


Called to Teach



Edited by David Ewert

**PERSPECTIVES ON
MENNONITE LIFE AND THOUGHT**

NO. 3

Called to Teach

**A Symposium by the Faculty of the
Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary**

**Edited by
David Ewert
1980**

**Center of Mennonite Brethren Studies
Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary
Fresno, California**

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Dr. D. Edmond Hiebert
Professor Emeritus of New Testament

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CONTRIBUTORS

Henry H. Dueck, B.Sc., M.A., M.A.,
Vice President for Administration / Registrar

David Ewert, B.A., M.A., B.D., M.Th., Ph.D.,
Professor of New Testament

D. Edmond Hiebert, B.A., M.Th., Th.D.,
Professor Emeritus of New Testament

Waldo D. Hiebert, B.A., B.D., S.T.D.(h.c.),
Associate Professor of Practical Theology

Hans Kasdorf, B.R.E., B.A., M.A., M.R.E., M.A., D.Miss.
Associate Professor of World Mission

George G. Konrad, B.R.E., B.A., M.R.E., Ed.D.,
Professor of Christian Education

Elmer A. Martens, B.A., B.Ed., B.D., Ph.D.,
President and Professor of Old Testament

Loyal J. Martin, B.A., B.D., M.A., D.Min.,
Assistant Professor of Christian Education

Leslie Mark, B.A., M.Div.,
Director of Theological Education for Hispanic Americans

Henry J. Schmidt, B.Th., B.A., M.Div., Ph.D.(cand.),
Assistant Professor of World Mission

John E. Toews, B.A., M.A., Ph.D.,
Dean and Associate Professor New Testament

John B. Toews, B.A., B.D., M.Th., S.T.D.(h.c.),
Director of Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies
Professor Emeritus of Theology

PREFACE

The apostle Paul exhorted his younger colleague, Timothy, with the words: "What you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim 2:2). The faculty of the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary is deeply committed to fulfill this challenge, albeit in a different setting and a different age from that of Timothy.

We, too, call to mind with gratitude the names of many faithful witnesses who taught us the truth as it is in Jesus. Some of these were teachers in our own Mennonite Brethren schools, others who enriched our understanding of the Scriptures came from other persuasions. To all of these we feel indebted.

Recognizing that the church needs not only pastors and evangelists, but also teachers (Eph. 4:11), we as faculty look upon our calling as a gift of God's grace. Our calling is to equip those "who will be able to teach others." We do not take this vocation lightly, and feel responsible not only to God but also to our Brotherhood which supports us in this task.

Occasionally seminary teachers are asked, "What does the seminary teach?" If the question relates to some article in our Mennonite Brethren confession of faith, the answer is simple enough, for all faculty members subscribe to that confession. On issues that lie farther on the periphery of the Christian faith one would have to ask the individual teachers, for on such questions the faculty members may not always agree.

To give our Brotherhood a taste of the kind of things we teach, it was agreed that we should publish a volume of essays, written by seminary faculty members, under the motto: "Called to Teach."

Twelve faculty members have contributed one chapter each to this volume. The book is divided into four sections: Part one contains three chapters on the subject of "teachers" in the Bible; part two deals with the teaching

agencies within the church; part three singles out three important strands of Biblical teaching; part four focuses on that which is uniquely Mennonite Brethren in our faith and heritage, and on how the Seminary seeks to entrust this heritage to faithful students.

Whereas the editor has exercised general oversight in the creation of this volume, each faculty member had the freedom to develop his topic as he saw fit and in his own style. However, the editor wishes to acknowledge the valuable criticisms and suggestions of his colleagues as they read each other's chapters. Much thanks is due also to our seminary secretaries who typed these chapters and to Henry H. Dueck, Vice President for Administration, who saw the volume through the press.

It is with gratitude to God that we dedicate this book to His faithful servant, Dr. D. Edmond Hiebert, who was able by God's grace for a period of twenty five years to entrust to others at the seminary what he had learned.

David Ewert

D. EDMOND HIEBERT

Dr. D. Edmond Hiebert is the one faculty member whose ministry at the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary has continued for 25 years, so that to mark a 25th anniversary year for the school is to mark an anniversary of teaching for Dr. Hiebert. It is appropriate to honor this scholar in conjunction with the publication of this volume. Moreover, we, his colleagues, take genuine pleasure in recognizing his contribution in theological training.

When the Seminary began in 1955, linked at that time to Pacific Bible Institute on Tuolumne Street (later to be Fresno Pacific College), Dr. Hiebert was one of five faculty. He had moved to California with Ruth, his wife and three children, Dean, Dorothy, and Alice, from Hillsboro, Kansas where he taught at Tabor College. At the Seminary he instructed in Greek and New Testament. He was honored at his retirement in 1975 with a celebrative banquet and with an issue of *DIRECTION*, a publication of Mennonite Brethren higher educational institutions. Since 1975 he has continued teaching as professor emeritus. This his 25th anniversary at the Seminary marks the completion of 38 years of ministry in the Mennonite Brethren Brotherhood.

Dr. D. Edmond Hiebert is a man in whose life the grace of God has come to be demonstrated particularly. Both faculty and students recognize him as a man of God. Dr. Hiebert's handicap of total deafness, a handicap which has crippled lesser men, has surfaced sterling qualities and has shown the sufficiency of the grace of God. His pleasant and Christ-like ways, his open and smiling countenance, testify to continued inner triumph. He is a man of prayer. As his former pastor I testify to his diligence in participating in small group prayer sessions. It is at once obvious to those who hear him pray that he is at home in God's audience chambers.

In Dr. D. Edmond Hiebert the Spirit-given grace of teaching has come to expression beautifully. He is a man "able to teach." He has taught Synoptic Gospels over the years with a particular enthusiasm; and former students, including this writer, recall how dialogue or parable portions

would come alive through impersonations. Though highly knowledgeable, Dr. Hiebert still prepares carefully for each class session. In almost uncanny ways he anticipates students' questions. He will not ever be charged with wasting the students' class time—he redeems every minute of the teaching hour. More important by far is his unquestioned devotion to the Bible as God's inspired and infallible Word.

Dr. Hiebert is a scholar as well as a teacher. He has distinguished himself through his writings. Most significant is the 3-volume *Introduction to the New Testament*. Many have expressed appreciation for those carefully articulated Bible book outlines. Commentaries such as those on Mark, Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Thessalonians, James and I Peter (in process) along with such gems as *Working by Prayer* and *Personalities Around Paul* have made his diligent research available beyond the classroom. The fruit of his scholarship has overflowed into the life of his denomination. Not only has he contributed many an article to periodicals (more than 200 book reviews), but for 12 years he was editor and writer of the adult Sunday school lessons. His scholarly stature is evident through his participation in the preparation of the *New International Version of the Bible*. He has contributed 52 articles to the *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*.

Dr. Hiebert has endeared himself to many. His words of encouragement, "More power to you," and his pleasantries have lightened the day for students, faculty and administrators. Alumni who return to the school frequently spend a special time with their former teacher. He has been generous with his gifts, his time and his library, for the Seminary is the recipient of 6,000 volumes from his library.

"Let us now praise famous men," said the writer of Ecclesiasticus.

With genuine affection we, his colleagues, join many others in expressing gratitude to Dr. D. Edmond Hiebert, a model among us. With thanksgiving to God, we tender deep appreciation to an outstanding man, God's gift to the Seminary and to the English-speaking evangelical world.

In behalf of the faculty, Elmer A. Martens, President