

Non-Resistance, Evangelism, Supplications, and the Second Coming:
Analysis of Three Mennonite Ministers' Worship Schedules: 1894-1955

by Donald Stoesz

Abstract

This article highlights four themes on which three Mennonite ministers preached over a sixty year period in southwestern Manitoba (1894-1955). Their emphasis on non-resistance is linked to Anabaptist themes. Evangelism stands out in contrast to their conservative ritualistic traditions. Prayers of supplication on the basis of the Psalms and Prophets balance their revivalist and discipleship emphases. Preaching on the Second Coming during Advent reflects their dependence on the Lutheran lectionary. Biographical information, historical background, and description of the three worship schedules used for this study are provided.

Introduction

A. 1 Peter and Anabaptism

Imagine my surprise when AMBS seminary professor Erland Waltner, in his Church Believers' Commentary on 1 Peter, said that being an evangelical believer and non-resisting Christian (Mennonite ethical heritage) came together for him in the Scripture text of 1 Peter 2:21-25. Verses 22 and 23 affirm the non-resistant aspect of Jesus' ministry:

“He committed no sin and no deceit was found in his mouth.” When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten. But he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly.

Verses 24 and 25 link this act of non-resistance to Jesus' atonement, believers' justification, and believers' sanctification:

He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that free from sin, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

Waltner states the correlation this way: “There I saw Jesus Christ both as Supreme Pattern of nonretaliatory love and as the Redeemer, dying on the cross for human sin and thus making our salvation possible.”¹

In my research of three southern Manitoba Russian Mennonite ministers’ sermons, I discovered that they had preached twenty-four times on 1 Peter 2:21 and fifty-one times on 1 Peter 2:24 during the course of their ministry (1894-1955, Appendix 1). These sermons were used on New Year’s Day as well as for communion celebrated twice a year.

They also preached nine times on Christ’s atonement detailed in 1 Peter 1:18-19 and forty-two times on the ethical injunctions in 1 Peter 1:22-23. I concluded that these Mennonite ministers were within the stream of Anabaptist thought that included 1 Peter as a significant reference point for their affirmation of pacifism along with salvation. Waltner shows how the above verses were included in the writings of early Anabaptists such as Dirk Philips, Menno Simons, Michael Sattler, and Pilgrim Marpeck.² The Swiss Brethren of 1540 included 1 Peter 2:20-24 as a foundational text in their discipleship section.³

B. Evangelism

A second surprise was in store as I compiled Scripture verses used by these ministers. 18 per cent of these three ministers’ sermons were dedicated to evangelism.⁴ This emphasis on conversion was revealing because two of the ministers were from a church that was not known for its evangelistic emphases. The Sommerfeld Mennonite Church began in 1893 when 88 per cent of the Bergthal Mennonite Church membership left their church because it had introduced too many innovations. The new Sommerfeld Church under the leadership of Bishop Abraham Doerksen continued the Bergthal traditions of following the lectionary, writing and reading their sermons, having catechism instruction during the Easter season worship services, and retaining the use of the old German Gesangbuch.⁵

The confining strictures of these traditional practices within the Sommerfeld Mennonite Church resulted in 21 per cent of its church membership starting a new church in 1937.⁶ The four ministers and nine hundred and fifteen congregational members who left felt that the Sommerfeld church was not evangelistic enough.⁷ The Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference was started so that believers could experience “Christ is a new and intimate way” and find “in Him a new vision for ministry.”⁸

These historical events of 1893 and 1937, the first one having to do with maintaining tradition and the second one with rejecting renewal, make it appear that the Sommerfelder Church was not committed to evangelism. An article on evangelism in the Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online reflects this general assumption: “The spirit of evangelism remains extinct in such groups in North America as the Old Order Amish, the Old Order Mennonites, and the Old Colony Mennonites.”⁹ The Sommerfelders presumably would be included among these tradition bound, conservative groups.

Two factors belie this negative assumption. First, the Sommerfelder Church grew one hundredfold from 3500 people in 1893 to 7000 people in 1926.¹⁰ Over 50 per cent of the Mennonite population on the West Reserve in southern Manitoba in 1926 belonged to the Sommerfeld Mennonite Church.¹¹

Analysis of the sermon texts themselves demonstrates that revivalism was alive and well within this “ritual oriented” church. 26 per cent of the sermons of Sommerfelder Bishop Abraham Doerksen (1894-1922) were dedicated to renewal. 17 per cent of the sermons of Sommerfeld minister David M. Stoesz (1912-1934) had to do with evangelism.¹²

Cornelius G. Stoesz, in turn, devoted 10 per cent of his sermons to conversion. Son of Sommerfelder minister Cornelius W. Stoesz, Cornelius G. Stoesz grew up in the Sommerfelder church and joined the EMMC Church when he was 45 years old (1937). Called to the ministry during this time, Stoesz continued the Sommerfelder tradition of writing and reading his sermons until 1955. Conversion, revival, and evangelism were an integral part of all three of these ministers’ sermons.

B1: Use of Honey and Vinegar in Evangelism

More revelations were forthcoming regarding the nature of these evangelistic sermons. I grew up in a Mennonite church in which evangelism was conducted on the basis of a guilt-ridden proclamation about the wrath of God, intended to bring about repentance and conversion. Having been convicted by the Holy Spirit of sin, we as young people flocked to catechism classes so that we would avoid the punishment of God that would come if we did not believe and practice our faith.

Over half of the sermons reflect this kind of sin-oriented philosophy. Abraham Doerksen used Jeremiah 4:-34 during New Year’s to warn the congregation that God’s wrath would burn everything in its path if they did not turn back to God. Elijah called fire down from heaven in 1 Kings 18:21 to make the Israelites decide between following Baal and obeying God. Psalm 50 declared that God was a devouring fire

that would consume the people of Israel if they did not offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

Passages from the New Testament such as Hebrews 3:12-14 and Hebrews 4:1-13 were also used as a vinegar approach to evangelism. Doerksen and David M. Stoesz compared their congregation to the Israelites in the wilderness, where they turned away from God and worshipped idols. Believers would not reach the promised land if they hardened their hearts and became rebellious. The three ministers preached eighty-three times of the above five passages of Scripture (Appendix 1).

Given the above approach, I was not prepared for the fact that these same ministers preached eighty-five times on Matthew 9:13. After calling Matthew, a tax collector, as his disciple, Jesus declared to the Pharisees present that he desired mercy for the sick. He had come to save the lost, not the righteous.

A similar emphasis was evident in the ministers' use of Luke 15:1-10 and Luke 19:1-10. The woman described in Luke 15 celebrated together with friends and neighbours because she had found a lost coin. Jesus declared that there was similar joy in heaven when one sinner repented.

Luke 19 has Jesus eating at another tax collector's table, this time at the house of Zacchaeus. After dining with Jesus, Zacchaeus promised to give half of his possessions to the poor. Jesus concluded his stay at Zacchaeus' house with these words: "The Son of man has come to seek out and save the lost." David and Cornelius Stoesz preached forty-seven times on these two verses. Honey was as effective as vinegar in bringing about repentance and renewal.

C. Sermons of Supplication

A third surprise was forthcoming. I had assumed that the ministers would use the Old Testament sparingly. Only 15 per cent of the Old Testament including 2 per cent of the Psalms (4 texts) were included as readings for worship in the one-year Lutheran lectionary. These sets of readings were included as an *Anweisung der Lieder*¹³ at the beginning of the German Mennonite hymnal that the three ministers consulted on a regular basis.

I was proven wrong yet again. One hundred and sixty-four sermons, based on ten Scripture passages from the Psalms, were used as prayers of supplication to God for healing and deliverance (Appendix 1). Psalm 72:12-13 and Psalm 73:21-24 spoke about God delivering the needy and bestowing honour on believers. Psalm 34 announced that God saved believers from their fears and plight. Psalm 102 assured believers that they could live secure in God's steadfast presence. Assurances of

deliverance were also announced in Psalm 56:11, prompting believers to “walk before God in the light of life.” Psalm 69:6 called on God to be faithful to those who hoped in him.

Scripture passages from the Prophets were also used. Isaiah 26:9 spoke about “yearning after God and earnestly seeking him.” Isaiah 49:14-16 compared God to a mother who never forgot her children. Jeremiah 17:14 announced that God healed and saved the sick. Daniel received a spirit of wisdom and understanding when he brought his supplications to God (Daniel 9:20-21). God told Haggai to be courageous because God’s spirit abided with him (Haggai 2:5-6). Doerksen and the two Stoeszes preached sixty-seven times on these verses from the Prophets. Overall, these three ministers based 19.2 per cent of their sermons on the Old Testament.¹⁴ Old Testament texts represented 15.2 per cent of Scripture passages included in the lectionary.¹⁵

These sermons of supplication reinforced a sense of belonging and brought comfort to the members of the congregation. Preaching about the mercy and salvation of God was as much a part of the Psalms and Prophetic writings as the story of the New Testament. These sermons complemented ministers’ emphases on repentance and discipleship.

D. Preaching about the Second Coming of Christ during Advent

Sermons on the Last Judgment as preparation for Christmas was a fourth theme that stood out. This emphasis made sense in light of the fact that many Advent lectionary texts had to do with the Second Coming.

Jesus spoke about the Last Judgment in Matthew 25:31-46. Luke 21:25-30 envisioned “the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.” John 1:1-14 spoke about John the Baptist “being a witness to the Light.” John 1:19-28 declared John as the one who was making straight the way of the Lord in the wilderness.

Epistle texts were similar in their emphasis on the Second Coming. Romans 13:11-14 exhorted Christians to “wake from sleep” because “salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers.” Philippians 4:4-7 combined the joy and celebration surrounding the incarnation of Jesus with anticipation of the Second Coming. “Rejoice in the Lord always. . . . The Lord is near. . . the peace of Christ will guard your hearts.” The three ministers preached one hundred and seven times on these six Gospel and Epistle texts during Advent.

An authoritative author on the subject, Hughes Oliphant Old has this to say regarding the Advent Scripture passages that Pope Gregory in the sixth century chose for the one-year lectionary:¹⁶

That one should read the sayings of Jesus on the end times as preparation for Christmas is the sort of thing one would expect from the Jehovah Witnesses or other Adventist groups.

Old offers an explanation of Pope Gregory's choice of Advent texts:

These texts make eminent sense in the light of Gregory sermons' on Ezekiel, which he preached when the barbarians began to march on Rome. When times are bad Christians lift their eyes to the coming of the Lord, that is to say, the second coming, and this is certainly what the Gospels (for Advent) do.

The three Mennonite ministers also preached on other Scripture passages that had to do with the Second Coming during Advent. Abraham Doerksen used Isaiah 64:1 to ask God "to tear open the heavens and come down." He preached on Revelation 22:12-20, which had to do with faithful Christians waiting for Christ's return. Cornelius Stoesz, in turn, preached on Luke 12:35-36. Luke asked his readers to "be dressed for action and have your lamps lit" so they could open the door to their master when he returned from the wedding banquet. These two ministers preached fifty-three times on these three apocalyptic Scriptures during Advent.

I have seldom heard a sermon on the Second Coming during the Advent season. More familiar to me are the angels appearing to Mary and Joseph, the coming of the wise men, the visit of the shepherds, and the celebration of Christ's birth. The theme of the Second Coming of Christ was generally reserved for New Year's services or revival meetings. That future eschatology was an integral part of these ministers' sermons during the first Advent came as a surprise.¹⁷

Historical Background

A. Brief Biographical Sketches

As former member of the Bergthal Mennonite Church in southern Manitoba, Abraham Doerksen was selected as a Mennonite minister of the newly formed Sommerfeld Mennonite Church in 1893. He was ordained a Bishop the following year, in 1894.¹⁸ He served in that capacity until 1922 when he moved together with about one hundred families to Mexico. He continued ministry in Mexico until his death in 1929.

Son of East Reserve Chortitzer Bishop David Stoesz, David M. Stoesz moved to the West Reserve in 1891 and became a Sommerfelder minister in 1912.¹⁹ He and his family moved with Bishop Doerksen to Mexico in 1922. Dissatisfied with life there, David returned with his family in 1923 to southern Manitoba and continued ministry in the Sommerfeld Church until his death in 1934.

Born in 1892, Cornelius G. Stoesz grew up in the Sommerfelder Church before joining the EMM Conference in 1937.²⁰ His father Cornelius W. Stoesz had been a Sommerfelder minister (1920-1925) and his grandfather a Chortitzer minister (1865-1900). Cornelius G. Stoesz was chosen as a EMMC minister in 1937 and served the church until his death in 1972. He continued the Sommerfeld tradition of writing out his sermons and reading them until 1955.

B. Outline of Three Worship Schedules

These three ministers kept detailed log books of the sermons they preached. Sommerfeld Church Bishop Abraham Doerksen kept record of the seven hundred and sixty-seven sermons that he preached from 1894-1922.²¹ Sommerfeld Minister David M. Stoesz kept track of his eight hundred and eighty-seven preaching assignments from 1912-1934.²² Evangelical Mennonite Missionary Conference Minister Cornelius Stoesz kept a log book of five hundred and seven sermons that spanned the years 1937-1955.²³

These service schedules indicate the date, location, and Scripture text used for each of the sermons that they preached (Figure 1).²⁴ They have been compiled and organized according to the church year (Figures 2 and 3). Abraham Doerksen's worship schedule can be found in Peter Bergen, *History of the Sommerfeld Mennonite Church*,²⁵ The worship schedules of David M. Stoesz and Cornelius G. Stoesz are included in Donald Stoesz, *Canadian Prairie Mennonite Ministers' Use of Scripture: 1874-1977*.²⁶

C. Brief Description of Southern Manitoba Context

These three worship schedules are valuable because they list over fifty villages on the West Reserve at which these sermons were preached. Each minister made a circuit of preaching to between fifteen and thirty congregations in their denomination (Figure 4, a rotation schedule, known as an *Andacts* list, is included in Figure 3).²⁷ Congregational members along with their ministers saw themselves as belonging to a *Gemeinde* rather than to a particular congregation. The ministers preached on behalf of this *Gemeinde* rather than within the context of a specific congregation. The bishop, in turn, was the only one who could conduct baptismal

and communion services. These denominations were led by a ministerial committee (*Lehrdienst*) headed by a bishop. This communal approach provides for a broad overview of the dominant Scripture texts, themes, rituals, and occasions that were relevant to this religious community.

Conclusion

This article has highlighted four themes on which Mennonite ministers over a sixty-year period (1894-1955) preached in southern Manitoba. Links to Anabaptism regarding salvation and non-resistance have been made in relation to 1 Peter 2:21-24. The fact that conservative Mennonite groups engaged in evangelism has been demonstrated. The ministers' use of Psalms and Prophets as prayers of supplication showed their balanced approach of situating faith and belonging between revivalist exhortations and discipleship emphases. Their proclamation of the Second Coming of Christ in light of the first incarnation of Jesus demonstrated their affirmation of a limited realised eschatology.

Figure 1: Excerpt from C. G. Stoesz' Logbook²⁸

Reinlandet	Rosfarm.
Træl	Træl
Walden 51.12. 5 Septem 1937	Walden 51.12. 11 July 1937
Luk 9. 23. 20 Febr. 1938	Jupis. 26. 9. 9 januar 1938
Luk 22. 7-16. 30 März. 1938	Luk 9. 23. 30 " 1938
" 19. 41-48. 28 August 1938	" 22. 7-16. 3 April 1938
Wald 26. 67-75. 30 Novem 1938	Jacmin. 5. 22-24. 2. Octo 1938
Lobris 11. 1-14 21 May 1939	Luk 2. 7-11 25. Dec. 1938
Rönn 10. 10 23 April 1939	Luk 3. 1-12 9 July 1939
1 Corn 11. 28. 8 Octo 1939	Rönn 2. 4-5. 17 Sept 1939
Wald 7. 15-23. 23 July 1939	Wald 22. 15-22. 29 Oct 1939
2 Corn 5. 20. 31 Dec. 1939	1 Tuffaloni 4. 14. 25 März 1940
Apostel 2. 1-22. 13 Mai 1940	1 Corn 11. 28 13 Oct 1940
1 Febr 2. 21. 19 Febr. 1941	Jupis. 26. 9. 5 januar. 1941
Luk 19. 41-48. 10 August 1941.	Luk 22. 7-16. 30 März. 1941
Wald 22. 15-22. 16 Nov 1941.	Opfub 2. 1-22 10 June 1941
Luk 12. 35-36 6 Dec. 1942	Luk 16. 19-24 for 13 Jul 1941
Wald 2. 1-12. 6 januar 1943	Wald 26. 67. 75. 7. Novem 1941
Luk 2. 2-23. 28 Februar. 1943.	1 Febr 2. 21. 15 Febr 1942
Lobris 11. 1-14. 6 Juni 1942	Luk 16. 17. 21 June 1942
Walden 67. 6. 23 März 1943.	Wald 16. 11 27 Septem 1942
Wald 7. 15-23. 1 August 1943.	Rönn 6. 23. 4 April 1943.
Off. Ligg. 4. 4-7. 19. Dec. 1943	1 Tuffaloni 4-14 25 " 1943
Luk 22. 7-16. 27 Febr 1944.	Wald 7. 15-29. 26 Aug 1943.
" 23. 7 April 1944	Rönn 6 23 19 März 1944
" 16. 19-24. 6 August 1944.	Walden 67. 6 30 April 1944.
" 16. 19 " 17 June 1945	Luk 19. 10 21 Juni 1945
Jacmin 5. 22-24 7 Oct 1945	Rönn 7. 24-25 6 März 1945
	Luk 9. 23. 3 Febr. 1946

Figure 2: Excerpt from Cornelius G. Stoesz' Service Schedule²⁹

June 6, 1937 - April 8, 1955

59 sermons preached 507 times over an 18 year period.

(Each sermon preached an average of 9 times)

(Average of 28 preaching assignments per year)

Bold text: corresponds to scriptures cited in *Anweisung der Lieder*.

Underlined text: corresponds to worship schedules of other ministers.

First Sunday of Advent

1938, Nov.27 Neubergthal **Matt. 21:1-10**
 1939, Dec. 3 Rosenbach Luke 12:35-36
 1940, Dec. 1 Osterwick Luke 12:35-36
 1941, Nov.30 Eigenhof Luke 12:35-36
 1942, Nov. 29 Winkler Luke 19:10
 1944, Dec. 3 Austen Luke 12:35-36
 1945, Dec. 2 Osterwick Luke 12:35-36
 1946, Dec.1 Eigenhof Luke 12:25-36
 1948, Nov. 28 Winkler Luke 12:35-36
 1949, Nov. 27 Glencross Luke 12:35-36
 1953, Nov.29 Plum Coulee Luke 12:35-36

Second Sunday of Advent

1937, Dec. 5 Bergfeld Psalm 56:11
 1938, Dec. 4 Osterwick **Matt. 21:1-10**
 1939, Dec. 10 Bergfeld Luke 12:35-36
 1940, Dec.8 Glencross Luke 12:35-36
 1941, Dec. 7 Langevine **Isaiah 60:1-4**
 1942, Dec. 6 Reinland Luke 12:35-36
 1943, Dec.5 Plum Coulee Luke 12:35-36
 1944, Dec.10 Eigenhof Luke 12:35-36
 1948, Dec. 5 Rosefarm Luke 12:35-36
 1949, Dec. 4 Rosefarm Luke 12:35-36
 1951, Dec. 9 Plum Coulee Luke 12:35-36

Third Sunday of Advent

1938, Dec. 11 Rosenbach **Matt. 21:1-10**
 1941, Dec. 14 Rosenbach **Phil. 4:4-7**
 1942, Dec.13 Plum Coulee Luke 12:35-36
 1943, Dec.12 Eigenhof **Phil.4:4-7**
 1946, Dec. 15 Glencross **Phil. 4:47**
 1947, Dec. 14 Bergfeld Luke 12:35-36
 1951, Dec.16 Eigenhof Luke 12:35-36
 1953, Dec. 13 Winkler Luke 12:35-36

Fourth Sunday of Advent

1937, Dec. 19 Scheinfeld Psalm 56:11
 1938, Dec. 18 Glencross **Matt. 21:1-10**
 1940, Dec. 22 Plum Coulee **Phil. 4:4-7**
 1941, Dec.21 Bergfeld **Phil. 4:4-7**
 1943, Dec. 19 Reinland **Phil. 4:4-7**
 1945, Dec. 23 Glencross **Phil. 4:4-7**
 1947, Dec. 21 Winkler **Phil. 4:4-7**
 1948, Dec. 19 Eigenhof **Phil. 4:4-7**
 1953, Dec. 20 Eigenhof **Phil. 4:4-7**
 1954, Dec. 19 Bergfeld **Isaiah 9:6-7**

Christmas Day

1937, Dec. 25 Bergfeld **Luke 2:9-11**
 1938, Dec. 25 Rosefarm **Luke 2:9-11**
 1939, Dec. 25 Plum Coulee **Luke 2:9-11**
 1940, Dec. 25 Bergfeld **Luke 2:9-11**
 1942, Dec. 25 Bergfeld **Luke 2:9-11**
 1943, Dec. 24 Winkler **Luke 2:9-11**
 1945, Dec. 24 Winkler **Luke 2:9-11**
 1945, Dec. 25 Bergfeld **Luke 2:9-11**
 1946, Dec. 25 Rosenfeld **Luke 2:9-11**
 1947, Dec. 25 Bergfeld **Luke 2:12-21**
 1950, Dec. 25 Plum Coulee **Luke 2:12-21**
 1953, Dec. 25 Bergfeld **Luke 2**

Second Christmas Holiday

1937, Dec. 26 Rosenfeld **Luke 2:9-11**
 1939, Dec. 26 Rosenfeld **Luke 2:9-11**
 1940, Dec. 26 Langevine **Luke 2:9-11**
 1941, Dec.26 Eigenhof **Luke 2:9-11**
 1943, Dec. 26 Bergfeld **Luke 2:12-21**
 1946, Dec. 26 Plum Coulee **Luke 2:9-11**
 1948, Dec. 26 Bergfeld **Luke 2:1-40**
 1949, Dec. 26 Bergfeld **Luke 2:12-21**

1950, Dec. 26 Bergfeld **Luke 2:12-21**
1951, Dec. 26 Bergfeld **Luke 2:10-11**

Third Christmas Holiday

1937, Dec. 27 Halbstadt 2 Cor. 5:20
1939, Dec. 29 Eigenhof 2 Cor. 5:20
1941, Dec. 28 Neubergthal 2 Cor. 5:20
1951, Dec. 28 Plum C. **Luke 2:10-11**
1953, Dec. 27 Plum C. 1 Moses 32:10
1953, Dec. 28 Bergfeld 1 Moses 1:22-23

New Year's Eve

1937, Dec. 30 Horndean 2 Cor. 5:20
1938, Dec. 31 Bergfeld 2 Cor. 5:20
1939, Dec. 31 Reinland 2 Cor. 5:20
1942, Dec. 31 Bergfeld 1 Moses 32:10
1944, Dec. 31 Plum C. 1 Moses 32:10
1952, Dec. 31 Plum C. 1 Moses 32:10

New Year's Day

1938, Jan. 1 Neubergthal 1 Peter 1:22-23
1939, Jan. 1 Bergfeld 1 Peter 1:22-23
1940, Jan. 1 Rosenbach 1 Peter 1:22-23
1942, Jan. 1 Neubergthal 1 Peter 1:22-23
1943, Jan. 1 Bergfeld 1 Peter (1): 22-23
1944, Jan. 1 Rosenfeld 1 Peter 1:22-23
1946, Jan. 1 Bergfeld 1 Peter 1:22-23
1947, Jan. 1 Bergfeld 1 Peter 1:22-23
1949, Jan. 1 Bergfeld 1 Peter 1:22-23
1951, Jan. 1 Plum Coulee Isaiah 26:9
1951, Jan. 1 Bergfeld 1 Peter 1:22-23
1953, Jan. 1 Bergfeld 1 Peter 1:22-23
1954, Jan. 1 Bergfeld 1 Peter 1:22-23

First Sunday in the New Year

1938, Jan. 2 Rosenfeld Isaiah 26:9
1941, Jan. 5 Rosefarm Isaiah 26:9
1942, Jan. 4 Eigenhof Isaiah 26:9
1943, Jan. 3 Eigenhof Isaiah 26:9
1948, Jan. 4 Rosefarm Isaiah 26:9
1949, Jan. 2 Eigenhof Isaiah 26:9
1952, Jan. 4 Plum Coulee Isaiah 26:9
1954, Jan. 3 Rosenfeld Isaiah 26:9

Epiphany

1938, Jan. 6 Horndean **Matthew 2:1-12**
1939, Jan. 6 Rosenfeld **Matthew 2:1-12**

1940, Jan. 6 Halbstadt **Matthew 2:1-12**
1943, Jan. 6 Reinland **Matthew 2:1-12**
1944, Jan. 6 Plum C. **Matthew 2:1-12**
1945, Jan. 6 Rosenfeld **Matthew 2:1-12**
1948, Jan. 6 Eigenhof **Luke 2:1-12**
1949, Jan. 6 Bergfeld **Matthew 2:1-12**
1952, Jan. 6 Bergfeld **Matthew 2:1-12**
1954, Jan. 6 Plum C. **Matthew 2:1-12**

First Sunday after Epiphany

1938, Jan. 9 Rosefarm Isaiah 26:9
1939, Jan. 8 Rosenbach Isaiah 26:9
1940, Jan. 7 Neubergthal Isaiah 26:9
1941, Jan. 12 Bergfeld Luke 9:23
1942, Jan. 8 Glencross Luke 4:14-24
1942, Jan. 11 Bergfeld Isaiah 26:9
1943, Jan. 10 Bergfeld Luke 19:10
1944, Jan. 9 Horndean Luke 19:10
1945, Jan. 7 Neubergthal **Luke 13:1-8**
1948, Jan. 11 Neuberg. **Luke 16:19-end**
1950, Jan. 8 Eigenhof Isaiah 26:9
1953, Jan. 12 Rosenfeld Luke 9:23

Second Sunday after Epiphany

1940, Jan. 14 Bergfeld Isaiah 26:9
1941, Jan. 19 Homewood **Luke 5:1-12**
1941, Jan. 20 Homewood 1 Peter 2:21
1944, Jan. 16 Eigenhof Luke 19:10
1949, Jan. 16 Winnipeg Luke 12:35-36
1949, Jan. 16 Winnipeg Luke 19:10
1951, Jan. 14 Eigenhof Isaiah 26:9
1953, Jan. 18 Eigenhof Matt. 16:24-28

Third Sunday after Epiphany

1938, Jan. 23 Bergfeld Luke 4:14-24
1940, Jan. 21 Plum Coulee **Luke 5:1-12**
1941, Jan. 26 Bergfeld **Matt. 7:15-23**
1942, Jan. 21 Austen **Luke 5:1-12**
1942, Jan. 25 Rosenbach Luke 4:14-24
1945, Jan. 21 Rosefarm Luke 19:10
1948, Jan. 25 Horndean **Luke 2:1-40**
1948, Jan. 25 Halbstadt **Luke 16:19-end**
1950, Jan. 22 Bergfeld Luke 4:14-24
1952, Jan. 21 Bergfeld Luke 4:14-31

Figure 3: 1957 Rotation Schedule of Chortitzer Ministers' Preaching Assignments (*Andachts Liste*)³⁰

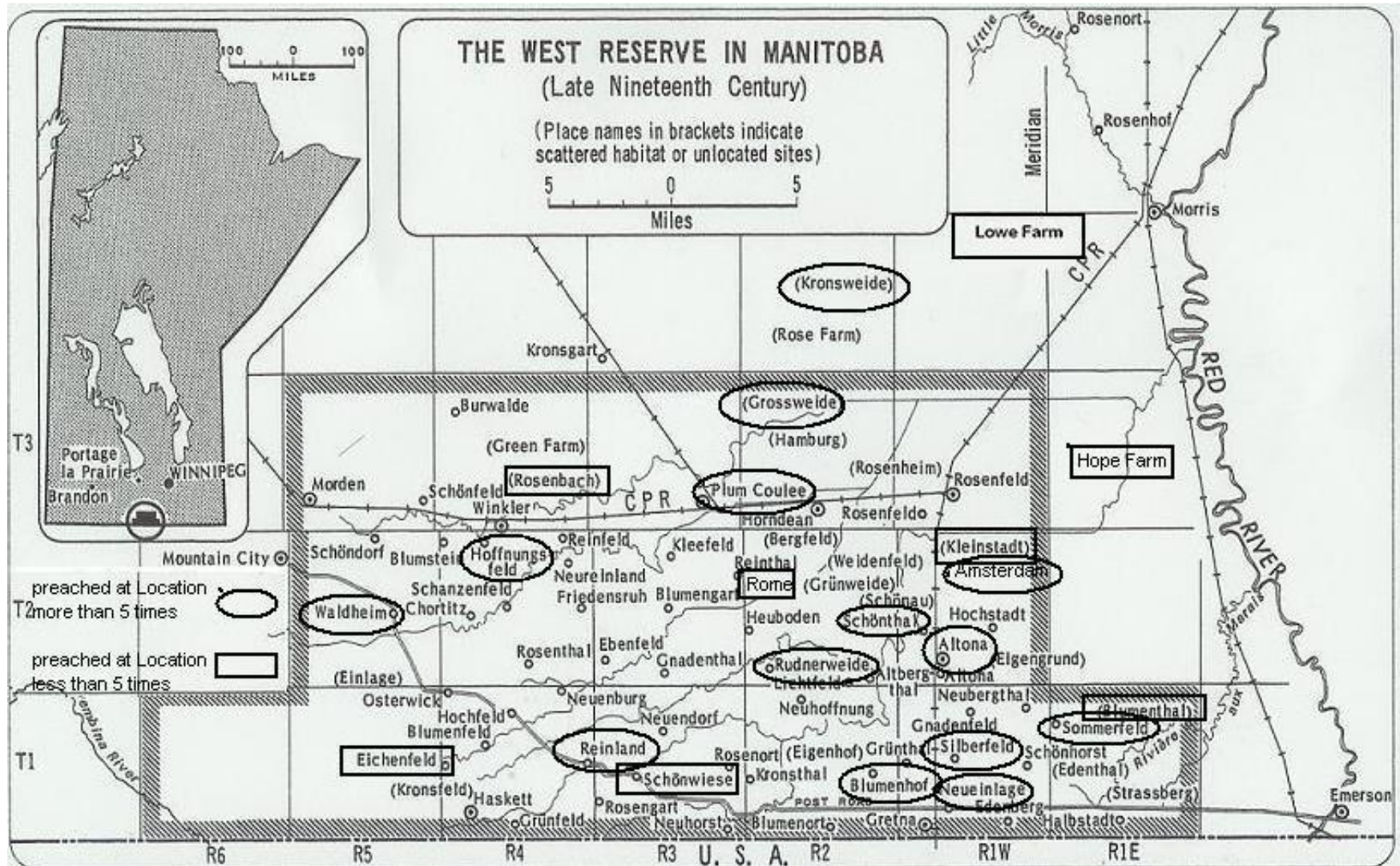
Andachts-Tabelle für das letzte halbe Jahr in 1957

Monat	Datum	Feste	P. S. W.	P. F. W.	C. W. F.	J. F. W.	J. S. M.	P. S. K.	M. F. K.	J. J. Sch.	P. K. Sch.	P. S. K.
Juli	14. 4.	Sonntag nach Trin.		Chort.	Rosgd.	Grünt.	Silbf.	Weidf.		Stb.		Niv.
"	21.	Dankfagung	Niv.	Wpg.	Chort.	Rosgd.	Grünt.	Silbf.	Weidf.		Stb.	
"	28. 6.	Sonntag nach Trin.		Niv.		Chort.	Rosgd.	Grünt.	Silbf.	Weidf.		Stb.
Aug.	4. 7.	Sonntag nach Trin.	Stb.		Niv.	Wpg.	Chort.	Rosgd.	Grünt.	Silbf.	Weidf.	
"	11. 8.	Sonntag nach Trin.		Stb.		Niv.	Chort.	Rosgd.	Grünt.	Silbf.	Weidf.	
"	18. 9.	Sonntag nach Trin.	Weidf.		Stb.		Niv.	Wpg.	Chort.	Rosgd.	Grünt.	Silbf.
"	25. 10.	Sonntag nach Trin.	Silbf.	Weidf.		Stb.		Niv.	Chort.	Rosgd.	Grünt.	
Sept.	1. 11.	Sonntag nach Trin.	Grünt.	Silbf.	Weidf.		Stb.		Niv.	Wpg.	Chort.	Rosgd.
"	8. 12.	Sonntag nach Trin.	Rosgd.	Grünt.	Silbf.	Weidf.		Stb.		Niv.	Chort.	Chort.
"	15. 13.	Sonntag nach Trin.	Chort.	Rosgd.	Grünt.	Silbf.	Weidf.		Stb.		Niv.	Wpg.
"	22. 14.	Sonntag nach Trin.		Chort.	Rosgd.		Silbf.	Weidf.	Grünt.	Stb.		Niv.
"	29. 15.	Sonntag nach Trin.	Niv.	Wpg.	Chort.	Rosgd.	Grünt.	Silbf.	Weidf.		Stb.	
Okt.	6.	Erntefest		Niv.		Chort.	Rosgd.	Grünt.	Silbf.	Weidf.		Stb.
"	13.	Vorbereitung			Niv.	Silbf.	Chort.	Rosgd.)	Stb.	Grünt.	Weidf.	Wpg.
"	20.	Vorm. Abendmahl	Chort.	(Vorbereitung		Weidf.	(Grünt.)				Stb.	
"	20.	Nachm. Abendmahl	Niv.									
"	27.	Vorm. Abendmahl	Grünt.	(Niv.	Chort.		Dankfag.	Silbf.)	(Vorbereitung	Wpg.	Stb.	
"	27.	Nachm. Abendmahl	Weidf.									
Nov.	3.	Vorm. Abendmahl	Stb.	(Dankfag.	Grünt.	Weidf.)		Silbf.	Chort.			Niv.
"	10.	Nachm. Abendmahl	Wpg.)	Vormittag	Silbf.	Chort.		Niv.	Rosgd.	Weidf.	Grünt.	Stb.
"	17. 22.	Sonntag nach Trin.		Silbf.	Chort.		Weidf.	Grünt.	Stb.	Niv.	Rosgd.	
"	24.	Dankfagung			Wpg.)	Chort.	Silbf.	Weidf.	Grünt.	Stb.	Niv.	Rosgd.
Dez.	1. 1.	Advent		Rosgd.		Chort.	Silbf.	Weidf.	Grünt.	Stb.		Niv.
"	8. 2.	Advent	Niv.		Rosgd.	Wpg.	Chort.	Silbf.	Weidf.	Grünt.	Stb.	
"	15. 3.	Advent		Niv.	Stb.	Rosgd.		Chort.	Silbf.	Weidf.	Grünt.	
"	22. 4.	Advent	Grünt.		Niv.	Stb.	Rosgd.	Wpg.	Chort.	Silbf.	Weidf.	
"	25.	Weihnachten	Chort.	Grünt.		Niv.	Weidf.	Rosgd.	Stb.		Silbf.	
"	26.	Weihnachten		Silbf.	Grünt.		Niv.	Weidf.	Rosgd.	Stb.	Wpg.	Chort.
"	29.	Jahreschluss	Chort.	Niv.	Silbf.	Grünt.		Weidf.	Rosgd.	Stb.		

Psalm 52, 10

Niv.-Niverville; Rosgd.-Rosengard; Grünt.-Grünthal; Weidf.-Weidenfeld; Chort.-Chortitz; Stb.-Steinbach; Silbf.-Silberfeld; Wpg.-Winnipeg.

Figure 4: Map of West Reserve with Locations of Abraham Doerksen's Preaching Assignments³¹



Appendix 1: Scripture Texts Used and Times Preached according to Theme and Season³²

Evangelism	Faith/Supplication	Discipleship/Communion	Advent/Christmas
1 Kings 18:21 (20)	Psalm 8:10 (6)		
Psalm 50 (24)	Psalm 34 (11) Psalm 51:12 (16) Psalm 56:11 (16) Psalm 69:6 (9) Psalm 72:12-13 (13) Psalm 73:21-24 (23) Psalm 88:4 (34) Psalm 102:27-28 (30) Psalm 103:2-4 (6)		Isaiah 9:6 (12)
	Isaiah 26:9 (22) Isaiah 49:14-16 (10)		Isaiah 64:1 (19)
Jeremiah 4:3-4 (6)		Jeremiah 5:22-24 (37)	
	Jeremiah 17:14 (11) Daniel 9:20-21 (13)	Micah 6:3-5 (16)	
	Haggai 2:5-6 (11) Sirach 51:12-13 (5)	Matthew 3:8 (6) Matthew 5:20-25 (6) Matthew 7:15-23 (25)	
Matthew 9:13 (85)		Matthew 16:24-28 (6)	
Matthew 18:3 (13)			Matthew 21:1-9 (4) Matthew 25:31-46 (14)
Matthew 26:69-75 (4)			Luke 2:1-14 (82) Luke 2:15-20 (5)
	Luke 4:14-24 (7)	Luke 6:46-49 (9)	
	Luke 7:2 (15)	Luke 9:23 (16)	
Luke 15:1-10 (26)			Luke 12:35-36 (23)
Luke 18:7-8 (28)			
Luke 18:15 (8)			

Evangelism	Faith/Supplication	Discipleship/Communion	Advent/Christmas
Luke 19:1-10 (21) Luke 19:41-48 (21)			
			Luke 21:25-30 (14) John 1:1-14 (23)
	John 1:12-13 (35)		John 1:19-28 (3)
John 3:3 (20)	John 3:20 (7) John 10:12-16 (25) John 14:1-7 (37) John 16:23-27 (15)	Acts 2:1-22 (11) Acts 10: 42-48 (19)	
Romans 2:4-5 (24) Romans 2:29 (10) Romans 6:23 (13)		Romans 10:10 (83)	
			Romans 13:11-14 (8)
	1 Corinthians 2:12-13 (17)	1 Corinthians 10:11-13 (20) 1 Corinthians 11:28 (58)	
	1 Corinthians 15:1-6 (4)	2 Corinthians 5:20 (15)	
2 Corinthians 6:1-10 (9)		Galatians 5:25-6:10 (28)	
	Ephesians 1:13-14 (9)		Philippians 4:4-7 (45)
	Ephesians 6:10-17 (22)	Colossians 1:10-12 (26)	
	Colossians 2:7-12 (8)	Colossians 3:12-18 (3)	
Hebrews 3:12-14 (16) Hebrews 4:1-13 (17)	Hebrews 11:1-14 (5)	1 John 4:19 (20)	
1 John 1:7-10 (19)	1 Peter 1:18-19 (9)	1 Peter 1:22-23 (42) 1 Peter 2:21 (24) 1 Peter 2:24 (51)	
Revelation 3:20 (5)			Revelation 22:12-20 (11)
E: 389 -18%	FS: 451 -20.8%	D/C: 521- 24%	AC: 263 -12.2%

Appendix 2: Summary of Scripture Texts Used and Number of Sermons
Preached According to Different Themes and Seasons

<i>Theme/Season</i>	<i>Scripture Texts Used</i>	<i>Sermons Preached</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Evangelism	26	389	18%
Faith/Supplication	34	451	20.8%
Discipleship/Communion	29	521	24%
Advent/Christmas	21	263	12.2%
Epiphany	6	96	4.5%
Lent/Easter	23	276	12.8%
Pentecost/Trinity	9	88	4.1 %
Sub Total	148 76.3%	2084 96.4%	96.4%
Sermons preached less than 5 times, excluding those mentioned	46 23.7%	77 3.6%	3.6%
Totals	194 (100%)	2161 (100%)	100%

Endnotes

¹ Erland Waltner and J. Darryl Charles, *Believers Church Bible Commentary, 1-2 Peter, Jude* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1999), p. 15.

² Ibid., pp. 107-109.

³ *Biblical Concordance of the Swiss Brethren 1540*, translated by Gilbert Fast and Galen Peters (Kitchener: Pandora Press, 2001), p. 8.

⁴ Donald Stoesz, *Canadian Prairie Mennonite Ministers' Use of Scripture: 1874-1977* (Victoria: Friesen Press, 2018), p. 186.

⁵ Peter Bergen, *History of the Sommerfeld Mennonite Church* (Altona: Sommerfeld Mennonite Church, 2001), pp. 10-11, 44-46, 49-51.

⁶ Donald Stoesz, *Canadian Prairie Mennonite Ministers' Use of Scripture: 1874-1977*, p. 28.

⁷ *Search for Renewal: The Story of the Rudnerweider/EMMC: 1937-1987* (Winnipeg: Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference, 1987), pp. 39-41.

⁸ Ibid., p. 41.

⁹ The assumption that conservative Mennonite churches are not interested nor involved in evangelism is reflected in a 1954 article on evangelism in the Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online: "The spirit of evangelism remains extinct in such groups in North America as the Old Order Amish, the Old Order Mennonites, and the Old Colony Mennonites," [Evangelism - GAMEO](#).

¹⁰ Donald Stoesz, *Canadian Prairie Mennonite Ministers' Use of Scripture: 1874-1977*, pp. 16-17.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., p. 186.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 39-49.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 209-221.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 186.

¹⁶ Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church, Volume 3, The Medieval Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), p. 183. Cross reference Old's comments about Pope Gregory's Ezekiel sermons and choice of Gospels for Advent in *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church, Volume 2 The Patristic Age* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 436-440.

¹⁷ The Amish lectionary, which is based on the Reformed *lectio continua* form of reading Scripture during worship, also includes *Weltende* passages such as Matthew 24 and 25 as Scripture readings just before Christmas, Donald Stoesz, *Canadian Prairie Mennonite Ministers' Use of Scripture: 1874-1977*, p. 69. Hughes Old explains the difference between a *lectio selecta* form of reading Scripture used in the Lutheran tradition from the *lectio continua* form used in the Reformed tradition, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church, Volume 4, The Age of the Reformation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), pp. 27-31, 153.

¹⁸ Donald Stoesz, *Canadian Prairie Mennonite Ministers' Use of Scripture: 1874-1977*, pp. 119-120.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 137-139.

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 169-171.

²¹ Peter Bergen, *History of the Sommerfeld Mennonite Church*, pp. 69-77.

²² David M. Stoesz wrote two thousand, two hundred, and twenty-six pages of text for sixty-four of his sermons. Two of his sermons have been translated. The one that he preached on New Year's Day, based on 1 Peter 1:22-23, appears in Donald Stoesz, *Canadian Prairie Mennonite Minister's Use of Scripture: 1894-1977*, pp. 237-255. It is analysed in chapter eight of the same book, *ibid.*, pp. 197-208. The other one is a Good Friday sermon based on John 19:28-30. It appears in Donald Stoesz, "Sermons and Service by Sommerfelder Stoeszes," Volume 5292 of the Mennonite Heritage Centre, [david-stoesz-family-fonds.pdf \(mhsc.ca\)](#).

²³ Cornelius Stoesz wrote a total of one thousand, four hundred and sixty pages of text for fifty-nine of his sermons. Three of his sermons have been translated. A sermon based on 1 Peter 2:21 appears in Donald Stoesz, *Canadian Prairie Mennonite Minister's Use of Scripture: 1894-1977*, pp. 257-268 and is analysed on pages 187-195. The other two are based on Philippians 4:4-7 and Luke 19:41-48. They can be found in Donald Stoesz, "Sermons and Service by Sommerfelder Stoeszes," Volume 5292 of the Mennonite Heritage Centre, [david-stoesz-family-fonds.pdf \(mhsc.ca\)](#). A partial list of various Mennonite sermons that have been translated from the written Gothic German script appears in Appendix 8 of Donald Stoesz, *Canadian Prairie Mennonite Minister's Use of Scripture: 1894-1977*, p. 235.

²⁴ The organization of Abraham Doerksen's use of Scripture texts according to church year can be found in Peter Bergen, *History of the Sommerfeld Mennonite Church* (Altona: Sommerfeld Mennonite Church, 2001), pp. 69-77. Jake Peters obtained these records from Bishop Jack Doerksen in Mexico in 1982 and brought them back to Canada, *ibid.*, p. 68. David M. Stoesz' sermons can be found in Volumes 1561-1563 of the Bishop David Stoesz fonds of the Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg, Manitoba, [David Stoesz family fonds - Mennonite Archival Image Database \(mhsc.ca\)](http://mhsc.ca). C. G. Stoesz' logbook along with several sermons can be found in Volume 3273-3275 of the Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg, Manitoba, [Cornelius G. Stoesz fonds - Mennonite Archival Image Database \(mhsc.ca\)](http://mhsc.ca).

²⁵ Peter Bergen, *History of the Sommerfeld Mennonite Church*, pp. 69-77.

²⁶ Donald Stoesz, *Canadian Prairie Mennonite Ministers' Use of Scripture: 1874-1977*, pp. 153-168, 187-195.

²⁷ Maps detailing the preaching circuits of Abraham Doerksen, David M. Stoesz, and Cornelius Stoesz appear in Donald Stoesz, *Canadian Prairie Mennonite Ministers' Use of Scripture: 1874-1977*, pp. 231-233.

²⁸ C. G. Stoesz' logbook along with several sermons can be found in Volumes 3273- 3275 of the Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg, Manitoba. [Cornelius G. Stoesz fonds - Mennonite Archival Image Database \(mhsc.ca\)](http://mhsc.ca).

²⁹ Donald Stoesz, *Canadian Prairie Mennonite Ministers' Use of Scripture: 1874-1977*, p. 187.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 231. The map has been excerpted from Frank Epp's book, *Mennonites in Canada: 1786-1920s* (Toronto: MacMillan of Canada, 1974), p.221. The locations of Rome, Amsterdam, Hope Farm, and Lowe Farm are approximations.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 209-221.