



Newsletter

Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta

Volume XVII Number 3

October 2014

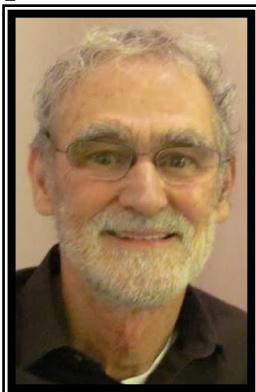
Life-Giving Tears in an Anabaptist Cave

A

*Reconstructed
Story by Hugo
Neufeld*

Date: Approximately 1530 A.D.

Place: Near the hamlet of Baretswil, Switzerland in the Canton (Province) of Zurich.



Hugo Neufeld

"This is an exhausting walk. I'm getting tired! Yet there is an upward momentum in my energy as I climb this mountain, other people cautiously ascending all sides! A river of joy pulsates through me. When the

(Continued on page 13)

Takahi, Satoshi (Korean name – Eun Hyun Gee)

(Born December 9, 1947)

Written by Rita Dahl

Just over a year ago, I received an e-mail from Ruth Neufeld who was working at the front desk at the MCC office in Calgary, saying she had been contacted by a Brad Kipfer who was looking for a Mrs. Rita Dahl whose address was, at one time, 3031 Beil Avenue, Calgary. The reason for this inquiry was that, while

Mr. Kipfer had been serving as an MCC volunteer in Japan, he had met a dairy farmer who had been a war orphan in Daegu, Korea in the 1950s. **Takahi** (last name) **Satoshi** (first name) had told Brad that, while he had been at the Mennonite Vocational School (MVS) near Daegu, he had received a letter from me that had meant so much to him and he wanted to thank me. He said that he had recently found my name and address in his diary from that time, although the letter itself had been lost in one of his many moves. The letter to which he was referring must have been sent in

(Continued on page 4)



Satoshi Takahi

In this Issue

- 1 Takahi, Satoshi
- 1 Anabaptist Cave
- 2 Editorial
- 3 Chairman's Corner
- 3 Ravenhead Remembered
- 8 Reflections on a Visit
- 9 Mennonite Vocational School
- 11 Book Review: Red Quarter Moon
- 12 Menno Simons School
- 16 Ruth Derksen Siemens

MHSA FALL CONFERENCE on Sat. November 1, 2014

The 2014 Fall Conference of the MHSA will be held at **First Mennonite Church**
3650 - 91St. Edmonton, AB on November 1, 2014. at 1:00 pm.

Our Guest Speaker will be **ANDREA DYCK, Curator, Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach, MB.** Andrea's presentation is entitled:

"MENNONITE HERITAGE VILLAGE: COLLECTED HISTORIES"

Please pre-register by Monday, October 20, 2014 with
DAVID JEFFARES at 780-438-0404 or by e-mail ddjeff@icloud.com
Admission: \$15.00. per person (includes Faspas lunch!).
Everyone is welcome.

Editorial Reflections

by Dave Toews

In Joshua 4:21, we read in part, "In the future when your descendants ask their parents, 'What do these stones mean?'" The answer, in Psalm 145:4, is:



Dave Toews

"One generation shall praise Your works to another, And shall declare Your mighty acts."

I believe one of these stones was the MCC Mennonite Vocational School (MVS) in Kyung San, South Korea 1953 - 1971. Many young Koreans benefited from this school both vocationally and spiritually including Satoshi Takahi. Satoshi, as one reads in this publi-

cation, took the time and, with determination, came to Calgary to thank some of his benefactors and the organization that shaped him.

The reader should note that, in both the Korean and Japanese languages, the family name is said and written first and the given name is second. However, in the articles featured in this edition of the MHSA Newsletter, the various authors have used the names, "Satoshi" and "Takahi," interchangeably.

As I read these articles, I was reminded of the school year, 2001-02, that my wife, Marion, and I spent in Bundang, just south-east of Seoul, South Korea. Marion taught English full time and I taught part-time, volunteered part-time at the Korea Anabaptist Centre (KAC) and played ice hockey with a bunch of crazy Canucks, some Americans and a few Koreans. Marion and I had many amazing life-changing experiences during the course of that year!

My time spent at KAC was especially meaningful. KAC was

funded in part by very successful graduates of MVS, their way of giving back to MCC. We were privileged to meet and worship with Koreans, Kim, Kyong Jong and Lee, Jae Young and Canadians, Tim Froese and Cheryl Woelk, at the Jesus Village Church in Chuncheon. Looking back at this time, evoked in me many pleasant memories.

Thank you to all who contributed the articles in this issue. MHSA welcomes your direct feedback, letters to the editor and the offer of articles that could be featured in future newsletter issues. The deadline for submissions for the next newsletter is February 1, 2015.

In the meantime, I expect to see you at First Mennonite Church in Edmonton on November 1, 2014 for the MHSA Fall Conference which will feature guest speaker, Andrea Dyck, recently appointed curator of the Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach, Manitoba.❖

Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta Newsletter

ISSN 1916-6966

is published three times a year.

Send submissions and other correspondence to:
Dave Toews, Editor
(dmtoews@gmail.com)

Subscription is through membership (\$30.00). To join, send payment to:

MHSA
2946 32 Street NE
Calgary, AB T1Y 6J7

Editor: Dave Toews

Assistant Editor: Lorne Buhr

Copy Editors: David Jeffares, Karen Bock & Myrna Belyea

Editorial Committee: Dave Toews, Lorne Buhr, David Jeffares & Colin Neufeldt

Layout: Colin Neufeldt

Distribution: Dave Hildebrand

Visit our Website:
www.mennonitehistory.org

MHSA Executive

Chair: Dave Neufeldt, Lethbridge
Vice Chair: Dan Jack, Calgary
Secretary: Katie Harder, Didsbury
Treasurer: Ellie Janz, Calgary

Members at Large:

Ted Regehr, Calgary
Peter Kroeger, Calgary
Ken Matis, Coaldale
Peter Dyck, Calgary
David Jeffares, Edmonton
Lil Bartel, Calgary

GAMEO Representative:
Wes Berg, Edmonton

Errata: *MHSA Newsletter*, Vol. XVII, No 2, June 2014.

On page 21, the author of the article *From Indiana to Alberta* is "Ed Kauffman" (not "Ed Kaufman"). The photo caption on the same page should also read "Ed Kauffman".

Publications for Sale:

- Coaldale Hospital Memoirs (\$25)
- Among the Ashes (\$25)
- Seeking Place of Peace (\$15)
- Nuggets of Gold (\$15)

Chairman's Corner

By Dave Neufeldt



Dave Neufeldt

As I read our last newsletter, I was struck by the common theme of two of the articles, both reviews. The first was of a master's thesis by Sean Patterson that looked at the conflict between Nestor Makhno and the Mennonites in Ukraine. The second was of the memoir of Jacob A. Neufeld who lived through the Stalin years and then escaped from communism to find refuge in Nazi Germany. What I found striking as I read these two reviews was the way they revealed how strongly the lens through which we view history shapes our interpretation of that history.

Patterson's thesis compared the Makhnovist narrative and the Mennonite narrative regarding events in Ukraine during the Russian Civil War. The landless peasants saw Makhno as someone who was freeing them from the oppression of foreign colonists. The Mennonites saw him as a brutal murderer. Patterson examines the Eichenfeld massacre and concludes that neither of the two narratives is objective and tells the full story.

Jacob Neufeld experienced Nazi Germany as a liberator, rescuing him from Stalin and providing refuge in Germany. I talked recently with someone whose mother made that same trek from the Soviet Un-

ion to Germany during World War II, eventually coming to Canada. He said that it took her many years to get her head around the dominant western perspective of Hitler and Nazi Germany as an evil genocidal regime.

So what is the truth of history, or is there a singular truth when we look at history? The Ukrainian peasants viewed Makhno as deliverer and the Mennonites viewed Hitler as deliverer. Whereas the Mennonites were victims of Makhno, the Jewish people were victims of Hitler. Do contradictory perspectives of Makhno or Hitler both contain some truth? It takes time and distance from an event to be able to look objectively at the evidence and develop a more complete and perhaps honest story.

As an historical society, our primary objective is to collect and preserve records of historical value and to make them available to historians or others interested in understanding the events of the past. We can't predict what the longer-term understanding of present events will be, but by recording our stories now, a more accurate and full understanding will be possible in the future. If we don't record our stories, then our voice will be lost.

We encourage everyone to record their stories – whether their own, that of a family member or of their congregation. If you would like to record a story but have questions about how to do that, please contact our office. One of our volunteers will be happy to

give you some suggestions on where to find resources and how to get started. ♦

Ravenhead Remembered

By Dave Toews



Ravenhead School 1952

Rear left to right: Evelyn Pethick, Elizabeth Bonik, Natalie Shklanka. Centre: Hilda Toews, Elizabeth Toews, Steve Bonik, Arthur Katchorick, Anna Marie Toews. Front: Lana Johnson, David Toews, Bonnie Mae Pethick

Standing between Lana Johnson (waving) and Bonnie Mae Pethick, the smiling happy looking little boy in the front row looks out expectantly at me from the school picture. It was September 1952, the year Princess Elizabeth ascended to the throne as the Queen of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth. I was seven years old and had just started grade one. What do I remember? And, what is reinforced by pictures, stories by family and friends and reconstructive memory?

(Continued on page 16)

(Continued from page 1)

about 1965 when he was 17 years old – about 50 years ago. Satoshi wondered whether I was still alive, and if so, whether I would like to hear from him.

All of this happened because, at the time this letter was written, our ladies group, Helping Hands Women in Mission, was supporting, financially, an orphanage and school that MCC had created in Korea after the Korean War. Every month our collection money had been forwarded to MCC in support of this effort. In order to try to establish a personal contact, MCC would give us the name of the orphans and some of us would take turns writing to them. It must have been one of these letters that Satoshi received from me. I have absolutely no recollection of what I might have said in that letter. I do vaguely remember that I tended to put off writing these letters because I had a great deal of difficulty thinking of something meaningful to say to someone I had never seen, someone whose circumstances I really did not understand and someone whom I never expected to meet.

When I responded, Satoshi seemed very excited to hear from me and he wrote (as translated), “God made it possible for us to learn about each other’s welfare in the course of this life on earth, and I am overflowing with joy! If you were close by I would come and visit you immediately, but instead I will use a letter to express my thanks for the warm kindness you showed to me in Christ’s love”. Then he wrote that twenty-seven years ago, his family left Korea and moved to Japan. He and his son run a dairy farm in the province of Hokkaido which is on the most northern island of Japan. Then he wrote, “The letters and the lovely cards I received as a student made me, who felt lonely and alone, very happy. One way to express it might be to say it was like coming near and feeling the warmth of a stove when it’s cold. Those small words of encouragement always gave me great courage. Small things done with God’s love are always accompanied by great blessings. God taught me that anyone, anywhere, can do small acts of love for others. As I am unable to forget the love shown to me by Mennonites, I have named my farm “MENNONite DAIRY FARM.” On the upper part of the sign is written, in English, “In memory of Mennonite Christians serving in the name of Christ in the Mennonite Vocational School in Korea 1951 – 1971”.

I learned that, while he was a student at Mennonite Vocational School (MVS), MCC had sent 20 dairy cows from the U.S. to the school to be used



Rita Dahl

both for teaching and to provide milk for the students. The school ran an agricultural program, both to educate the students and to provide produce to help sustain them. Students were required to help in the various activities on the farm and in doing so they both supported the institution and they learned. Satoshi became interested in the dairy and asked if he could help with the milking. This initial interest and a great deal of study and even more hard work eventually made it possible for him to own a dairy of his own. He says that to become the owner of his own dairy, he has had to overcome many obstacles but God has always made it possible for him to move forward and to persevere if he made the required sacrifices. It seems that because someone recognized Satoshi’s ability and his willingness to make the required effort to succeed, he was given the opportunity for further study after he left MVS. He has become an expert in artificial insemination of cattle and he has been invited to lecture on the subject in places like Australia, Washington, and Israel. He sent us the following list of his credentials which include diplomas, awards and certificates:

1967 -- Mennonite Vocational Secondary School Graduate in Agricultural Development

1967 -- Employed at Canaan Christian Institute as a farm manager

1974 -- Employed at Coca-Cola Korea (MIT) for 10 years

1986 -- Graduate of Yonsei Uni-

- versity Institute of Agricultural Development
- 1986** -- Trained at Kurosawa Dairy Farm in Hokkaido, Japan
- 1986** -- Trained at Japanese Agricultural Development Co. for AI, ET, training & raising cows
- 1988** -- Graduate of Rakuno Gakuen College in Japan
- 1989** -- Trained at Japanese Chu-Ou farm for ET, milk cow and beef management
- 1991** -- Employed at Ebisia dairy farm as a farm manager
- 1996** -- Trained at Israeli agricultural development by invitation of I.C.B.A
- 1998** -- Employed at B*C Farm in Washington, US and Melbourne, Australia as technical manager
- 2000** -- Employed at JI* Dakeda Dairy Farm (1000 cows) as a technical manager.
- 2007** -- Currently operating a family dairy farm (MENNONite DAIRY FARM)
- 1985** -- License to commence artificial insemination (livestock) in Korea
- 1986** -- Award from the headmaster of Yonsei University
- 1988** -- Award from the Rakuno Gakuen College department head of Agricultural Development
- 1988** -- Award from the Japanese education department
- 1990** -- License to commence artificial insemination and embryo transplant (livestock) in Japan
- 1991** -- Award of thanks from Morinaga Milk Industry Co. Ltd.
- 1993** -- Award of thanks from Osaka Dairy and Agricultural Union.

Satoshi has nothing but the highest praise for MCC and what

the organization has done for him and for what it did in Korea while he was there. In 2012, the graduates of MVS organized a reunion of alumni and former staff and workers at the school and other MCC relief efforts in Korea after the War. The event was covered and promoted by a Christian Korean television station, broadcasted by TV networks and written up in local newspapers. The alumni provided the former teachers and workers with free transportation to Korea so they could be part of the celebration. As part of this reunion, the alumni, together with former teachers and staff, published a 132 page book about the "Relief and Educational Missionary Work in Korea, 1951 to 1971." Satoshi wrote, "In current society – sixty years after the Second World War – that service is being forgotten and this was a chance to remind people again. I thank God that I was able to participate as an MVS graduate and express my gratitude to everyone". In another letter he wrote, "The graduates of MVS have not left the path of faith, no matter what kind of difficult social environments they have experienced. They continue to participate fully in society as pastors, college professors (including one president and one vice-president), teachers, industrialists, executives, army commanders, government workers, musicians, business owners, farmers, and more. They also continue to connect with each other through alumni gatherings and in other ways".

The book published for the alumni event provides details about life and work at the school and the many other programs of MCC in Korea during and after the war. It tells about a program for Korean widows in which MCC brought in sewing machines and gave sewing lessons to 150 women so they could have a skill with which to become self-sufficient. MCC supplied new and used clothing, blankets and all kinds of survival necessities and distributed over 5000 Christmas bundles every year. It established five feeding stations where up to a total of 8000 people were given a hot meal each day. Christian nurses staffed hospitals and orphanages and rescued many abandoned and starving infants.

Our conversations continued by e-mail through the fall and the winter on a somewhat irregular basis, partly because letters both ways needed to be translated. Satoshi shared with us some of his plans and dreams. He would like to enlarge his dairy and then establish a cheese factory so he can use the milk produced on the farm to make cheese. Then he would like to build a local, rural, Mennonite church on his property. When that is going, he envisions creating a public park and opening his farm to schools and other groups for educational and recreational purposes. He has big plans. With his faith, his energy and his courage, I would not be surprised to see these things happen.

For Christmas, I created a Christmas card for him and his family. In response he wrote: "Thank you for the Christmas card. I was very happy

to get it. I wondered what you were thinking while you were making it and decorating it with those pretty leaves and bells. The card now stands by our Christmas tree in our entrance”.

In one e-mail, Satoshi invited Ralph and me to visit him in Japan. Ten years ago, that would have been possible, but at this time, we feel that a trip like that is more than we can undertake; instead, we invited him and his wife to visit us in Calgary. By about Easter, he sent us his airline bookings – his wife would not be able to come, but he would be here for six days in July. He asked whether, while he was here, he could see a Mennonite dairy and a Mennonite cheese factory. He also said that while he was here, he would like to be treated as a friend and not as a guest.

We were quite excited about his visit but, at the same time, we were apprehensive and began to wonder how this would evolve because he speaks virtually no English and we know not one word of Japanese. We became rather anxious when we thought of spending this time with someone with whom we couldn't communicate. A few weeks before Satoshi arrived, we had an e-mail from Lydia, who lives near Red Deer and who is Korean. She offered to help with the translating when she could. She had never met Satoshi and knew him only through Facebook; that is how she knew about his forthcoming visit. She and her husband, Young, offered to come to the Calgary airport with us to meet Satoshi. It so happened that, because, Young was unemployed at that time, he volunteered to stay at our house and be our full-time interpreter. This was a huge help for us and relieved some of our anxiety. Young and Lydia have been in Canada eleven years and speak a very passable English.

When Satoshi and we arrived at our home, Young told us that Satoshi wanted to thank us in the time-honoured Japanese fashion. This meant putting his hands together, then bowing right down to the floor in front of me and saying thank you in Korean. Then he did the same for Ralph. We were both honoured and humbled, not sure how to respond and feeling that we really didn't deserve this kind of honour. That was the beginning of “getting to know you.”

Until Satoshi actually arrived at our house, Ralph thought that he was just an interested observer and that this visit was really my concern. Now, however, he quickly became a full-time chauffeur and tour guide. The day after Satoshi arrived, Ralph took him and Young to a dairy farm that is close to our farm east of Didsbury. This excursion had been arranged a few weeks earlier. The owners gave them a detailed 2 ½ hour tour answering questions and explaining how they do things in Canada. Satoshi was very busy taking pictures and making notes. After lunch, they went to our farm and Ralph showed them where he grew up and where he went to school.

The next day, Ralph took them to see the house in Calgary where we used to live when I wrote Satoshi the letter. That afternoon they went to the MCC office because we thought it was important that he meet some of the people who run the programs like the one that had helped him when he was in Korea. We had talked to the staff at the office to let them know about Satoshi before he came to Canada so they would be ready for the delegation when they met them in the board room for tea. There, Satoshi thanked MCC for what they had done and were doing, and he told them about his vision for a cheese factory and church and public park. He told them he was looking for a cheese maker for his farm and a pastor for the church he was hoping to build. Did they know of any such people? He asked and answered many questions, all of which was made possible by Young's ability to translate. Without an interpreter, this would have been very different and not very useful.

On two separate evenings, some of our friends invited us, Satoshi and Young to dinner in order to meet and get to know them. The conversation was in English so Young was busy interpreting for Satoshi who seemed to be very absorbed in trying to learn what he could about our Canadian way of life. After we came home from those visits, I would wake up well after midnight and hear Young and Satoshi downstairs in conversation and I thought it would be

interesting to know what their perceptions of us and our Canadian society were. Long before we got up, Satoshi was already up and writing in his note book.

We thought we would like to show Satoshi some of Alberta beyond Calgary so, on Friday, Ralph took them to Banff. It was a cold and rainy day with low-hanging clouds that obscured the mountain tops but we did see what we could of Banff and Lake Minnewanka and we saw a black bear amble across the road in front of us.

On Sunday we all went to church along with Young, Lydia and their boys. On the way there, I thought that in our church it would be appreciated if Satoshi were to thank them in German, so we taught him to say "Dankeschoen". During the service, I introduced Satoshi, Young and Lydia, and Satoshi thanked the ladies of the Helping Hands in Korean, in English and in German. After the service, it was coffee time in the basement and Satoshi had his picture taken with the ladies of Helping Hands. He gave each of them a little cross on a chain. During the conversation, Satoshi wondered where he could get a big Canadian flag since, it seems, these are not easy to find. Herman Walde thought he knew where to get one. Early Monday morning before Satoshi left, Herman appeared with a big Canadian maple leaf suitable to run up the flagpole on a dairy farm in Japan!



Left to Right: Young Won (interpreter), Rita Dahl & Satoshi Tahahi

On Sunday night, we were invited to dinner at the house of our Korean friends who attend our church. At this gathering, everyone except Ralph and I spoke Korean so that was often the language of the conversation. Now, instead of Young translating for Satoshi, he was translating for us!

Satoshi came with gifts for us and our children but we hadn't really thought about gifts so when it was close to the time he was to leave, I said I would like to give him one of my paintings. He could choose any one of the many he saw on our walls. I thought he might choose something small because he had only a very small carry-on, but, instead, he chose a fairly good-sized painting of a typical Canadian wheat field with a blue Alberta sky. It was too big to fit in the carry-on space so the morning was spent rigging up a carrying case that he could take with him on the plane. Then he asked if he could have an English Bible so Ralph found several of various sizes, again thinking that that he had only a small suitcase, but he chose the big one. His little suitcase just got heavier. Now, I imagine, if one should visit Satoshi in Japan, one should expect to see an English Bible on the coffee table, a picture of a Canadian wheat field on the wall and a red maple leaf on the flagpole outside.

We think Satoshi is an amazing person. We feel fortunate to have met him. We are impressed by his many achievements and his ability to persevere in spite of his circumstances. Now that he is no longer here, we can

think of many things we didn't ask. We found that speaking through an interpreter has its limitations. We wonder if he found what he was looking for on this trip and we wonder if we are what he expected us to be. We wonder if he found the Christians in Canada that he had hoped to find. He reminded us, as he said in one of his letters, that, "Small things done with God's love are always accompanied by great blessings. God taught me that anyone, anywhere, can do small acts of love for others".

At one point Satoshi wondered where God was leading us now that He had made it possible for us to meet. I wonder that, too. His visit has given us many pleasant memories.

In conclusion, I would like to recognize Brad Kipfer for his perseverance in making this contact possible and also for the many translations he did for Satoshi and me. I wish to thank my husband for sending my e-mails, for acting as chauffeur and tour guide and for assisting me with this report. ❖

Reflection on the Visit of Mr. Satoshi to the MCC Alberta Office

By Abe Janzen

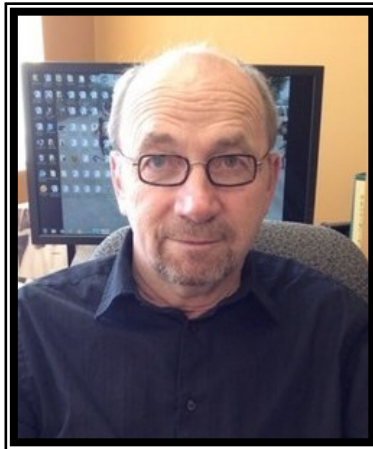
Mr. Tokahi Satoshi, from Japan, was planning a visit to Calgary. The reason for this surprising visit was that Mr. Satoshi had been a young boy during the Korean war, and had been looked after both during and after the war, in one of many orphanages set up for this purpose, during the war. At least some of these homes were supported by people from Canada, through MCC. And some of the support had names and addresses attached to it. Mr. Satoshi, as he grew older, did not forget his earlier years and kept many photographs and other artifacts from those early years. He moved, eventually, to northern Japan, where he has had some contact with the Japanese Mennonite Churches as well, and there he has built up a successful dairy farm which he calls, on his business card, MENNONite Dairy Farm.

During the past few years, Mr. Satoshi began a search for a connection to the people who might have been helpful to him, in the orphanage where he and others had lived. He noticed the names of Ralph and Rita Dahl. The address had been blotted out by dark felt pen, but when he looked more closely, he could make out ... "Calgary". And that is when his search for a connection gained some momentum, leading eventually, to the Dahls' address, here in Calgary. Soon, he arranged to come here, mostly, to say hello and thank you. He came alone, and the Dahls found a local interpreter

(Young Won), since Mr Satoshi's English is somewhat limited.

During his visit, the Dahls brought Mr. Satoshi to the MCCA office where a number staff were able to visit with him over a couple of hours, and look at his photo albums and other records that he had brought with him. It was a very pleasant visit, with a very kind and thoughtful man.

The story is much too abbreviated in these lines but he did not have time to tell us many, many details. What remains with me among other things, is the beauty of a person who, despite the years that have passed, remembers to "come back" and say thank you. Not just to the Dahls, but in a way, to those hundreds and thousands who then, and today still, find ways to reach out to people in other places whom they most likely will never meet, to offer what Jesus so very clearly reminded us to do in Matthew 25 ... to visit those in prison, to feed those who are hungry, to clothe those who do not have clothes. The Dahls represent those many servant-minded people, all over the world. Mr. Satoshi represents those who are helped, but also those who in turn, want to help others, and who, in some Holy-Spirit driven way, are transformed by the kindness of others. The Gospel is this. A reaching out around us ... in many and simple ways ... generously ... and letting the Holy Spirit accompany that reaching out. In his patient way, he turns awful situations, into the Salvation of God.



Abe Janzen

Abe Janzen is the Executive Director of Mennonite Central Committee Alberta in Calgary. ♦

History of the Mennonite Vocational School, Kyung San, South Korea

Founding and Purpose of the School: The Mennonite Vocational School (MVS) in Kyung San, which is 15 miles east of Taegu, was a remarkable project of MCC in Korea. In the early 1950s to the 60s, there were not many schools in Korea. Particularly, educational programs providing vocational training and professional skills were extremely rare. Preparation for a vocational school for orphan boys were made by Robert Kohls who continued as the first principal. MVS began to admit orphans right after the Korean War in 1953.

The purpose of MVS was to give war-orphaned boys an adequate combination of food, shelter, clothing, education, and spiritual help. In addition, one of the prime purposes of MVS was to provide students not only with basic academic schooling but also with vocational skills so that they could be self-supporting following graduation. The goal of the school was to help develop Christian democracy-loving citizens who could make a good contribution to their society and country.

Although MVS was established as an agricultural training school, it later branched out into metal work, carpentry, printing, grafting, elec-



Mennonite Vocational School, Kyung, South Korea

tronics, and English/typing. About 200 boys, from grade 7 to 12, were taught vocational skills as well as basic academic education.

Acceptance into MVS and the Student Body: Students were accepted to MVS by passing the entrance examinations given annually. Exam subjects included Korean, English, mathematics and writing. An interview was also conducted. Roughly one third of those tested were accepted into the school. A high percentage of those entering into grade seven remained at MVS through high school graduation. However, in 1967 MVS changed to a three-year school for only high school-aged boys.

Interestingly, not all the boys who took the entrance exams were orphan boys. Many of them still had parents or relatives. Poverty, however, prevented most of them from receiving an education. Therefore, it was rather natural in those years that there was a lot of competition to get into MVS, especially since it was a tuition-free school. After the war it was also very common in Korean society to try to have a connection with Westerners, in order to obtain foreign sponsorship (Western countries were known for nothing but wealth). It was partly for this reason that MVS usually had more applicants than the number of students that could be admitted. In the late 1960s, however, MVS officially accepted some boys as students from the surrounding community. Also, whereas in the early years most of the boys who went to MVS were from Kyongbuk Province (where Kyung San is), by the late 1960s more students came to the school from other provinces.

Grounds & Faculty: MVS had 4 dormitory buildings in which all students lived. Those dorms each had a different name: 신 (Trust), 망 (Hope), 애 (Love), and 진 (Truth). There were also 18 residences for staff on the campus. The chapel was one of the main buildings at MVS. Every morning

all students and staff gathered in it for a short service. (Bible class was also taught once a week.).

There were a total of 35 buildings that made up MVS, including an assembly hall, warehousing, a green house, a study room, and a rice mill. The 44 acre property allowed for an extensive farm operation involving rice and barley fields, upland terraces, a herd of cattle and hogs, a small orchard and vineyard, vegetable fields, and a couple of small ponds.

The faculty and staff of MVS usually consisted of 6 MCC workers: a principal and an agriculturalist and their wives, two single men (PAX men), and approximately 40 Korean staff who had responsibilities in teaching, dormitory supervision, cooking, maintenance, farm operation, community extension work, and so on. The number of staff gradually increased throughout the 1960's. There were a total of 5 principals at MVS during its short history from 1953 to 1969.

The wives of the principal were also very important figures among the staff. They were usually put in charge of nurturing the boys. They worked as nurses and taught English and typing. Due to the supply of sufficient food and a regular medical examination, the hygienic condition of MVS students was generally good.

Farming Practice: Besides chapel, the one requirement for students was farming practice hours. All students had to complete their labour hours - usually 4 per week - doing things like taking care of the cattle, hogs, and hens, or weeding the field and orchard. For 2-3 weeks in spring and fall all students and staff went out to the rice field to plant and harvest rice. By do-

ing this, MVS could supply rice and other crops for the boys to eat instead of buying food from Taegu.

A new program, the Mennonite Community Service Project (MCSP), for the advancement of farming methods and living standards in rural homes was begun by MVS staff in 1960. The MCSP staff worked with 10 village communities surrounding MVS until 1970. From 1965 the annual Farmer's Winter Institute was held, training capable persons in providing agricultural leadership to their communities.

Graduation and Employment: Although MVS students received practical experience through their education, getting a job was not necessarily simple. Especially for the graduates who had studied agriculture, it was extremely difficult to find employment - and owning land was even more difficult. Some of the unemployed graduates did not even have an appropriate place to go after graduation, and needed a place to live until they found work. MCC provided these individuals with a living hostel, letting them stay there until they found jobs.

In spite of the initial struggle after graduation, many students got into colleges and universities, and were gradually able to find good jobs. Another success of the school was that, even though some of the students were not Christians when they entered MVS, they left it Christians.



MVS School Buildings, Farm and Fields

School Closure: In 1968 MCC decided to finalize all its activities in Korea. Since MCC has historically been an emergency relief agency, Korean economic development signified that the organization should move on to other more needy countries. The MCC began to look for ways to hand MVS over to a national board so that the school could continue to run. MCC was involved in creating the local Kong San Vocational School board, which included Korean members, and the president of Kyongbuk University as chairperson of the board. Full responsibility for the operation of MVS was transferred to this board in July 1969.

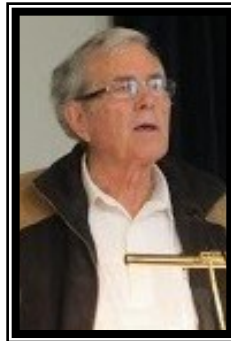
On March 31, 1971, MCC concluded all its programs in Korea, which had been carried on in the name of Christ for 20 years. A little later, some of MVS board members became board members for Keimyong Christian University (KMCU), and MVS was taken over by the KMCU. KMCU did not have a particular reason to keep running MVS, especially since financial support from MCC had since stopped.

Leaving countless memories behind, MVS was closed in early 1970s. During its short history, about 350 students in total graduated from MVS.

This article is reprinted from the MCC Website (<http://mcc-en.kac.or.kr/>) with permission by Kim Kyong Jung, director of the Korea Anabaptist Centre. ❖

Review of Anne Konrad's *Red Quarter Moon - A Search for Family in the Shadow of Stalin*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012. Reprinted 2013. Pp.356 pages

Reviewed by Henry M. Dick



Henry M. Dick

It is late 1929 and the impact of Stalin's five-year plan has convulsed the Mennonite villagers throughout the Ukraine. The city of Moscow is crowded with non-Russian minorities who have come from villages near and far seeking exit visas, after word had got out that emigration visas were being issued in Moscow, despite the official announcement received back home that applications were no longer being considered. During the day long lines wait impatiently at the passport issuing office, while family members scramble to find food and lodging. At night they lie on their narrow cots, praying; and listening for the rumble of the Black Raven van, the heavy footsteps of the terrifying GPU, inevitably followed by the knock on the door. Another family is victim to the dreaded raid and roundup followed by deportation and exile to labour camps in the northern forests or the coal mines; or, for many, to prison, treachery and execution.

That was the tragic fate of the majority of the estimated 13,000 would-be emerges in Moscow. Included in those who were allowed to escape were Peter and Louise (Braun) Konrad, the author's parents. Following their death in 1989, Anne Konrad peruses their hundreds of letters from and photographs of family members now scattered across the globe. She resolves to give these people an identity and a voice. Over the next 20 years, with the help of her husband, Harvey L. Dyck (U. of Toronto historian), the International Red Cross, MCC, Mennonite publications, information extracted from "D.P.'s" who arrived in Canada after WW2, and archival sources in the Ukraine she is able to trace her parents families back to 1790 when they first arrived in Ukraine. Through letters, interviews and visits to Paraguay, Germany and Russia she is able to hear the stories about her family's experience during and following the Stalinist years.

May, 1930, in Omsk, Siberia, arrest and exile of anti-revolutionists is imminent. Escape through Moscow is no longer possible. Justina (Konrad) fills sacs with roasted *Zwiebach*, sausages, clothes and bedding and sews gold coins into the hems of dresses and underpants. Unannounced and under darkness the family heads for the train station. They leave the Trans-Siberian express at Blagoveshchensk, just north of the Amur River and the Chinese border. A bribe gets the family of 8 housing and jobs on a communal farm. In late fall, on the pretext of plans to cut wood in the forest, they are permitted to purchase horses and a sleigh. The plan is to escape Russia across the frozen Amur into China. Tragically, Justina's husband becomes ill and dies just as the roundup of "anti-soviets" has again caught up with

them and escape becomes urgent. His death is masked by burying him in a grave registered to a Russian. On December 16 at midnight in -40 degrees, Justina's family piles into the sleigh and heads for the Amur. They reach it at dawn and miraculously the river is shrouded in thick fog. The heavy soviet border surveillance, thinking no one would venture the treacherous river crossing in the fog, leaves the cold watch towers for warmer quarters. Driving blindly in the fog and guided by a crowing rooster on the Chinese side of the river the escapees find shelter in a small village inn nearby.

Justina gives up her gold coins, sells her fur coat and purchases train tickets to Harbin where MCC has a presence and is able to provide her family temporary housing; up to five families sharing a room. She immediately applies for immigration to the US and Canada but is informed that people without passports or with Russian passports are not accepted. When in 1932 the Japanese occupation orders that all soviet refugees be returned to Russia, the League of Nations intervenes and is able to persuade Brazil and Paraguay to offer refuge. Having escaped the hell that is Stalin's Russia, Justina and her children join about 400 Mennonite refugees eventually to be dumped in the 'green hell' that in 1932 was the Paraguayan Gran Chaco.

June 2001, Slavgorod, Siberia. Cousin Heinz (Andrei) Braun lives on a farm 65 km. distant. Andrei's extended family has come to meet the Canadian relatives who on arrival are greeted with enthusiastic hugs. Soon he tells his story. His father was arrested in Memrik in 1937 and nine year old Andrei became a cow herder for the village, taking five or six cows to pasture in the morning and returning with them at night. In late 1941 his family was arrested and deported to Siberia. After five weeks on a crowded train "everyone was so covered in lice, you could scrape them off". They were taken to a collective farm and given shelter in an old chicken coop. Andrei continued to work as a cow herd. Some years later he became a "tractorist" and his mother was able to buy the house he now lives in. He fell in love with the milkmaid, Maria, taking her away from the village boss who was planning to marry her. For this 'victory' he was rewarded with a higher work quota and she with loss of status and privilege on the farm.

Andrei and Maria lived with his mother. Two daughters died of cancer at a young age because of radiation from atomic tests in the region. Nevertheless they prospered, setting aside savings for their three children. Then came *Perestroika*, closing the factories, collapsing the economy and wiping out their savings. Currently the collective farm was barely functioning as young people refused to do manual labour. Andrei and his wife were living on what they could raise on their garden plot and the cow, the pig and chickens in their pens. He had given up his religion, discarded his parents' traditions, married a Russian girl, spoke Russian better than German, became very fond of vodka - always trying to prove that he was not *Nemtsy* (German). He never succeeded.

In *Red Quarter Moon* the Konrad and Braun families, those passed on and those still living, take on a real life identity and in a compelling way Anne Konrad succeeds in bringing to the reader's attention the tragic events that followed the Russian revolution, and continue to some degree today. Even those who 'escaped' were victims in that they lost their communities, their family connections and their citizenship; and, as in their native Russia, so in their adopted countries they were often seen as 'the other'.

Towards the end of the book the author observes that wherever she turned in Russia, there was brokenness. Ruin and decay were found everywhere and the tragic outcomes of the revolution linger to this day: people live in hovels, eke out an existence and are suspicious of strangers. Officials are generally hostile towards foreigners. Konrad's story underscores, in a powerful way, how very fortunate are those of us whose parents escaped the combined horrors of Bolshevism and Fascism in the first half of the 20th century. ❖

Menno Simons School Genealogy Project

By Lil Bartel

The class of 2013-14 grade 9 students at Menno Simons School in Calgary once again participated in the *Genealogy Project* as part of their religious studies class. Working with Byron Thiessen, Principal, we gave the students

more time this year, beginning before Christmas. With a definite outline and resources, many of the students elected to take on this project and did a great job. There were bare bones factual charts and there were also artistic family trees. Much to my surprise and several students, the "grandma program" had us related!

Five students were chosen to receive a monetary prize from MHSA. I presented the awards at a June assembly in the school.

The five students and their work are a direct reflection of the atmosphere and the teachers at Menno Simons School. It was my pleasure to work with them and I look forward to the coming school term to see what the next grade 9 class can accomplish! ❖



**Lil Bartel with Members of the
Menno Simons School Genealogy Project**

bound and drowned in barrels in the courtyards. But our fear is driven out by the words of 1 John 4: 18: "...perfect love casts out fear."

It is early in the morning! We must not be late. Our brothers and sisters have come from the valleys below. They are hiking through dense forest and untraveled paths to our designated meeting place for this Sunday. We dare not walk together, lest we draw attention to our gathering.

(Continued from page 1)

baptism stream washed over me as an adult, confirming my decision to follow Jesus, the tears gushed down my face. I felt cleansed. The circle of believers whom I hardly knew became my Community of Faith. We are the true Body of Christ!

And this Body of Christ is coming together in a secret spot, the Baretswil Cave, for the study of Scripture and worship. The officials in Zurich have issued ordinances for our arrest – they forbid what they call "Anabaptist" meetings. A number of our brothers and sisters have already been arrested, some thrown into prison towers, and some killed – even



Present-day Cave Worship

“Hush, my child! Your shrill voice echoes down the valley and could alert the authorities.” Our Lord cautioned us to be “wise as serpents and harmless as doves,” for we are as “sheep among wolves” (Matthew 10:16).

We know someone could be infiltrating our group and could turn us in. It happened recently to the believers who met in a village close to Zurich. But the movement of the Holy Spirit within us cannot be quenched. Anyone who sincerely searches the Scriptures is invited. And the words of Jesus are so clear; we are to love even those who seek to harm us – our enemies. (Matthew 5:44)!

Our secret path is becoming even more steep and dense. We pause to rest. The tall trees umbrella us, as does the God of love. Through a tiny clearing we can see the beautiful green, pastured valley below. No one is following us, although we sense that other believers may not be far away. Our mood is solemn, yet punctuated with joy!

We are getting close. Snuggled into a craggy cliff, opening up behind a canopy of majestic trees, camouflaged from the “world”, is our meeting place. Felix, Abram, Noah, Rebecca and Mary are already here. George is reading from the Word: “Let us hold fast to the confession of hope without wavering ...” (Hebrews 10:23). We join the community of faith, nourishing our bodies and souls.

Date: July 9, 2013 A.D

Place: Near the hamlet of Baretswil, Switzerland in the Canton (Province) of Zurich (On a Tourmagination bus tour in Europe, discovering our Anabaptist heritage).

Fifteen of us have left the bus, after travelling up the rolling crisp green valley as far as possible. We notice the relaxed beauty of the sheep and cows munching in the goodness of God’s gifts to them. We are inspired.

Following a country pathway to the edge of the mountain we cross some streams and trek steeply up the incline, with the forest on one side and grazing land on the other. Cow bells make their unique statement, awakening the valley below. A few strategically placed benches are a welcome relief physically, and offer a moment for meditation.

We are excited about this part of our journey. I’ve often wondered how the early Anabaptists could be so confident and committed to their new found faith, that all danger receded into the background. Like Peter and the other apostles, even though they were arrested and flogged, “They rejoiced that they were considered worthy to suffer dishonour for the sake of the Name ... and they did not cease to teach and proclaim Jesus as the Messiah” (Acts 5:41-42).

Our path is now crowned with overflowing branches that reach down to us. In the distance around a corner we see the outline of a cave that becomes darker the further our eyes pierce. The cave’s shallow, wide open mouth is barely visible through brush and trees. I imagine our Spirit-led an-

cestors worshipping in such camouflaged settings, praying that they not be detected. Yet at the same time, as *Martyr’s Mirror* testifies, these early Anabaptists refused to camouflage their beliefs. Their seven-day-a-week faith bubbled forth, often leading to imprisonment and sometimes execution.

There’s a hush in our group. With the help of a railing we solemnly make our way up into the cave, a cave that could comfortably house 50 pilgrims. I notice trickles of water oozing out of the cracks in the rock face.

We sit on benches arranged so that we can view the branch-filled world outside the cave. A veil of water sprinkling from the top of the cave into the rock strewn cavity below enhances the beauty. I feel the tears that once trickled down the rough faces of the early Anabaptists meeting in this holy place. Many would have lost family members, released from this world to sit in the Glory of God. Most would have known of someone languishing in a prison cell, possibly confined to crude wooden stocks.

Our emotions are gathered together as we do what Mennonites have done over the centuries. We join in singing! The first song in the *Mennonite Hymnal, a Worship Book*, reminds us that this meeting place indeed becomes a sacred spot where God is recognized and given honour:

“What is this place where we are meeting?

*Only a house, the earth its floor,
walls and a roof sheltering people,
windows for light, and open door.*

Yet it becomes a body that lives when we are gathered here, and know our God is near.” (1)

Our leader breaks the bread and holds up the wine. We pray, we reflect, and we serve one another. Our identification with our Anabaptist ancestors is strong. Brothers and sisters once worshipped here in secret. We can do so openly, without fear. Yet momentarily, when we close our eyes, we imagine what it would be like to have threatening officials suddenly breaking into our gathering.

Our spiritual journey is propelled further into history, as we experience the broken body of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is all so compelling. Tears meld into our bodies. We look up and claim Christ and this Christian community, that has once again formed in a simple cave in the heart of mountainous forestland, away from the noise of everyday life.

Date: July 12, 2013 A.D (3 days later)

Place: At the Silvretta Pass, Switzerland, 6,500 feet above sea level (On a Tourmagination bus tour in Europe, discovering our Anabaptist heritage).

Thirty-two, look-the-other-way switchbacks have brought us to the top of the pass. I am dipping into the delicious stone soup I have ordered. Two thinly carved pieces of aged white cheese are curled over an actual stone, placed squarely in the middle of a tasty nutritious mountain soup. No one else in our company has dared to order this dish. Thanks to the preheated



Cyndy Brandt & Benita Warkentin in a snow cave

stone, my soup is piping hot. I am refreshed.

A few minutes later our bus pulls into a parking lot partially submerged in mounds of snow that dwarf our vehicle. Like scattered chicks released from a cage, we plunge out of the bus and take in a good old-fashioned snowball fight. The warm air dilutes the icy snow making contact with our bodies. We feel free! We are on top of the world! Huge gulps of fresh air, just the right temperature, revive our tenth day of Anabaptist pilgriming.

“Over there – just look at that huge snow cave that the sun has tunneled out.” Some of us are brave. We crouch down and slither into the opening. Water is dripping. Icy drops! Are they tears?

But no! We laugh, we joke, we dare one another to explore the snow cavern. We dodge the snowballs now directed toward those of us in the cave. The snowball constructors, our persecutors, don’t really want to hurt us – just playfully scare us.

Back on the bus I reflect on the caves we have experienced. In contrast to the Anabaptist cave, the snow cave gives us more of a picture of our worship in Canada today. We’re safe. The state protects us. There are no informers who will turn us in.

We sing songs of worship that warm us, but rarely do we become uncomfortable by paying careful attention to the words. We say the Bible is central to our faith but often we only “skip” through the Scriptures, avoiding the unpleasant parts that scrutinize our lifestyles.

We have fun and sometimes joy in our services, but find it difficult to be honest and move beyond the, “Oh, I’m fine,” mind-set. In our protected world, it is difficult to allow those icy tears to impact our worship.

Why is it that we tend to feel more comfortable in the “snow cave” than

in the "Anabaptist meeting place" in the dense forest? Could it be that we are so accommodated to our culture with its freedom and individuality that we forget the tears that are associated with the Christ of the Bible and the cost of discipleship?

Postscript

Date: 0 A.D (some say 7-2 B.C.)

Place: Bethlehem, Palestine/Israel

Ancient sources suggest Jesus was born in a stable/cave built into the side of a hill. In this cave too, there were fears and tears of joy. God saw fit to send his beloved son into a world filled with tears. Will our connection with this Jesus of Nazareth, our Anabaptist heritage, and those who are currently embracing the Anabaptist understandings fill our "cave" experiences with not only joy and laughter, but also life-giving tears?

Hugo Neufeld is a retired pastor who has written a number of books including his latest, *Just a Kid Without a Computer: unformatted adventures*. Hugo and his wife, Doreen, live in Calgary, Alberta. They are storytellers and write a monthly column for *Purpose*, a MennoMedia periodical.

(1) *Hymnal a Worship Book*, (Elgin, Illinois: Brethren Press, Newton, Kansas: Faith and Life Press, Scottdale, Pennsylvania: Mennonite Publishing House, 1992) number 1. ❖

Ruth Derksen Siemens Wins Prestigious Award

Derksen Siemens' book, *Daughters in the City*, won the Lieutenant Governor's award for historical non-fiction. The book was selected by the judges of the British Columbia Historical Federation book competition. The award of *Honourable Mention* was presented by Lieutenant Governor Judith Guichon at a reception given by the Federation.

A recent guest speaker at a Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta



Ruth Derksen Siemens (left) chats with The Honourable Judith Guichon (right) Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia at the award reception.

Conference, Derksen Siemens wrote to Ted Regehr, "I was honoured and humbled and wanted to share the news with you and the MHSA. Best wishes to you and the historical society as you continue your valuable work." ❖

(continued from page 3)

Reconstructive memory - "recall that is hypothesized to work by storing abstract features which are then used to construct the memory during recall."

Some of what I can reconstruct is, from my father's ledger, where the farm and family income and expenses were meticulously journalized. The Mammoth five-cent scribbler consists of forty-two pages written alternately in German and English. One can see that father's English improves as the years progress. There is no direct reference in the ledger that I started school, but shoes were purchased for \$3.01 and T. Eaton Co. mail order parcels in the amounts of \$38.46 and \$33.87 were received that fall. The only regular income shown was for cream, eggs and family allowance, with the occasional sale of chickens, pigs, cows and grain.

I started at rural Ravenhead School, close to Mayfair, Saskatchewan, when I was seven. This was because I contracted pneumonia in the fall of 1951 and had to spend two weeks in the isolation ward at North Battleford Union Hospital.

(To be continued in the next edition of the MHSA Newsletter)