

Mennonite and john a. lapp assignment



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Mission FOCUS Annual Review 2001 Volume 9 Contents Editorial The Causes and the Consequences of Separations in North American Anabaptist Missions John A.

Lapp Cooperation, Complimentarity, and Conflict: Case Study in Mission/Service Agency Relations – Mennonite Ministries Botswana Erwin Rempel Cooperation, Accommodation and Conflict Case study: Vietnam Betsy Headrick McCrae Personal Reflections on Language Ministry in Burkina Faso after Two Decades Donna Kampen Entz Mennonite History and Identity in Indonesia Stefanus Christian Haryono Hispanic Mennonites in North America Gilberto Flores The Future of Mission Stanley Green Christianity and the other Religions Karl Koop Mission Theology Wilbert Shenk Book Reviews: True Life: First-hand Stories of Mission.

A Celebration of a Century of Mennonite Brethren Mission: MBMS International Centennial 1900-2000. Compiled and edited by Brad Thiessen. Fresno CA: MBMS International, 2000, pp. 104. Reviewed by Titus Guenther. Jacob A. Loewen, Educating Tiger: My Spiritual and Intellectual Journey, Hillsboro, KS: Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, 2000, Pb. , pp. 346. \$19. 99. Reviewed by Titus F. Guenther Wilbert Shenk, By Faith They Went Out. Mennonite Missions 1850-1999. Elkhart: Institute of Mennonite Studies, Occasional Papers No. 20, 1999. 133pp. Alle Hoekema, Dutch Mennonite Mission in Indonesia.

Historical Essays. Elkhart: Institute of Mennonite Studies, Occasional Papers No. 22, 2001. 148pp. Reviewed by Walter Sawatsky 3 Editorial How can the bearer of Good News ensure that the bad news will not ruin things? That

simplified statement may point to the common thread in the articles making up this issue. It has become quite common place to assert a missiology that starts with the *missio Dei*. The problem points usually have to do with the way human beings participate in God's mission, to the extent that they begin to think their way is the divine way.

Can a spiritdriven mission truly end in something less than Christian unity and still claim the Spirit? The fact of our separations, in particular our separate ways as Mennonites in mission, were held up for review at the annual meeting of the Council of International Anabaptist Ministries (CIM) in January 2001. This issue includes a major critical survey by John Lapp and several case studies that showed that cooperation and complimentarity are possible. As Donna Kampen Entz' reviews her pilgrimage in mission, we are reminded of the impact of westernization on Africa and other parts of the globe.

Can we communicate the news of the Gospel without entangling it in becoming western? As one reads on in her story, the possibilities for the bad news to get in the way come from unexpected quarters. Or one begins to wonder whether keeping westernization out was really the central question. Entz' essay poses probing questions about the nature of conversion, whether personal or communal, whether sudden or gradual. She raises questions about where to center the Biblical message, in her case appealing for discerning the God of the Gospel in the Torah, but also subordinating the epistles to Jesus of the Gospels.

In this issue we present several essays that reveal how the process of telling the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ story from a global perspective helps us ponder mission issues. Stefanus Haryono's article on one of the Indonesian Mennonite Synods provides an integration of what he as leader in that church in recent years has learned, and what he learned through the historical work of Lawrence Yoder, only one of whose works is cited here for the English reader.

Gilberto Flores presented his argument for taking the Hispanic Mennonites seriously, when scholars gathered in June to reflect on what a North American volume in the Global Mennonite History series should be like. Flores' paper started a lengthy positive discussion, with writers from Asia and Africa finding many parallels. Two Mennonite denominations in North America agreed to integrate and form two national structures in Canada and USA, both national church bodies affirming a commitment to the vision of a missional church.

In this issue we present the thoughts on mission of Stanley Green, who was named executive director of the American Mennonite Mission Network. North American Mennonites continue to explore the implications of the consultation on Anabaptist Mission held in Guatemala in July 2000. Well-known Mennonite missiologist Wilbert Shenk presented a background paper for a theology of mission, which concludes this issue. It is an invitation to attempt to think about central issues of a mission theology when the perspective is global but necessarily local, and when a Mennonite mission theology both profits from what has been happening in other Christian confessions and speaks to it. A terrorist act performed in New York City and Washington D. C. has created

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shock waves that draw attention in particular to religious commitments held too intensely, as in fundamentalist faiths. One concern has been to become better informed about Islam, a world religion that has grown more rapidly than Christianity. The Christian encounter with Islam has never been easy.

We continue the theme of mission in the face of the other religions, with a short article by Karl Koop that was first requested for the yearbook of the German Mennonites. Koop calls us to humility when we do not know how gracious or otherwise God will be. The Good News that should not be lost is that God loves the world and that makes all the difference. Walter Sawatsky

THE CAUSES AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF SEPARATIONS IN NORTH

AMERICAN ANABAPTIST MISSIONS John A. Lapp The topic assigned me to address is even bigger than the designated title.

At best what I have to say points a direction in helping us understand causes and consequences. This is also a risky endeavor. There will be differences of opinion. I will try to be both candid and appreciative of our differences. In what follows, I am dealing with realities, causes, and consequences. The conclusion suggests some ways to cope with these separations. I. THE REALITIES OF SEPARATIONS We do not like to be reminded of our separations. But it is important that we see the scope of different structures among us.

The appendix to this article charts the organizational labyrinth of Mennonite mission. Chart I lists the names of conferences with mission programs drawn from Mennonite Church Information 1999. This directory lists the congregations and addresses of nineteen groups on the traditionalist side of

the spectrum. Not all the groups listed in this directory have mission activity but a surprising number have both domestic and overseas missions. Chart I. Mission Agencies/Addresses from Mennonite Church Information 1999.

Amish Mennonite Aid (BA) Lon don, O hio Blue Ridge International for Christ (BA) Ga p, Pa . & Su garc reek , Oh io Christian Aid Ministries (BA) Ber lin, O hio Ma ster*s International Ministries (BA) M ilverton, O ntario Beth el Fellow ship S um m er sv ille, M D . Bib le M ennon ite Fellow ship S her id an , O R Co nserva tive M ennon ite Ch urch of On tario Kippe n, O ntario Eastern Penn sylvania M ennonite Chu rch Lititz, Pa. (Mennonite Messianic Mission) M ennon ite Ch ristian F ellowship S wa nto n, M D .

Na tionwide Fellowship C hurches F ar min gto n, N M Nigerian M ission Co lum biana , Oh io Open Doo r Ministries P an teg o, N C Phil ippin e W itness P lu m Co ulee, M B W est Ind ies W itness Sou theastern Men nonite Conference Penn Laird, VA Pu erto R ico M ennon ite Co unc il Unaffiliated Mennonite Congregations Alabanza Y Adoracion Venezu ela Caribbean L ight and Tru th Mission Belize Mennonite Air Missions H a ger sto wn , M D W estern C onserva tive M ennon ite Fellow ship E sta ca da , O R Other: John A. Lapp is Coordinator of the Global Mennonite History Project (MWC).

He retired in 1996 as Executive Secretary of Mennonite Central Committee. Mission Focus: Annual Review © 2001 Volume 9 6 Causes and Consequences of Separations C hr istia n S er vice I nter na tio na l (CG C M) Montezuma, KS Chart II is the listing from the Mennonite Directory 2000. Most of these agencies are present at this CIM meeting. I suspect Peter Rempel made this compilation. It is us! Chart II International Ministries: This section lists

International Ministries with which North American Mennonite and Brethren in Christ agencies are associated. The Council of International

Ministries is an association of North American and Brethren in Christ international and service agencies. The executive leadership and program administrators meet annually to exchange information, study issues, and plan joint projects. In the following list of agencies (CIM) denotes membership in the Council of International Ministries. CIM OFFICE 600 Shaftesbury Blvd. Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4. 204-888-6781. fax 201-831-5673. e-mail 737 42. 3 077 @compuserve.com or compuserve.com. STAFF : Peter H Rempel. executive secretary AGENCIES Africa Inter-Mennonite Missions 5946 6 CR 1 13.

Elkhart IN 46517, 219-875-5552. Fax 219-875-6567. e-mail AIMM@sprynet.com (CIM) Amish Mennonite European Missions, Paul Yoder, Nieuwstraat 30. B-8970. Poperinge. Belgium. U. S. contact person. Melvin Gingerich. 4255 S 900W, Topeka, IN 46371 Beachy Amish church, Mission Interests Committee. Kenneth Kauffman. chairman. 53A S. Weavertown Rd. Ronks, PA 17372. 717-768-8013 Bethel Conservative Fellowship, Belize Missions. Joe Weirich. chair. 4230 Hwy 17, Summerville. MO 65571, 417-932-5286 Bible Mennonite Fellowship, Missions committee, Wilton Smucker. 31148 Sub Station Dr.

Harrisburg. OR 97446. 503-993-8472 Brethren in Christ World Missions, PO Box 390, Grantham PA 17027-0390. 717-697-2634, fax 717. 691-6053 email BICWM@messiah.edu (CIM) Bruderhof Communities International, 213. PO Box 903 Rifton. NY 12471-0903 Caribbean Light and Truth, Bishop

Wilford Stutzman, RR 1. Box 39. Keota, IA 52248; Bishop Daniel R Stutzman. P0 Box 35. Puntagorda, Belize China Educational Exchange. 1231 Virginia Ave. Harrisonburg, VA 22801, 540-432-6983. fax 540-4345556. email Chinadeaol.com (CIM) Commission on Overseas Mission, 722 Main St.

P0 Box 347. Newton, KS 67114. 316-283-5100, fax 316-283-0454, email cogcm.c.org (CIM) Conservative Mennonite Church of Ontario, Bishop Merlin Bender. RR 2. Hensall. ON N0M1X0. 519263-5628 Eastern Mennonite Missions, P0 Box 628. Salunga PA 17538-0628. 717-898-2251, fax 717-898-8092, email emm@emm.org (CIM) Eastern Pennsylvania Mennonite Church, Mennonite Messianic Mission Board. H Lynn Martin, 2428 Coldsmith Rd, Greencastle. PA 17223, 717-375-4831 Evangelical Mennonite Church, International Missions, 1420 Kerry Ct. Ft Wayne, IN 46805-5402, 219-423-649, fax 219-420-1905, e-mail EMaol.com (CIM) Evangelical Mennonite Conference, Board of Missions, Box 1268. Steinbach. MB R0A2A0. 204-3266401, fax 204-326-1613, e-mailnet (CIM) Evangelical Mennonite Missions Conference, P0 Box 52029. Niakwa Post Office. Winnipeg. MB R2M5P9, 204-253-7929. Fax 204-256-7384. e-mailmb.sympatico.ca (CIM) Fellowship Churches Nigeria Witness. Lester Otto. treasurer. 3221 Napa Rd NE, Mechanicstown, OH 44651, 216738-4501. Field address: Benjamin Umahon. P0 Box 3646. Benin City. Edo State. Nigeria. John A. Lapp Publication: Nigeria Missions. 12341 Huyett Ln. Hagerstown, MD 21740. 7 Open Door Ministries (Mexico. John Myers, treasurer. RR 1. Box 109. Pantega. NC 27860. 919-935-5061. Field address: Jerry Yoder. Apartado 3 <https://assignbuster.com/mennonite-and-john-a-lapp-assignment/>

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 2 19 -29 4-7 52 3. fax 21 9-2 94 -86 69 . e-mail M B M @ m bm . o rg (C IM)
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 Ave. Fresno. CA 93727-5006, 559 -456-46 00, fax 55 9-251 -1342 . e-mail M
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e-mailmeda. org (CIM) M id-W est M ennon ite Fellow ship. Mission Extension C omm ittee. Ernest W itmer, chair. 1 80 4 1 5th S t. International Fa lls. MN 56649. 218-283-9367. Deeper Life Ministries. Nolan Byler. chair, 16433 Dover Rd. Box 277. Mount Eaton, OH 44659, 216-359-5104 Ministries Commission, Conference of Mennonites in Canada. 600 Shaftesbury Blvd. Winnipeg. MB R3P QM 4, 20 4-888 -6781 , fax 204-83 1-567 5, e-mail CMC @m ennonitechurch. a (CIM) Pacific Northw est Mennonite C onference. 697 6 SW Pine, Tigard, OR 97233, 503-452-2563. fax 5034 5 2-2 5 63 , e-m a il jo hn miller @ ju no . co m (CI M) Pilgrim Mennonite Conference, Mission Board. Ja mes M ack. 5 21 Indian C reek Rd. Telford, PA 18969. 215-721-9510 Ro sedale Mennonite Missions, 992 0 R osedale Milford Center Rd. Irwin, O H 43029, 614-857-1366. Fax 614 -857-1605. e-m. ail RMcom (CIM) Sou th Atlantic Mennonite Conference, Mission Comm ittee: Nathan Goering. chairman, 3093 Hwy 2 5 N , Keysville, G A 3 08 16 , 70 6-5 54 -69 21 ; Ed gar Str ite, secretary; Delma r Diem. reasurer; W endell Heatwole; Howard B rubak er. bishop representative Southeastern M ennon ite Co nference, Pu erto Rico Mennonite Cou ncil. Charles H eatwole. RR 1, Box 494, Penn Laird. VA 22846, 540-434-8112 Virgin ia Mennonite Board of Missions, 901 Parkw ood Dr. Harrisonburg. VA 22801, 540-434-9727. fax 5 4 0-4 3 4-7 6 27 , e-m a il v mcoa ol. co m (CI M) Chart III is interesting because it is a recent listing of Mennonite-related groups working in Haiti. Sharon Wyse Miller, a former MCC worker in Haiti, compiled this list as part of her masters thesis at Eastern Mennonite Seminary.

This is no doubt the worst case. It is also interesting that in Guatemala, where we met in July, there are at least eight Causes and Consequences of Separations agencies at work, only three of which participated in the consultation. Chart III. Mennonite-Related Missions in Haiti I. Blue Ridge International for Christ (BRIC), Gordonville, PA 2. Christian Aid Ministries (CAM), Berlin, OH 3. Christian Fellowship Mission (CFM), Sarasota, FL 4. Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT), Chicago, IL 5. Ecole Biblique Par Extension (EGX-EMM), Port-au-Prince 6. Flame Ministries, Inc. Abbotstown, PA 7. Grace Mennonite Assembly, Miami, FL 8. Haiti Christian Union Missions, Inc. (HCUM), Sugar Creek, OH 9. Haiti Relief and Missions, Inc. (HRM), Arlington, KS 10. Amos E. Horst Mission, Sarasota, FL 11. International Faith Missions (IFM), Jonesville, MI 12. International Fellowship Haven, Inc., Alvordton, OH 13. Jubilee Missions, Inc. Milford, NE 14. Life Ministries, Conestoga, PA 15. Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), Akron, PA 16. Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA), Waterloo, Ont. 17.

Mennonite Gospel Missions (MOM), New Holland, PA 18. Mission Mennonite/Christian Service International (GGCM), Montezuma, KS 19. Palm Grove Haiti Mission, Sarasota, FL 20. Port-de-Paix Mennonite Mission, Hagerstown, MD 21. Son Light Missions, West Palm Beach, FL 22. Son Light Missions, Inc. Castorland, NY 23. Water for Life, Kalona, IA [from Sharon Wyse Miller, "The Anabaptist Witness in Haiti: Proclaiming the Gospel of Peace." Thesis presented to Eastern Mennonite Seminary, July 1999. Unpub. Pp. 70-82] Chart IV is something most of us have seen before.

Wilbert Shenk did this first some years ago. This is his most recent update. Separations are in part simply the product of different times and different places. If you see Wilbert Shenk's recent book *By Faith They Went Out*, he also charts out in an almost yearly fashion the geography of mission development as well as this chronology. Chart IV Mennonite/Brethren in Christ Missions Founded 1851-1999 (by decade):

1850-1859	1870-1879	1890-1899	1900-1909	1910-1919	1920-1929	1930-1939	1940-1949	1950-1959	1960-1969	1970-1979	1980-1989	1990-1999
1	1	5	6	5	1	4	15	38	12	14	5	50

John A. Lapp 9 Chart V comes from Calvin Redekop's recent study of the Defenseless Mennonite Brethren who became the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren and are now the Fellowship of Evangelical Bible Churches. This is a listing of agencies in which EMB members serve or served in missionary activity. 1 Chart V: Mission Agencies Used and Supported by DMB/EMB

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.	17.	18.	19.	20.	21.	22.	23.	24.	25.	26.	27.	28.	29.	30.	31.	32.	33.	34.	35.	36.	37.	38.	39.	40.	41.	42.	43.	44.
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Name of Organization # Workers Action Internationa l Ministries Africa E van gelical F ellowship 2 Africa Inland Mission 14 Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission 10 American Leprosy Mission 2 Arctic Mission 1 Am erican M essianic Fe llowship 2 Am erican M issionary Fellow ship 4 Arab W orld Missions Awana You th Association Ba ck to the Bible B roa dca st 9 Bible Christian Union 2 Brazil Gospel Mission Ca mp us C ru sade for C hrist 8 Calvary E vangelistic

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Mission 45 City/Rural Missions 43 Chicago Mission 11 Childrens Home 2 Child Evangelism Fellowship 22 China Mennonite Mission Society 24 Congo Inland Mission 23 Continental Missions Christian Natl. Evangsm. Comm. Canadian Sunday School Mission Canadian Sunday School Mission Deliverance 2 Evangelical Alliance Mission Evangelical Free Church Mission Far Eastern Bible School Far Eastern Gospel Crusade 18 Fellowship International Mission Fundamental Mission Association 2 Go Year Mission 6 Good News Evangelical Council Greater European Mission 18 Global Outreach Incorporated 5 Gospel Light Mission for the Blind Gospel Mission of South America 2 Grace Mission Incorporated Gospel Missionary Union 42 Gospel Recordings 3 Grace Childrens Home 4 InterAct Ministries International Missions 1 Calvin W. Redekop, Leaving Anabaptism. From Evangelical Mennonite Brethren to Fellowship of Evangelical Bible Churches. Telford PA: Pandora Press, 1998. p. 131-3. 10 Causes and Consequences of Separations 45. IM Indian Mission 7 46. IN International Missions 47. ISI International Students Inc. 48. IEM Israel's Evangelistic Mission 49. JEM Japan Evangelical Mission 3 50. KM Koinonia Ministries 51. LB Lutheran Brethren 52. LUC Lives Under Construction Ranch 53.

MCC Mennonite Central Committee 7 54. MO Missions Outreach 4 55. MAF Missionary Aviation Fellowship 56. NAV Navigators 57. NTM New Tribes Mission 58. NCEM Northern Canada Evangelical Mission 4 59. OM Operations Mobilization 60. OMF Overseas Missionary Fellowship 61. PI Pioneers International 62. RGBI Rio Grande Bible Institute 63. RBMU Regions Beyond Missionary Union 64. SAM South America Mission 65. SEND Send International 66. SMMM Scripture Memory Mountain Mission 67. SIM

Sudan Interior Mission 18 68. SM Shantyman*s Mission 2 69. SMMM Scripture Memory M ountain M ission 8 70. SGM Slavic Gospel Mission 2 71. TEAM The E vangelical Alliance Mission 12 72.

TWR T rans W orld R adio 73. UFM Unevangelized Fields Mission 5 74. WIM W est Indies Mission 2 75. WBT W ydliffe Bible Translators 8 76. WOL W ord of L ife 2 77. WT W ilderness T rails 2 78. WI W orld Impa ct 79. WRC W orld Relief Com mission 80. WT World Team 81 WTM W orld Tract M ission 2 82. WV W orld Vision 83. WRM F W orld R adio M issionary Fellow ship 84. VMI Village M issions Inc. 85. YFC Y ou th for C hrist 1 86. *** -See note below
 Sources Yearb oo ks , An nu al R ep or ts, and O . J. W all, A Concise Record.
 Note: N ot listed are seventeen persons who served in various Sunday school assignments but had no organizational referen ces.

Another group of persons, around fifteen, were listed but identified only casually with organization or field, such as “ Ethiopia,” and hence are not included. Something not too different could be done for most of our conferences which would be very revealing. This is a separation we might overlook but I am convinced it is a major phenomenon likely to grow even more. Most of these missionaries have to raise their own support.

Congregations identify with one or more and hence mission support becomes one of the separating issues for congregations to deal with. Before these charts get too deeply embedded in our consciousness, I think it is important to put these realities in some perspective. 1. The God movement or Biblical faith has always had a plural character. There were John A. Lapp 11 twelve tribes in Israel, two Hebrew Kingdoms, four Gospels, seven churches in Asia. Paul and Barnabas could not even agree to be missionaries together! The

richness of the gospel is always greater than any one of us individually or any single tradition can comprehend. Plurality if not separation would appear to be intrinsic. 2. Mennonites and Brethren in Christ, or if you prefer, Anabaptists, have never been a single or monolithic group. If there are separate conferences, there are bound to be separate task driven agencies. The question of separation is an ecclesiological issue as much as it is a mission issue. Yet, I would hasten to say, there is a Mennonite or Brethren in Christ narrative or story.

It is a narrative rooted in the images of pilgrimage or exile in the Old Testament, rooted in Jesus life and teaching on discipleship and community in the New Testament, rooted in the zealous practices required for a disciplined church, rooted in a readiness to suffer found in the early church and medieval minorities, rooted in the courageous humility of the Anabaptist dissent to both Catholic and Protestants, rooted in the long experiences of expressing a radical faith in Switzerland and Holland, the Palatinate and Prussia, Russia and North America, and also rooted in periodic renewal movements that brought new life into the contemporary narrative rooted in active mission and service agencies. These are all elements in the Mennonite and BIC story. Nevertheless the Mennonite and BIC narrative, like all traditional stories is under enormous pressure.

For two hundred years, in the words of John Roth, the modern synthesis with its high value on human reason and individual rights, a commitment to rational and efficient organizational structures and a deep confidence in the progressive nature of human history have persistently impacted the more traditional Mennonite worldview that regarded suffering as an inevitable part

of the Christian faith and the communitarian values of humility, corporate discipline, and the collective wisdom of tradition. Missions and other institutions, especially higher education, use modern techniques that can disrupt the traditional outlook.

2. 3. Separation is not a unique Mennonite or Brethren in Christ issue. David Barrett last year reported that there are 33,800 distinct and organizationally separate denominations. How he found that figure no one knows.

In the report for 2001, he says there are 23,500 service agencies, 4,100 foreign mission sending agencies, and 85 stand alone as global monoliths. It would be interesting to speculate who these are. Mennonite separations are a comparatively small part of this phenomenon.

2 John D. Roth, "Context, Conflict, and Community: South German Mennonites at the Threshold of Modernity, 1750-1850" in Susan Biesecker-Mast and Gerald Biesecker-Mast (eds.) *Anabaptists and Postmodernity*. 2000. p. 121.

3 David Barrett, "Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 2000", *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (January 2000), 24-25; and for 2001 Vol. 25, No. 1 (January 2001) 24-25.

12 Causes and Consequences of Separations

These fragmenting pressures for separation are magnified by the enormous institutional/programmatic character of contemporary church Mennonites and Brethren in Christ. Ordinary cultural and theological conversations have become embedded in structures empowered with specific mandates which easily become self-centered, self-aggrandizing, autonomous points of view. The gifts the apostle so clearly defined have become energetic power centers. In a prosperous, mobile culture, these institutions buttressed by

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local interests become competitive, each offering a growing range of services with a lesser concern for a corporately determined division of labor.

4.

The existence of CIM illustrates a long-term interest in coping with and overcoming separation on the part of our membership. Wilbert Shenk told this story as an Experiment in Interagency Coordination (1986) and as Gods New Economy: Interdependence and Mission (1988)⁴. I hope our conversations this weekend will spark new interest in cooperative and coordinated work. The modern missionary movement has always been distressed by separation and competition. From continental pietism to William Carey to the foreign mission conferences to the ecumenical epoch there has been a persistent questioning of the separatist model. The emergence of the now majority churches in the 2/3s world has highlighted the blight of division.

It is their concern expressed through confessional bodies like Mennonite World Conference that make separation and unity priority concerns for us today. Separation is really long standing. II. THE CAUSE OF SEPARATION

Even though the early churches had their own unique character, the Apostles were profoundly concerned with separation and disunity. I would urge us to read again and again Paul's Letters to the Corinthians. It isn't difficult to understand why there were separations then or to see modern parallels. – There was a cult of the personality Paul, Apollos, Cephas. 1: 12 –There was competition as to who did the most baptizing. 1: 14 –There was lack of consideration for the other. : 1, 1: 10 –There was a weak sense of the common cause, a weak commitment to common good. 12: 7 –There was

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concern for instant results or what makes you look important. 3: 3 –There was an absence of the servant model of relationships. 3: 9, 4: 1 –They were forgetting that all we have is a gift from God. 1: 30, 3: 21, 4: 7 –They were not taking seriously the others point of view 10: 24 –They were reducing Christ to what they were: rather than their being raised to 4 Both published by CIM, copies available from Mennonite Mission Network, Elkhart IN. John A. Lapp 13 what He (Christ) is. 10: 16-17 –They were fragmenting Christ rather than becoming unified in Him. 0: 16-17 –They were independently calling their own shots. 12: 19 –They were forgetting their dependence on all other parts of the body. 12: 24-25 Most of this phrasing is from Eugene Peterson’s paraphrase. By now it is obvious, Peterson says, that Christ’s church is a complete Body and not a gigantic unidimensional Part. And yet some of you keep competing for so-called important parts. 12: 29-30 With this background what are the causes of our separations? The answer would require an extended history. When I began thinking about causes, I soon had a list of thirty without duplicating I Corinthians. Such a list did not seem helpful so I reduced the causes to three categories.

Intrinsic Factors of Separation The first category I call INTRINSIC. I have alluded to this already. The church has never been monolithic. Creation is richly diverse and although healed in the Kingdom of God, the rainbow of cultural richness continues. There are differences in taste and style and emphases. Paul in Corinthians also helps us see that the body has different members with appropriate functions and that the Holy Spirit inspires the body with a variety of gifts. Difference, wisely defined and strategically developed, can and surely has contributed to the presence of the Kingdom.

What also appears intrinsic are differing expressions of what it means to be church.

John Howard Yoder once suggested that in every moment of renewal one can discover three streams of spiritual vitality: the RESTORATIONIST focus on recovering the original gospel life; the SPIRITUALIST focus on dismantling externals and discovering the inwardness of faith alone; and the THEOCRATIC focus on renewing society according to the will of God. 5 Rarely do these types exist in total conceptual purity. Contemporary Mennonites disagree in part because some of us are attracted to the spiritualist or theocratic models. These three tendencies, I suspect, are present in our meeting today. A third intrinsic factor is rooted in the believers church tradition itself. I have sometimes said that separation is the Achilles heel of the believers churches. But James Pankratz sees the pluralism of the Mennonite story not as a luxury in spiritual matters, rather it is essential.

Then he makes a strong case: “ Over the centuries Mennonite missionary activity has been directed not only at non-Christian religious traditions, but also at other Christian groups. The basis for such a practice, especially toward others within the Christian tradition, was the assumption, namely, that the particular Mennonite understanding of the Christian faith held by an

5 Joh n H owa rd Y oder , *The Royal Priesthood* , Eerdmans, 19 94 , p. 6 9 ff.

14 Causes and Consequences of Separations individual or group constituted true spiritual understanding, and must be promoted sothat it could replace or significantly modify other religious alternatives.

This self-definition provided a strong impetus for mission. “ 6 I do not believe either the Mennonite tradition or Biblical Christianity is so individualistic or separatist as Pankratz suggests. I am not convinced by the breadth of this argument. But he is surely correct in highlighting voluntarism, and choice implies difference if not separation. There is a fourth intrinsic cause namely, the separate histories and experiences of Mennonite and BIC conferences. We began with different styles and motifs in Switzerland, South Germany, and the Netherlands. James Juhnke observes that those distinctions embedded in historical traditions are still the biggest divide among North American Mennonites.

Add the normal weathering of movements. Wilbert Shenk once said these become archaic over time. Then there needs to be renewal. The new wine cannot be contained in the old wineskins. Differences are difficult to reconcile within a single body or structure without a basic theological orientation or narrative. Some of you will wonder whether there are not also serious theological disagreements. There is surely a Mennonite and a BIC argument with other Christian traditions. But between our groups I do not find issues that should occasion a break in fellowship. Indeed I suspect the disagreements within each of our conferences are as great as any difference between us.

The first set of factors causing separation is intrinsic. Some kinds of unity seem difficult to realize even among people who are committed to it.

Disruptive Factors of Separation The New Testament lets us know very clearly that some separations are not acceptable. So a second category of causal factors might be labeled DISRUPTIVE. While indeed these factors are

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always present, I am also persuaded that they are at best secondary explanations for the separations we live with in Mennonite missions. The first of these in I Corinthians is the role of personality. Some individuals and some institutions are uncooperative. They want to run the show. They are ambitious and impatient.

Few if any Mennonite mission separations were created by single personalities but it isn't difficult to find entrepreneurial spirits with little communal sensitivity in the expanded mission scene. A second disruptive factor is what I call ideological, to argue a point of view justifying a particular institution or course of action. Idealism is penultimate rather than ultimate. Ideology is always present but especially crucial for task oriented agencies and boards. Ideology can be used to buttress any structure and strategy. Competing visions are James Pankratz, "Mennonite Identity and Religious Pluralism", in Harry Huebner(ed.) *The Church as Theological Community*. Winnipeg: CMBC Publications, 1990, p. 304. John A. Lapp is envious to the extent that they rise above institutional prerogatives. A third disruptive factor is power. All of us, individually and institutionally, have it. Power tends to aggrandize. It believes that growth indicates success. It is subtle and captivating. It prefers separation and domination over cooperation. Some people reduce all conflict to a struggle to dominate. That seems to be too simplistic. Yet there are power struggles among us. Some of us have more influence in defining reality than others do, a greater capacity to develop our collective myths. Sometimes these expressions of power feel oppressive and generate counter forces. A fourth disruptive factor is wealth.

Note that many of our agencies were either established or grew rapidly amidst the prosperity of the 1950s and 1990s. Wealth makes us independent and self-sufficient. It is a separating force. 7 I am quite convinced that denominationalism and multiplicity of institutions in our time are a luxury possible because western churches have been culturally dominating and enormously wealthy. The cultures of advertising and marketing, now present in all our organizations, are at the heart of the consumerist model rooted in surplus wealth. A fifth disruptive factor is the individualistic, free enterprise character of North American culture. American evangelicalism tends to presume individual initiative is always good, even spirit motivated.

Fred Clark puts it sharply in his December 200 Prism magazine article, “Kingdom Building or Empire Building”. Empire building is competitive leaving little time for covenantal discernment. None of our agencies want to be empires but we are very careful about institutional prerogatives. No single one of our agencies, not even the Mennonite/BIC tradition of faith, constitutes the fullness of Christ’s body. A sixth factor causing disruption might be labeled distrust. Most often this is the result of not nurturing trust or being too busy to nurture relationships. Trust grows out of mutual regard built on a sense of competence, reliability, and shared vision. Where that is lacking, there will be competition and conflict.

Finally we ought to recognize that separation breeds separation. Once a separate institution is established there is enormous inertia. The nature of institutions is to go it alone and to justify themselves. Separation often gives rise to rivalry or competition. Tactical Factors of Separation There is a third category of causal factors that I am labeling TACTICAL. These are not as

deeply embedded as the intrinsic factors or the ever-present tendencies that can be disruptive. These tactical factors will seem right on some occasions and less positive on others. Like all the factors I have identified, these can also be used as masks to disguise agency self-interest. 7

For excellent insights into the role of wealth in evangelical institution building, see the articles on “The Financing of American Evangelical Religion” in the June 12, 2000, issue of Christianity Today. 16 Causes and Consequences of Separations One of these tactical causes might be labeled specialization. MCC was founded as a response to a particular crisis and later became a specialized agency for relief and development. Indeed the existence of MCC alongside mission boards sparked the creation of COMBS, later CIM. Bible translation and distribution, newer technologies for communication or identification with particular mission strategies have given rise to other separate organizations.

It is important to recall that modern missions were founded, funded, and administered by enthusiasts, but only with time did churches begin to own mission as a churchly task. A second tactical issue I will call constituencies. Mission agencies represent a church or part of a church. Some do not feel adequately served so they form a new agency. Some agencies set out to develop new constituencies. Constituencies can be geographic, national, special interest, generational. I sometimes thought MCC country alumni became lobbies to be sure MCC maintained a particular country program. A third tactical factor I will label opportunity. When a Macedonian call comes and agencies fail to respond, then you form a new agency.

In the global church situation the invitation to form partnerships can be viewed as new opportunity which might also buttress separateness. One of the reasons for multiple institutions is that we were established in different times and in different locations responding to separate calls. An interesting tactical factor not too well developed among us is the uniting movement. Other churches and institutions are doing more of this but I suspect we will be doing more in the future. Will our constituents and structures be able to unite or will it require yet new structures? AIMM and MCC have been quite successful uniting agencies in our midst while limited in scope.

Finally there is the public policy factor. In a time when faith based community action is so popular, mission and service agencies need to determine whether they want to maximize their independence or accept the resources and obligations of serving civil society. Some of us have done it and others are resisting. Canadians can be very helpful to Americans in dealing with this issue. These three categories seem to me to explain most of our separations. I have not touched the post-modern tendency to emphasize the particular and local rather than the universal and global. Some observers think this means there will be even more separate organizations in the future.

It is worth noting that more separating is occurring in churches and their institutions these days than uniting. Three more comments on causes. Mennonite historians and sociologists are helping us understand our conflicts which sometimes become separations. Fred Kniss in his important analysis of Cultural Conflict in American Mennonite Communities says our conflicts (he studied over 200) revolve around two key paradigms – traditionalism and

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communalism. These are two approaches to the locus of moral authority and what John A. Lapp 17 constitutes the moral project. Traditionalists stress moral and spiritual values, the importance of the family, biblical and ecclesiastic authority which form the collectivity.

Communalism, he says entails a concern for egalitarianism, social justice, pacifism, stewardship, mutual aid and seed the congregation as the primary community. He observes that the two paradigms pull in different directions, especially in American political culture, where the former looks to the right while the latter has affinities with the left. 8 Because of these pulls mainstream American ideological dynamics influence the internal tensions between traditionalism and communalism. 9 So-called public cultural wars easily become part of the stresses within the Mennonite church family. Interestingly, missions were not central to the conflicts Kniss studied.

But surely the causes of our separations also need to include the influence of the media and what is going on in other churches. Contemporary Mennonite tensions are in part the result of larger influences as well as divisive mission ideologies. Just as these influences become more apparent, our church life has diminished in intensity so that we spend less time in worship and study together. Indeed we know each other less well so criticism and debate are handled less well. Kniss addresses the possibility of more separation in his conclusion: Given the size and complexity of the contemporary Mennonite denominational apparatus, it seems highly unlikely that a powerful charismatic leader of the Funk/Kauffman/Bender ilk will emerge.

If the postmodern era is upon us, perhaps the next period will exhibit a plurality of local consensuses, with increasing diversity between local communities. If that occurs, we would expect to see more localized conflicts around a variety of local issues, with broader conflicts being concerned with how to manage such diversity. 10 Secondly, a comment on tensions within CIM. I really don't know if I was expected to address these or not. I do not profess to know all our disagreements. Some of these are long standing and should be a normal expectation for any group seeking the mind of God. It appears to me that we have some disagreement over how we define mission.

Is the accent on proclaiming the Kingdom of God or is it conversion of sinners? Is the thrust on teaching disciples or on planting churches? Does salvation include an ethic? Does our ethic include salvation? Another set of questions revolves around strategy. Do we focus on growth in numbers or in devotion? Do we assume a minority stance for the church or a majority movement? Is denominational identity significant or superficial? How do we relate to younger churches and which churches do we respond to? Can we do more cooperative 8 9 Fred Kn iss, D isq uie t in the La nd . Scottdale: Herald Press, 1997, p 6. Ibid. p. 130. 10 Ibid. p 196. 18 Causes and Consequences of Separations ork together and with other groups? How much influence should the new Mennonite majority churches have in the definition of program? Is the Mennonite World Conference the appropriate body for hearing these voices? Does mission imply a long term taking up residence or can it mean short-term support ministries? Is mission always an open presence or a sometimes clandestine voice? Do all the technological

apparatuses we have at our disposal help us communicate the gospel or do they widen the gap with poor and marginal people? What attitudes do we bring to relationships with people of other faiths? Can we learn from them or does learning come after conversion?

Some of our differences in CIM depend on which mission journals we read, which mission meetings (EFMA, IFMA, CWME-CC) we attend, which mission spokespersons we gravitate toward. Some of our differences depend on our attitudes toward novelty or tradition. Some of us cherish the Mennonite and BIC narrative while others would like us to become more mainline or evangelical. These questions are only a beginning. I am also sure that none of our agencies are monolithic so that we could help each other if we would wrestle with these questions openly, candidly, in the fullness of Spirit. Like many of you, I am inspired and disturbed by Engel and Dyrness's recent book *Changing the Mind of Missions: Where Have We Gone Wrong?* (2000). If their three trends are accurate, CIM has major agenda.

Could it be that we are also captive to American culture which associates the gospel with economic and political pragmatism? There are implications for us as North American agencies if the initiative in missions has shifted to the younger churches. Would we dare to say that Mennonite and BIC missions may have lost sight of their theological roots by reducing the gospel to proclamation? At least Engel and Dyrness suggest basic questions are in the air for all mission agencies. Let me conclude this section with several quotations from *The American Mennonites: Tracing the Development of the (Old) Mennonite Church* published by the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference in 1998. In no field of endeavor has the Mennonite Church been more

vulnerable than in education and mission work. Although not questioning the fact that they had a message for the world, the church seemed to be influenced by Protestant methods and ideas about how that message should be given. As a result, mission efforts often failed to reproduce the faith effectively. ” (p. 152) One major concern of the Eastern Board was that the missionaries who went to Africa would be deeply committed to the Gospel, the Lancaster Conference Discipline, and the “ all things” of the Bible. Before long, however, this work met the same pressures that had confronted MBM work in India.

Gradually, the African effort took on a more liberal image, to the great disappointment of the Conservative element in Conference. (p. 150) In their list of questions for further reflection they get quite pointed: 1. How did the emphasis on educated personnel affect early Mennonite foreign missions? John A. Lapp 19 2. How can we maintain a sound approach to mission work? 3. How did MCC help accelerate the apostatizing process, especially in the eastern conferences? 5. What special challenges and dangers accompany foreign mission work? 11 There are indeed multiple causes for our separations. III. THE CONSEQUENCES OF SEPARATION What is the impact of our separations?

Are 33, 800 distinct and organizationally separate denominations a blessing or an abomination? Are two hundred conference bodies the right number for 1. 2 million Mennonites or 50 conferences for 438, 000 in North America? Yet Jesus prays that his disciples become completely one so that the world may know that you have sent me. John 17: 23. That, it seems to me, is the criterion. Do our separations help the world know? One of the most vigorous

spokesmen for church unity during the last century was V. S. Azariah, the first Indian-born Anglican Bishop. His evangelizing of masses of untouchables, as they were then called, in Dornakal diocese, gave him enormous credibility as an advocate for unity.

At the Lausanne Conference on Faith and Order in 1927 he explained that a divided church subverted the essence of the gospel call to overcome caste and class in a reconciled community. Unity may be theoretically a desirable ideal in Europe and America, but it is vital to the life of the Church in the mission field. The divisions of Christendom may be a source of weakness in Christian countries, but in non-Christian lands they are a sin and a scandal.

12 Azariah went on to lament how Indian converts exploited divided churches and Missions in order to preserve caste divisions. Nine years after Lausanne, Azariah met B. R. Ambedkar, the leader of a national mass movement of what we now call Dalits. If we become Christians, Ambedkar asked, can we be united in one church wherever we live?

And will we be entirely free from all caste prejudice? Azariah often reported that “ I have never felt so ashamed in my life because I couldn't say Yes to either question I could only come away in disgrace”. 13 Such anecdotes do not answer our question. There are sufficient similar ones that we know our separations do not always bring blessing. These anecdotes also confirm that the issue of consequences is a profound missiological issue which should be an issue for 11 The American Mennonites. Tracing the Development of the (Old) Mennonite Church. Ephrata PA: Eastern Mennonite Publications, 1998. Relevant questions selected from a longer list in the study guide. p. 54

12 Quoted by Susan Billington Harper, In the Shadow of the Mahatma:

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Bishop V. S. Azariah and the Travails of Christianity in British India. 2000. p. 235. 13 Ibid. p. 313 20 Causes and Consequences of Separations the entire church. There are consequences. Again, I can only hint at what these are or might be. 1. When I told an anthropologist friend last week about this assignment, his immediate response was surely our mission is better with multiple agencies. More people involved. Different approaches are used. More gets done. Decentralized authority goes further than centralized authority. 2. Multiple structures are also valuable in complementing and supplementing whatever any of us can do alone.

Sharing vision and experience will always be helpful if we are ready to listen and learn from one another. 3. But multiple structures can also be confusing. Who are the real Mennonites? The worldly-wise MBs or the Pennsylvania Dutch Unaffiliated Mennonites? The BIC pietists or the MCC pacifists? That is the problem. 4. Multiple structures also sometimes lead to competition for finances, for workers, for administrators. Such competition can become wasteful as our fund-raisers see the same potential donors and our communications departments plaster the Mennonite media with their own news stories and advertisements. 5. Our separation can accentuate theological controversy.

Rather than agencies being seen as complementary, constituents divide up over their support for agencies which have well-known practices and programs. Word and deed, evangelism and development, education and healing, grassroots work and influencing public policy ought all to be seen as the work of the church. Each should be done as Paul says, for the common good and the edifying of the saints. 6. The enormous Mennonite institutional

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network could be undercutting the wholeness of the church. The current Mennonite Directory lists 38 mission agencies, 36 mutual aid societies and foundations, 19 colleges and seminaries, 89 camps and retreat centers, 14 publishers, 48 welfare and disability programs, etc. , etc. , etc.

Do all these institutions serve the church or does the church begin to serve the institutions? Do these structures focus our attention on the total ministry of the church or magnify the parts rather than the totality? 7. Do strong mission structures distort the totality of church life? Cal Redekop suggests that the EMBs overarching commitment to evangelism and missions were at the expense of congregational nurture, discipline and discipleship. 14 I have always felt that MCC was/is only as strong as are the churches. The same can be said for all of our agencies. I believe that we need to be as preoccupied with the spiritual vitality of our congregations as with the performance of our agencies. 8.

And what about the impact of our separations overseas? Are the multiplicity of agencies in Haiti or Guatemala really a good thing? Does our abundance really get shared or do 14 Redekop, *Leaving Anabaptism* , p. 145. John A. Lapp 21 these places become playgrounds for northerners seeking to be do-gooders? How can we build a sense of accountability to local churches and to each other where several of us rub shoulders on location? How do we build adherence to a common narrative when multiple agencies work in close confines? 9. The impact of multiple agencies can also disrupt the practices of local churches. Middle Eastern churches have long lamented the proselytization of western churches.

MCC, MBM, and EMM have had to work constantly on relationships in Israel-Palestine because our identities as Mennonites influenced the status of each other. We made mistakes but we kept the conversation going and recognized the integrity of one another's roles. This requires including the United Christian Council of Israel and the patriarchates in the conversation.

10. I am told that Mennonite agencies are also played off against one another in some places. MCC is likely caught more in this matrix, but mission boards are not immune. I hope that one of the results of these CIM conversations will be to deal with such things forthrightly. 11. There are some turf battles that emerge from our multiple agencies.

Many younger administrators never heard of comity. We cannot bring it back. But Mennonite agencies should not be competing with one another to control territory or to get to one place before another agency does. We should be helping one another to place workers, share resources, and cooperate in planning and administration. The former USSR is an area, we are told, that has been a disaster in the competitive work by many agencies.

15 12. Last, an ironical consequence. Organizational theorists tell us that there is a phenomenon they call institutional isomorphism, the tendency of different organizations with similar purposes to look alike in character and program.

The more different we think we are the more similar we become. Could it be?? You surely can add to this list of consequences. IV. COPING WITH SEPARATIONS: A CONCLUDING COMMENT. I was not asked to address what should be done, but I want to say a few things. The New Testament bias for the church is unity. Paul begins his first letter to the Corinthians with an

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appeal that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose. 1: 10 Such unity is not an abstraction but as in Jesus prayer is a demonstration so the world might believe that such unity is not monolithic organization but rather as commitment to a common Lord.

Biblical faith is intrinsically corporate. John Howard Yoder insisted that the gospel is good news for the entire world. Hence the order (unity) 15 See Janine Wedel, *Collusion and Coercion: Western Foreign Aid in Eastern Europe*, 1989-1998. 2000. 22 Causes and Consequences of Separations of the faith community constitutes a public offer to the entire society. 16 That is why he could say when Christians are not united, the gospel is not true in that place. Yoder points out that Jesus, in John 17, says unity is to make credible the fundamental Christian claim that the Son was sent by the Father. 17 Unity then is as intrinsic as diversity.

James McClendon put it this way: “ If we find our convictions in discord, we have not gotten our story straight, we have missed their proper priority or we have muddled their actual content. “ 18 Unity requires time, effort, commitment. Miroslav Volf and Maurice Lee in the fall 2000 issue of the *Conrad Grebel Review* have an excellent missiological statement entitled “ The Spirit and the Church”. They declare that the church does not have a mission of its own; its only mission is the very mission of Jesus. 19 After reading this, a devious thought occurred to me. Does this mean there is a basic flaw in mission agencies having their own mission statements?

If the community's trust and obedience are in and to Christ then the resulting church has to be catholic in character. Here are their powerful words: " Since the Spirit, who creates the community in continuation of Christ's anointing, is the Spirit of the reign of God, and since the eschatological reign of God will mean the creation of a single people of God from every tribe and nation, every local community must see itself both as part of that one people of God and as its microcosm. Hence, no church in a given culture may isolate itself from other churches in other cultures; every church must be open to all other churches. Even more, every local church is a catholic community because all other churches are part of that church; all of them shape its identity. ²⁰ Incidentally, I have rarely seen wholistic mission stated so clearly as Volf and Lee put it as forgiveness for the sinner, fellowship for the outcast, and care for the physically needy. Then they add: " Since the church's mission is nothing but the face of its identity turned toward the world, the church must engage in the ministry of reconciliation. " ²¹ For too long, I believe, we have sidestepped the imperative of structuring our churches in a cooperative, unifying fashion. Today we are only addressing mission agencies. Should we not paraphrase Volf and Lee to say that every agency must be open to all other agencies?

At the beginning of the twenty-first century would we be prepared to make the strategic decision to deliberately work together in a systematic effort? Unless we make such a strategic decision, I believe the cultural forces of fragmentation will ¹⁶ ¹⁷ John Howard Yoder , *For the Nations*, Eerdmans, 1997, p. 27. Yoder , *Royal Priesthood*, Eerdmans, 1994, p. 291 ¹⁸ James McClellon, *Ethics*, 1994 , p. 313 . ¹⁹ Miroslav Volf & Maurice Lee, " The

Spirit and the Church”, Conrad Grebel Review, Fall 2000, p. 28. 20 Ibid. p. 31. 21 Ibid. p. 37. John A. Lapp 23 become ever more pervasive. Such a strategy, it seems to me, will require at least several actions on our part. 1.

We will want to repent for a lack of concern, an easy acceptance of division and discord. We will want to repent for causing confusion and sometimes being competitive in and through our institutions and programs. 2. Each of our agencies will want to make it a matter of basic policy to adopt a deliberate stance of working together through meaningful, sustained consultation, forgoing the politics of separation and one-upmanship.

Whenever we find ourselves in the same country or region, we will want to be in regular communication with one another and, above all, with the local church. 3. We will want to design a discipline of cooperation built on conversation, truth seeking, and worship together.

Cooperation will only happen if we understand the church and mission as dependent on God's grace, calling us to love one another as God loves us, and to practice mutual respect and affirmation so essential to bearing one another's burdens. 4. CIM is not the only set of Mennonite and BIC structures working with churches around the world. We will want to share our convictions, experience, models of relationship with congregations, colleges, seminaries, and other agencies lest they become part of a culture of autonomy and separatism. 5. We will welcome this Kairos moment as a great opportunity. The Guatemala Consultation laid before us an agenda.

The new majority churches are proposing new terms of engagement. We have in the Mennonite World Conference a vehicle for building a more

cooperative world movement. Will we have the courage to respond together? Jane Parker Huber expresses this spirit in her hymn “ Called as Partners in Christ’s Service” (copyright 1981) Here are the words of verse three: Thus new patterns for Christ’s mission In a small or global sense. Help us bear each others burdens, Breaking down each wall or fence. Words of comfort, words of vision, Words of challenge, said with care, Bring new power and strength for action, Make us colleagues free and fair. Cooperation, Complimentarity, and Conflict.

Case Study in Mission/Service Agency Relations Mennonite Ministries

Botswana Erwin Rempel It is my conviction that the coming together of Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission (AIMM) and Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Botswana as Mennonite Ministries represents a compelling model for consideration in Mennonite mission work elsewhere. 1 MCC first became involved in Botswana in 1968, two years after the country gained independence from its protectorate status with Great Britain. Seven years later in 1975 AIMM first became involved in ministries in Botswana with the arrival of Ed and Irene Weaver. During the past 32 years over 300 persons have served in Botswana sponsored either by MCC or AIMM.

In 1975 it was relatively easy for AIMM personnel to enter the country because of the good reputation and government recognition of MCC as the Mennonite organization in Botswana. MCC had by then obtained a technical service agreement which enabled new personnel to enter the country without the necessity of following normal entry procedures. However, by 1976 as the number of AIMM personnel approached ten, the government expected AIMM to regularize its registration in compliance with the Societies

Act. In the mid 1970s both Ray Brubaker from the MCC office in Akron and Jim Bertsche from the AIMM office in Elkhart, explored possibilities of new work in Lesotho. Aware of the joint venture in East Africa between Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and MCC they considered the same relationship for Southern Africa.

With the need for AIMM to regularize its presence in Botswana with the government the question “ Akron personnel... suggested that some sort of joint arrangement there might merit consideration. ” (Bertsche: 492). And, within Botswana several voices, among them Ronald Sawatzky and John and Ruth Fast Kliewer, encouraged AIMM and MCC to bring the two programs together. 1 Sources for this reflection include: Personal experience as a Co-Country Representative of Mennonite Ministries Botswana supported by COM/AIMM and MCC from 1994 to 2000. Chapter 5.2 entitled “ “ Mennonite Ministries’ is Born” pp. 491 -499 in Jim Bertsche’s history of AIMM, CIM/AIMM: A Story of Vision, Commitment, and Grace, Fairway Press, 1998 .

A History of MCC/Mennonite Ministries written by Jon Rudy in April, 1999 and the section “ Formation of Mennonite Ministries (MM)” pp. 15-17. Erwin Rempel and his wife Angela were Co-directors of Mennonite Ministries in Botswana, having earlier served as Executive Secretary of Commission on Overseas Mission and a missionary in Brazil. Mission Focus: Annual Review © 2001 Volume 9 Erwin Rempel 25 Jim Bertsche notes that for all the voices that were encouraging the integration of AIMM and MCC in Botswana there were also voices questioning the wisdom of such a venture and expressing

caution. Some of these questions raised by the AIMM Executive Committee and Board included the following (Cited by Bertsche: 492): 1.

Is it possible for one person (a joint country director) to adequately administer both programs? 2. Since it (AIMM) is smaller and more recently arrived in the country, is it possible that AIMM may lose its identity and sense of direction? 3. Is there a danger that AIMM will be overshadowed or dominated in this relationship and be hampered in maintaining its emphasis upon evangelism and spiritual nurture? John Eby, MCC Country Representative in 1980, asked: “ Do AIMM and MCC work from the same theology and philosophy? Can both... work with the same administrative philosophy and style in Botswana? Is it possible to include in one program the divergent specialties now represented by the current AIMM/MCC programs? (Bertsche: 492) Jim Bertsche commented: In spite of evident inter-Mennonite jitters all around, there emerged a conviction that in Botswana AIMM and MCC found themselves in a unique situation. Jointly confronted by an unusual mix of problems and opportunities, the challenge seemed clear to summon the will and faith to plow some new furrows of inter-Mennonite collaboration. On one occasion the AIMM Executive Secretary observed: “ If AIMM and MCC intend to try to close ranks somewhere sometime in Africa, Botswana is the place and the time is now. ” (Bertsche; 492) While articulating some of the challenges in his study paper, John Eby also highlighted “ good reasons for moving ahead with some form of joint ministry, e. g. ‘ The Biblical imperative to be in mission includes both word and deed integrally interrelated.

Our structures for doing programming should reflect that unity. Two Mennonite... programs in Botswana are unnecessarily confusing to local people. Our witness will be enforced by unity. AIMM must soon register with the government. It seems better to register only one Mennonite program. There would be administrative efficiencies if there were a more unified program. Local programs would more likely include both word and deed in integrated ministries to the whole person. ” (Cited by Bertsche: 492) And, on June 12, 1981, the Government of Botswana officially approved the formation of Mennonite Ministries. Finding the right leadership for Mennonite Ministries was crucial, especially at th