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CONCLUDING STATEMENTS OF STUDY CONFERENCE ON ESCHATOLOGY

January 25-27, 1978
Fresno, California

CENTER FOR M. B. STUDIES IN CANADA
77 HENDERSON HIGHWAY
WINNIPEG, MANITOBA R2L 1L1

As we reflect on this conference, we give thanks to God that the Blessed Hope of Christ's return remains at the center of the faith of the Mennonite Brethren.

We thank God that He has kept that hope burning brightly among us by giving us gifted teachers and preachers who have opened the Scriptures with us and have urged us to continued discipleship and mission.

We thank God for the unity of our brotherhood, and for the diversity of our brethren. We trust we are not threatened by that diversity, but recognize it as God's gift to us.

We thank God for the solid commitment to the Word which is evident here and to the humility with which it has been expounded. We thank God that our Confession of Faith has been reaffirmed.

We thank God for the opportunity to clarify our thinking on eschatology. We are thankful that we are united on the "who" of history and prophecy, and that there is openness regarding the details of the "what" and the "how." ^{en}

We thank God that no one interpretation of the Scripture as it relates to eschatology is required of us. We believe that the variety of viewpoints expressed enriches rather than impoverishes us.

As we reflect further, we also raise several points of concern:

We are concerned that this conference may not adequately represent our brotherhood. We wish that more of our brethren had been able to participate.

We are concerned that some may have felt overwhelmed by the scholars among us. We trust that all will feel free to speak their views as those views are based upon biblical study.

We are concerned that there may be a lack of understanding of our hermeneutics. Further clarification may be necessary to help us arrive at an understanding of the way we interpret Scripture.

We are concerned that those who hold certain eschatological views not be intimidated by the presentation of ideas which differ from their own. In our concern we voice a plea that we remain open to one another in our difference.

We are concerned that issues which still need to be discussed will be part of a continuing dialogue. We feel that more time should be spent in clarifying our thinking on these issues.

We are concerned that our belief in the Blessed Hope motivate us to holy living, evangelistic caring, and sacrificial giving of ourselves and our resources.

In conclusion, we praise God that He holds all of the future in His hand, and we affirm the constancy of our commitment to our Lord and to each other, as we build up the body of Christ and as we serve in the world until He comes.

--The Findings Committee: Jim Holm, Vernon Wiebe, Marvin Schmidt, Herb Brandt