



E.K. Francis' Search for Utopia: A Tribute

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Sociologist Emerich K. Francis died in Munich, Germany, on January 14, 1994, at the age of 88. He will be remembered by Mennonites for his *In Search of Utopia: The Mennonites in Manitoba*, published by D.W. Friesens in 1955. Those of us who knew him, valued his ideas and used his works in our research, feel a deep loss. The dedication and scholarship of Francis meant much to many of us.

Like many Mennonites, Francis was a refugee. He came to Canada in 1940 from Austria via France and England as an enemy alien of World War II. Like others who come to a new country, he had to struggle with a new language and culture while seeking to make a living and trying to find a meaningful place in life. All this was made especially difficult for a scholar with a Ph.D who had no other skills or experience to fall back on. Finding a scholarly focus, blending personal and research commitments, weaving supporting social networks, getting creative ideas heard and struggling to get works published are familiar problems in academia. Success and recognition came to Francis only after much struggle, including false starts and frustrating delays in getting his publishing career underway.

Formative Forces¹

E.K. Francis was born in Innsbruck, Austria, in 1906 and raised in a Catholic home. As a boy in the old Austro-Hungarian monarchy, with its loose multicultural milieu, he witnessed the defeated Austrian army come back from World War I. A few years later as a student he listened to professors who had served in the military talk about the war. Prague, where he obtained his doctorate, was a multi-ethnic city with many Germans and Jews, as well as Czechs. Here he studied philosophy, psychology, history and, later, sociology at the University of Münster.

When World War II broke out he happened to be in Prinknash Abbey in France. While in school he had assisted Catholic priests working with students and had been a journalist for a Catholic newspaper from 1934-38, but he really wanted to become a monk or a priest. Having been accepted as an Oblate monk, he did liturgical studies close to a cloister, but during the Dunkirk evacuation he was interned and sent to the Isle of Man in England. In 1940 he was transferred to an internment camp in Sherbrook, Quebec, but was released in 1942 and became by turns a gardener, orphanage worker and farm laborer. He finally landed, still in the same year, in the Trappist monastery in St. Norbert, Manitoba, on the outskirts of Winnipeg. After stints as a hospital worker and as a linotype operator, in 1945 Francis was able to take a step up when he taught German briefly at United College and the University of Manitoba, where he also assisted in the Political Science department.² It had been a long journey for a young internee now almost 40 years old. He was a well-trained scholar from Europe who had served the Catholic church in earlier years and paid the price for being a religious German during the war, but who had not yet been able to launch a scholarly career. After being forced to do many other things, he was finally able to turn to productive scholarship during the second half of his life.

Birth of a Classic: Canada 1940-47

Social science research in Canada at this time was still very much in its beginning stages. Charles A. Dawson's *Group Settlement: Ethnic Communities in Western Canada* (1936), was a study of French, German, Doukhobor, Mormon and Mennonite communities in western Canada, including the Mennonite West Reserve in Manitoba. However, it was a demographic and community survey of eleven groups in as many places and more indepth community study was required on each of them. In 1939, in Quebec, Horace Miner had made the first intensive anthropological study in his *St. Denis: A French-Canadian Parish*, which Francis used as a model in part for his study of Manitoba Mennonites later.³ Everett Hughes' study of Cantonville in *French Canada in Transition* (1943), focused on the industrial changes within a small town in Quebec and the impact it had on French-English relations. Francis' early published articles focused on his interest in peasant society and in the ideological forces of tradition and progress, stability and change.⁴ While Miner's study

fed into Francis' interest in peasant society, Hughes' study dealt with change related to questions of acculturation and modernization, also concerns of Francis.⁵ It was clear that an indepth study was needed in the West, considering that Miner's and Hughes' sociological studies were done on Quebec and that Canadian sociological research in general was still in its early stages in Canada.

And so it was not surprising that when the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba asked Francis in 1945 to do an indepth study of one of the ethnic groups in Manitoba for their new series in ethnic studies, he would choose to study the Mennonites. He had been in Manitoba since 1942, first as an internee in a monastery and later in various occupations. He had taught part-time at the University of Manitoba, where he had become acquainted with the well-known historian W.L. Morton. The Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba granted Francis a two-year fellowship that ran from September, 1945, to March, 1947. Here was his first major opportunity to do intensive social research, using the tools for which he had been trained, after a long round-about journey of editorial, monastic and internee service.

Trained in philosophy, history, psychology and sociology, Francis was well prepared to do a comprehensive community study. As a monastic candidate in the Catholic church, he was familiar with church history and theology. He was a practicing Catholic, having explored the deeper meaning of devotion, service and dedication in his earlier years and wrestling with what it meant to be a Christian in the larger world, including academia. Thus, it was not surprising that he was able to enter the traditional Mennonite community and be accepted by its leaders and lay people. Ted Friesen of Altona, Manitoba, who spent considerable time driving Francis around the East and West Reserves, reports that Francis interviewed the Mennonites in High German, although he could understand Low German.⁶ Friesen, and often Victor Peters, a teacher who became a well-known Mennonite historian himself, supplied Low German when needed, and also acted as a sounding board after the interviews.

Back at the University of Manitoba, Francis cultivated his contacts with historian W.L. Morton, who provided Manitoba and Canadian historical sources and interpretations. Morton, a member of the Executive of the Historical Society which was sponsoring the two-year study, was a close ally of Francis during the time he dealt with the Society. Indeed, after the study had been completed and reported to the Society, Morton offered to help get it published, although his efforts, as we shall see later, were not all that Francis might have expected. When the book was finally published in 1955 Morton was asked to write the Preface.

For his basic research models Francis went to the demographic community studies of Charles Dawson, Horace Miner and Everett Hughes already referred to, as well as to that of J. Winfield Fretz, an American-Mennonite sociologist. All four scholars were graduates and proponents of the so-called Chicago School approach to community study.⁷ These studies, in turn, were based on an earlier study of "Middletown" by the Lynds in 1929. The basic method was to sketch briefly the arrival of a given immigrant group and then to describe in

broad terms its population (demography) and the area (ecology) in which it lived. Usually census data were used to trace the growth of population in the community and to plot these general trends by the use of maps, charts and tables. Then the basic social institutions of family, religion, education, economics and politics were studied in depth by means of interviews. Finally attention would focus on the demographic, ecological and institutional changes which had occurred over time. This was the basic pattern of the early sociological community studies which Francis followed in his research on the Mennonites.

When Francis made his final research report to the Society in 1947, he presented the basic Mennonite community pattern. However, since he was speaking mostly to historians (social scientists hardly existed in Manitoba) Francis' historical introduction captured most of the attention, while his extended concentration on demographic, ecological, and institutional data presented in scores of tables, charts and figures was not fully appreciated. The historians were looking for historical process while Francis the sociologist was interested in the dynamics of social structure and interaction.⁸ Furthermore, he was trying to explore the theoretical implications that would throw light on what to expect for the future. For example, were Mennonites assimilating or acculturating? Would their group structures change, and how? And what implications would all this have for their future survival as an ethnic group? Since this was to be the first in a series of new ethnic studies in Manitoba, however, the Historical Society and its members were concerned that this first study follow their own methodological historical patterns. Fortunately, Francis' multi-disciplinary education enabled him to move easily between methods and ideologies, but he was concerned that the methods of social science should not be neglected.

The Politics of Publication

Unfortunately for Francis, he ran into both expected and unexpected road-blocks from the outset. As a war internee and immigrant who had received his education in Europe, he was an outsider who could not rely on the usual network of references, sponsors and colleagues to assist him in his new academic career. So he was not prepared for the kind of opposition he encountered immediately. Mrs. Margaret McWilliams, wife of the Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba, was the President of the Manitoba Historical Society. When Francis presented his research manuscript to the Society, Mrs. McWilliams took special exception to his multicultural perspective. As a loyal Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-conformist, she expected other ethnic groups to assimilate fully and become like the British. She was alarmed by a study which argued that the Mennonites, while accommodating somewhat, were certainly not going to assimilate. Besides, the ethnic studies by Dawson had predicted the assimilation and Anglo-conformity of ethnic groups in Western Canada, a view which supported that of McWilliams. Francis, raised

in the multi-ethnic Austro-Hungarian empire, simply did not think in terms of Anglo-conformity.

The differences between Mrs. McWilliams and Francis represented assimilation and multicultural polarities that could not be resolved. McWilliams did not want such a multicultural study and Francis refused to cater to the dominant British interests that had usually won out on the Prairies in the past. Since most of the historians sided with the McWilliams view, the matter had reached an impasse. Francis was understandably upset when he found that the Society was reluctant to publish his work. After two years of diligent work his research and publication efforts had once again been postponed, and he was now forty years of age.⁹

Francis was determined to proceed with publication. Having submitted his original manuscript to the Society, he was now faced with the problem of getting it released so that he could publish it elsewhere. An avenue seemed to open up. S.D. Clark, the current head of the Department of Sociology at the University of Manitoba, sat on the editorial board of the University of Toronto Press, which was in the process of publishing his own *Church and Sect in Canada* (1948). Clark and W.L. Morton helped Francis make the necessary contacts. The University of Toronto was interested but asked for revisions because there were so many tables and appendices, which would make publication expensive. Francis agreed and twice revised the manuscript extensively. In several of his shorter publications in 1951 and 1952, Francis stated that his study would be published by the University of Toronto Press, but the matter dragged on. Because the Society had sponsored the study and held the rights to it, it balked at releasing it for publication elsewhere.

Becoming a Recognized Scholar: USA 1947-58

In 1947, the year Francis finished his Manitoba research, Notre Dame University hired him to help develop a doctoral programme in sociology. He obtained the position not because of his scholarly record but through personal contact. The Dean at Notre Dame knew Francis from the time the latter had studied at Münster, and knowing Francis' abilities and dedication was willing to take the risk that he would develop into a productive scholar.¹⁰ At the time Francis had only a meagre handful of published articles, but his Mennonite research held promise of a major book if only the University of Toronto would publish it. Publication of his manuscript would enhance both his own reputation and that of his department at Notre Dame. Francis, however, could not afford to wait. Using his unpublished Mennonite data, he published a dozen or so articles between 1947 and 1958 in prestigious sociological journals in America, Britain and Germany. It was this productive period at Notre Dame that established Francis as a sociological scholar of stature.

His first of four articles published in the *American Journal of Sociology*, provided the outlet he needed. The University of Chicago where *AJS* was published, was now only 100 miles from South Bend, Indiana, where Francis taught. Francis got to know the *AJS* editors Herbert Blumer and Everett Hughes, whose help he also acknowledged later in the preface of *In Search of Utopia*. Hughes, who published *French Canada in Transition* in 1943, understood the multicultural perspective which Francis espoused. Hughes had taught earlier at McGill University and had studied under both Park, an assimilationist, and Thomas, a multiculturalist at Chicago. Hughes appreciated Francis' multicultural perspective.

Francis' first article in the *AJS* focused on "The Nature of the Ethnic Group," which his research on Mennonites had raised. In 1948, Francis published "The Russian Mennonites: From Religious to Ethnic Group" in the *AJS*, stressing that mutations can happen in groups as they develop. The sectarian group had become an institutionalized social system in Russia, largely responsible for its own economic and political well-being.

"Toward a Typology of Religious Orders," published in the *AJS* in 1950, represented a return to his monastic experiences now that he had been at the Catholic Notre Dame University for three years. The Catholic religious, living in the various orders, like the Mennonites, were all moving from close-knit groups to greater contact with the larger society as well. He saw a whole range of sub-societies within the Catholic church as well.

"Variables in the Formation of So-Called 'Minority Groups'," published in the *AJS* in 1954, continued his larger quest to understand more fully the nature of minority structures and their relationship to the larger society. This theme continued in two more articles published in the *British Journal of Sociology* in 1951, and *Rural Sociology* in 1952. New research on Pueblo Indians in New Mexico began to appear in the *American Sociological Review*, another premier journal in 1956.

These probes into the theoretical basis of ethnic group identity and solidarity continued in his six publications in the premier German sociological journal *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* published in 1953, 1957 and 1981.

By the end of eleven years at Notre Dame University, E.K. Francis had concentrated intensely on publishing a dozen scholarly articles accepted by a half dozen of the best sociological journals in America, Britain and Germany. Ethnic and minority group change would remain the lifelong interest and work of E.K. Francis.

The Bender Connection

With publication of his book manuscript still held up in Canada, Francis developed another scholarly contact that would be of great value to him over the years. At Goshen College, Indiana, just twenty miles from Notre Dame in South

Bend, Harold Bender was the editor of *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, in which solid Mennonite contributions were always welcome. Between 1950 and 1954 Francis published four articles using his Manitoba Mennonite data in *MQR*. This connection with Bender would prove to be most helpful in finally getting his book published. H.S Bender was busy grooming scholars who would help in his ambitious programme of research in Mennonite history. The Mennonite Historical Society, the Mennonite Archives, *MQR* and his "Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History" series, were all part of this major programme at Goshen. By 1950 seven books in the Mennonite History series had already been published and as its editor Bender was always looking for good manuscripts on Mennonites.

While academic sociological journals provided opportunity for Francis to hone his conceptual and theoretical scholarship, important for his Notre Dame academic career, publication in *MQR* provided him with a chance to also explore confessional concerns. To Francis it was important that he speak to the confessing Mennonite community, which had something in common with his own journey of faith. He began this phase of his publishing career with a brief article in *Mennonite Life* in 1949 entitled "Mennonite Contributions to Canada's Middle West," which celebrated the 75th anniversary of the first arrival of Russian Mennonites in Western Canada in 1874. In March, 1950, Francis presented the paper "Tradition and Progress Among the Mennonites in Manitoba" to the Mennonite Historical Society at Goshen College, a paper published in *MQR* in October, 1950. Here he began by going back to his earlier peasant, utopia and progress themes, and showed how Mennonites in many ways illustrated a search for the kind of perfection he himself had pursued during his monastic years. Referring frequently to his as yet unpublished *In Search of Utopia*, he concluded that Manitoba Mennonites had found, if not utopia, then "the next best to it; social and psychological security in a well-organized community" (Francis, 1950:328).

In 1951 Francis published "The Mennonite Commonwealth in Russia, 1789-1914" in *MQR*, again citing his forthcoming book to be published by the University of Toronto Press. The paper documented how Russian Mennonites had changed from a religious movement to an institutionalized sect. His 1953 and 1954 *MQR* articles incorporated parts of his research on Manitoba Mennonites which it was clear by now would not appear in the revised version of his book. The 1953 article, "The Mennonite School Problem in Manitoba 1874-1919: A Bibliography on the Mennonites in Manitoba," presented important research material which the Toronto publisher did not want to include. The 1954 article, "The Mennonite Farmhouse in Manitoba," was another appendix that had been rejected. By this time Harold Bender had begun negotiations to get *Utopia* published, and so Francis felt it safe to publish the rejected sections.

In early 1953, six years after Francis had submitted his manuscript and report, he received a letter from the Manitoba Historical Society to the effect that his manuscript would be placed in the archives and that he was now free to have

it published. A month later Francis wrote Bender informing him that he was prepared to have D.W. Friesen and Sons of Altona publish the book in Canada, and suggested that the American Mennonite Historical Society could jointly publish it in the US as part of their historical series. As for the University of Toronto Press, the project there had stalled because 1) they needed a subsidy, which the Society would not grant; and 2) they wanted a third revision which would omit the appendices to cut costs, a measure Francis refused to accept. Bender immediately wrote to Friesens, asking them to get a copy of the manuscript from W.L. Morton and then make their decision about publishing it. Friesens did try to get the manuscript from Morton, but after two letters received a reply that the Society wanted to microfilm it before releasing it, and that another decision would then be taken. The truth of the matter was that the Society, while having released the manuscript in a letter as a formality, really did not want the author to have it published at all and by resorting to the stalling tactic of microfilming probably hoped that it would finally remain buried in the archives.

In February, 1954, Harold Bender wrote Friesens that he had now received the complete manuscript from the author and that Francis was willing to edit it down to 350 pages. On March 3, D.K. Friesen informed Bender that they were willing to publish the book and gave the cost and selling price estimates Bender had requested. Bender replied by proposing an edition of 1500 copies, of which 500 would be for the Mennonite Historical Society as part of Bender's historical series. It looked like a good deal. Bender's dedication to research, his efficiency and the generous time he devoted to the project, not to mention his willingness to take risks, were qualities very much in evidence and boded well for the long-delayed project.

The Manitoba Historical Society, however, was not privy to the deal between Bender and Friesens through Francis, and was still willing to dangle carrots without making any firm commitments. On March 24 W.L. Morton wrote to Francis (addressing him as "Dear Nick" and signing himself as "Bill"):

When in Toronto recently, I discussed with Del Clark the publication of your Mennonite *mss*. He is still of the opinion it ought to be *printed*—an opinion I share...we wondered why you should not revise the *mss* as you now plan for publication in Canada, by the U.T. Press in the series....Before we can microfilm, the whole must [be] retyped, and the deadlock over microfilming remains....As the Council meets this evening, I shall try to get the *mss* released for return to you.¹¹

The letter is revealing in more ways than one. After all this time the original manuscript still had not been microfilmed! Francis, as already mentioned, had always regarded Morton (first as Secretary and then as President of the Society) as an ally working on his behalf. Morton seemed to be using his connections with Clark in Toronto, but somehow nothing ever happened. Francis' patience was now at an end and his reply to Morton shows his anger. In his three-page letter Francis listed eleven points of grievance in the fiasco and concluded in no uncertain terms:

To my mind, the only decent and gentlemanly thing for the Manitoba Historical Society to do in this perfectly absurd situation would be: a) return to me immediately the charts, maps and tables...b) send me the original manuscript...¹²

Needless to say, the behaviour of the Society had been unconscionable. However, Francis was now at last freed from this inexplicably frustrating situation. A more established Canadian scholar would probably not have put up with such callous treatment. As already outlined, by 1954 Francis had gained enough recognition in the United States so that he was no longer at the mercy of persons and circumstances in Canada that seemed to block his professional progress.

The Frustrations of Book Publishing

The ordeal of actually getting the book published, however, was far from over. Had the Manitoba Historical Society come up with the subsidy required by the University of Toronto Press, which was willing to publish it, the book would have appeared much sooner and with better distribution. But even after years of frustration Francis, to his credit, did not give up. The detailed correspondence between Francis and Friesens speaks eloquently of Francis' determination, dedication and sheer will power in the face of frustrations that would have taxed the patience of a saint.¹³

One such frustration was the negotiating of dual publication in Canada and the US. With Friesens ready to publish in Canada there was still no publisher for the US edition. By June of 1954, however, Francis was in touch with Jeremiah Kaplan of the Free Press at Glencoe, Illinois, not far from South Bend.¹⁴ The Free Press was a major publisher of social science books and Bender encouraged Francis to go with them. However, the Free Press set conditions: they wanted exclusive rights in the US, and they demanded clarification of contractual rights. They were also concerned about the quality of printing they would get from Friesens. The Free Press also demanded 500 copies with their imprint on the final bind before they finally signed the contract in late 1955.

There were further difficulties and delays in trying to get a much-needed subsidy from the Canadian Social Science Research Council. In July, 1954, Friesens were still petitioning the Council for a \$500 grant so that they might include more tables and figures in the book. Not until August 29 did Friesens receive word from the Council that a grant for the requested sum would be forthcoming. As it turned out, the Council did not actually pay the grant until November, 1955, just after the book appeared and had been favorably evaluated by the Council.

Meanwhile, it was becoming rather obvious that Friesens simply did not have proper facilities to publish books. With all their experience as printers, they were novices when it came to book publishing. They lacked the necessary editors and promotional staff, as well as the plant resources and finances

required for such an ambitious project. However, they went in to it as a labor of love and faith: it was their belief that Manitoba Mennonites and their friend Francis deserved that the book be published. From start to finish the firm was stretched almost to the breaking point in dealing with the day-to-day technical problems and the long-range communication required between Altona and South Bend. For example, lacking the facilities and staff to deal with the numerous charts, graphs and photos, Friesens required help not only from sources in Winnipeg but from Goshen and Notre Dame. The binding had to be done in Winnipeg, and even the developing of the dust jacket became a major issue. The Free Press had promised to look into this, but by the Fall of 1954 when the book was almost ready for the Canadian market they had still not done so.¹⁵

Especially trying were the long-range communications required during the publishing process. Problems arising from procedures and details required contact between Altona and South Bend either by telephone, wire or letter. Francis began one letter to D.K. Friesen in February, 1955, by stating that "our business is becoming unduly complicated because of difficulties of communication. Let me try to straighten it out a bit." He went on to list numerous points and subpoints that illustrated the problems. Among other things, he had received charts that needed to be redone, he wanted to see the proofs, he detailed options on prices and addressed the issue of royalties, speculated about a possible second edition and was worried about review copies of the book.¹⁶

D.K. Friesen wrote back almost in despair:

I have your letters of February 12 and 25 and two wires on my desk, and I feel sick over the whole project. Ray was sick in bed for a week and expects to enter hospital... I just returned to work this morning after being in bed a week. Our plant is working around the clock practically, and everyone is hollering for his job. We are swamped with work and I practically had a nervous breakdown trying to keep up...¹⁷

It was obvious that resources and emotions were near the breaking point. In spite of all the good intentions and extraordinary efforts, publication of the book seemed to be almost too much for the small Altona firm.

When *In Search of Utopia* was finally published in November, 1955, in an edition of 2000 copies, the problems and frustrations continued. The 500 copies for the American edition were duly shipped to the Free Press, but the shipment could not clear the New York customs office. Apparently, US copyrights had been violated, and in January, 1956, almost three months after the book's appearance in Canada, the US shipment was still in customs. In addition to all their other problems, Friesens were now faced with legal hassles.¹⁸ All this delayed the Free Press distribution and, of course, increased costs. The books were not released by customs until June, 1956, some nine months after publication in Canada. And in November, a whole year after publication, the Free Press had still not paid the brokers who dealt with the customs in New York, an added difficulty Friesens had to untangle.

There were further problems with publicity and distribution, again because

Friesens lacked adequate facilities and experience. Francis asked for 100 author's copies of the book (a request that would be considered highly unusual today) to distribute to colleagues, organizations and friends who might help promote the book. This list included many North American scholars who he hoped would review the book favorably. And Francis' hopes were not misplaced. In spite of inexperience, mistakes and delays on the part of both Friesens and Francis, in the end their strenuous efforts were rewarded with very good reviews in a number of prominent journals.

For all the difficulties and delays attendant upon its publication, *In Search of Utopia* proved to be worth the prolonged effort and found a modest but secure place for itself, especially in the Mennonite world. It was the first serious book-length sociological study of Mennonites, and has been used extensively by later Mennonite scholars. It also gave Canadian-Mennonite readers a general sense of direction about where they had come from and where they were going. However, it did not make much of an impact on sociological literature in Canada for several reasons. Firstly, Canadian sociology at the time was still in its infancy; secondly, as a rural publisher, Friesens was not well-known, thus limiting distribution of the book; and finally, the multicultural perspective in the fifties was not yet well received. As well, in the much larger US market 500 copies of *Utopia* constituted a very small drop in a gigantic sea of publication.

Search for Utopia in Germany: 1958-74

By working at Notre Dame, the premier Catholic university in America, for eleven years Francis was in many ways returning to his Catholic roots in his restless search for a personal utopia. Here he had blossomed into a recognized scholar but personal frustrations remained. In a December, 1956, letter to Robert Friedmann, another refugee from Nazi Germany, Francis expressed his doubts about being a Catholic scholar in a predominantly Protestant society:

So far I haven't had any reaction about my book except from Mennonite circles and a few friends. Whether it will help me academically is doubtful; there is as much prejudice against Catholic scholars in America as there once was against Jewish scholars in pre-Hitler Germany or Austria. I am [so] fed up with this situation that I was seriously considering staying in Germany. My name actually was suggested in second place in the *facultät vorschlag* for München but as you know there is now a social-democrat coalition government in Bavaria and so the Minister of Education called the third man on the list who was not tainted with a Catholic background and affiliation.¹⁹

Francis' gloomy feelings of being victimized by prejudice in an American setting in which he did not feel fully at home, were no doubt reinforced by his realization that his book would not lead to new academic opportunities.

Francis' pessimism about his future prospects turned out to be unfounded. In 1958 he left Notre Dame to establish the Institute of Sociology at the University

of Munich. In a letter to Robert Friedmann in December, 1958, he wrote:

Alas, I am still swamped with work trying to build up the institute and library, and to handle the more than hundred students who have registered for the one or other of my seminars and labs. Even with the help of three assistants, a librarian, and a secretary I am barely able to provide for an appropriate training in social research methods. And this is only the beginning of my headaches which are too numerous to mention.²⁰

The Austrian monk, internee and immigrant scholar had returned to his European origins and was now faced with a new and very different set of problems and challenges. He was now fifty-one and burdened with heavy administrative problems in trying to get his new Institute underway. He was near his beloved Alps again but he found little time for hiking.

Francis list of publications in journals after 1958 is rather sparse, as he lacked the time for serious research. He did, however, manage to get some work published shortly after he arrived in Munich and before he was swamped with administrative and teaching duties. In a series of three articles in *Die Kölner Zeitschrift*, where he had published twice before (1953 and 1957), he dealt with various issues related to minorities in North America. After that there were only occasional articles which appeared much later when his Institute had been fully established. He also managed to write two more important books in his later years. *Ethnos und Demos: Soziologische Beiträge zur Volkstheorie* was published by Duncker & Humblot of Berlin in 1965. Written in German (most of his work so far had been in English), this volume contained a summary of some of his best-known English work as well as some unpublished work, and was designed for German sociology students and scholars. In his teaching in Munich he was finding that his scholarly work in North America could be adapted to his needs in German and introduced in Germany, where there was a need for it. Works in ethnicity especially, a major part of his research, were relatively scarce in Europe and had been long neglected. Ethnic theory and methods needed to be introduced. Interestingly, his Mennonite research still occupied a prominent place in his work, evidence of how the 1945-47 Mennonite research had shaped his thinking.

Not having begun his serious scholarly work until he was almost forty, Francis had to search longer than most sociologists in developing a rounded theory of ethnic relations. In 1976, when he was seventy, he published his *magnum opus: Interethnic Relations: An Essay in Sociological Theory*, published in English by Elsevier in New York. The volume integrates his ethnic research and summarized thirty years of his work. By now retired as Professor Emeritus of Sociology, he was at last in a position to synthesize his anthropological, historical, political and sociological investigations into ethnic groups. It had been Herbert Blumer, a highly respected sociological theorist in America and a long-time supporter of Francis, who suggested that he embark upon this venture.²¹ In this final volume as well, Francis' Mennonite research is still present. It seems that the Mennonite search for a utopia had also been his own,

and as a Catholic he seemed to identify with all minorities that sought to reshape their identity in the midst of modernization and minority change.

Conclusion

The influence of Francis' work is difficult to evaluate. Undoubtedly, his publications in reputable journals in America, Britain and Germany would have attracted his largest readership. As we have seen, Friesens printed only 2000 copies of *In Search of Utopia*, 500 of which were sold by the Free Press in the US. The 1500 Canadian copies sold out in 1969, a modest number in terms of today's sales figures. *Ethnos und Demos* sold only 500 copies in Germany, and Francis estimated that *Interethnic Relations* sold 3000-4000 copies in the US. While distribution of his articles in journals had the potential for a wide readership, sales figures for his three books must be considered as fairly modest.

A survey of some forty books dealing with social aspects of the Mennonites shows that citations of Francis' works have so far appeared in 25 Mennonite works. Don Smucker in his bibliographical *Sociology of Canadian Mennonites, Hutterites and Amish* (1977) listed a dozen citations of Francis from *Utopia*, his four *MQR* articles and two of his articles in sociological journals. Most scholars have tended to refer mainly to *In Search of Utopia*. Frank Epp, for example, cited Francis in all three of his major historical books (1962, 1974, 1982), drawing mainly on *Utopia*. Calvin Redekop (1969, 1980, 1989) used *Utopia* extensively in his *Mennonite Society* (1989), as well as in several articles. Leo Driedger (1988, 1989) cited Francis extensively in two of his books by referring to Francis' three books as well as to all of his major sociological articles.²² Francis' most public recognition came from his colleagues at the University of Munich when they celebrated his eightieth birthday with a Festschrift, edited by Werner von der Ohe, titled *Kulturanthropologie: Beiträge zum Neubeginn einer Disziplin* (1987).²³

The search for a utopia is always an elusive, perhaps illusory, journey with the promised goal seemingly near but ultimately out of reach. This was the experience of E.K. Francis as an individual, as it has been the experience of minorities like the Mennonites. Francis began his search for utopia in a monastery, but internship made him an immigrant in a foreign land. Canada eventually offered new hope for him as a scholar, but no-one seemed to want to publish the Mennonite research that was to be his professional breakthrough. Notre Dame, a leading Catholic university in America, provided opportunities for successful publication, but Francis was bothered by what he saw as prejudice toward Catholics in American society. The call to return to Germany promised institutional independence, but the price was too much of work, too few resources and less time to publish. As always, the utopian quest finally had to be left unfinished. Nevertheless, the scholarly legacy left behind by this remarkable man should not be regarded lightly, especially by Mennonites. The Mennonites of Manitoba and elsewhere were fortunate enough to become the

subject of a comprehensive sociological study at just the right time, before they had made the transition to mainstream society. Best of all, perhaps, E.K. Francis not only retained his professional interest in the Mennonites by making them a corner-stone of his sociological theory, but he kept in touch to the end with the Mennonite friends he had made in pursuing his own utopian quest.²⁴

Notes

The author wishes to thank Ted Friesen and Ted Regehr for critical comments and the editors of *JMS*, Harry Loewen and Al Reimer for editorial work which helped to improve the article.

Picture Credit: Professor Emerich K. Francis, 1986. Oil painting by Claus Grimm
Source: Werner von der Ohe, ed. *Kulturanthropologie. Beiträge zum Neubeginn einer Disziplin. Festgabe für Emerich K. Francis zum 80. Geburtstag* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1987).

¹ The author interviewed Francis in his home in Munich, Germany, May 16 and 17, 1989. The interview focused on his early life, education, and on his Canadian, American and European experience, information of which little can be found in his letters and writings in files today.

² Most of this information comes from Ted Friesen's extensive Altona file, which includes scores of letters from March, 1953, to February, 1992. It includes the correspondence between Francis and Ted and D.K. Friesen, especially during the 1953-56 process of publishing *In Search of Utopia*. It also includes brochures, paper clippings, reviews and correspondence with many others.

³ Leo Driedger interview with E.K. Francis in Munich, May 16 and 17, 1989.

⁴ See Francis, "Monastic and Family Life," in *Pax* (Gloucester: Princkash Abbey, 1940); "The Personality Type of the Peasant According to Hesiod's 'Works and Days': A Culture Case Study," in *Rural Sociology* 10: 275-295; and Progress and Golden Age: Conceptions of Progress and the Ideal Way of Life," *Dalhousie Review* 25:458-464.

⁵ In the ethnic literature there is an extensive discussion on both assimilation and multiculturalism. There is constant debate as to what extent minorities can retain their identity, language, culture, religion and institutions, or whether inevitably all will finally assimilate and lose most of their identity. Francis clearly fits into the multicultural pluralist camp, which was not popular in the 1940s.

⁶ Driedger interview with Ted Friesen, June 26, 1988. There are also extensive files on the work of E.K. Francis in the Provincial Archives of Manitoba, MG9-A55-24-28, which include charts, maps, graphs, manuscripts, etc. The Manitoba Historical Society does not have any archival material on Francis. Their back issues on *Transaction* have only one reference to E.K. Francis, "The Origins of Mennonite Institutions in Early Manitoba."

⁷ The University of Chicago established the earliest Sociology department in the world and dominated the field in North America for the first half of this century. C.A. Dawson and Everett Hughes both taught at McGill, with Dawson establishing the Sociology department there. Francis used J. Winfield Fretz's *Mennonite Colonization: Lessons from the Past for the Future* (Akron: MCC, 1944; *Pilgrims in Paraguay* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1953), and three of his articles on immigration.

⁸ Like most countries in the British Commonwealth, Canada started its development of sociology late. While a few sociologists existed before World War II, the discipline really got established only in the sixties. Prior to that sociological research in Canada was confined to a few scattered studies. Francis' research of the mid-forties was, therefore, an important study among relatively few others which existed.

⁹ The information concerning this confrontation comes from the Leo Driedger interview with Ted Friesen, May 16, 1994.

¹⁰ Driedger interview with Francis, May 16 and 17, 1989.

¹¹ March 24, 1954, letter of Morton to Francis. Ted Friesen Altona file of *Utopia* correspondence.

¹² Ted Friesen Altona file of *Utopia* correspondence, March 29, 1954. It is interesting to note that in spite of Morton's ineffectiveness on his behalf, Francis still asked the noted historian to write the Preface when the book was finally published.

¹³ Ted Friesen Altona file of *Utopia* correspondence.

¹⁴ June 14, 1954 letter of Jeremiah Kaplan to Ted Friesen. Ted Friesen file of *Utopia* correspondence.

¹⁵ Correspondence between Kaplan of the Free Press and Friesens in the fall of 1954 reveals many problems still to be solved. Ted Friesen file of *Utopia* correspondence.

¹⁶ Letters by Francis to D.K. Friesen on February 12 and 25, 1955. Ted Friesen Altona file.

¹⁷ Letter by D.K. Friesen to Francis March 21, 1955. Ted Friesen Altona file.

¹⁸ A letter on January 26, 1956, from Meadows Wye and Co. (custom house brokers in New York City) to E.K. Francis. Ted Friesen Altona file.

¹⁹ Letter by Francis to Robert Friedmann, December 23, 1956, Robert Friedmann Collection Hist. Mss. 1-404 Box 7, File 3 entitled, "Robert Friedmann Correspondence, F-Miscellaneous."

²⁰ Letter by Francis to Friedmann, December 1, 1958. Friedmann Collection, Ibid.

²¹ Blumer, who then taught at the University of Chicago, had been the editor for some of Francis' early published articles and had read the *Utopia* manuscript, which in a letter to Francis in 1949 he had praised as a "magnificent scholarly job" for which he had "exceedingly high regard." Francis showed his gratitude to Blumer by asking him to write the Preface to his last book.

²² Other Mennonite scholars who cite Francis' works more than once in their books are Peter Hamm (1987), J. Howard Kaufmann and Leland Harder (1975), Esther Epp-Thiesen (1982), John Redekop (1987), James Urry (1989) and Royden Loewen (1993). *Utopia* is cited in books at least once by Guy Hershberger (1958), Leonard Sawatzky (1971), J.R. Burkholder and Calvin Redekop (1976), Calvin Redekop and Sam Steiner (1988), and J. Howard Kaufmann and Leo Driedger (1991).

²³ Twenty-three scholars, mostly from Germany, contributed articles but included also were contributions from well-known American sociologists like Charles Loomis, Milton Yinger and Thomas Luckmann, and from Leo Driedger, a Canadian-Mennonite sociologist, who wrote the lead article. Editor von der Ohe lists the complete writings of Francis on pages 523-530, a list which includes five books, 19 chapters in books, 40 articles in refereed journals, 15 book reviews, four multilithed manuscripts, and the titles of 31 student dissertations he directed.

²⁴ It is especially gratifying to note that the Friesens and Francis remained friends long after *Utopia* was published, with Ted Friesen and the author continuing to correspond and to visit back and forth in Canada, America, and later in Germany until Francis' death there.

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