



Adventist, Richard Conradi, reports of his work among the Mennonites

February 1882 (*Review and Herald*) Parker, Turner Co. Richard Conradi

I have labored in this county among the German-Russian Mennonites since Nov. 7. After becoming acquainted with their different sects, and finding that the one where I commenced to labor was not so favorable as some others, on account of the use of stimulants, and the great prejudice against immersion, I went by invitation to the Baptist Mennonites, who, besides practicing immersion, do not permit the use of tobacco and stimulants. [I think these would be Mennonite Brethren]. But their ministers, unlike the others, did not permit me to preach in their meetings, so I started meetings in private houses, with good attendance. As is usually done, they sent for one of their preachers to keep the people away by holding meetings themselves, and in this they partially succeeded. Still, thank God, after a long struggle against prejudice, stubbornness, calumny, and against firm barriers, such as only a solid church organization where all members are intermarried can present, the Lord broke the solid front, when I almost gave up, and yesterday I held my first Sabbath meeting, four precious souls obeying their Master's will. About twenty more are convinced, all hoping to keep it soon, but love for their church and their peculiar custom of considering and weighing matters for a long time before doing, are as yet obstacles in their way.

I hope that the little mustard seed sown here will yet, through the grace of God, develop into a large, healthy tree. I have spoken fifty-four times, mostly in German, received forty subscriptions for the *Stimme Der Wahrheit*, and one for *Good Health*, visited two hundred families, and sold and distributed many pamphlets and tracts. I am now going to visit the Russian Sabbath-keepers at Milltown, Armstrong Co., in the hope of bringing them fully in harmony with us.

I desire the prayers of God's people, that the Master may send forth more laborers in the German language, as a wide field of labor is opening up everywhere.

February 1882 (*Review and Herald*) Milltown, Hutchinson Co. Richard Conradi

Arrived here among the Russian Brethren February 13. Found them sadly divided; still many rejoiced to see me. There are now about forty left here and at Immanuel's Creek, forty miles south, where the leading brethren are. The trouble commenced here a year ago, the leaders, with some of the members, taking the responsibility of disfellowshipping members forever to which others objected. Upon inquiry, I also found that their leaders have been working against us for nearly two years. Since New Years about fourteen have withdrawn from the others, among whom I commenced my meetings. The bitterness of the other party is so great that if any of their members visit my meetings they are excluded.

The 16th I went with four brethren to Immanuel's Creek to visit the other brethren and to talk with their leaders. We had good meetings at the house of one of this party, and our hearts became knitted together. Sunday, with Br. Conrey, I went to visit their leaders, but it was of no avail. I found that many here had given up the Sabbath on account of the trouble. In consequence of the cold winds, and being up nights, my eyes had become inflamed, and I went with Bro. Conrey to Springfield to rest a few days and to visit the American Brethren. On Sabbath and Sunday I held five meetings with good outside interest. On returning, as well as going, I spoke at Scotland to a large audience, the last time, by request, on the Sabbath.

Arriving again at Milltown, I commenced a regular course of lectures and the plain truths of the message have melted away the peculiarities which existed here. Sabbath we had our first German Sabbath-school. Over forty were in attendance. We did the best we could without lesson sheets. Sunday night we again met for the purpose of talking over the subject of their uniting with us. I explained this message, and twelve at once expressed themselves ready to join. Others will undoubtedly join soon. Some were prevented from attending the meetings by distance or bad weather. I also organized a tract society. Already twelve have joined. At first the ordinance of humility, the judicial oath, the covering of the heads of the sisters, also the fact that our brethren had guns in their houses, were great obstacles, and have been for years. The use of fermented wine was an especial hindrance to our work among them. But, thank God, all this vanished as I showed them the true position from the word of God. Only a few linger. Our company already number over twenty, as several have joined us since I commenced my meetings. I hope and pray that others will decide for the truth. Still they will have much to do to retrace their steps and humble themselves. Two already desire baptism. From this company light has been going out and as the result, some in Kansas, Nebraska, and even Southern Russia, are keeping the Sabbath, also a few forty miles west of here. I learn also by postal that near Parker about fifteen families are desiring to hear me again.

Some here are leaving off the use of pork, and several are ready to sign the tea total pledge. The tithing



system is also regarded with favor by several. I have spoken twenty-eight times thus far. I feel truly thankful that my health is so good, notwithstanding the loss of sleep. My prayer is that the Lord may soon send some one to labor with me, that I may have more time for study and meditation. May the Lord open the hearts of many of the German nation, that the work begun may go with power.

April 1882 (*Review and Herald*) Milltown, Dakota S.B. Whitney

Came to this place Sabbath day, as I was called to attend a funeral at Bridgewater, Fri. P.M. Here I found a company fully in the faith of the message-health reform, Sabbath school, tract society, and all, as the result of faithful labors by Br. Conradi among them. Only those who understand the situation can appreciate what these labors have been, or the importance of the results reached. It is one of the great triumphs of truth, and its influence will reach much farther than this immediate time and locality. To the Lord be all praise.

Yesterday (April 9, 1882) the church was fully organized with a membership of 14. In the afternoon two were baptized, and in the evening these, with one other, united with the church. There is a prospect of several more coming soon. A good interest is also manifested in the town, and I have an appointment to speak there this evening.

May 1882 (*Review and Herald*) Milltown, Dakota Richard Conradi

The last few weeks I have visited both old fields and new ones. Among the Baptist Mennonites north of Parker, the truth still makes headway. To avoid divisions, they resolved not to molest those who are convinced of the true Sabbath, also to recognize those still as God's children who should commence to keep it. Several more were anxious this time to hear, and to subscribe for the *Stimme*. One of their number in Nebraska, who has been keeping the Sabbath with his family for a year, labors hard there to spread the truth. He writes some excellent letters. The Mennonites here have tried to quiet their troubled consciences by sending for one of their ablest men from Kansas; but he daubed with untempered mortar, and the rents again appear.

I held also a few meetings near Lenox, where two German Baptist families are somewhat interested.

Last Sabbath I returned to Milltown. The old teachers were trying hard to spread discord during my absence, yet, thank God, we enjoyed the best meeting we have ever had. Confessions were made, and all resolved to stop listening to these false accusations. Our Sabbath-school increases in interest, also our T and M work.

Yesterday I visited a German-Methodist, thirty five miles west, who, against the bitterest opposition from his wife, commenced to observe the Sabbath a few weeks ago. We had a blessed interview, and he, with renewed zeal, seeks to spread the truth way out on the frontier. I have received twenty subscriptions from the *Stimme*, one for the *Instructor*, one for the *Tidende*, and sold over twenty German Bibles. In this field, eighty miles in length, there are now about sixty families reading the *Stimme*, hundreds well supplied with our tracts, and several places in which to hold meetings; there are also about twenty-five churches, of various creeds, that have considered the Sabbath question, more or less. Yet in many of them a terrible prejudice exists, partly created by misrepresentations, and partly by the apostasy and backsliding of many Sabbath-keepers at Emmanuel's Creek. Yet thanks be to God for the openings here and there, and the tokens of some good done. Quite a few have promised to visit our camp meeting. Will the people of God remember me in their prayers? I need them very much.

July 1882 (*Review and Herald*) Parker, Dakota R. Conradi

Through the blessing of God, the truth has finally become so deeply rooted among the Baptist-Mennonites north of here as to bring some to a decision. Since our good camp meeting, the last message of warning has more than ever agitated the minds of the people and one young man, ten miles west of here, but belonging to this church, has observed every Sabbath since that meeting. Others talked the matter up, and Sunday and Monday the church met to consider the cases of those affected, and decided to forbid he Lord's supper, not only to those that would observe the Sabbath, but even to those that thought it right. The consequence is that the first meeting of persons that have fully decided will be held next Sabbath. About thirty church members will be affected by the above resolution. Some are undecided, but I think about half will keep the Sabbath without delay.

Near Childstown an old Mennonite preacher who takes the *Stimme*, and whom I visited this winter, is reading it to his friends, and invites me to come to preach. The same request comes from Nebraska. To the Lord alone be the praise for his wonderful ways. When I think of the three months of apparently almost



fruitless labor that I spent last year around here, and now see the effect, I can truly say that the little mustard seed planted in a seemingly cold and barren ground is now fast maturing under the fostering rays of God's grace. The harvest of the earth is rapidly ripening, but where are the reapers? May God fit up some of our young men to become laborers in the German cause. While this is but one step toward bringing these friends in harmony with us, and probably much time and wearing labor will be required to bring about this desirable result, I trust the work to Him who has so far opened the way.

I have just received a letter from Milltown stating that the church there is growing in numbers.

Yesterday (July 22, 1882) I held my first meeting with the Baptist Mennonites north of here. Eighteen, nearly all heads of families, have so far obeyed the message. In the morning I spoke to them; at noon I held an English service at Allentown, and in the afternoon a mixed service again at the first place. The Lord's spirit came very near and made hearts tender, and at the close, in the afternoon, all joined to praise the Lord for his rich blessing. I expect quite a number more to start by next Sabbath. As this is the first Mennonite Church that I have visited (those at Milltown being originally Lutheran), I feel quite a burden to see them unite with us fully, as thereby a great field of labor will be opened; for they are scattered over Pennsylvania and several Western states. If the prejudice is once overcome so that they fully unite, the battle will be easier, as we can refer to those already with us. As a people, they are much opposed to the wearing of flowers on hats and ruffles on dresses, -in fact, to all pride, and our sisters who are not free from such things may consider themselves stumbling blocks in their way. Pray for me and the cause here, that the Lord may help further to finish the work.

August 1882 (*Stimme der Wahrheit*) Dakota Campmeeting

This was held in a grove a number of miles from Parker, from June 29 to July 4. About 300 of our brothers and sisters, -American, German, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, and Russian- were present on the Sabbath. The conference is growing rapidly mostly as a result of people moving in.

Each day worship services were held in English, German, and Danish. A church of 18 Russian Sabbath observers was taken into the conference. One of Sister Whites solemn testimonies was sent in and read at one of the morning services. The piece was excellent. The hearts were turned to serious thought and superficial thoughts were driven away. Sabbath afternoon the service lasted until after sundown. Many stepped forward to request prayer. The Spirit of the Lord was present with power. Eighteen were baptized on Monday. Three were ordained: Richard Conradi, M.M. Olsen, and Br. Briggs. Br. Conradi wants to stay in this territory and continue the work among the Germans.

August 1882 (*Review and Herald*) Parker, Dakota R. Conradi

The Lord is still moving upon the hearts of our German-Russian friends here. Those who have embraced the truth desire now to unite fully with us, and will be organized when Eld. O.A. Olsen comes here. Twenty are keeping the Sabbath, and quite a number more will commence this week; others are seriously investigating. None of these are addicted to the use of liquors and tobacco, and all have considerable experience in practical Christianity. Several of them will make laborers for the Lord; in fact, they have done considerable in the cause already. As this is such a busy time, most of my work consists in visiting, but on the Sabbath we have meetings nearly all day; we have also started a Sabbath-school.

As I leave here for a short time, I hope to be remembered in the prayers of my brethren and sisters; but above all, remember the interests of the cause of God here, that nothing may injure its progress.

I feel that the present work is already too great for my strength, although I do not follow up more than one-fourth of the interest created. May God arouse us as a people, and especially may the last Testimony from his servant be heeded, and the true advent spirit be kindled anew in our hearts. We need it very much, as a people. How can so many among us be worse than idle, while people are everywhere starving for the bread of life? Oh for a faith that would enable us to grasp the great promises of the near future! May we not make the perishing things of this world, -its pride and pleasure, -our idols. Pray for me, that I may always be so humble that God can use me as an instrument in his hand to spread the truth.

September 1882 (*Review and Herald*) Dakota O.A. Olsen

Among the churches -Sept. 15, in company with Bro. Conradi, we met with the Russian friends about eight miles north from Parker, who have recently taken hold of the truth through Br. C.'s labors. We partially organized a church of eighteen members. As it was thought best not to choose and ordain an elder as yet, Bro. Conradi is to be considered as holding that office for the time being. We are very favorably



impressed with the earnestness and simplicity of this people. It has taken them a long time to yield to the claims of truth, and it has required much patient labor on Bro. Conradi's part; but it appears that when they did yield they yielded fully, and they are now very desirous to learn their duty, and to be fully in harmony with the work of the third angel's message. Bro. Conradi will be with them more or less for some time. Others are deeply interested, and on the point of obeying the truth.

On Sabbath we enjoyed a very precious season with them. In the forenoon I spoke to them in English, Bro. C. interpreting into German. In the afternoon we celebrated the ordinances of the Lord's house. It was a precious season. Our English brethren from Parker were present, and thus the German brethren had the benefit of their experience. This they appreciated much. On leaving them, they expressed deep gratitude for this visit, and their last charge was that I must "greet all people" for them.

October 1882 (*Stimme der Wahrheit*) Dakota R. Conradi

Thanks to the help of the Lord, the good news goes forward faster and faster. Last Sunday, with the help of Elder D.A. Olsen, the second German-Russian church by the name of Brotherfield was organized. Also foot-washing and the Lord's Supper was celebrated with some of our English *Geschwistern*. The Lord allowed all present to share richly in the Lord's blessings. Not only from this state, but also especially from Wisconsin and Nebraska where small churches are found, came upon invitation. Also the call in the August Number caused many isolated *Geschwistern* and friends to write and tell us that our courage and ambition in working for the Lord is being multiplied. It is always more obvious that the "voice" by grace from above is quiet, but bringing blessings to various areas of this land; I hope to hear from many others. And I hope that our *Geschwister* will not forget to pray for those who write in order to spread the message. The Lord is opening the way. Let us with all of our power and concentration further the Work. Always remember me in your prayers.

November 1882 (*Review and Herald*) Milltown, Dakota R. Conradi

The work among the German-Russians is still onward. I met with the Milltown Church at their quarterly meeting and found them in hopeful condition. We enjoyed a blessed interview, all members being present at the ordinances. We hope for more additions. The sum of \$10. was pledged to the T. and M. work.

December 1882 (*Stimme der Wahrheit*) Dakota

Elder Olsen and Conradi visited the Russian sabbath keepers eight miles north of Parker on September 15. Since then Elder Olsen has made more visits to the churches and reports that in Madison eleven were added, in Bridgewater-two, and Sunny Side-two. Br. Conradi writes that since the organization in Brotherfield five more persons are following the holy Laws, in all, twenty five.

December 1882 (*Review and Herald*) Milltown and Brotherfield, Dakota R. Conradi

Since my last report, I have visited Milltown, where the brethren showed their love for the present truth by giving liberally to the cause. They also renewed their subscription on the *Stimme*, and raised their club to twenty copies. Two joined the T. and M. Society. In Brotherfield we organized a tract society of seventeen members, and they now take eleven copies of the *Stimme*. They also send several to Russia direct from the Office.

I spent the three days of prayer and fasting with the church at Brotherfield. Friday and Sunday the American Brethren from Parker met with us and we held services in both English and German. The blessing of the Lord was with us during these days; many good testimonies were borne, and nearly all expressed themselves as greatly benefited by thus trying to seek the Lord by fasting and prayer, and manifested a desire to further humble themselves before the Lord.

Sunday was an especially important day for the work here. After an hour spent in earnest prayer for wisdom and guidance from above, followed by preaching, an elder and deacon were elected and ordained. This was followed by preaching and social meeting in English. After a short intermission, a service in German closed the day. One brother feels a burden to become a laborer in the Master's vineyard.

I have also done some visiting and preaching in new places, received eleven new subscribers for the *Stimme*, and sold \$20. worth of books.

For a while, my address will be Parker, D.T., where all business for me should be addressed.

I am of good courage, although the enemy in so many ways tries to hinder the work. My desire is to humble myself daily before the Lord, that not I may work, but CHRIST in me.



OBITUARY (Taken from the January 1883 publication of *Stimme Der Wahrheit*)

On December 4, 1882, our dear Brother Heinrich Wedel from Brotherfield, Dakota, died at the age of 52. He was born in Waldheim, Molotchna, South Russia, and even though he had found his Lord long ago, he first was buried with his Lord in baptism four years ago. The next year he moved to America and joined the Baptist-Mennonites here. This summer after hearing the message of the third angel, he willingly also took this step and kept the Sabbath of the Lord. This fellowship was organized in his home.

He died in the blessed hope of an early resurrection, when Christ, our life, comes. Words of comfort were given from Revelation 14:12 & 13 by this writer to a large assembly. R. Conradi (in German)

(Taken from the January 2, 1883, publication of *The Review and Herald*)

Died of cholera morbus and rupture, at Brotherfield, Turner, Co., D.T., December 4, 1882, Henry Wedel, in the fifty-second year of age. Bro. Wedel was born in Waldheim, South Russia, where he was converted in 1868, and joined the Mennonite Baptists. He came to this country in 1879. Last Spring, when he heard the third angel's message, he again willingly followed his Master, and our church here was organized at his house. He died in full faith, looking forward to the soon-coming resurrection and joyful anticipations. In the short time since he accepted the message, he has always been ready to help spread a knowledge of the truth, and the church has lost a faithful worker. A widow and five children mourn his loss. He is the first German-Russian who has been called away before the coming of the Lord, believing presently truth. Funeral discourse by the writer, from Rev. 14:13, to a large company of friends and relatives. R. Conradi (in English)

Grace Seibel Thiesen