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Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary and the Battle for the Bible 1977–1982¹

John E. Toews

The Mennonite Brethren Church in North America published three English confessions of faith in the twentieth century. The 1936 Confession of Faith was an English translation of the German Confession made in Russia in 1902. It has no article on the Bible, but concludes with the following statement: “Every confession of faith . . . is subject at all times to examination . . . according to the Holy Scriptures . . . the only infallible written preserved resource for the necessary and sufficient revelation of God to humanity for our salvation.”² The index to the Confession

My belief that honest “brotherly” theological conversation in the church could lead to a consensus was deeply shaken.

does not list the Bible as a topic that is confessed. The 1976 Confession of Faith, approved by a 600 to 2 vote at the 1975 General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, confesses that “we believe that all Scripture is inspired by God as men of God were moved by the Holy Spirit.

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We accept the Old and New Testaments as the infallible Word of God and the authoritative Guide for the faith and life of Christian discipleship.”³ The two “no” votes objected to the non-dispensational article on eschatology, not the statement on the Bible, according to JB Toews. The 1999 Confession of Faith says that “we believe that the entire Bible was inspired by God through the Holy Spirit . . . We accept the Bible as the infallible Word of God and the authoritative guide for faith and practice.”⁴

In 1982 the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary (MBBS), the denominational seminary of the Mennonite Brethren Churches in North America, was charged with heresy by a pastor in Montana because the Seminary faculty was reluctant to use the word “inerrancy” of the Bible, even though the faculty had affirmed the 1978 Chicago Declaration on Biblical Inerrancy. The Seminary sent three faculty (Elmer Martens,⁵ JB Toews,⁶ John E. Toews⁷) and one Board member (Vern Heidebrecht⁸) to meet with the Central District Board of Reference and Counsel (BORAC) to defend its supposed “deviant” view of the Scriptures.

How can a denomination move from no need to make confessional assertions about the Bible to charges that the faculty of its Seminary are guilty of false teaching because they are reluctant to use one word that is not in the denomination’s Confession of Faith about the Bible and after they have affirmed a lengthy evangelical ecumenical statement about the Bible?

The purpose of this article is to narrate for the record the history of the Seminary’s engagement with “the Battle for the Bible” and to raise questions about how a denomination handles charges of “false teachings” from minority voices within the church.

THE 1976 LINDSELL CHARGES

Harold Lindsell, a founding faculty member at Fuller Theological Seminary and the editor of *Christianity Today* at the time, published a polemical broadside in early 1976, *The Battle for the Bible*,⁹ that was directed in large measure at Fuller Seminary for going “soft” on inerrancy, and therefore, in his judgment, on biblical authority. The thesis of the book was that “biblical inerrancy is a theological watershed.” Any institution, church, denomination, or church agency that ceased or refused to use inerrancy language would lose its evangelical identity.¹⁰

We should be clear for readers who are not familiar with the “inerrancy” debates of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries that “inerrancy” language is technical language which makes the claim that the Bible is free from error in the part and in the whole in the “original autographs,” that is, in the original writings of the biblical authors, e.g., Jeremiah, Paul. This particular formulation of the doctrine of inerrancy was first made by A.A.

Hodge, Princeton Theological Seminary faculty, in the 1879 edition of his *Outlines of Theology* (originally published in 1860), and over time became one of the fundamentals in fundamentalist theology.¹¹ The fact that there are no “original autographs” against which to test the claims of the doctrine always represented a challenge to the proponents of the theology.

Lindsell elevated the claims of inerrancy in his fight with Fuller Seminary and other evangelicals who argued for “limited inerrancy,” that is, inerrancy in the purposes and teachings of the Scripture rather than in the textual details, e.g., matters of science, geography, astronomy.

Seminary Discussions, 1977–78

Lindsell’s *Battle for the Bible* initiated a wide-ranging and divisive debate in the evangelical community. The MBBS faculty began immediate discussions about how to address the inerrancy issue in the Mennonite Brethren (MB) constituency because they were sure it would become a topic of conversation. I joined the MBBS faculty effective July 1, 1977, and one of my early surprises was the repeated discussion of the inerrancy of the Bible in formal and informal settings within the faculty. The faculty reviewed a David Ewert drafted statement on October 12, 1977, that was to be presented to the MBBS Board on October 13 as a statement of the faculty. It asserted that “the Seminary faculty holds to the scriptural teaching about inspiration;” it “confesses that the whole Bible is the inspired and infallible Word of God and is the supreme and final authority in all matters of faith and conduct . . . It is part of our biblicism to say as much as the Bible says, no less, but also no more.” The danger of saying more than the Scripture says is illustrated, the statement asserted, by the Roman Catholic Church’s attempt to explain the sinlessness of Jesus by formulating the doctrine of the immaculate conception.¹² The faculty was supportive of the statement; it articulated a high view of Scripture while not buying into “inerrancy” language and thought.

The October statement did not resolve the issue. A December 8, 1977, letter from Vernon Wiebe, U.S. Mennonite Brethren Conference moderator, expressed the need for dialogue on some theological issues, and we all understood that to mean inerrancy and eschatology. A faculty meeting the next day, December 9, reviewed and affirmed a revised statement by David Ewert. The statement asserted that “the Seminary is committed to appoint only such members to its faculty who share our confession of faith, including the article on Biblical inspiration and authority.” It went on to state that “in its concern to be biblical the Seminary faculty accepts everything that the Bible claims for itself on the matter of inspiration and authority, no less, but also no more. We do not presume to understand the mystery of divine inspiration, and hold that all human efforts to define this mystery are more

or less inadequate. However, we accept the Bible as God's revelation to man, a revelation in which no error is taught."¹³ A faculty meeting on December 19 reviewed a letter from the U.S. Mennonite Brethren Southern District Conference which raised questions about the Seminary's stance on "the authority of Scriptures . . . inerrancy, and infallibility," and asked that "the Seminary take under advisement the appropriateness of verbalizing a positive statement concerning the scriptures."¹⁴ At the April 13–15, 1978, MBBS Board meetings Elmer Martens reported the Southern District letter and presented the January '78 statement of the faculty to the Board. Jake Froese, fund-raiser in the U.S. Conference for the Seminary Endowment, expressed concerns that "some current issues [inspiration of Scripture and eschatology] have not made the work easy."¹⁵ A lengthy Board discussion encouraged the faculty "to rework the statement to reflect the Seminary position that the Bible is the Word of God, and avoid being defensive in dealing with extra-biblical concerns." Martens committed the faculty to rework the statement and "send out a new statement to pastors and conference leaders—particularly the Southern District where questions were being raised." The faculty reviewed the January statement on May 1 and reaffirmed it. The January statement was an attempt to affirm the authority of the Bible in biblical language. But, it also was clear to most of the faculty that the refusal to use "inerrancy" language was a problem for a good number of pastors in the denomination. They had bought into the fundamentalist doctrine of inerrancy without understanding its Platonic philosophical foundation—a hypothetical perfect or ideal text with only imperfect copies of that text available to humans. The Lindsell assertion that some faculty in evangelical seminaries were soft on inerrancy was stirring growing distrust of MBBS faculty among these pastors. The Seminary's refusal to embrace inerrancy language quickly and clearly was being interpreted as evidence of the faculty's theological compromise on questions of scriptural authority.

Why was the Seminary faculty reluctant to use "inerrancy" language? The faculty was hesitant for several reasons: (1) it was not biblical language; in fact, there was no biblical basis for the inerrancy proposition—the texts usually cited in support of inerrancy, 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:21 did not use the language and did not teach inerrancy;¹⁶ (2) the philosophical foundations of inerrancy were Greek philosophy, as noted, specifically Platonic philosophy, a perfect spiritual, heavenly/transcendent original with an imperfect earthly copy; (3) the modern theological formulation of the doctrine was highly rationalistic and modernistic as mediated to North American Protestants through Scottish Common Sense philosophy by the Calvinist theologians of Princeton Theological Seminary.¹⁷ MBBS was a "biblical seminary," and the entire inerrancy formulation was out of sync

with the Seminary and the denominational commitment to biblical theology, that is, to formulate a theology based on the language, thought categories, and teachings of the Scriptures.¹⁸

THE 1978 GENERAL CONFERENCE

Two years following the publication of Lindsell's book, the Mennonite Brethren Church held a convention of the churches of North America in Buhler, Kansas, August 3–6, 1978. One pastor from the Southern District, Leonard Vogt,¹⁹ asked for the floor to make a statement and then to ask a question of Elmer Martens following the Seminary report to the convention. The statement was that he had four young men in his congregation who were looking forward to attending seminary, and

my counsel to them . . . will depend upon an answer which I can have in a 'yes' or 'no' to a question that I will ask. . . . 'We regard the Bible . . . as the inspired Word of God. The Bible is an infallible, inerrant, rule of life and faith for us and for all mankind. . . . Does that also apply or include the scientific, geographical, and historical sections of Scripture?' My question to the Seminary: Would you give an affirmative answer to that?²⁰

Elmer Martens answered as follows:

Our faculty has thought about this kind of a question since this kind of inquiry comes occasionally. We have prepared for ourselves a document so that we might answer this question. That document reads: "We affirm that the Bible is the Word of God. This affirmation means that it is authoritative. The Scriptures in their entirety are infallible. They will lead a person to the truth. As believers we submit to its authority. It is part of our biblicism to say as much as the Bible says, no less but also no more. We believe that it is a God-breathed book. We do not presume to understand the mystery of divine inspiration and hold that all human efforts to define this mystery are more or less inadequate."

We hold as a faculty that the Bible is infallible. It will not lead us astray. It will lead us to the truth. We believe that is an historically accurate book. It is reliable. We believe that in the statements that it makes concerning geography and science that it is reliable, authoritative in the sense in which in everyday common language we speak about it. It may involve us in much discussion but I think it is only fair to say that we are hesitant to push the word "inerrancy" in as much as that has been filled in our day in some recent books with a definition that speaks of a scientific precision and this scientific precision is an aspect that if we wish to claim for the Bible

we claim more than the Bible itself says. The statement in Timothy is very clear that its inspiration and infallibility has to do with matters of faith and conduct leading us to salvation. We hold that the Bible is reliable in terms of history and science but it will be problematic and we will back ourselves into a corner nor does the Bible for itself claim that we need to work in terms of 20th century scientific precision on the question of science or geography or history.²¹

Martens's answer was careful and honest, but it created a firestorm with pastors committed to the rhetoric of inerrancy and suspicious of the Seminary faculty. The pressure on the Seminary faculty became more intense. The issue came up during the fall convention of the Southern District Conference.

I wondered at the time and have wondered since how the concerned pastors became aware of and engaged in the controversy surrounding Lindsell's *Battle for the Bible*. The MB publication, the *Christian Leader*, in November 1976, had one critical book review of Lindsell's book by Devon Wiens, a New Testament faculty at Fresno Pacific College, which asserted that "this book need not and should not have been written."²² The book review did not trigger any kind of discussion or debate in the denomination. *Christianity Today* a few months earlier had one positive book review by Francis Steele, a mission executive, which stated that "this book is right on target—clear, cogent, and convincing."²³ To his credit Lindsell did not leverage *Christianity Today* to press his case, and shortly after the publication of the book the board of *Christianity Today* replaced Lindsell with Kenneth Kantzer, who almost immediately extended an olive branch to Fuller Theological Seminary. A short announcement in the "Religion in Transit" section of *Christianity Today* (November 19, 1976) reported that Lindsell's book came in third in the "annual most-significant-evangelical-book poll," behind Charles Colson's *Born Again* and Mark Hatfield's *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*. The two periodicals that MB pastors tended to read made little of Lindsell's book. The April 1977 issue of *Direction* had two serious and critical reviews of Lindsell's book by MB scholars (see below), but it was never clear how many pastors read *Direction*. Yet a significant number of MB pastors were quite agitated by the Lindsell thesis by 1978. Had they read the book? From where did they get their information? What was driving their concern? What made them suspicious of the Seminary faculty?

The MBBS faculty in December 1978 discussed the "Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy" that had been drafted in October by four systematic theologians (Carl F. H. Henry, J. I. Packer, Francis Schaeffer, R. C. Sproul—there were no biblical scholars among the formulators) and affirmed at the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy in Chicago. Ev-

everyone knew that the public release of the Chicago Statement would be followed by calls from some pastors in the constituency for the faculty to formally sign the Statement, as some evangelical seminary faculty had. The Chicago Statement was a complex, multi-layered, long, very dialectic statement on inerrancy. Section one, called "A Short Statement," was a short, five-point, unnuanced statement for public consumption which said nothing about the "original autographs" and introduced no qualifications. Section two, "Articles of Affirmation and Denial," limited inerrancy to the "original autographs" and noted that inerrancy is an inference from the Bible's teaching of inspiration rather than a specific teaching of Scripture. Section three, called "Exposition," began to qualify the "Short Statement" and the "Affirmations and Denials" by talking about the importance of the culture and conventions of the authors' times; about understanding the role of history, poetry, hyperbole, metaphor, generalization, and approximation in understanding biblical texts; about differences between literary conventions in biblical and contemporary times; about non-chronological narration and imprecise citations. Such things were "acceptable and violated no expectations in those days. . . . we must not regard these things as faults when we find them in Bible writers. When total precision of a particular kind was not expected nor aimed at, it is no error not to have achieved it. Scripture is inerrant, not in the sense of being absolutely precise by modern standards, but in the sense of making good its claims and achieving that measure of focused truth at which its authors aimed." Furthermore, the Chicago Statement reminded everyone that God had not promised an inerrant transmission of Scripture and that no translation of Scripture was perfect; "all translations are an additional step away from the *autographa*."²⁴ The "Exposition" made precisely some of the careful qualifications that Elmer Martens had made in his answer to Leonard Vogt at the General Conference in Buhler a few months earlier.

The faculty agreed that the Statement "was acceptable but did not necessarily shed much new light on the topic."²⁵ The faculty, who opposed the use of inerrancy language, myself included, felt we could say the full or the long statement "was acceptable" because it was so highly qualified that no one really knew what inerrancy meant. It was an affirmation without meaning, but one that did give the Seminary some political cover with people who thought inerrancy language was important. Martens did report to the April 16–17, 1979, Board meeting that the inerrancy issue had surfaced again at the Southern District Conference in the fall of 1978. He went on to report that the faculty "has indicated its support" for the Chicago Statement "even though from our tradition we might have formulated the doctrine in a different way."²⁶

A SECOND LINDSELL BROADSIDE

In 1979, three years after *The Battle for the Bible* appeared, Lindsell took on the critics of the first book and expanded the broadside of *Battle* in *The Bible in the Balance*. MBBS got fingered in this book because of book reviews by Howard Loewen and David Ewert in the April 1977 issue of *Direction*. Book reviews by nature are intended to be critical assessments of the thesis and arguments of an author. Loewen and Ewert did exactly what they were asked to do. Loewen, a faculty member at Fresno Pacific College at the time, not at the Seminary (he became a faculty member at the Seminary in 1981), assessed the biblical text that was central to Lindsell's argument (2 Tim. 3:14–17) and the historical argument that was critical to Lindsell's thesis (Martin Luther's understanding of the Word of God), and found both wanting.²⁷ The burden of the 2 Timothy text, Loewen pointed out, was "the authority of Scripture in the life of the believer," not the inerrancy of the text in the original autographs, as Lindsell argued. Luther's understanding of the Word of God, Loewen argued gave much more emphasis to the hearing, experiencing, and efficacy of Scripture than it did to its inspiration, infallibility, and authority let alone issues of the inerrancy of the text. Loewen's constructive conclusion was that the authority of Scripture was "essentially a confession of our faith regarding its ability to accomplish its purpose, not a definition of the accuracy of the biblical text itself."²⁸

Ewert, the senior New Testament scholar/teacher at the Seminary and in the MB Church in North America, offered a very critical assessment of the spirit of Lindsell's book: "it strikes me as unspeakably sad when someone feels 'called' to divide the evangelical movement, in which the Bible is confessed to be inspired and authoritative for doctrine and practice, by demanding that everyone use the same vocabulary when defining inspiration (other than that which the biblical writers use)."²⁹ Ewert went on to point out that inerrancy is not part of the Bible's vocabulary; the New Testament simply confesses that Scripture, which strictly speaking refers only to the Old Testament, is "God-breathed" (2 Tim. 3:16). But, Lindsell, Ewert noted, was "not content with the Bible's witness to its own inspiration." Rather, "he sets himself up as judge over other Christian denominations and institutions."³⁰ When Lindsell makes his understanding of inspiration "the measuring stick for determining who is evangelical and who is not, he goes too far . . . he has done neither himself nor the evangelical cause a service by writing this book."³¹

The Loewen and Ewert critiques merited the Seminary and the Mennonite Brethren Church critical mention in *The Bible in the Balance*. Anyone who disagreed with Lindsell was sliding down the slippery slope, according to Lindsell. The MB Church and its Confession of Faith were now

included in this condemnation because Ewert cited the Confession in his critique of Lindsell. Lindsell concluded his response to the *Direction* reviews of his book with a sweeping generalization:

The April, 1977, issue of *Direction* . . . makes known to the Christian public that the Mennonite Brethren also has been infiltrated with a view of Scripture which impugns inerrancy, contradicts the doctrinal platform of their seminary in Fresno, and in effect limits the trustworthiness of the Bible to salvific or redemptive matters, and lays down the dictum that 'the nature of biblical authority is such that it can never be satisfactorily formulated by an assertion regarding the accuracy of textual details'. And whoever accepts this proposition either becomes an agnostic about inerrancy (and errancy), or he is making a dogmatic statement that no one can make a credible statement that the Bible is free from error in textual details."³²

It should be noted that Lindsell cited only the "Short Statement" and the "Affirmations and Denials" of the Chicago Statement in the book, and those only in the last appendix of the book. His failure to cite the full statement, that is, to include the "Exposition," is important because it is the qualifications of the Exposition that undermined so much of what Lindsell claimed for his position and the charges that he made against people who disagreed with him.

U.S. CENTRAL DISTRICT CONFERENCE CONCERNS AND CHARGES

An April 15, 1980, letter from Ron Seibel (pastor at Henderson, NB) on behalf of the Central District BORAC to the Seminary was a reminder of how important some pastors in the MB constituency saw the inerrancy issue.³³ The letter called for a "yes" or "no" answer to the question of inerrancy and asked that each faculty member to sign "a doctrinal statement. . . that the total Bible is without error both in matters of faith and practice as well as pertaining to history, geography, science, etc." Elmer Martens informed the faculty that he planned to spend several weeks in summer travelling through the churches of the Central District to engage in conversations with pastors and other concerned people.

The faculty during the June 4-6, 1980, year-end faculty meetings approved a letter written by David Ewert in response to the Central District letter. The letter affirmed the commitment of all Seminary faculty to "the full inspiration and infallibility of the Scriptures" and asserted that "every current faculty holds to the authority of God's Word in whatever the Scriptures teach." Faculty were fully supportive of the Ewert letter, but I think

all recognized that the letter would not satisfy the concerns of the Central District. The lack of "inerrancy" language and the commitment to the denominational Confession of Faith were all problematic for many pastors in the Central District.

Elmer Martens's visit through the churches of the District during the summer of 1980 did still the storm for a time. He was able to build trust and understanding with many pastors and concerned lay people.

The Heresy Charges, 1982

Elmer Martens was on sabbatical the Winter Quarter 1982. I was the Academic Dean and had been asked to serve as the acting president during his sabbatical. I had a visit from Henry Dick, Chairperson of the General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches in North America, on Tuesday, January 12,³⁴ to tell me that he had learned via a phone call that Dan Pulliam, a new pastor in Lustre, Montana, was making charges of heresy against the Seminary on questions of inerrancy to the Central District BORAC. Pulham was a young person who came into the denomination from outside the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition; he had been trained in two fundamentalist Bible schools (Prairie Bible Institute in Alberta and Calvary Bible College in Kansas City) before assuming the pastorate in Lustre.³⁵ Dick thought the Seminary needed to take the Pulham charges seriously because he had the support of some leaders in the Central District, especially the District Minister Waldo Wiebe.³⁶

As soon as Dick left my office I sought out Wendel Unruh, a Seminary student from Lustre and a former student of mine at Tabor, and Dave Block, a pastor in the Central District who was studying at the Seminary for the quarter.³⁷ I wanted to get their reading of the situation in Lustre and on Pulliam. While neither knew Pulliam well, they were in touch with developments in Lustre. They reported that Pulliam and John Klassen, a new faculty at the Lustre Bible Academy and a new member in the church,³⁸ had read a statement to a recent meeting of the church council which asserted that during a November 1981 visit to the church Elmer Martens had said the Bible contains error.³⁹ The Seminary, they charged, had departed from the biblical teaching on the inspiration and authority by impugning inerrancy. Pulliam and Klassen plus one layman, Ron Olfert, then tabled four recommendations to the church council: (1) the church discontinue supporting the Seminary, which was voted down (only three votes in support); (2) the church would not bring in speakers who hold a "deviant" view on Scripture and eschatology (accepted); (3) the church would continue to support Wendel Unruh through the completion of his Seminary studies (accepted); (4) the church would send a letter of concern to the District expressing its concern about the theology of the Seminary (accepted). Unruh

and Block painted the picture of a very narrowly defined and dogmatic pastor. Following the conversation with Unruh and Block I called JB Toews who knew some of the key people in the Lustre Church. In the evening I called Elmer Martens to inform him of the Pulliam charges in Lustre. Wednesday, January 13, I visited with Henry Dick and Marvin Hein, a member of the Seminary Board, about the Lustre situation.⁴⁰ I had several more conversations over the next few days about the Lustre problem with Marvin Hein and JB Toews. I met with Edmund Janzen, a member of the General Conference BORAC, on January 22 to discuss the issue.⁴¹

The Pulliam charge that Elmer Martens "said the Bible contains error," I learned from Martens, was based on a November 1981 conversation in Lustre in which Pulliam asked if Elmer believed that the mustard seed was the smallest seed in the world (Mark 4:31; Matt. 13:31; Luke 13:19). Martens responded that it was in Jesus' time. Pulliam wanted to know if it still was the smallest seed in the world. Martens indicated that with modern instruments of scientific precision we would not consider the mustard seed the smallest seed any longer. Pulliam charged that Martens did not believe the Bible was without error. The Bible said the mustard seed was the smallest seed in the world, and if Elmer said it was no longer the case he did not believe in inerrancy.

On January 21, 1982, the Seminary received a copy of a letter dated January 15 from Daryl Toews, the moderator of the Lustre Church, to Elton Berg, chair of the Central District BORAC. The letter outlined the concerns of the church and the recommendations of the church council.⁴² The charges were as follows: (1) the teachings of the Seminary on inerrancy and eschatology were "questionable;" (2) Elmer Martens made contradictory statements about inerrancy; (3) the Seminary's responses to the 1980 questionnaire from the Central District BORAC were not made in good faith or the Seminary had changed its positions. The recommendations that the church council would make to the church on April 18 were: (1) the church no longer support the Seminary because "we no longer want to expose our people to men who hold to a deviant view of the Scriptures and the Second Coming"; (2) the church support institutions which take a strong affirmative position on inerrancy and pre-millennialism; (3) the church file a formal statement of concern with the District.

I received a call from JB Toews in the evening of January 22 informing me that two brothers from the Lustre Church, Rudolf and Ray Toews (no relatives of mine), whom JB knew well, were in town and wanted to meet with him. I immediately suggested that he encourage the Toews brothers to meet with him, as well as with Marvin Hein and myself. The five of us met Saturday evening, January 23, at the Seminary. The Toews brothers were both farmers. Rudolf was a former moderator of the church. The

men had driven to Fresno specifically to talk with JB to seek reassurances about the teachings of the Seminary in the face of the charges Pulliam was making. Both men were denominational loyalists. Rudolf apologized for the situation in Lustre. He said that he and Ray felt uncomfortable with the situation. "We are not strong enough to talk to the pastor," he said. "The pastor is very opinionated, and not open to other viewpoints." Ray added "the pastor is very dogmatic. No deviation is possible. . . . It is beyond our ability as laymen to deal with this." I asked "what is the bottom line?" Ray answered that "Elmer would not say the Bible is truth. The Seminary is opening up for error and going liberal." Halfway through the conversation JB Toews asserted that "this is all old stuff," and proceeded to outline the history of discussion regarding the Bible and eschatology in the Mennonite Brethren Church, including naming church leaders from Montana whom the Toews' brothers remembered. "At MBBS," he said, "the Bible is the Word of God." The problem is a desire "to nail down some things too tight. We always say we know only in part on many things." Marvin Hein's analysis of the problem was that Pulliam and Klassen as newcomers to the denomination were really arguing with the Conference rather than the Seminary. JB interjected, "Hein is correct. They want the Conference to adopt their position." Hein continued, "They are asking the General Conference to change the Confession of Faith."⁴³ It was a helpful meeting, I thought. The Toews brothers trusted JB and Hein, and left with greater assurance about the Seminary. But it also was clear that these brothers were no match for Pulliam and Klassen, and that the Seminary would need to take further initiative to contain the Lustre charges.

Another meeting regarding the Lustre charges occurred at Deer Creek, Colorado, during the U.S. Board of Church Ministries consultation with church leaders in March 1982. All the members of the Central District BORAC were present at Deer Creek. The chairman, Elton Berg, requested a meeting with Marvin Hein and myself. We met for breakfast on March 19. In answer to the question of the Seminary response to the charges from the Lustre Church, I, with support from Marvin Hein, made the following claims: (1) MBBS is in full agreement with the Mennonite Brethren Confession of Faith; (2) MBBS is in agreement with the Chicago Declaration on Inerrancy; (3) MBBS was cleared on similar concerns by the Central District BORAC in October 1980; (4) MBBS was cleared on similar concerns by the General Conference BORAC in October 1981; (5) The Lustre charges were based on a misunderstanding of the Mennonite Brethren Confession of Faith and polity.⁴⁴ Hein expressed concern about how the Central District BORAC planned to proceed with the charges from the Lustre Church. It was clear BORAC was struggling with how to deal with the issue. Following some discussion of the inerrancy issue, Hein sum-

marized that he heard two levels of concern: (1) the Lustre charges, and (2) restlessness if the Seminary was in the evangelical camp on inerrancy.

The Seminary received a letter dated May 18, 1982, from Elton Berg, moderator of the Central District BORAC, reporting that the Board had assumed responsibility for the Lustre charges on March 5 and that it had drafted a statement of "Growing Concerns Regarding Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary and its Influence," which was enclosed.⁴⁵ Berg suggested a meeting of Seminary representatives with the District BORAC in July or August. The concerns identified were the following: (1) a shift in the theological orientation of the Seminary from the early years to more recent ones; (2) a move away from "some specific truths which are very important to our district churches" even though "the seminary functions within the broadly defined MB General Conference Confession of Faith"; (3) the hesitancy of the Seminary to use "inerrancy" language, which in the perspective of the District must include history, science, and geography and cannot be diluted by appealing to the cultural setting of the day; (4) the association of the Seminary with groups that reject inerrancy.

In a year-end faculty session Elmer sought to frame the faculty preparations for a Seminary delegation that was to meet with the Central District BORAC with the outline of a think piece, "The Theological Position of the Seminary."⁴⁶ On the Scripture question Elmer noted that concerned people wanted the Seminary to take a position beyond the Confession of Faith, e.g., affirm the inerrancy of Scripture. In the discussion the faculty agreed to reaffirm its agreement with the longer 1978 Chicago Statement on Inerrancy. The faculty agreement was carefully nuanced: "in all areas of teaching" rather than history and science, and the longer Chicago Statement which was so highly qualified that it was a meaningless statement.

Meeting in Rapid City

The meeting with the Central District BORAC to converse about the Dan Pulliam charges took place in Rapid City, SD, on Monday, July 26, 1982. The Seminary was represented by a four person delegation—Elmer Martens, JB Toews, Vern Heidebrecht (Board), and myself. The members of the Central District BORAC were Elton Berg (chair, pastor in Yale, SD),⁴⁷ LaVerne Hofer (pastor in Huron, SD),⁴⁸ Phil Glanzer (pastor in Bridgewater, SD),⁴⁹ Ron Seibel (pastor in Henderson, NB),⁵⁰ Charles Harder (pastor in Gettysburg, SD),⁵¹ Leander Faul (farmer in Harvey, ND), Roy Zweigle (farmer in Harvey, ND), Waldo Wiebe (Central District Minister). Gene White (pastor in Mountain Lake, MN)⁵² who was not a member of BORAC was present. It was not clear why he was included in the meeting except that he was a critic of the Seminary. Dan Pulliam (pastor in Lustre), of course, also was present. Four of the people were graduates

of MBBS (Berg, White, Glanzer, Seibel). White, Glanzer and Seibel had been students of JB.

The meeting began with Berg outlining the expectations of the Central District: MBBS was to answer the Central District Letter of Concerns and to outline future directions especially regarding inerrancy. Elmer had asked me to give the Seminary response to the District Concerns. I had tested my response both with him and JB Toews. I addressed two issues: (1) the general direction of the Seminary, (2) specific responses to the District Concerns—and made some concluding comments.⁵³ The Seminary, I asserted several times in different words, is evangelical. There are no liberal faculty at the Seminary, I said. The Seminary faculty, I reminded them, had affirmed the Chicago Declaration on Inerrancy in 1978 and 1982. Because the Chicago Declaration goes beyond the Confession of Faith, I noted that the Seminary had been criticized for this affirmation. The Seminary, I continued, is Mennonite Brethren and will remain Mennonite Brethren. The Seminary faculty is in full agreement with the Mennonite Brethren Confession of faith and is subordinate to the will of the General Conference and the Seminary Board.

My specific responses to the District Concerns addressed the issues raised in their May 18 statement of “Concerns.” (1) The shift in theological orientation which occurred with the presidency of JB Toews in 1964. There had been no shift in theological commitments, I said, but there had been a shift in methodology from systematic to biblical theology. The shift, I noted, had been mandated by the U.S. Conference in 1963–64 and reaffirmed in 1975 by the General Conference when it adopted a statement on general theological orientation at the time of the transfer of ownership of the Seminary from the U.S. Conference to the General Conference. This way of doing theology also had been affirmed by the Consultation on Church Leadership at the Seminary in October 1981. (2) The Seminary stance on inerrancy. All Seminary presidents, I pointed out, had signed the National Association of Evangelicals and Evangelical Theological Society statements on inerrancy. The Seminary faculty had affirmed the Chicago Declaration on Inerrancy in 1978 and again in 1982. The Seminary had gone public with its stance on the Chicago Declaration in the June '82 *President's Newsletter* (a quarterly newsletter sent to all Mennonite Brethren households). The Seminary faculty in June '82 agreed to address the inerrancy issue specifically in two classes, Introduction to Biblical Studies and Theological Confessions. (3) MBBS association with errantists. We did not understand the concern, I said, and so had no response.

The lengthy discussion period was dominated by three people, Dan Pulliam, Waldo Wiebe, Gene White, who together spoke 60 percent of the time.⁵⁴ The primary issues debated were inerrancy and the Seminary's shift

from systematic to biblical theology, specifically from dispensational theology. The tone was often polemical, especially from Pulliam and Wiebe, and focused initially on Elmer Martens. JB Toews, who had enormous stature with the members of the Counsel defended Martens. Pulliam was unrelenting, and responded to JB's defense of Elmer by charging JB with heresy. The other members of the Counsel were quiet for the most part; they did not know what to make of the Pulliam charges and the defense of Martens and Toews. The group as a whole had great difficulty understanding the difference between systematic and biblical theology, and, therefore, the reasons for the Seminary's reluctance to use the philosophically based language of inerrancy. The repeated assertion that the faculty had affirmed the Chicago Statement on Inerrancy but was hesitant to use the language because it was not biblical just made no sense. We were simply talking past each other.

The profound fear of "liberalism" or "neo-orthodoxy" ran so deep that anything that sounded different from what they were used to or that was in the slightest way critical of conservative evangelicalism/fundamentalism was read as liberal. Howard Loewen's critique of Lindsell's book could not be understood; it had to be repudiated, according to Pulliam, if our stated commitments were to be believed. After hours and hours of talking, everyone around the table said they could trust the Seminary except for Pulliam. His worldview and the Seminary's were so different, he said, that he could not agree to trust the faculty.

As the meeting progressed, I made a set of notes for myself. First, what is the role of a District Minister in socializing new pastors into a denomination?⁵⁵ Does the District Minister of a denomination not have an obligation to lean in and to teach the pastors in the District to lean in? What happens when on many issues, including inerrancy, he is leading the charge against the denomination's Confession of Faith, the Seminary of the denomination, and long-time teachers and trusted leaders of the denomination? Second, is not the deeper crisis here a crisis of authority? A young pastor who did not know the Mennonite Brethren Church was permitted to make charges of false teaching and heresy against two of the senior and most trusted leaders in the denomination, Elmer Martens and JB Toews. The senior leadership of the District legitimated these charges by giving this young pastor a platform to make public accusations. Had not BORAC abdicated its authority to give theological leadership in the District? Was not the real issue on the table the authority of senior church leadership to deal with people who made uninformed and false charges against trusted leaders in the church rather than the Seminary's position on inerrancy? Third, why did there seem to be an inability to accept any form of pluralism in the interpretation of texts and traditions? Why did the fact that the Seminary's

theological position was in agreement with the denominational Confession of Faith seem irrelevant? Why was the Seminary wrong because it was out of line with the dominant theology in the District? Had it occurred to anyone that maybe the theology in the District needed re-thinking? Fourth, I had serious questions if the members of BORAC understood the Chicago Statement on Inerrancy. In fact, I wondered if they had read anything more than the five point "Short Statement?" Did they even have access to the full statement? The *Christian Leader* had not printed any part of the Statement. *Christianity Today*, which affirmed the Statement, had printed only the five-point "Short Statement,"⁵⁶ but nothing beyond that; not a word was said about the qualifications of the "Exposition." Was "Inerrancy" anything more than a code word or a slogan for the pastors to use to express their anti-intellectualism and their mistrust of the Seminary? Finally, I did not understand the fundamentalist style, the polemics, especially of Pulliam and Wiebe; it was an alien form of theological conversation for me in the church. JB Toews and Waldo Wiebe were from the same generation, and both had served the Mennonite Brethren Church for many decades; both had been in each other's homes often and broken bread around each other's tables often. But Wiebe felt compelled and free to charge JB with false teaching when they disagreed on one issue that stood outside the denominational Confession of Faith. Did the fracture lines in Mennonite Brethren Church run much deeper than I realized? Was unity in the denomination possible with this kind of polemical spirit and style?

REFLECTIONS

The return trip to Fresno was a long and quiet one for me. I was deeply troubled that we as a Seminary and I personally had been too gracious and too accommodating in an attempt to make peace with the Central District leaders and others who shared their concerns. I knew that inerrancy language was Platonic thought and language—a perfect and eternal original, but an imperfect and changeable earthly copy. I thought we, and I, should have been more candid in explaining the philosophical problematic of the inerrancy language and debate. I also thought that we knowingly talked passed each other. Central District people understood inerrancy language in the very literal and unnuanced terms of Lindsell or the Chicago "Short Statement" whereas we understood the language in the nuanced terms of the longer Chicago Statement which took into account literary genres and cultural conditioning. We should have been much more confrontational and educative; for example, we should have insisted on a careful reading and exegesis of the entire Chicago Statement. We should have insisted on a careful reading and exegesis of the key biblical texts in order to demonstrate that there was no biblical basis for the inerrancy claim.⁵⁷ We should

have tried to help the members of BORAC understand the phenomenal problematic of inerrancy language—no autographs, the use of secretaries to write many of the biblical books, the role of editors and compilers in the case of some of the biblical writings. We erred by not showing how divisive the inerrancy debate was within evangelicalism, and how significant evangelical figures were publicly breaking with and admonishing Lindsell, e.g., Bernard Ramm,⁵⁸ Clark Pinnock,⁵⁹ Berkeley Mickelsen,⁶⁰ William Abraham,⁶¹ Puller Theological Seminary.⁶² Even Carl F. H. Henry, an inerrantist ally of Lindsell, felt that Lindsell was destroying evangelicalism by demanding uniformity to his definitions.⁶³ Finally, my belief that honest “brotherly” theological conversation in the church could lead to a consensus was deeply shaken. There could not and would not be consensus with the leaders of the Central District if we could not talk more charitably with each other. Elmer Martens said it well in his October report to the Seminary Board: “The differences of viewpoint will not be readily resolvable, largely because they stem from two diverse approaches to scriptural study. At issue is whether the Mennonite Brethren will give primacy to systematic theology in which attention is given to propositions and dogma or whether it will adhere to its Anabaptist heritage of biblical theology.”⁶⁴

CONCLUSION

This article began with the Confession of Faith and should end with it. The Seminary throughout my time on the faculty, and during the entire inerrancy debate, was committed to and in full agreement with the denomination’s Confession of Faith. And that was and remains my own personal commitment. We, and I, believed “that the entire Bible was inspired by God through the Holy Spirit. . . . We accept the Bible as the infallible Word of God and the authoritative guide for faith and practice.” We, and I, confess this of the Bibles we have, the Bibles we personally read, the Bibles we study, teach, and preach, whether from the Hebrew or Greek or English. And, the numerous footnotes in our Bibles tell us there are discrepancies in the text, uncertainties about the precise readings of some texts. But we read these Bibles as the Word of God. There are no original autographs.

In retrospect, I think the engagement of the Seminary with the leaders of the Central District was an exercise in hermeneutical community, even if inadequate. One group in the church did not trust another group, and so we talked. The positive outcome of the conversation was that none of the “mistrusting” leaders took their churches out of the denomination. That outcome was facilitated in part—at least from my perspective—because I and the Seminary faculty were overly non-confrontational in order to keep the “ecclesiastical peace” with one group in the constituency. We should have been more vigorous advocates for the Confession of Faith and for the

teachings of the Bible, which in the case of “inspiration” are very limited—two texts that use words (*theopneustos* = “God-breathed” and *hupo pneu-matos hagiou pheroumenoi* = “carried along by the Holy Spirit”) whose exact meanings are uncertain. David Ewert was correct: we should “say no more and no less” than the Bible says.” And JB Toews was right to remind us that “we see through a glass darkly.”

“MBBS and the Battle for the Bible” raises a larger theological and polity question. What happens when a small group in the denomination makes theological charges, even accusations of false teaching, against an institution or an individual in the church as happened in the case of Pulliam and then the Central District against MBBS? As both Marvin Hein and JB Toews said so clearly, what Pulliam and the Central District were really asking was that the denomination change its Confession of Faith. The Seminary made a mistake, I think, to engage the Central District directly. The Seminary should have said either, “This is General Conference agenda” and referred the entire question to the General Conference BORAC, or “Because this is a denominational issue we will engage in conversation only on neutral grounds with denominational leaders as third party mediators.” I suggest that the dynamic of the conversations and the outcomes might have been even more constructive with such terms of reference.

In August 1987, exactly five years after the MBBS and Central District conversation about inerrancy, the General Conference BORAC presented a resolution at the convention in Abbotsford, B.C. The statement affirmed the 1975 Confession of Faith which declared that “all Scripture is inspired by God” and “is the infallible Word of God and the authoritative Guide for the faith and life of Christian discipleship.”⁶⁵ It did recognize “those who confess the inerrancy of the original documents of the biblical books,” but went on to note “that the precision of any person’s definition of revelation and inspiration is not necessarily an index of his or her spiritual depth or faithfulness to God and his Word.”⁶⁶ The resolution was overwhelmingly adopted by delegates to the convention with virtually no further discussion. The inerrancy debate seemed over.

There has been almost no discussion of the inerrancy issue in the denomination since 1987. The Mennonite Brethren Church adopted a revised Confession of Faith in 1999. It confesses that “we believe that the entire Bible was inspired by God through the Holy Spirit . . . We accept the Bible as the infallible Word of God and the authoritative guide for faith and practice.” Over twenty years after Lindsell injected “inerrancy” into Mennonite Brethren churches as a subject of debate, the denomination has retained its historic understanding of the inspiration and authority of the Bible. ✨

NOTES

1. I am grateful to Elmer Martens, Paul Toews, and Al Dueek who read various drafts of this article and made some helpful corrections and suggestions. I also am thankful to Kevin Enns-Rempel, Archivist of the Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, for the data on the pastoral tenure of the ministers of the Central District BORAC.
2. *Confession of Faith of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America*, American ed. (Hillsboro, KS, 1902), #77, 36.
3. *Confession of Faith of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches*, 1976 ed. (Hillsboro, KS: Board of Christian Literature, 1976), #2, 11–12. The two “no” votes were by Waldo Wiebe and H.R. Berg, according to JB Toews.
4. *Confession of Faith of the U.S. and Canadian Conferences of Mennonite Brethren Churches* (Hillsboro, KS: Kindred, 1999), #2, 9.
5. Elmer Martens, PhD, was president of the Seminary from 1975 to 1986. Following a pastorate at Butler Avenue Mennonite Brethren Church in Fresno, he taught Old Testament at the Seminary from 1972 to 1996. He served on the denominational boards of Christian Literature and Missions and Services for many years.
6. JB Toews was president of the Seminary from 1964 to 1973, and taught theology and missions at the Seminary from 1963 to 1984. Prior to coming to the Seminary he served as pastor of Mennonite Brethren Churches in Hepburn, SK, Buhler, KS, and Reedley, CA; President of Bethany Bible Institute, Hepburn, SK, and Mennonite Brethren Bible College, Winnipeg, MB; Executive Secretary of the Mennonite Brethren Board of Foreign Missions, Hillsboro, KS; Executive Secretary of the Mennonite Brethren Historical Commission, and Director of the Center of Mennonite Brethren Studies, Fresno, California. He also was a long-time member of the General Conference Board of Reference and Counsel (BORAC). BORAC was the board responsible for theological, confessional, and polity issues in the Mennonite Brethren Church. Each district/provincial conference, each national conference, and the General Conference had a BORAC to deal with these issues at its respective level. Many people in the denomination considered “JB,” as he was known, as the last of the “patriarchs” in the denomination because of the authority which he embodied and with which he spoke.
7. John E. Toews, PhD, was academic dean of the Seminary from 1980 to 1992, and Professor of New Testament from 1977 to 1995. Prior to coming to the Seminary he taught Biblical Studies at Pacific College, Fresno, CA; Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, ON; and Tabor College, Hillsboro, KS. He was a member of the U.S. Conference Board of Faith and Life for six years, the General Conference BORAC for nine years, and secretary of the General Conference for three years.
8. Vern Heidebrecht was an alumnus of the Seminary who was a pastor of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Visalia, California. He had been the pastor of the MB Church in San Jose prior to Visalia.
9. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976.
10. *Ibid.*, 120–21.

11. See George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century American Evangelicalism 1970–1925* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 112–13; Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism. British and American Millenarianism 1800–1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 127–28; Gary Dorrien, *The Remaking of Evangelical Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 13–19.
12. See “Biblical Authority: A Statement by the Faculty of the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary,” 10/13–15/77 MBBS Board Minutes, Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, Fresno (hereafter CMBS). David Ewert, PhD in New Testament, was the senior biblical scholar and teacher in the denomination. He had been a Bible teacher all his life: Coaldale Bible School, Coaldale, AB; Mennonite Brethren Bible College, Winnipeg, MB; Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, VA; MBBS. He had served for many years on the Canadian Conference Board of Reference and Counsel and as Chair of the Canadian Conference. In addition, he had served for many years on the General Conference Board of Reference and Counsel, and been instrumental in the writing of the 1976 revision of the Confession of Faith.
13. See “Biblical Inspiration and Authority,” 12/9/77 MBBS Faculty Minutes, and an identical statement dated 1/78, CMBS.
14. See 12/19/77 MBBS Faculty Minutes, CMBS.
15. See 4/13–15/78 MBBS Board Minutes, CMBS.
16. See James D.G. Dunn, “The Authority of Scripture According to Scripture,” *Churchman* 96 (1982): 104–22.
17. On the influence of Scottish Common Sense philosophy, see Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 109–18; Mark Noll, “Common Sense Traditions and American Evangelical Thought,” *American Quarterly* 37 (1985): 216–38.
18. The difference between “biblical” and “systematic” theology is an important distinction to understand. “Biblical” theology seeks to frame a theology of the Bible inductively using the language and categories of thought of the Bible. Ewert’s “say no more and no less than the Bible says” is a very important criterion here. “Inerrancy language is not used in the Bible, and so it is a problem for biblical theologians to use. “Systematic theology” builds a theology on the basis of a set of philosophical presuppositions that it adopts from outside of the Bible and then deductively tries to fit the teachings of the Scripture into the framework determined by those presuppositions. The Anabaptist movement broke with the Catholic Church and the major Protestant reformers in part over the question of how to read the Bible. Anabaptists were “biblicists,” that is, they tried to read the Bible inductively apart from the existing philosophical and theological systems. The Mennonite Brethren movement was known for its biblicism, even its “naive biblicism,” that is, its deep desire to read and follow the teachings of the Bible inductively.
19. Vogt was the pastor of a church plant in Bellvue, CO, a suburb of Denver. Prior to Bellvue he had been a pastor in Dallas, OR, and Collinsville, OK.
20. Cited from a transcript of a recording of the question and the answer, August 5, 1978. The transcript is in the John E. Toews Papers, CMBS.
21. Ibid.
22. See “Blazing Battle,” *Christian Leader*, 14 September 1976, 20–21.

23. Francis Rue Steele, "Inerrancy is Indispensable," *Christianity Today* 20, no. 14 (April 9, 1976): 35.
24. See <http://www.bible-researcher.com/chicago> for the full Chicago Statement.
25. See 12/19/78 MBBS Faculty Minutes, CMBS.
26. See 4/16–17/79 MBBS Board Minutes, CMBS.
27. Howard Loewen, "Biblical Infallibility: An Examination of Lindsell's Thesis," *Direction* 6, no.2 (1977): 3–18.
28. *Ibid.*, 13.
29. David Ewert, review of *The Battle for the Bible*, by Harold Lindsell, *Direction* 6 no.2 (1977): 39.
30. *Ibid.*, 39.
31. *Ibid.*, 39–40.
32. Lindsell, *The Bible in the Balance* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1979), 67.
33. See 5/5/80 Faculty Council Agenda and Minutes, CMBS.
34. As the Chairperson of the General Conference Dick was also the Chair of the General Conference BORAC of which he had been a member for a good number of years. Dick was currently the pastor of the Reedley Mennonite Brethren Church, the largest Mennonite Brethren Church in North America. Prior to that he had served as a pastor in Lodi and Shafter, CA, as President of the Seminary, and as the District Minister of the U.S. Pacific District Conference.
35. Pulliam was in his second year as pastor of the Lustre Church at the time he made the heresy charges, and left the church a little over a year later.
36. Waldo Wiebe was a long-time pastor in the denomination, having served in churches in Okeene, OK, Tampa, KS, Shafter, CA, and Collinsville, OK. He also had served as the Conference Evangelist for the U.S. Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches. He became the District Minister for the Central District in 1977.
37. Block was on a sabbatical leave from the Grant Mennonite Brethren Church (Nebraska).
38. Klassen was a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary.
39. See 1/12/82 John E. Toews Notes on "Meeting with Wendel Unruh and Dave Block," John E. Toews Papers, CMBS.
40. Hein was the pastor of the North Fresno Mennonite Brethren Church. He had been the long-time pastor of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Hillsboro, KS, before moving to Fresno. He had served as the Chair of the U.S. Southern District Conference, the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, and the Mennonite World Conference. He also had served on the BORAC of two U.S. Districts, Southern and Pacific, the U.S. Conference, and the General Conference.
41. Janzen was a former pastor in the Central District, a former president of Fresno Pacific College, a long-time Bible professor at Fresno Pacific College, a former member of the U.S. Pacific District Conference BORAC and chair of the U.S. Pacific District Conference, and a member of the U.S. Conference BORAC.
42. See the letter in MBBS Presidents Correspondence, CMBS.
43. See 1/23/82 John E. Toews Notes, "Meeting with Toews', Lustte," John E. Toews Papers, CMBS.

44. See 3/19/82 John E. Toews Notes, "Meeting with Central District BORAC, Deer Creek," John E. Toews Papers, CMBS.
45. See the letter in MBBS Presidents Correspondence, CMBS.
46. See 6/8–9/82 Faculty Council Agenda, CMBS.
47. Prior to serving as the pastor of the Yale Church, Berg had been the pastor of the Mennonite Brethren churches in Wolf Point, MT, and Rosehill, ND.
48. Hofer had been the pastor of Mennonite Brethren churches in Omaha, NE, Yale, SD, Arleta, CA, before the pastorate in Huron.
49. Prior to Bridgewater, Glanzer had been the pastor of the country Mennonite Brethren Church in Harvey, ND. Harvey had two Mennonite Brethren churches, one in town and one in the country.
50. Seibel had been the pastor of the Yale, SD, Mennonite Brethren Church prior to Henderson.
51. Gettysburg was Harder's only Mennonite Brethren pastorate.
52. Before his ministry at Mountain Lake, White was the pastor of two Mennonite Brethren churches: Capitola, CA, and Tulsa, OK.
53. See 7/26/82 John E. Toews Notes, "MBBS Meeting with Central District Board of Reference and Counsel," John E. Toews Papers, CMBS.
54. *Ibid.*
55. *Ibid.*
56. Donald Tinder, "Proinerrancy Forces Draft Their Platform," *Christianity Today* 23, no. 4 (November 17, 1978): 36.
57. See Dunn, "The Authority of Scripture," note 16 above.
58. See Bernard Ramm, "Misplaced Battle Lines, *Reformed Journal* 26 (1976) 37–38; "Is Scripture Alone the Essence of Christianity?" in *Biblical Authority*, ed. Jack Rogers (Waco, TX: Word, 1977), 107–23.
59. See Clark Pinnock, "The Inerrancy Debate Among the Evangelicals," *Theology News and Notes*, Special Issue (1976): 11–13; Pinnock, "Inspiration and Authority: A Truce Proposal," *Other Side* (1976): 61–65; Pinnock, "Three Views of the Bible in Contemporary Theology," in *Biblical Authority*, ed. Jack Rogers (Waco, TX: Word, 1977), 47–73.
60. See Berkeley Mickelsen, "The Bible's Own Approach to Authority," in *Biblical Authority*, ed. Jack Rogers (Waco, TX: Word, 1977), 75–105.
61. See William Abraham, *The Divine Inspiration of Holy Scripture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981); and *Divine Revelation and the Limits of Historical Criticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).
62. See George Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), for a very helpful narration of the inerrancy discussion at Fuller Seminary.
63. See Henry's review of Lindsell's *Battle for the Bible*, in *New Review of Books and Religion* 1 (1976), 7.
64. See 10/29–30/82 MBBS Board Report, CMBS.
65. See "Resolution on Inerrancy," *1987 Yearbook, General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches*, Abbotsford, BC, August 7–11, 1987, 44–46.
66. *Ibid.*