new image.²⁸

It was only in concert with these internal forces of change that outside pressures from militaristic governments and hostile Anglo-Canadian host societies, undermined the closed, homogeneous Steinbach community.²⁹ In August 1914 when war broke out in Europe between Britain and Germany, Mennonites in Steinbach expressed little apprehension. Canadian Mennonites were assured that the 1873 federal government Order-in-Council that had promised them a complete military exemption was still valid. Between 1917 and 1918, however, Mennonites did feel the anxieties of governments seeking to defeat a stubborn German power and of host societies unsympathetic to a German-speaking, pacifist, unassimilating ethnic group in their midst. Canadian Mennonites, although assured of continued blanket exemption so long as they could prove membership in a Mennonite church, were compelled to participate in manpower registrations, pay special war taxes and give up their German-speaking parochial schools. Nevertheless, the war was not an automatic agent of change for Mennonites; it merely accelerated the process of shifting boundaries.

III

The Steinbach church that adapted itself most readily to this new order of things was the American-spawned Bruderthaler Church. It had had a rather shaky start in Steinbach in 1897, being founded by a few families of non-Kleine Gemeinde descent. The founder, teacher Heinrich Rempel, had migrated from Russia in 1884 and had made no secret of the fact that he and his wife disliked both the conservative Kleine Gemeinde and the exclusive Holdemans.³⁰ Another early member, Benjamin Janz, was a refugee from Russia who despite being financially dependent on his Kleine Gemeinde relatives in Steinbach soon reported "helping to spread the gospel [in the village] where the harvest is great."³¹ Despite this evangelistic fervour the church attracted few members in its first decade. Beginning in 1908, however, the Bruderthaler Church made inroads into the Kleine Gemeinde and by 1913 it had attracted some 67 members and earned the reputation of being the most progressive and fastest growing church.³² It had successfully adopted the main tenets of American Evangelicalism, the "Holy Ghost revivals," the parade of foreign missionaries, and the emotional singing. By 1912 it was large enough to follow the Kleine Gemeinde and Holdemans in erecting its own church building in town.³³

The people who were attracted to the Bruderthaler Church were clearly those who had faced the greatest social upheaval in the new society. They were younger, more educated and poorer than those of either the Kleine Gemeinde or Holdeman Churches. They included schoolteachers, craftsmen, young merchants and laborers

who, according to one observer, did not “feel honoured and felt pushed back.”³⁴ E.K. Francis’s observation that the church held a special “appeal to the upper class in town” in the 1940s did not hold true for the 1910s.³⁵ In fact the upper class in Steinbach—the Reimer merchants, the Barkman millers and Loewen lumbermen—belonged to the old *Kleine Gemeinde Church*. The lower social standing of the first Bruderthaler members is confirmed in the juxtaposition of its 1916 church roster with the municipality tax roll of 1915; this comparison indicates that the average Bruderthaler had a real property assessment of \$545, less than a third of the \$1875 assessed the *Kleine Gemeinde* or Holdeman Mennonites in Steinbach.³⁶

One of the reasons for the Bruderthaler Church’s growth in Steinbach was that it shifted its emphasis from a communitarian religiousness, with a strong emphasis on a self-denying lifestyle, to a more individualistic theology that promised an enrapturing religious experience and a personal assurance of salvation. And no forum served better to spread this message than the revival meeting. Preachers from sister churches in Saskatchewan, Minnesota and Nebraska regularly visited Steinbach to lead these week-long meetings. Although Bruderthaler Church growth between 1908 and 1912 was ascribed to the “tireless and faithful work” of its leader, former Saskatchewan farmer P.B. Schmidt, it was the preaching of Chicago revivalist and Moody Bible Institute graduate George Schultz in 1907, 1911 and 1925 that attracted the most attention.³⁷ As the superintendent of the Bruderthaler’s “Happy Hour Mission” in Chicago, his aim was to convert “dope fiends, drunkards, whoremongers, [and] prostitutes of the lowest kind.”³⁸ Schultz’s work included preaching six nights a week, often in open air forums in front of brothels and saloons, and organizing Vacation Bible Schools with financial assistance from Chicago’s meat-packing plants.³⁹

This experience, no doubt, helped to give Schultz his appeal in small Mennonite towns. Among his favorite preaching towns was Steinbach where he led 14 revival meetings, the first one in 1907. Schultz distinctly recalled the first revival meeting. When he arrived in Steinbach there were “just a few families...who were interested in evangelistic meetings...[but] a fairly good crowd attended [on the first day] and we continued the meetings for nearly four weeks.”⁴⁰ What attracted the crowds was the lively singing from books with notes, a short, “hard hitting” 20-minute revival sermon, and the “altar invitation.” Schultz recalled that “the spirit moved in the hearts of people and folks began to get saved.”⁴¹ So successful was Schultz that, in his words, “the devil got stirred up about this awakening in Steinbach and he appeared in the form of dead church members [who] began to throw dirt at me and called me a wolf in sheep’s clothing.”⁴² Nevertheless, as Schultz recalled it, “dance halls closed and tobacco shops lost business, [t]he local church...got a new vision of evangelical christianity....[and] grew to be the largest in the conference.”⁴³

Schultz’s success in Steinbach, however, was due to more than his new methods. His sermons disseminated new ideas that were proving successful in the new, more urban society. In one of his devotional booklets entitled “Weathered Words,” he bemoaned traditional views of youth, community, sin, and the wider

society. He decried the old notion that youth was a time for the “sowing of wild oats” and called upon children to conform to the church’s ways at an earlier age, for “every moment lost in youth is so much character and advantage lost.”⁴⁴ He also attacked the idea that the faithful must separate themselves from the world: “...after they have come out of the world,” he preached, “they should march...into the very ranks of the enemy, and conquer new ground for Christ our Lord.” He had a vision for a trained, fundamentalistic church leadership. “We need preachers with college and seminary training” and “men who will attack the modernists...and expose their false teaching,” he declared. His was a Protestant concept of church, no longer symbolized by a simple, agrarian community but by “the House of God...where God dwells...[and] where the Great Truths of the Bible are taught...”⁴⁵ Most important was a new theology of salvation. It was no longer grace given at the end of a humble, God-fearing pilgrimage. It was now an expressed “faith in the finished redemptive work [that] justifies and sanctifies the believer.” And it resulted in “living on fire for the Lord” and turned “the main objective of all that we do as farmers, businessmen, teachers, preachers...to [the] sav[ing of] souls.”⁴⁶

Schultz’s vision took root in the Steinbach Bruderthaler Church. Its regular leaders were for the most part men with public profiles and Bible School education. Between 1908 and 1930 they did include a farmer, but also a schoolteacher and a merchant.⁴⁷ And in the late 1920s its leaders included H.P. Fast and John R. Barkman, graduates of the Minneapolis Northwestern Seminary and Moody Bible Institute in Chicago.⁴⁸ Its church meetings were more elaborate and included special monthly programs for youth and an annual “Kinderfest,” complete with choirs and Bible quizzes.⁴⁹ By 1906 the church had also adopted baptism by immersion, a more dramatic symbol of personal repentance and spiritual rebirth than baptism by pouring, the mode practiced by most Mennonites and strongly advocated by the first Bruderthaler leaders.⁵⁰ The church adopted a new outward-looking view of society, exemplified by an emphasis on foreign missions. As the foreign mission budget of the Bruderthaler conference increased from \$245 in 1905 to \$16,000 in 1929, the number of missionaries from India, Africa and China who reported in Steinbach rose too.⁵¹ Newspapers spoke of “very large audiences” coming to hear missionary reports of the “poor Chinese” in “heathen lands,” and to see living embodiments of foreign society, such as the “little five year old Hindu girl” who accompanied “Missionary P.W. Penner of India” to Steinbach in 1917.⁵²

The Bruderthaler’s new views and methods were strengthened between 1923 and 1930 with the coming of the “Russlaender” Mennonites from the war-torn, famine-stricken Soviet Union. Many of these refugees, whose parents had elected to stay in Russia in the 1870s where they had prospered until the Russian Revolution decimated their colonies, were first and second cousins of Steinbachers.⁵³ Each of the Steinbach church groups helped underwrite the travel debt that the 21,000 Russlaender incurred with the Canadian Pacific Railroad. But it was the Bruderthaler who felt most akin to the evangelistic and more highly urbanized Russlaender immigrants. The Bruderthaler Church began at once to host special religious services for the Russlaender youth.⁵⁴ The Russlaender reciprocated by

leading revival meetings in the Bruderthaler Church. And in 1927 they lent a new legitimacy to the Bruderthaler by establishing a second evangelistic church, the Mennonite Brethren, in Steinbach.⁵⁵ Jacob Reimer, the leader of this church, gave evangelicalism a new profile in town by teaching millennialism in "evening bible classes" in 1929 and leading the community to open a Bible School in 1931.⁵⁶ The easy working relationship between these two groups of Brethren also pointed to a denominationalization of church structure, a move that accepted religious pluralism and the view that church and community were not synonymous.⁵⁷ The irony of the Russlaender immigration was that while these well-educated, German-speaking immigrants helped maintain the ethnic identity of Mennonites with their emphasis on the German language, they did more than any other single group to ensure the demise of old Mennonite folkways.

IV

In sharp contrast to the Bruderthaler Church's approach to the new society in Manitoba was the old Kleine Gemeinde Church. Unlike the Bruderthaler Church which adapted quickly to a more urban existence and succeeded, the Kleine Gemeinde Church confronted that new world and failed. The basis of that confrontation was a set of religious practices rooted in the cycles and mores of an agrarian society. Baptism was associated with early summer; between 1902 and 1917 the East Reserve Kleine Gemeinde held its baptism in late June or early July with only one exception. Church services were rotated from district to district within each of the larger communities of Steinbach, Blumenort and Kleefeld in the East Reserve, a practice that was meant to unite the wider church community but that often resulted in sporadic church attendance. Religious holidays included "Heilige Drei Koenige," 40 days after Christmas, and "Himmel- Fahrt," 40 days after Easter. Seasonal changes were celebrated each June and September by the special "spring sermon" and the "harvest sermon." Church leaders were chosen from kinship lines that had proven themselves in church leadership; each of the three Aeltesten who served the Steinbach area Kleine Gemeinde during these years was the son of a preacher.

There was much, however, that was dynamic in Kleine Gemeinde Church life during these years. This dynamism resulted from the Kleine Gemeinde's attempt to cultivate old communitarian ways in a new, more urban and individualistic society. The nature of these ideas was forcefully articulated by Peter R. Dueck, the Kleine Gemeinde Aeltester from Steinbach. From the time of his election as Aeltester in 1901 at the age of 38, to his death in 1919, he worked vigorously to maintain traditional ways. His ideas, encapsulated in scores of 7000-word handwritten sermons, were remarkably different from those of George Schultz. The contents of a Christmas advent sermon composed in 1905, and delivered 19 times during the

next 14 years, is illustrative. For Dueck the church was a community, not a physical structure; it was characterized by "brotherly love, unity and...the fear of God." Its leaders were not professionals, but servants who came to their people in "great weakness and imperfection" realizing that God "will put an end to the mighty and their sanctuaries." Dueck's ethical concerns focused less on personal morality than on "pride, abundance and much contentment" that could ruin community solidarity.⁵⁸

For Peter Dueck, religious salvation was not a personal event, claimed by an individual with "assurance" and promising a "present joy."⁵⁹ It was grace given by God at the end of a life of "cautiously walking in his paths and seeking to keep the holy covenant faithfully." Salvation could not be "claimed" as the Bruderthaler preached, it could only be "desired." A presumptuous, confident life was simply not indicative of a soul longing for God's grace, and to a person who did not desire grace God could not grant salvation. The "cautious walk" always entailed two things — a humble love within the congregation and a separation from worldly society. It included among other things "fleeing the transitory pleasures of this world," a spirit of "fear and trembling" before God, "yieldedness" to the community, "Nachfolge Christi" (following Christ) in a life of simplicity and peace, and of allowing one to be refined and purified through tests of death and sickness, and "toil and trouble."⁶⁰

These were the ideas that Peter Dueck attempted to keep alive in a changing social environment. A highly detailed diary traces that effort over the course of 18 years between 1901 and 1919. In every instance the church sought to maintain an "unblemished" community in which peace, unity and love within the brotherhood would flourish. It was only in this state that it could hold its biannual "Einigkeit," the service of Holy Communion in which "unity" among the brethren was a prerequisite for "communion" with God. Thus, no item was too small to address: there was the brother who had become drunk during threshing time; another who had as a practical joke shot a neighbour's ox; a sister who had been caught stealing merchandise from her step-sons; a widow and widower, now married, who confessed to premarital sex; a brother who had hosted a "worldly" party in his guesthouse; two brothers who had had a fist fight after one had spread gossip about the other; a sister who had been discovered to have lived in "great sin."⁶¹

These, however, were the minor issues, almost always quickly resolved, either through warnings and confessions, or through brief periods of excommunication. The half dozen references, over the course of the 18 years of Dueck's diary, to each of drunkenness, adultery and assault indicates their relative lack of importance. The all-male church brotherhood, after all, met almost 200 times during these years and at each meeting addressed at least half a dozen ethical issues. The most thorny problems were those which went hand in hand with the encroachment of the modern world with its new technological innovations such as the telephone and the car, its new capitalistic order of things such as increasing indebtedness, consumerism and business size, and a government which seemed intent on integrating Mennonites into the wider society. During these years members at the brotherhood

meetings grappled with the issue of commerce 38 times, with government intrusion 35 times, and with the car 34 times; these brotherhood agenda items reflected the issues on which the church felt it was the most vulnerable.

The intrusiveness of government was, no doubt, a major concern for the *Kleine Gemeinde*. The highly publicized events of militarism and Anglo-conformity, however, were clear-cut issues, requiring unequivocal responses from the *Gemeinde*. The Manitoba Flag Act of 1908 was a major threat for the *Gemeinde*, but the issue and the action required were indisputable. When the Act which required all district schools to fly the Union Jack was passed, the *Gemeinde* responded quickly. After all, it saw the flag as nothing less than a "military banner." The *Kleine Gemeinde* leaders joined Holdeman Mennonite preachers and the Mennonite schools inspector H.H. Ewert in making a personal visit to Manitoba's premier, Rodmond Roblin. When Roblin kept the delegation waiting in his lobby for almost four hours and then promised only to do "his best," the *Kleine Gemeinde* immediately withdrew its schools from the district school roster even though it meant forfeiting the "legislative grant" which had financed the hiring of local school teachers for more than a generation.⁶²

Similar action was taken to deal with overt government action during World War I. Unlike their American brethren, the Manitoba Mennonites were to receive a total exemption from military duty on the basis of their 1873 agreement with Ottawa. While their American brethren were compelled to report to military training camps where they could receive conscientious objector status, Manitoba Mennonites were required only to prove "membership" in a Mennonite church.⁶³ However, as the war progressed the Manitoba Mennonites faced a host of pressures from the Anglo-Canadian society and from the government. Quiet acquiescence was the strategy of the *Kleine Gemeinde* and most of the wider Mennonite community. When the federal government requested that Manitoba Mennonites purchase war bonds and pay a special "1% war tax" once in 1917 and again in 1918, Mennonites complied; Peter Dueck protested privately that paying the tax was "to make friends with the unrighteous 'Mammon'" but publicly he reasoned that "since the money is to be used only for the needy [we]...will participate."⁶⁴ When in August 1917 the federal government passed its Military Service Act and then, although exempting the pacifist Mennonites from the draft, issued a directive for a comprehensive registration of Canada's manpower, the *Kleine Gemeinde* hesitated. But as Peter Dueck explained, after an inter-Mennonite delegation ascertained from federal officials that completing the registration "cards has nothing to do with the 'Violence'" and that "writing the name Mennonite on the cards" would safeguard their military exemption, "we...agreed to obey the government."⁶⁵

The *Kleine Gemeinde* was also required to deal with pressures from other sectors of Anglo-Canadian society. The most overt occurred one Sunday night in September 1918 when a troop of some 25 soldiers descended on the town of Steinbach, startling the townspeople. The *Steinbach Post* reported that at first "no one knew what they wanted," but then, after booking in at the guesthouse, the soldiers began demanding to see the military registration cards of randomly chosen

townspeople, and then arrested those who could not produce them.⁶⁶ These were pressures, however, that the conservative Mennonites could understand and with which they could deal. In fact, it served well the purposes of the elders who warned youth to remain within the sanctuary of the Mennonite settlements. One Steinbach father eagerly publicized his warning from a Winnipeg resident to "keep your boys at home [in Steinbach]....[for] if, upon returning from the 'fire' [of the war], our sons will find your sons at the pool tables [in Winnipeg] we will not be able to constrain them!"⁶⁷

Kleine Gemeinde Mennonites similarly adjusted quickly to the Anglo-conformist principles of Manitoba's Liberal premier T.C. Norris. His government's 1916 School Attendance Act that forced Mennonites to attend public English-language schools was to precipitate the migration of 6000 Old Colonist and Sommerfelder Mennonites to new colonies in Latin America. The Kleine Gemeinde, however, acquiesced after ascertaining that by forming their own local school boards and hiring community members as teachers they could still control the education of their children, even though it was now in English. The view of Steinbach farmer C.B. Loewen in 1919 that "we cannot blame the government for we have been in this country long enough to learn the language" held a certain degree of support among Kleine Gemeinde members; the view of Blumenort farmer Peter Unger that "many did not want to leave this government which had been so good to them" was even more widespread.⁶⁸

What caused the Kleine Gemeinde brotherhood at least as much consternation as these highly publicized events, were the more subtle ways in which the Mennonite community and the "outside world" became enmeshed. In 1906 when the Manitoba government expropriated the Bell Telephone company and began to erect long distance lines linking Winnipeg with rural outposts, the Kleine Gemeinde members were caught in a quandary. They decided to vote on the issue in order to keep the long distance line out, but realized that by exercising their vote they were compromising their principle of political non-involvement.⁶⁹ Similar quandaries faced Gemeinde members in 1912 and 1913. In one incident a single 38-year-old mentally deranged Blumenort man who threatened his neighbours with a pistol, was physically constrained and turned over to "authorities" in Winnipeg. In the other incident the Blumenort family of a daughter who had been gang-raped asked for the church's permission to heed a subpoena and testify at the trial of the Anglo-Canadian offenders in Winnipeg. Both incidents precipitated lengthy brotherhood meetings where the brethren questioned whether it was right to involve the wider society in the community's problems. In both cases the brotherhood conceded, but clearly with apprehension: in the first instance, they gave their approval of the Blumenort neighbours' action, but only because the "government disallows us to have people like that living in our community"; in the second case they decided that "we cannot forbid [the family] to testify because the proceedings were not initiated by them."⁷⁰

A second, more perplexing problem for the Gemeinde came when old boundaries were violated by its own members. The list of requests to brethren to

heed established mores in any kind of political involvement was long: in 1906 a brother was asked to resign his post as municipal secretary, a vocation that contravened "Article 27 in the *Martyrs Mirror*," in 1907 two men involved in a land dispute were told that "fighting one another with lawyers cannot be approved of, nor seeking to defend oneself in that manner"; in 1910 members were "warned not to vote in the government election" and when several voted anyway, the church compelled them to repent; in 1913 members were asked to consider whether the reporting of thefts to police did not "come too close to [contravening] our faith"; in 1914 farmers were warned not to take their neighbours' cattle to the municipal pound, as "it is wrong to complain to the 'world' about one's brother"; in 1916 members were counselled that to vote in the Manitoba's temperance plebiscite would be tantamount to Christians "trying to rule and govern with the 'world.'" ⁷¹

Each of these challenges to old boundaries paled in comparison to the decision in April 1911 by a majority of the Steinbach village parents to turn the town's parochial German-language school into a public institution. The significance of this decision was that it came fully seven years before Mennonites were compelled to end their private schools by government legislation. The fact that the parents had been encouraged to do so by a Manitoba school inspector who argued that in "a British country people should speak English" and who "explained the purpose of the flag" did not impress the rural-dominated *Kleine Gemeinde*.⁷² Peter Dueck's protest that the public school was seen by "most congregation members as very wrongful, for us and for our descendants" and his promise to "work against" the new school, however, did little to impress the progressive parents.⁷³ In fact, by July 1911 it became apparent that the *Kleine Gemeinde* had become isolated, being alone among the Steinbach churches in its opposition to the public school. The only course left open to it now was to open its own private school.⁷⁴ A symbolic end to the old concept of community came in October 1911 when the *Kleine Gemeinde* received word from the "new [head] schoolteacher [that he] no longer wants church services to be held in the [Steinbach] schoolhouse as it has been turned into a 'District School.'" ⁷⁵ That year the *Kleine Gemeinde* built its first building in Canada used exclusively for worship.

A third major issue in the *Kleine Gemeinde* during the years of World War I was the erosion of plain, modest lifestyles. Increased prosperity, the growth of town businesses, the rise of consumerism, and especially the purchase of automobiles were transforming the community. While merchandizing itself was no longer opposed by the *Kleine Gemeinde*, it actively attempted to control mercantile activity and maintain simple lifestyles. Among the many brotherhood meetings in which the problem of Steinbach's "big businesses" came up for discussion was the meeting of May 14, 1905, at which Dueck denounced those "evil businesses" which are "always growing larger."⁷⁶ In the same vein the *Kleine Gemeinde* opposed both the January 1911 banquet held for "high officials... according to worldly custom" at Klaas Toews' guesthouse and the November 1911 rental agreement between merchant H.W. Reimer and a young barber who was planning to sell tobacco and musical instruments from a store on Reimer's land. It censured the gain mentality

that rose in the heady economy of World War I, decrying both those who "charge exorbitant interest rates from poor people" and those who "incur large debt loads." And it questioned the shifting boundaries of commerce. In March 1916 when butcher A.W. Reimer opened his Winnipeg branch-office the brotherhood was unequivocal: "for salvation, this is certainly harmful."⁷⁷

To ensure that business growth would not get out of hand and in order to maintain conservative lifestyles, the Kleine Gemeinde Church also vociferously opposed the coming of a railroad to Steinbach. The Southeastern Railroad had bypassed Steinbach in 1897, and by 1905 some Steinbach businessmen were lobbying for a spur line to connect the town with the railroad. Church brotherhood minutes for January 6, 1905, provide a clue as to why that spur line was never built. The minutes record the following: "We...discussed the building of the railroad with which some of the brethren are working and seeking signatures for a petition....[but we] strongly opposed this...as there is danger in it for us and our children in that we might become like the world in business and lifestyle... and the [present] businesses, which already seem too big, would grow even larger."⁷⁸

Associated with commerce and abundance was a new conspicuous consumption. The Kleine Gemeinde leadership made it clear that it believed that the new acquisitiveness turned one's attention from one's neighbour and one's soul, to one's fortune and status. Thus, it sought to counter each of the elements of this new lifestyle: the new fashions, the "stiff white collars" for men and the "ruffled blouses and skirts" for the women; the "Nachhochzeiten," the wedding parties where invited guests gave gifts and enjoyed fancy meals; the new fascination with firearms, justified for hunting, but remaining, nevertheless, a symbol of power; the musical instruments that graced the "lawn parties" held by Steinbach's youth in full view of town elders.

Of all these "symbols of pride," the car was the most heinous. On May 16, 1910, at a Sunday afternoon brotherhood meeting in Steinbach, Aeltester Dueck presented the 21 baptismal candidates for the year and then introduced an issue which would be debated in the *Gemeinde* for eight long years: "a brother has purchased a car for \$480 which most of us brothers do not see as proper...." Two weeks later when the owner, 26-year-old miller Abram Reimer, appeared before the brotherhood and promised to sell the car, Dueck elaborated his position: "It is detrimental to one's salvation as it seeks to emulate the world, is on the whole such an unknown thing, is so costly and leads to such arrogance and ostentation."⁷⁹ If Dueck thought that this could stop the tide of car purchases he was wrong. By July it was apparent that Reimer had reneged on his promise to sell his car. Only an overt threat of excommunication brought another promise to sell the offending object. A year later, however, there were reports that "two more brothers have purchased cars." At a special meeting in May 1911, Dueck reiterated the theology underlying his opposition, but his admonitions were publicly opposed. "The car is supported by many brothers who look upon our opposition as stemming from self-made rules," wrote Dueck after the meeting and "thus we were unable to come as far as we had wished."⁸⁰

Peter Dueck, however, never retreated. By April, 1912, the church began to force members who owned cars, including the Steinbach's premier car dealer J.R. Friesen, to resign from the church or face excommunication and the ban. A stand-off had occurred and people began leaving the church. Between 1911 and 1913 the church banned or accepted the resignation of 19 members. In 1912 Dueck baptized fewer members than he had since taking office in 1901, and for the first time in a generation the *Kleine Gemeinde* suffered a net loss of members. Still the *Gemeinde* would not change its course. Over the following years owners of cars were called upon to repent, requested to avoid communion services, warned against riding in the cars owned by members of other churches, berated for registering cars in the names of their unbaptized children, and cautioned that ownership of gasoline-powered tractors could serve to weaken the resolve of members not to buy cars. Just two months before his death in January 1919, Dueck made the observation that "most brethren are [still] not heeding our warning about the car" and that more time will be required before communion services can be held with the owners. The year of Peter Dueck's death, however, marked the end of the *Kleine Gemeinde's* opposition to the car and during the summer of 1919 members purchased cars in unprecedented numbers. The *Kleine Gemeinde* had clearly lost this battle to maintain the old ways.

The failure of the *Kleine Gemeinde* in Steinbach was a failure only in part. The Manitoba branch of the *Kleine Gemeinde* remained intact, doubling in size to almost 2000 persons between 1913 and 1930.⁸¹ And it did so without changing its essentially conservative nature. Sermons still emphasized the communitarian ethics of day-to-day life. A record of 42 sermons preached during a 12-month period in 1924 and 1925 in Steinbach indicates that two thirds were based on ethically-oriented texts from the Gospels or the Apocrypha, and only a few on the doctrinally oriented Pauline epistles. Nor did the nature of leadership change. While the second-generation ministerial included a schoolteacher and a businessman, in 1924 when the *Kleine Gemeinde* voted for its second Aeltester in five years, progressive members received little support. Both Peter P. Reimer, the man chosen for the office, and Cornelius Penner, the runner up, were staunchly conservative Blumenort farmers. Communal-oriented ideas continued to set the church's agenda and it continued in the role as the arbiter of day-to-day community affairs.⁸²

Despite these signs of traditionalism other practices pointed the *Kleine Gemeinde* in a new direction. The strategy of inculcating simplicity and separation now seemed more flexible and accommodating. The car had become acceptable, for example, but only because it was now deemed practical; the value of simplicity still exhibited itself when "glass cars" and "shiny bumpers" became issues in the 1920s.⁸³ The public school may have been accepted, but local school boards exercised considerable control over teacher-hiring, curricula, school construction and attendance policies.⁸⁴ In order to assure that acceptable Mennonites qualified as teachers, community leaders gave implicit approval for young people to attend Normal School in Winnipeg.⁸⁵ And unlike their Old Colonist Mennonite brethren

even the most conservative of the *Kleine Gemeinde* sought only to maintain those boundaries within Canada. There was a special fascination with Quebec, where a church-run education system seemed more amenable to their own objectives. Between 1922 and 1929 four different delegations visited Quebec to consider the founding of a new settlement. The delegations were pleased to learn that the Quebec government was eager to have them and ready to provide them with "educational freedom." Only their disappointment with the quality of the low-lying land near Amos, Quebec, and the rocky, fragmented land strips in the Eastern Townships caused delegates to abort the Quebec plan.⁸⁶

The unwillingness to migrate during the 1920s stemmed as well from the presence of a growing evangelistic minority within the *Kleine Gemeinde*. It was most strongly represented in Steinbach. Indeed, the list of innovations in the Steinbach church resound with mainstream Protestantism: in 1926 it started a Sunday School with schoolteacher Gerhard Kornelson at its head; in 1927 it officially joined the evangelistically oriented inter-church "Jugendverein"; in 1928 it started a church choir led by local schoolteacher P.J.B. Reimer; in 1929 it began providing financial support to a Bruderthaler missionary in North China; in 1931 it renovated its church building, shifting the pulpit from the side of the building, according to traditional Mennonite architecture, and placing it at the end in keeping with Protestant church architecture.⁸⁷ If the year 1919 had marked the *Kleine Gemeinde's* loss of the battle to maintain traditional boundaries, by 1930 it was clear that the old *Gemeinde* was beginning to develop new strategies for survival.

V

Increasing openness and a rising individualism did not mark the experience of all the Mennonite churches in the *Kleine Gemeinde* descendent communities. The more urbanized of the *Kleine Gemeinde* may have sought survival by adopting the progressive methods of the Bruderthaler, but the Holdeman Church sought its continuity by revitalizing aspects of traditionalism. It continued its emphasis on personal religious revival, but at the same time it increased its emphasis on a communal-oriented church, strengthened with visible symbols of separation.⁸⁸ The method was highly successful; the church population rose from 498 in 1913 to 958 in 1931 and local newspapers reported a steady construction of new Holdeman Church buildings.⁸⁹ The Holdeman Church in Manitoba took a confident, highly public role in the Mennonite community. It was the Holdeman Mennonites who introduced "Jugendverein" into Steinbach in 1908 and then invited all the town youth to attend with promises of "travellogues and biographies, songs learned by memory, [English] grammar, church history and other forms of... knowledge."⁹⁰ Similarly it was members of the Holdeman Church who supported the controver-

sial Steinbach public school in 1911.⁹¹ It was a confidence that showed an almost easy relationship with the outside world, allowing an early acceptance of the car and the telephone. In June, 1917, when the *Kleine Gemeinde* still opposed cars, the *Steinbach Post* reported that two Holdeman families had purchased cars which it noted "would come in very useful as our itinerant preacher F.C. Fricke is coming [from the United States]...to hold services in many places."⁹²

Of all the innovations, however, the revival meeting was the most important and became an institution in the Holdeman Churches after World War I.⁹³ Revival meetings were annual week-long affairs of intense preaching that encouraged adult members to undergo a rigorous self-examination and teenaged youths of age 14 to 16 to experience spiritual conversion.⁹⁴ It was an approach to religious faith that promised an emotional, personal experience: "O, that all souls could taste and discover how sweet and welcoming it is with the Lord" was the plea of Rev. Jacob Enns in 1907.⁹⁵ It was an approach that emphasized a personal conversion: in 1911 when F.C. Fricke, the leading American Holdeman preacher, preached in Steinbach, the report was that "many have found joy... for we have seen how easy it is for those under the burden of sin to have it removed... as more than 40 people decided to walk the narrow way of the cross."⁹⁶

Undergirding the revivalism of the Holdeman Church was a staff of itinerant, charismatic preachers. Jacob Wiebe, the farmer who had taken over the reigns of leadership of the Canadian Holdeman Church from Peter Toews, the immigration leader, was exemplary.⁹⁷ Wiebe was an imposing leader, remembered as a "tall man with a stately bearing... and a long, flowing white beard."⁹⁸ But members particularly remembered his preaching: "His voice would come through clarion-clear... as he admonished and encouraged the saints to greater efforts.... With the same voice he would warn the wayward of judgement to come; then, with tears in his eyes, he would plead with his hearers to accept the only way to heaven — Jesus Christ." So powerful a preacher was Wiebe that observers noted that "few can forget the earnestness of the patriarchal figure behind the pulpit.... [I]t was as if God Himself was speaking... in a strong German voice."⁹⁹

The Holdemans may have resembled the Bruderthaler in the use of Protestant church methods, but they diverged sharply when it came to social boundaries. The Holdeman Church made a mark for itself by making old boundaries stricter, insisting on uniform outward symbols of separation and emphasizing the church's role as the arbiter of all social relations. Church leadership was authoritative: Our church leader "made it clear how sinful it is to go against the teaching of our beloved church," recalled one member from the 1920s.¹⁰⁰ Courtship was carefully regulated by parents and preachers alike to ensure both endogamy and propriety.¹⁰¹ Economic activities such as "involvement and investment in business, farm and other enterprises" were discussed regularly at church conferences.¹⁰² Most visible was the church's growing insistence that external symbols of separation included the beard for the men, and the three-cornered black kerchief for the women. According to Clarence Hiebert, it was only in 1923 that the Holdeman Church made these symbols a crucial part of its "non-conformity to the world."¹⁰³

Undergirding this new conservatism was the Holdeman Church's powerful use of the ban. Excommunication and social avoidance always had been a method of maintaining church discipline for sectarian churches. The Holdeman Church gave the practice a new vigour with the teaching that it alone represented the "true church" of God and that its leaders could experience direct "revelations" from God.¹⁰⁴ In no other church under study was the ban carried out with the same severity. Church members were allowed neither to eat nor associate with the excommunicated.¹⁰⁵ Just how powerful this method of church discipline was, is evident from a bitter experience of Steinbach miller John Toews, who was excommunicated in the 1890s and then ostracized for 30 years. According to Toews, even his brother and mother could not accept his hand-shake. In 1926 Toews reached an emotional breaking point and he filed a legal suit against the church leadership in the Court of King's Bench in Winnipeg. According to court records "the plaintiffs... alleged that in...1898...they were wrongfully expelled from membership... that they have been ostracized by the defendants...and that they had suffered damage to their business...."¹⁰⁶ The court's ruling that the Holdeman Church as "an unincorporated society" was immune from such a charge made it an important legal event in Manitoba; the trial itself was significant for the churches of *Kleine Gemeinde* descent for it revealed the degree to which they had diverged in their strategies of continuity.

VI

Second generation concepts of church and religious faith diverged significantly from those of the first generation. It was clear that in their quest for religious meaning, Steinbach Mennonites could not remain aloof from a more integrated urban-industrial society. As some of the more urban, progressive churches adapted to the new society, conservative churches with a large rural base rejected many aspects of it. True, there were common elements in the *Kleine Gemeinde*, *Bruderthaler* and *Holdeman* groups. Each perceived itself as a Mennonite church; the most progressive of these churches, the *Bruderthaler*, even changed its name to the *Defenseless Mennonite Brethren* during World War I. Each group also supported important inter-Mennonite institutions, including the special committees that negotiated with the Canadian government during World War I. Yet behind this common religious front were widening ideological chasms.

Each of the three descendent church groups pursued a different strategy to counter the new society. During the second generation, the *Bruderthaler* became a clearer champion of American evangelicalism that included revival meetings, foreign missions, immersion baptism, youth programs, and denominational church structure. The *Kleine Gemeinde* changed too. In its quest to maintain a separate, communal-oriented religious faith it was required to take positions on unprec-

edented problems, including the car, town life, commercial enterprise, and consumerism. However, within the old *Kleine Gemeinde* itself there was a growing divergence as conservative members considered seeking a new separate community in isolated parts of Quebec, while others wished instead to adopt the more personalized faith and the denominational structure of mainstream Protestantism. Finally, the Holdeman Church, which had become known for its innovative youth programs and support for public education before 1915, became the new guardian of old ways. By 1930 it had raised ascetic life styles and physical symbols of separation to new virtues, and used the revival meeting to enforce the new conservatism.

Religious discourse in Steinbach between 1900 and 1930, then, had relatively little to do with external political pressure of militaristic governments, or with petty theological differences initiated by clashing personality types; what precipitated religious conflict was the new, urbanizing society replete with new individualizing technology, consumerism, and closer ties with the outside world. As some churches introduced a new level of subjectivity into religious teaching, others devised new means by which to raise social boundaries and keep the new society at bay. Religious upheaval during the first generation, 1874 to 1900, had left Steinbach with three separate church bodies; the conflict of the second generation was more internal in nature as the churches struggled within themselves to develop a religious understanding of the new urbanizing society. The increasing degree of divergence among the *Kleine Gemeinde*, Holdeman and Bruderthaler Mennonites was symptomatic of just how new and far-reaching the new society was.

Notes

This article will be part of a book to be published later this year by the University of Toronto Press.

¹For Canadian studies of immigrant church communities see: Anthony W. Rasporich, "Early Twentieth Century Jewish Farm Settlements in Saskatchewan: A Utopian Perspective," *Saskatchewan History* (1988), 28-40; John M. Cobb, "German Lutherans in the Prairie Provinces Before the First World War: Their Church Background, Emigration and new Beginning in Canada," (Ph.D. Diss., University of Manitoba, 1991). For American studies of the immigrant church see: Randall M. Miller and Thomas Marzick, Introduction, *Immigrants and Religion in Urban America* (Philadelphia, 1977), pp. i-xviii; Jay P. Dolan, "Immigrants in the City: New York's Irish and German Catholics," *Church History* 41 (1972), pp. 354-368;

²John Bodnar, *The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America* (Bloomington, IN, 1985), p. 150.

³Rudolph J. Vecoli, "Prelates and Peasants: Italian Immigrants and the Catholic Church,"

Journal of Social History 2 (1969), pp. 217-268; Stephen Speisman, "Religious Developments at Holy Blossom, 1876-1900," *Prophets, Priests and Prodigals: Readings in Canadian Religious History, 1608 to the Present*, eds., M. McGowall and D. Marshall (Toronto, 1992): 134-147; Paul Yuzyk, "Religious Life," *A Heritage in Transition: Essays in the History of Ukrainians in Canada*, ed., Manoly R. Lupul (Toronto, 1982), pp. 143-172; George Woodcock and Ivan Avakumovic, *The Doukhobors* (Toronto, 1977).

⁴Frank Epp, *Mennonites in Canada, 1786-1920: The History of a Separate People* (Toronto, 1974), p. 133.

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 283-300.

⁷Theron F. Schlabach, *Peace, Faith, Nation: Mennonites and Amish in Nineteenth-Century America* (Scottsdale, PA, 1988), pp. 295-321; James C. Juhnke, *Vision, Doctrine, War: Mennonite Identity and Organization in America, 1890-1930* (Scottsdale, PA, 1989), pp. 56-135.

⁸Timothy Smith, "Religion and Ethnicity in America," *American Historical Review* 83 (1978), p. 1155-1185. For other studies that specifically link religious conflict in immigrant communities and increased urbanization and industrialization see: Raymon A. Mohl and Neil Betten, "The Immigrant Church in Gary, Indiana: Religious Adjustment and Cultural Defense," *Ethnicity* 8 (1981), pp. 1-17; Jon Gjerde, "Conflict and Community: A Case Study of the Immigrant Church in the United States," *Journal of Social History* 19 (1986), pp. 681-97.

⁹Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York, 1973), p. 92.

¹⁰William Westfall, *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Kingston and Montreal, 1989), p. 16.

¹¹For a full account of Steinbach and district and of these schisms between 1879 and 1882 see, Royden Loewen, *Family, Church and Market: A Mennonite Community in the Old and the New Worlds, 1850-1930* (Toronto, 1993).

¹²For ingroup histories of these church groups see: Church of God in Christ Publication Board, *Histories of the Congregations of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite* (Hesston, KS, 1963); G.S. Rempel, ed., *A Historical Sketch of the Churches of the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren* (Rosthern, SK, 1939); Peter J.B. Reimer and David P. Reimer, eds., *The Sesquicentennial Jubilee: Evangelical Mennonite Conference, 1812-1962* (Steinbach, MB, 1962).

¹³Mennonite histories usually see religious conflict as having occurred during the generation before World War I. See, Epp, *Mennonites in Canada*; Juhnke, *Vision, Doctrine, War*; Schlabach, *Peace, Faith, Nation*.

¹⁴These figures are derived from 1922 membership lists cited in Wall, *Concise Record*, p. 17. These lists indicate that another 889 persons lived in the colonies in Dallas (Oregon), Paxton (Nebraska), Langham (Saskatchewan) and Garden City (Kansas) which had drawn many members from Kleine Gemeinde communities. Membership figures for 1922 indicate the following membership statistics: Langham 287, Steinbach 82, Meade 58, Paxton 12, Dallas 66, Jansen 106.

¹⁵See: Kevin Enns-Rempel, "The Fellowship of Evangelical Bible Churches and the Quest for Religious Identity," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 63 (1989), p. 251.

¹⁶E.K. Francis, *In Search of Utopia: The Mennonites in Manitoba* (Altona, MB, 1955), p. 257.

¹⁷Robert C. Brown and Ramsay Cook, *Canada, 1896-1921: A Nation Transformed* (Toronto, 1974), p. 1; Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History* (Toronto, 1984), p. 301.

¹⁸*Giroux Volks Bote*, June 10, 1914; *Steinbach Post*, December 17, 1919; January 2, 1930; May 16, 1930.

¹⁹*Steinbach Post*, September 19, 1917.

²⁰*Giroux Volks Bote*, June 17, 1914; August 5, 1914.

²¹*Giroux Volks Bote*, June 17, 1914; August 5, 1914.

²²*Steinbach Post*, May 30, 1917; June 18, 1919; February 19, 1920.

²³Abe Warkentin, *Reflections on Our Heritage: A History of Steinbach and the R.M. of Hanover From 1874* (Steinbach, 1971), p. 249.

²⁴*Steinbach Post*, November 19, 1924.

²⁵*Giroux Volks Bote*, March 4, 1914.

²⁶*Ibid.*, July 22, 1914.

²⁷*Ibid.*, January 11, 1914.

²⁸*Steinbach Post*, January 3, 1917; Hanover Municipal Council Minutes, January 7, 1920, R.M. of Hanover Office, Steinbach, MB; hereafter RMH.

²⁹Epp, *Mennonites in Canada*, 33ff.

³⁰Heinrich Rempel to "Liebe Geschwister," January 1, 1887, Ed Schellenberg, Steinbach, MB; *Mennonitische Rundschau*, February 22, 1899.

³¹*Ibid.*, June 17, 1903.

³²In the two decades following 1913 the Bruderthaler Church grew by 167% compared to 92% for the Holdeman Church and 75% for the Kleine Gemeinde. Francis, *In Search of Utopia*, p. 257 cites the following memberships: Kleine Gemeinde (1913) 1108, (1932) 1912; Holdeman (1913) 498, (1932) 958; Bruderthaler (1913) 22, (1932) 400.

³³John C. Reimer, *75 Gedenkefeier der Mennonitischen Einwanderung in Manitoba, Canada* (North Kildonan, MB, 1949), p. 61.

³⁴Interview with John C. Reimer, November 1987.

³⁵Francis, *In Search of Utopia*, p. 263.

³⁶R.M. of Hanover Tax Roll, 6-6E, 1915, RMH.

³⁷Rempel, *Evangelical Mennonite Brethren*, p. 67.

³⁸George Schultz, "Autobiography" (Unpublished manuscript, Chicago, ca1950), Beatrice Schultz, Monteray, CA, p. 18.

³⁹Arnold Schultz, "A Centennial History of the [Evangelical Mennonite Brethren] Conference, 1889-1989," Unpublished Manuscript, Beatrice Schultz, Monteray, CA, n.p.

⁴⁰Schultz, "Autobiography," p. 24.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁴²*Ibid.*

⁴³*Ibid.*

⁴⁴For the social context of this change see: Joseph F. Kett, "Adolescence and Youth in Nineteenth Century America," *Journal of International History* 2 (1971), pp. 288 and 298. Kett contrasts pre-industrial notions of youth as "rash and heedless" to those of the late nineteenth century which saw them as "vulnerable, passive, and awkward" persons, easily moulded to the "norm...[of] conformity."

⁴⁵G.P. Schultz, *Weathered Words* (Chicago, n.d.), pp. 15, 17, 20, 25, & 27.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 9, 11, & 35.

⁴⁷They were P.B. Schmidt, H.S. Rempel and B.P. Janz.

⁴⁸Rempel, *Evangelical Mennonite Brethren*, p. 68.

⁴⁹*Giroux Volks Bote*, July 1, 1914.

⁵⁰Church records of 1906 indicate a baptism was held in a creek on the preacher's farm and after 1914 this service occurred regularly in the Seine River east of Giroux. *Giroux Volks Bote*, September

30, 1914.

⁵¹O.J. Wall, ed. and trans, *A Concise Record of our Evangelical Mennonite Brethren Annual Conference Reports, 1889-1979* (Mountain Lake, MN, 1979), pp. 11, 14 & 21.

⁵²*Steinbach Post*, June 13, 1917; July 7, 1920. Other visitors to Steinbach included Peter A. Friesen, India (July 1914), H. Bartel, China (August, 1914), Aaron Janzen, Africa, (July 1917), Gerhard Thiessen (July 1920). *Giroux Volks Bote*, July 22, 1914; August 1, 1914; *Steinbach Post*, July 25, 1917; July 7, 1920.

⁵³According to the *Mennonite Encyclopedia* "World War I and its aftermath devastated the [Borosenko] villages. Steinbach was slaughtered off almost completely in a single night. The bandits caused much depredation in the other villages....It is assumed that this settlement was completely destroyed in World War II." Harold S. Bender and Cornelius Krahn, *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, s.v., "Borozenko," by P.A. Rempel.

⁵⁴*Steinbach Post*, September 19, 1923.

⁵⁵Leland Harder, *Steinbach and Its Churches* (Elkart, IN, 1970), p. 50.

⁵⁶*Steinbach Post*, November 14, 1918; October 9, 1929; September 26, 1931.

⁵⁷For a discussion of the differences in denominational and sectarian churches see: Rodney Sawatsky, "Domesticated Sectarianism: Mennonites in the United States and Canada in Comparative Perspective," *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 3 (1978), 236.

⁵⁸Peter R. Dueck, "Christmas/Advent Sermon, 1905," trans. Peter U. Dueck, Evangelical Mennonite Conference Archives [hereafter EMCA], Steinbach, pp. 1, 5, 13, 15

⁵⁹Arden Thiessen, "E.M.C. Theology in the Years of Transition," Paper Presented at the Evangelical Mennonite Conference History Symposium, Steinbach, Manitoba, October 30, 1987.

⁶⁰Dueck, "Christmans Advent Sermon," trans. P.U. Dueck, EMCA, pp. 9 & 14.

⁶¹Peter Dueck, "Tagebuch, 1901-1919," EMCA, *passim*.

⁶²*Ibid.*, December 2, 1906; December 30, 1907.

⁶³For a discussion of different approaches of the Canadian and American governments to Mennonite pacifists see: William Janzen, *Limits of Liberty: The Experience of Mennonite, Hutterite, and Doukhobor Communities in Canada* (Toronto, 1990), pp. 167-197; Juhnke, *Vision, Doctrine, War*, pp. 208-243.

⁶⁴Dueck, "Tagebuch," November 15, 1917; October 6, 1918.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, December 26, 1916; January 17, 1917; May 28, 1918.

⁶⁶*Steinbach Post*, October 9, 1918.

⁶⁷K.J.B. Reimer, ed., *60 Jaehrige Jubilaeum der Mennonitischen Einwanderung in Manitoba* (Steinbach, MB, 1935), p. 25.

⁶⁸*Steinbach Post*, January 1, 1919; Peter Unger, "Denkschrift, 1882-1929," EMCA, Box 88, p. 63.

⁶⁹*Winnipeg Telegram*, December 15, 1906; *Mennonitische Rundschau*, August 13, 1908; Dueck, "Tagebuch," December 16, 1906.

⁷⁰Dueck, "Tagebuch," April 7, 1912; October 1, 1913.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, January 6, 1905; December 31, 1905; March 12, 1906; November 10, 1907; July 10, 1910; July 31, 1910; October 20, 1913; July 12, 1914; February 20, 1916.

⁷²*Die Nordwesten*, April 12, 1911.

⁷³Dueck, "Tagebuch," April 2, 1911.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, July 12, 1911; Gerhard Kornelson, "Einst und Jetzt," *Steinbach Post*, March 1, 1916, p. 1.

⁷⁵Dueck, "Tagebuch," October 1, 1911.

⁷⁶Dueck, "Tagebuch," May 14, 1905.

⁷⁷*Ibid.*, January 22, 1911; November 26, 1911; November 28, 1915; March 11, 1916.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, January 6, 1905.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, May 16, 1910; May 29, 1910; Interview with John C. Reimer, September 1987.

⁸⁰Dueck, "Tagebuch," May 25, 1911.

⁸¹Between 1913 and 1932 it increased from 1108 to 1933 souls. Francis, *In Search of Utopia*, p. 257.

⁸²Isaac Reimer, "Tagebuch, 1924-5," Dave K. Schellenberg, Steinbach, MB.

⁸³Jacob B. Kroeker, "Tagebuch, 1924-37," EMCA, July 22, 1928; Interview with Henry F. Loewen, Meade, Kansas, who recalled that on visits to his relatives in Rosenort around 1930 he painted a number of bumpers black.

⁸⁴Royden Loewen, *Blumenort: A Mennonite Community in Transition, 1874-1982* (Blumenort, MB, 1990), p. 394.

⁸⁵Kroeker, "Tagebuch," December 6, 1926.

⁸⁶Henry Plett to Cornelius Plett, June 26, 1925, Cornelius L. Plett Papers, Steinbach Bible College, Steinbach.

⁸⁷*Steinbach Post*, May 23, 1928; Reimer and Reimer, *Sesquicentennial*, p. 56; Henry Bartel to Gerhard Kornelson, November 1929, Gerhard Kornelson Papers, EMCA; *Steinbach Post*, January 1, 1931.

⁸⁸It was a method that paralleled the experience of the largest Swiss-Mennonite body, the "Old" Mennonite Church, which is said to have developed "a new bond between revivalism and nonconformity" during the 1890s. Juhnke, *Vision, Doctrine, War*, p. 117.

⁸⁹Francis, *In Search of Utopia*, p. 257; Reimer, *75 Gedenkfeier*, p. 59; *Rundschau*, August 5, 1907; *Histories of the Congregations*, p. 155, 172, 177. These included Linden (Alberta), 1914; Rosenort (Manitoba), 1919; Hochstadt (Manitoba), 1907; Steinbach (Manitoba), 1911; Greenland (Manitoba), 1920.

⁹⁰Dueck, "Tagebuch," March 1, 1908; *Mennonitische Rundschau*, April 8, 1908. Other Holdeman programs geared to the youth included the Sunday School begun in 1910, and a "Kinderfest" of songs and Bible quizzes founded in 1914. *Mennonitische Rundschau*, September 14, 1910; *Giroux Volks Bote*, July 1, 1914.

⁹¹Dueck, "Tagebuch," 1911.

⁹²*Steinbach Post*, May 30, 1917.

⁹³Clarence Hiebert, *The Holdeman People: The Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, 1859-1969* (South Pasadena, CA, 1973), p. 279. An account of the Greenland, Manitoba congregation states that "Brother Mininger...came in the early spring of 1920, preaching with success and bringing much fruit. After that we had revival meetings every year." *Histories of the Congregations*, p. 165.

⁹⁴While the youth in the Kleine Gemeinde church were usually baptized at the age of 21, youth in the Holdeman church were often baptized between the ages of 14 and 16. See Edwin Wiebe and Edwin Penner, *The Jacob T. Wiebe Family Book* (Rosenort, MB, 1976), pp. 31, 33, 39, 44, 49, 52, 54 & 56.

⁹⁵*Mennonitische Rundschau*, March 14, 1907. For similar themes developed by Manitoba Holdeman preachers see *Messenger of Truth*, July 10, 1912; November 10, 1912.

⁹⁶*Steinbach Post*, November 23, 1911.

⁹⁷After Wiebe's election in 1910 at the age of 37 he quickly assumed the position of prominence once held by Aeltester Peter Toews, becoming the editor of the German-language church periodical and establishing himself as an itinerant revivalist.

⁹⁸Wiebe and Penner, *Jacob T. Wiebe*, p. 31.

⁹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*, p. 53.

¹⁰¹See: Johannes Holdeman, *Ein Spiegel der Wahrheit: Ein Lehrbuch den Frommen zum Trost, und den Suendern zur Busze* (Lancaster, PA, 1880), pp. 317ff; Jacob G. Friesen and Frank P. Toews, *Family Tree: Jacob Regehr, 1832-1906* (Kleefeld, 1969).

¹⁰²Hiebert, *Holdeman*, p. 282.

¹⁰³Hiebert, *Holdeman People*, pp. 268-275. In 1884 the Holdeman Church had shown a remarkable openness to dress when it declared "that we have no particular pattern to follow scripturally to make our clothes" so long as it did not include the "latest fashion." Gemeinde Gottes, "First Conference," October 1868, Fullton County, Ohio.

¹⁰⁴Hiebert, *Holdeman People*, p. 236.

¹⁰⁵See, for example, Holdeman, *Spiegel der Wahrheit*, pp. 175-182.

¹⁰⁶*Toews v. Isaac* [Manitoba Court of Appeal, March 25, 1928] W.W.R. I, at page 818. See also *Toews v Isaac* [Manitoba K.B. November 24, 1927] W.W.R. I, 643; *Toews v Isaac* [Manitoba C.A. March 26, 1931] II, 48.