A DIFFERENT KIND OF STATION: RADIO SOUTHERN MANITOBA AND THE REFORMULATION OF MENNONITE IDENTITY, 1957-1977

by

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Abstract

In 1957 the Southern Manitoba Broadcasting Company launched radio station CFAM in Altona, Manitoba. The privately owned outlet emerged from the province's Mennonite community at a moment when its people were negotiating the powerful forces of social, economic, and cultural change that were transforming North American rural life. This study describes the origins of what became known as Radio Southern Manitoba and its development into a regional cultural institution as it cultivated a broad audience over its first two decades on the air.

The primary focus of this analysis is Radio Southern Manitoba's role in the Mennonite community, and its influence in the cultural reformulation that transmuted Mennonite group identity in the latter half of the twentieth century. Through an examination of the activities and materials pertaining to the production of the radio broadcast, and a limited consideration of sources describing its consumption, this thesis explores how the broadcaster reflected and attempted to shape the culture and practices of its Mennonite audience segment. It finds that through an unconventional mix of farm programming, classical and semi-classical music, religious broadcasts, and community services, CFAM (and its later sister stations) encouraged a version of Mennonite identity deemed acceptable by members of this ethno-religious group as it shifted from being a relatively isolated people to subjects in a pluralistic, modern society.

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Introduction

Readers of the Sunday *New York Times* of September 3, 1961, might have discovered an article that described the curious existence of a radio station in the rural community of Altona, Manitoba, that offered a variety of "fine music and generally 'uplifting' programming" surpassing in sophistication many big city outlets. CFAM, the writer declared dramatically, was "one of the most interesting and significant radio outlets in all of Canada, if not North America." Unlike other rural stations, its programming pattern did not merely reflect the "basic needs of the individual farmer," nor did it cater to the "teen-aged tastes" in popular music that tended to dominate the broadcasting industry. It was significant, contended the article, because its commercial success demonstrated that listeners desired programming that would satisfy their "cultural and spiritual" appetites, as well as addressing their more practical needs.[1] Many *Times* readers were evidently fascinated by CFAM's unusual model of commercial community-service broadcasting. Although very few would ever have the opportunity to hear it – despite the optimism of one New Jersey reader determined to purchase a radio capable of receiving the distant signal – the station received several letters from points in New York, Michigan, and eastern Canada expressing enthusiastic interest and requesting copies of the broadcaster's monthly program guide.[2] The publicity, joined by newspaper and magazine coverage from local and national organs, favourable broadcast measurement

[1] Charles J. Lazarus, "Attractive Radio Listening in Canada's Hinterlands," *New York Times*, 3 September 1961, 11(X).
[2] CFAM *Transmitter*, n.d., in "History of Southern Manitoba Broadcasting Co. Ltd., 1957-[1972]" (scrapbook), Golden West Broadcasting, Altona.

ratings, and regular positive feedback from new and loyal listeners, gratified station management and confirmed the appeal of their unique program philosophy.[3]

CFAM was established with the aim of providing a service that would address the interests and needs of listeners in the mainly rural region of southern Manitoba. The privately owned broadcaster emerged from the province's Mennonite community in the mid-1950s, at a moment when it was negotiating powerful forces of social, economic, and cultural change that were transforming rural life throughout North America, and which saw this particular ethno-religious group adapt generally in the direction of greater integration into mainstream Canadian society. This study describes the station's origins and its development into a regional cultural institution as it cultivated its audience from its initial broadcast in 1957 through its first two decades on the air, during which time the broadcaster expanded its coverage area and added two sister stations, taking on the name Radio Southern Manitoba. The primary focus of this analysis is the broadcaster's role in the Mennonite community, and its association with and influence on the processes of cultural reformulation that transmuted Mennonite group identity in the latter half of the century. This work contends that the programming of CFAM (and its sister outlets) intentionally reflected and shaped the evolving identity of its Mennonite listeners as they responded to new circumstances. As is no doubt the case with all successful media, radio and community were in dialogue; this history represents an attempt to understand this relationship.

It is worth underscoring that CFAM was not strictly a Mennonite station, and that it always sought to, and did in fact, appeal to a wide audience in the multicultural region

[3] President's Address, Directors' Report, and Manager's Report, Annual Meeting, 4 December 1961, Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives (hereafter MHCA), Winnipeg, Theodore (Ted) E. Friesen fonds, Vol. 4892, File 8.

it covered. The broadcaster did, however, have deep roots in the Mennonite community, and it is on the basis of the special relationship between the two that this study is organized. It was chiefly as the result of specific concerns within the Manitoba Mennonite community about the necessity of an outlet that would provide religious programming that the endeavour of creating a radio station was undertaken in the first place. All of the original shareholders backing the venture were Mennonites, and Mennonite churches and institutions were well represented on the air with programming in English, German, and the Mennonite Low German dialect. Geographically, CFAM's Altona studio was located at the heart of one of the province's two main areas of Mennonite settlement, the area once known as the West Reserve, and coverage of the other concentration, the former East Reserve, was always a high priority. Beyond this, it will be demonstrated that CFAM's founders and management were concerned about how its programming could be a positive influence specifically in the Mennonite community, as a force that could variously encourage unity, cultural uplift, and a respectable and modern public identity that would facilitate participation in broader society.

Historian Mary Vipond counsels that "given the range of ways in which the mass media are interconnected to the lives of virtually everyone in the modern world … it is imperative that they be studied as a variable, often a key variable, in historical projects."[4] This study takes seriously her assertion, and while it may be considered a work of communications history, it is also a work of Mennonite history (or, more broadly, ethnic or immigration history); historiographically it is situated at the intersection of the two. To date there has been little scholarship taking mass media as the object of analysis in the

[4] Mary Vipond, "The Mass Media in Canadian History: The Empire Day Broadcast of 1939," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, n.s., 14 (2003): 4.

field of Mennonite history, and the literature that does exist has tended to focus on print media. One example is Dora Dueck's study of the Mennonite denominational newspaper *Zionsbote*, which suggests that the print organ helped construct and maintain a sense of group identity by creating narratives and collapsing time and space, engendering a sense of what Benedict Anderson famously termed the "imagined" community in his scholarship on nationalism and print capitalism.[5]

Since Mennonites began to settle in Manitoba print media had helped to sustain a sense of Mennonite community and shared cultural and religious values. These newspapers, denominational bulletins, and other periodicals contained various types of writing, including local news and information, religious articles and church news items, and reports from Mennonite settlements in Canada, the United States, Latin America, and Russia. Initially most of these publications were printed in German, but in the 1940s English-language local weeklies were started in three Manitoba towns.[6] Mennonites were slow to acquire radios given the secular nature of much of the available programming, but by the early 1950s most households had a set, and the establishment of CFAM persuaded many conservative holdouts to accept the medium. The creation of a station like CFAM was in a sense a logical step for a community as distinct and relatively cohesive as the Manitoba Mennonites, according to Gerald Friesen's analysis of the relationship between communications and community. He observes that "a viable, politically involved community requires communications vehicles, and when the

[5] Dora Dueck, "Print, Text, Community: A Study of Communication in the *Zionsbote*, a Mennonite Weekly, Between 1884 and 1906" (M.A. thesis, University of Manitoba, 2001); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991), 6.

[6] E. K. Francis, *In Search of Utopia: The Mennonites in Manitoba* (Altona: D. W. Friesen and Sons, 1955), 269-270; John H. Warkentin, *The Mennonite Settlements of Southern Manitoba* (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1960; reprint, Steinbach, Man.: Hanover Steinbach Historical Society, 2000), 244, 258-59 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

dominant communication technology changes it must adapt to the new media if it is to remain a viable community."[7] This observation is made in reference to the Canadian nation, but upon consideration it is evident that it applies equally to any active community whose membership is "imagined" to extend beyond a geographic concentration or a group of individuals united through regular social contact.

The cultural influence of radio was in part a function of its growing everyday presence. Although it would soon enough compete for attention with television, when CFAM started radio was still the ascendant mass medium, and it increasingly provided the soundtrack to daily life as transistor technology made it more mobile and affordable. Historian Paddy Scannell argues that the "dailiness" of broadcasting defines its nature and is key to its influence. Following Heidegger's analysis of everyday existence, he observes, "In modern societies radio and television are part of both the background and foreground of our everyday dealings with each other in a common world." This background "constitutes the horizon of all possibilities for all actual foregrounded social relationships and practices." [8] In effect, broadcast media help to bring into being the world as we understand it. By virtue of the dailiness of its program matter, media institutions come to exercise a normalizing influence as they interpret the changing world to their audiences, a process which is examined in this history.

Despite the ubiquity of radio and its permeation of the lives of a massive listening public, it is only in the past two decades that it has begun to surface as an object of historical study after years of neglect. Perhaps the invisibility of the purely aural medium renders it evanescent, too easily forgotten, not only by audiences who often listen in the

[7] Gerald Friesen, *Citizens and Nation: An Essay on History, Communication, and Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 198.
[8] Paddy Scannell, *Radio, Television & Modern Life* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 5.

background while going about their daily routines, but also by the critical mainstream.[9] Media scholar Michele Hilmes observes that in the United States, just as radio began to attract serious academic interest it was eclipsed by television, as the emerging industry diverted programming capital and talent from the older medium. As radio became more localized, music-focused, and format-driven, its status as a cultural form declined, and scholarly research on radio virtually ceased. The rise of cultural studies in the 1980s, which challenged notions of cultural hierarchy and which brought new attention to what had been considered "low" forms, in combination with the contemporary shift toward social history, which brought new attention to previously marginalized subjects, revived the field of radio history by the 1990s. Even still, most historical radio scholarship has focused on the pre-television period, and the period from the 1950s onward remains largely unstudied.[10]

Canadian broadcast historiography has generally followed the American pattern.[11] The perceived relevance of radio as an object of historical analysis evidently diminished as – with the exception of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) network – dramatic and public affairs programming migrated to television, and radio quickly became a local service that increasingly catered to narrow audience segments,

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[9] Andrew Crisell provides a good description of the characteristics of the radio medium in *Understanding Radio* (London: Methuen, 1986).

[10] Michele Hilmes, "Rethinking Radio," in *Radio Reader: Essays in the Cultural History of Radio*, ed. Michele Hilmes and Jason Loviglio (New York: Routledge, 2002), 1-19.

[11] See for example Mary Vipond, *Listening In: The First Decade of Canadian Broadcasting, 1922-1932* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992); Frank Peers, *The Politics of Canadian Broadcasting, 1920-1951* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969); T. J. Allard, *Straight Up: Private Broadcasting in Canada, 1918-1958* (Ottawa: Canadian Communications Foundation, 1979). Exceptions include Wayne Schmalz, *On Air: Radio in Saskatchewan* (Regina: Coteau Books, 1990); Bernard Bocquel, *Au pays de CKSB: 50 ans de radio française au Manitoba* (St. Boniface: Les Éditions du Blé, 1996); Marylu Walters, *CKUA: Radio Worth Fighting For* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2002).

concentrating especially on specific musical formats.[12] Still, radio remained a highly popular and significant force of cultural production that reached most demographic groups, and its capacity to render local service allows it to function as a purveyor of localized cultural identities that are indeed relevant to a historiography characterized by a concern about difference and place.[13]

When CFAM went on the air on March 13, 1957, Mennonite identities in North America were in the midst of significant upheaval. The identity of any group is susceptible to change; as sociologist-historian Charles Tilly defines it, public identity is relational, cultural, historical, and contingent. That is to say, identity exists in the relations among individuals and groups, "rests on shared understandings and their representations," and bears the influence of "memories, understandings, and means of action" that accumulate over long periods of time. Furthermore, this conception "regards each assertion of identity as a strategic interaction liable to failure or misfiring."[14] Since their emergence in sixteenth-century Europe a key element of Mennonites' identity had been a sense of separateness from the rest of society, motivated by a history of religious persecution and oppression, a belief in the separation of church and state, and an emphasis on Christian nonconformity. By the middle of the twentieth century this separatist stance was becoming less viable as new social, economic, and cultural

[12] Mary Vipond, *The Mass Media in Canada*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: James Lorimer & Co., 2000), 50-52.
[13] Hilmes identifies radio's capacity to serve "subaltern counterpublics." "Rethinking Radio," 11.
[14] Charles Tilly, "Citizenship, Identity and Social History," *International Review of Social History* 40, Supplement 3 (1995): 5-6.

circumstances made Mennonite participation in mainstream society increasingly common.[15]

When the Mennonites first came to Manitoba in the 1870s, attracted by the promise of religious freedom and economic opportunity, they were distinguished by their separateness, simplicity, pacifism, and communitarian values. The initial wave of immigrants consisted of the most conservative groups from their communities in Russia, which they had left to avoid modernizing changes including school reforms and the spectre of compulsory military service. Most of the founders of CFAM were descendants of these settlers. Group identity was maintained through the relative isolation of a nearly self-sufficient rural, agricultural existence in ethno-religious enclaves; the active use of their Low German dialect; control of an array of community-based institutions, including education; and adherence to a distinctive religious tradition.[16] A second wave of migration in the 1920s brought Mennonites who were more accommodating to modern society, but these immigrants also preserved a sense of group distinctiveness, and were generally integrated into the larger, existing Manitoba Mennonite community. While the ideal of separation became progressively more difficult to uphold during the interwar period, Mennonites pursued a variety of strategies of resistance to maintain it.[17] By the end of the Second World War, however, isolation had become much more difficult, and many began to engage more actively with their host society. Mennonites were challenged

[15] T. D. Regehr, *Mennonites in Canada, 1939-1970: A People Transformed* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); Paul Toews, *Mennonites in American Society, 1930-1970: Modernity and the Persistence of Religious Community* (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1996).
[16] Regehr, 1-2; Francis, 275-77.
[17] Frank H. Epp, *Mennonites in Canada, 1920-1940: A People's Struggle for Survival* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1982).

to find new ways to preserve their beliefs, values, and coherent group identity in the face of the transforming forces encountered by all ethnic and religious groups in rural society.

Historian T. D. Regehr describes the approach of the majority of Mennonites who experienced the unprecedented changes of this era as a process of accommodation, in which major adjustments to new social realities were made more or less as a group while the vital core of their identity, values, and traditions was retained, enabling them to avoid succumbing as a mass of individuals to the pressures of assimilation.[18] As farms expanded to meet economies of scale, and machines reduced agricultural labour needs, Mennonites, like other rural Canadians, increasingly moved into towns and cities for work, while modern transportation and communications technologies further reduced the traditional isolation of rural communities. Regehr contends that as traditional means of social control weakened, space was opened for new developments that brought Mennonites closer in line with wider Canadian society, but frequently in ways that encouraged continued group cohesion. For instance, North American evangelicalism became increasingly influential in several Mennonite church groups.[19] Mennonite high schools and newly established colleges allowed the religious community to retain control of the socialization of their youth, while equipping the next generation with the knowledge and skills necessary to integrate with the outside world.[20] Of particular relevance to the story of CFAM was the musical training given by these schools, which entrenched a strong choral tradition among Mennonites while functioning as a vector of accommodation by integrating many Mennonites into the Canadian music community.[21]

[18] Regehr, 418, 2-3.
[19] Regehr, 207-12.
[20] Regehr, 271.
[21] Regehr, 285.

An important force of change that affected Manitoba Mennonites was the agricultural revolution of the mid-twentieth century. Royden Loewen puts this at the centre of his transnational study of social and cultural transformation in Mennonite communities in Manitoba and Kansas.[22] He takes as his point of departure the work of American rural historian John Shover, who contends that the change in America's farmlands was a "revolution," a "vast technological upheaval" that "overwhelmed traditional family farming and the village life that existed symbiotically with it."[23] Canadian rural society underwent similar transformations as the locus of agricultural production shifted from the small family farm to much larger farm units that were increasingly mechanized, employing new technologies and innovations in crop science, soil management, and animal husbandry, with new efficiencies yielding higher outputs. These were capital-intensive operations under the sway of increasingly powerful, vertically integrated agribusiness interests and of government intervention in marketing, planning, and transportation.[24]

Mennonites' responses to the developments that restructured rural society were various and fragmented. Loewen argues that the result was a reformulation of culture and identity, a notion resembling Regehr's interpretation of accommodation, with the difference being primarily Loewen's emphasis on the complexity of this process of cultural change. Inherited values and traditions were retained but they were also reinvented, supplemented by borrowed cultural ideas, and made to fit evolving mythologies. Cultural reformulation was the product of a dialectic between an ethno-

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[22] Royden Loewen, *Diaspora in the Countryside: Two Mennonite Communities and Mid-Twentieth-Century Rural Disjuncture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006).
[23] John L. Shover, *First Majority–Last Minority: The Transforming of Rural Life in America* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976), xiii.
[24] Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 429-35.

religious heritage and the ideologies and symbols of "an imagined regional and even national culture."[25] Loewen observes this dynamic in his analysis of the construction of a Mennonite middle class. Postwar economic prosperity provided the basis for a rising consumer culture that challenged traditions of simple living and an anti-materialistic ethos. At the same time a demographic shift from farm life to towns brought Mennonites into increased contact with their non-Mennonite neighbours, foregrounding questions of group identity. Loewen argues that Mennonites were beginning to conceive of themselves less as a separate people than as an ethnic group, one of many in multicultural Canada. Increasingly, this was a sense of ethnicity that objectified and celebrated traditions and elements of the past that served their new self-perception as "respectable, middle-class Canadians." As Mennonites increasingly adopted middle-class Canadian values and concerns, ethnicity provided a sort of "anchor" that allowed Mennonites to maintain a sense of group distinctiveness while presenting their shared heritage in a package that would fit alongside the many others that constituted the multicultural nation.[26] Similarly, Loewen argues that the reorientation of many Mennonite churches toward evangelicalism, with its individualized religiosity, provided both a path toward middle-class Canadian respectability and a new set of social boundaries, based on evangelical purity, that justified a degree of continued separateness.[27]

The process of cultural reformulation can be observed in patterns of consumption of cultural products, which sociologist Pierre Bourdieu argues are a way social groups define and distinguish themselves from others. In his pioneering work on the subject, he asserts that "art and cultural consumption are predisposed, consciously and deliberately

[25] Loewen, 230.
[26] Loewen, 58-69.
[27] Loewen, 94.

or not, to fulfil a social function of legitimating social differences."[28] He contends that "taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier. Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make."[29] Aesthetic taste is a component of cultural capital which interacts with a range of forms of capital, including economic capital and educational capital, to determine the position of actors in social space. An examination of the cultivation of taste, then, raises questions about the possibility of social mobility.

Mass media communication can be analyzed from the perspectives of production and consumption. The bias of this project is toward the former, based on the availability of primary sources pertaining to this side of the production/consumption dynamic. Archival materials describing the business of the Southern Manitoba Broadcasting Company and the activities of CFAM reveal the concerns that motivated the establishment of the station and which informed programming philosophies. Documents produced by interactions with Canada's broadcast regulation apparatus further illuminate these questions. Consumption of the media product is addressed with reference to published listener comments in newspapers, letters sent to the broadcaster, memoirs, personal recollections, and audience measurement survey data.

This thesis is developed over three chapters. In the first, the narrative of CFAM's creation and development is set out. It describes the context in which southern Manitoba Mennonite business leaders assembled a group of shareholders and put forward a vision for a form of private, community-service broadcasting. Attention is paid to the succession of programming objectives, from a concern about Christian witness when the station was

[28] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 7.
[29] Bourdieu, 6.

conceived, to the provision of practical information and education to support the development of agriculture in the coverage area, to the promotion of "good music" when the station went on the air, to a growing emphasis on local news and other community service. The broadcaster's special interest in its Mennonite audience is also addressed. Brief descriptions of the station's main programming areas are provided, followed by an outline of various milestones that marked the broadcaster's expanding reach as it increased its signal strength and set up sister stations in Steinbach and Boissevain.

The second chapter examines CFAM's music programming, focusing in particular on the influence of its first music director, Ben Horch. The chapter asks how and why it was that what had been proposed as a farm station came to play more classical music than any other station in the province, and how this programming fulfilled objectives of cultural and social advancement for the Mennonite listening community. The third chapter addresses how the broadcaster reflected and played a role in shaping Mennonite daily practices, religious ideas, and notions of social identity through an examination of its other major programming areas.

The story of CFAM is a unique and intriguing one. At a time when throughout the industry radio stations were narrowing their programming to appeal to specific audience segments, the Altona outlet aimed for a broad regional audience with its unusual mix of farm, good music, and religious programs. In an era when improved transportation links and growing automobile ownership brought the city closer to the countryside, and technological change and economic pressures pushed many rural denizens toward urban centres, it demonstrated the continued vigour of rural cultural life, and reaffirmed a geographical identity that was not defined by a metropolis. For Mennonites, whose

traditional separatist existence had been shaken by the interjection of forces of modernizing change, the history of CFAM demonstrates how their group was able to retain its sense of cultural distinctiveness in the face of challenging circumstances by engaging on its own terms with the surrounding society, in this instance through the public act of community broadcasting.

Chapter I: The Establishment of a Regional Cultural Institution

At 8:01 p.m. on March 13, 1957, D. L. Campbell, premier of Manitoba, turned the switch that put radio station CFAM on the air. Eager listeners were welcomed by a recording of "O Canada," followed by greetings from the production manager and an invocation delivered by Bishop David Schulz of the Bergthaler Mennonite Church. Broadcasting from its studio in the town of Altona, the president of the Southern Manitoba Broadcasting Company, A. J. Thiessen, promised that the station would serve the people of the region by delivering a diverse mix of agricultural information, "good music," family programs, regional talent, local and world news, and religious programming. A sense of excitement permeated the air as congratulatory messages were conveyed by mayors and civic officials from communities in the Red River Valley, provincial cabinet ministers, and representatives of the province's schools. In acknowledgement of the ethnic diversity of the station's coverage area, remarks were also made by community members in French, German, Icelandic, Yiddish, Ukrainian, and Low German.[1] The establishment of CFAM generated considerable enthusiasm and curiosity from Manitobans near and far, as evidenced by the three thousand guests who attended a series of open house events at the studio building in the week that followed.[2] The novelty of a rural broadcasting facility in southern Manitoba, with its unconventional and ambitious programming pattern, caught the imagination of the listening public.

On the face of it, Altona was an unlikely site for a radio outlet. Incorporated as a town in 1956, the predominantly Mennonite community was the smallest centre in the

[1] "Opening Night At CFAM," *Red River Valley Echo*, 20 March 1957, 9.
[2] "3,000 Attend Open House At CFAM," *Red River Valley Echo*, 27 March 1957, 5.

country to get a station.[3] Its economic base alone was not large enough to support commercial operations, and although there were several other communities in the station's coverage area that might provide advertising revenues, the town's location 115 kilometres southwest of Winnipeg would put CFAM in competition for listeners with outlets based in the capital city area. Its coverage zone also overlapped with country music station CFRY, launched six months before CFAM in the small city of Portage la Prairie, about 150 kilometres northwest.[4] Despite these challenges, the Southern Manitoba Broadcasting Co. (SMBC) was granted a radio license on the basis of indications of support from surrounding businesses and communities, and its commitment to serve the specific needs and interests of rural listeners in particular. In short order it became apparent that there existed a sizeable audience, or perhaps multiple audiences, for a broadcaster that focused on southern Manitoba and delivered a different kind of programming than the urban outlets.

By the 1950s Altona was in fact a vibrant community animated by a spirit of local initiative and progress. A fairly typical agricultural service centre at the turn of the century, it had become the district commercial and trade centre by the 1930s on the strength of cooperative ventures which expanded its economic influence.[5] An American sociologist, commenting on the success of Altona's cooperatives and other local improvements in the mid-1940s, wrote that the community was enjoying a rural "renaissance."[6] The town experienced tremendous growth in the postwar era, swelling

[3] "Brings Benefits Both Cultural and Economic," *Red River Valley Echo*, 19 March 1958, 9.
[4] Canadian Communications Foundation: Radio Station History: CFRY-AM, <http://www.broadcasting-history.ca/listings_and_histories/radio/histories.php?id=888&historyID=684>.
[5] Gerhard J. Ens, *Volost & Municipality: The Rural Municipality of Rhineland, 1884-1984* (Altona: R. M. of Rhineland, 1984), 165.
[6] J. Winfield Fretz, "The Renaissance of a Rural Community," *Mennonite Life* 1 (January 1946): 14-17, 39.

from a population of under 700 in 1944 to 1065 in 1946, and reaching 1698 in 1956. Five years later the number would exceed 2000.[7] Other area towns and villages also grew, benefiting from the thriving agricultural economy, but not as rapidly. Industrial development contributed to Altona's growth, with the Co-op Vegetable Oils processing plant opening in 1946, and the expansion of the D. W. Friesen & Sons printing firm. The practice of intensive agriculture in the surrounding region, which supported smaller farms and a denser rural population, increased commercial activity in the town. This was partly the result of the crop diversification campaign undertaken by the area agricultural society. Community development was also actively promoted by the weekly *Altona Echo* and the local Board of Trade.[8] During this same period, residents began to participate in an increasing range of recreational and cultural activities.[9] Local efforts, buoyed by the prosperous postwar economy, had transformed Altona into a flourishing prairie town.

CFAM was the product of a modernizing prairie society, but it was also distinguished by its roots in the Mennonite community. The station's Altona base was located in one of the two areas reserved by the Canadian government in the 1870s for settlement by Mennonite immigrants from Russia. The descendants of sixteenth-century Anabaptists, characterized by their commitment to nonresistance and separation from worldly affairs, they migrated in pursuit of religious freedom and the opportunity to continue a rural way of life. In Manitoba they originally kept to themselves to a significant degree, living in ethnic enclaves in settlements known as the East and West

[7] John H. Warkentin, *The Mennonite Settlements of Southern Manitoba* (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1960; reprint, Steinbach, Man.: Hanover Steinbach Historical Society, 2000), 257 (page citations are to the reprint edition); Esther Epp-Tiessen, *Altona: The Story of a Prairie Town* (Altona: D. W. Friesen & Sons, 1982), 238.
[8] Epp-Tiessen, 211, 226-29, 258-63.
[9] Epp-Tiessen, 283-89.

Reserves. The former lay some fifty kilometres southeast of Winnipeg, east of the Red River, and encompassed the Rural Municipality of Hanover, including the town of Steinbach. The latter was located west of the river, north of the United States border, corresponding to the R.M. of Rhineland and most of the R.M. of Stanley, and included the towns of Winkler and Altona.

At midcentury, Mennonites remained the dominant ethno-religious group in these areas.[10] According to the 1951 census, nearly 45,000 Manitobans identified as Mennonite. More than half resided on farms, while most of the rest lived in villages and small towns; fewer than 3500 lived in Winnipeg.[11] By this time many had begun to participate much more actively in business and other secular affairs that brought them increasingly into the broader public sphere. Established by a group composed exclusively of Mennonites, CFAM exemplified this new orientation. Although its audience was more diverse than this single constituency, it embodied many of the prevailing values and interests of the Mennonite community.

Genesis of a Radio Station

The notion of creating a southern Manitoba station emerged in part out of discontent with the radio offerings available in the province's south-central region in the early 1950s. Listeners in the area had the choice of four English-language stations based in Winnipeg (CJOB, CKY, CKRC, and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation station

[10] In the West Reserve, Mennonites composed about 86% of the population according to the 1941 and 1961 censuses. In the East Reserve they represented approximately 80% of the population. Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *1941 Census of Canada*, vol. 2, *Population*, Table 37; *1961 Census of Canada*, Bulletin SP-3.
[11] Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *1951 Census of Canada*, vol. 2, *Population*, Table 6.

CBW) and St. Boniface's French-language CKSB.[12] Some signals could also be received from the United States, and it was even possible to pick up the Saskatchewan CBC station.[13] Rural listeners were not always particularly well served by the Winnipeg stations, which naturally concentrated on city news and the interests of their metropolitan audiences. Within the Mennonite community concern was expressed about the declining availability of religious programming, and there was some alarm when certain "gospel" programs were cancelled.[14] Dissatisfaction with existing stations became more pronounced as airtime was increasingly given to rock and roll.[15]

Mennonites had been producing their own radio programs in the province since at least 1947, when three Mennonite Brethren college students started the "Gospel Light Hour."[16] For a time, Mennonite Brethren city missionary William Falk also delivered German sermons on CKY.[17] However, it was becoming more difficult to find stations that would accept new religious programs. This was the experience of the Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba, the province's largest denominational body, which had begun to discuss the idea of producing a German broadcast in 1949. In the years that followed, the Conference mission committee and its youth organization made little progress in their efforts to find an outlet in Winnipeg or North Dakota that would air their programs at an acceptable hour. In 1955 a special committee was appointed to deal with the radio issue,

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[12] Canadian Communications Foundation: Radio Station Listings: Manitoba, <http://www.broadcasting-history.ca/listings_and_histories/radio/listings.php?pt=92&r=>.
[13] Radio schedules, 1950-56, *Winnipeg Free Press*.
[14] [Frank H. Epp], "Our Radio Programs," *Canadian Mennonite*, 4 December 1953, 2; [Frank H. Epp], "A Mennonite Radio Station?" *Canadian Mennonite*, 12 November 1954, 2.
[15] Frank H. Epp, "Radio as it Should Be," *Canadian Mennonite*, 7 November 1958, 5.
[16] Wally Kroeker, "Mennonite Brethren Broadcasting," in *For Everything a Season: Mennonite Brethren in North America, 1874-2002: An Informal History*, ed. Paul Toews and Kevin Enns-Rempel (Winnipeg: Kindred Productions, 2002), 92.
[17] J. G. Rempel, "Mennonites on the Air in Western Canada," *Mennonite Life*, July 1952, 127; Rita Y. Toews, "William Falk – The Man Behind the Library," *Eye Witness*, Fall 2001, <http://prov.ca/eyeWitness/2001/Fall/ew-f01-williamfalk.aspx>.

and finally in early 1956 time slots were obtained for two Sunday programs: a 15-minute English broadcast on CKY, and a half-hour German program, "*Frohe Botschaft*" (Good News), on KFNW, a Christian station in Fargo, North Dakota.[18]

One of the appointees to this committee was Altona businessman A. J. Thiessen, who had by this time already begun to work on a more long-term solution. Aware of the difficulties the Conference was experiencing, around September 1954 he proposed that Mennonites create a station that would serve the needs of southern Manitoba.[19] Thiessen wrote in his memoirs that he believed "the Mennonite community needed a radio outlet for their religious programs as well as [a] medium that provided good music, entertainment, and agricultural news."[20] By November, the Altona-based *Canadian Mennonite* newspaper reported growing interest among Manitoba Mennonite leaders in a project that had once seemed "a fantastic dream." Editor Frank H. Epp argued that all interested Mennonite church groups and communities should be involved. Declaring that "this province is desperately in need of a Christian radio station," Epp proposed a private enterprise that could be run as a mission by Mennonite businessmen.[21] Thiessen was not the only one to muse openly about such an idea. When he began looking for business partners he started in Steinbach, where Dennis Barkman, a young electric appliance salesman, was considering a similar venture.[22] It is not clear what progress was made on this project in its first year, but at the November 1955 annual meeting of the Manitoba

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[18] Anna Ens, *In Search of Unity: Story of the Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba* (Winnipeg: CMBC Publications, 1996), 101.
[19] In his remarks at CFAM's first broadcast, Thiessen stated that it had been "exactly 2½ years ago [*sic*] since the subject [of establishing a radio station] was first mentioned." "Opening Program of Radio Station CFAM," 13 March 1957, Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies (hereafter CMBS), Winnipeg, Benjamin and Esther Hiebert Horch fonds, Vol. 1235, File 18.
[20] A. J. Thiessen, *"Grace": My Background and Life's Experiences* (*n.p.*: by the author, 1982), 91.
[21] [Frank H. Epp], "A Mennonite Radio Station?" *Canadian Mennonite*, 12 November 1954.
[22] Thiessen, 91.

Conference there was a surprise announcement that the regulatory authorities in Ottawa had been contacted regarding permission to build a station.[23]

Thiessen, born in 1910 in Rosenfeld, was an experienced entrepreneur with a record of community service. Beginning his business career as an insurance agent, he and a partner were later awarded an automobile dealership that expanded into the farm machinery business. In 1946 he established Thiessen Bus Lines and was awarded a franchise to provide bus service to the Gretna, Altona, and Winkler areas, with daily service to Winnipeg. This company expanded rapidly, eventually acquiring the province's largest independent operator, Grey Goose Bus Lines. Thiessen's involvement in community affairs included a position as president of the Manitoba School Trustees' Association, service on several provincial boards governing education and area school boards, and membership of the Rosenfeld village council. In addition to this, Thiessen operated a 400-acre grain farm.[24]

Despite Thiessen's extensive associations and business experience, he initially had trouble finding committed partners. His efforts to recruit partners in Steinbach eventually came to naught since business people there were determined to have the station in their own community. Thiessen had planned to locate the station in the Altona area, and would not budge on this point.[25] He proceeded to meet with parties in the Winkler, Morden, and Altona areas, but had trouble securing commitments of support

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[23] "Manitoba Mennonites Hold Annual Two-Day Conference," *Canadian Mennonite*, 18 November 1955, 1, 4.

[24] Ens, *Volost & Municipality*, 187-88; Library and Archives Canada (hereafter LAC), Canadian Broadcasting Corporation fonds, RG 41, "Minutes, agenda books and working papers of the Board of Governors" series, Vol. 657, File "Agenda of the 102nd Meeting, Board of Governors, Held in Ottawa, Oct. 25, 26 & 27, 1956," "Information for the Board of Governors in Connection with the Report of the Technical Committee," 62; LAC, RG 41, Vol. 160, File no. 10-9, "Information for the Board of Broadcast Governors in connection with broadcast applications considered at its first public hearing, January 28-30, 1959," 66.

[25] Thiessen, 91.

until he approached D. K. Friesen of Altona.[26] Friesen, like Thiessen, was a successful businessman with a considerable record of community service. The president of the printing firm D. W. Friesen & Sons, he was also the publisher of the *Red River Valley Echo* (formerly the *Altona Echo*), which he frequently used to promote projects that would benefit the Altona area, and was perhaps the town's greatest booster. He was also a strong proponent of cooperative ventures, and was the first vice-president of Co-op Vegetable Oils, serving as plant manager for seven years. His public service activities included membership on advisory committees to the Manitoba Department of Industry and Commerce and the Department of Education, and a term as chair of the Altona School Board.[27] Once Friesen became involved, several other business, church, and community leaders gave their support. Among these was Walter E. Kroeker of Winkler, director of the Kroeker family farm and seed companies, and an active promoter of developing the province's horticulture industry.[28]

The pace of work on the radio station intensified in early 1956, when participants in the group, which had previously been meeting informally, drew up a provisional set of guiding principles for shareholders. This document described a conception of broadcasting that was devoted foremost to "serving the Mennonite areas of settlement" in southern Manitoba and to Christian witness within the framework of "Mennonite principles and doctrine."[29] This formulation differed significantly from the nonsectarian model of service proposed by the group in its application for a broadcast license later that

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[26] A. J. Thiessen, interview by Gerhard J. Ens, tape recording, 25 August 1983, Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives (hereafter MHCA), Winnipeg.
[27] Epp-Tiessen, 208, 211, 226; LAC, RG 41, Vol. 657, File "Agenda of the 102nd Meeting," "Information for the Board of Governors in Connection with the Report of the Technical Committee," 65.
[28] "Southern Manitoba Broadcasting Co. Ltd. Executive," *Canadian Mennonite*, 8 March 1957, 5.
[29] "A radio station operated by a group of Mennonites," MHCA, Theodore (Ted) E. Friesen fonds, Vol. 4892, File 5.

year, which made limited mention of religious programming, but it reveals some of the central motives that drove initial efforts in the radio enterprise. One of the first items in the document called special attention to the service the station would provide its Mennonite audience:

> It shall speak to all the Mennonite people irrespective of church affiliation or language. [It] shall strive to be an agency whereby our people may be more closely drawn together. It shall endeavour to deepen spiritual life and promote church unity. It shall unite Mennonites under the Mennonite way of life.[30]

The pledge to encourage Mennonite unity, and a subsequent item stipulating that the facility's governing board "should represent as many Mennonite churches as possible" echoed Frank H. Epp's 1954 editorial proposal. This signified a departure from the historical pattern of Mennonites establishing institutions – schools, church periodicals, mission boards – along church group and conference lines. At the time there were no fewer than ten Mennonite conferences or church branches in Manitoba, the result of a schismatic tendency, migration patterns, and reform or renewal movements.[31] The nascent broadcasting company might have been influenced toward an inter-Mennonite approach by D. K. Friesen (and his two brothers who became shareholders), whose family firm founded the *Canadian Mennonite* in 1953 on the same model, but on a national scale.[32]

After identifying the station's intended Mennonite audience, the next item announced the broader goal that "it shall also reach out to *all* people in clear and uncompromising testimony [of] the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ."[33] This was

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[30] "A radio station operated by a group of Mennonites," MHCA, Vol. 4892, File 5.
[31] John J. Friesen, *Building Communities: The Changing Face of Manitoba Mennonites* (Winnipeg: CMU Press, 2007), 193.
[32] T. D. Regehr, *Mennonites in Canada, 1939-1970: A People Transformed* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 386-87.
[33] "A radio station operated by a group of Mennonites," MHCA, Vol. 4892, File 5. (Emphasis mine)

followed by a definition of programming standards, which the broadcaster proudly worked to maintain over the ensuing decades:

> It shall present the best in all that it offers, such as music, drama, speeches, current events, worship services, etc. Jazz, swing, crime stories, anything that is demoralizing, or degrading[,] is absolutely forbidden; cheap comedy & music such as westerns etc., should be discouraged as much as possible.[34]

Advertising was also to conform to certain moral criteria and was to be controlled by the governing board to ensure that it would be "clean and honest, and only of such things that we can subscribe to in good conscience," and the proposed station would have no political or organizational affiliations. Commitments were made to providing "educational and informative" programs on agricultural topics, in consideration of the needs and interests of the station's rural audience, and to fostering local talent by providing a medium for its expression.[35]

Having articulated a vision for the station, the founding group set about organizing a company. They selected an executive committee consisting of Thiessen (president), Kroeker (vice-president), and Friesen (secretary-treasurer), and began the work of enlisting shareholders.[36] The provisional guiding principles specified that members of the company board should be "church members in good standing."[37] Applications for stock in the proposed corporation were published, with shares of preferred stock available at $100 per share and common stock available for $10 per share. The company authorized 1000 shares of each type of stock, putting the total value of capital stock available to the company at $110,000 once all shares were subscribed and fully paid (payment of common stock to be made once a broadcasting license was issued,

[34] "A radio station operated by a group of Mennonites," MHCA, Vol. 4892, File 5.
[35] "A radio station operated by a group of Mennonites," MHCA, Vol. 4892, File 5.
[36] Epp, "Radio as it Should Be," *Canadian Mennonite*, 5.
[37] "A radio station operated by a group of Mennonites," MHCA, Vol. 4892, File 5

with payment of preferred shares due only in part, up to 25%, the balance due on call of the company board).[38] Thiessen held the largest stake in the company, with over 20% of issued stock.[39]

Twenty-eight shareholders were enlisted by the time the proposed company applied for a broadcast license. Of this group, ten had experience managing small or large businesses, six were teachers or school administrators, five were ministers, and two were insurance agents. There was also a doctor and a bus driver. At least twelve operated farms, often in addition to another occupation. Nearly all had one or more commitments to such public or community service bodies as school board and educational committees, cooperative boards, chambers of commerce, credit unions, and church organizations. Apart from seven shareholders who lived in Winnipeg, the rest all resided or worked in communities of the former West Reserve (most in Winkler and Altona).[40] It is notable that there were none from the former East Reserve, since the radio station was being promoted as a venture that would serve this area as well. This may have been a symptom of the social divisions that persisted between the two geographical regions, separated by a drive of at least 85 km and the barrier, as it then seemed, of the Red River.

The application for a broadcast license was a major undertaking that entailed over nine months of preparation.[41] The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) Board of Governors, the body tasked with regulating the airwaves, required the submission of a comprehensive brief that detailed programming plans, engineering specifications,

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[38] "Application for stock in the proposed Southern Manitoba Broadcasting Co. Ltd., Altona, Manitoba," n.d. [1956], MHCA, Vol. 4892, File 5; Southern Manitoba Broadcasting Co., Ltd., Balance Sheet, 31 October 1957, MHCA, Vol. 4892, File 5.
[39] LAC, RG 41, Vol. 657, File "Agenda of the 102nd Meeting," "Information for the Board of Governors in Connection with the Report of the Technical Committee," 60-61.
[40] LAC, RG 41, Vol. 657, File "Agenda of the 102nd Meeting," "Information for the Board of Governors in Connection with the Report of the Technical Committee," 60-66.
[41] Peter Letkemann, *The Ben Horch Story* (Winnipeg: Old Oak Publishing, 2007), 330.

financial projections and organizational particulars, and economic data about the coverage area, including population figures, income of residents, information on industry and retail trade, and evidence of interest from commercial sponsors.[42] Over forty letters were also submitted in support of the application, including representations from municipalities, businesses, schools, and agricultural associations – all located in the region around Altona or in Winnipeg – and from provincial and federal legislators and cabinet ministers.[43] By all indications the local community enthusiastically backed the proposed venture.

Thiessen, Kroeker, and Friesen appeared before the Board of Governors at a meeting in Ottawa on October 27 for the hearing of their license application, which had been submitted in early August.[44] The conception of broadcasting service described in their submission reflected a shift in priorities since the statement of guiding principles was drafted. The applicants proposed a "farm station" that would "serve a distinctly rural audience, providing programs of particular interest to the farmer and rural dweller."[45] The SMBC had already made this rural (as opposed to Mennonite) emphasis its first priority by the end of May, when a newspaper report declared that the station's purpose was to serve the "highly diversified agricultural area of southern Manitoba," giving the industry "special attention."[46] It is not clear what prompted this shift in focus, but a 1959 letter written to the *Canadian Mennonite* concerning the supposed "Mennonite" nature of

[42] Epp, "Radio as it Should Be," 5.
[43] LAC, RG 41, Vol. 657, File "Agenda of the 102nd Meeting," "Information for the Board of Governors in Connection with the Report of the Technical Committee," 70-71.
[44] LAC, RG 41, Vol. 657, File "Briefs Presented to 102nd Meeting, Board of Governors, Held in Ottawa, Oct. 25, 26 & 27, 1956," "Submission of A. J. Thiessen."
[45] LAC, RG 41, Vol. 657, File "Agenda of the 102nd Meeting," "Information for the Board of Governors in Connection with the Report of the Technical Committee," 66.
[46] "Thiessen Chosen Head Of Altona Radio Group," *Red River Valley Echo*, 30 May 1951, 2. (The same article appeared in the *Canadian Mennonite* two days later.)

CFAM asserts that this emphasis was "deliberately and for very good reasons toned down."[47] The writer does not elaborate on this claim, but it is quite possible that as the company board was preparing its license application it was advised by an industry veteran or perhaps an area politician that the CBC would not look kindly on a narrow definition of radio service. Certainly it stands to reason that as the company began to approach representatives of the wider southern Manitoba community, the founders would have realized that not only would they attract wider support if they emphasized objectives that were not limited to a specific group, but also that the station would appeal to a larger audience and effect a greater impact if its outlook were less parochial.

The application claimed that existing Canadian stations – located in Winnipeg – generally did not meet the needs of this audience, and that American stations near the border did a better job of delivering rural service. The CBC offered a farm broadcast for the prairie provinces, but the application argued that this service was not adequate. The proposed facility would feature a "predominantly agricultural programming schedule" focused on local needs.[48] As SMBC vice-president Kroeker explained at the application hearing, the station would be committed to supporting the rural economy. Farm production in the Red River Valley had shifted over the previous two decades from a primarily grain economy into the production of corn, sunflower seeds, sugar beets, rapeseed, and canning crops like peas, beans, and tomatoes. An advocate of agricultural diversification, Kroeker reiterated that special crops like these required much closer care and attention than grain crops and necessitated timely information about insect and disease problems, which could arise quickly and required rapid treatment. The proposed

[47] B. Alf Warkentin, Letter to the Editor, *Canadian Mennonite*, 30 January 1959, 2, 4.
[48] LAC, RG 41, Vol. 657, File "Briefs Presented to 102nd Meeting, Board of Governors, Held in Ottawa, Oct. 25, 26 & 27, 1956," "Submission of A. J. Thiessen."

facility could provide this service, as well as educational information on farming methods and livestock management, provided in cooperation with the federal and provincial departments of agriculture.[49]

In addition to farm programming, the SMBC promised to deliver music with "family appeal," since they claimed that "rural audiences are not particularly fond of 'popular' hit tunes which can be heard being played by metropolitan stations any time of the day or night."[50] The station would also deliver local and national news, and would encourage the development of talent by airing musical and dramatic performances by groups and individuals in the listening area. The company declared that it would operate the station as a public service to help advance "economic and cultural standards" in the region, and stated that it was interested in realizing only a nominal financial return.[51] Religious broadcasting, once the central focus of the applicants, was not mentioned at the Ottawa hearing, although their submission asserted that the station would provide "church services to shut-ins and other isolated persons and an opportunity to ethnic groups to have services in their own languages where desired."[52]

Just as notably, when describing their objectives, the company representatives made no reference to any specific commitment to the Mennonite community. In fact, the considerable Mennonite presence at the heart of the proposed coverage area was discussed only when one of the CBC governors raised the matter. Asked to confirm that

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[49] LAC, Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission fonds, RG 100, "Records of public hearings" series, File "CBC Board of Governors, 102nd Meeting, 25, 26 & 27 October 1956," 221-22, Microfilm reel M-4160.
[50] LAC, RG 41, Vol. 657, File "Briefs Presented to 102nd Meeting, Board of Governors, Held in Ottawa, Oct. 25, 26 & 27, 1956," "Submission of A. J. Thiessen."
[51] LAC, RG 100, File "CBC Board of Governors, 102nd Meeting, 25, 26 & 27 October 1956," 227, Microfilm reel M-4160.
[52] LAC, RG 41, Vol. 657, File "Briefs Presented to 102nd Meeting, Board of Governors, Held in Ottawa, Oct. 25, 26 & 27, 1956," "Submission of A. J. Thiessen."

the facility would not be regarded as a Mennonite station, Kroeker assured the Board that the shareholders were not "a sectarian group interested in perpetuating Mennonite belief."[53] Indeed, the "conception of public broadcasting" detailed in the license submission contained none of the particularism of the earlier statement of guiding principles. Instead, it included a broad commitment to providing listeners with "training for Canadian citizenship." This role the applicants somewhat ambiguously deemed especially important "in areas where there is a heavy influx of immigrants from Central Europe."[54]

The licensing process invited submissions from other broadcasters that might be affected by the application, and while none were opposed to the proposed station, the president of Winnipeg's CKY, Lloyd Moffat, wrote a letter in which he expressed his opinion that the market "would not support a quality Broadcasting Station in Altona for ordinary commercial operations."[55] A letter was also received from the Federation of Southern Manitoba Co-operatives, an organization with Altona roots, explaining why it had declined to recommend the SMBC's application. The Federation was concerned that membership in the company was not sufficiently broad, indicating that it would prefer that ownership of the SMBC be organized on a cooperative or wider corporate basis.[56] When this concern was put to the company representatives at the hearing, Thiessen responded that the issue had been "discussed at length," and suggested that because a large number of area businesses were already being operated cooperatively, another

[53] LAC, RG 100, File "CBC Board of Governors, 102nd Meeting, 25, 26 & 27 October 1956," 224-25 Microfilm reel M-4160.
[54] LAC, RG 41, Vol. 657, File "Briefs Presented to 102nd Meeting, Board of Governors, Held in Ottawa, Oct. 25, 26 & 27, 1956," "Submission of A. J. Thiessen."
[55] LAC, RG 41, Vol. 657, File "Agenda of the 102nd Meeting," "Information for the Board of Governors in Connection with the Report of the Technical Committee," 70.
[56] LAC, RG 41, Vol. 657, File "Agenda of the 102nd Meeting," "Information for the Board of Governors in Connection with the Report of the Technical Committee," 71-72.

cooperative venture would not succeed. Furthermore, he asserted that private ownership was "the only way we could reasonably and profitably operate" the company, and did not elaborate further. Friesen pointed to his record of involvement in large cooperatives and noted that nearly half the shareholders were members or directors of cooperative associations, seeming to suggest that the company's opposition was pragmatic and not based on opposition to the principle of cooperative ownership.[57] This stance is notable nevertheless, given the dominance of cooperatives in the Altona area, which one contemporary geographer described as "a benevolent company town with everything co-ordinated about the cooperatives."[58] It may be that this was an early sign of the observed loss of idealism that characterized the cooperative movement in the following decades, during which the economic benefits of cooperation became paramount, making the organization of new enterprises more difficult.[59]

The CBC quickly recommended approval of the license application, and within days of the hearing a shareholders' meeting was held at which arrangements were made to proceed immediately with construction of the studio and transmitter, and to obtain the necessary equipment. The studio would be situated in a prominent location in Altona on a property purchased from Thiessen.[60] The station would broadcast at 1290 kHz AM from two 1000-watt transmitters to be erected on Thiessen's farm two and a half kilometres south of town.[61] By early December the Department of Transport had assigned the call letters CFAM, studio construction was underway, and a target launch date in March was

[57] LAC, RG 100, File "CBC Board of Governors, 102nd Meeting, 25, 26 & 27 October 1956," 230-31, Microfilm reel M-4160.
[58] Warkentin, 259.
[59] Henry Dyck, "Jacob John Siemens and the Co-operative Movement in Southern Manitoba, 1929-1955" (M.A. thesis, University of Manitoba, 1982), 170-71.
[60] "Minutes of the meeting of the shareholders of the Southern Manitoba Broadcasting Company Ltd.," 31 October 1956, MHCA, Vol. 4892, File 5.
[61] "Altona To Get Radio Station," *Canadian Mennonite*, 2 November 1956, 1; Thiessen, *"Grace,"* 91.

set.[62] In the intervening months a staff was hired, programs prepared, advertisers secured, and by March 13, 1957, the station was ready to broadcast to the 600,000 people living in the Red River Valley and adjacent regions.[63]

An Auspicious Beginning and Some Hiccups

The launch of CFAM attracted a great deal of attention in southern Manitoba, especially in the Altona area. Esther Epp-Tiessen writes in her history of the town that "the founding of radio station CFAM caused more excitement than any other new business" in the decades after the Second World War.[64] The *Red River Valley Echo* devoted six pages to promotion of the highly anticipated event in its March 13 edition, and reporting was carried by the various other rural, Winnipeg, and Mennonite papers. This development was a source of fascination: CFAM was more than another radio station – it was local, and its presence signaled to rural listeners that their communities were no longer an electronic media hinterland. Fifty years later many people still remember where they were when they listened to the station's first broadcast. Henry Engbrecht, now a distinguished choral conductor and then a student at the Mennonite Collegiate Institute in Gretna, recalls that he and his fellow students living in residence were given special permission to turn on their radios during the evening study period for the occasion. Remarking on its significance, he observes, "Radio in the minds of country people was something from far away. The notion of community radio was something new and unbelievable."[65]

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[62] "Progress Report On Altona CFAM Radio Station," *Canadian Mennonite*, 7 December 1956, 1; D. K. Friesen, Secretary-Treasurer, SMBC, to T. E. Friesen, 14 December 1956, MHCA, Vol. 4892, File 5.
[63] "CFAM To Feature Farm And Good Music Programs," *Canadian Mennonite*, 8 March 1957, 5.
[64] Epp-Tiessen, 248.
[65] Henry Engbrecht, email to author, 28 November 2007.

The novelty of regional broadcasting seems also to have enticed area businesses to purchase ads, but they soon soured, precipitating a major financial predicament for the SMBC. According to Elmer Hildebrand, then an advertising copywriter and one of the station's first salaried employees (and current president and CEO of Golden West Broadcasting, as the SMBC was later renamed), most of CFAM's advertisers cancelled their accounts after the first two or three months of broadcasting. He explains that an agency hired to sell commercial time in advance of the station's opening had promised local businesses that advertising on the radio station would be so effective that "stores would have to hire more employees to look after the onslaught of customers."[66] Since the Winnipeg stations had previously carried virtually no advertising from rural businesses, they could not know what to realistically expect. When promised results failed to materialize, disappointed businesses began to reconsider their contracts. With few clients remaining, Hildebrand was asked to help out by making sales calls, a role in which he continued for several years, helping to build a base of local advertising clients.

Hildebrand indicates that part of the advertising problem was that the broadcaster's audience was not large enough.[67] For all the excitement surrounding its launch, it may be that it took audiences some time to adjust their listening patterns and to become accustomed to the new station's programming. Whatever the case, before the end of the year, CFAM had established its position as a major force in the competition for southern Manitoba listeners. A November 1957 audience-tracking survey conducted by the public opinion research firm Elliott-Haynes showed that it had the largest all-day average share of listeners in the area south of Winnipeg. The results of this survey,

[66] Elmer Hildebrand, interview by author, 11 December 2007, Winnipeg, digital recording, MHCA.
[67] Hildebrand, interview by author, 11 December 2007. I have been unable to locate audience measurement data for these months.

distributed to promote the station's advertising potential, demonstrated that CFAM had the largest audience share (37.3%) in the region during the prime listening hours of 7 a.m. to 1 p.m., when 48.4% of radio sets were in use (during the 9 a.m. hour its share peaked at 39.3%). Between 1 p.m. and 10 p.m., when 33.9% of sets were in use, CFAM came in second place with 28.5% of listeners. Three unidentified Winnipeg broadcasters were listed as the next three highest-rated stations.[68] Of the districts surveyed, CFAM obtained the largest audiences in the communities of Altona and Steinbach, where their shares exceeded 50 percent, with station CKY coming in a distant second.[69] An audience survey conducted a few months later by the Bureau of Broadcast Measurement estimated a total of 17,700 households tuned in to the station at least once during the four-day survey period. Audience sizes fluctuated over the broadcast schedule, ranging from a weekday daily average of about 2000 households to an average of over 5000 every day in the peak half-hour slot.[70]

Another unexpected development troubled the SMBC during the broadcaster's first year when A. J. Thiessen resigned as company president and station manager. Thiessen, a man of great determination and strong opinions, had evidently presented a motion to the board that was rejected. Personality clashes with some of the board members made it difficult for Thiessen to accept this rejection, and he tendered his resignation, apparently under pressure, shortly before the company's November annual general meeting.[71] At this meeting Walter Kroeker was elected the new president, and

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[68] "Elliott-Haynes Survey, November, 1957," MHCA, Vol. 4892, File 5.
[69] LAC, RG 41, Vol. 665, File "Briefs Presented to 111th Meeting, Board of Governors, Held in Ottawa, March 24, 25 & 26, 1958 – Part 2," "CFAM – Listening Trends in Rural Southern Manitoba."
[70] Bureau of Broadcast Measurement, Radio Station Report – Spring 1958 Survey: CFAM, CMBS, Vol. 1228, Binder 05, 72.
[71] Ted E. Friesen, interview by author, 5 December 2007, Altona, digital recording, MHCA; Letkemann, 346.

D. K. Friesen took over management duties at the station.[72] By December Thiessen had offered his significant stake in the company for sale to other shareholders. All of his shares were sold by early January 1958.[73] Hildebrand attributes this internal struggle to the inexperience and lack of preparation of Thiessen and the other founders for the operation of a radio station.[74]

The production staff encountered problems of its own, but these were generally of a less severe variety. Fortunately some staff came to Altona with broadcasting experience. Valuable management expertise was provided by A. Leslie Garside, a radio industry veteran with over thirty years of experience, and manager of Winnipeg's Inland Broadcasting Service, who served for almost a year as supervisor of operations while the station was being established and in its first several months on the air.[75] Reuben Hamm, the station's first farm director, had been farm editor at CFQC radio and television in Saskatoon for several years, and Ben Horch, CFAM's program and music director, came with a little more than one year's experience in a similar position at a station in Wasco, California.[76] Other employees were new to radio work, a fact reflected in staff meeting minutes from the early years, which contained many warnings to on-air and other production staff to comport themselves more professionally. These tended to be directed to news announcers, and ranged from admonishments to refrain from "laughing and kibitzing around" while doing newscasts, to advising announcers to spend more time preparing their scripts to avoid impromptu corrections, and to counseling staff to learn to

[72] "W. E. Kroeker Elected CFAM President," *Red River Valley Echo*, 20 November 1957, 1.
[73] D. K. Friesen to shareholder, [November/December 1957], MHCA, Vol. 4892, File 5; D. K. Friesen to Campbell & Haig, 7 January 1958, MHCA, Vol. 4892, File 5.
[74] Hildebrand, interview by author, 11 December 2007.
[75] LAC, RG 41, Vol. 657, File "Agenda of the 102nd Meeting," "Information for the Board of Governors in Connection with the Report of the Technical Committee," 68; LAC, RG 100, File "CBC Board of Governors, 112th Meeting, 21 & 22 April 1958," transcript of public hearing, 205, Microfilm reel M-4163.
[76] "CFAM To Feature Farm And Good Music Programs," 5; Letkemann, 311-28.

read weather forecasts in prose form or to re-write them to avoiding sounding awkward and unprofessional.[77] These were not egregious errors, but they were the sorts of mistakes easily noticeable to listeners and marks of a 'green' broadcaster. In time these reminders would become less frequent as staff gained experience on the job and became more effective at training newcomers.

A Dependable Program

If CFAM's listeners tolerated the occasional blunder, it was because the station appealed to audiences with a variety of programming unlike that provided by other broadcasters. It generally adhered to the format described in its license submission, although in its promotion, greater emphasis was placed on its music programming than the original proposals had suggested. Calling itself "Manitoba's Farm and Good Music Station," daily fare also included local news coverage and community announcements, women's and children's programs, and religious broadcasts. As described by SMBC directors, this was a "'folksy' type of program, which follow[ed] a much more 'relaxed' tempo" than other private stations.[78] Loyal audiences came to depend on a consistent schedule and philosophy of service that changed little over the years. Eventually individual programs were replaced, time slots were adjusted, and different personalities were introduced, but these developments were piecemeal and incremental.

One of the main pillars of its programming strategy, CFAM's farm service provided valuable assistance to farmers who in the postwar era found it increasingly important to keep close track of market prices and developments in agribusiness, and who

[77] Staff Meeting Minutes and Staff Memos, 1957 through 1962, Golden West Broadcasting (hereafter GWB), Altona.
[78] LAC, RG 100, File "CBC Board of Governors, 112th Meeting, 21 & 22 April 1958," SMBC submission, Microfilm reel M-4164.

might wish to follow the latest reports on agricultural research and news from the Department of Agriculture and marketing boards. There were initially five farm features daily, including a 25-minute block in the morning containing farming news and a calendar of agricultural events, and a midday program offering interviews with farmers and agricultural representatives, and commentary on subjects affecting farm operators. Two reports were given each weekday on the grain and livestock markets, the first describing market trends and opening prices, the second detailing closing prices from Winnipeg, Minneapolis, and Chicago. There was also a weekly program produced for young people involved in 4-H rural education activities.[79] CFAM signaled the depth of its commitment to agricultural development and education when it hired Dr. P. J. Olson of Grafton, North Dakota, as its farm director in December 1957, replacing Reuben Hamm. Olson, a retired professor and former head of the department of Plant Science at the University of Manitoba, brought expertise and prestige to the position, which he held for a decade.[80] During his tenure and in the ensuing years, the farm programming on CFAM was expanded, while other broadcasters in the province, including the CBC, eliminated or seriously reduced theirs.[81]

CFAM took great pride in its delivery of "good music" programming, which it began to consider its "most important product."[82] Music director Ben Horch designed a program that placed heavy emphasis on classical and semi-classical music during his two

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[79] "CFAM Altona to Feature 5 Farm Programs Daily," *Red River Valley Echo*, 13 March 1957, 13; Program Schedule, 3 November 1958, CMBS, Vol. 1228, Binder 05, 95.
[80] "CFAM Marks First Year Of Radio Broadcasting," *Red River Valley Echo*, 19 March 1958, 9; "Tribute to Dr. P. J. Olson, Broadcast Friday, March 1st, 1968, on CFAM/CHSM on 'Today in Agriculture' - 12:20 p.m.," in "History of Southern Manitoba Broadcasting Co. Ltd., 1957-[1972]" (scrapbook), GWB; Promotional brochure – staff profiles, n.d., "History" scrapbook, GWB.
[81] Elmer Hildebrand, "An inside report on Manitoba's farm and good music station," *Canadian Mennonite*, 7 March 1967, 15; [Elmer Hildebrand], *CFAM, Radio 950* (*n.p.*: privately printed, 2007) [promotional 50th anniversary booklet].
[82] Elmer Hildebrand, "An inside report."

years at the station. Under his direction, the station incorporated five hours of this type of music into its daily schedule. In accordance with CFAM's mandate to foster local talent, it also gave extensive support to Manitoba's annual amateur music competition festivals, and broadcast performances by many school choirs, individuals, and vocal and instrumental groups. Some listeners were not prepared to receive such a steady diet of classics, but the broadcaster showed no readiness to compromise its "good music" policy, and the appreciative responses of thousands of other listeners justified CFAM's persistence with this program strategy. Outside observers were interested in the success of a rural station with such a musical format, juxtaposed unusually with agricultural and community programming, which they often recognized as an outgrowth of the station's commitment to "community service" above financial considerations. When the *New York Times* ran a profile on CFAM in its Sunday edition in 1961, its author remarked upon the station's "lack of self-consciousness in giving fine music, culture, and generally 'good' programming to its audiences."[83] A story in *Canada Month* magazine echoed this glowing evaluation, commenting that CFAM was "out-CBCing the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation by playing more classical music and religious programs than the government network."[84]

Although unacknowledged by the "Farm and Good Music" tag, religious programming was the third pillar of CFAM's broadcast schedule. When the station began, religious broadcasts occupied fifteen percent of airtime, with approximately one and a half hours of religious programming on weekdays and eight hours on Sundays,

[83] Charles J. Lazarus, "Attractive Radio Listening in Canada's Hinterlands," *New York Times*, 3 September 1961, 11(X).
[84] "Flatlands Radio Formula: Beethoven for Mennonites," *Canada Month*, November 1961.

which were commercial-free.[85] A five-person advisory committee, consisting of ministers from various Mennonite church groups, monitored these programs, dealt with concerns and complaints, and processed applications for new religious broadcasts.[86] Mennonite church organizations provided many programs. The Mennonite Brethren church produced daily family devotions and the "Gospel Light Hour" for Sunday broadcast in English and German. The Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba established the Mennonite Radio Mission, which produced three Sunday programs: the High German "*Frohe Botschaft*" (Good News), "The Abundant Life," and the Low German "*Wort des Lebens*" (Word of Life).[87] Other programs were sponsored or produced by Mennonite institutions or individual churches, such as the Mennonite Collegiate Institute, Elim Bible School, and Winnipeg's Bethel Mennonite Church. Sunday morning services were also carried live from churches in the broadcast area, including United Church, Baptist, and Lutheran congregations.[88] Other Protestant denominations and nondenominational evangelical organizations provided most of the rest of CFAM's religious programs. By far the most popular of these was the "Back to the Bible" broadcast.[89] Many of these programs were syndicated through tape technology, relieving the station of the burden of coordinating production.

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[85] Epp-Tiessen, 249; "CFAM Marks First Year Of Radio Broadcasting," *Red River Valley Echo*, 19 March 1958, 9.
[86] "Minutes of the meeting of the shareholders of the Southern Manitoba Broadcasting Company Ltd.," 31 October 1956, MHCA, Vol. 4892, File 5; Selected reports of the Ministerial/Religious Advisory Committee, 1957-1971, MHCA, Vol. 4892, Files 5-12.
[87] Ens, *In Search of Unity*, 141.
[88] "Ministerial Advisory Committee report" (1960), MHCA, Vol. 4892, File 7; LAC, RG 100, File "CBC Board of Governors, 112th Meeting, 21 & 22 April 1958," SMBC submission, Microfilm reel M-4164.
[89] Hildebrand, interview by author, 11 December 2007; Bureau of Broadcast Measurement (BBM) data show that the half-hour "Back to the Bible" broadcast frequently received the most listeners of the day. Bureau of Broadcast Measurement, Radio Station Report – Spring 1958 Survey: CFAM, CMBS, Vol. 1228, Binder 05, 72; Bureau of Broadcast Measurement, Radio Station and Area Reports, 1965-1971.

The annual reports of CFAM's religious advisory committee show that the amount of religious programming remained fairly constant through the 1960s at about thirty programs, occupying a total of about eighteen hours of airtime per week. In 1960, 14 of these programs were in English, 12 in German, 2 in Low German, 1 in French, and one was in English and German.[90] Ten years later, 23 of 31 programs were presented entirely or partially in English, while 9 included German, 3 were in Low German, and individual programs were offered in French, Polish, and Ukrainian.

CFAM further distinguished itself by its news and community service programming. Hildebrand asserts that Winnipeg media outlets ignored southern Manitoba except for stories about serious events like major crimes, bad accidents, and dramatic emergencies.[91] CFAM provided regular newscasts throughout the day, with twenty-two during the daily 18-hour schedule by 1958.[92] Initially the station's news gathering efforts were modest, since it did not have the reporting staff to cover the area in pursuit of stories. Correspondents located in communities throughout the region provided local assistance, and by 1968 a network of twenty-eight "stringers" was supplementing the efforts of the broadcaster's two news people and sportscaster.[93] For a few years there was also a standing offer of $5 for calling in news tips.[94] These early arrangements were less than ideal, but the regular service it afforded throughout the day represented a great improvement in the delivery of local news, which had previously been covered in the region by weekly newspapers. CFAM's news reporting deliberately avoided sensationalism, its staff instructed that when preparing news broadcasts, "murders and

[90] "Ministerial Advisory Committee report" (1960), MHCA, Vol. 4892, File 7.
[91] Hildebrand, interview by author, 11 December 2007.
[92] Epp, "Radio as it Should Be," *Canadian Mennonite*, 5.
[93] "CFAM Altona, Man., has 28 news stringers," n.s., n.d. [1968], "History" scrapbook, GWB.
[94] Staff Meeting Minutes and Staff Memos, 1957 through 1962, GWB.

lurid stories should be left out entirely if not of local interest, and if mentioned, only the main facts, no details."[95] The station also provided a valuable service in its coverage of local sports. Game scores were called in to CFAM by the team members themselves. Some leagues considered this duty so important that they would fine teams that failed to report their scores.[96] Live broadcasts of Saturday night hockey games, curling bonspiels, and other sports events were also offered.

One program feature that itself became an institution was the daily report of funeral announcements that aired weekdays at 9:05 a.m. and Saturdays before the 9 o'clock news.[97] These announcements were a part of many people's daily routines, and anecdotes abound of listeners who tuned in with near-religious devotion. Available audience survey data show that the half-hour segment containing this feature was regularly among CFAM's most popular.[98] Elmer Hildebrand surmises that over the years the funeral announcements had a greater impact than most of the other services provided by the broadcaster.[99] The brief announcements followed a prescribed format, giving the name, age, and hometown of the deceased, and the names of surviving family members. This service helped people residing in communities throughout southern Manitoba maintain a sense of connection with extended family and friends by alerting them to the passing of loved ones, and it held special appeal to the elderly.[100] In a region without daily newspapers the station fulfilled an important community service by providing the public with current information.

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[95] Minutes of 27 February 1958 meeting, Staff Meeting Minutes and Staff Memos, 1957 through 1962, GWB.
[96] Hildebrand, interview by author, 11 December 2007.
[97] Program Schedule, 3 November 1958, CMBS, Vol. 1228, Binder 05, 95.
[98] Bureau of Broadcast Measurement, Radio Station Report – Spring 1958 Survey: CFAM, CMBS, Vol. 1228, Binder 05, 72; Bureau of Broadcast Measurement, Radio Station and Area Reports, 1965-1971.
[99] Hildebrand, interview by author, 11 December 2007.
[100] Friesen, interview by author, 5 December 2007.

The broadcaster also designated time to what were classified as women's programs. The first of these was the mid-morning "Ladies First," a program that presented music and information including a calendar of events of interest to women in the district, a list of births, and "News for the Ladies."[101] Programming in the afternoon was more specifically directed toward practical domestic concerns. By the late 1960s this took the form of a 1 p.m. program called "Open House" that offered items on fashion, tips for homemakers, and recipes and kitchen advice. It also featured the popular "Story Time," in which full-length novels were read by the chapter.[102] Esther Horch was initially involved in hosting these programs until she left the station following her husband Ben's resignation.[103] She was replaced by Olly Penner, who served in this role for the next twenty-eight years.[104]

Both women also hosted the station's "Children's Party," as Tante Esther and as Aunt Olly. This 45-minute program for schoolchildren ran weekdays after school, and for many years the week ended with a Saturday morning broadcast featuring a local elementary school class.[105] The lively program was intended to educate and entertain, and included stories and music.[106] Personal birthday wishes were also read to children on the air, usually along with instructions about where to look for their birthday presents (the family clothes dryer was a popular hiding space).[107] For many years, Aunt Olly received

[101] Promotional pamphlet, 1968, "History" scrapbook, GWB.
[102] Promotional pamphlet, 1968, "History" scrapbook, GWB; "An inside report," *Canadian Mennonite*, 18.
[103] Letkemann, 362.
[104] Mary Lou Driedger, "A career of the heart: Aunt Olly Penner earned a lasting place in many youthful lives," *Mennonite Mirror*, May-June 1989, 4.
[105] Promotional pamphlet, 1968, "History" scrapbook, GWB. Initially the program was half an hour long.
[106] "An inside report," *Canadian Mennonite*, 18.
[107] [Hildebrand], *CFAM, Radio 950.*

about 3500 letters annually and was something of a "children's celebrity," particularly in the 1960s, before many families owned a television.[108]

Radio Southern Manitoba Expands

Having attracted a sizeable audience that continued to grow, the board of the SMBC resolved in November 1957 to seek permission to increase its broadcasting power to 5000 watts, in order to improve coverage to listeners in areas reporting blind spots and interference from American stations from points including Grand Forks, North Dakota, Moorhead, Minnesota, and Omaha, Nebraska.[109] The application was opposed by CKY, which accused CFAM of trying to strengthen its position in the Winnipeg market. Representatives of a Steinbach group also appeared at the Ottawa hearing to request that the decision be deferred until its own application for a Steinbach station could be considered.[110] The Altona group had little trouble justifying its request to the CBC Board of Governors, which had a policy of granting increases to stations suffering interference from American broadcasters, and the application was approved. The power boost came into effect in November 1958.[111] This increase did not eliminate the problem of signal interference from stations south of the border, however, and by December of the same year the SMBC shareholders resolved to pursue a second power increase to 10,000 watts.[112] When CFAM's application for a daytime increase in power was heard in

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[108] Driedger, 4.
[109] "Minutes of second Annual and Special General meeting of shareholders," 15 November 1957, MHCA, Vol. 4892, File 5; LAC, RG 100, File "CBC Board of Governors, 112th Meeting, 21 & 22 April 1958," SMBC submission, Microfilm reel M-4164.
[110] LAC, RG 100, File "CBC Board of Governors, 112th Meeting, 21 & 22 April 1958," transcript of public hearing, 209-10, 215-16, Microfilm reel M-4164.
[111] Epp, "Radio as it Should Be," *Canadian Mennonite*, 5.
[112] "CFAM Seeks Power Increase to 10,000 Watts," *CFAM Transmitter*, 30 December 1958, "History" scrapbook, GWB.

September 1959 it was approved without any challenges, but the increase was delayed for over a year due to opposition from an American station.[113]

Before this request was considered, SMBC executives Kroeker and Friesen were impelled to appear at another hearing, this time before the Board of Broadcast Governors (BBG), the newly formed body that would regulate private stations and the CBC. The two men went to Ottawa in January 1959 to oppose the application of the Steinbach group, which consisted of seven businessmen from the town and A. J. Thiessen.[114] The idea of a Steinbach station had been discussed since Thiessen began seeking supporters for what became CFAM, and it seems area business leaders, observing the success of CFAM, had decided that a southeastern Manitoba station was viable. Thiessen would be the largest shareholder in the proposed radio company, and with his 25% stake he brought his experience with the broadcasting industry, and his notion of what a rural radio station should provide. The programming plans for the Steinbach station were virtually identical to what the Altona group had proposed in 1956; in fact, much of the detailed submission had been copied verbatim. For the SMBC, which received over 20% of its commercial revenue from the town of Steinbach alone, the success of this application could have devastating effects.[115] Because of the business and personal relationships involved with some of the applicants, including K. R. Barkman, former Steinbach mayor and father-in-law to CFAM's Dennis Barkman, opposition had to be presented diplomatically. Simply by describing the services provided by CFAM, and how

[113] Manager's Report, Annual Meeting, 5 December 1960, MHCA, Vol. 4892, File 5.
[114] LAC, RG 41, Vol. 160, File no. 10-9, 64.
[115] LAC, RG 100, File "B1 – Board of Broadcast Governors, Public Hearing, 28-31 January 1959," transcript, 205, Microfilm reel M-3073.

it would be adversely affected by the proposed station, the SMBC executives made their case and the Steinbach application was denied.[116]

With an eye to the future, the SMBC began in 1960 to investigate the possibility of a venture into FM broadcasting with a station located just south of Winnipeg at St. Norbert, which it viewed as a way to capitalize on its existing Winnipeg audience and to provide a high-fidelity signal, free of interference, taking advantage of the properties of the FM band.[117] On December 10, 1962, the wholly-owned SMBC subsidiary Radio Fine Music Greater Winnipeg Ltd. launched CFMW-FM at frequency 98.3; it was the province's second FM station after CJOB-FM.[118] At first most of its programming was simulcast from CFAM in Altona, with 44 hours per week originating from St. Norbert, but within a year it was programmed separately.[119] Unfortunately, the FM radio audience was not large enough for the station to generate necessary advertising revenues, despite the company's efforts to sell FM radios, and in the spring of 1965 CFMW-FM was sold to the CBC.[120]

In the meantime, signal interference continued to affect the reliability of CFAM's coverage in its eastern range, prompting the company to apply for its own station in Steinbach. Service to the area was always important to CFAM, and in 1960 the company had opened an office with a single salesman-reporter to improve business support.[121] A

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[116] W. E. Kroeker to Shareholder, 10 February 1959, MHCA, Vol. 4892, File 5
[117] President's Address, Annual Meeting, 5 December 1960, MHCA, Vol. 4892, File 7; LAC, RG 100, File "B22 – Board of Broadcast Governors, Public Hearing, 22-25 August 1961," transcript, 251-70, Microfilm reel M-3079.
[118] "Strongest FM Station Goes On Air Tonight," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 10 December 1962, 8; "2nd FM Station Planned," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 29 August 1962, 3.
[119] "The New Sound Of CFMW-FM" pamphlet, n.d., "History" scrapbook, GWB.
[120] [Hildebrand], *CFAM, Radio 950*; "Decisions By BBG In Brief," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 14 April 1965, 32.
[121] President's Address and Directors' Report, Annual Meeting, 5 December 1960, MHCA, Vol. 4892, File 7.

strong signal finally arrived in March 1964, when CHSM went on the air at 1250 AM rebroadcasting the CFAM signal. The 10,000-watt station improved service to southeastern Manitoba as well as to Winnipeg. [122] The BBG commented that a factor in its decision to approve SMBC's application was the demonstration of "a strong community of interest between Altona and the principle [*sic*] area to be served by the proposed station based on language, religious and cultural ties."[123] In contrast to the company's first hearing before the Board of Governors in 1956, at the hearing of the application for the Steinbach station the company deliberately emphasized the large Mennonite population in the Altona-Winkler and Steinbach areas, and confirmed that CFAM aimed to serve this group.[124] The second station made promotion using call letters or frequencies unwieldy, so CFAM and CHSM became known together as "Radio Southern Manitoba," and "CFAM" or "1290" were dropped from program titles in favour of names like the "Twin Ten Sports Report" or "Twin Ten Weather," alluding to the combined power of the stations' 10,000-watt signals.[125]

In 1965 new cartridge tape technology was introduced that permitted commercials to be broadcast separately on the two stations, the first step toward more localized community service in the two (overlapping) broadcast areas. This resulted in a cease and desist notice from the Board of Broadcast Governors when a Winnipeg station complained that running separate commercials contravened CHSM's license, which specified that the Steinbach station would broadcast exactly the same signal as CFAM.[126]

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[122] "CHSM Bows In, Linked To CFAM," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 21 March 1964, 89.
[123] Quoted in Manager's Report, Annual Meeting, 6 December 1963, MHCA, Vol. 4892, File 9.
[124] LAC, RG 100, File "Board of Broadcast of Governors, Public Hearing, 22 & 23 October 1963," transcript, 287, Microfilm reel M-3083.
[125] Staff Meeting Minutes, 22 February 1964, 14 March 1964, GWB.
[126] [Hildebrand], *CFAM, Radio 950*.

Production staff had to scramble to deal with advertising contracts that were now double-booked. The two stations were forced to continue broadcasting identical signals until 1968, when the SMBC successfully petitioned the newly formed Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to amend the terms of its broadcast license.[127]

CFAM further expanded its coverage area in September 1968 by changing its frequency from 1290 to 950, and relocating its transmitter to a site south of Winkler.[128] The final addition to "Radio Southern Manitoba" was a station in Boissevain called CJRB, which went on the air in October 1973. The license for this station permitted it to air separate commercials and local programming, including news, sports, and community announcements.[129] The CRTC soon gave CHSM permission to do the same, allowing each of Radio Southern Manitoba's stations to provide focused local service to its audiences, while benefiting from a centralized program that filled the majority of the broadcast schedule.[130]

The SMBC continued to expand in the following years, establishing its first foothold outside Manitoba in 1974 by acquiring a 50% share in Frontier City Broadcasting Co., Ltd., which owned a small station in Swift Current (CKSW), Saskatchewan, with a repeater station in the town of Shaunavon (CJSN).[131] Three years later, station CHOO was acquired in Ajax, Ontario, a suburban area of Toronto, bringing the company into unfamiliar territory. Around the same time, Elmer Hildebrand, who had

[127] LAC, RG 100, File "C3 – Canadian Radio-Television Commission (CRTC), Public Hearing, 22-24 October 1968," 128-39, Microfilm reel M-3090.
[128] Director's Report, Annual Meeting, 1 November 1968, MHCA, Vol. 4892, File 12.
[129] [Hildebrand], *CFAM, Radio 950*.
[130] LAC, RG 100, File "C-73 – CRTC, Public Hearing, 14-17 May 1974," 983, Microfilm reel M-6339.
[131] LAC, RG 100, File "C-83 – CRTC, Public Hearing, 10 December 1974," 483, Microfilm reel M-6345.

been appointed general manager in 1965, formed a company with former CFAM employee Reuben Hamm to apply for a new station in High River, Alberta, which would join the SMBC family.[132] A few months later, in May 1977, the Southern Manitoba Broadcasting Co. changed its name to Golden West Broadcasting Ltd., denoting the company's widened geographic scope and expanded business vision, which recognized that with a few modifications the community service broadcasting model that had been created to address particular needs in southern Manitoba could be profitable elsewhere.[133] There would be no further expansions or acquisitions for a decade, but management had plenty of work to keep itself occupied. The company that started in Altona had come to encompass more than Radio Southern Manitoba, and had shifted into a new era.

Originating primarily out of a concern about the inadequacy of religious broadcasting in the province, a group of church-going Mennonites headed by Altona and Winkler business leaders established CFAM, and in the process committed to a set of economic and cultural objectives that would inform their conception of commercial public service broadcasting. In a time when radio broadcasters were turning increasingly to niche formats, CFAM (and later CHSM and CJRB) offered audiences a varied program of "good music," farm reports, religious broadcasts, news, and community features, a strategy that was consistently pursued and which appealed to a large and loyal listening public. This was unlike anything presented by the city stations; it was, as its promoters put it, "a different type of radio broadcast."[134] Most importantly, its

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[132] LAC, RG 100, File "RB078 – CRTC, Public Hearing, 1-2 February 1977," 679-742, Microfilm reel M-6364; LAC, RG 100, File "RB078 – CRTC, Public Hearing, 1-2 March 1977," 105-145, Microfilm reel M-6364.
[133] Manitoba Companies Office, "Golden West Broadcasting Ltd.," File no. 0116408, Provincial Archives location no. 195-17-6-14.
[134] LAC, RG 100, File "CBC Board of Governors, 112th Meeting, 21 & 22 April 1958," SMBC submission, Microfilm reel M-4164.

programming was decidedly local to southern Manitoba, contributing to a sense of regional identity, or imagined community. At the same time, a special relationship was sustained with the Mennonite listening community, whose specific needs and interests were the founders' original priority.

Chapter II: The 'Good Music' Station

When CFAM signed on the air as "Manitoba's Farm and Good Music Station" in 1957, the heavy emphasis on classical and semi-classical music in its daily schedule immediately revealed the intensity of the broadcaster's commitment to music programming. The notion of "good music" encapsulated a cultural norm – an aesthetic standard – that the broadcaster hoped its audience would come to embrace. CFAM's first music director, Ben Horch, played an important early role in defining the station's musical programming, which he believed could help transform the image of its Mennonite constituency. By all indications there was considerable consensus among listeners and custodians of public opinion that the music played by CFAM was meritorious, if not necessarily what audiences might wish to listen to all the time. Listeners who voiced their dissatisfaction with the station's musical fare in such public forums as the local community newspaper rarely challenged its quality, but rather usually indicated their preference for a greater diversity of musical styles. Nonetheless, the failure of listeners to appreciate the station's musical programming in its fullness was apprehended by CFAM's management, which eventually oversaw the tempering of the broadcaster's 'serious' music with the introduction of selections that it deemed more in line with the tastes of the larger part of its rural southern Manitoba audience.

From a business standpoint, starting a radio station in southern Manitoba that would make classical and semi-classical music programming one of its main emphases was by no means a sure-fire proposition, but then CFAM's founders were motivated more by a sense of what would benefit their community than purely commercial considerations. As company president Walter Kroeker put it in his annual address to

shareholders in the Southern Manitoba Broadcasting Co. (SMBC) in 1960, theirs was a "tasteful approach" to broadcasting "that would reflect not only our cultural heritage, but all *the best* in the character of this great country of ours."[1] The commitment to presenting "the best" in all its broadcasting was a motif of CFAM's promotion and press in its first years on the air, but nowhere was the founders' cultural idealism more apparent than in the station's music programming. At first the church-going Mennonites had been mainly concerned with providing an alternative to the rock and roll music that was increasingly dominating the playlists on existing stations.[2] Classical and semi-classical music suited this criterion, and appealed to the tastes of several leaders of the radio venture. Classical music was also recognized as possessing intrinsic cultural value, in the sense described by Victorian writer and critic Matthew Arnold, who defined culture as "the best which has been thought and said in the world," and it was generally believed that listeners would do well to develop an appreciation for music in this tradition.[3]

The rhetoric of CFAM's main proponents of classical and semi-classical programming revealed certain assumptions about music's power to reform or uplift its audience. This was a position well developed by other public service radio broadcasters in Canada and Britain, who believed that classical music could form a bulwark against the debasement they associated with mass culture. During the interwar period in Britain, John Reith had established a tradition of high-culture public broadcasting in his role as the first managing director of the British Broadcasting Corporation. Reith's model of cultural intervention stemmed from a desire to "educate and 'civilize' the 'lower' masses

[1] President's Address, Annual Meeting, 5 December 1960, Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives (hereafter MHCA), Winnipeg, Theodore (Ted) E. Friesen fonds, Vol. 4892, File 7. (Emphasis mine.)
[2] Frank H. Epp, "Radio as it Should Be," *Canadian Mennonite*, 7 November 1958, 5.
[3] Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy and Other Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 190.

in order to preserve 'British cultural standards' and inculcate appropriate high-culture 'taste'," and found justification in the criticisms of mass culture expressed by critics like Arnold, F. R. Leavis, Theodor Adorno, and Max Horkheimer.[4] The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation followed a similar course, aiming to educate, inform, and cultivate national understanding – while mitigating the powerful influence of American broadcasting[5] – by offering a range of programming not generally provided by private broadcasters, including high-culture musical offerings like symphony concerts and opera.[6]

High-culture music programming in the public interest was not only the domain of large public broadcasters based in metropolises. Outside observers often expressed surprise that CFAM presented "sophisticated broadcasting" from its location in the heart of a farm community,[7] but in fact in many of its programming priorities it resembled the American university- and college-operated agricultural extension service radio stations of the 1920s. Hugh Slotten observes that "music programming drew the particular attention of extension officers" who, compelled by an agenda of reform and modernization, wished to uplift their rural audiences by instilling in them a taste for classical and semi-classical music.[8] In Canada, the University of Alberta's extension department started radio station CKUA in 1927 out of a concern for adult education. The station focused on its rural audience in much of its programming, and its music menu relied predominantly on

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[4] P. Eric Louw, *The Media and Cultural Production* (London: Sage Publications, 2001), 75.
[5] Frank W. Peers, *The Politics of Canadian Broadcasting, 1920-1951* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 440-442.
[6] L. B. Kuffert, *A Great Duty: Canadian Responses to Modern Life and Mass Culture, 1939-1967* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), 200-201.
[7] Charles J. Lazarus, "Attractive Radio Listening in Canada's Hinterlands," *New York Times*, 3 September 1961.
[8] Hugh R. Slotten, "Radio's Hidden Voice: Noncommercial Broadcasting, Extension Education, and State Universities during the 1920s," *Technology and Culture* 49, no. 1 (2008): 10.

classics and, later, jazz.[9] In Manitoba the French-language commercial station CKSB also broadcast classical music to Winnipeg and the surrounding area, but there was no English-language rural radio station before the founding of CFAM with a similar commitment to cultural development.

Mennonite Musical Tastes

The launch of CFAM occurred at a moment when the musical tastes of the Mennonites who constituted an important part of its audience (and all of the Southern Manitoba Broadcasting Company's shareholders) were evolving in several directions. One source of these changes was radio, which, although viewed with initial suspicion as a worldly medium, had been widely accepted by most Mennonites by the end of the Second World War.[10] Radio brought all manner of music to southern Manitoba, although several of the most popular types, including rock and roll, jazz, swing, and some of what was known as western or cowboy music, were deemed "demoralizing," by community standards.[11] Gramophone records were another medium that permitted exposure to these and other types of music. Mennonites also had their own musical traditions, including a tradition of Low German folk song that was vanishing at midcentury, at a time when English was increasingly becoming the primary language used at home and other social settings.[12] Far more prominent was the tradition of church music, which was an important element of the Mennonite worship experience, and the focus of a considerable amount of

[9] Marylu Walters, *CKUA: Radio Worth Fighting For* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2002).
[10] Royden Loewen, *Diaspora in the Countryside: Two Mennonite Communities and Mid-Twentieth-Century Rural Disjuncture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006, 67; Esther Epp-Tiessen, *Altona: The Story of a Prairie Town* (Altona: D. W. Friesen & Sons, 1982), 233.
[11] "A radio station operated by a group of Mennonites," Vol. 4892, File 5; Epp, "Radio as it Should Be," 5.
[12] Doreen Helen Klassen, *Singing Mennonite: Low German Songs Among the Mennonites* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1989), 3-12. Conducting her research in the late 1970s, Klassen found that "even among Mennonites who still [spoke] Low German, the very idea of Low German song often seemed alien." Yet, she collected approximately two hundred songs.

activity and musical development since the second major influx of Mennonites from Russia in the 1920s.

In the half century after the first migration of Mennonites from Russia to Manitoba in the 1870s, those who remained in Russia had enjoyed economic prosperity, acknowledged the value of advanced education, and embraced certain forms of cultural change, particularly in the area of music.[13] James Urry observes that "in a society where the creative and performing arts were still restricted, music, both religious and secular, became the major focus of artistic endeavour and received widespread community approval."[14] The 1920s immigrants brought to Manitoba a heritage of choral singing in church, school, and local choirs, as well as instrumental music.[15] This distinguished them from the more conservative Mennonites who had previously settled in Manitoba, many of whom continued to sing as congregations in the traditional unaccompanied unison style, and whose churches, with the exception of the small Mennonite Brethren group, did not encourage the use of choirs.[16] The influence of the Russian Mennonites quickly spread to the more established groups, however, whose members joined newly formed choirs and participated in choral workshops and festivals. Under the dedicated leadership of a few talented Mennonite immigrants, more challenging works like German cantatas and oratorios were introduced, sometimes to the dismay of critics who were unaccustomed to this music and apprehensive about the "evils of 'concertistic' performances of sacred

[13] Wesley Berg, *From Russia with Music: A Study of the Mennonite Choral Singing Tradition in Canada* (Winnipeg: Hyperion Press, 1985).
[14] James Urry, *None But Saints: The Transformation of Mennonite Life in Russia, 1789-1889* (Winnipeg: Hyperion Press, 1989), 271.
[15] Berg, *From Russia with Music*, 33-34.
[16] Berg, *From Russia with Music*, 42-44.

music."[17] Instrumental music was encouraged by some of these same leaders, both on its own and as accompaniment to choral and congregational singing.[18] At the same time, some groups adopted the evangelical gospel songs and hymns learned from German Pietists in Russia and North American evangelicals.[19]

'Mr. Mennonite Music'[20]

Musicologist Wesley Berg identifies a shift in the trajectory of Canadian Mennonite musicianship toward increasing sophistication in the 1950s, when training at newly formed Bible colleges and universities became the norm for Mennonite musicians and church music leaders.[21] One individual who played a significant role in the professionalization of Mennonite musical training was Ben Horch, who would later be responsible for defining CFAM's "good music" policy in its early years. Horch was the first Mennonite conductor and educator in Canada to receive a professional education in music, which he brought to bear in his efforts to cultivate musical taste within the Mennonite community in Manitoba and across Canada.[22] Biographer Peter Letkemann contends that Horch "did more to determine the nature and direction of musical development" within the Canadian Mennonite community than any other individual in the twentieth century.[23]

Born in 1907 in the German Lutheran village of Freidorf in southern Russia, Horch and his family emigrated in 1909 to escape economic uncertainty and anti-German

[17] Berg, *From Russia with Music*, 65-79; Peter Klassen, "Concerning Mennonites and Music – A Brief Appraisal," *Voice of the Mennonite Brethren Bible College* 4, no. 1 (1955): 13.
[18] Berg, *From Russia with Music*, 65-79; Berg, "From Piety to Sophistication: Developments in Canadian-Mennonite Music After World War II," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 6 (1988): 89.
[19] Berg, "From Piety to Sophistication," 95-96.
[20] "Benjamin Horch, Mr. Mennonite Music of Winnipeg," *Festival Quarterly*, Summer 1977.
[21] Berg, "From Piety to Sophistication," 95-96.
[22] Berg, "From Piety to Sophistication," 94.
[23] Peter Letkemann, "Benjamin Horch (1907-1992)," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 11 (1993): 236.

sentiment, ultimately settling in Winnipeg.[24] Finding that the Lutheran church in Winnipeg lacked the evangelical zeal of the Pietistic Lutheran tradition to which they were accustomed, Horch's parents joined the North End Mennonite Brethren Mission church.[25] Letkemann claims that Horch "was only able to accomplish what he did for Mennonite music because he was *not* an ethnic Mennonite."[26] Certainly, as a youth, Horch was exposed to a variety of musical influences that would have been foreign to most Mennonites at the time. Horch grew up listening to his family's library of recordings of the great German and Austrian composers like Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Schubert, and Strauss. He received formal vocal training in high school from one of the city's leading voice teachers; was a member of two of the city's fine choirs, the Winnipeg Male Voice Choir and Winnipeg Philharmonic Choir; and sang in an Anglican church choir in exchange for voice and theory lessons.[27] In addition to singing, Ben and his siblings were encouraged by their father to learn to play several musical instruments.[28] Radio was also an important musical influence in the Horch home once the medium became popular in the early 1920s.[29]

Horch's primary musical interest was choral singing, but like the other prominent musical leaders of his generation, he was also quite interested in promoting instrumental music. Horch was a founding member of the Wayside Chapel Orchestra, which emerged from the North End Mennonite Brethren church, and from 1925 to 1938 gave many Mennonites their first taste of classical instrumental music. Special measures sometimes

[24] Peter Letkemann, *The Ben Horch Story* (Winnipeg: Old Oak Publishing, 2007), 9-21.
[25] Letkemann, *Ben Horch Story*, 38-43.
[26] Letkemann, *Ben Horch Story*, 39.
[27] Letkemann, "Benjamin Horch," 237.
[28] Lloyd Siemens, "Ben Horch: Dean of Mennonite conductors," *Mennonite Mirror* 4, no. 1 (1974): 14.
[29] Letkemann, *Ben Horch Story*, 32.

had to be taken to make this music more palatable to Mennonite sensibilities, such as adjusting the titles of pieces: the word "Impromptu" disguised lively dance pieces, and slower waltzes were described as "Meditations."[30] Horch also led a later incarnation of this institution, the Mennonite Symphony Orchestra, from 1943 to 1950.[31] The MSO fostered the musical development of many young Mennonite instrumentalists, several of whom went on to professional symphonic careers.[32]

Horch pursued advanced musical training at the Bible Institute of Los Angeles, where he completed four years of study in 1943.[33] His partial sponsorship by his friend and mentor A. A. Kroeker, a Winkler farmer and businessman, was indicative of changing Mennonite attitudes about higher education and the need for adequately trained musical leadership. In 1944 Horch was invited to Winnipeg to head the music department at the Mennonite Brethren Bible College (MBBC), which was formed in the same year.[34] At MBBC Horch encountered opposition from faculty and church leaders to his emphasis on classical music and performance, which they viewed as a distraction from the objective of evangelical outreach. Horch was sensitive to this criticism, which led him to submit his resignation on three occasions between 1948 and 1954.[35] During his time at MBBC, Horch was also granted a one-year study leave at the Detmold music academy in West Germany.[36] In 1954 the persistent tension at MBBC between Horch's musical vision and the college's desires led to his final resignation, which the college accepted. After a brief stint teaching at a private high school in California, Horch resigned out of

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[30] Bertha Elizabeth Klassen, *Da Capo: "Start Once From the Front": A History of the Mennonite Community Orchestra* (Winnipeg: Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies, 1993), 3-8.
[31] Bertha Klassen, 125.
[32] Bertha Klassen, 36-37.
[33] Letkemann, *Ben Horch Story*, 129-155.
[34] Letkemann, *Ben Horch Story*, 238-240.
[35] Letkemann, *Ben Horch Story*, 256-258.
[36] Letkemann, *Ben Horch Story*, 277.

frustration and accepted an invitation to become the classical music director at radio station KWSO, in Wasco, California.[37]

There were some striking similarities between KWSO and CFAM, as it would appear in 1957. Like CFAM, KWSO was a Mennonite-owned radio station that broadcast to a community with a significant Mennonite population.[38] It was founded in 1950 by Ed Peters, a Mennonite Brethren farmer born in Saskatchewan who made his fortune in California growing potatoes and cotton.[39] Like the group in southern Manitoba, Peters wanted to provide an alternative to existing radio programming, much of which he found objectionable. KWSO broadcast mainly classical and semi-classical music, which Peters believed could serve a function of cultural uplift that could help listeners "rise above themselves" and spur them on "toward greater achievement."[40] The station also broadcast religious programs and had a strict policy guiding the commercials it would air.[41] KWSO promoted itself as a "good music" station, and was probably the inspiration for CFAM's slogan.[42] Horch was responsible for several musical programs, although it is not apparent whether he created any. He would later implement many programming ideas from KWSO at CFAM. Some, like "Symphonic Treasures," "Opera Library," and "R.S.V.P.," would carry the same name.[43]

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[37] Letkemann, *Ben Horch Story*, 318-319.
[38] Letkemann, *Ben Horch Story*, 328.
[39] Letkemann, *Ben Horch Story*, 322; Cornelius J. Dyck, "Station KWSO," *Mennonite Life* 7 (July 1952): 128.
[40] Mary Gregg, "Kern Applauds Edward J. Peters," *Shafter Press*, 12 March 1953, quoted in Letkemann, *Ben Horch Story*, 323.
[41] Letkemann, *Ben Horch Story*, 323; Dyck, 128.
[42] Letkemann, *Ben Horch Story*, 322, 339-340. KWSO was apparently also known as a "farm" station, though it is not clear how this was reflected in its programming. As Horch described it in a draft of a letter, "Generally it is known as the 'friendly farm and good music station' to an area of some 800,000 listeners." Ben Horch to [Southern] Manitoba Broadcasting Co., 13 November 1956, Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies (hereafter CMBS), Winnipeg, Benjamin and Esther Hiebert Horch fonds, Vol. 1228, Binder 05, 60.
[43] Letkemann, *Ben Horch Story*, 324.

'Good Music' at CFAM

When the Southern Manitoba Broadcasting Company made its license submission to the CBC Board of Governors in October 1956, the company directors had not determined what they would offer in the manner of musical programming, only that it would be "a good type of music suitable for the entire family."[44] The provisional guiding principles presented to shareholders went a little further, containing implicit moral criteria that it would prohibit the broadcast of certain types of music, as well as suggesting a minimum aesthetic standard. It declared, "Jazz, swing, crime stories, [and] anything that is demoralizing or degrading is absolutely forbidden; cheap comedy & music such as westerns etc. should be discouraged as much as possible."[45] The latter portion of this statement was perhaps put more forcefully than some within the company would have preferred. Western music held significant appeal to listeners in the area, for Mennonites as well as others, and evidently only some found the genre objectionable. According to Walter Kroeker, the first vice-president of the SMBC, the directors never ruled out western music, and indeed when the company applied for its broadcast license it declared that in the morning it would play a "good type of music – not necessarily classical – with some western included."[46] When the shareholders committed the station to presenting "the best" in all its programming, there was no consensus about what this meant in terms of the music it would play, nor did they articulate any specific ideas about how music programming could function as a vehicle for cultural uplift. In the absence of

[44] "Altona To Get Radio Station," *Canadian Mennonite*, 2 November 1956, 1.
[45] "A radio Station operated by a group of Mennonites," Vol. 4892, File 5.
[46] Letkemann, *Ben Horch Story*, 330; Library and Archives Canada (hereafter LAC), Canadian Broadcasting Corporation fonds, RG 41, Vol. 657, File "Agenda of the 102nd Meeting," "Information for the Board of Governors in Connection with the Report of the Technical Committee," 68.

a defined musical vision, CFAM might have come to resemble many other small-town North American radio stations in its music programming.

Musical focus and purpose were brought to the station with the hiring of Ben Horch as music director. According to biographer Letkemann, no one other than Horch was ever considered for the position, since there was no one else in the Mennonite community with comparable musical expertise and broadcasting experience, and the company directors would not have considered hiring a non-Mennonite for this position. The SMBC board had a good sense of what Horch would bring to the station as music director, and the emphasis he would place on 'serious' instrumental and choral music, since his reputation as a teacher and conductor was well known in the Mennonite community. Many board members and shareholders knew him personally, having sung in his choirs, including president A. J. Thiessen; Walter Kroeker, son of A. A. Kroeker, had played violin for Horch in the Mennonite Symphony Orchestra.[47] Horch had been informed of the undertakings in Altona as early as May 1956 when A. A. Kroeker mailed him some newspaper clippings about the project, but although he was interested in how he might become involved, he had just recently begun his new position at KWSO, and he did not pursue the matter further until November.[48]

In his correspondence, Horch indicated his desire to do the same kind of music programming in southern Manitoba as he had been doing in Wasco.[49] This wish stemmed partly from his own musical tastes, but, as he would express in a number of instances, it also had to do with commitment to the Mennonite community and his conviction that it

[47] Letkemann, *Ben Horch Story*, 330-31.
[48] Letkemann, *Ben Horch Story*, 331.
[49] Ben Horch to [Southern] Manitoba Broadcasting Co., 13 November 1956, CMBS, Vol. 1228, Binder 05, 61-62.

would benefit through association with "good music." As he wrote to his friend Johnny Martens, secretary of the Mennonite Symphony Orchestra Society, he believed that Ed Peters' station had generated considerable "good-will" for Mennonites in the area, and asserted that by introducing KWSO's audience – composed of Mennonites but even more non-Mennonites – to classical music, he had helped "to associate the fine influences of good music as a sort of special attribute of Mennonitism in general, together with the known qualities of industry, thrift, moral rectitude and Christian zeal."[50]

Horch underscored this idea that association with "good music" could improve how Mennonites were perceived in their interactions with broader society and how they viewed themselves in a draft letter he addressed to the SMBC, but apparently never mailed. In it he insisted that "beyond the matter of serving 'good music' as an ambassador of good-will from us to peoples of non-Mennonite origion [*sic*], a Mennonite radio station in this area would have no significant impression."[51] Horch believed that music could be a force of social integration, a conviction he applied to other ethnic groups in his later career at the CBC as well.[52] Mennonites could define and distinguish themselves through association with classical music, accruing what Bourdieu identified as cultural capital through the refinement of taste.[53]

The notion of "good music," as Horch used the term, was firmly rooted in the tradition of Western classical or art music, though it also encompassed semi-classical,

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[50] Ben Horch to Johnny Martens, 19 November 1956, CMBS, Vol. 1228, Binder 05, 61-62.
[51] Ben Horch to [Southern] Manitoba Broadcasting Co., 13 November 1956, CMBS, Vol. 1228, Binder 05, 60.
[52] Doreen Klassen, "Benjamin Horch as Insider-Outsider," in *Sound in the Land: Essays on Mennonites and Music*, ed. Maureen Epp and Carol Ann Weaver (Kitchener: Pandora Press, 2005), 83-94.
[53] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984).

"easy-listening," and folk.[54] Horch's musical priorities became evident as he directed the creation of CFAM's music library, a task begun through correspondence with members of the SMBC board before he and his wife Esther arrived in Altona in early February 1957. A "basic library," he wrote, should "cover a four hundred year period in music making in the right proportion of generally five great epochs of music" (i.e., Renaissance, Baroque, Classic, Romantic, and Modern).[55] Intending that CFAM, like KWSO, would feature full-length operas, Horch advised that the library should also include these, as well as sacred works like oratorios and cantatas, and "good gospel songs and hymns" to be selected by "a *responsible musician* from any of the major Mennonite churches."[56] The "character" of this library was to be "governed by our most important listening audience, German and English." The library was to include folk music from these traditions. Referring to the Mennonite community, Horch declared that the collection "should stress our German cultural heritage in the same way that CKSB in St. Boniface does for the French," and should also represent local talent.[57] Horch was given considerable freedom in constructing the station's library and developing its music programs, although not necessarily with the full confidence of members of the board, who, Horch recalled, would have preferred to hear more popular music like crooner Perry Como and bandleader Lawrence Welk.[58]

When CFAM first signed on, its broadcast schedule featured prominently several programs dedicated to 'serious' classical music "chosen from the works of such well-known composers as Handel, Haydn, Bach, Beethoven, Wagner, etc.," and modern

[54] Horch, Program Analysis, CMBS, Vol. 1228, Binder 05, 76-78.
[55] Ben Horch to D. K. Friesen, 22 January 1957, CMBS, Vol. 1228, Binder 05, 65-67.
[56] Ben Horch to Walter Kroeker, 22 January 1957, CMBS, Vol. 1228, Binder 05, 68-70.
[57] Ben Horch to D. K. Friesen, 22 January 1957, CMBS, Vol. 1228, Binder 05, 65-67.
[58] Letkemann, *Ben Horch Story*, 335.

composers like Vaughan Williams and Benjamin Britten.[59] These programs constituted three to four hours of the station's daily airtime. This was less than the six hours daily that Horch asserted was the minimum for a "good music station,"[60] but more than was available during the daytime on CBW, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's Winnipeg station, or on the French-language CKSB, the province's other private broadcaster committed to classical programming. Monday through Friday, listeners could hear "Symphonic Treasures" from 11:05 a.m. to noon, "Concert Hall" from 2 to 3 p.m., and "Evening Concert" from 7:05 to 9 p.m. Horch described the latter program as consisting of "75 per cent familiar or near familiar music (familiar to concert goers); 15 per cent contemporary, and 10 per cent completely familiar music," while the other two consisted "mainly of familiar and near familiar selections."[61] Saturdays offered "Symphonic Treasures" in the morning, an afternoon concert hour at 2 p.m. (initially designated as the "Young People's Concert"), and an hour-long "Saturday Night Symphony" at 8:05. The afternoon concert was replaced in October 1957 with a three-hour program that broadcast opera and oratorio performances on alternating weeks.[62] Sunday afternoons from 3 to 5 p.m. were given to "R.S.V.P.," the station's popular all-classical request show.[63]

These programs were hosted by Horch, who provided educational and entertaining commentary in an informal style about the music he played, nearly always speaking without a script. Some listeners complained that he went on too long, while others found it part of his charm. Often, in the enthusiasm of delivering a commentary, he

[59] "Music Director Places Emphasis On Classics," *Red River Valley Echo*, 13 March 1957, 13.
[60] Ben Horch, "Program Analysis," n.d. [1957], CMBS, Vol. 1228, Binder 05, 76-78.
[61] "Music Director Places Emphasis On Classics," *Red River Valley Echo*, 13 March 1957, 13.
[62] Radio schedule, *Winnipeg Free Press*, 25 October 1957, 16.
[63] "There's Something New on the air for you" (brochure), 1957, CMBS, Vol. 1228, Binder 05, 82b.

would neglect to read paid commercials.[64] He once explained his approach was to talk as someone "merely 'sharing' his musical interest," in contrast to other announcers, like those on the BBC transcription service to which CFAM would later subscribe, who he felt presumed a musically sophisticated audience and gave listeners the impression of being "talked down to."[65]

CFAM played a variety of other music throughout the day, much of which would have been less demanding listening for the uninitiated. Two announcers hosted most of the other music programs, including "The 1290 Band Parade," "Familiar Classics," "Piano Personalities," "Choral Spotlight," and "The Nocturne Hour."[66] These often featured "semi-classical" pieces, sentimental, melodic music performed by an orchestra or perhaps a piano, and which might have lyrics.[67] Folk music from around the world was played after the "Evening Concert" on "Songs of the Nations." "Best Loved Hymns," Monday to Saturday afternoons, presented the songs listeners had learned to appreciate in church. Esther Horch developed and hosted a six-year series entitled "The Story of Our Hymns" that aired Sunday mornings at 9:15, before church service broadcasts.[68]

CFAM supported local talent by recording amateur musicians for broadcast on several of its programs. A major contribution in this regard was the recording of classes at regional music festivals, beginning in the spring of 1958 at Winnipeg's Manitoba Music Competition Festival and the Southern Manitoba Music Festival, and later including the Southeastern Manitoba Music Festival.[69] Highlights were broadcast on a

[64] Letkemann, *Ben Horch Story*, 337, 341.
[65] Ben Horch to Clyde Logan, British Broadcasting Corporation, 17 March 1959, CMBS, Vol. 1235, File 18.
[66] "There's Something New on the air for you" (brochure), 1957, CMBS, Vol. 1228, Binder 05, 82b.
[67] George Wiebe, telephone conversation with author, 1 May 2008.
[68] "There's Something New on the air for you" (brochure), 1957, CMBS, Vol. 1228, Binder 05, 82b.
[69] Monthly classical music program guides, 1958, CMBS, Vol. 1228, Binder 05.

Sunday afternoon program throughout the year. The station actively promoted the development of young talent by providing a number of awards available through annual competitions. These included trophies awarded to school choirs in several age categories, the sponsorship of a trophy and scholarship prize through the Junior Musical Club (whose broadcasts the station carried), and the donation of several trophies to the area festivals, which had many young participants.[70] As station manager Elmer Hildebrand wrote, these awards were part of the station's larger objective "to help further the cause of good music in southern Manitoba."[71]

There was some allowance for "popular music" on CFAM as long as it fit the aesthetic and moral criteria that characterized the station's "good music" policy. During the Horch years, "popular" music was restricted to use in programs not devoted to music – i.e., interludes during farm, women's, or other community broadcasts. A program analysis written by Horch laid out the terms for what would be considered acceptable "pops" programming. "All popular music should be conservative in musical values, stressing lyrical content, harmonic reserve and moderation [in] rhythmic outline," he wrote. Music with lyrics was not to suggest in any way the debasement of the "Mennonite way of life," particularly as it concerned "the Mennonite code of ethics in courtship, marriage, home, children, special attitudes and patterns of thinking with reference to matters pertaining to divorce, promiscuous living and the encouragement of drinking." Songs perceived to mock or disparage biblical teaching, like George and Ira Gershwin's irreverent "It Ain't Necessarily So," would likewise not be tolerated. Political

[70] "Musical Winners," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 4 May 1968, 69; Scrapbook, 1971-1972 – newspaper photos of school choir competitions; Hildebrand, "An inside report".
[71] Elmer Hildebrand, "An inside report on Manitoba's farm and good music station," *Canadian Mennonite*, 7 March 1967, 15.

controversy was also to be avoided – a song like "Sixteen Tons," for example, about the low-wage grind of coal mining, was considered "Communistically inflammatory." Some "symphonic jazz" by "serious composers" like George Gershwin, Morton Gould, and Aaron Copland was acceptable, but not all works by these conductors.[72] However, "outright jazz that is 'cultish' in character" – "clever music" mainly designed "for sexual stimulation"[73] – was intolerable. This was understood to cover "jungle rhythms," progressive jazz, calypso, and rock and roll. Instrumental "pops" could also be unacceptable if the song titles were objectionable. Authentic "songs of the West" could be played, since this music – "cowboy songs, songs of the railroaders, miners, and literally anything that is associated with the true pioneer spirit of the West" – had a historical basis (it seems the political content of these songs, which often addressed themes of labour, was not explicit enough to be noteworthy). Horch drew a distinction between these songs, which represented a folk tradition, and the popular "Westerns" produced by the music industry with their "contrived nasal vocalism and cheap artificiality," not to mention lyrical content that in many instances may have been questionable.[74]

Listening to the Audience

Public response to CFAM's "good music" programming was mixed. The minority of the audience who were classical music aficionados embraced the new station when it came on the air. These were the type of people who subscribed to the station's monthly guide to concert highlights so they could be sure to catch their favourite works when they

[72] Ben Horch, "Program Analysis," n.d. [1957], CMBS, Vol. 1228, Binder 05, 76-78.
[73] Ben Horch, Memo presented to president and board of directors of Radio CFAM re. Hit Parade, 17 April 1957, CMBS, Vol. 1228, Binder 05, 84-86.
[74] Ben Horch, "Program Analysis," n.d. [1957], CMBS, Vol. 1228, Binder 05, 76-78.

were broadcast on the afternoon and evening concert programs, and who submitted their requests to the show "R.S.V.P." Many listeners took the opportunity in their letters to this program to express their gratitude to CFAM for playing music of a quality worth listening to. Comparisons were often made to Winnipeg's CBC station, which letter writers claimed had been "on a very degenerate operating schedule," dropping many of its "decent musical programmes" in the period before CFAM was started.[75] Letters to "R.S.V.P." were also a way for listeners to enter into dialogue with Horch about the music he played, as he read and responded to their comments on the air. This sometimes elicited further comment from other listeners. The longest such dialogue concerned the subject of "contemporary" or "modern" (i.e., twentieth-century) classical music, which Horch was happy to broadcast. For over a year critics and supporters of this music debated its merits, while Horch offered his own analysis.[76] CFAM received around two hundred letters per year for "R.S.V.P." during the time it was hosted by Horch.[77] Interestingly, the majority were from listeners who lived in Winnipeg and who did not have Mennonite surnames. This is not necessarily representative of the composition of the audience for the station's "good music" programming during these early years, but it does suggest that it was this Winnipeg population that was most engaged by it.

The larger part of CFAM's audience was less familiar with classical music, and demonstrated an array of responses. An interview with Horch in a promotional piece in Altona's *Red River Valley Echo*, published by SMBC executive D. K. Friesen, presaged

[75] Frederic Wieler to CFAM, 19 March 1957, CMBS, Vol. 1235, File 19; Barbara Taylor, Winnipeg, to CFAM, 17 March 1957, CMBS, Vol. 1235, File 19.
[76] This critical discourse began in September 1957 and seems to have ended in October 1958, whereupon a similar discussion began about jazz. CMBS, Vol. 1235, File 19.
[77] There is no indication that letters written to "R.S.V.P." after Horch left in late March 1959 were preserved.

the disjuncture some listeners would experience between their tastes and expectations and the reality of what the station presented as "good music." "Will you be broadcasting old time music?" asked the reporter, referring to the folk music sometimes heard on CBW, CJOB, and American radio stations. "We sure will," Horch said in jest. "We'll be playing lots of Bach, and he's been buried for the last 250 years. How much older do you want your music?"[78] Some of CFAM's audience did not appreciate the joke. A letter from one listener in Plum Coulee read: "The farm broadcasts are alright [*sic*] and the churches on Sunday are very nice too. But the music you got makes a guy sick . . . we are not used to such classical stuff and I am not interested to get used to it."[79] In the weeks after the station went to air the *Echo* printed remarks from listeners who did not share the station's conception of "good music." An editorial related the story of a farmer who claimed that "his cows had been happy to give milk to rock and roll, but when he tuned in to CFAM, the cows withheld their milk supply."[80] "I don't like the music," said another listener. "If it weren't for the music a lot more people would listen."[81]

Other critics were less dismissive. These were the type who could appreciate some classical music, but who were unprepared for a daily diet of symphonies, chamber music, and cantatas. Reporter Alf Warkentin commended the broadcaster for offering respite from the popular music that was predominant on other radio stations, but suggested that its aims were too ambitious for a portion of its audience. "After a while," he wrote, "we had a secret longing for good music, western version, after listening to

[78] "Music Director Places Emphasis On Classics," *Red River Valley Echo*, 13 March 1957, 13.
[79] Epp, "Radio As It Should Be," *Canadian Mennonite*, 7 November 1958, 5.
[80] Vic Penner, "Heard Along the Line," *Red River Valley Echo*, 20 March 1957, 2.
[81] Alf Warkentin, "Sidewalk Survey," *Red River Valley Echo*, 24 April 1957, 1.

classics morning, afternoon and evening. But for patriotic reasons we didn't switch."[82] Defenders of CFAM's musical mission, on the other hand, argued that it was the station's job to improve the sensibilities of its audience. Writing in response to Warkentin's reporting, one letter to the editor in the *Echo* read, "Certainly, if people are supposed to like classical music, they must hear it. And isn't one of the aims of CFAM to raise the cultural standards of our Mennonite people?"[83]

Although the SMBC board had made a commitment to broadcasting "only good music rendered by the best artists and recordings available," it had no intention of antagonizing its audience.[84] Advertisers also had a stake in the station's success, and shared its concern about retaining listeners. Community service rather than financial returns may have been the main priority at CFAM, but when faced with the prospect of regaining the confidence of advertisers once most of the station's original clients withdrew their support by late spring of 1957, budget considerations compelled management to reconsider the character of its programming. In addition, certain executives attempted to impose their personal musical interests, resulting in continual pressure for Horch to modify his "good music" policy. Against his wishes and sometimes without advising him, programs were shortened, rescheduled, and deleted from the schedule.[85] By mid October 1957 the morning symphony program had been cancelled, and by January some board members wanted to replace the two-hour evening concert, the centrepiece of the station's classical programming, with a religious program that would

[82] Alf Warkentin, "On The Hustings … and other things," *Red River Valley Echo*, 27 March 1957, 12.
[83] Henry Krahn, Letter to the Editor, *Red River Valley Echo*, 8 May 1957, 2.
[84] A. J. Thiessen, SMBC president, "Opening Program of Radio Station CFAM," 13 March 1957, CMBS, Vol. 1235, File 18.
[85] Ben Horch to "the Management," 15 August 1958, CMBS, Vol. 1228, Binder 05, 126-128.

generate revenue.[86] The board decided against this, but continued to look for ways to broaden the station's musical appeal, approaching Horch a few months later with the idea of replacing some of his classical programs with western or barbershop music.[87] Horch shut down this idea by refusing to take responsibility for any such programming if the station made this change.[88]

Tensions mounted as the executive continued to discuss the music issue. Their intent was not to abandon classical music, but to make CFAM's music more accessible and diverse. According to Horch the emphasis of discussions at the management level was on playing more "familiar classics, … more lightness, shorter pieces, [and] 'happier music'."[89] Horch was, however, uncompromising in his vision and unwilling to make concessions in the implementation of his "good music" policy, and because he was a well-known and respected figure in the Manitoba Mennonite community, his employers felt the options available for coercion were limited. Station manager and company director D. K. Friesen made this known to Horch, saying, "if you weren't who you are we'd fire you."[90] Horch eventually left the station along with his wife Esther at the end of March 1959 to take a producer position at CBC Radio in Winnipeg, a job the CBC offered him to eliminate their competition.[91]

With Horch gone, CFAM management was able to exercise its full authority in the area of music programming, and gradually changes were introduced, beginning by placing greater emphasis on "lighter" classics and increasing the amount of semi-classical

[86] Radio schedule, *Winnipeg Free Press*, 14 October 1957, 10; Esther Horch, "From My Diary," 9 January 1958, CMBS, Vol. 1228, Binder 05, 10-16; Letkemann, *Ben Horch Story*, 346.
[87] Esther Horch, "From My Diary," 19 June 1958, CMBS, Vol. 1228, Binder 05, 10-16.
[88] Ben Horch to D. K. Friesen, n.d., CMBS, Vol. 1228, Binder 05, 123-124.
[89] Horch to "the Management," 15 August 1958, CMBS, Vol. 1228, Binder 05, 126-128.
[90] Handwritten note by Esther Horch on the back of a copy of a letter from Ben Horch to Walter Kroeker, 24 January 1959, CMBS, Vol. 1228, Binder 05, 130.
[91] Letkemann, *Ben Horch Story*, 360-61.

music.[92] This was more a matter of introducing a greater variety of styles than shifting to a lighter format, and the station continued for many years to cater to its classical audience with programs like "Concert Hall," "Evening Concert," "R.S.V.P.," and "Opera and Oratorio Library." CFAM's license renewal application in 1961 asserted that the station devoted approximately fifty-five hours per week to classical music, although thirty-six of these hours were occupied by "Classics Till Dawn," a six-hour program starting at midnight, Monday through Saturday. The remaining 19 hours were less than the approximately four hours a day averaged by Horch, but it was still substantial. The station also played about forty-five hours per week of "semi-classical, folk song, and sacred music."[93]

With the addition of the Steinbach rebroadcasting station CHSM in 1964, Radio Southern Manitoba began to place new emphasis on the continental European melodies and folk songs CFAM had always offered, referring to it as "cosmopolitan" radio in acknowledgement of the various ethnic and linguistic communities it served.[94] In subsequent years the broadcaster continued to diversify its musical offerings, reducing the amount of airtime given to classics. Classical aficionados were disappointed by the changes, but with the rise of FM radio in the mid to late 1960s and the launch of the high culture-oriented CBC station CBW-FM, they were already increasingly tuning in to its high-fidelity sound. The drift away from the original model of "good music"

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[92] Walter Kroeker noted some difficulties finding pieces of appropriate length and character in his 1960 President's Report, Annual Meeting, MHCA, Vol. 4892, File 7.
[93] Walter E. Kroeker, president, SMBC, to F. G. Nixon, Director, Telecommunications and Electronics Branch, Department of Transport, 24 November 1961, Vol. 4892, File 8.
[94] "Demand creates AM radio station," n.s., [1964], and "Double Power at Night" promotional pamphlet, [Fall 1968], in "History of Southern Manitoba Broadcasting Co. Ltd., 1957-[1972]" (scrapbook), Golden West Broadcasting (hereafter GWB), Altona. In his 1969 President's Report Walter Kroeker noted that in representations to regulators over the previous years the broadcaster had tried to "consolidate [its] claim to being, in some significant aspects, an ethnic station." Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives, Winnipeg, Theodore (Ted) E. Friesen fonds, Vol. 4892, File 12.

programming elicited no great protest. There were, however, some disappointed parties, such as original shareholder Ted Friesen, a lover of classical music and brother to long-time SMBC executive D. K. Friesen, who sold his shares in the early 1970s because of the broadcaster's perceived compromises in "cultural and religious programming."[95]

Radio Southern Manitoba was perhaps not as successful in cultivating highbrow musical tastes among its audience as its founders and Horch had hoped, but the broadcaster nonetheless influenced the tastes and musical development of many of its listeners by becoming part of the cultural fabric of its broadcast region. By offering multi-faceted, family-oriented community service, CFAM, and later CHSM and CJRB, became a fixture in many Manitoba homes, and a vector by which many listeners became acquainted with musical styles that might have otherwise remained foreign. Some found this music particularly stimulating. Musicologist Wesley Berg recalls that it was a "program of piano music" heard on CFAM in the summer of 1959 that inspired him to become a musician, and asserts that "there are others for whom such broadcasts were also a revelation," identifying the station as one of the factors that set Mennonite musicians and audiences on a trajectory toward greater sophistication."[96] There is no question that the broadcast of several hours each week of live and recorded performances by school, church, and community choirs, individual vocalists and instrumentalists, and instrumental groups promoted the development of musical skill. The station also nurtured the careers of two young men who would go on to prominent positions in national music broadcasting at CBC Radio: Eric Friesen, of Altona, who did small jobs as a "gofer" for several years before doing his first on-air job on the nightshift at age 16 in 1963, and

[95] Ted Friesen, *Memoirs: A Personal Autobiography of Ted Friesen* (Altona: by the author, 2003), 59.
[96] Berg, "From Piety to Sophistication," 96.

Howard Dyck, of Winkler, who started working at the station immediately after graduating from high school in 1961, continuing through his university education.[97]

When CFAM was in the planning stages in 1956, its founders recognized the importance of music programming to their audience, and were motivated by the desire to provide an alternative to the popular music prevalent on other radio stations which transgressed the norms of their Mennonite community, either in its lyrical content or through associations made with its musical form. A mission of service to the people of southern Manitoba, and especially Mennonites, informed the broadcaster's commitment to community development and cultural uplift through its programming. The station's music programming would be employed to serve these purposes, but there was initially some ambiguity about what it would sound like and whose tastes would be represented. Ben Horch articulated a vision for a "good music" station that focused on classical and semi-classical music which fulfilled the imperative of providing an alternative to existing music broadcasters and epitomized the objective of cultural advancement. But the concept of "good" music had another meaning that only listeners could determine, according to whether it suited their tastes and they decided to listen to it. A considerable number of listeners accepted that the station's music was "good" in its moral and aesthetic senses, and many took pleasure in it as well, but it soon became apparent that CFAM's "good music" did not completely satisfy the appetites of its audience. To a certain extent CFAM's audience was prepared to accept an "uplift" agenda, but they were not passive subjects. They made their opinions known, and both station management and advertisers knew listeners were not shy of simply turning the radio dial. The broadcaster

[97] CBC Radio, "Studio Sparks – Host," <http://www.cbc.ca/studiosparks/host.html>; CBC Radio, "Choral Concert," <http://www.cbc.ca/radio2/programs.html?CHORAL_CONCERT>; [CFAM] Staff Meeting Minutes and Staff Memos, 1957 to 1962, GWB.

realized that if it were remain commercially viable and attract listeners, it would have to make a greater effort to appeal to their interests.

Chapter III: Mediating the Transformation of Rural Mennonite Life

The decades following the Second World War were a time of rapid social, economic, and cultural change on the Canadian prairies, of such scope and magnitude that this transformation can be described as a revolution in rural society.[1] Developments in the agricultural economy that had dominated the region precipitated social upheaval, including migration from farms to towns and cities, heightened consumerism, and increased differentiation in the gendered division of labour. Improved transportation links facilitated the traversal of physical distance and social boundaries, and the expanding reach of electronic media collapsed time as well as space as growing radio and television audiences consumed mass culture frequently emanating from metropolises like New York, Toronto, or even Winnipeg. These changes had a marked effect on Mennonites, who had until the war largely resisted the mounting forces of modernization, maintaining in their ethno-religious communities a significant degree of isolation from broader society. In the postwar era they relinquished their former isolated, enclave-bound existence as they began to participate more fully in mainstream Canadian life. Changing patterns of social interaction were accompanied by a process of cultural reformulation, by which Mennonites attempted to retain some sense of distinctive group identity and a core of inherited values and traditions while adjusting to new circumstances and embracing aspects of the culture of the world around them. The establishment of radio station CFAM exemplified this combination of willingness to engage with the cultural practices of dominant society and desire for continuity with the past. In its farm, music, religious,

[1] John L. Shover describes this change – a "fundamental transmutation of rural life," which despite its significance went largely unremarked – in *First Majority – Last Minority: The Transforming of Rural Life in America* (De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976), xiv; Gerald Friesen addresses the profound transformations in the Canadian "new west" in *The Canadian Prairies: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 418-60.

and community programming, CFAM offered a form of acceptable culture to a society in flux. It not only reflected the values and priorities of its audience, but also broadcast the message its *producers* – business, community, and cultural leaders – believed the audience should hear, in this way helping shape how they would respond to their changing world.

For more than four centuries Mennonites had sought to live as a people separate from "the world." Emerging from the Anabaptist movement in the sixteenth-century Swiss, German, and Dutch states, their heretical theology – which insisted on the separation of church and state, the rejection of infant baptism, and an ethic of love and nonresistance that forbade participation in war – undermined the authority of official churches and secular rulers, resulting in religious persecution and oppression. Mennonites found refuge in areas of relative geographic isolation, where the Christian doctrine of nonconformity to the world sustained and justified a separatist way of life. In time a strong bond was assumed between the preservation of their faith and the maintenance of a distinctive culture, a bond transplanted and reaffirmed through successive migrations in pursuit of religious freedoms as well as economic opportunities.[2]

Separation was achieved by the first wave of Mennonite immigrants to Manitoba, who arrived from Russia in the 1870s. Settling *en bloc* into the relative isolation of farm and village communities, they maintained their Low German dialect, established their own community institutions, and worshipped according to long-standing religious traditions. The second major wave of Mennonite immigration in the 1920s brought a group that was considered more culturally sophisticated, better educated, and generally

[2] Frank H. Epp, *Mennonites in Canada, 1786-1920: The History of a Separate People* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1974).

more open to acculturation.[3] There were real cultural differences between this group, referred to as *Russländer*, and the descendants of the early immigrants, known as *Kanadier*, but despite early tensions, members of both groups interacted extensively and could eventually be considered to be largely amalgamated.[4] Until the Second World War, even as the Mennonites began adjusting to the culture of the surrounding society, their communities remained considerably isolated and a high degree of group coherence and solidarity was preserved; no significant assimilation had occurred.[5] This isolated rural lifestyle could not be maintained in the years that followed, however, as Mennonites contended with new realities, including technological advances in agriculture, the expansion of the global market economy, urbanization, and the growing necessity of higher education. Accompanying these changes were increasingly specific gender roles and the heightened appeal of evangelicalism.[6] Responses to these pressures of modernization varied, but the majority of Mennonites became more integrated into the mainstream of Canadian society. While some were assimilated, giving up their sense of ethnic identity and drifting away from the Mennonite church, most succeeded in maintaining a sense of continuity with the past by embracing new ideas and practices while reaffirming the importance of their ethno-religious tradition, even as aspects of this tradition itself were often reinvented. In doing so a discernible corporate identity was preserved.[7]

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[3] Frank H. Epp, *Mennonites in Canada, 1920-1940: A People's Struggle for Survival* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1982), 243-45.
[4] E. K. Francis, *In Search of Utopia: The Mennonites in Manitoba* (Altona: D. W. Friesen and Sons, 1955), 212-13.
[5] Francis, 275-77.
[6] Royden Loewen, *Diaspora in the Countryside: Two Mennonite Communities and Mid-Twentieth-Century Rural Disjuncture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 8-9.
[7] T. D. Regehr, *Mennonites in Canada, 1939-1970: A People Transformed* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 2-4; Loewen, *Diaspora in the Countryside*, 230.

In places like southern Manitoba the processes of accommodation and cultural reformulation were supported by the existence of a constellation of Mennonite institutions, including the church, schools, and media, and the concentration of Mennonites in areas like Altona, Winkler, and Steinbach, where they constituted the majority of the population. These communities were marked by a significant degree of what is called "institutional completeness," in that most of the major social and cultural institutions their members would have reason to encounter over the course of their lives were controlled by their own group.[8] In the age of mass communications, CFAM and its sister stations CHSM and CJRB were important additions to the ensemble of institutions that served southern Manitoba Mennonites. As an enterprise owned exclusively by church members, transmitting a signal that covered the main areas of Mennonite population, and attracting a considerable audience from their number, it reflected in its broadcasts many of the values and characteristics of the evolving Mennonite culture as it was reproduced and recreated in the context of postwar social and economic realities.

The establishment of CFAM was a product of the transformation of Mennonite culture. By the early 1950s most Mennonite homes had a radio, but the medium had not always been so widely accepted. Before the Second World War many Canadian Mennonites regarded radio entertainment as a source of corrupting secular influence. Resistance was strongest from the least acculturated groups, and in these communities the owners of the first radios often used their sets in secret to avoid facing the disapproval of fellow church members; many young people with radios also had to conceal them from their parents. At least one of the more conservative, nonconformist Manitoba churches

[8] Raymond Breton, "Institutional Completeness of Ethnic Communities and the Personal Relations of Immigrants," *American Journal of Sociology* 70, no. 2 (1964): 194.

formally resolved in 1934 to discourage its use.[9] In time increasing numbers of Mennonites found reasons to justify radio usage: farmers decided they needed it to obtain commodity prices, while for others radio was the only way to follow the latest wartime news, which was a special concern to those with relatives in the Soviet Union.[10] By 1951, rates of radio ownership in the two census divisions comprising the main areas of Mennonite settlement in southern Manitoba were 78% in Division 1 (including the Rural Municipality of Hanover and its main town, Steinbach – the old East Reserve) and 86% in Division 2 (covering the municipalities of Rhineland, Roland, Stanley, and Morris, and including the towns of Altona, Gretna, Plum Coulee, and Winkler – the old West Reserve). This latter figure was nearing the national average of 92%.[11] The difference between the two areas might be partly because electrification, recently completed in the West Reserve, was still in progress in the East Reserve, restricting some households to battery-powered or simple crystal radio sets.[12]

Recognition of radio's potential as a vehicle for evangelism and faith nurture helped increase its acceptance, and as the various Mennonite groups across North America accepted the medium they began to produce religious broadcasts. Some of the earliest were begun in the United States in the late 1930s, and in Canada Mennonite

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[9] *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*, s.v. "Radio," by Donald B. Kraybill, <http://www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/contents/R34ME.html>; Royden Loewen, *Blumenort: A Mennonite Community in Transition: 1874-1982* (Blumenort, Man.: Blumenort Mennonite Historical Society, 1983), 431, 458-59.
[10] Regehr, 352.
[11] Dominion of Bureau of Statistics, *1951 Census of Canada*, vol. 3, *Housing and Families*, Table 41.
[12] John H. Warkentin, *The Mennonite Settlements of Southern Manitoba* (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1960; reprint, Steinbach, Man.: Hanover Steinbach Historical Society, 2000), 230, 239 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

programs were founded in Ontario and Saskatchewan in 1940.[13] In Manitoba the evangelically-oriented Mennonite Brethren church led the way when its "Gospel Light Hour" radio ministry was established in Winnipeg in 1947.[14] Mennonite broadcast activity expanded in the late 1940s and 1950s, and by 1952 Mennonite churches, conferences, and schools were involved in producing at least ten broadcasts in western Canada, including four in British Columbia, two in Alberta, four in Saskatchewan, and two in Manitoba.[15] In the United States three Mennonite colleges operated FM stations during this period, but in Canada there were no stations owned or operated by Mennonites until the Southern Manitoba Broadcasting Co. (SMBC) established CFAM.[16]

This pattern of growing involvement by Mennonites and their institutions with radio production at midcentury can be read as a measure of the vitality of the Mennonite community. As Gerald Friesen remarks in his analysis of communications and history, communities must adapt to new media when the dominant technology changes if they are remain viable.[17] Although one might conclude that Mennonites were about a generation behind the technology when it to came broadcast activity, if one considers when radio became the dominant medium for the Manitoba Mennonite community, the creation of CFAM was indeed timely.

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[13] *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*, s.v. "Broadcasting, Radio and Television," by Harold S. Bender and Diane Zimmerman Umble, <http://www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/contents/B761ME.html>.
[14] Wally Kroeker, "Mennonite Brethren Broadcasting," in *For Everything a Season: Mennonite Brethren in North America, 1874-2002: An Informal History*, ed. Paul Toews and Kevin Enns-Rempel (Winnipeg: Kindred Productions, 2002), 92; Anna Ens, *In Search of Unity: Story of the Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba* (Winnipeg: CMBC Publications, 1996), 101.
[15] J. G. Rempel, "Mennonites on the Air in Western Canada," *Mennonite Life*, July 1952, 125-27.
[16] *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*, s.v. "Broadcasting, Radio and Television."
[17] Gerald Friesen, *Citizens and Nation: An Essay on History, Communication, and Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 198.

Radio for a Changing Society

The desire for an outlet for religious programming was one of the primary factors driving the creation of CFAM, but the success of this undertaking rested in large part on the particular initiative of A. J. Thiessen and the contributions of the group he assembled. The radio venture was an example of the flourishing of Mennonite-owned businesses in southern Manitoba at midcentury and changing attitudes toward entrepreneurship. Traditionally, Mennonites in North America had been hesitant to enter the world of commerce, since the religious community tended to consider the capitalist pursuit of profit to be a potentially corrupting influence that was in conflict with its ethic of nonconformity and its communal orientation.[18] This attitude began to change in the early decades of the twentieth century, which saw the commercial development of Mennonite towns like Steinbach, Winkler, and Altona.[19] In the postwar years there was a considerable increase in business activity as Mennonite young people looked for alternatives to farming, which had prohibitively high capital requirements owing to mechanization and larger farm sizes, and found opportunities in rural businesses that benefitted from a prosperous economy. As economic and cultural circumstances shifted, traditional antipathies toward business subsided. Many new and expanded enterprises focused on meeting the needs of the agricultural economy, but Mennonite business people quickly diversified into other areas as well.[20] Southern Manitoba Broadcasting Co. directors Thiessen, D. K. Friesen, and Walter Kroeker were members of a new class of successful Mennonite entrepreneurs in medium- to large-scale businesses.

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[18] Calvin Redekop, Stephen C. Ainlay, and Robert Siemens, *Mennonite Entrepreneurs* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 78-79.
[19] John J. Friesen, *Building Communities: The Changing Face of Manitoba Mennonites* (Winnipeg: CMU Press, 1997), 89-90.
[20] Regehr, 148-50.

Complementing this activity was a growing culture of consumerism, as retail opportunities in towns like Steinbach and Winkler expanded.[21]

Farmers, too, were becoming increasingly business-minded as their operations became more highly capitalized and subject to the uncertainty of market forces. Many were active in the cooperative movement, which set up stores that provided a wide range of farm supplies and household goods, as well as helping to create new markets by establishing factories to process farm products, such as Altona's Co-op Vegetable Oils.[22] Credit unions brought together farmers, business people, and others in cooperative enterprise. The establishment of CFAM not only embodied the entrepreneurship and economic diversification of the period, but it also built on this practice of seeking broad involvement to develop institutions designed to serve local interests.

Representatives of the SMBC proclaimed that CFAM's objective was to render a service to its regional community. Unlike most private broadcasters, which cultural studies scholar Ien Ang argues aim to "conquer" a maximum audience so the attention paid by its listeners can be sold to advertisers, CFAM pursued a strategy that resembled public service broadcasting, which is characterized by "a pervasive sense of cultural responsibility and social accountability."[23] As manager Elmer Hildebrand remarked on the occasion of the station's tenth anniversary, CFAM's offering of farm, music, and religious programming, supplemented with a variety of other regular features, was designed "to assist in the economic, cultural, and spiritual growth of our province."[24]

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[21] Loewen, *Diaspora in the Countryside*, 62-63; Hans Werner, *Living Between Worlds: A History of Winkler* (Winkler: Winkler Heritage Society, 2006), 138-39.
[22] John J. Friesen, 86-89; Henry Dyck, "Jacob John Siemens and the Co-operative Movement in Southern Manitoba, 1929-1955" (M.A. thesis, University of Manitoba, 1982).
[23] Ien Ang, *Desperately Seeking the Audience* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 26-28.
[24] Elmer Hildebrand, "An inside report on Manitoba's farm and good music station," *Canadian Mennonite*, 7 March 1967, 19.

Without question, the broadcaster sought to reflect the tastes, interests, and needs of its listeners, but it also aimed to establish cultural standards and promote the development of the local economy. Whether producers reflected audience tastes accurately when this was their aim, and whether audiences received the meanings producers intended, are questions that can be answered only partially in the absence of extensive ethnographic or sociological data describing the relationship between media producer and consumer, but a survey of CFAM's programming does reveal discourses about economic production and consumption, taste, religion, ethnicity, gender, and politics that were pertinent to a Mennonite audience negotiating its place in mainstream Canadian society.

CFAM's community service commitment extended to all the people in its coverage area, regardless of ethnic or religious background, and by attracting a large audience it became a regional institution. For a time, efforts were even made to serve non-English speakers, with programs in German, French, Italian, Ukrainian, and Dutch.[25] Still, the station had a special relationship with its Mennonite listeners, who looked at its programming, ownership, and geographic base, and saw a station aligned with their ethno-religious community. Many of these listeners attributed to the broadcaster a Mennonite identity. This issue was raised in a 1959 editorial in the *Canadian Mennonite*, which often reported on news involving the broadcaster. Editor Frank H. Epp lamented the application of the Steinbach group for a radio license when there was already "one radio station of Mennonite identity" in operation.[26] After a reader responded that neither the programming nor the audience of the station were predominantly Mennonite, Epp

[25] Library and Archives Canada (hereafter LAC), Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission fonds, RG 100, "Records of public hearings" series, File "Board of Broadcast Governors, Public Hearing, 13-14 September 1966," 108-110, Microfilm reel M-3089.
[26] Frank H. Epp, "We Do It Every Time," *Canadian Mennonite*, 9 January 1959, 2.

argued that while CFAM was not "constitutionally" a Mennonite station, psychologically and sociologically one could conclude that it was.[27] It is perhaps revealing that geographer John Warkentin in his contemporaneous study identified the "Mennonite radio station at Altona" as one of the positive contributions of a "more self-assured, confident, even proud group of people" to the province.[28] A well-known Low German acronym for the station's call letters, "*Knacksot fräte aule Mennoniete*" (literally, "all Mennonites devour sunflower seeds"), also reflected its association by Mennonites with their group.[29]

Of course the broadcaster did carry religious programs that were distinctively Mennonite, but beyond this it is apparent that company directors considered it one of their tasks to represent Mennonites to the wider world. In the relative privacy of an annual report to shareholders, SMBC vice-president Peter Brown stated in 1961 that "the board does give a great deal of thought to the image CFAM is creating in the minds of the people of Manitoba. Ethnically and socially, yes, even educationally and agriculturally, the image of Manitoba Mennonites had improved very distinctly during the last few decades. During the past five years CFAM has made a deep impact on this trend."[30] The same sentiment was echoed several years later by president Walter Kroeker, who asserted that the quality and ethical standards of Radio Southern Manitoba's programming had "been a significant factor in improving the stature and influence" of not only the

[27] Frank H. Epp, "Questions And Answers," *Canadian Mennonite*, 27 February 1959, 2.
[28] Warkentin, 312.
[29] Doreen Helen Klassen, *Singing Mennonite: Low German Songs Among the Mennonites* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1989), 132. Radio listeners who preferred pop music to CFAM's fare had another acronym, "Can't Find Any Music."
[30] Directors' Report, Annual Meeting, 4 December 1961, Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives (hereafter MHCA), Winnipeg, Theodore (Ted) E. Friesen fonds, Vol. 4892, File 8.

broadcaster but also the "Mennonite community at large, whose principles and characteristics we reflect."[31]

In many instances it is impossible to ascertain whether CFAM sought to shape or merely reflect the culture and behaviour of its listeners, and often it did both. In the area of agricultural programming, however, the "Farm and Good Music Station" certainly aimed to influence listeners. By doing so it assisted its listeners in adapting to the evolving rural economy. Twelve of the original twenty-eight SMBC shareholders made their livelihood at least in part by farming, and three others served as directors of cooperative agricultural operations, so the company had a wealth of knowledge about the needs of the industry.[32] However, it was most likely founding vice-president Walter Kroeker who was most influential in defining the specific objectives of the station's farm service. Kroeker was the son of Winkler agricultural innovator A. A. Kroeker (also an SMBC shareholder), who pioneered the use of chemical fertilizers and the production of corn and seed potatoes in the region.[33] Walter studied agriculture at the University of Manitoba and the University of Minnesota and became a partner in the family farm operation in 1936, later serving as a director and officer of Kroeker Farms Ltd. and Kroeker Seeds Ltd. He shared his father's interest in promoting diversification of farming in southern Manitoba, which he demonstrated in 1953 by organizing the Vegetable Growers' Association of Manitoba to foster vegetable production, serving as its first

[31] Director's Report, Annual Meeting, 1 November 1968, MHCA, Vol. 4892, File 12.
[32] Library and Archives Canada (LAC), Canadian Broadcasting Corporation fonds, RG 41, "Minutes, agenda books and working papers of the Board of Governors" series, Vol. 657, File "Agenda of the 102nd Meeting, Board of Governors, Held in Ottawa, Oct. 25, 26 & 27, 1956," "Information for the Board of Governors in Connection with the Report of the Technical Committee," 62-66.
[33] Werner, 75, 105; John J. Friesen, 89.

president. Kroeker's service to the horticultural industry was later recognized by his appointment as a member to the Order of Canada.[34]

At the 1956 broadcast license hearing before the CBC Board of Governors, Kroeker explained that while farmers in the Red River Valley had diversified their crop base since the 1930s, when a precipitous drop in the price of wheat, their main crop, combined with a lengthy drought resulted in a devastating loss of income, there was more to be done. "To end a wheat economy it is necessary to do a great deal of promotional work," he declared.[35] Moreover, special crops like peas, beans, corn, and tomatoes required closer care and attention than grain crops and necessitated timely information about insect and disease problems, which could arise quickly and required rapid treatment. CFAM's farm bulletins would provide important information on a daily basis, as well as advice about cultivation methods, recommended seed varieties, livestock management, and the use of insecticides, herbicides, and chemical nutrients.[36]

Knowledge about scientific farming was disseminated through frequent broadcasts of interviews with experts, guest speakers, and taped excerpts from agricultural fairs and conferences on topics ranging from genetics to beef futures.[37] In the station's first year, the list of agriculturalists heard on CFAM included over forty professors and teachers from the University of Manitoba, researchers from the Morden

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[34] Deaths Index, *Mennonite Brethren Herald*, 1 December 2000; Manitoba Agricultural Hall of Fame, "Walter Edward Kroeker," <http://www.manitobaaghalloffame.com/hall_of_fame.php?ID=59>.
[35] LAC, RG 100, File "CBC Board of Governors, 102nd Meeting, 25, 26 & 27 October 1956," 222, Microfilm reel M-4160.
[36] LAC, RG 100, File "CBC Board of Governors, 102nd Meeting, 25, 26 & 27 October 1956," 222, Microfilm reel M-4160; LAC, RG 41, Vol. 657, File "Agenda of the 102nd Meeting," "Information for the Board of Governors in Connection with the Report of the Technical Committee," 66-67.
[37] MHCA, Vol. 4892, File 12, "Annual Reports – 1966-1971," "Manager's Report (1968)"

Experimental Farm, and local Department of Agriculture representatives.[38] On at least two occasions the broadcaster also took a political stance on issues affecting farmers. Around 1958 promotion began for a project to give the Red River Valley a reliable water supply, which would benefit industries like Co-op Vegetable Oils and provide a source for irrigation use.[39] The station was even more active in a campaign for uniform time, so that rural and urban areas would agree to a common position on the use of daylight saving time. This culminated in a month of radio editorials in 1963, in which listener opinions were solicited, followed by a brief presented by manager Dennis Barkman before a committee of the provincial legislature.[40]

Radio Southern Manitoba also contributed to and reflected developments in Mennonite religious thought with its daily programming. A 1969 editorial in the *Canadian Mennonite* asserted that the broadcaster was "exceedingly influential in shaping the cultural and religious life of the Mennonite people of southern Manitoba – particularly among the old and middle-aged," apparently surpassing in some respects the sway of the local church.[41] With its variety of daily devotions, Bible teaching, sacred music, sermons, and advice segments, it certainly had the potential to deliver religious content to listeners throughout the week. The programs, originating from individual local churches, conferences, schools, and parachurch organizations based in Canada and the United States, presented a range of Protestant theological perspectives to its listeners. The most influential of these, judging by the reach of individual programs and the estimation

[38] LAC, RG 100, File "CBC Board of Governors, 112th Meeting, 21 & 22 April 1958," SMBC submission, Microfilm reel M-4164.
[39] LAC, RG 100, File "CBC Board of Governors, 112th Meeting, 21 & 22 April 1958," SMBC submission, 2-3, Microfilm reel M-4164.
[40] "Brief Presented to Law Amendments Committee of the Manitoba Legislature by CFAM, April 22nd, 1963," in "History of Southern Manitoba Broadcasting Co. Ltd., 1957-[1972]" (scrapbook), Golden West Broadcasting (hereafter GWB), Altona.
[41] Larry Kehler, "Some further comments," *Canadian Mennonite*, 4 July 1969, 4.

of various observers, was evangelicalism, a movement defined broadly by its emphases on the personal conversion experience, biblicism, a concern for sharing the gospel, and a stress on redemption through the sacrifice of Christ.[42]

Historically, Mennonites had shown only limited interest in evangelical ideas. Some church groups, particularly those formed in response to revival movements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, identified strongly with evangelicalism, but others disagreed with its priorities, such as its emphasis on conversion and the salvation experience, which they distinguished from the emphases of the Anabaptist tradition such as discipleship and service.[43] This began to change by the late 1940s and 1950s, which saw a much wider adoption in Mennonite churches of evangelical language, methods, and theological emphases.[44] In Manitoba, the summer of 1957 was a breakthrough moment, when American Mennonite evangelist George Brunk held a series of tent revival meetings in Steinbach, Winkler, Altona, and Winnipeg. Frequently attracting crowds of about two thousand, this campaign had a major effect on the Mennonite community.[45] Royden Loewen contends that "evangelicalism held special appeal" to Mennonites adapting to the cultural transformations of the postwar period. It was conservative in its commitment to biblical authority, but progressive in the sense that its emphasis on a personal faith, its call to greater engagement with wider society, and its orientation toward the future gave religious sanction to new ways of engaging with the world.[46]

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[42] Mark A. Noll, *American Evangelical Christianity: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 13.
[43] Regehr, 12; John J. Friesen, 31-33, 78-80, 132-34.
[44] John J. Friesen, 132-34; Anna Ens, 109-12.
[45] John J. Friesen, 132; Regehr, 209-10.
[46] Loewen, *Diaspora in the Countryside*, 82-83.

Evangelicalism also provided a new religious vocabulary to Mennonites in the midst of a transition from using German to English in the church.[47]

Evangelical emphases were present in several of the religious broadcasts on CFAM, including the widely syndicated U.S.-based programs "The Lutheran Hour" and Billy Graham's "Hour of Decision," but the program that had the greatest impact was "Back to the Bible." The program was founded by Theodore H. Epp, a former Mennonite minister who chose to do independent evangelistic work after deciding that the outlook of the Mennonite church was "very limited as far as the needs of the outside world were concerned."[48] The broadcast was syndicated from Lincoln, Nebraska, to several hundred stations in North America and further afield. Epp presented a radio Bible study according to a literalist approach and dispensationalist theology, interpreting contemporary events through his reading.[49] On Mondays the broadcast was dedicated to a talk on world missions by speaker G. Christian Weiss, and on Fridays radio pastor Ord L. Morrow would speak on "evangelism and practical Christian living."[50] Unlike most other programs, which aired weekly, this half-hour broadcast was heard every weekday at 9:30 a.m., with a repeat broadcast at 8:30 in the evening added in 1964. Broadcast ratings indicate that the program often received the station's largest listener share of the day, particularly in the districts encompassing Altona, Winkler, and Steinbach. In this central coverage area more listeners tuned in to Radio Southern Manitoba for that half hour than

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[47] John J. Friesen, 132.
[48] Theodore H. Epp, *Adventure by Faith* (Lincoln, Nebr.: Back to the Bible Publishers, 1964), 45, quoted in Rudy Baergen, "Theodore Epp and the Canadian Mennonites," 1970 (student paper, Canadian Mennonite Bible College), TMs, MHCA, p. 1.
[49] *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*, s.v. "Epp, Theodore H. (1907-1985)," by Albert H. Epp and Richard D. Thiessen, <http://www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/contents/E665.html>; Baergen, "Theodore Epp and the Canadian Mennonites."
[50] Theodore H. Epp, *A Man After the Heart of God* (Lincoln, Nebr.: Good News Broadcasting Association, 1965), back cover; Theodore H. Epp, *What God Has Wrought: A Pictorial Tour of the Broadcast Headquarters* (Lincoln, Nebr.: Back to the Bible Publishers, n.d.).

any other station.[51] Evidently the program was part of the regular daily routine of many listeners. This was not an audience that listened passively either. When the program conducted its annual letter months, CFAM regularly generated more responses than any other Canadian station.[52]

Like many other radio missions, the Back to the Bible organization depended on financial support from listener donations, and produced pamphlets and other materials available upon request. It also had an effective youth ministry, a half-hour broadcast that aired Saturdays on Radio Southern Manitoba at 9:30 a.m. Following "Children's Party," these two programs tended to attract the largest audiences of the day.[53] A popular feature was the weekly Danny Orlis story, an instalment from a series of Christian books written for Back to the Bible. These stories described the adventures of the title character, mostly set in the area of his home in the Northwest Angle of northern Minnesota, and modeled Christian responses to the various challenges he encountered.[54]

Although no studies have been conducted to determine the specific influence of evangelical radio on Mennonites, many of whom were affected by other evangelical institutions, bible schools, and literature as well, Radio Southern Manitoba certainly played an important role in presenting the evangelical option to its listeners. The assessment of Manitoba Mennonite historian and theologian John J. Friesen that the broadcaster "influenced Mennonite theology in the direction of an evangelical identity"

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[51] CFAM Radio schedule, *Winnipeg Free Press*, 6 June 1964, TV-Radio guide, 13; Bureau of Broadcast Measurement, Radio Station Report – Spring 1958 Survey: CFAM, Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies (hereafter CMBS), Winnipeg, Benjamin and Esther Hiebert Horch fonds, Vol. 1228, Binder 05, 72; Bureau of Broadcast Measurement, Radio Station and Area Reports, 1965-1971.
[52] Manager's Reports, 1963, 1965, MHCA, Vol. 4892, File 9, 11.
[53] Bureau of Broadcast Measurement, Radio Station and Area Reports, 1965-1971.
[54] Randall Balmer, "Palmer, Bernard," in *Encyclopedia of Evangelicalism* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 435; Bernard Palmer, *Danny Orlis and the Angle Inlet Mystery* (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1955).

seems apt.[55] This is not to say, however, that Mennonite audiences accepted these radio programs uncritically. A minority took exception to what they perceived as deviations from the traditional emphases of Mennonite theology. Ted Friesen, who had with his brothers Dave (D. K.) and Ray been involved as a shareholder in founding of CFAM, was among those disappointed with the broadcaster. Ted objected to the presentation of "religious programs that included American fundamentalistic content" such as "Back to the Bible," which he found inconsistent with Mennonite teaching and believed to have had a "deleterious effect on the churches in Southern Manitoba." This view and his dissatisfaction with the dilution of CFAM's original classical music format devised by Ben Horch contributed to a growing sense of disillusionment, eventually prompting him and Ray to sell their shares.[56]

Many listeners who did not appreciate the stream of evangelicalism would have found some of the Mennonite denominational programs more palatable. "The Abundant Life," produced by the Mennonite Radio Mission, is an example of a program that aimed to bring a more distinctively Mennonite or Anabaptist approach to discussions on Christian living and social issues that were relevant to listeners engaging with a modern culture.[57] Messages addressed a wide range of topics, including Christian vocational advice; counsel on driving habits; the morality of tobacco use; responses to poverty and

[55] John J. Friesen, 133; T. D. Regehr also notes the important influence of American evangelicals like Epp ; and Graham in the accommodation of Mennonites to North American evangelicalism. Regehr, 212.
[56] Ted Friesen, *Memoirs: A Personal Autobiography of Ted Friesen* (Altona: by the author, 2003), 59; Ted Friesen, interview by author, 5 December 2007, Altona, digital recording, MHCA.
[57] Anna Ens, 141-46.

other social needs; communism; Christian principles and Canadian politics; attitudes toward sex; financial stewardship; and the implications of pacifism.[58]

Station management was generally quite willing to support Mennonite religious institutions that wished to get on the air, but this did not mean that there were not ideological conflicts. In one instance that played out in the pages of the *Canadian Mennonite*, the newspaper's editor criticized the broadcaster for refusing to cover a teach-in event put on by the Manitoba branch of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), apparently on the subject of America's involvement in the Vietnam war, and for declining to broadcast news regarding the MCC's activist Peace Section.[59] Although Radio Southern Manitoba had earlier initiated a fundraising campaign to provide food relief to Vietnam through MCC,[60] the largest inter-Mennonite organization in the world with official support from all the major Mennonite church groups, it was reluctant to appear to endorse a politically controversial position. This reluctance would have been born of concern about the reactions it would elicit from its entire southern Manitoba audience, but even within the Mennonite community, with its pacifist theology, there was limited support for peace activism.[61] Whereas some Mennonites, like the Peace Section members, had begun to shift from a traditional stance of passive nonresistance into activist peacemaking, this was not the majority position among the Mennonite audience of the Altona broadcaster.[62]

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[58] CMBS, "Faith and Life Communications: Mennonite Radio Mission" fonds, Vol. 731, File 2, "*The Abundant Life*. – Transcripts of Inspirational talks by Frank H. Epp. – 1958–1964," and File 3, "*The Abundant Life*. – Transcripts of Inspirational talks by Bernie Wiebe. – 1960–1970."
[59] Larry Kehler, "Some further comments," *Canadian Mennonite*, 4 July 1969, 4.
[60] Elmer Hildebrand, news release, n.d., MHCA, Vol. 4873, File 25.
[61] Friesen, interview by author, 5 December 2007.
[62] Leo Driedger and Donald B. Kraybill, *Mennonite Peacemaking: From Quietism to Activism* (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1994).

Media historian Paddy Scannell asserts that the continual penetration of broadcasting into our daily lives allows it considerable, often unnoticed, influence over the "horizon of all possibilities for all actual foregrounded social relationships and practices." The unremarkable act of listening to the radio for information, entertainment, and companionship permits it to sink into what he calls the "meaningful background" of existence, which is meaningful in the sense that the repetition of its messages and patterns helps to reinforce and promote various social norms.[63] By contributing to this background, CFAM helped to reinforce the delineation of gender roles, which were becoming increasingly distinct in Mennonite communities in the postwar decades. Because Mennonites in the main, through to the 1940s, resisted the mechanization and industrialization of agriculture longer than most other rural ethnic groups, Mennonite spouses co-operated in the tasks of agricultural production to a great degree. It was only after the war that the forces of economic transformation introduced the "nucleated and gender-stratified household" that saw men become producers – either on their own farms or for an employer – and women, consumers responsible for domestic tasks and children.[64] Mennonite women also entered the paid workforce in growing numbers, taking up various forms of employment, including nursing, teaching, and clerical jobs, but even by 1972, a survey of Mennonites in North America found 60% of women identified as homemakers.[65]

This was the domestic ideal CFAM helped to promote and reproduce with its designated women's broadcasts. Marlene Epp observes that this kind of programming

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[63] Paddy Scannell, *Radio, Television & Modern Life* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 5.
[64] Royden Loewen, "Rurality, ethnicity, and gender patterns of cultural continuity during the 'Great Disjuncture' in the R.M. of Hanover, 1954-1961," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, new series, 4 (1993): 170; Regehr, 1-2, 28.
[65] J. Howard Kauffman and Leo Driedger, *The Mennonite Mosaic* (Waterloo: Herald Press, 1991), 38.

echoed the publication of columns and articles in Mennonite newspapers that worked to legitimize homemaking as a vocation.[66] Scheduled during the day while children were in school and women were presumably at home with the radio on, it initially consisted of the daily "Ladies First" hour at 10 a.m. Later the hour-long afternoon program "Open House" was added.[67] The type of content presented by these programs reveals the broadcaster's assumptions about what would be of interest to a homemaking woman. The morning offered a calendar of social events, birth announcements, and household tips, interspersed with music, while the afternoon offered more advice for women engaged in an urbanizing consumer culture, including fashion tips, recipes and kitchen advice.[68] Ironically, the hosts of these programs, first Esther Horch and later Olly Penner, were women working outside of the home. Still, this was in roles defined by gender and, paralleling the domestic responsibilities of many of their listeners, they were also responsible for children's programming. The fact that these women were in the studio and not at home did not go unnoticed, and Penner was the subject of some criticism from listeners who disagreed with her choice, as a mother, to work outside the home.[69]

The rest of CFAM's programming had no gendered designations, although at certain points its intended audience was largely male, such as when it aired its market reports and agricultural news. Men were also part of the audience for the station's daily sportscasts and live coverage of hockey, curling, football, baseball, and other games.[70] This programming supported the construction of an athletic version of masculinity, a

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[66] Marlene Epp, *Mennonite Women in Canada: A History* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2008), 255-56.
[67] CFAM program schedule, *Canadian Mennonite*, 15 March 1957, 3; Promotional pamphlet, 1968, "History" scrapbook, GWB.
[68] Promotional pamphlet, 1968, "History" scrapbook, GWB.
[69] Mary Lou Driedger, "A career of the heart: Aunt Olly Penner earned a lasting place in many youthful lives," *Mennonite Mirror*, May-June 1989, 4.
[70] "The Station That Fills A Basic Need," n.s., n.d., "History" scrapbook, GWB.

sense of manhood in which competitiveness and exhibitionism supplanted traditional Mennonite masculine ideals of humble service to the household and community. Once considered boyish pursuits, during this period of transformation and accommodation "sports activities marked the very passage into manhood," Loewen has argued.[71] Mennonite attitudes toward sports and recreation generally were changing at midcentury, as exemplified by the construction of an indoor hockey rink in Altona in the early 1950s, after town leaders overcame strong community opposition to spending money on competitive sports.[72] The increasing influence of mass media, including Radio Southern Manitoba, helped to normalize sports as a social and cultural pursuit.

The process of accommodation is marked both by adaptation to a dominant society and by the preservation of aspects of one's culture or identity. In several ways CFAM reminded its Mennonite listeners of their cultural heritage, even as their ethnic identity became more often "symbolic," based on the objectification of certain elements of a shared past that could be celebrated and practiced without interfering with life as an integrated member of society.[73] Language was becoming one of these elements of ethnicity. Though German still found regular use in many churches, as evidenced by the significant, yet declining, number of German-language religious programs on CFAM (14 of 31 in 1960, 9 of 31 in 1970[74]), Low German, the traditional dialect of everyday discourse, was transformed into an object of cultural inheritance that was celebrated in plays and books while at the same time it was spoken less frequently at home and in the

[71] Loewen, *Diaspora in the Countryside*, 162-66.
[72] Epp-Tiessen, 284; Other recreational amenities typical to small prairie towns also came to Mennonite centres around this time – much later than in other Manitoba communities. Warkentin, 263.
[73] Loewen, *Diaspora in the Countryside*, 64.
[74] Ministerial Advisory Committee report, 1960, MHCA, Vol. 4892, File 7; Religious Advisory Committee report, 1970, MHCA, Vol. 4892, File 12.

community.[75] CFAM celebrated this form of cultural expression by broadcasting Arnold Dyck's comic Low German *Koop U'Bua* stories beginning in 1958. In 1969 Dyck's play *Dee Fria* was aired on the station's "Radio Magazine" program, followed by a special feature about the Steinbach Mennonite Heritage Village.[76] Mennonite history was also celebrated in a weekly Low German broadcast by educator Gerhard Ens on the Russian Mennonites and their migrations. Started as part of the celebrations of the Manitoba Mennonite centennial in 1974, the program was continued for several years.[77] In recognition of the variety of cultures represented in its coverage area, CFAM also offered a number of programs of European folk music, placing particular emphasis on music of German origin.[78] As with other ethnicities represented in multicultural southern Manitoba, Mennonite ethnicity could increasingly be celebrated or consumed simply by tuning in the dial.

As a cultural institution created to serve the Mennonite community from which it was born, it is perhaps natural to expect that CFAM should have represented the changes in culture and identity engendered by the major social transformations underway in the postwar period. One can add to this analysis the role the facility played in normalizing Mennonite participation in politics, which became increasingly visible in the 1960s and 1970s.[79] Though scholars like James Urry have demonstrated that the degree of Mennonite political involvement in Canada was much greater than many have assumed, given their nonconformist orientation toward secular affairs, there remained Mennonite

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[75] Regehr, 287-92; Loewen, 66.
[76] Staff Meeting Minutes and Memos, 1957-1962, GWB; News release, 26 November 1969, "History" scrapbook, GWB. The title of the stories referred to as *Koop U'Bua* in CFAM's program schedule is usually written as *Koop enn Bua*.
[77] Al Reimer, "Gerhard Ens: A Message for Every Medium," *Mennonite Mirror*, November 1982, 7.
[78] Promotional pamphlet, 1968, "History" scrapbook, GWB.
[79] James Urry, *Mennonites, Politics, and Peoplehood: Europe – Russia – Canada, 1525-1980* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2006), 223-24.

churches that counselled abstention from voting around the time CFAM went on the air.[80] This was not the attitude of SMBC founding members like A. J. Thiessen, D. K. Friesen, and Jacob M. Froese, each of whom ran for provincial office in the years after the CFAM was established.[81] These were not Mennonites who believed in the necessity of withdrawal, and the programming of their station reflected this when it accepted political advertising during the 1957 federal election, and in its broadcast of regular reports from Parliament Hill by the area's Conservative Member of Parliament.[82] At the same time, identification by listeners with southern Manitoba as a region was encouraged by the broadcast of daily advertisements from area businesses, news reports, community bulletins, and live church services.

CFAM did more than hold a mirror to its audience. Its executive, shareholders, and staff made decisions to air a certain type of programming in accordance with stated and implicit principles. The founders – representatives and leaders of the Mennonite community – had ideas about service they desired to implement that went beyond the profit motive. The forces of modernization altered the material, social, and cultural conditions of existence in southern Manitoba in the decades after the Second World War, and through the production of a radio broadcast these changes were interpreted to CFAM's Mennonite audience. The station's listeners in turn took their own meanings from the broadcast message, which cannot simply be derived by examining the producers' motives, or even the message itself. Yet, if one is to understand the reproduction of culture and the complicated process of identity formation, one must

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[80] Urry, 219.
[81] Urry, 218.
[82] Southern Manitoba Broadcasting Company balance sheet, 31 October 1957, MHCA, Vol. 4892, File 5; Ad, "Listen to the report from Parliament Hill" (advertisement), *Red River Valley Echo*, 13 November 1957, 8.

examine those electronic signals that are part of the background and foreground of our day-to-day dealings with the world.

Conclusion

In his address at the 1960 annual meeting of shareholders in the Southern Manitoba Broadcasting Company, president Walter Kroeker summarized the motivations behind the establishment of CFAM:

> Our approach to broadcasting was simple, almost naive. We would combine within the programming scope of a single station an agricultural program to strengthen the economy of our area; a tasteful approach that would reflect not only our cultural heritage, but all the best in the character of this great country of ours; and an uncompromising Christian witness, that would find expression in all our broadcasting – not only in our religious programs.[1]

He went on to remark that the founders soon realized how ambitious a task they had set for themselves.

This study has examined how a group of Mennonites succeeded in establishing a radio station in southern Manitoba that earned a large, loyal audience with its unconventional mix of farm programming, "good" music, religious broadcasts, and various features oriented toward service to the communities within its coverage area. It has situated the founding of CFAM within the context of the social and economic developments that transformed rural societies throughout North America in the postwar period. Specific attention has been given to the rural Manitoba Mennonite communities that provided the original impetus for the endeavour. The audience of Radio Southern Manitoba was always broader than this single ethno-religious group, but as comments from listeners and persons involved in the business of production reveal, the station had a special relationship with the Mennonite people. As Wayne Schmalz observes in his history of radio in Saskatchewan, "radio and the culture that produces it … are in a symbiotic and mutually reflective relationship," since it is only with the sanction of its

[1] President's Address, Annual Meeting, 5 December 1960, Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives, Winnipeg, Theodore (Ted) E. Friesen fonds, Vol. 4892, File 7.

listeners that it can survive.[2] It follows that an historical examination of radio will expose the concerns and values of its listening community, as interpreted by the broadcaster, and may also demonstrate how the tastes and opinions of the public can be shaped through the act of listening.

This account began by tracing CFAM's origins to the early 1950s, when concerns were being voiced within the Mennonite community about the insufficient religious programming being provided by Winnipeg radio stations. A few Mennonite business leaders with records of public service were responsible for organizing the SMBC and defining the objectives for the station. Over the years, several different priorities were emphasized in various formulations before regulators, in newspaper stories, and in the broadcaster's own promotion. Although Christian witness was evidently the driving consideration when the project was conceived, when the founders put together their application for a broadcast license it was proposed that the station would primarily be concerned with serving the needs of southern Manitoba's farm producers. This focus reflected the central role of agriculture in the economy of the broadcast region and the growing importance of effective communication about the changing realities of dynamic markets and farm technologies. Once the station went on the air, this emphasis was for many years overshadowed by promotion of CFAM's "good" music programming as its most important product. Beginning in the mid-1960s, and increasingly in the following decade, the broadcaster began to present itself more as a community service station, as it began to put more energy into local news and coverage of community events.

When representatives of the SMBC first appeared before broadcast regulators in 1956, hardly any attention was given to the fact that the proposed station had emerged

[2] Wayne Schmalz, *On Air: Radio in Saskatchewan* (Regina: Coteau Books, 1990), 156-57.

from the Mennonite community, nor was this group singled out when the founders were called to describe their conception of public service. The extent to which CFAM was perceived as a "Mennonite" station shifted over time and depended on one's perspective. If the SMBC played down its base of Mennonite support in its initial encounter with regulators, by the time the application was made to establish a rebroadcasting station in Steinbach in 1963, the company was prepared to use the Mennonite ethnic and religious character of Steinbach and the Altona-Winkler area as a central point in its rationale. This may be evidence of a greater sense of self-confidence in the Mennonite community about their position in Canada as an ethnic and religious group, prompting an expectation of tolerant acceptance in the wider community. It also suggests a greater familiarity and comfort with the national regulatory system.

On the air and in its promotional efforts, the broadcaster aimed to speak to listeners of all backgrounds. Most of the station's offerings – music, farm broadcasts, news reports – exhibited no sectarian or ethnic biases, and by airing religious programs and church services originating from non-Mennonite groups, and "ethnic" music presented in languages including French, Ukrainian, and Italian, CFAM demonstrated its commitment to the diversity of specific interests in its listening community. Nonetheless, regular listeners would notice that Mennonites produced more of the station's religious programs than any other group, and that Low and High German were heard more than any language besides English. Furthermore, the perceptive observer might note a high proportion of Mennonite names listed on the morning funeral announcements, and the simple fact of geography which located the station's studios and many of its advertisers in the densest regions of Mennonite settlement in the province.

Taking a cue from historians of communication who insist that since mass media are an ever-present force in the modern world, our historical gaze must consider how social life is mediated through them, this study has examined CFAM's programming in the context of the various and often profound changes that were transforming Mennonite life in postwar southern Manitoba. The station came into being at a moment when Mennonites were increasingly giving up the familiar, traditional pattern of existence in ethnic enclaves in favour of greater engagement with the wider world. Under the direction of Ben Horch, CFAM aspired to acquaint its audience with a high-cultural standard. Comments from Horch and other figures responsible for the broadcaster's programming reveal a strategy of cultural refinement that they hoped would confer upon the station's Mennonite audience a degree of respectability. By cultivating a taste for classical music (a cultural form that was quite unlikely to offend any moral sensibilities), they could acquire a measure of cultural capital. The radio broadcast was a part of the process of what Royden Loewen identifies as the fashioning of a middle-class culture. CFAM's "good" music was not necessarily appreciated by all its listeners, but others were indeed influenced by this programming, which included sponsorship and broadcasts from regional music festivals, and opportunities for individuals and school and community groups to showcase their talents on the air. The radio station, quite simply, encouraged the musical development of many performers, teachers, and broadcasters in southern Manitoba.

The notion of Mennonite identity was challenged in the postwar era as the traditional integration between religious faith and ethnic community weakened in the face of social and economic changes common to rural societies throughout North America. As

sociologist Calvin Redekop observes, the identity of members of any ethnic church is vulnerable "as the faith system finds itself undercut by the loss of the geographic, occupational, social, agricultural and economic communities."[3] Various strategies were pursued by Mennonites who sought to reimagine a sense of community and place in the world. In addition to its "good" music, CFAM's programming reflected several other aspects of a reformulated Mennonite culture. At a time when ethnic identity was becoming more "symbolic," the Low German language was celebrated as a sort of cultural artifact that could be a source of entertainment through the broadcast of radio plays. Programs about Mennonite history and broadcasts from the Mennonite Heritage Museum in Steinbach reminded listeners of their past traditions, as well as of the progress that had been made.

CFAM sought quite deliberately to help develop the local economy, particularly in the area of agriculture. Daily market reports, weather broadcasts, and informative discussions about the use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers, new crops, and farming techniques were a service to farmers who often had to make considerable adjustments to previous methods in order to survive what John Shover termed the "Great Disjuncture" that marked the postwar rural economy. SMBC executive Walter Kroeker, an active promoter of agricultural innovation, clearly stated before the CBC Board of Governors that CFAM would strive not only to serve farmers but to propel change that would benefit the community.

The broadcaster also offered a platform to proponents of an evangelical understanding of Christianity. This reflected a growing tendency among Manitoba Mennonites toward evangelicalism which predated the establishment of CFAM, but the

[3] Calvin Redekop, "The Mennonite Identity Crisis," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 2 (1984): 100.

regular presentation of this type of programming on the radio increased the reach of the evangelical message considerably. The "Back to the Bible" program was especially popular. The magnitude of its influence no doubt derived from its daily airing. Evangelical radio was only one of a variety of theological influences, including bible colleges, literature, and travelling speakers, but as broadcast historian Paddy Scannell remarks, there is a pervasiveness that inheres in the dailiness of radio. As it becomes a regular presence, a companion, a part of one's routine, the values and patterns expressed in its programming are woven into the fabric of one's life and made to seem normal, and even authoritative.

This has been a study of a significant regional institution. By virtue of its diverse program offerings, CFAM became a fixture in many homes and an element of the cultural fabric of southern Manitoba. The broadcaster's various emphases meant different things to individual listeners, performing many roles within a seemingly singular expression. To a large number of listeners it was a "Mennonite" radio station, uniting the broad "imagined community" of southern Manitoba Mennonites, who were in actuality separated by geography and church groupings, with a version of respectable culture at a moment when this ethno-religious group was contending with the fragmentation brought about by the forces of modernity. This analysis has argued that Radio Southern Manitoba reflected many of the dominant values and concerns of its listeners, but that the listeners were also shaped by the programming they heard. At times in the background, other times at the fore, the radio broadcast was for many a regular presence in the noise of day-to-day life, participating with its listeners in the ongoing process of cultural change. As rural Manitoba Mennonites accommodated to mainstream Canadian society, participated

in the transformation of the agricultural economy, and sought to maintain an active religious faith, CFAM played an important role in helping to redefine cultural horizons and shape popular assumptions of normality. In doing this it contributed to the ongoing reformulation of a Mennonite group identity appropriate to the circumstances of life in a modern rural society.

Appendix A: Provisional Guiding Principles (1956)

A radio Station operated by a group of Mennonites
A provisional set of guiding principles for shareholders

Motto: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." – Col. 3:17

With the above text in mind, the basic motives that prompt us to move towards the establishment of a radio station in Southern Manitoba serving the Mennonite areas of settlement shall be

1. To provide radio listening programmes to our constituency that is not only in accordance but that magnifies and is a witness of our Christian faith as we understand it in the framework of our Mennonite principles and doctrines.
2. That it shall speak to all the Mennonite people irrespective of church affiliation or language. That it shall strive to be an agency whereby our people may be more closely drawn together.
3. That is shall also reach out to all people in clear and uncompromising testimony the [*sic*] good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ, preaching salvation through repentance, belief in Jesus as Lord and Saviour, in the necessity of being born again, of justification through faith, sanctification, the discipleship of the believer and in a believer's church.
4. It shall present the best in all that it offers, such as music, drama, speeches, current events, worship services, etc. Jazz, swing, crime stories, anything that is demoralizing, or degrading is absolutely forbidden; cheap comedy & music such as westerns etc., should be discouraged as much as possible.
5. It shall have no political or organizational ties or affiliations of any kind, shall not be influenced by any party or secular organization.
6. The membership of its governing board shall represent as many Mennonite churches as possible. Those that are on the board should be church members in good standing.
7. Advertising should be controlled by the board. It shall be clean and honest, and only of such things that we can subscribe to in good conscience. We cannot connive with or be party to dishonest or misleading advertising claims.
8. In view of our rural listening audience consideration shall be given to programs of an educational and informative nature that deal with agricultural and other related topics, and with such matters as are of interest and help to our farmers and townspeople.
9. It shall foster and be a medium of expression of our local talent giving opportunity to such groups as our Bible school, collegiate choirs and public school choirs, as well as other organizations that have a contribution to make in the cultural, educational or musical field.

The above principles are set forth tentatively and could be broadened out to include the ideas of other shareholders.

Source: Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives (Winnipeg), Theodore (Ted) E. Friesen fonds, Vol. 4892, File 5.

Appendix B: Conception of Public Broadcasting – License Submission (1956)

Submitted to the CBC Board of Governors by A. J. Thiessen on behalf of the Southern Manitoba Broadcasting Company Limited, 1 October 1956.

Applicants' Conception of Public Broadcasting

1. To present the highest possible standard of programming.
2. To encourage and assist in the development of the arts and sciences.
3. At all times to co-operated with the Federal, Provincial and Municipal authorities and make available to them the services and facilitators of the station whenever necessary.
4. To work with and assist Service and Charitable organizations to the best of our ability
5. To provide authentic and accurate local as well as national news coverage.
6. To provide facilities for the discussion of public affairs.
7. To serve the peculiar economic, social and cultural needs of our area; Applied to our area this would mean a predominently [*sic*] agricultural programming schedule; a broader local news coverage to compensate for the absence of daily newspapers; and a recognition of the fact that the extended period of complete isolation common to rural areas during the long winters require a compensating entertainment program for all age groups.
8. To encourage and provide an opportunity for self-expression for talent from within the area.
9. To provide church services to the shut-ins and other isolated persons and an opportunity to ethnic groups to have these services in their own languages where desired.
10. To provide leadership in training for Canadian citizenship. This aspect is of special importance in areas where there is a heavy influx of immigrants from Central Europe.

Source: Library and Archives Canada, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation fonds, RG 41, "Minutes, agenda books and working papers of the Board of Governors" series, Vol. 657, File "Briefs Presented to 102nd Meeting, Board of Governors, Held in Ottawa, Oct. 25, 26 & 27, 1956," "Submission of A. J. Thiessen."

Appendix C: Program Schedules

November 1958

Monday to Friday

6:00 AM	Sign-On: News - Sports - Weather
6:05 AM	Morning Meditations
6:07 AM	Good Morning Manitoba
6:30 AM	News - Sports - Weather
6:35 AM	Good Morning Manitoba (cont'd)
6:45 AM	Morgen Familien Andacht
7:00 AM	News
7:05 AM	Farm Facts and Music
7:05 AM	Livestock & Grain Markets
7:15 AM	Farm Calendar
7:20 AM	Farm News
7:25 AM	Weather Around the World
7:30 AM	News - Sports
7:40 AM	1290 Band Parade
8:00 AM	News - Weather
8:05 AM	Familiar Classics
8:30 AM	News - Weather
8:35 AM	Familiar Classics (cont'd)
8:55 AM	Four Minutes A Day
9:00 AM	News - Weather
9:05 AM	Funeral Announcements
9:10 AM	Hymn Dedications
9:30 AM	Back to the Bible Hour
10:00 AM	News - Weather
10:05 AM	Ladies First
10:20 AM	Social Calendar
10:30 AM	Cradle Roll
10:45 AM	Homemaker's Chat
11:00 AM	News - Weather
11:05 AM	Memories of Vienna
11:30 AM	Melodic Moments
12:00 PM	News - Weather
12:05 PM	The Luncheon Hour
12:30 PM	News - Weather
12:40 PM	1290 Sports Time
12:45 PM	Today in Agriculture
1:00 PM	News - Weather
1:05 PM	Farm Commentary
1:10 PM	Market Report
1:15 PM	At the Console
1:28 PM	Closing Grain Prices
1:30 PM	Afternoon at Home
1:40 PM	Storytime
2:00 PM	Concert Hall
3:30 PM	Best Loved Hymns
4:00 PM	News - Weather
4:05 PM	Piano Personalities
4:30 PM	Children's Party
5:00 PM	News - Weather
5:05 PM	Chorale Spotlight
5:30 PM	Music For You
6:00 PM	News - Weather
6:05 PM	Music for Dining
6:30 PM	News - Sports - Weather
6:40 PM	Music for Dining (cont'd)
7:00 PM	Report from Parliament Hill
7:05 PM	Your Evening Concert
8:00 PM	News Headlines - Weather
8:02 PM	Your Evening Concert (cont'd)
9:00 PM	News - Weather
9:05 PM	Garden Guide
9:15 PM	Evening Devotions
9:30 PM	*Monday* – The Church School Hour
	Tuesday – Steinbach Bible Institute
	Wednesday – Europe Crusade for Christ
	– Meditations at Eventide
	Thursday – Christian Home Hour
	Friday – The Gospel Message
10:00 PM	News - Sports - Weather
10:10 PM	*Monday* – Editorially Speaking
10:10 PM	*Tuesday* – Car Councillor [*sic*]
10:10 PM	*Wednesday* – Victor Peters Abroad
10:10 PM	*Thursday* – Car Councillor
10:15 PM	– Here's Health
10:10 PM	*Friday* – Low German News Commentary
10:25 PM	– Radio Camera Club
10:30 PM	Songs of the Nations
11:00 PM	News - Weather
11:10 PM	1290 Sports Review
11:15 PM	The Nocturne Hour
12:00 AM	News - Sports - Weather
12:10 AM	Sign-Off

Saturday

6:00 AM	Sign-On: News - Sports - Weather
6:05 AM	Morning Meditations
6:07 AM	Good Morning Manitoba
6:30 AM	News - Sports - Weather
6:35 AM	Good Morning Manitoba (cont'd)

7:00 AM News - Sports - Weather
7:05 AM Farm Facts and Music
7:05 AM Livestock & Grain Markets
7:15 AM Farm Calendar
7:20 AM Farm News
7:25 AM Weather Around the World
7:30 AM News - Sports
7:40 AM 1290 Band Parade
8:00 AM News - Weather
8:05 AM Familiar Classics
8:30 AM News - Weather
8:35 AM Familiar Classics
8:55 AM Funeral Announcements
9:00 AM News - Weather
9:03 AM Children's Party
9:30 AM Children's Back to the Bible Hour
10:00 AM News - Weather
10:05 AM Ladies First
10:20 AM Social Calendar
10:30 AM Cradle Roll
10:45 AM Heart to Heart
11:00 AM News - Weather
11:05 AM Memories of Vienna
11:30 AM Melodic Moments
12:00 PM News - Weather
12:05 PM The Luncheon Hour
12:30 PM News - Weather
12:40 PM 1290 Sports Time
12:45 PM 4-H in Review
1:00 PM News - Weather
1:05 PM Farm Commentary
1:10 PM Opera or Oratorio Library
4:00 PM News - Weather
4:05 PM Musical Novelties
5:00 PM News - Weather
5:05 PM Chorale Spotlight
5:30 PM Music For You
6:00 PM News - Weather
6:05 PM Music for Dining
6:30 PM News - Sports - Weather
6:40 PM Music for Dining (cont'd)
7:00 PM Report from Parliament Hill
7:15 PM Vistas of Israel
7:30 PM Children's Gospel Light Hour
8:00 PM News - Weather
8:05 PM Saturday Night Symphony
9:00 PM News - Weather
9:05 PM At The Keyboard
9:30 PM BBC Bandstand
10:00 PM News - Sports - Weather
10:10 PM Car Councillor
10:30 PM Songs of the Nations
11:00 PM News - Weather
11:10 PM 1290 Sports Review
11:15 PM The Nocturne Hour
12:00 AM News - Sports - Weather
12:10 AM Sign-Off

Sunday

7:10 AM Sign-On: News - Weather
7:15 AM German Gospel Meditations
7:30 AM Frohe Botschaft
8:00 AM Licht des Evangeliums
8:30 AM Mennonite Hour
9:00 AM News - Weather
9:05 AM Church News
9:15 AM The Story of our Hymns
9:30 AM Streams of Blessing
10:00 AM Meditation in Song
11:00 AM Sunday Morning Church Broadcast
12:00 PM Sunday Serenade
12:25 PM Key Witness
12:30 PM News - Weather
12:40 PM Morden M.B. Male Chorus
1:00 PM The Abundant Life
1:30 PM The Hour of Decision
2:00 PM '58 Manitoba Musical Festival
2:30 PM Southern Manitoba Musical Festival
3:00 PM R.S.V.P. (All Classical Request Program)
5:00 PM Radio Bible Class
5:30 PM Wort des Lebens
6:00 PM News - Weather
6:15 PM Lieder des Lebens
6:30 PM Lutheran Vespers
7:00 PM Sunday Evening Classics
8:00 PM Drama
8:30 PM Lieder Recital
9:00 PM The Bible for You
9:30 PM Gospel Light Hour
10:00 PM News - Weather
10:05 PM Christ for Victory
10:30 PM Russian Gospel Light Hour
11:00 PM News - Weather
11:10 PM Sign-Off

September 1968

News *on the hour and at 6:30, 7:30, 8:30 a.m., 12:30, 5:30, and 6:30 p.m.*

Monday to Friday

5:45 AM Quiet Time
6:05 AM Farm Almanac
6:20 AM Farm Markets
6:38 AM Farm Calendar
6:45 AM Morgen Familien Andacht
7:05 AM Morning Minstrel [to 9:30]
7:20 AM Citizen of the Day
7:25 AM Weather
7:35 AM Sports
8:25 AM Changing World
8:55 AM Be Still and Know
9:05 AM Funeral Announcements
9:30 AM Back to the Bible
10:03 AM Market Quotation Service B'cast
10:05 AM Ladies First [till 11:00]
10:20 AM Social Calendar
10:30 AM Ladies' News
10:40 AM Cradle Roll
11:05 AM Continental Melodies
12:05 PM Farm Journal
12:12 PM Market Report
12:22 PM Today in Agriculture
12:25 PM Midday Report
12:33 PM Weather in Detail
12:37 PM Sports
12:40 PM March-Past
12:49 PM Farm Calendar
12:50 PM Country Comment
1:05 PM Open House [till 2:00]
1:10 PM Heart to Heart
1:40 PM Story Time
2:03 PM Market Quotation Service B'cast
2:05 PM Concert Hall
3:02 PM Janz Team
3:17 PM Haven of Rest
3:47 PM Hymns
4:05 PM Matinee
4:30 PM Children's Party
5:05 PM Evening Musicale [till 7:00]
5:25 PM Changing World
6:20 PM Citizen of the Day
6:30 PM News & Sports
6:40 PM Weather
6:45 PM Business Report
6:50 PM Report on Agriculture
6:55 PM Southern Manitoba Calendar
7:00 PM Evening Concert
8:30 PM Back to the Bible
9:05 PM Garden Guide
9:15 PM Devotions
9:30 PM *Monday* – Church school
9:30 PM *Tuesday* – Briercrest Bible Hour
9:30 PM *Wednesday* – The Bible For You
9:30 PM *Thursday* – Christian Home Hour
9:30 PM *Friday* – The Gospel Message
10:15 PM Lieder aus der Heimat
10:30 PM Songs of the Nations
11:05 PM Sports
11:20 PM Melody
12:05 AM Classics Till Dawn

Saturday

6:00 AM News, Weather
6:05 AM Meditations
6:10 AM Almanac
7:25 AM Weather
7:35 AM Sports
9:00 AM Children's Party
9:30 AM Back to the Bible Youth Broadcast
10:05 AM For the Family
11:05 AM Melodies
12:05 PM 4-H in Perspective
12:25 PM Report
12:35 PM Sports
12:40 PM March-Past
1:05 PM Matinee
5:05 PM Evening Musicale [till 7:00]
6:30 PM News & Sports
6:38 PM Weather
6:40 PM Report from Parliament Hill
6:45 PM Business Report
6:50 PM Church Bells
6:55 PM Southern Manitoba Calendar
7:00 PM Radio Magazine
8:30 PM Songs of the Ukraine
8:45 PM Victor Peters (Low Germany Commentary)
9:02 PM Songs of Europe
9:30 PM Mal Dies, Mal Das
10:10 PM Ukrainian Baptist Church
10:30 PM Opera Library

End of Opera	Classics Till Dawn

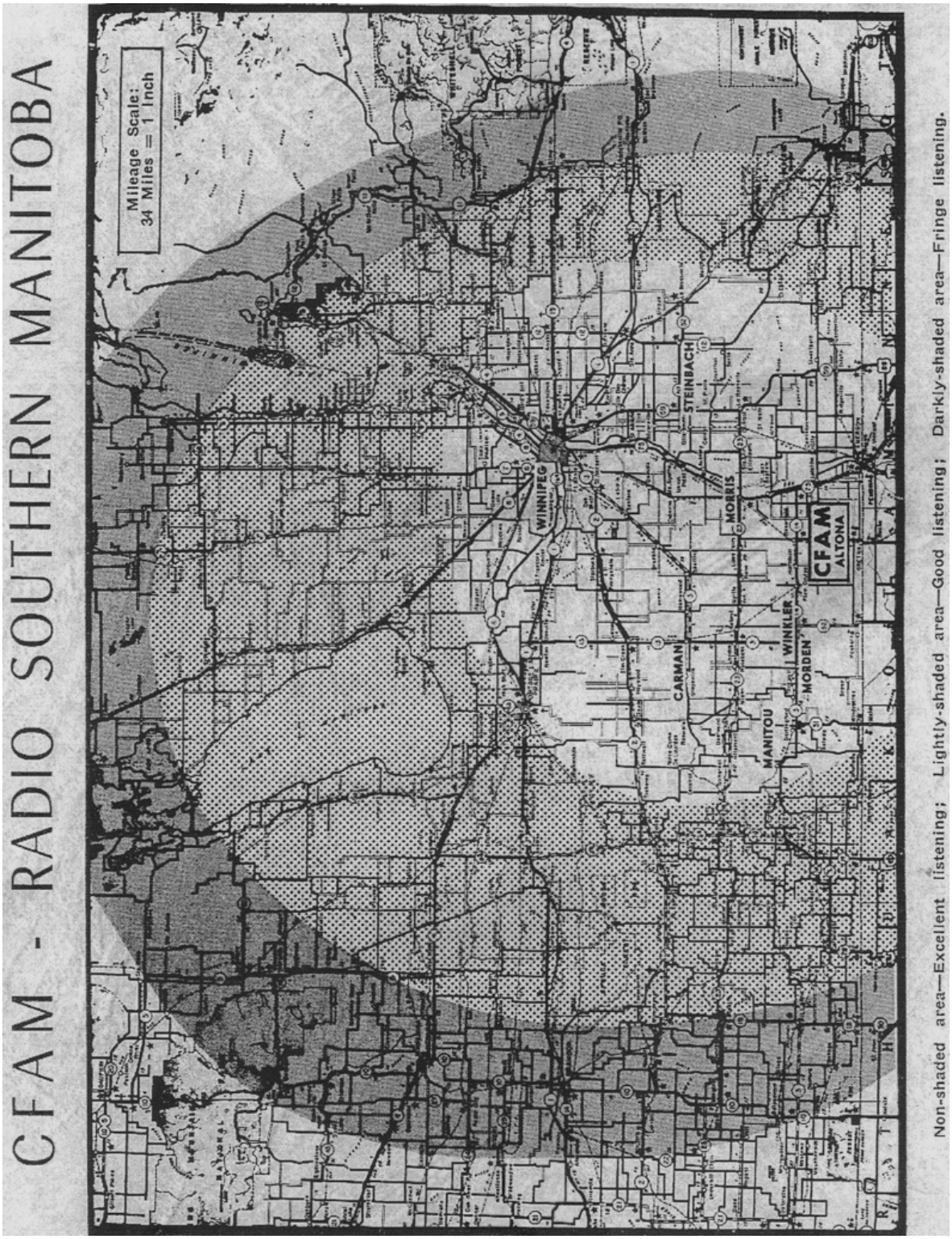
Sunday

6:00 AM	Music
7:00 AM	Neues Leben Missionwerk
7:15 AM	German Christian Hour
7:30 AM	Frohe Botschaft
8:00 AM	Licht des Evangeliums
8:30 AM	Mennonite Hour
8:45 AM	Janz Team Radio Broadcast
9:00 AM	News, Weather
9:05 AM	Church News
9:15 AM	Meditation
9:30 AM	Back to God Hour
10:05 AM	Chants Joyeux
10:30 AM	Lutheran Hour
11:00 AM	Worship Service
12:00 PM	Sunday Serenade
12:30 PM	News, Weather
12:40 PM	Church Announcements
1:00 PM	Abundant Life
1:30 PM	Hour of Decision
2:00 PM	Pop Concert
4:00 PM	Festival
4:30 PM	Children's Gospel Light Hour
5:00 PM	People's Gospel Hour
5:30 PM	Wort des Lebens
6:00 PM	News, Weather
6:05 PM	German Church of God
6:15 PM	Ruf Zur Entscheidung
6:30 PM	Recital
7:00 PM	RSVP
9:00 PM	Radio Bible Class
9:30 PM	Gospel Light Hour
10:05 PM	Low German Gospel Light Hour
10:30 PM	Organ Recital
10:45 PM	My Story
11:05 PM	Gems of Melody

Sources: Schedule pamphlets, November 1958 and September 1968, Golden West Broadcasting (Altona); additional details from *Winnipeg Free Press* radio schedules.

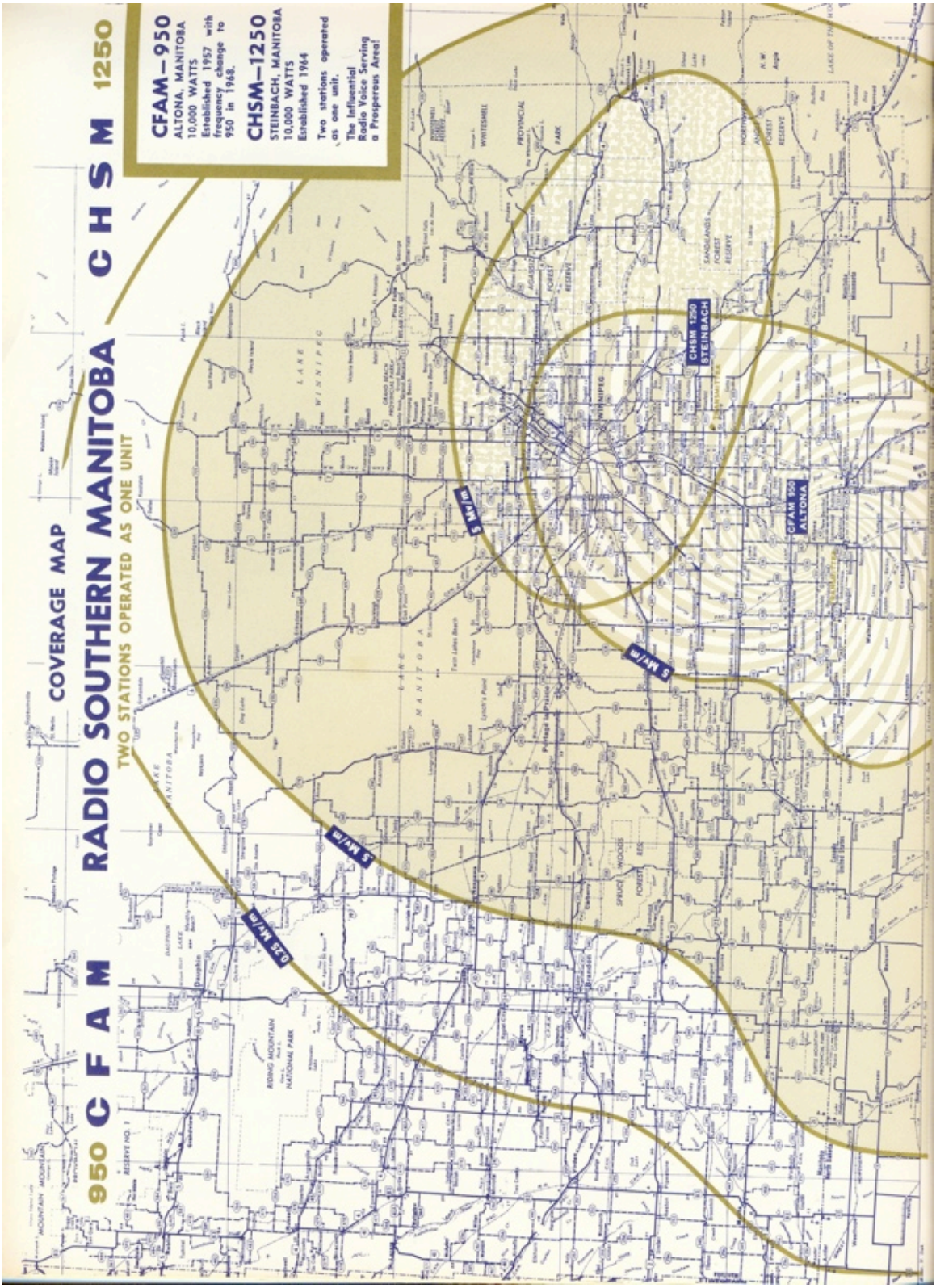
Appendix D: Coverage Maps

CFAM 1961 (1290 AM at 10,000 watts)



Source: Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives (Winnipeg), Theodore (Ted) E. Friesen fonds, Vol. 4892, File 8.

CFAM and CHSM – 1968



Source: Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives (Winnipeg), Theodore (Ted) E. Friesen fonds, Vol. 4892, File 12.

Appendix E: Shareholder Information

Shareholders in the Southern Manitoba Broadcasting Company Ltd. – 1956

Name	Residence	Common Shares	Preferred Shares	Occupation
A. J. Thiessen (President)	Altona	200	200	Manager/Car Dealer
D. K. Friesen (Sec.-Treas.)	Altona	60	60	Publisher
T. E. Friesen	Altona	10	10	Manager/Merchant
R. C. Friesen	Altona	10	10	Salesman
David Schulz	Altona	20	20	Minister/Farmer
Peter Brown (Director)	Winkler	40	40	Teacher
J. M. Froese (Director)	Winkler	80	80	Farmer
Isaac P. F. Friesen	Winkler	20	20	Minister/Farmer
J. E. Kroeker	Winkler	30	30	Insurance Agent/Salesman
P. J. Kroeker	Winkler	50	50	Farmer/Seedsman
J. F. Peters	Winkler	10	10	Clerk/Salesman
John H. Goosen	Manitou	30	30	Teacher/Farmer
Dr. C. W. Wiebe	Winkler	10	10	Doctor
Jake Hooge (Director)	Plum Coulee	40	40	Farmer
Bernhard Siemens	Horndean	20	20	Farmer
A. A. Kroeker	Winnipeg	40	40	Insurance Agent
William Falk	Winnipeg	10	10	Minister
Henry Wall	Winnipeg	10	10	Minister/Teacher
C. C. Neufeld (Director)	Winnipeg	20	20	Teacher
Walter E. Kroeker (V.P.)	Winnipeg	50	50	Manager/Seedsman
G. H. Fast (Director)	Tuxedo	30	30	Minister/Manager
David A. Fehr	Morden	60	60	Teacher/Dealer
John J. Fehr	Winkler	15	15	Bus Driver
Alfred Loewen	Gretna	15	15	Manager/Dealer
David Bueckert	Gnadenthal	50	50	Farmer
Helen Goertzen	Winkler	30	30	Teacher
G. J. Sawatzky	Winkler	10	10	Merchant
Helen Janzen	Winnipeg	10	10	Teacher
		980	980	

Source: Library and Archives Canada, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation fonds, RG 41, Vol. 657, File "Agenda of the 102nd Meeting, Board of Governors, Held in Ottawa, Oct. 25, 26 & 27, 1956," "Information for the Board of Governors in Connection with the Report of the Technical Committee," 60-61; Manitoba Companies Office, "Golden West Broadcasting Ltd.," File no. 0116408, Provincial Archives location no. 195-17-6-14, "Return of Information and Particulars," 31 December 1956 and 31 December 1957.

Notes: This is the "proposed share distribution" provided in the SMBC's broadcast license application. There were 980 common shares issued of an authorized 1000, at $10.00, and 980 preferred shares issued of authorized 1000, at $100.00.

Shareholders in the Southern Manitoba Broadcasting Company Ltd. – 1958

Name	Comm.	Pref.	Residence	Occupation
Peter Brown*	60	60		
David Bueckert*	150	150		
William Falk	20	20		
George H. Fast*	60	60		
David A. Fehr*	70	70		
John J. Fehr	15	15		
David K. Friesen*	100	100		
Isaac P. F. Friesen	20	20		
Raymond C. Friesen	20	20		
Theodore E. Friesen	20	20		
Jacob M. Froese*	80	80		
Helen Goertzen	30	30		
John Goossen	30	30		
Jake Hooge	50	50		
Helen Janzen	20	20		
A. A. Kroeker	80	80		
Jacob E. Kroeker	30	30		
Peter J. Kroeker	120	120		
Walter E. Kroeker*	150	150		
Alfred Loewen	15	15		
C. C. Neufeld*	50	50		
J. F. Peters	20	20		
George J. Sawatzky	10	10		
David Schulz*	40	40		
Bernhard Siemens	20	20		
Henry Wall	40	40		
Dr. C. W. Wiebe	20	20		
Diedrich H. Loewen	10	15		
Diedrich D. Klassen	10	15	Gretna	Farmer
Jacob H. Klassen	20	30	Gretna	Farmer
Harold D. Schulz	20	30	Altona	Teacher
Nick K. Heide	10	15	Gretna	Farmer
Aaron Klassen	10	15	Homewood	Student
John W. Kuhl	10	15	Gnadenthal	Farmer
Isaac I. Friesen	10	15	Winnipeg	Minister
Henry P. Hildebrand	10	15	Gretna	Farmer
Arthur Rempel	10	15	Winnipeg	Accountant
A. C. DeFehr	10	15	*not given*	*not given*
Cornelius A. DeFehr	20	30	*not given*	*not given*
John H. Epp	20	30	Winnipeg	Merchant
Walter Voth	10	15	Winnipeg	Contractor
David E. Redekop	10	15	Winnipeg	Merchant

Jacob Krahn	10	15	Winnipeg	Contractor

* = company director

Sources: Library and Archives Canada, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation fonds, RG 41, Vol. 666, File "114th Meeting – Board of Governors, October 8 and 9, 1958," "Information for the Board of Governors in Connection with the Report of the Technical Committee," 7-8; Manitoba Companies Office, "Golden West Broadcasting Ltd.," File no. 0116408, Provincial Archives location no. 195-17-6-14, "Return of Information and Particulars," 31 December 1958.

Shareholders in the Southern Manitoba Broadcasting Company Ltd. – 1964

Dennis Barkman
Helen V. Bock
Peter Brown
David Bueckert
Abram C. DeFehr
Cornelius A. DeFehr
Otto H. Driedger
Frank C. Dyck
John H. Epp
William Falk
David A. Fehr
David K. Friesen
Isaac I. Friesen
Isaac P. F. Friesen
Raymond C. Friesen
Theodore E. Friesen
Helen Goertzen
John H. Goossen
Nick K. Heide
Elmer Hildebrand
Jacob I. Hildebrand
Henry P. Hildebrandt
Jake Hooge
Helen Janzen
Diedrich D. Klassen
A. Donald Kroeker
Madeline R. Kroeker
Peter J. Kroeker
Walter E. Kroeker
Alfred Loewen
Cornelius C. Neufeld
John J. Pauls
D. D. Peters
Jacob F. Peters
David E. Redekop
Arthur Rempel
David Schulz
Harold Schulz
Bernhard Siemens
D. D. Stobbe
Elizabeth R. Thiessen
Walter Voth
Henry Wall
J. L. Warkentin
Cornelius W. Wiebe

Steinbach Shareholders
J. H. Brandt
E. J. Friesen
Albert Loewen
C. P. Loewen
George F. Loewen
A.D. Penner
J. A. Penner
J. D. Penner
Milton P. Penner
P. K. Penner

Source: Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives (Winnipeg), Theodore (Ted) E. Friesen fonds, Vol. 4892, File 10.

Appendix F: Sample Interview Consent Form

[Printed on Department of History letterhead]

Interview Consent Form

Research Project Title: Southern Manitoba on the Air: CFAM Radio and the Production of an Imagined Community, 1957-1977.

Researcher: Jeremy Wiebe, Graduate student, History Department, University of Manitoba

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Description of Research:
As part of the research for an M.A. thesis in history at the University of Manitoba, your participation is requested in an interview regarding the history of the radio station CFAM and its development as a cultural institution in southern Manitoba, particularly among Mennonite listeners. You will be asked questions about your experience as a radio listener and/or as a person involved in the business and production of radio programming. Interviews will last approximately one hour, and you may be asked to participate in a second, follow-up interview

Terms of Participation:
You may choose to have your real name used in this study or to remain anonymous. If you prefer to remain anonymous, you and the researcher shall discuss how you will be identified in the study. Please be aware that even if your real name is not used, it may be possible for people to identify you from your comments or background information you allow.

An audio recording of the interview will be made only with your consent. You may at any time have the recording device turned off. Written notes will also be taken. Following the interview you will have an opportunity to review the interview notes or transcript and make corrections or deletions. Only the researcher will have access to interview recordings, notes, and transcripts during the research period, with the exception of copies of notes or transcripts sent to you.

Upon completion of the thesis, interview recordings, notes, and transcripts will be destroyed unless you prefer that they be deposited in the archives of the Mennonite Heritage Centre (Winnipeg) for use by others. An electronic copy of the dissertation will be sent to you if requested.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Researcher: Jeremy Wiebe
(204) [redacted]

Supervisor: Gerald Friesen
(204) [redacted]

This research has been approved by the Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

___ Yes ___ No I grant permission for the interview to be recorded.

___ Yes ___ No I grant permission for the use of my real name.

___ Yes ___ No Recordings and transcripts of this interview are to be deposited at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives (Winnipeg) on completion of the study for use by others.

___ Yes ___ No I would like a copy of the interview results and/or an electronic copy of the thesis sent to me at this address:

_____

_____

_____

Participant's Signature Date

_____

Researcher's Signature Date

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