

Provenance

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2. *Reaffirmation of the Fundamentals*

Many a firm believer in the atonement of Jesus' blood has been swallowed up in modernism because he gave heed to some broad religious call, which was nothing better than socialism — OSCAR BURKHOLDER.¹

"Fundamentalism" is not necessarily, and in fact not generally, synonymous with the fundamentals — VERNON SMUCKER.²

ONE RESPONSE to the societal pressures which were threatening the Mennonite faith and way of life was to bolster that faith and to reinforce that way of life from within. While some Mennonites emphasized selective accommodation to society and others deliberate segregation from society as survival strategies, still others chose to cope with unwanted external influences primarily by strengthening the internal resources through teaching, preaching, and the production of literature. To this end, various organizational initiatives had been undertaken, schools and conferences had been founded, and publishing ventures had been established in earlier decades.

The varying approaches to survival were not mutually exclusive. Both accommodation and segregation were rarely ends in themselves, but rather means to the desired ends. In the minds of their respective advocates, the adoption of some things new or the isolation from all things new contributed to the strengthening of the faith. And those who promoted Mennonite institutions and organizations

must have known instinctively that those institutions represented a degree of accommodation as well as a degree of segregation. At one and the same time, they represented an adjustment to a society which was obsessed with organizations and institution-building, and a protection from that society through institutions uniquely Mennonite.

In the 1920s the issue was not so much the proliferation of institutions but the filling of those already part of the Mennonite scene with the right content, in other words with the true faith. And while this involved elements of both accommodation and segregation, the central thrust was neither of these two but rather the accentuation of that which had always come first, the centralities of Christian doctrine. To achieve this purpose, leaders of the century-old Mennonite Conference of Ontario sought a return to those things which were basic for the church. A statement on Christian Fundamentals, prepared in part by Bishop S. F. Coffman of Ontario and endorsed by the 1921 sessions of the Mennonite General Conference, provided the springboard for that "return," which, however, was accomplished only with divisive results.

The reaffirmation of the fundamentals meant not only strengthening Mennonite peculiarities such as the doctrine of nonresistance, directly tested by the war, and the practice of nonconformity, increasingly under siege, but also Christian theology and ethics in general, as historically taught by the Mennonites. This reaffirmation, however, could no longer happen only with reference to Anabaptism; it also had to take into consideration the religious winds which were blowing contemporaneously across the Canadian and American landscapes, because Mennonites were being influenced as much by their environment as by their heritage.

That Mennonites were not immune to the coming and going of religious movements had already been amply demonstrated in both Europe and North America in the nineteenth century. Most of the religious battles among them in the century just past had to do with degrees of adjustment or degrees of resistance to religious and secular movements confronting them from without. In Canada, the "migration" of the New Mennonites in the direction of revivalism and the objection of the Old Order Mennonites to every new fad, religious and otherwise, were already a matter of record. The Old Mennonites, anxiously seeking a reasonable middle course between the two

extremes, were being pulled in both directions, as they sought to rediscover and reaffirm the centralities of the faith.

It was precisely in that middle ground where the struggle here reported was most intense and this explains why the Old Mennonites of North America in general and the Mennonite Conference of Ontario in particular are centre-stage in this chapter. It is also true that the Mennonite General Conference was the largest of the Mennonite bodies in North America, though not in Canada and not in Ontario. However, whatever their numbers, wherever they were, they, the Old Mennonites, of all Mennonites, were most pulled in two directions. The normal tension between progressive and conservative forces in their midst was now complicated and accentuated by, or overlaid with, another set of forces. These were sometimes perceived to be allies and sometimes enemies in the struggle.

The effort to achieve a restatement of the faith coincided with, and to a certain extent perhaps was prompted by, a parallel movement in North American Protestantism known as fundamentalism. A certain borrowing therefrom was inevitable, not least of all because of the common language in use. Only a few people would learn to differentiate between the Mennonite fundamentals being espoused by the Old Mennonite Church and the Christian fundamentalist movement as such, or among the various literalist approaches to the Bible being advanced. To the promoters and to the laity the language and the meanings tended to be the same or, if not exactly the same, very similar and quite interchangeable.

Fundamentalism was basically an American movement, as was its counterpart, the modernist social gospel. However, both theological streams had Canadian parallels, which served to reinforce the influences from the south. On the one hand were the efforts within Canada towards reform in society and towards ecumenical association of the churches, the latter culminating in the formation in 1925 of the United Church of Canada.³ On the other hand were the promotions of personal salvation and piety, such as came from the flamboyant fundamentalist, and schismatic, Baptist preacher T. T. Shields in Toronto.⁴

In Canada the fundamentalist movement had a strong anchor in the Niagara Bible Conference, incorporated by that name under the laws of Canada in 1893.⁵ Indeed, in its 25-year history the institution

had already exercised leadership throughout the continent as “the mother of the very influential North American prophecy and Bible conference movement [and] a major force in shaping conservative Protestant theology into what soon was called fundamentalism.”⁶ The Conference helped to popularize a general preoccupation with the end times, the verbal inspiration of the Bible, faith missions, and revivalism.

For a variety of reasons the fundamentalist movement exerted the greater influence among Mennonites, but the social gospel stream did not go unnoticed. The American-based General Conference Mennonite Church, for instance, had become a member of the Federal Council of Churches, one of fundamentalism’s main targets, at its founding in 1908 and remained in it for a decade.⁷ There were other connections to the non-fundamentalist side. In Ontario numerous “assimilated Mennonites” ended up as members of the newly formed United Church of Canada, having previously become Methodists or members of the Evangelical Association, two of the denominational tributaries flowing into the ecumenical body.⁸

Moreover, one of the favourite German gospel hymnbooks, especially among the Dutch Mennonites in both the U.S.A. and Canada, turned out to be *Evangeliumslieder* (Gospel Songs), translated and edited by none other than Walter Rauschenbusch, one of the giants of the social gospel movement, who was much misunderstood and wrongly maligned. As with Rauschenbusch, so also with the Mennonites the evangelical faith had compelling social dimensions. The love of one’s fellow human beings was inseparably linked to a professed love of God. In the words of Menno Simons:

For true evangelical faith is of such a nature that it cannot lie dormant, but manifests itself in all righteousness and works of love; . . . it clothes the naked; it feeds the hungry; it comforts the sorrowful; it shelters the destitute; . . . it serves those that harm it; . . . it binds up that which is wounded; . . . it has become all things to all men.⁹

However, the impediments to a Mennonite embracing the social gospel movement were also great, above all because it implied political involvement of some kind at some level, an activity at that time quite foreign to Mennonites. Only a small minority at that time

voted in national or even civic elections, though the election to public office of some individuals has been previously noted.¹⁰ Besides, in both Canada and the U.S.A. the influence of the social gospel accented the citizenship obligations of the Christian, and for many social gospel advocates, though not for all, this led directly to support of the war effort. Indeed, it was the militarism of the Federal Council in the U.S.A. which prompted the General Conference to withdraw from membership in that body.¹¹ The social gospel, requiring social and political involvement, often produced different modes of involvement. For some it reinforced pacifism, for others militarism.

Similarly in Canada, diverse ideological and organizational alliances sprang from the social gospel and, from the Mennonite perspective, led its proponents and followers in strange directions. The Mennonites could have accepted the temperance and prohibitionist movements, or even joined them, as some of them did.¹² The cause of the Lord's Day Alliance was also to their liking. Mennonites kept not only the Sabbath but numerous additional Christian holidays. However, unions for workers and suffrage for women appeared unnecessary, if not dangerous, while militarism as a religious duty and Canadianization as the deliberate assimilation of minority groups¹³ were totally unacceptable. Most problematic also was the social gospel's link to modernism and generally also its language. For most Mennonites the word "fundamentalism" sounded much better than "modernism."

Fundamentalism in America

Before examining the precise impact of the fundamentalist movement upon the Mennonite churches, the manner in which it gained entry into their ranks, and the degree to which the churches in Canada were affected, brief attention must be given to a general review of the nature of the fundamentalist-modernist controversy and its major issues. Fundamentalism and modernism emerged and evolved essentially as different religious responses to the rapidly changing social conditions in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The depression and shock resulting from the civil war had been followed by the disruption of rural traditions and the disorientation resulting from rapid urbanization and industrialization.

In the midst of these great changes was planted the message of

progress. Astonishing advances in the fields of science, medicine, and technology gave rise to a growing wave of optimism and with it the hope that, through judicious use and application of this new knowledge, the world could be made a better and more peaceful place for mankind. Theories of progress, expounded variously by Darwin, Marx, and others, exploded upon the world in the latter part of the century with enormous implications in many areas of life.¹⁴

Increasingly, all disciplines became subject to exacting scientific methods and analysis. It was not long before the Bible and its teachings were affected by the intellectual climate of the times. The message of Scripture was reassessed in relation to the new scientific findings and along with the insights provided by recent discoveries in biology, psychology, and sociology. The new textual scrutiny of the Bible, called "higher criticism," tended to emphasize the ethical aspects of Scripture over the doctrinal teachings.¹⁵ Reflecting the positive scientific mood of the times, the new ethic stressed the need for, and the possibility of, the transformation of the social environment and not only the rebirth of the individual. The advocates of such social gospel views were called progressives, modernists, or liberals.

Set over against them were those traditionalists and conservatives who believed that the new theories threatened the very fundamentals of the Christian religion. Though the spokesmen for fundamentalism rarely attained a well-defined solidarity, they still managed to counter effectively the "modern apostasy" along lines described as both apologetic and apocalyptic. Apologetics had reference to doctrine and the defence of the faith. Apocalyptics had to do with the unfolding of history and the end times. Essentially, it was the union of two nineteenth-century theological systems, the so-called Princeton theology and Plymouth Brethren dispensationalism, that gave fundamentalism a definable form.¹⁶

Princeton theology, emanating from the seminary bearing the same name, was committed to the defence of an "inerrant and infallible" Scripture, a phrase that was to become the fulcrum of the fundamentalist movement. A basic tenet of the school's belief was that divine inspiration rested in some external authority and that this authority was an inerrant Bible. A perfect God, so these theologians declared, would not have revealed himself through a fallible work. Consequently, they argued that not only was the Bible verbally

inspired, but it was also inerrant in its every "reference, statistic, and quotation when first written down on the original autographs."¹⁷ In the popular translation of this teaching, it was usually forgotten that inerrancy was claimed only for the original autographs. Indeed, what was understood was that the King James Bible was inerrant and infallible, and such understanding was only one short step removed from implying that the fundamentalist interpreters themselves were beyond challenge and criticism.

The fundamentalists also challenged the overly optimistic liberal spirit with respect to human development and social evolution. Helpful to this end were the doctrines of dispensationalism. Dispensationalist teaching had originated with the Plymouth Brethren in England and Ireland a century earlier and become a popular doctrine within American Protestant circles by the 1870s.¹⁸ As already indicated, the Niagara Bible Conference was a strong Canadian source of such teaching. According to the dispensationalists, history was divided into periods or dispensations, usually seven in number. In each age, God had his followers, though the qualities of the faithful differed from period to period and certain divine expectations did not apply to them until the dawn of the millennium, a 1,000-year period referred to in the Book of Revelation.¹⁹

In this way, the ethical teachings of the Kingdom, which spelled out the social obligations of the church, could be omitted from fundamentalist dogma since, it was conveniently argued, they were not applicable in the present age. The overriding concern of the church in the present time should be to preach and to save souls for the future. Christian energies should be channelled not towards action for social reform but rather towards the salvation of individuals.²⁰

The dispensationalist neglect of social betterment was consistent with an intensely pessimistic view of the world's future and with a belief in the imminent and direct intervention of God in the affairs of the world. Thus, in sharp contrast to the optimism of the American creed and the fresh theological articulations of the liberals, modernists, and progressives, the dispensationalists and fundamentalists insisted that society was doomed, while at the same time enthusiastically championing the possibility of man's personal salvation.

Although incipient fundamentalism was evident in Canada during the 1800s, not least of all in the emergence of the Mennonite

Brethren in Christ denomination, it maintained a relatively low profile prior to the turn of the century. Its character was tempered by the steady conservative influence of Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, which school had attracted not only such young Mennonite men as John F. Funk, the outstanding American Mennonite publisher prior to the twentieth century, but also S.F. Coffman, the outstanding Old Mennonite bishop in Canada in the first half of the twentieth century and leader in the Ontario Mennonite Bible School, and later William J. Bestvater of the Herbert Bible School in Saskatchewan.²¹ Moody and his followers defended the faith against the inroads of heresy not through open polemics with the modernists, but rather through the medium of Bible conferences, revival meetings, pamphlets, and periodicals which strengthened the faithful. In other words, the conservative and fundamentalist stance of Moody Bible Institute and its graduates had a moderating quality about it because of its restrained rhetoric and tempered tone.

A radical shift in the complexion of fundamentalist leadership, and subsequently a change in the entire tenor of the movement, occurred early in the twentieth century. From that point on, every "modernist heresy" was answered with all the authoritativeness and straightforwardness of direct quotations from Scripture, even if this meant taking passages out of their biblical context. The Great War played a crucial role in converting a relatively sedate fundamentalism into an aggressive, offensive-minded movement, dedicated to the annihilation of the modernist foe. The scale of the carnage and destruction produced by the war, without precedent in human history, appeared to verify fundamentalist convictions that any attempts at world reform and peace were in vain.²² Moreover, the war supplied the fundamentalists with an increasingly militant language that could be used against the religious enemy.²³

And through an interesting twist of logic, the fundamentalists endeavoured to link the modernists—at least those modernists who were also pacifists—with the German foe and indeed with all the enemies of America.²⁴ The cries of the modernists for peace and reform, the fundamentalists contended, had undermined morale and left the West unprepared for the treacheries of the German empire. Subsequently, the fundamentalist critique of social reform programs became even more vehement, and proponents of pacifism and overseas relief were quickly accused of harbouring pro-German and pro-

Bolshevik sympathies. Common were the claims that modernism and evolution had brought together the following:

the Reds of Russia, the university professors of Germany, England, and America, the IWWs [Industrial Workers of the World, also known as "Wobblies"], and every bum from the "down and out" sections of every city in America.²⁵

Fundamentalism Among Old Mennonites

The simple but forceful and self-assured character of the fundamentalist message exercised a powerful attraction upon the minds of a large segment of the American populace, including the Old Mennonites. Offering simple answers to a complex set of questions, fundamentalism provided a measure of security to a people just emerging from their long history of isolation. Here was a religion that was conservative in its theology, straightforward and biblicist in its claims, traditional and rural in its appeal, one that reaffirmed the authority of church leaders.

Mennonites had much in common with the fundamentalists and, because they lacked full awareness of crucial differences, it was hardly surprising that some Mennonites found common cause with the fundamentalist position. Fundamentalism allowed them to remain true to the biblicism of their Anabaptist traditions and at the same time to step outside of that tradition into a wider Christian identity. The appeal was irresistible, especially where the implications for the Mennonites of following fundamentalism were not fully understood.

Historic Anabaptism and North American fundamentalism none the less represented two different "forms of faith," which, according to J.B. Toews, clashed with each other.²⁶ The one form was that of "an existential Christianity" and the other that of a "creedal theological system." The two forms represented different approaches to essential elements of the faith in a number of areas, including the Scriptures, conversion, discipleship, and the church, as well as missions and evangelism.

The devotion to the Bible as the Word of God for the Anabaptists was "not the end of a chain of logic" but much more "an exercise of faith" that manifested itself in obedience to the teaching and life of

Jesus. Hence, a shift from Anabaptism to fundamentalism meant shifting “the centre of faith” from a relationship of obedience to a creedal polemic and proof-texting which focus “on the inerrancy of the Scriptures in the original autographs which are non-existent.” In other words, fundamentalism substituted for true faith and gradual guidance into all truth by the Holy Spirit “a system of logic for the absolute trustworthiness of the Bible.”

Further, Anabaptism understood conversion “as a transformation of life” verified “in a life of discipleship,” which included nonresistance, non-swearing of the oath, and the pursuit of peace. Fundamentalism, on the other hand, exalted only the *work* of the cross, meaning grace, and neglected the *way* of the cross, meaning disciplined and abstemious living. Fundamentalism was aggressive, unusually self-assertive, militant, militaristic, and also individualistic. Whereas for Anabaptism the Christian life was lived in the context of the congregation, fundamentalism was highly individualistic and the experience of the church as a community tended to be absent.

For the time being, the differences between the “two forms” were obvious to the dissenters, but less so to those leaders in the Old Mennonite Church whose passion was a return to the fundamentals. They were fighting, as it were, a two-front war: the trends towards new modes of living, arising from modernity, and the threat of new modes of thinking, arising from modernism. In this struggle, fundamentalism was an obvious ally, though Mennonites wanted a Mennonite variety of fundamentalism.

Mennonite fundamentalism suffered from the absence of a definitively worded contemporary theology. That such a confession had not yet been formulated was due to the agrarian Mennonite background, the satisfied reliance on such historic documents as the Dordrecht Confession, and the interest in publishing being relatively recent. The printed word and written self-expression had only begun to play an important role through the pioneer publishing efforts of John F. Funk, first at Chicago, then at Elkhart, Indiana.

Funk’s *Herald of Truth* (1864–1908),²⁷ as the first Mennonite periodical in America, was eventually replaced by the more official, and for this topic crucial, *Gospel Herald* (1908–), published at Scottdale, Pennsylvania, by the Mennonite General Conference.²⁸ It was the *Gospel Herald*, as well as the earlier German-language

Herold der Wahrheit (1864–1901),²⁹ a twin-publication of *Herald of Truth*, which gave to the church its foremost articulators of the fundamentals during this period. The first of them was John Horsch (1867–1941), born in Austria and partially educated in Germany, whose emigration to America to escape military service gave Funk his much-needed German editor in 1887. Thus began a 55-year career for Horsch in editorial work and historical and theological writing which was most influential in the 1920s.³⁰

The second was Daniel Kauffman (1865–1944). As editor for 39 years of the *Gospel Herald* (1908–1943), frequent moderator of the church and omnipresent committeeman—at one time he was a member of 22 committees and boards—and a speaker in much demand, Daniel Kauffman moulded the life and thought of the church as no other individual during that time.³¹ Both Horsch and Kauffman fashioned the official policy and polity of the Old Mennonite Church in the mould of their own conservative, authoritarian, and also very decisive preferences. Through them the church was transformed to correspond closely to classic fundamentalist sentiments.

The view of Scriptures embodied in the Princeton theology was widely disseminated throughout the church by Daniel Kauffman. During his long association with the *Gospel Herald*, that periodical was filled with editorials and articles endorsing fundamentalist thought.³² His *Bible Doctrine*, an interpretative work prepared in response to a conference request, confidently asserted that the Bible was “inspired from cover to cover; that every part is alike inspired, and that the words of Scriptures express inerrantly, the truths God wished to declare.”³³ Both the periodical and the book were widely read in Canada.

Along with Kauffman, Horsch contributed much of the material propounding similar thinking. The study of early Mennonite history was Horsch’s consuming passion, but even here his predisposition coloured his interpretation of the origins. His examination of the Anabaptist progenitors appeared to be prompted more by a desire to affirm their religious orthodoxy in the light of contemporary faith than to uncover objectively the essence of their teachings. Accordingly, the early Anabaptists were pictured more as theologically sound twentieth-century conservatives than as radical sixteenth-century dissenters.³⁴

Horsch possessed a genuine dread of the new, popular, religious liberalism. He sincerely believed that modernism threatened the very foundations of true Christianity, and he marshalled his best forces to combat the admission of heresy into Mennonite ranks. *The Mennonite Church and Modernism*, published in 1924, was one such effort aimed at exposing and discrediting the liberal elements resident within the Mennonite Church.³⁵ Indicted most heavily were educators such as Vernon Smucker, John E. Hartzler, and Noah E. Byers, faculty members at Goshen College. They were accused of spiritual unorthodoxy with regard to such items as the authority of Scripture, the divinity of Christ, and the authority of the bishops. The charges were not supported with credible evidence, but they typified Horsch's ready inclination to denounce those men and institutions that were not, in his opinion, sufficiently anti-modernist and not solidly fundamentalist.

The adoption of "Eighteen Fundamentals" at the 1921 Mennonite General Conference reflected the widespread adoption of fundamentalist language within the Church. While there was some objection to the addition of yet another confession of faith to the "canon," the "Fundamentals" were accepted as a "restatement of [the Dort (*sic*) Confession] in the light of present religious contentions and teachings."³⁶ What this meant was that historical Mennonitism was now firmly related to, if not identified with, contemporary fundamentalism.

A brief survey of the articles quickly demonstrates the degree to which the fundamentalist ideas had penetrated Mennonite ranks.³⁷ Article I affirmed "the plenary and verbal inspiration of the Bible as the Word of God . . . inerrant in the original writings. . .". Article III announced "that the Genesis account of the Creation is an historic fact and literally true." Article X, with probable reference to the advocates of the social gospel, admonished the church "to keep herself aloof from all movements which seek the reformation of society independent of the merits of the death of Christ and the experience of the new birth." Article XIV, sounding the familiar pre-millennial warning bell, observed that "the latter days will be characterized by general lawlessness and departure from the faith; . . . further, that present conditions indicate that we are now living in these perilous times." Articles XV–XVIII predicted "the bodily resurrection" of all men, after passing through an "intermedi-

ate state” and an ultimate destiny in either heaven or hell. Significantly, only a passing reference was made in the “Eighteen Fundamentals” to the principle of nonresistance.

The inflammatory and judgmental spirit accompanying the fundamentalist-modernist dispute made a reasonable approach to conciliatory discussion virtually impossible, especially when emotions ran high on both sides, and persons or institutions often emerged as the focal points of the debate. Within the Old Mennonite Church, Goshen College assumed a central role in the protracted religious wranglings.³⁸ A minority faculty group, led by Smucker and Byers, and drawing its support mainly from the younger, relatively well educated constituency, challenged the majority, represented by the older, less erudite leadership, more attuned to fundamentalist ways of thought. Suspect theological opinions on various issues, ranging from the deity of Christ to the plenary inspiration of the Bible, were most often cited as the root cause of the college’s internal turmoil. Compounding the difficulties was the fact that the conflict was, to a large extent, generational and related as much to varying approaches to historic Anabaptism as to the theological movements of the day. O.B. Gerig, a spokesman for the younger group, confirmed this much when he explained that “a small section of the Mennonite Church, mostly the younger generation, has come to see the really noble sentiments and ideals of their historic faith.”³⁹

For six years, from 1918 to 1924, the Goshen controversy ground on. In the end, the conservative faction, headed by the perennial leaders, Horsch and Kauffman, excised what they considered to be “liberal” elements from the college’s faculty. The latter, disillusioned and frustrated by the experience, left the Old Church to accept positions at Bethel College or Bluffton College, schools of constituencies within the more tolerant General Conference Mennonite Church.⁴⁰ But these individuals did not give up their cause.

Very promptly, they founded the monthly *Christian Exponent* as an alternative voice,⁴¹ contending that “‘fundamentalism’ is not necessarily, and in fact not generally, synonymous with the fundamentals.”⁴² They cautioned against an uncritical acceptance of fundamentalism and urged that those elements which were incongruous with the tradition be promptly discarded. They were also repelled by the acrimonious language and the intolerant spirit which were common to fundamentalist rhetoric. In response to Horsch’s

brash offensive mounted in *The Mennonite Church and Modernism*, Vernon Smucker replied:

The methods and motives [of Horsch] must be utterly abhorrent to anyone who is a true Christian and who desires to see fair play and knows the facts in the case.⁴³

The forced faculty resignations at Goshen College signalled a decisive victory for the conservative forces. Curriculum revisions subsequently introduced at the college reflected the institution's new alliances. The denominational Mennonite Board of Education, to which the college was ultimately responsible, declared that it would tolerate no compromise on "religious essentials," which were interpreted to include areas such as dress and nonconformity.⁴⁴ Pronouncements endorsing the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures were made, along with outspoken criticism of institutions that were deemed "unsound." Additionally, the Board recommended that "the first and fundamental work of the church was to evangelize the world rather than to reform the world."⁴⁵

One specific area of contention between the leaders and the young educators was the doctrine of nonresistance. This principle, though somewhat brittle in its application and often not understood in any comprehensive manner by its adherents, remained a basic and indispensable position. But not all who deemed the doctrine important interpreted it in the same way. For some, nonresistance was a personal ethic. Others saw it as a relevant social and political ethic. Evangelist John S. Coffman, for instance, had felt a kinship with political and humanitarian peace movements, which he regarded as Christian, if not in identity, then in terms of direction.⁴⁶

Now, however, the Mennonite stance on peace and nonresistance was modified by the absorption of mainstream American religious values. Embracing fundamentalism, the Old Church was compelled to reinterpret one of its historic fundamentals. It thus found itself opposing "modern pacifism" because of its link to the social gospel and urging believers to do their utmost to avoid "the so-called peace movement."⁴⁷ This position on war and the peace movements, though widely accepted, suffered from an ironic inconsistency that was readily recognized by its detractors. On the one hand, the Mennonites had energetically campaigned for the military exemp-

tion of their members during the war. At the same time, they denounced all social peace programs, proclaiming them to be unchristian. It became incumbent upon them somehow to reconcile the contradiction within their platform and provide themselves with historical and biblical legitimacy.

This task was undertaken and accomplished by Horsch, who submitted a revised critique of nonresistance which was to become the official Mennonite position. Horsch's formulation was ingenious for its simplicity. According to its premise, biblical nonresistance was "based on the Gospel which teaches that righteousness is the fruit of the new birth." Hence, nonresistance was only the fruit, not the root, of the gospel. It followed on Christian conversion, which was an essential prerequisite. This was fundamentally distinct from modern pacifism, which substituted mere social betterment for biblical regeneration.⁴⁸

The inevitable conclusion of his position was that Christians were preferably nonresistant but not necessarily nonresistant, this virtue being a fruit of the gospel. But equally important was the fact that only Christians, as defined by him, could be nonresistant or pacifist. Hence, all other forms of peace concern or opposition to war were unacceptable because they were not properly grounded. Horsch's interpretation was warmly received by the majority of the church leaders. His dichotomy permitted them to retain their ties with fundamentalist orientations, while at the same time allowing them to remain true to their historic faith as they perceived it.

A second problematic situation involved the doctrine of nonconformity. Since the sixteenth century, the Mennonites had held the notion that they were to be separate from, and nonconformed to, the world. Thus, they believed that their way of living was not to be guided by the standards and modes of the surrounding society but by the biblical imperatives of such passages as the Sermon on the Mount in particular. In North America this doctrine of separation had been reinforced by the continued use of the German language in an English-language culture and by geographic isolation in the context of a rural and agricultural way of life.

Early in the twentieth century, however, the Old Mennonites in North America had abandoned the German language to a very large extent and thus severed one form of cultural separation. The result

was much greater social intercourse with the outside world, and a new fear that such association would lead to the loss of their unique identity. In other words, the loss of traditional social controls threatened the preservation of the old way of life. The German language and other symbols of separation having been lost, simplicity in clothing styles became for conservative Mennonites the final citadel "which must be held at all cost."⁴⁹

Fundamentalism in Ontario

Canadian developments in many ways paralleled the American experience. In Ontario the leaders of the church grappled with many of the same issues confronting their southern colleagues and, in almost every instance, the outcome was the same. This was not surprising, because both areas of the church were served by the same periodicals, and the international border was not one that made a big difference in the Old Church. Fundamentalism, as defined and endorsed by the 1921 Conference session, and as disseminated to many Canadian homes through the medium of the *Gospel Herald*, became the approved theology of the Mennonite Conference of Ontario. Basic fundamentalist motifs, such as biblical infallibility, millennialism, and personal salvation, made their way to the people and experienced a warm reception.⁵⁰ Naturally, fundamentalism had its practical applications as well. Mennonites were admonished from the pulpit or at evangelistic meetings to remain aloof from sinful worldly amusements, life insurance companies, secret societies, sports, radio, and secular music.⁵¹ "For fifty years," one Ontario minister claimed, "this book [Daniel Kauffman's *Bible Doctrines*] was of great influence" especially with respect to fundamentalism and nonconformity.⁵²

An effective blend of traditional Mennonite piety and contemporary fundamentalist conservatism was thus established. The synthesis worked, not in small part because of the positive impression made by the leaders upon their followers. Strong personalities such as S.F. Coffman, Oscar Burkholder, and later C.F. Derstine were convinced that the tenets of fundamentalism and Mennonitism were compatible. Their absolute confidence was transmitted to, and observed by, the people who responded to firm leadership as they

faced the changing forces of the twentieth century. Fundamentalist-inspired precepts provided this direction. In the words of Paul Martin:

. . . Mennonites showed their greatest interest in the Fundamentalists. I believe it was at this stage that we learned to use the Bible in very legalistic and prescriptive ways.⁵³

S. F. Coffman, bishop of the Lincoln County area Old Mennonite Churches, is considered by many to have been Ontario's most influential voice in the first half of the twentieth century.⁵⁴ He was a moderate who consistently held that a policy of patience and restraint was the wisest approach to the religious developments overtaking Ontario and the wider church. His first love lay in preparing exegeses on such books of the Bible as Acts or Corinthians or in elaborating on the significance and symbolism of the tabernacle in the Old Testament. Had Coffman's talents as a co-ordinator, committee person, and mediator been less exceptional, he likely would have devoted his working life to biblical research. However, both the Mennonite Conference of Ontario and the Mennonite General Conference recognized Coffman's abilities, and as a result, the bishop was recruited for a myriad of church-related assignments. He represented the conferences on history, peace, literature, music, fundamentals, and Sunday School committees. During the Great War he also served as official liaison between the Ontario Mennonites and Ottawa.

Coffman's gentle disposition precluded his involvement in public disputes with those with whom he disagreed. Quiet counsel and reasoned dialogue were to him preferable, and more scriptural, than outright verbal battle. Coffman had, like his mentor John F. Funk, achieved an effective fusion of Anabaptism and the theology of Moody Bible Institute, and his reputation for orthodoxy and dependability resulted in his being named to a select committee appointed to study, and then prepare a statement on, the Mennonite doctrinal position. The culmination of this work was the adoption of the aforementioned "Eighteen Fundamentals" which were intended "to safeguard our people from the inroads of false doctrines which assail the Word of God and threaten the foundation of our faith. . . ."⁵⁵

Coffman was at first reluctant to accept the assignment, not because he objected to affirming the fundamental truths, but because

he considered the church to be adequately served by the Dordrecht Confession formulated in 1632. The Ontario leader questioned the need for another doctrinal statement and worried whether such might not prove injurious to church unity. He also wondered whether the committee was only to delineate the church's position on disputed doctrine or whether it was to compile a comprehensive statement on the church's faith.⁵⁶ In the end, Coffman suppressed his reservations and submitted to the responsibility. The Conference was fortunate that he did so, for throughout the course of the project, Coffman distinguished himself as a champion of tolerance and charity. He reminded his fellow members that even the Dordrecht Confession had shown some flexibility on non-essential matters, and he recommended that

the same sincerity must be observed by us concerning the foundations of our faith. The same charity concerning our individual opinion regarding some of the teachings of Christ and the apostles, among which are some things hard to understand.⁵⁷

Coffman's thoughts on the subject of the Bible and its inspiration were unequivocal. "Any position on the authenticity of the records of the Bible but that of simple faith is unsatisfactory," he testified. "Every record of events must be true."⁵⁸ The inspiration of the Scriptures held a fascination for the Vineland bishop, and he inserted a number of articles on the topic in his "Bible Study" column, featured regularly in the *Christian Monitor*.⁵⁹ Partly as a result of Coffman's leadership, the Mennonite Conference maintained a strong belief in the Bible as reliable and undisputed authority and pre-millennialism as the basis of human hope. The annual meeting in Vineland in June 1924 drew attention to the "tide of unbelief that is sweeping over the world, preventing the salvation of multitudes, and destroying the faith of some." The recommended antidote to the religious malaise was to be found in a "prayerful, obedient application of the Word."⁶⁰

Other well-known and influential Ontario leaders concurred with Coffman on the Bible's infallibility. One such person was Oscar Burkholder, who had been ordained to the pastorate of Cressman Church in Breslau early in 1913.⁶¹ Burkholder embodied many of those attributes that one might have expected to find in a Mennonite

leader of his time. He was totally self-assured, stern, dogmatic, and not infrequently given to making authoritarian pronouncements. The Breslau minister served in a number of different roles during his long association with the Old Mennonite Church. He spent 36 years as an instructor at the Ontario Mennonite Bible School in Kitchener (1917 – 1954). He was also a prolific writer. During his lifetime, he authored three books⁶² and contributed many forceful articles to the *Gospel Herald*, the *Christian Monitor*, the *Christian Ministry*, and the *Sword and Trumpet*.⁶³ As if these activities, not to mention the demands of his home congregation, were not enough to consume Burkholder's energies, he was also extremely active as an itinerant evangelist. Between 1910 and 1949, Burkholder conducted over 180 religious rallies, most of which were held outside Ontario.⁶⁴

The classroom, the printed page, and evangelistic meetings proved ideal vehicles through which Burkholder could channel his message and spiritual insights. Never one to dodge issues, particularly if these related to the contemporary religious scene, the Breslau pastor left no doubts with his audience as to his position on any number of subjects. For example, Burkholder confessed that Christian conduct was not always plainly defined in the Holy Writ, but "where we approach the realms of doctrine and stated truth there can be no two ways or attitudes that are right."⁶⁵ He stood absolutely convinced that ultimate truth and salvation were the exclusive property of fundamentalist Christianity. Other religious systems were acknowledged, but in Christianity was found "the only right religion" capable of dispelling "the darkness that is hanging over this sin-sick world."⁶⁶

He maintained that an inerrant Bible constituted the foundation of the genuine church. Scripture acted as the Christian's indispensable guide to righteous living and as the "higher authority to decide whether a certain doctrine or teaching is true or untrue."⁶⁷ This latter role was of vital importance to Burkholder for he and other believers were surrounded by well-dressed seducers who gave the appearance of being morally upright but who inwardly were "as ravenous as wild beasts."⁶⁸ The seducers, who generally were identified to be misguided intellectuals, were revealed by their scientific, philosophical, and religious opinions to be opposed to biblical fundamentals. What these tamperers with the sacred biblical truths needed, Burkholder contended, was the illuminating "light of the Scriptures."

The crusader's preoccupation with religious deceivers and false prophets was very closely tied to his pre-millennialist theology. He concluded that the world had entered into its final stage, proof of which was demonstrated by the rampant signs of apostasy and unbelief proliferating everywhere. So provoked was Burkholder by the insidious modern-day deceptions that he was compelled to write *The Predicted Departure from the Faith*. The purpose of this popular treatise was "to present a message on the signs of apostasy and the responsibility connected with backsliding from Christian experience"⁶⁹ and to focus attention on the special problems created by the "terrific pressure brought to bear upon believers in these last days."⁷⁰ Burkholder spared few words in getting to the heart of the matter:

Sunday school teachers will deliberately and boldly declare that they do not believe the Genesis account of the Creation, and claim kinship with a monkey instead of an omnipotent God; . . . when mothers will switch on the radio for the bedtime stories for their children, rather than tell them the stories of truth from the Bible.⁷¹

Burkholder was an avowed opponent of modernism, a phenomenon which he termed "nothing better than socialism."⁷² He was also deeply distrustful of humanitarian and social reform movements, including pacifist organizations.⁷³ In this instance he was joined by others, such as Manasseh Hallman, who insisted that "modernist and fundamentalist cannot work together"⁷⁴ and S.F. Coffman, whose credentials as a dedicated pacifist were beyond reproach. Coffman had carried on lengthy negotiations with Ottawa to assure his church of official nonresistant privileges. Yet, in his capacity as secretary for the provincial Peace Problems Committee, he warned his fellows to "keep aloof from other peace movements, of a humanitarian principle, or political affiliation."⁷⁵

Further evidence that fundamentalism had taken root in the Mennonite Conference of Ontario presented itself through the Bible conferences and conventions held in the province.⁷⁶ The thirteenth session of the Mennonite General Conference, meeting in Waterloo during the summer of 1923, selected as its theme "The Fundamentals of Christianity." The convention attracted several thousand people and, according to an official report, "one of the impressive

features of these "Fundamentals" meetings was the unity that prevailed regarding the truths of the Bible which we regard as fundamental to the Christian faith."⁷⁷ A roster of prominent fundamentalist speakers was assembled and the subjects addressed ranged from "The Inspiration of the Scriptures" to "Modernism" to "The Second Coming of Christ."⁷⁸

Several years later, at a locally sponsored Bible conference conducted near New Hamburg, the familiar fundamentalist concerns continued to appear. The subjects introduced by Oscar Burkholder and Alberta's Norman Stauffer included "Eight Signs of Modernism," "Evils of the Tongue," and "Worldly Organizations and the Christian."⁷⁹ All of these subjects led to fundamentalist-type pronouncements, including a 1924 Conference resolution which asked their members to reconfirm their faith in God and in Jesus:

Whereas the world is abounding with false doctrines [that] are undermining the faith and attacking the foundation of the church, be it resolved, that the members of the Ontario Mennonite Conference declare themselves to believe that the Christ, Son of God, is the foundation upon which the church is built.⁸⁰

Educational developments in Ontario lagged behind those found in the American Mennonite community. The absence in the province of a church-supported college was in one sense a blessing, since the area was spared the kind of bitter friction that enveloped Goshen. Even so, and despite its geographic separation from the Indiana campus, Ontario could not escape the shock waves released by that struggle. Through S.F. Coffman, who served as chairman of a literature committee assigned to scrutinize, appraise, and recommend texts for use in the Bible, science, and history departments at the Goshen and Hesston colleges, and through the occasional student, the province was kept closely informed of the situation at Goshen.⁸¹ The bishop's choice of competent and trustworthy authorities, to whom questionable books could be referred for evaluation, said much for his personal leanings. James Gray, R.A. Torrey, and B. Riley, all of them fundamentalist giants, were included in Coffman's list.⁸²

Coffman discovered himself to be in a delicate, sometimes ambiguous, spot with respect to the school controversy. On the one hand,

he agreed with many points made by the dissenting faculty members, some of whom were his close friends. On the other hand, Coffman felt constrained to support the conservative leadership, principally because he felt this would best serve the interests of church unity.

Closer to home, Coffman took a leading hand in the development of the Ontario Mennonite Bible School.⁸³ Established in 1907, the Kitchener school made valuable contributions to its constituency, both for the Bible-steeped students it returned to the home congregations and because it offered educational services in a largely rural district located far from the Old Mennonite educational centres. The school provided an accessible alternative to the more sophisticated American institutions. It had low entrance requirements and winter and evening courses which suited the constituency and its students. Attendance at the school was a way of making up for what was missing in the public schools. Coffman many times expressed regrets that the Bible, "the standard book of the world," had been omitted from the public classroom.⁸⁴ Some years later, Oscar Burkholder expanded on this same theme:

For, while true education is to be desired, and its usefulness, as a servant of the believer, is accepted almost without question, the modern educational system, influenced, governed, and practically controlled by those who openly believe and teach evolution, is so far removed from the biblical position and teaching that no loyal follower of Christ can truthfully and conscientiously support it.⁸⁵

The subject material taught at the Bible School throughout its 62-year history was constantly revised, but the emphasis on biblical studies, using the Bible as the primary text, remained unchanged. Coffman adhered to the notion that "to know the material of the sources of Christian life and experience" was of greater worth "than the teachings of subject material supported by selected texts."⁸⁶

Fundamentalism and Divisiveness

Fundamentalism, as manifested in the doctrinal and educational spheres, did not precipitate a divisive internal reaction in Ontario as it had in the U.S.A. The situation was different, however, with respect to the issue of nonconformity. As the once-steady resistance to

the world weakened in the face of persistent social pressures, and as Mennonite business, educational, and religious habits increasingly resembled those practised outside their group, nonconformity came to be legalistically equated with a prescribed manner of dress. Indeed, nonconformity became the single most-discussed topic in Ontario. The principal speaker at an annual conference held in Vineland was moved to declare that, like nonresistance during the last war, "the test today is nonconformity."⁸⁷

Modern fashions had long been a source of concern to the Mennonite Conference of Ontario. Already in 1864 leaders had voiced alarm over the steady encroachment of the fashion monster into their own ranks. That year, the conference resolved that "we [Mennonites] witness against pride and the fashions of the world, etc. which has made too much inroad into the church."⁸⁸ In 1901, the conference again addressed itself to the subject of dress. Delegates agreed at this time to "use [their] influence to bring about more simplicity in the form of dress."⁸⁹ Four years later it was resolved that "we do more teaching on the subject of modest apparel."⁹⁰ Still, no specific pronouncements defining what could, and could not, be worn were introduced.

By the 1920s, the Ontario conference had definitely decided to promote the use of a uniform dress standard, meaning "the wearing of the bonnet by our sisters, and the regulation [plain] coat by the brethren."⁹¹ This swing to dogmatic conservatism likely reflected the influence of Oscar Burkholder, who used Bible and nonconformity conferences to publicize his viewpoint.⁹² Burkholder favoured the maintenance of a mandatory dress code, believing that if this was the announced will of the church, it should be observed by its members. The Breslau evangelist approvingly quoted Griffith Thomas as saying, "If the church said that all men should wear yellow pants, then all men should wear yellow pants."⁹³

Women were most affected by the dress regulations. It was expected that they would wear the prescribed head covering to church and whenever they were out in public. Men were urged to adopt the black plaincoat, but except for bishops, ministers, and deacons, few did so. Women were understandably resentful of a standard that was applied more stringently to them than to the men. The latter were hard-pressed to justify this discrepancy. They frequently resorted to the argument that nonconformity meant "obedience to the wishes of

the church.”⁹⁴ Women were reminded that the church leaders knew what was best for their flock and should be obeyed. But these explanations fell short of assuaging the restless spirit and, in Toronto and Kitchener, discontent soon spilled out into the open.

An explanation of conference operations will contribute to a better understanding of the ensuing events. The “Constitution and Discipline,” as adopted in 1909, governed the affairs of the Mennonite Conference of Ontario.⁹⁵ It specified that the membership of the conference included all bishops, ministers, and deacons. The conference met twice a year. The agenda of the public sessions included reports from the congregations, the executive committee, and other standing or ad hoc committees which were few in number. Submitted “Questions” approved for discussion in an advance private session constituted an important, though sanitized, part of the proceedings. At the annual session, the conference elected an executive committee consisting of a moderator, a secretary, and three other members, all of them bishops. Thus, the bishops were the strong persons in the conference and generally carried an authoritarian image. Of interest in this connection is their mutual characterization. Said one about the other at the latter’s death:

There was never any question about his orthodoxy. He was conservative — never liberal, — nor an ultra-conservative. He was dogmatic — but not “bulldogmatic.” He was firm but resilient. Every message he preached rang true to the Book. He knew how to walk on the narrow road. He was no Pharisee — : he would add to the Scriptures. Nevertheless, he was no Sadducee who would subtract from their pages.⁹⁶

Within the congregations, the leading church officers were of course the bishops, who were chosen from among the ministers by the unanimous voice of the congregations in a given bishop district or by lot if two or more candidates had been nominated. The lot was a unique process for choosing, supposedly with divine approval and without human politics, the right person from among presumably equally qualified candidates.

The bishops performed the ordinary duties of the ministry, baptized and received into church fellowship “penitent believers,” conducted communion and foot-washing services, solemnized marriages, and “excommunicated [with the counsel of the church] the

disobedient." An all-important function and obligation was "the general oversight of the church" which meant many things, depending somewhat on the personality of the bishop and the needs, wishes, and tolerances of the congregations in a given district, as well as the needs of the times. An inescapable duty was the implementation of the instructions of the conference.

The bishops were assisted by ministers and deacons, who came to their positions in one of two ways. They were chosen "by the voice of the church" or, if necessary, by lot and ordained by the bishops. The choosing could also be initiated "by the ministry," which in practical terms could mean the bishop, and ordained with the consent of the congregation. The ordination of bishops or ministers required "the permission of the Conference in regular session or the advice of the executive committee" and the ordination of deacons the consent of the ministers' meeting of a given district.

Ministers were preachers and pastors and they could, "under the direction and oversight of the bishop, perform the duties usually performed by bishops." Deacons had "oversight of the poor" and special responsibility in removing difficulties and effecting reconciliation "when troubles or disagreements arise among the members." Ministers and deacons, like bishops, could "be relieved from the active duties" with the consent of the conference if they had proven themselves incapable, unqualified, or unsound.

The primacy of bishops, ministers, and deacons in the conference and the primacy of the bishops among their servant colleagues meant, in effect, a form of "centralized government" which had its very strong advocates. Centralization was a reflection of God the creator who "laid down both positive and negative laws" and of Jesus who "laid down regulations, rules, and laws by which the church should be governed." From the practical point of view the church had to stand up for authority at a time when due to modernism, bolshevism, and anarchism "no one is inclined to submit to authority."⁹⁷

All of this was in the context of a "discipline" which specified the faith of the church and the duties of its members. The faith embraced the 18 articles, certain ordinances—baptism, communion, feet-washing, the devotional head covering, the salutation of the holy kiss, anointing of the sick with oil, and Christian marriage—and an ethical code. The latter specified civil obedience, respect and intercession for rulers, and refusal of activity involving the use of "the

force of law or the administration of the oath." Other requirements were stated as follows:

Believers should abstain from flagrant sins, ungodly conversation, extravagance in habits or living, excesses, fleshly and worldly lusts, the use of liquor and tobacco; renounce pride, vanities and worldliness in dress and associations; separate themselves from the world in questionable methods of business, in politics, and in carnal and worldly amusements, refrain from carnal warfare and shall not fellowship with secret societies or like organizations.⁹⁸

Open resistance to the conference's dress policy first became visible in the early spring of 1922. Not surprisingly the setting was Toronto, where the most urban of the churches was located. Nelson Martin, superintendent of the recently founded Toronto mission, notified S.F. Coffman, the responsible bishop, on March 22 that a state of tension had seized the congregation.⁹⁹ The problem, according to Martin, was that many of the members believed the Old Mennonite Church to be antiquated in its message and appeal. The dress regulations, reflecting the church's traditional rural background, acted as an impediment to the church's work in an urban environment.

Martin volunteered several reasons for dropping the dress standards. For one thing, exceptions related to the manner of clothing had been made in other localities and similarly should be forthcoming in Toronto.¹⁰⁰ More to the point, the Toronto mission worker complained that the conspicuous bonnets created an unnecessary fuss, for "members in the cities were constantly subjected to criticism and misunderstanding."¹⁰¹ Martin concluded that the Mennonite dress code worked against the church's future success. Unless certain changes were instituted, he would resign from his position.

The disclosure of events in Toronto caught Coffman quite off guard. The Old Mennonite bishop confided to a friend that he believed Martin had assumed "a very radical stand" that was "contrary to the teachings and practices of the Church."¹⁰² His own response to the crisis was to meet with the mission group and to present a thoughtful defence of the "bonnet practice." Coffman defended his position with a series of arguments.¹⁰³ The wearing of the bonnet, he declared, was in no way the product of coercion, since

all who had joined the Old Mennonite Church had done so voluntarily and in full awareness of the accompanying commitments. The congregation was also reminded that the practice of the church accorded with that of Jesus, who upheld the laws of the strict religionists among whom he found himself and who himself lived and taught the principle of self-denial and separation from the world.

Coffman also explained that nonconformity as represented by the bonnet, rather than attracting ridicule, actually served as a witness and an important symbol of identity. "If we neglect these principles," he maintained, "and discontinue the practice of them, our testimony would be lost and we would have nothing to offer them that has not been, and is not being offered by other societies." In conclusion, Coffman begged patience and understanding until that "time when there would be a natural transition in the customs of the church." Despite the bishop's conciliatory manner, Martin remained unswayed. His frustration at the lack of change in the conference position led him to resign his post in the summer of 1923.

The Toronto mission dispute was but a preview of the larger crisis that was to embroil Kitchener's historic First Mennonite Church, since the days of Bishop Benjamin Eby, a century earlier, one of the leading congregations in the conference. Such was the magnitude of this confrontation that not only did it precipitate a schism within the local congregation but it also threatened the unity of the entire Mennonite Conference of Ontario. The immediate dispute was again occasioned by the dress code. In its larger application, the conflict exposed the greater issue of congregational autonomy versus the authority of the conference and the bishop.

As in the case of the Toronto mission, the urban setting within which First Church found itself seemed to foster a more relaxed attitude towards the dress code. The urban liberalism was generally regarded as insubordination by the rural churches that dominated the conference, but by 1922 most members of the Kitchener congregation agreed that, within sensible bounds, individual freedom should be granted in the selection of a wardrobe, including headwear. These members were supported by their pastor, U.K. Weber, though not by the responsible bishops in the area. Weber directed a letter to S.F. Coffman in late March, criticizing the existing dress legislation and warning that "we are at the parting of the ways [meaning in the conference], for we must choose between the attitude taken by those

in authority and by those of our young people.”¹⁰⁴ S. F. Coffman was at that time on the Conference Executive Committee and the only bishop outside the Waterloo area.

Weber correctly sensed that his younger church members had almost lost patience with the dress regulations thrust upon them. Immediate remedial action was needed, the pastor advised, if a large defection from the congregation was to be averted. An appeal was made for Coffman to exercise aggressive and insightful leadership as a positive response to the younger people:

What we need at the present time in our church is men who have a real vision of the needs of tomorrow, not [just] a blind following of tradition, suppressing of our young people, but adjusting ourselves to meet and solve their problems.¹⁰⁵

Coffman, however, rejected the plea for instant action. He stiffened at the threat of schism suggested by Weber and warned that any attempt to force the conference’s hand would only create additional, and perhaps more serious, troubles. The reference to a possible secession was no empty prediction on Weber’s part. As an outspoken and somewhat emotional individual, Weber already had sharp critics and even some enemies.¹⁰⁶ Personality differences thus aggravated disagreements over the nonconformity issue. The dispute was formally brought out into the open in 1922, when a deputation representing the majority dissident faction notified the conference of their grievances.¹⁰⁷ The conference responded with a resolution that called for “reasonable and faithful compliance” or failing that “the proper discipline,” as follows:

. . . we . . . recognize the need of proper regulation of the apparel of the members of the church according to the apostolic teachings and practices . . . [we] recognize the need and practice of leniency on the part of conference towards our members, and regret the liberties assumed by some who have exceeded the advice and counsels of the church, therefore be it resolved that we earnestly appeal to all of our members in our various congregations to maintain the standards and practices repeatedly confirmed by our Annual Conference . . . expecting that there shall be a reasonable and faithful compliance with this request, or expect the proper discipline by the officers of the church, through the councils and decisions of the church.¹⁰⁸

An Investigating Committee was appointed by the conference to inquire into the difficulties in the Kitchener congregation. The Committee, which elected S.F. Coffman as chairman, met four times within the space of eight days from June 20 to June 27, 1922.¹⁰⁹ The first was an informal meeting "to outline the nature and scope of work to be done." The second and third were preliminary meetings with representatives of the Kitchener congregation and with the chairman of the petitioners, respectively. The single regular meeting of the Committee was held on June 27. At that meeting a Committee of Petitioners, seven in number, presented twelve "charges . . . bearing on the conditions existing" but only after protesting "the fact that the privilege of representation on your committee was not granted."

The subsequent findings report of the Investigating Committee revealed considerable misunderstanding and poor communication among bishops, ministers, and members, some of it undoubtedly due to a structural flaw. Considerable "confusion" had arisen from the fact that the bishops of Waterloo County had failed to define their bishop districts. In other words, First Church was not within the particular district of one bishop but within the general area being supervised by two bishops, Jonas Snider and Manasseh Hallman, whose home congregations were Waterloo and Mannheim, respectively. A third area bishop was Abraham Gingerich at Floradale.

While ill-defined responsibilities, misunderstandings, and confused communications had exacerbated a problem and prevented a resolution, the real problems were differences of position on the wearing of the bonnet by the women, but even there the Committee found no absolute break with tradition because obedience had never been so complete or discipline so rigid that exceptions to the standard hadn't existed and been allowed. The Committee reported:

that for more than 40 years there have been sisters in our congregations who have at times worn other than bonnets approved by the church and that they have been patiently dealt with. But, in no instance have we found a reversal of the customs and practices of the church regarding the principle of separation from the world in the matter of dress.¹¹⁰

It was clear that, in the past, disobedience had been tolerated, quite probably because occasional, or regular but few, dissenters were not

really a threat to the authority or standards of the conference. Besides, they were psychologically, if not sociologically, ostracized by the majority, and this was punishment or discipline sufficient. In any event, a review of the tradition made clear that the problem at first was not new and not recent and U.K. Weber could not be held "wholly responsible for conditions in the congregation at Kitchener," and yet it was precisely the minister's support of the growing number of dissenters which made the movement so dangerous. The causes of difficulties, the Investigating Committee acknowledged, were due to "a manifest desire on the part of many for the removal of conference regulations regarding the matter of dress, and a consequent questioning" of church authority. Members, parents, and "the spiritual oversight and leadership of the church" had not all been fully devoted "to the cause of maintaining the church's standards."

The recommendations for the resolution of the problem called for a defining of the bishop district, a general acknowledgement of failure and full forgiveness, a pledge of loyalty to the standards, a program of Christian service for the young people, and a special session of the conference to deal with the report. The special non-public session took place on December 21 and approved the findings and recommendations clause by clause, with only occasional dissent of one or two votes, in 23 separate motions duly made, seconded, and passed.¹¹¹

In February 1923, the Investigating Committee, accompanied by Bishop Jonas Snider, met with the pastor and congregation of the troubled First Church to communicate the conclusions. The conference representative indicated that all of the involved parties stood guilty of a "general failure and offence" and requested a solemn pledge of loyalty to the church and her standards.¹¹² Most of the original dissenters, however, did not really believe themselves to be guilty of a "general failure." When asked to demonstrate their solidarity with conference policy by standing, many, especially the young women, remained seated.¹¹³ The time had come when discussion alone failed to bridge the enlarging rift.

The deteriorating conditions at the First Church finally forced the conference to act. The 1923 session passed a motion calling for the forfeiture of communion rights and church council privileges for those people who "deliberately transgress the doctrine of Christ and decisions of Conference."¹¹⁴ Ministers were instructed to deal

quickly with recalcitrant members as the situation warranted. The actions proved ineffective in untangling the situation at First Church, though, since its pastor openly sympathized with the critics of the conference. The conference meeting in 1924 therefore adopted stiffer measures to ensure the obedience and conformity of all members to its decisions. A strongly worded statement declared that:

Since the Ontario Mennonite Conference has decided in former resolutions that simplicity in apparel, both in principle and practice, is a scriptural teaching . . . we resolve that all conference members be dealt with by the Bishops, and that all disobedient lay members be dealt with by the pastors under the Bishop's instruction, according to the provisions made by said former resolutions, and that this resolution be carried into effect before next communion in each congregation.¹¹⁵

The lines were now drawn. Bishop Snider, under pressure from an impatient conference, was planted squarely on a collision course with Weber and his party. The showdown came on August 3, when Weber refused to bar from a communion service those women who no longer wore head coverings in public, including places of work and, most importantly, the place of worship. Snider himself had no option but to revoke Weber's ministerial authority.¹¹⁶ After the silencing of their minister by the bishop, whose action was in effect forced by the recent conference legislation, the dissenters believed they had no alternative but to secede and form their own congregation. On August 19, 1924, they announced their intention of establishing an independent congregation,¹¹⁷ which later became the Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, located just a block away from the mother congregation. The conference, reacting to the development, recorded the following "as a matter of record":

We deeply regret the circumstances . . . we earnestly pray for reconciliation and restoration of lost fellowship.¹¹⁸

The conference and the Kitchener congregation, as represented by its bishop, had been unable to accommodate the dissenters by liberalizing the doctrine and practice of nonconformity, but the reasons for this apparent stubbornness were several. Indeed, there was even an element of political realism in the conference position. A crucial

consideration was the fact that the conference was not only losing members but also gaining them because of its conservative stance. The gains for the Old Mennonites were from the Old Order Mennonites, where an even greater conservatism was pushing away those who felt the time had come to accept the telephone and the automobile.¹¹⁹

There was movement in this regard throughout Old Order country, in Haldimand, Lincoln, and York counties, but most significantly, in Woolwich Township of Waterloo County. There, the Old Mennonite congregations at St. Jacobs and Floradale had already registered significant membership gains. And in Elmira former dissenters from the Old Order became the core of a new Old Mennonite congregation formed with the help of the Floradale congregation in the very year that Stirling left First Church in Kitchener. Thus, there were gains as well as losses, and the most important gain of all was the satisfaction that the fundamentals of faith and practice were not being sacrificed just to accommodate impatient modernizers.

The new Stirling church with over 100 members—membership of First dropped from 293 to 175—meant newness and modernization in a number of ways. Musical instruments were immediately introduced and a “meeting-house,” more in the cathedral style, was erected on the hill “above” First. More significantly, the subsequent relations of Stirling with the U.S.-based General Conference Mennonite Church through its Eastern district, meaning mostly Pennsylvania, meant the return to Ontario of that other group of New Mennonites which had existed in Ontario in the nineteenth century and then disappeared in favour of a more evangelical form of New Mennonite, namely the Mennonite Brethren in Christ. Pennsylvania was distant, however, and Stirling, physically connected to the cemetery grounds of its former church home, remained tied to Ontario roots symbolically and otherwise.

The entire Kitchener incident promoted an even greater swing to conservatism among the surviving members at First Mennonite. This was evident in their choice of a new pastor, C.F. Derstine, an occasional visiting preacher from Pennsylvania and well-known for his fundamentalist inclinations. It was further reinforced by S.F. Coffman’s support of the conservatives and his refusal to condone the actions of the Stirling group. His stance made an open split difficult

to avoid, but it also prevented a more major rupture at the conference level, such as had occurred twice in the previous century.

Derstine, for his part, became a popularizer of the fundamentals as a frequent evangelist inside and outside his denomination. Using the medium of the monthly *Christian Monitor*, which he edited from 1923 to 1929, together with his preaching, he waged an unrelenting assault against the religious heresy that he felt was eroding true orthodoxy.¹²⁰ In his characteristically bold fashion, he sketched the perilous dangers inherent in all modernist teachings:

The liberalist theology of the present day will close our churches, empty our pulpits, close our Sunday schools, silence our prayers, make Godless our family hearths, silence the lips of sacred song, put a question mark before the future, and plunge man into an abyss of unbelief and infidelity that can hardly be imagined by us today.¹²¹

The new Kitchener pastor blamed modernism for a host of society's ills, ranging from all shades of moral turpitude to the extremes of murder itself.¹²² The need of the hour, he proclaimed, was a warm, passionate preaching of the Gospel, "which would serve as an absolute antidote to the modernistic theories which are working such havoc in the Christian Church."¹²³ Derstine himself was such a preacher, consistently attracting large audiences to an uncounted number of Bible conferences and evangelistic meetings, both inside and outside the Mennonite church. In Kitchener, Derstine's appeal to the larger community was reminiscent of Benjamin Eby, the popular preacher of Ebytown and first bishop of the region's Mennonite churches.

Derstine underlined the importance of evangelizing in preparation for the end times, calling it the "chief task of the Christian church."¹²⁴ He maintained that "the passion of every Christian should be to win men to Christ, to save men from their sins, to save men from the judgement of God, to save them from their doom."¹²⁵ Derstine's interest in eschatology manifested itself in his writing and in his preaching. His preoccupation with this subject made him a major force in propagating pre-millennialist theory not only in Ontario but throughout the United States. And yet, he remained a defender also of Mennonite principles. In 1925, in his first address

to the conference, he reviewed 400 years of Mennonite history which was summed up as follows:

Mennonitism has developed from the gospel principles of evangelical Christianity. . . . It stands for a church separated from the state and from the world, for the peace principles of Christ, for faith in God and in the brotherhood, for a spiritual social life, in a negative sense, holding aloof from sinful amusements, life insurance, secret societies, and swearing of oaths. Mennonitism advocates the simple life, a sound non-commercialized ministry, obedience to every doctrine and ordinance, the permanency and sacredness of the marriage vow, a practical church discipline. Mennonitism looks upon works as an evidence of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and not as a means of salvation.¹²⁶

The Kitchener schism was symptomatic and symbolic of both Mennonitism and North American Protestantism, which in many places was torn asunder by the controversies of the day. Perhaps the Stirling split would have been a province-wide experience had the nineteenth century not bequeathed to the twentieth century other options for conservatism. On the one hand, the Old Order Mennonites embodied the extremes of cultural conservatism, too extreme even for the nonconformity school of First Mennonite. On the other hand, the New Mennonites of the nineteenth century, now known as the Mennonite Brethren in Christ, represented the extremes of theological fundamentalism.

The Old Mennonites, caught between these two forms of conservatism, were moderates by comparison. But so fine did even the moderates define the faith and its practice that differentiations over detail, and the emotions generated thereby, could not survive personality clashes and inadequate procedures for conflict resolution. Even the wisdom and patience of a Coffman, capable of many compromises, was insufficient to bridge the gaps.

Fundamentalism and Fundamentals Elsewhere

Unwavering confidence in "old-time" Christianity was also the standard in Old Mennonite congregations located in Western Canada.¹²⁷ E.S. Hallman, bishop of the Alberta-Saskatchewan Con-

ference District, compared the challenges facing his church in its confrontation with the world with those encountered by the first-century apostles Peter and Paul.¹²⁸ Hallman observed that his conference's mission prospects were made doubly difficult because "some of the Protestant churches have drifted into modernism, the greatest menace to the Church. . . ."¹²⁹ He remained convinced that the gospel is "the only agency needed to win and save the northwest with its different religions in this cosmopolitan race."¹³⁰

Generally speaking, the same forces that assailed the Old Mennonite Church in the U.S.A., in Ontario, and in the Alberta-Saskatchewan conference were at work also amongst the Amish, though in a different way. Because of their more pronounced cultural conservatism, and an even greater appetite for quietistic ruralism, the Amish noticed and integrated outside influences more slowly than did the Mennonites. Emphasizing a practical Christianity and discipleship, they were "disinterested in the scholarly debate or doctrinal correctness, which characterized the fundamentalists." While the Amish missed the fundamentalist controversy itself, they "absorbed a fundamentalist mood and dogmatism. . . [which] became the 'bed partner' of revivalism and did much to transform and direct the theological framework towards evangelical, conservative Old Mennonitism."¹³¹

Within the more progressive Amish body, the spirit of awakening at this time was calling for adjustments along organizational, rather than theological, lines. The Great War and later developments convinced the leaders of this group that changes were necessary. Accordingly, after a previous attempt had failed, the Ontario Amish Mennonite Conference was organized in 1923.¹³² Thereafter, and though still harbouring a small measure of suspicion of modern innovations, the Amish conference followed the Old Mennonite lead in its adoption and support of institutions such as Bible conferences, revival meetings, winter Bible Schools, and mission projects. In most things seemingly about a generation behind the Old Mennonites, the Amish Mennonites represented important exceptions to that conclusion. From among them came some of the first missionary couples to leave Canadian soil, the Amos Schwartzentrubers and the Nelson Litwillers to Argentina, in 1924 and 1925, respectively. The very first had been sent out in 1901 by the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Conference.¹³³

The founding of an Amish Mennonite Conference was prompted in part by the earlier emergence of a Sunday School Conference, which “tended to be the avenue through which progressive laymen expressed their views and propagated new ideas.” In that process, they became involved in a “power struggle” with the “ordained leadership” which “tended to be more conservative . . . the champion of the status quo and . . . the block to progress.”¹³⁴ The conference was founded in part to check innovation and, ironically, to bring progress under control. Although a trial conference session had been held in 1918, five years had elapsed before another session, leading to annual meetings, was held.

In 1925 a constitution for the newly organized Amish Mennonite Conference was adopted to help “advance the cause of Christ and promote the unity and general welfare of the church.”¹³⁵ Members of the conference were all the “elders (bishops), ministers, and deacons,” and, in the absence of any of these, one delegate “from their brethren” for each 100 members or fraction thereof. In this provision, too, they were ahead of the Old Mennonites, who had not yet made provision for lay delegates. A year later, the conference adopted “rules and discipline” which prescribed guidelines for the faith and life of the church, including the choice of leaders.¹³⁶ They specified that in the selection of deacons, ministers, and elders the lot should “be used to decide whom the Lord had chosen” if the congregation itself was not unanimous.

The discipline also specified the conference’s teaching on ordinances and the related symbolisms. Water baptism by pouring was identified as the initiating rite into “the visible church.” The “partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine” was recommended for frequent observance “to keep the suffering and death of our Lord vividly before our minds.” The “washing of the saints’ feet” was seen as a “true symbol of humility.” A “special devotional head covering” was prescribed for “all women professing godliness . . . during worship (or engaged in teaching, prayer, or prophesying).” “Salutation with the holy kiss” was enjoined as “a symbol of Christian love.” The anointing with oil “in cases of extreme illness” was practised as “a symbol of God’s grace in healing power.” Marriage was taught as “divinely instituted for the propagation, purity, and happiness of the human race.” There could be no marriage “between a believer and an unbeliever, nor between members of different denominations.”

Obligations to government were binding so long as they did not conflict with "the teaching of Christ and His apostles." "Carnal warfare" was opposed, as was the swearing of oaths. Nonconformity to the world meant opposition to "intemperance, unholy conversation, fashionable attire, covetousness, worldly amusements, Sunday desecration, and pride." Life insurance was viewed as wrong because it made "merchandise of human lives." Membership in secret societies was held to be unacceptable because they "are generally oath bound" and because they were "detrimental to Christian churches and antagonistic to the spirit of Christ." "Liberal support" of home and foreign missions was encouraged.

The Swiss Mennonites and the Amish were not the only groups in North America forced to re-evaluate and readjust their patterns of thought and work during the turbulent early decades of this century, but the experience of the Dutch Mennonites in Western Canada was somewhat different. In the congregations of the Conference of Mennonites in Central Canada, for instance, the fundamentalist-modernist debate did not attain crisis proportions until several decades later. This was partly due to the preoccupation with other problems by its leaders, notably David Toews. As bishop of a large church himself and moderator of the conference, Toews had neither the time nor the energy to spend on matters unrelated to the issues at hand, which included the survival of the German-English Academy. Besides, he had always been more predisposed to a practical Christianity and action than to abstract theological debate. This and other factors prevented the fundamentalist-modernist dispute from becoming a prominent feature in this area until later, when it struck with the same divisive impact experienced in the east in the 1920s.

The theological position of the Mennonite Brethren churches, as yet only a small number in the west, likewise anticipated future directions. A strong emphasis on doctrine, biblical orthodoxy, clear-cut conversions, strict discipline, and pre-millennialism, which had characterized the denomination since its founding 60 years earlier,¹³⁷ was now reflected in the first of the Mennonite Bible Schools founded in Western Canada. The Herbert school, established in 1913 by J.F. Harms from Kansas and reopened in 1921, after a two-year closing, by William J. Bestvater, a former Winnipeg city missionary, was modelled in part after the American Bible Schools. The denomination's historian at least assumed that both Bestvater and Harms "appear to have been inspired to establish schools in their own

brotherhood by the pattern and program at the Moody Bible Institute.”¹³⁸

Bestvater’s specific goals in reopening the school were to provide “sound biblical training” and to establish and strengthen youth “in fundamental principles and doctrines.” Since suitable texts in German were not available, Bestvater wrote his own *Glaubenslehre* (doctrine) and *Bibelkunde* (Bible introduction), based on his own training.¹³⁹ This included dispensational and eschatological teaching at the Light and Hope Bible Institute and correspondence courses like “the Scofield Bible Courses [and] Bible Conferences [with] men like A.C. Gaebelin, William Evans, A.C. Dixon, William B. Riley, Harris Gregg, and others,”¹⁴⁰ all of them of the fundamentalist mould. The dependence on such theological sources was a harbinger of things to come in the Mennonite Bible School movement in the prairies, especially among the Brethren.

The Anabaptist sickness, which historically caused the Mennonite people as a whole to resolve their problems by further fragmentation, was not helped by the fundamentalist-modernist controversy. On the contrary, it spawned divisive debate and created centres of conflict for decades to come. The language of fundamentalism and modernism, in any event, became convenient handles for many of the battles that ensued between cultural conservatives and progressives, between rural and urban Mennonites, between strict and less strict ethical codes, between isolation and accommodation, between those opposing and those promoting higher education, between doctrinal simplicity and theological sophistication, between denominational separatism and ecumenicity. Hardly a Mennonite denomination and hardly a Mennonite congregation remained untouched in the decades to come as the struggle for the survival of the faith and of the Mennonite people in the Canadian environment evolved.

Relatively untouched at this time by North American theological controversy were the bishop-oriented congregations of Mennonites in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, going back to the immigration from Russia of the 1870s. Their struggles related more to the assimilationist pressures from the provincial governments and society in general than to the theological schools of thought sweeping the continent. Rather than engage in a prolonged battle and open confrontation, these Mennonites firmly made their point and then quietly prepared to escape worldly influence by emigrating to other countries more tolerant of minorities and their religion-based way of life.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Oscar Burkholder, *The Predicted Departure from the Faith* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1930), p. 95.
- 2 Vernon Smucker, " 'Fundamentalism' and the 'Fundamentals,' " *Christian Exponent* 1 (23 May 1924):165.
- 3 See John Webster Grant, *The Canadian Experience of Church Union* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1967); Claris Edwin Silcox, *Church Union in Canada: Its Causes and Consequences* (New York: Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1933).
- 4 John Webster Grant, *The Church in the Canadian Era* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1972), pp. 113-33; H.H. Walsh, *The Christian Church in Canada* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1956), pp. 318-20.
- 5 Walter Unger, "Earnestly Contending for the Faith: The Role of the Niagara Bible Conference in the Emergence of American Fundamentalism, 1875-1900" (Ph.D. dissertation, Simon Fraser University, 1982).
- 6 CGC, XV-31.2, "1920-Fundamentalism," Walter Unger, "Predicting the End: It Started at Niagara," n.d.
- 7 Don E. Smucker, "Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, 2:318-19; Samuel Floyd Panabecker, *Open Doors: The History of the General Conference Mennonite Church* (Newton, Kans.: Faith and Life Press, 1975), p. 384.
- 8 See Frank H. Epp, *Mennonites in Canada, 1786-1920: The History of a Separate People* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1974), pp. 144-45. The Vineland United Church, for example, has strong Mennonite roots, as is attested to by the cemetery and membership lists.
- 9 *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons*, ed. J.C. Wenger, trans. Leonard Verduin (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1956), p. 307.
- 10 For several examples, see Frank H. Epp, *Mennonites in Canada 1786-1920*, pp. 107-8, 311, 326-27.
- 11 Don E. Smucker, p. 319.
- 12 C.F. Derstine, the Kitchener pastor to appear later in this history, was involved in both the temperance and the alliance movement. The Ontario Conference of Mennonite Brethren in Christ called "attention of our women to the importance of the Women's Christian Temperance Union whose object is . . . the standard of total abstinence . . . the complete extinction of the liquor traffic." *Conference Journal*, 1928, pp. 41-42.
- 13 A prominent social gospeller whose concern for immigrant groups went deeper than that of most people, J.S. Woodsworth was also convinced that aliens must be assimilated, for both their own good and Canada's. See J.S. Woodsworth, *Strangers Within Our Gates* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972).
- 14 See Richard Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955).

- 15 Richard C. Wolf, Introduction to *The Origins of Fundamentalism: Toward a Historical Interpretation*, by Ernest R. Sandeen (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), p. v.
- 16 Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Origins of Fundamentalism: Toward a Historical Perspective* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), p. 3.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p. 13.
- 18 See F. Roy Coad, *A History of the Brethren Movement: Its Origins, its Worldwide Development and its Significance for the Present Day* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1968); C. Norman Kraus, *Dispensationalism in America: Its Rise and Development* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1958).
- 19 The Revelation of John 20:4, 6.
- 20 See reference to “*Weltverbesserung*” or social betterment as a false Christian task at 1920 session of Conference of Mennonites in Central Canada in J.G. Rempel, *Fuenfzig Jahre Konferenzbestrebungen*, I, p. 135.
- 21 The appreciation the Mennonites had for Moody was acknowledged by Funk, who in 1927 testified that they owed “D.L. Moody a vote of thanks for the influences that he has brought to bear upon the interest of the Mennonite Church.” Quoted in William Ward Dean, “John Funk and the Mennonite Awakening” (Ph.D. dissertation, State University of Iowa, 1955), p. 62.
- 22 Norman F. Furniss, *The Fundamentalist Controversy, 1918–1931* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1963), pp. 23–24.
- 23 A.Z. Conrad, quoted in Furniss, p. 36.
- 24 Rodney Sawatsky, “The Influence of Fundamentalism on Mennonite Nonresistance” (M.A. thesis, University of Minnesota, 1973), pp. 63–64.
- 25 Quoted in *ibid.*, pp. 61–62.
- 26 J.B. Toews, “Influences on Mennonite Brethren Theology,” a paper presented to Symposium sponsored by the Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies in Canada, 21–22 November 1980. Toews writes this paper with hindsight and with special reference to the Mennonite Brethren denomination, but his analysis is applicable and useful here. While Toews contrasts Fundamentalism with the historic Mennonite Brethren faith, he makes that faith synonymous with Anabaptism and our own juxtaposition seems appropriate.
- 27 Helen Kolb Gates et al., *Bless the Lord O My Soul: A Biography of Bishop John Fretz, 1835–1930*, ed. J.C. Wenger (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1964), pp. 52, 68–70.
- 28 John A. Hostettler, *God Uses Ink: The Heritage and Mission of the Mennonite Publishing House After Fifty Years* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1958), pp. 134–37.
- 29 Harold S. Bender, “Herold der Wahrheit,” *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, II, p. 711.
- 30 See Harold S. Bender, ed., *John Horsch Memorial Papers* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1947).

- 31 A standard introductory treatment on Mennonite History offered the following assessment of Kauffman: "In the long span, 1905-43, more than any other man, 'D.K.,' as his friends knew him, served as the chief leader and the major voice of the Old Mennonite Church." Cornelius J. Dyck, ed., *An Introduction to Mennonite History* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1967), p. 173. See also Daniel Kauffman, *Fifty Years in the Mennonite Church, 1890-1940* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1941).
- 32 For some examples of Kauffman's editorials in the *Gospel Herald*, see "Modernism vs. Fundamentalism," 17 (22 May 1924):145; "Why Do They Do It?" 18 (27 August 1925):433; "Are You a Fundamentalist?" 18 (28 January 1926):897; "Liberalism's Bid for the Mennonite Church" 22 (23 May 1929):161-62.
- 33 Daniel Kauffman, ed., *Bible Doctrine* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1914), p. 108.
- 34 See Walter Klaassen, *Anabaptism: Neither Catholic Nor Protestant* (Waterloo, Ont.: Conrad Press, 1973). For Horsch's own views, consult John Horsch, "The Faith of the Swiss Brethren," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 4 (October 1930):241-66; 5 (January 1931):7-27; (April 1931):128-47; (October 1931):245-59.
- 35 John Horsch, *The Mennonite Church and Modernism* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1924).
- 36 S.F. Coffman, ed., *Mennonite Church Polity: A Statement of Practices in Church Government* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1944), p. 67.
- 37 The articles were published in *ibid.*, pp. 68-75.
- 38 The crucial role of church college education, as perceived at the time by Old Mennonites, is reflected in the following: "Extracts from the Report of the 11th Mennonite General Conference . . . 1909," *Mennonite Year-Book and Directory*, 1920, pp. 14-22; D.H. Bender, "Education in the Mennonite Church," *Mennonite Year-Book and Directory*, 1920, p. 102; I.R. Detweiler, "Education and the Denominational College," *Mennonite Year-Book and Directory*, 1921, pp. 13-16.
- 39 O.B. Gerig, "Mennonite Ideals and Modern Life," *Christian Exponent* 2 (30 January 1925):38.
- 40 See C. Henry Smith and E.J. Hirschler, eds., *The Story of Bluffton College* (Bluffton, Ohio: Bluffton College, 1925), and Bluffton College Faculty, *Bluffton College: An Adventure in Faith, 1900-1950* (n.p., [1950]).
- 41 Harold S. Bender, "Christian Exponent," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, I, p. 581. See also Sawatsky, pp. 98-102.
- 42 Vernon Smucker, "'Fundamentalism' and the 'Fundamentals,'" *Christian Exponent* 1 (23 May 1924):165.
- 43 Vernon Smucker to H.S. Bender, as quoted in Rodney Sawatsky, "History and Ideology: American Mennonite Identity Definition

- Through History" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1977), pp. 177–78.
- 44 CGC, Hist. Mss. 1.1.1.2.3(5), Daniel Kauffman, Report on recommendations of executive committee re Goshen College, 13 July 1922.
- 45 *Ibid.*
- 46 Rodney Sawatsky, "Influence of Fundamentalism," p. 126.
- 47 J.H. Mosemann, "The Modern Peace Movement," *Gospel Herald* 18 (28 January 1926):898.
- 48 Quoted in Guy F. Herschberger, "John Horsch, a Proponent of Biblical Nonresistance," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 21 (July 1947):157. See John Horsch, *Die Biblische Lehre von der Wehrlosigkeit* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1920), pp. 74–81.
- 49 Melvin Gingerich, *Mennonite Attire Through Four Centuries* (Breinigsville, Pa.: Pennsylvania German Society, 1970), p. 148.
- 50 Paul Martin says: "At least three major issues emerged because of *outside* influence: the inspiration of Scripture, the millennial question, and an individualistic approach to personal salvation." See "Factors of Influence and Change in the Mennonite Conference of Ontario: 1900–80" (research paper, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, 1979), p. 8.
- 51 C.F. Derstine, "The Development of Mennonitism in the Last Four Centuries," as reported in *Calendar of Appointments, 1925–26*, p. [13].
- 52 Martin, p. 6.
- 53 *Ibid.*, p. 11.
- 54 John S. Weber, "A History of Samuel Frederick Coffman, 1872–1954: The Mennonite Churchman" (M.A. research paper, University of Waterloo, 1975), p. 102. For biographies of S.F. Coffman, Oscar Burkholder, and C.F. Derstine (as well as J.B. Martin), see Urie Bender, *Four Earthen Vessels* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1982).
- 55 "A Statement of Christian Fundamentals Adopted by Mennonite General Conference, August 25, 1921." A copy of this statement was appended to *Mennonite Year-Book and Directory*, 1925 (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1925). See Appendix I.
- 56 CGC, Hist. Mss. 1.1.1.2.4 (5), S.F. Coffman to Noah Mack, 12 May 1921.
- 57 *Ibid.*
- 58 S.F. Coffman, "The Whale," *Christian Monitor* 9 (January 1917):15.
- 59 Some of these include "Education With the Bible," *Christian Monitor* 9 (May 1917):[142–43]; "Bible Study," *Christian Monitor* 9 (September 1917):272–73; "The Bible and Modern Thought," *Christian Monitor* 10 (November 1918):719, 734.

- 60 *Calendar of Appointments*, 1924-25, p. [15].
- 61 CGC, Hist. Mss. 7-14, Norma J. Shantz, "Oscar Burkholder, Minister and Bishop, 1886-1956," 1969.
- 62 *True Life Stories* (Scottdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1929); *The Predicted Departure from the Faith* (Scottdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1930); *True Stories from Life* (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1942).
- 63 See, for example, "The Infallibility of the Word," *Gospel Herald* 22 (17 October 1929):600-1; "The Meaning of Feet Washing," *Gospel Herald* 22 (18 April 1929):67-69; "Duties of the Pastor," *Christian Ministry* 4:3 (1951):129-34; "The Doctrine of Separation," *Sword and Trumpet* 17:2-19:3 (1949-1951).
- 64 CGC, Hist. Mss. 7-14, Norma J. Shantz, "Oscar Burkholder, Minister and Bishop, 1886-1956," 1969, p. 13.
- 65 Oscar Burkholder, *Predicted Departure*, p. 74.
- 66 *Ibid.*, p. 70.
- 67 *Ibid.*, p. 77.
- 68 *Ibid.*, p. 27.
- 69 Advertisement, in *Mennonite Year-Book and Directory*, 1931 (Scottdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1931), back cover.
- 70 Oscar Burkholder, *Predicted Departure*, p. 5.
- 71 *Ibid.*, p. 44.
- 72 *Ibid.*, p. 95.
- 73 *Ibid.*, p. 99.
- 74 *Calendar of Appointments*, 1925-26, p. [11].
- 75 CGC, Hist. Mss. 1.1.3.1.6(2), S.F. Coffman, "The Church and Particular Doctrines" (a report on the work of the Peace Problems Committee), 27 January 1932.
- 76 *Mennonite Year-Book and Directory*, 1928, pp. 20-1.
- 77 "Mennonite General Conference," in *Mennonite Year-Book and Directory*, 1924 (Scottdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1924), p. 27.
- 78 A program from this conference is found in CGC, III-12.3.1, *First Mennonite Kitchener, #1 Programs, Clippings, Photos*; Programs.
- 79 "New Hamburg, Ont.," *Gospel Herald* 20 (18 August 1927):453.
- 80 *Calendar of Appointments*, 1924-25, p. [15].
- 81 John S. Weber, p. 108.
- 82 CGC, Hist. Mss. 1.1.1.2.3(5), J.B. Smith to members of Literature Committee, 28 January 1920.
- 83 See Clarence Fretz, "A History of Winter Bible Schools in the Mennonite Church," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 16 (April 1942):59-60. See also Newton Gingrich, *History of the Ontario Mennonite Bible School* (n.p., n.d.). The student yearbooks of the school.
- 84 S.F. Coffman, "Bible Study," *Christian Monitor* 9 (September 1917):272-73.

- 85 Oscar Burkholder, *Predicted Departure*, p. 57.
- 86 OMBS *Clarion* (Kitchener, Ont.: n.p., 1939), p. 5. This was the annual yearbook printed by the Ontario Mennonite Bible School.
- 87 *Calendar of Appointments*, 1921–22, p. [15].
- 88 CGC, II-1.A.1, *A Manual of Conference Resolutions of the Mennonite Church of the Canada Conference District* (n.p., 1904), p. 6.
- 89 *Ibid.*
- 90 Oscar Burkholder, S.F. Coffman, and Gilbert Bergey, comps., *Resolutions: Ontario Mennonite Conference, 1847–1928* (n.p., 1929), p. [5].
- 91 *Calendar of Appointments*, 1918–19, p. 13; 1922–23, p. [15]; 1923–24, p. [15], 1924–25, p. [15].
- 92 Melvin Gingerich, *Mennonite Attire*, p. 150.
- 93 Norma Shantz, p. 10.
- 94 C.F. Derstine, “Twenty-one Reasons,” *Christian Monitor* 20 (February 1928):44. In the same article Derstine advised that those in leadership should be listened to since they “watch for your souls.”
- 95 CGC, II-1.A.1, “Constitution and Discipline of the Mennonite Conference of Ontario,” adopted at Vineland, Ontario, 27 May 1909.
- 96 C.F. Derstine, “Bishop Jonas Snider,” *Mennonite Year-Book and Directory*, 1945, pp. 22–3.
- 97 D.H. Bender, “Our Form of Church Government,” *Mennonite Year-Book and Directory*, 1924, pp. 17–19.
- 98 “Constitution and Discipline,” p. 11.
- 99 CGC, Hist. Mss. 1.1.1.2.6(1), “Toronto File,” Nelson Martin to S.F. Coffman, 22 March 1922.
- 100 CGC, Hist. Mss. 1.1.1.2.6, “Toronto File,” S.F. Coffman to Ab. S. Snyder, 12 June 1922.
- 101 *Ibid.*
- 102 CGC, Hist. Mss. 1.1.1.2.6, “Toronto File,” S.F. Coffman to C.F. Derstine, 27 March 1922.
- 103 CGC, Hist. Mss. 1.1.1.2.6, “Toronto File,” S.F. Coffman to Ab. S. Snyder, 12 June 1922.
- 104 CGC, Hist. Mss. 1.1.1.2.6 (1), “Toronto File,” U.K. Weber to S.F. Coffman, 27 March 1922.
- 105 *Ibid.*
- 106 CGC, Interview between Lyle Friesen and Elvan Shantz, 20 October 1977.
- 107 The seven members of this delegation included: Allan Cressman, Moses Shantz, Titus Shantz, Allan Shantz, William Backert, Melvin Shuh (president), and E.B. Betzner (secretary). CGC, XV-31.2, “1920-Stirling Church,” Minutes of Committee of Group of Members of First Mennonite Church, 27 June 1922.
- 108 *Calendar of Appointments*, 1922–23, p. [15]. CGC, II-2.A.1, Minute Book 2, Mennonite Conference of Ontario, 1–2 June 1922.

- 109 CGC, "1920-Stirling Church," "Report by the Investigating Committee Appointed by Conference to Inquire into the Difficulties in the Kitchener Congregation," n.d.
- 110 *Ibid.*
- 111 Minutes of Special Session of the Ontario Mennonite Conference, 21 December 1922.
- 112 *Ibid.*, "Report of the Representative of Conference Appointed at the Special Conference to present the Findings and Recommendations of the Committee on Investigation of the Affairs of the Kitchener Congregation to the Congregation at Kitchener and the Bishops Concerned," n.d. See also CGC, II-2.A.1, Minute Book 2, Mennonite Conference of Ontario, 1-2 June 1922.
- 113 *Ibid.*
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