

Our Heritage

Pacific Northwest Mennonite Historical Society Newsletter

Spring 2015

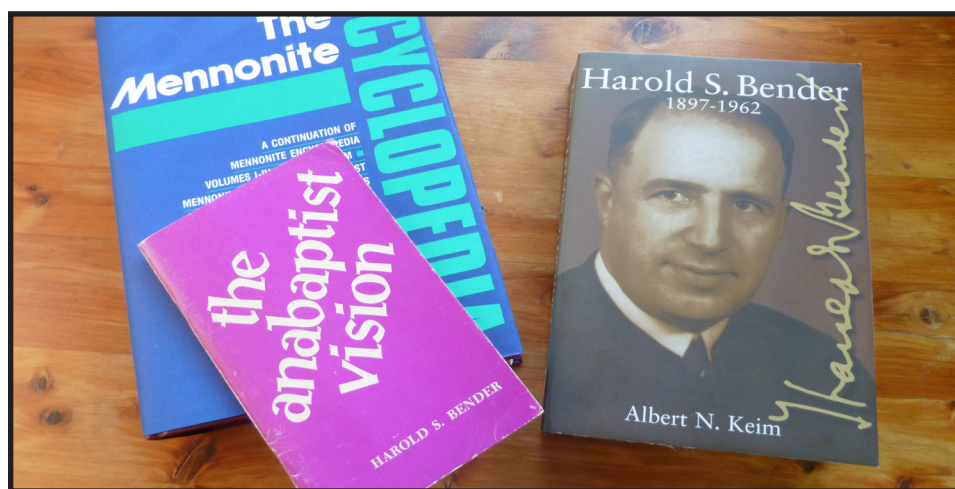
Volume 28, Issue 1

Reflections on The Anabaptist Vision and Harold S. Bender

By Ray Kauffman

Browsing the used books tables at the MCC Fall Festival this October, I came across a thin yellowing 23-page booklet: *The Anabaptist Vision* by Harold S. Bender. As I paid for it, David Hockman-Wert remarked, “Ray, you must have read that long ago.” But a few days later as I read it in its entirety I could not recall ever having done so, although I was well acquainted with its essence and some of its context.

Now seventy years later we can recognize and appreciate its historical significance. Bender’s *Vision* essay placed Anabaptism on the Reformation history map in a different, more positive light. It was an authentic manifestation of the sixteenth century reformers’ aspirations. Heretofore Anabaptism was viewed as a distraction, an incoherent movement of dissenters, “a dangerous virus that threatened to infect the



Bender’s *The Anabaptist Vision* stands alongside Albert N. Keim’s text exploring Bender’s life and ministry. Photo courtesy of Melodie M. Davis, who writes for Menno Media and blogs at findingharmony-

whole of Europe, planting seeds of unrest and rebellion... They were held in contempt and regarded as true subversives.”¹

Harold Bender as Teacher

This encounter took me back to 1955 when, as a senior at Goshen College, I enrolled in Harold S. Bender’s Church History course. The year-long class, with 40 or more students, met on the 3rd floor of the Ad-

ministrative Building.² Looking in a storage trunk in our garage, sure enough I found my notes consisting of an 87-page syllabus bound in a paperback notebook, a file-folder of 25 pages with notes on both sides, plus notes all the way through the syllabus, from Semester II only.

Course requirements included a 2,500 word term paper and 2,000 pages of reading which included the text, with a

reading report to be submitted each week. On the back of the course requirements page I kept track of my reading – 2,428 pages. My term paper was not there, but I have my Blue Book mid-term exam, on which my grade was a B. Review questions for the final exam consisted of 43 items, like: 1) What were the chief causes of the Reformation; 2) Characterize the Age of Enlightenment in general; 3) Describe the Great Awakening; 4) What outside reading did you the most good and why; and 4) Be ready to identify additional names. Church History was one of the most challenging courses I took.

However, what I was searching for in vain throughout my notes was any mention of *The Anabaptist Vision*. I have several pages of notes under “Survey of Anabaptist Movement,” including an interesting guest lecture on March 24 by Paul Peachey. But all of this was sixteenth century Anabaptism, part of a survey of the Reformation. I needed to remind myself this was a Church History class, not Anabaptist/Mennonite history. Even so, I’m surprised that there was no mention of *The Anabaptism Vision*.

Bender the Churchman

Twelve years after its delivery, a recovery of the Anabap-

tist Vision was underway. Some of H. S. Bender’s former students, like John Howard Yoder, Albert Meyer, Irvin Horst, and Calvin Redekop, challenged Bender’s ecclesiastical understandings and his exercise of power. These scholars became known as the Concern group. This is interesting and ironic. When Bender was a young teacher at Hesston (two years) and Goshen colleges he was known as a progressive and was frequently criticized by Mennonite conservatives. Now, a generation later, the tables were turned.

Bender the Scholar

It was December 1943, and Harold S. Bender, Dean of Goshen College, had a scheduling problem. As secretary of the Mennonite Central Committee executive board, he needed to attend a Mennonite

Central Committee meeting in Chicago at noon on December 29. He also had an important appointment on that same date in New York.

Bender had been a member of the prestigious American Society of Church History (ASCH) for fifteen years. Elected Vice President of the ASCH in 1941, he became President the next year: “Had he not become president, there likely would have been no Anabaptist Vision, at least not in the form we have it today.”³

As a member of nearly every major committee of the (Old) Mennonite Church, he was appointed to a group comprised of Peace Church leaders to negotiate with the government to establish an alternative service program for conscientious objectors. Bender shared in administering the Civilian Public Service program and visited

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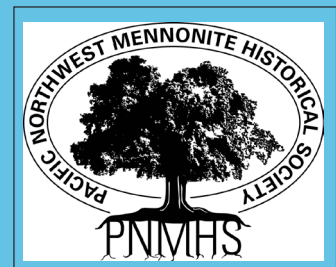
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the camps. Bender's plate was full. He was frequently away from Goshen College where he taught courses as well as functioned as Dean, which was a full time job in itself. Students complained that their professor was absent far too often.⁴

After being named president of the ASCH, Bender was expected to give a Presidential address, scheduled at Columbia University in New York City on December 28 and 29, 1943. Various papers were to be read, including Bender's. It was wartime and trains were always running late; confirmed reservations were nearly impossible to get.

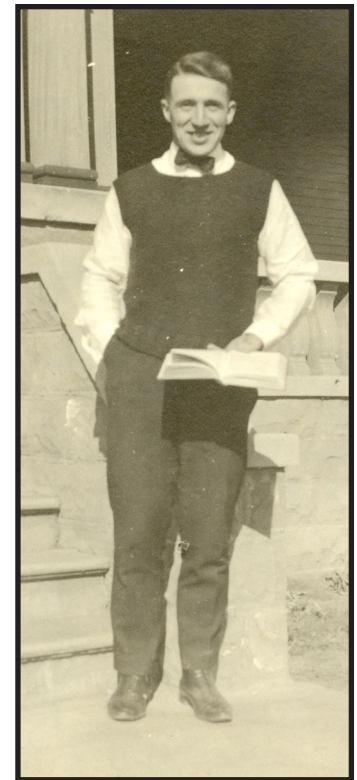
On December 16, although his paper was not yet written, Bender notified the ASCH that, due to his tight schedule and difficult travel arrangements, he could not guarantee being present at their meeting, but was considering mailing them his address instead of delivering it personally.⁵ But just before Christmas, Bender learned he could get a plane late evening of December 28 out of New York to Cleveland, and take a train from there to Chicago, arriving by noon on December 29. The plane ticket added \$10 to the cost of that trip, which Orie Miller assured Bender MCC would pay.⁶

However, getting to New

York was another nightmare. Due to an impending railroad strike to begin on December 28, and the usual Christmas travel rush, Bender was unable to get a ticket to New York. Somehow providence provided a seat at the last minute and he boarded an eastbound train leaving Elkhart, IN the evening of December 27. It arrived in New York late. By the time he got to Columbia University it was after 3 p.m. and the ASCH was in session. Thirty-one church historians were present to hear two papers read.

At 7 p.m. the society held its annual dinner, followed by President Bender's address entitled *The Anabaptist Vision*. The minutes of that meeting noted "the speech was followed by a very lively discussion which would have undoubtedly continued much longer were it not for lack of time, for President Bender had to leave soon afterwards by plane to attend a meeting in Chicago."⁷

In his last act as president, Bender appointed Roland Bainton to preside over the session the next day. That done, he took a taxi to LaGuardia and boarded a plane to Cleveland, then a train to Chicago. Thus, "Just after lunch at 12:30 . . . Bender was at his place in one of the conference rooms at the Atlantic Hotel, ready for a day



Bender is pictured here during his student time at Heston College, 1918-20. *Photo courtesy of Mennonite Church USA Archives.*

and a half of MCC meetings dealing with CPS."⁸

The events and rushed schedule that December were typical of Bender's workload and travel pattern for most of his life. It makes one tired just to read Al Keim's account of it all in his revealing biography, *Harold S. Bender 1897-1962*.

In 1957 when GC president, Paul Mininger, gently suggested Bender should step down from some of his offices, Bender replied as he had for twenty years: all he needed was a first-class secretary.⁹ At Mininger's request he made a list of his on-



Bender at Goshen College

We students half jokingly referred to Bender as the Mennonite pope, though we also highly regarded him. But we had no idea of the struggles, ambitions, financial hardship, critical opposition, and work overload he endured. Reading Keim it is not too much to say that the trio of H.S. Bender, Chris Graber (financial officer and fund raiser), and Orië O. Miller (financial agent of the Mennonite Board of Education) rescued Goshen College. Bender, especially, as Dean in the 1930s, helped make GC what it is today.

He recruited faculty with academic standing, encouraged and assisted them in obtaining Ph.D. degrees, built the liberal arts curriculum, and achieved GC's accreditation. Later he was successful in establishing the GC Bible School which evolved into Goshen Biblical Seminary which, with the profound assistance of Erland Waltner, president of the General Conference Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Chicago, dovetailed into AMBS.

That triumvirate of Bender, Graber, and Miller in economic terminology was an interlocking directorate. Outsiders would see it as a conflict of interest and monopolistic,

Harold and Elizabeth (Horsch) Bender, in a photo circa 1960. A caption on the Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopaedia Online site (gameo.org) suggests the couple was working on the Mennonite Encyclopedia. Elizabeth Bender was a Mennonite scholar in her own right, and taught at Goshen College from 1924 until 1963. She also edited most of Harold Bender's written work. The couple had two children. *Photo courtesy Mennonite Church USA Archives.*

going responsibilities. Besides being dean of the seminary and teaching, Bender listed thirteen offices: secretary of, chairman of, president of, editor of, etc., various boards and committees. This hectic pace would have been impossible without his wife Elizabeth's (Horsch) literary skills and management behind the scenes.

Actually, Bender had been blessed with competent secretaries who at times were assistant administrators in his absence. It was not until 1947 that "Bender had a nearly full-time secretary who was almost able to keep up with his pace.

She was twenty-year-old Goshen College student Lois Yake."¹⁰ Bender had been asked to go to Europe again on an MCC assignment. He planned to take his wife and two daughters along, and after some finagling managed to take Lois along as his secretary.

Lois Yake Kenagy, now residing at Quail Run, Mennonite Village, in Albany, Ore., recently told me that she typed her way across the Atlantic in 1947 aboard ship with the Benders. She was Bender's secretary in Basel, and after he returned she stayed with MCC working with refugees in north Germany.¹¹

but these three and other Mennonite leaders perceived it as efficiency. When conducting business at one board meeting they could deal with matters of other boards too.

Documenting The Anabaptist Vision

A few more words on that booklet I picked up at the Fall Festival in October. It was a 1949 reprint from *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, April 1944. The scholarly *MQR* is one of Bender's prize legacies; he founded and edited it until 1962. Before *The Anabaptist Vision* could be published in the *MQR* and in the March issue of *Church History*, work needed to be done.

Keim says Bender had not researched it well, nor was there documentation, as "there was no time for that."¹² Elizabeth remembered, "how he got the whole thing done and ready to give in no time at all: two or three days."¹³

So, in January of 1944, Harold and Elizabeth and J. C. Wenger were observed sitting at a table in the Historical Library surrounded by mounds of books, intently searching for references and supplying footnotes for Bender's Vision essay.¹⁴ They succeeded; the document now has fifty-nine footnotes, at least half of them annotated.

Bender as an Author

Although Bender from early on wanted to do scholarly research he was unable to do so because he prioritized other tasks and administrative assignments. During his lifetime he was unable to take off a block of time for research and writing like his colleagues, Guy F. Her-shberger and J. C. Wenger, did.

For example, he began his dissertation, a biography of Conrad Grebel, in 1930 when he was at the University of Heidelberg, resumed and completed it in 1935 when he received his Doctorate of Theology from Heidelberg, and it was finally published as a book in 1950.¹⁵

Keim says Bender did write essays for the *Gospel Herald* and Bible study materials for CPS men, e.g. *Must Christians Fight?*, coauthored with Edward Yoder.¹⁶ Keim writes, "Throughout Bender's life, serious research was always secondary to more immediate and pressing popular writing. On one level, it reflected his commitment to the church . . . but it was also a fact that he could write such short pieces quickly and at odd moments without interrupting his hectic, fast-paced life – a pattern that an extensive scholarly work would not allow. . . . The result was almost no original research but much quick and semi-popular writing. Such

was the case with Bender's most influential essay, *The Anabaptist Vision*."¹⁷

Robert Friedman and Nachfolge

Keim says, "The outline of the Vision was already present in 1935, but absent then were some descriptors Bender later used in *The Anabaptist Vision* essay – terms such as non-conformity, nonresistance, and discipleship."¹⁸

In fact, "discipleship" as a concept came to Bender in the early 1940s by way of an Austrian-Jewish refugee who was exiled by the Nazi regime. His name was Robert Friedmann. He was doing research at Yale University. Bender had corresponded with Friedmann for about ten years, beginning when Bender was studying at Heidelberg, Germany, but didn't meet him until a mutual historian friend, Roland Bainton, arranged a meeting at Yale in early 1940.¹⁹

In July of that year Friedmann was on the faculty of Goshen College at the invitation of Dean Bender. "Robert Friedmann was almost certainly the single most formative influence on the shape and form of Bender's *Anabaptist Vision* address," according to Keim.²⁰ Two of Friedmann's essays, "Conception of the Anabaptists"

and “Anabaptism and Pietism,” both published by Bender in the *MQR*, expanded Bender’s vision.

“Friedmann described how Pietism’s preoccupation with soul-saving piety weakened the seamless connection between faith and practice.”²¹ He challenged Bender’s concept of what the essence of Anabaptism was. Friedmann developed the idea of *Nachfolge* which he translated as discipleship. Friedmann said the early Anabaptists most often quoted Jesus rather than Paul as the other reformers had.²² Bender’s *Vision* essay reads, “Their focus of the Christian life was not so much the inward experience of the grace of God, as it was for Luther, but the outward application of that grace to all human conduct.”²³ By the time Bender wrote his *Vision* essay discipleship was his key idea.²⁴

Keim goes on to say that in the days just before Christmas 1943, when Bender wrote his *Vision* essay, he was “at a point in his evolution as a historian when the influences of persons like Friedmann and Bainton were formative. They helped him jell his ideas. But the formulation was finally Bender’s. By artfully weaving together ideas of discipleship, fellowship of believers, and nonresistance, he created a conceptually convincing argu-

ment that the Swiss Brethren represented what he called a ‘consistent evangelical Protestantism.’ His key purpose in the *Vision* essay was to convince his academic historian colleagues to give the Anabaptists the credence and respect they deserved, and to distinguish between various early Anabaptist groups.”²⁵ Bender wrote that the Swiss Brethren carried the Reformers’ ideals to their logical conclusion.

(Kauffman’s source for most of the above content and quotations is Albert N. Keim’s biography, *Harold S. Bender 1897-1962*, Herald Press, 1998. Kauffman provides his own summary and impressions of his 1943 *Anabaptist Vision* essay below.)

Bender and the Separation of Church and State

One omission of Al Keim’s book (unless I missed it) was mention of perhaps the best known contribution of the sixteenth century Anabaptists to the world: the principle of separation of church and state.

This is Bender’s launching point, already in the second paragraph of *The Anabaptist Vision* essay: “There can be no question but that the great principles of freedom of conscience, separation of church and state, and voluntarism in religion, so basic

to American Protestantism, and so essential to democracy, ultimately are derived from the Anabaptists of the Reformation period, who for the first time clearly enunciated them.”²⁶

C. Henry Smith of Bluffton College published in 1941 a massive Mennonite History, *The Story of the Mennonites*, in which he argued the key element of Anabaptism was the freedom of the individual and separation of church and state.²⁷

James Juhnke comments “I suspect the reason Keim didn’t mention it much is that Bender didn’t mention it much. Smith, far more than Bender, emphasized the Anabaptist contributions to American democracy, including separation of church and state and individual rights.”²⁸

Content of *The Anabaptist Vision*

Next, Bender speaks of the attraction of Anabaptism to the common people, and the fear this spreading movement presented to Catholic, Lutheran, and Zwinglian authorities, and the consequent “dreadful severity of the persecution of the Anabaptists in the years 1527-1560 in Switzerland, South Germany, Thuringia, Austria, and in the Low Countries.”²⁹

The authorities discovered that persecution was

counterproductive; the Anabaptists did not fear death and often died rejoicing. Martyrdom, at least at first, multiplied converts. “The Count of Alzey in the Palatinate, after three hundred and fifty Anabaptists had been executed there, was heard to exclaim, ‘What shall I do, the more I kill, the greater becomes their number!’”³⁰

Bender then attempts to identify “genuine” Anabaptists as the Swiss Brethren, and followers of Menno Simons in the Low Countries, “not to be obscured by Thomas Muntzer and the Peasants War, the Munsterites, or any other aberration of Protestantism in the sixteen century.”³¹ He then begins to define the Anabaptist vision as the culmination of the Reformation, quoting from a nineteenth century German author, Max Gobel, and Conrad Grebel.

The Swiss Brethren believed the Reformation leaders “did not secure among the people true repentance, regeneration, and Christian living as a result of their preaching (and reforms). The Reformation emphasis on faith was good, but inadequate, for without newness of life, they held faith is hypocritical.”³²

Both Luther and Zwingli accepted this criticism as fair and longed for more “earnest” Christians, but both “decided

it was better to include the masses within the fold of the (state) church than to form a fellowship of true Christians only.” In settling for this the Anabaptists said “the reformers surrendered their original purpose, and abandoned the divine intention.”

Others may say that they were “wise and statesmanlike leaders,” adds Bender. He also comments that “Luther in his later years expressed disappointment at the final outcome of the Reformation . . . and the moral outlook was more deplorable than ever. His last years were embittered by the consciousness of partial failure.”³³

The Witness of The Anabaptist Vision

Having defined Anabaptism, Bender now was ready to examine its central teachings. “The Anabaptist vision included three major points of emphasis: first, a new conception of the essence of Christianity as discipleship; second, a new conception of the church as a brotherhood; and third, a new ethic of love and nonresistance.”³⁴

Later he makes the claim that, “The Anabaptists had faith,



Harold Bender, in a photo circa 1960. Photo courtesy of Mennonite Church USA Archives.

indeed, but they used it to produce a life. Theology was for them a means, not an end.”³⁵ They not only proclaimed a life of discipleship, they achieved it, as even their adversaries admitted. Zwingli wrote in 1527, “If you investigate their life and conduct, it seems at first contact irreproachable, pious, unassuming, attractive, yea, above this world. Even those who are inclined to be critical will say that their lives are excellent.”

Bullinger lamented in 1531 that “the people are running after them as though they were living saints.” Bender dwells at length on what he calls “the finest contemporary characterizations of the Anabaptists.” One time a non-Anabaptist “was

brought before the court on suspicion of being an Anabaptist primarily because he did not curse but lived an irreproachable life.”³⁶

“Voluntary church membership based upon true conversion and involving a commitment to holy living and discipleship was the absolutely essential heart” of the Vision’s second point. This belief also gave rise to Anabaptist opposition to infant baptism. Only an adult could make this kind of commitment.

Thus Bender says, “Infant baptism was not the cause of their disavowal of the state church; it was only a symbol of the cause.” He goes on to say, “A corollary of this concept of the church . . . was the insistence on the separation of the church from the world, that is noncon-

formity of the Christian to the worldly way of life.” Quoting Menno Simons, “All the evangelical scriptures teach us that the church of Christ was and is, in doctrine, life, and worship, a people separated from the world.”³⁷

This leads logically to the concept of a suffering church. He then introduces the principle of true brotherhood and sharing of possessions, using the Hutterites as a prime example.³⁸

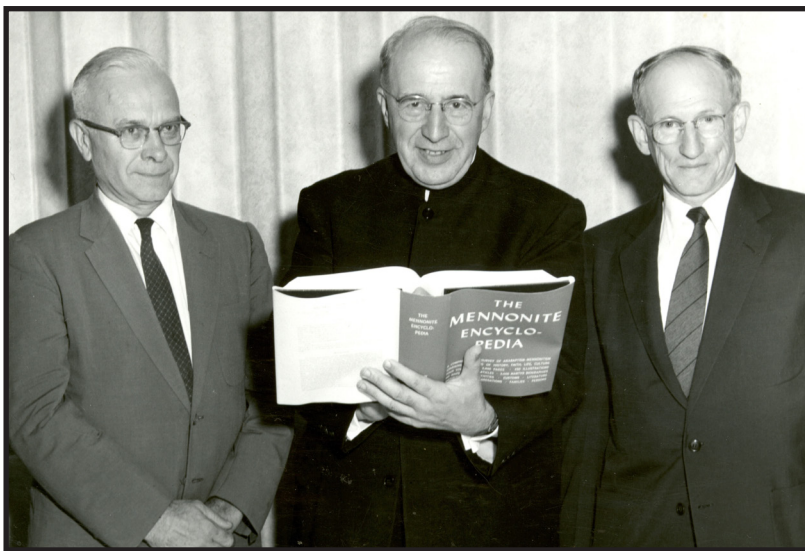
Bender’s “third great element in the Anabaptist vision was the ethic of love and nonresistance as applied to all human relationships.” This meant to them no warfare, strife and violence, or the taking of human life. Conrad Grebel, Pilgram Marpeck, Peter Riedemann, and Menno Simons are all cited.

Bender says, “. . . here again the Anabaptists were creative leaders, far ahead of their times, in this antedating the Quakers by over a century. Other earlier prophets had advocated similar views but left no continuing practice behind them.”³⁹

Faith, Church, and Citizenship

Concluding, Bender reviews the vision of the Anabaptists in two foci: the first relates to the nature of Christianity, the second to the church. He characterizes and contrasts the meaning of church in Catholicism, Lutheranism, Pietism, and Anabaptism. He then compares the social ethics of four main Christian groups of the Reformation period: Catholic, Calvinist, Lutheran, and Anabaptist.⁴⁰ How were they alike and different?

This is a thoughtful, concise comparison and fitting conclusion to the Vision. In explaining why the sixteenth century Anabaptists rejected Luther’s compromising view of a Christian citizen, Bender states, “He must withdraw from the worldly system and create a Christian social order within the fellowship of the church brotherhood. Extension of this Christian order by the conversion of individuals and their transfer out of the world into the church is the



Bender (middle), with Cornelius Krahn on the left and Melvin Gingrich on the right, at a celebration for the Mennonite Encyclopedia. Taken August 11, 1959. *Photo courtesy Mennonite Church USA Archives.*

only way by which progress can be made in Christianizing the social order.”⁴¹

This may be a somewhat narrow view in light of today’s Anabaptist/Mennonite understanding of Christian citizenship, although this remains a knotty issue and an ongoing discussion.

The last paragraph of *The Anabaptist Vision* is worth quoting in full: “The Anabaptist vision was not a detailed blueprint for the reconstruction of human society, but the Brethren did believe that Jesus intended that the Kingdom of God should be set up in the midst of earth, here and now, and this they proposed to do forthwith. “We shall not believe, they said, that the Sermon on the Mount or any other vision that He had is only a heavenly vision meant but to keep His followers in tension until the last great day, but we shall practice what He taught, believing that where He walked we can by His grace follow in His steps.”⁴²

Bender’s Legacy

Bender’s *Vision* is an inspiring read, useful for renewal. I also recommend my Pax friend, Al Keim’s, biography of H. S. Bender. It’s one of those books you may find hard to put down.

To Keim and many of his

readers, H. S. Bender was a giant. He quotes Robert Friedmann who once called Bender “an event – a human phenomenon of unique dimension.” Yet he was human and made occasional blunders. He was a forceful leader with a strong, yet winsome personality. He was humble, too. Maybe that is why he omitted covering his *Vision* in his Church History course. (But I still think he should have included it.) He had character.

Keim says he will be best remembered for planning Mennonite World Conferences, editing the *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, and the *Mennonite Quarterly Review*. Keim also concludes his epilogue with, “Discipleship had existed at the very heart of historic Anabaptism, and by the time of his (Bender’s) death, it had become the central theological credo of his own people. In that development rests Harold S. Bender’s greatest accomplishment.”⁴³

Wilbert Shenk speaks of “the phenomenal impact of this relatively brief essay (*The Anabaptist Vision*) in the seventy years since it first made its appearance. I can think of no other essay with comparable impact. John H. Yoder’s *Politics of Jesus* has had enormous impact but that is a book. Bender’s *Vision* represents the crystallization of seminal ideas about the Radical

Reformation that have continued to shape and define the contribution of Anabaptism to the wider Christian community, and its relevance to the global Christian movement.”⁴⁴

Bender at the Seventh MWC

Bender died of pancreatic cancer in September of 1962. In early August, 1962, the Seventh Mennonite World Conference in Kitchener, Ontario drew over 15,000 people. My wife, Tina, and I were among them.

Despite treatment and a valiant effort to build up his strength, Bender could not attend the week long event. Erland Waltner read Bender’s opening keynote address entitled “Who is Lord?” Later Harold and Elizabeth were able to come for part of the conference. I remember well that Sunday evening when Bender addressed that throng in the huge Memorial Auditorium. His theme was “My Vision for the World Conference.”⁴⁵

Keim says “he observed that he was probably the only person in the hall who had been at all the world conferences since 1930.” On Tuesday evening the conference ended with an “eloquent benedictory prayer by Bender, almost certainly the best-remembered Mennonite prayer ever uttered. Using King James ‘Thees’ and ‘Thous’ and

the masculine language of the day, he addressed God on behalf of his people. . . . and in a line which brought tears to many eyes, given Bender's own precarious hold on life, he prayed: 'Yes, great Jehovah, guide us, lead us, until some day we shall hear the welcome applaud: Come home, thou beloved of the Lord, thou servant of mine, and dwell in the house of the Lord forever.'⁴⁶

Final Thoughts

Al Keim includes many fine black and white photos in his book. On page 511 appears a picture of Harold, Elizabeth, and daughters, Mary Eleanor and Nancy. I knew Elizabeth, too: she was my German teacher at GC, and Nancy was a year behind me there. Harold was photogenic, but his wife, Elizabeth, except on this one photo, looks pensive, rather sad and unsmiling.

And that's the way I remember her. She was burdened, overworked, and labored long hours, especially during the '50s decade, on the *Mennonite Encyclopedia*. Some have estimated she spent more hours on that project than her husband did. Melvin Gingerich, one of the editors, says Bender "relied on her for editorial polishing of his handiwork. He trusted her judgment implicitly on matters

of style."⁴⁷

Secondly, about Conrad Grebel, the subject of Bender's dissertation, which was published in 1950 as *Conrad Grebel 1498-1526: The Founder of the Swiss Brethern, Sometimes Called Anabaptists*. There is another book on Grebel I have, written by John L. Ruth, entitled *Conrad Grebel- Son of Zurich*, Herald Press, 1975. John Ruth was one of the tour leaders on a Swiss-Volhynian Mennonite Heritage tour I took with TourMagination in 2004.

When we got to Zurich we saw Grebel's house, the Grossmunster Cathedral, and the Limmat River location of Felix Manz's death. Before going on tour I had read John Ruth's book on Conrad Grebel. Visiting on tour with Ruth, I told him his book depressed me.

It includes the darker side of Grebel, at times arrogant and impatient, and details his profligate lifestyle when he was a university student. Ruth remarked, "Yes, unlike H. S. Bender, I wrote an unvarnished biography of Grebel."

NOTES

- ¹Wilbert Shenk, Dec. 26, 2014 email.
- ²Carl Kreider, (Harold S. Bender, Educator, Historian, Churchman, a memorial Symposium, Herald Press, 1964), p. 55, lists 45 courses (out of a total of 53) taught by Bender at Goshen College from 1924-1962, including P.E. and Ad-

vanced Hebrew. Fifteen of these courses he taught only once; the highest number of times taught was Church History – 28 times. He enjoyed teaching Church History and Kreider says it was a full year course carrying 6 hours of credit and it was always a large class of both college and seminary students. Peter Dyck had vivid memories of taking this class many years ago. p. 91

³Albert N. Keim, Harold S. Bender 1897-1962. (Herald Press, 1998) page 311

⁴Ibid., 314

⁵Ibid., 312

⁶Ibid., 313

⁷Ibid., 313

⁸Ibid., 313-314

⁹Ibid., 513-514. Bender had a "first-class" secretary in 1958 with Irene Hershberger whose skills and energy were almost equal to Bender's demands. In 1961 she took a leave of absence to work for MCC in Frankfurt, Germany. Her replacement was Ada Schrock, who after only the first day on the job described herself as "bushed, pooped, exhausted, and weary to the bones!!!" She was appalled at the piles of files, papers, and books which covered his desk and the floor.

¹⁰Ibid., 382

¹¹Lois Yake Kenagy conversation, December 3, 2014

¹²Keim, 314

¹³Ibid., 314

¹⁴Ibid., 327

¹⁵J. C. Wenger, H. S. Bender, Educator, Historian, Churchman, Symposium, op cit p. 45-46

¹⁶Keim, 309

¹⁷Ibid., 310

¹⁸Ibid., 320

¹⁹Ibid., 301-302

²⁰Ibid., 322

²¹Ibid., 306-307

²²Ibid., 322-324

²³Ibid., 317

²⁴Ibid., 325

²⁵Ibid., 325-326

²⁶Harold S. Bender, "The Anabaptist Vision" reprinted from *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, April 1944, Mennonite

Historical Society, Goshen College, Goshen, IN, p. 3-4

²⁷Keim, 315

²⁸James Juhnke, December 3, 2014 email. Juhnke goes on to say that Perry Bush, Bluffton historian, has written a biography of C. Henry Smith due to be released in October, 2015, which will explore this issue further.

²⁹Bender Vision reprint, p. 5

³⁰Ibid., 6

³¹Ibid., 8

³²Ibid., 11

³³Ibid., 12-13

³⁴Ibid., 13

³⁵Ibid., 14

³⁶Ibid., 15-17

³⁷Ibid., 17, 18

³⁸Ibid., 20

³⁹Ibid., 20-22

⁴⁰Ibid., 22

⁴¹Ibid., 23

⁴²Ibid., 23

⁴³Keim, 528

⁴⁴Wilbert Shenk, December 4, 2014 email

⁴⁵In this speech Bender's emphasis was on ecumenicity. He loved all strands of the Mennonite Brotherhood here and abroad. And beyond Mennonitism, his range of ecumenical interests and accomplishments extended to other American and European Protestants, strengthening ties between Christians in both East and West during the Cold War, and even "the prospect of a growing Protestant-Catholic dialogue." One time Bender called himself an "ecumaniac." See Erland Waltner, "H.S. Bender: The Ecumenical Mennonite," Herald Press, 1964. op cit p. 64-73

⁴⁶Keim, 517-518

⁴⁷Melvin Gingerich, "Harold S. Bender and the Mennonite Encyclopedia," H.S. Bender, Educator, etc., op cit p. 76. This memorial to Bender published in 1964 by Herald Press, 141 pages, six chapters written by close colleagues, followed by testimonials from 44 of his N. American and European fellow scholars and churchmen (A Symposium on the Meaning of the Life and Work of Harold S. Bender) shows the breadth and depth of Bender's accomplishments and influence worldwide and the esteem in which he is held. ~

Ray Kauffman was the historian for the Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference until 2014, and serves on the PNMHS board. He lives in Albany with his wife, Tina.

PNMHS Holds Annual Business Meeting

The first annual business meeting for the Pacific Northwest Mennonite Historical Society was held on January 31 at Zion Mennonite Church in Hubbard. Even though PNMHS has been in operation for almost 30 years, January's event was the first time members have gathered to conduct business, which included approving the organizational by-laws and affirming current and new board members.

Approximately 35 people attended the business meeting, which began with a sit-down dinner in the church's fellowship hall. After the meal, the members moved to a classroom to hear an address by Marisa-Gouverneur, who attends Albany Mennonite Church.

Gouverneur, who did not grow up Mennonite but joined the church as an adult, spoke about "The 'M' People," referring to her early-on quest to find those people who had written the *More With Less* cookbook and who struck her as the kind of Jesus followers she might like to know. Beyond that, Gouverneur challenged listeners to think about diversity within the Mennonite church, and the ways ethnic Mennonites might be limiting the church's potential by deciding that others must conform to the ways of ethnic Mennonites, rather than focusing on the denomination's basic tenets.

After her speech, PNMHS president Jerry Barkman spoke, providing members with a glimpse of the society's financial status, then helping members understand some of the nuances of the organizational by-laws. Board members were also affirmed to continue in their roles.

The next business meeting will occur in early 2016.

From the Editor

What Matters: One Story, About One Man

In this month's *Our Heritage*, we are exclusively featuring an essay written by Ray Kauffman about the work of Harold S. Bender, a Mennonite leader. Kauffman reflects on Bender's important work, *The Anabaptist Vision*, and places that text within the context of Bender's life and ministry as a Mennonite scholar and thinker.

You may wonder why we are dedicating so much of our newsletter space to one essay about one man: someone who did not even live in the northwest. Truthfully, a good many other events have been happening with the Pacific Northwest Mennonite Historical Society: we had our first-annual business meet-

ing in January; we continue to have semi-annual gatherings that explore specific Mennonite historical topics; our library and archives continue to provide scholars and lay people with access to important documents about the history of Mennonites in this area.

But Ray's essay itself reflects the significant efforts PMNHS is making to spread the stories of Mennonites in the Pacific Northwest and elsewhere. Ray uses his own interaction with *The Anabaptist Vision* to consider the work of Bender. In the process, we get to see how Bender served the church in the mid-20th century.

We also get to see how Ray Kauffman, a Mennonite

historian in his own right, was challenged and changed by his reading of Bender's text; and in the process, Kauffman challenges us to think about how Bender might sharpen our understanding of Mennonites, both during the 20th century and now, when so much has changed, even as our fundamental faith has remained the same.

I'm grateful that Ray has taken the time to do this good work. And I'm also grateful for the PMNHS, who continues to curate and honor the stories of Mennonites, both in our time and in the past. ~

Melanie Springer Mock is a Professor of English at George Fox University, Newberg, Ore.

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