

Book Reviews

Waldemar Janzen, *Old Testament Ethics: A Paradigmatic Approach* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994). Paperback; 236 pp.

If one were to ask Janzen how Christians could live according to a biblical ethic, he would respond that they should immerse themselves in the Bible's stories, absorb from them models or paradigms for the good life, and conform their lives to those models. Janzen observes that many "simple" Bible-reading Christians have done exactly this (p. 210). Thus Janzen implies that he offers not an innovative approach to Old Testament (OT) ethics but, rather, an explicit and descriptive statement of how many Christians do and should faithfully appropriate an ethic from the OT.

According to Janzen, Christians have derived ethical guidance from the OT in other ways, too. Often they have adopted its prominent characters as ethical models, but the difficulty encountered by this way is that every "hero" exhibits morally flawed behavior. Alternatively, Christians have often mined stories for a central ethical principle; or they have sought the ethical yield of the OT in selected genres, particularly in the prophetic books or in collections of law, especially the Ten Commandments. But this way results in the abandonment of the narrative after the principle is found, or in treating the major portion of the OT as ethically irrelevant.

Janzen proposes that the paradigmatic approach can grasp the OT's ethical message in a comprehensive way. In Janzen's usage, paradigm means a "personally and holistically conceived image of a model (e.g., a wise person, good king) that imprints itself immediately and nonconceptually in the characters and actions of those who hold it" (pp. 27-28).

Janzen discerns that the OT story presents a primary ethical paradigm, namely, the familial paradigm. Its central values include (i) life conceived in terms of the ongoing family line, (ii) land as place and source of livelihood for the family, and (iii) hospitality as the gracious extension of basic sustenance for life in time of need to those outside the immediate circle of kinship obligations.

Supporting this primary paradigm, the OT offers four others, namely the paradigms of the holy life (priestly), of the wise life (sapiential), of the just life (royal), and of the life devoted to service even if it entails suffering (prophetic).

In the final chapter of his book, Janzen demonstrates that the four subservient paradigms of the OT correspond to Jesus' roles as priest, sage, king, and prophet in the New Testament. The familial paradigm is subsumed in that of the kingdom of God which embraces as family all who do the will of the Father in heaven. Thus Janzen finds continuity between the Testaments. The OT forms the necessary presupposition for a complete biblical ethic, though the NT claims a certain finality. The relationship is like that of the last chapter of a novel to the chapters that precede.

One may describe Janzen's approach to the Bible as canonical, meaning that he treats the completed scriptural canon as the primary context within which to understand a biblical text, and his approach to ethics as narrative, meaning that he maintains that any idea of what constitutes the good life is particular to a personal and communal story. In these approaches, biblicists and ethicists will recognize the influences of especially B. S. Childs and S. Hauerwas, respectively.

Janzen's argument against reducing OT ethics to moral principles abstracted from story or perceived in law succeeds very well. I find it compelling to think in terms of ethical paradigms arising out of biblical narratives, but even more fundamentally, taking shape within the context of a people's unfolding story.

Janzen explains (and I think rightly so) that for the ancient Israelites, ethical paradigms were dynamic, not static. Their paradigms changed with time, they differed from region to region, and, from one social setting to another. Janzen asserts that he has not ventured on "a search for universal ethical constants," and he says it would be "a misguided effort . . . to attempt to find a timeless set of paradigms [in the OT]" (p. 30). A possible inference from this is that Christians, in seeking out ethical paradigms for their own time and place, ought to include in their narrative the still unfolding story of the Church.

Of course, readers will find various points of contention with Janzen. Some historians will take issue with Janzen's presuppositions regarding the seminomadic, immigrant origins, and the egalitarian social structures of early Israel. Others will dispute Janzen's depiction of the prophets, urging constructs informed by recent anthropological and sociological studies. Historians of Israelite religion may disagree with the presumed monotheism of early Israel, or the existence of licentious sexual practices within the fertility cults of Canaan and Israel. But such contentions will, with justification, be seen only as distractions when considered against the magnitude of Janzen's achievement.

The reader may also wonder about the place history holds in Janzen's narrative/canonical approach. At some points Janzen reaches beyond the biblical story to suggest a historical reconstruction, for example, when he discusses the role of Israelite kings in the administration of justice (pp. 149-50). At other places the line between the historical and the literary enterprises seems somewhat blurred. For example, when Janzen considers the story about Ahab and Naboth, he says that the quandary is due to their different stories: "Naboth has been shaped by Israel's *history*, whereas Ahab hovers at its edges" (p. 31, emphasis mine). To what extent does Janzen learn of their different stories through reading the canonical texts, and to what extent does he depend on a historical reconstruction? If it is the biblical story in its canonical shape that informs us about the good life, I wonder whether historical inquiry can offer any help for this pursuit.

Janzen has provided a systematic work that presupposes a lifetime of study and of conversation with both American and European scholarship. It is evident throughout his book that Janzen has written for the Church, and he presents his thesis with examples, analogies, and illustrations that will make it comprehensible, convincing, and valuable to all who will read. His book models for pastors, teachers, and for any other Bible reader how one can make a meaningful transfer from the biblical text into the contemporary experience of life.

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John D. Rempel, *The Lord's Supper in Anabaptism: A Study in the Christology of Balthasar Hubmaier, Pilgram Marpeck, and Dirk Philips*. Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History No. 33 (Waterloo, ON; Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993). Paperback, 272 pp., \$38.95 Cdn.

This book is a careful and scholarly treatment of the theology of the Lord's Supper in three major Anabaptist theologians of the sixteenth century. Rempel gives two main reasons for his choice of Balthasar Hubmaier, Pilgram Marpeck and Dirk Philips. First, the amount of available material was most extensive for the three and, second, each represents "the dominant biases and issues of a stream of Anabaptism in his generation" (38). In his Foreword, Hans-Juergen Goertz suggests that, although from the standpoint of systematic theology the selection may be justified, from a historical point of view a historical-genetic approach might have been better (15). Rempel's approach is therefore not fully polygenetic because none of the three really represents the movement of which they were a part, according to Goertz.

Rempel's study begins with brief comments about Eucharistic thought in the

late medieval period as well as during the Reformation. One lengthy chapter then deals with each of the individuals in turn and a final chapter summarizes his findings, relates these to Mennonite thought and practice until the present, and seeks to point out some areas where we can be enriched in our current practice and theology.

The book as a whole retains much of the structure and character of a dissertation. The non-academic reader is likely to get lost in the details and subtleties of the analysis, particularly in the middle three chapters. Those who are less interested in such detail can capture the essence by reading the final chapter. There are also four pages of summary charts (pp. 20-23) which likewise give the essence of the findings.

As far as lessons for contemporary Mennonites are concerned, Rempel would like us to recover some of the loss of meaning of the Lord's Supper, but there doesn't seem to be enough common ground between the three representatives to allow an easy transfer of meaning. Each of the representatives struggled with the nature of the incarnation and the nature of Christ's continuing presence, but tried to resolve it in different ways. The primary dualism, Rempel states, was not between spirit and matter but between the church and the world (36). For all three the fourth Gospel rather than the Synoptics or the Pauline literature was decisive, but the outcome was still far from uniform.

Rempel is critical of the present tendency among many Mennonites to make the memorial emphasis of the eucharist the exclusive one (224). In this respect all three theologians have something to offer. Pilgram Marpeck stands out as the theologian who had the most to offer, although not without his own inner contradictions. His emphasis on the prolongation of Christ's earthly life in the church, complimented by his heavenly ministry for the church and combined with his definition of the sacrament as an event flowing from the gathering of a community in faith and love, has the potential to enrich the celebration of the Lord's Supper significantly (222).

Given the theological diversity of early Anabaptist teachings on the Lord's Supper, it seems doubtful that a study such as this can serve as an adequate basis for renewal in the Mennonite church today. Nevertheless, the book will serve a valuable purpose if it can help to release us from our past reductionist tendencies to an openness to the larger claims of theology and Christology.

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Delbert F. Plett, editor, *Leaders of the Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde in Russia, 1812 to 1874* (The Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde Historical Series, Volume 6). Crossway Publications: Steinbach MB, 1993. Paperback, 932 pp.

The dogged determination and resourcefulness of Delbert Plett has resulted in yet another volume of materials and analysis of the Kleine Gemeinde, in this case focussing on the leading figures of the movement in the mid-nineteenth century in Russia, although the transition to the New World is included as well. Another feature of this volume is the inclusion of essays by a number of current historians, perhaps an attempt to give more balance to the overall interpretation.

A first part introduces the background by means of essays on a range of topics by John Friesen, Harvey Plett, Henry Schapansky, Adolf Ens, Delbert Plett, Royden Loewen and Archie Penner. Later contributions come from Al Reimer, James Urry, John Dyck, Harry Loewen, Henry Fast, Leland Harder and Clarence Hiebert, an impressive list, which unfortunately adds to the stylistic unevenness of this volume as much as to its variety. A good copy editor could have made a substantial difference.

The body of this large book is made up of primary materials, sermons, letters, verse and other such documents emanating from these leadership figures—a “massive” task of translation manfully accomplished by Ben Hoepfner—and it is these texts that constitute the core of the book.

For this reviewer a steady reading of these primary texts was nothing less than deeply disturbing. On the one hand one cannot help but be impressed by the way in which these men of the Kleine Gemeinde clung to the “classics” of their faith tradition: the Bible, Menno, Pieter Pieterz, Schabalie and the others. But one is soon brought up short by the brutal literalism of their interpretation and their fixation on narrow external categories in dealing with what they considered the application of faith in daily life; categories like perceived pride and humility, for example.

Long epistles are filled with lengthy biblical quotations, mainly from the Old Testament, with a no doubt implicit but ineffable point lodged somewhere between the lines, and concluding with “your insignificant brother.” Such exchanges accompany every shift in real life as much as every “new wind of doctrine,” stifling much that might have been of sustenance to the movement rather than proving the spirits. A systematic comparison of “conservative” and “progressive” elements in the KG and MB movements, based on documents such as these, would no doubt be a significant addendum to the tortuous infrastructure of the larger Russian Mennonite history.

There are several references to the scandalous “Franz Thiessen incident” in the book. To an outsider it appears that a certain Thiessen was accused of incest with his daughter and thrown into prison—as was his daughter. He died there, but his daughter had to serve a full term and then was shipped off to Siberia,

where she was married (apparently by the government) to a Russian man. A letter has been preserved in which she asks her *Gemeinde* to send her her inheritance. We do not know whether or not she ever received anything, but we are told that she had never been visited in prison. This information is contained in letters by Abraham Friesen, *Aeltester* of the Kleine Gemeinde, who shows concern for Anna, the daughter, and chastises the leaders of the Große Gemeinde for allowing such a thing to happen (244-49).

Another document that captures a reader's attention is a group of letters from a concerned father to his son and daughter. The son has married a woman from another Mennonite group (MB) and is excommunicated. A long letter impresses upon the son that there is forgiveness for repentance. But before the letter can reach its goal the son is killed by lightning while sitting on a bench between two members of the other *Gemeinde*. The second letter than implores the daughter-in-law to recognize the obvious divine judgment.

Such spectacular examples are rare and the overall effect of reading these documents is not that which the editor might hope for: rather than demonstrating the "right doctrine" of these leaders, as the editor claims, Plett has shown the reader one of the darker sides of Mennonite history, its narrow and often self-righteous religiosity. I think it is important to add immediately that this dismal picture could at least be modified by the larger view which might be conveyed by a more inclusive social history.

It is necessary to take note of Plett's polemical response to Leland Harder's eloquent biography of Jacob A. Wiebe, who moved from the KG to the KMB position in Russia and remains a contentious figure, at least to Plett. Without going into the details, which are rehearsed here at length, it may suffice to remark that Delbert Plett's zeal leads him to some injudicious formulations and a rather intemperate tone.

There is of course much more in this tome than can be commented upon in a brief review. Some of the scholarly essays are beautifully done, in contrast to the rough-hewn quality of most of the primary materials. The lengthy verses presented in this book deserve further investigation, though not for their poetic quality. The poem cited as "The Refiner" by Peter Plett Toews (p.819), has also been claimed in the Russian M.B. History of Heinrich and Gerhard Woelk (*A Wilderness Journey. Glimpses of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Russia, 1925-1980*) as having been authored by Johann J. Toews, an M.B. elder (Woelk, p.59-60). The autobiographical text by Klaas Reimer, "Ein kleines Aufsatz", should have been corrected in its title as a matter of editorial tact.

These things having been said, it is also necessary to thank Delbert Plett for the large and challenging historical task he has taken up and the energy he has given to this project. The insignificant reviewer will forgive the editor's partiality gladly, since it appears to be a function of that selfsame energetic pursuit of this labor of love. Delbert Plett, however, must take the consequence: namely, that his work will have to defend itself in the court of

Mennonite and Russian historiography. As a lawyer, he will know that that will take time.

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Abraham Friesen, *History and Renewal in the Anabaptist/Mennonite Tradition* (North Newton, Kansas: Bethel College, 1994). Paperback, 155 pp., \$23.00 U.S.

This book, a kind of *Geistesgeschichte*, grew out of Friesen's lectures at various institutions, particularly his Menno Simons Lectures at Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas, in October 1992. Chapters 1 and 2 are autobiographical, recounting the author's gradual becoming Anabaptist-Mennonite and his "doing Anabaptist history." While at first glance his rather lengthy personal story may seem superfluous to the main argument of the book, it fits into Friesen's concern for "renewal" of Anabaptist-Christian faith among present-day Mennonites.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5, the so-called "biographical" part of the book, deal with Ludwig Keller (1849-1915) and his ground-breaking research and publication in Anabaptist studies. Friesen's penetrating investigation and analysis of Keller's interest in and motives for doing Anabaptist history is fascinating. Friesen demonstrates convincingly that in portraying the Anabaptists positively and presenting Hans Denck as a model Anabaptist leader, Keller wished to unite all European Mennonites and other "old-evangelical" groups into a kind of spiritual-intellectual-humanistic union, as a sort of "counterweight" to the dogmatic and confessional mainline churches of his day. This Keller tried to do by arguing that the Anabaptists were not a recent Reformation sect, but part of a long line of Christians, including Waldenses and mystics, that went back to Apostolic times.

Keller's attempt at union failed in the end mainly because his linking of the Anabaptists with medieval groups could not be sustained historically, and because the pietistically-inclined South-German Mennonites and the Fundamentalist John Horsch in America became suspicious of Keller's, and presumably Denck's, rationalism and liberalism. For South-German and American Mennonites the Swiss Anabaptists in general and Menno Simons in particular became "normative" for their faith and life.

Keller's influence upon American Mennonites, however, continued through Horsch and his son-in-law Harold S. Bender. The renewal theme in Keller's work, particularly Keller's linking the Anabaptists with the Apostolic church, gave rise to Bender's "Anabaptist Vision" in the 1940s, which was *also* a call for renewal among Mennonites.

This call for spiritual renewal continues in Friesen's book. Friesen rejects both Keller and Denck as models or agents of renewal, but like them and Harold

Bender he appeals to his audience and readers to study Anabaptism with renewal in mind. However, after “polygenesis” Friesen, unlike his predecessors, cannot be so certain about “normative Anabaptism” or concerning who can speak for the Anabaptists. Repeatedly he asks: “Who speaks for the Anabaptists? And who determines who speaks for the Anabaptists? Insiders? Outsiders? Theologians? Historians?”

In the end Friesen seeks to go beyond Bender’s “Vision” and beyond Anabaptism, all the way to the Apostolic church as the basis for spiritual renewal. He writes: “Anabaptists would never have advised their descendants to study their history in order to be spiritually renewed. They would have pointed them to the Bible” (p.146). But surely Friesen knows that *all* Christian confessions seek to base their faith and life on the Gospels. Thus Mennonites will still have to decide through which Anabaptist glasses they will read the Bible. The great variety of Mennonites, including the fundamentalists and liberals among them, testify to the fact that they do not interpret the Bible the same.

This book is a pleasure to read. Friesen’s engaging style, spiked with humor, personal comments, and the occasional sarcasm, makes it difficult to put the book down. It is relatively free of typos. On page 54 the date for the Münster uprising should be 1535 (not 1525).

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The Anabaptist Writings of David Joris 1535-1543. Translated and edited by Gary K. Waite (Waterloo, Ont./Scottsdale, PA, 1994). Hardcover, 346 pp. \$39.95 US, \$51.95 Can.

This edited translation of the “Anabaptist” writings of David Joris (1500/1-1556) compliments Waite’s earlier book on this Dutch spiritualist (*David Joris and Dutch Anabaptism 1524-1543*. Waterloo: WLU-Press, 1990). Like the earlier study which deals with the “Anabaptist phase,” this book includes only those writings which Waite considers “Anabaptist.” Included are the anonymous biography of Joris; two songs of the prophet; “Of the Divine and Godly Ordinance”; “Hear, Hear, Hear”; three selections from Joris’s early correspondence; the minutes of the Strasbourg disputation, 1538; and the apology to Countess Anna of Oldenburg.

While the selections included provide valuable insights into the working of Joris’s mind and his place within Dutch radicalism they tell us little about his commitment to Anabaptism. In fact, the writings indicate that Joris did not take Anabaptist principles, including adult/believers baptism, all that seriously. And as far as other Anabaptist groups were concerned, with the exception of ex-Muensterites, they were generally not attracted to Joris. In fact, the Anabaptists

around Menno Simons opposed and rejected him, and the Melchiorites of Strasbourg, including the female prophets there, refused to acknowledge his leadership.

After the Muenster fiasco Joris developed into an apocalyptic spiritualist who interpreted the Christian rites, Scriptures, marriage, the kingdom of God, the church, indeed all of life, spiritually. In his inwardness and subjectivism Joris went even beyond the Anabaptist spiritualists. As Waite correctly points out, Joris was influenced by the writings of spiritualists such as Sebastian Franck, Caspar von Schwenckfeld and Bernhard Rothman. The more moderate Anabaptist spiritualists like Hans Denck he apparently did not know or chose to ignore.

This is not to say that Joris was not an Anabaptist, considering the great variety of, and diversity among, sixteenth-century Anabaptism. It seems to me, however, that in view of the complexity of this spiritualist's character and thinking, the *Anabaptist* label might not apply nor be of much help in trying to understand this man. To understand this reformer more fully one needs to deal with all his extant works, including his massive *Wonder Book*, instead of focusing on his so-called "Anabaptist writings" only. Only thus one might come close to appreciating the "measure of the man."

Even the selections included in this volume demonstrate that Joris was not a simple Anabaptist believer. He was many things: a spiritualist thinker, a prophet with a great sense of his mission, a symbolist and artist, and a creative thinker and theologian in his own right. He was his own person, difficult to classify and label. Only the totality of this person's life and work, including his last years in Basel (not dealt with in this book), can do justice to David Joris.

The above reflections are not meant as a criticism of Waite's fine and important book. They are intended as a reminder that the radical movement in general and characters like Joris in particular were more complex than any one label might suggest.

The present translation with its introduction to David Joris and the accompanying notes is excellent. With Waite's two books on Joris our knowledge of this reformer has been advanced appreciably. No serious student of the sixteenth-century Reformation can afford to bypass these studies.

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Leo Driedger and Donald B. Kraybill, *Mennonite Peacemaking: From Quietism to Activism* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1994). Paperback. 344 pp.

In this work, Driedger and Kraybill document the dramatic changes which Mennonite views on non-violence have undergone during the twentieth century. They argue that these changes have, in conjunction with more specific historical events, been the result of the impact of the process of modernization, with its attendant impact on the Mennonite way of life and on the relationship of Mennonites to broader society.

The authors begin with an overview of the Mennonite legacy of non-resistance, especially as this legacy had come to be interpreted by the late nineteenth to early twentieth century. The focus during this period was on passive non-resistance, based on the principle of "resist not evil," and a two-kingdom theology which separated the Kingdom of God from the kingdoms of this world. This was the belief of a people apart, and removed from the affairs of the world. Driedger and Kraybill emphasize the increasing influence on Mennonites since that time of the forces of modernization. The effects of modernization have included increasing urbanization, education, occupational diversity, and greater involvement on almost every level with the institutions of secular society, including government. These changes are seen to have had their impact on a more psychological level as well, including increasing acceptance of values such as individualism and self-assertiveness, as central aspects of a modern consciousness.

The modernization process, along with the influence of two world wars, and the political and social ferment of the sixties, is associated with the emergence of a more assertive approach to non-violence which the authors describe as active peacemaking. This more activist orientation includes a commitment to challenging the powers of this world through a peace witness, and a willingness to consider options such as civil disobedience and nonviolent resistance.

Driedger and Kaufman document the emergence of these historical changes through the analysis of a wide range of documents, including confessions of faith, various official statements on the subject, magazines, books and pamphlets which have been produced over the years. Utilizing thematic and keyword analyses they trace changes in the language of non-violence, across time periods, and in conjunction with the challenges raised by historical events. For example, they trace the decline in the use of the term "nonresistance" through a variety of sources, and the corresponding rise of a new terminology, with increasingly frequent use of words such as "love", "justice", and "peacemaking." They also trace the ideas of a "new generation of Mennonite scholars," from Guy Hershberger to J.H. Yoder, J.L. Burkholder, and Gordon Kaufman, acting as "brokers" in the formulation of a new theology of peacemaking for Mennonites in the modern world.

The second part of the book explores the influence of these new ideas of peacemaking on representative samples of the Mennonite rank-and-file. Drawing on the data from the two Church Member Profile surveys, carried out in 1972 and 1989 respectively, the authors explore opinions about peacemaking in terms of a composite scale made up of several survey questions. While there are variations in the results, it is fair to say that the orientation to a more active peacemaking is clearly reflected among the membership. For example, two thirds of all respondents in the 1989 survey agreed that: "Mennonites should actively promote peace and win supporters," compared to just 56% in 1972. However, it may be noted that variables such as denominational membership, "Mennonite identity," and Anabaptist beliefs, are found to be more strongly associated with active peacemaking than with modernization per se, as measured by a combination of variables including urbanization, education, socioeconomic status, and attitudinal measures of individualism and materialism. In light of their thesis regarding the significance of this relationship, a more comprehensive effort on the part of the authors to account for this apparent inconsistency would have been welcome.

Finally, Driedger and Kraybill also include a very interesting discussion of future directions for Mennonite peacemaking. They discuss a range of factors affecting the future of Mennonite peacemaking, and identify some important issues and enduring dilemmas which will need to be the focus of further dialogue and discernment in the future.

A case may be made by those who would adopt a more theological perspective on the issues raised in this book, in response to the strictly empiricist orientation of this work. However, Driedger and Kraybill are to be credited for pursuing their thesis rigorously, within the frame of reference they have set for themselves. In the process, they have made a significant contribution to the study of this important topic. This work will be an important sourcebook on the subject of Mennonite peacemaking for some time to come.

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Louise Stoltzfus, *Amish Women: Lives and Stories* (Intercourse PA: Good Books, 1994). Hardcover, 123 pages. \$14.95.

Much of Mennonite creative writing, perhaps especially in Canada but also in the US, has been critical of the Mennonite community, its church and its traditions. The oppressiveness of patriarchy, the relentlessness of dogma, the

hypocrisy of leaders—all these have come under fire. The writers are often persons who have grown up in the community but no longer see themselves as part of it. They have become outsiders looking in.

Louise Stoltzfus is also an outsider looking back on her Amish roots. In her case, though, she remembers, fondly and nostalgically, the good that she has left behind and defends her Amish heritage. In this book she profiles ten women, deliberately bypassing those “especially gifted or particularly successful” for ordinary women, among whom she “found hope for the future.” Her portraits—she begins with her grandmothers and her mother—are affectionate and respectful. At every turn she speaks warmly and without criticism about Amish life.

The women she describes have not been free of suffering, but through trouble and even tragedy they have prevailed and remained hopeful and whole. Hard experience has not crushed them; there is no despair in these stories and no bitterness.

Esther, who has lost two young sons, one to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and another to accident, has written a book about her experience, to help parents struggling with similar loss. She has done this “...to give them hope, to take away some of their despair. Always, I just think I must help them.”

Linda, an older, single woman, spent much of her life caring for her elderly parents. She has no regrets about such a restricted life and no self-pity. When she was free to travel, she went by ocean liner (the Amish do not board aircraft) or, closer to home, by horse and buggy (the Amish eschew automobiles).

The reader is given the impression that this community always offers enough support and unity, and always engenders the necessary personal strength and courage, to override all problems and all doubt. The author’s intention is to celebrate the simple life and extol a community within which it is possible to experience tragedy and joy, disappointment and success with serenity and without fanfare. It is not her intention to achieve that “creative balance between critique and advocacy” that John L. Ruth calls for in *Mennonite Identity and Literary Art* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1978).

Like the black and white drawings that illustrate this book, Stoltzfus’s portraits are spare. Sometimes too sketchy. I came away willing to believe that these women, whose collected stories create an idealized picture of Amish life, were content and fulfilled and that for them faith and life were solidly integrated. But I didn’t feel I really knew them, and often wished for more probing, more reflection.

Stoltzfus, who is assistant editor of *Festival Quarterly*, has also authored *Two Amish Folk Artists: The Story of Henry Lapp and Barbara Ebersol*, and co-authored four cookbooks. In *Amish Women* she writes in a clear and unadorned style, with short paragraphs and frequent lists of plain statements.

Stoltzfus tells us more than once “I am glad once to have been Amish,” and admits “It is a life I still sometimes long for.” But she left the community and therefore her own story no longer fits the parameters of this book, even had she wished to tell it. She doesn’t say why she left and why she won’t return. It is her

untold story I find myself wondering about, when I have read the last story in this attractive, comfortable and hope-filled book.

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John Friesen, *Against the Wind. The Story of Four Mennonite Villages* (Winnipeg: Henderson Books, 1994). Paperback xiv, 165 pp. \$24.99.

Against the Wind is a well-researched history of the Baratow and Schlachtin Mennonite colonies of the Ukraine, originally established to ease the pressure of the landless population of the Chortitza Colony. Neu-Chortitza and Gnadental constituted the Baratow Colony founded in 1872, followed in 1874 by Steinfeld and Gruenfeld to form the Schlachtin Colony. Friesen carefully analyses the geography of the area, then true to his word he traces the "initial establishment and development of these two daughter colonies into a mature farming community with its religious, social and economic infrastructures, its local government, and its service and manufacturing industries." Unfortunately he must then also document the disintegration of the community and its complete disappearance in 1943.

Friesen has a personal interest in these villages, his parents having been born in Steinfeld, Schlachtin Colony. He has used personal interviews, but has also extensively searched the literature and archival material, obtaining a great deal of interesting information. The book is well written, with a clear unencumbered style and crisp, accurate use of words.

The author brings to bear expertise which is particularly relevant to the story. While all Mennonite history must to some degree have a religious orientation by the very nature of who Mennonites are, this specific story is more agricultural and economic. The choice of land, the initial pioneering experiences, the subsequent flourishing of the colonies depended principally on how the land was used and how transportation and industry were organized. In an agricultural community it may be much more significant to study the climate, the soil and the roads than to evaluate its poetry or its theological hair-splitting. Friesen by profession was a land use specialist, so his analysis of the situation is most helpful.

A few minor criticisms might be in order. This being the story of villages, one could have had a somewhat closer look at day to day village life. Included would have been a few more extensive stories and even biographies. The industrialist Johann Froese is mentioned a number of times, and he and his factory are pictured. He sounds like an interesting leader I would have liked to know more about. People such as *Aeltester* Jacob Paetkau and *Aeltester* Jacob A.

Rempel might also merit attention.

Included in the text are a number of maps and charts, but there is an additional collection of pictures as well as more maps and charts at the back of the book. I would have preferred to have more of them incorporated into the text. There are many useful maps in the book; some could have been redrawn by a cartographer.

Against the Wind is an attractive book; the cover is well designed, the binding is good. There are only a few typographical errors.

This is a book that should definitely be on the shelf of each Mennonite historian. The general Mennonite reader who has roots in Baratow-Schlachtin will likely find a wealth of relevant information, as will the agricultural specialist who is interested in the relationship of land to people.

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Alex Sareyan, *The Turning Point. How Persons of Conscience Brought About Major Change in the Care of America's Mentally Ill* (Scottsdale/Waterloo: Herald Press, 1994). Paperback; 314pp.

Of the twelve thousand or more conscientious objectors in the United States during World War II, some three thousand COs worked in sixty-one mental hospitals and training schools. Alex Sareyan, himself a CO in the front lines of this service, is among scores of COs whose concerns were sensitized in wartime alternative service to the improved care of the mentally ill.

There have been a number of previous publications dealing with the plight of conscientious objectors in America. *The Turning Point* deals exclusively and in depth with how "persons of conscience brought about a major change in the care of America's mentally ill."

Just how these courageous few, religiously motivated COs fought their own quiet battles during the war is well documented here. The book begins by citing personal anecdotes depicting the spectre of fear and punishment that hung heavy in so many hospitals. The author chronicles the almost daily confrontations with physical violence that both patients and attendants faced from morning to night. For some COs it was the kind of setting in which to demonstrate the superiority of pacifism over brute force in handling tense situations.

Most of these men were drawn from the ranks of the three major peace churches: the Mennonites, the Brethren, and the Quakers. Over 68% had either graduated from college or had some college education, whereas the comparable

figure for the military was slightly more than 15%. The work of the COs drew the attention of newspapers, radio stations, Life Magazine, The Reader's Digest and other media. That, together with the establishment of a "National Mental Health Week," illustrates the creative means used to bring about long-lasting attitudinal changes toward the mentally ill.

In the postwar period eight community health centres were established by the Mennonites. The Mennonite Central Committee, with its organisation, its staff, its leadership, its vision and sense of mission, was in a position to offer responsible leadership in the establishment of these institutions. They have now matured into independent bodies serving the broader community.

This book is a worthy chronicle of the work of the COs in U.S. hospitals. Their counterparts in Canada had quite different and generally more positive experiences, since the treatment of the mentally ill was in no measure as disparate in Canada as in the American hospitals.

The Turning Point will be a valuable resource to anyone with an interest in the experiences of COs during wartime, and in the development and improvement of mental health services.

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