

Book Reviews

Fiction and Poetry

Di Brandt, *Now You Care*. Toronto: Coach House, 2003. Pp. 108. Paper, \$17.95.

Now You Care, Di Brandt's fifth poetry collection, is a witness to environmental wreckage and the underlying political forces that are daily disfiguring our landscapes, cities, bodies, and relationships. It is also a lyric appeal for closer attention to signs and wonders, to the stories told in the details: "the blackbirds are angry:/give them back their seeds." The voice in these poems is by turns intimate, playful, enraged, mournful, sarcastic, and hopeful, calling us to mindfulness and a radical care.

Brandt characterizes our wanton destruction of the natural world with images of mutilation and dismemberment, lending the collection an often macabre, almost Gothic feel: "all those women's breasts/cut off to keep our lawns green/and dandelion free"; "bits of severed limbs float through the room"; "doesn't everyone/have cut off hands gripping knives in their/too big heads." Goldenrod, cherry trees, prairie grass and diamond-studded lakes are unexpected, renegade, and even miraculous in the face of creosote, depleted uranium, and the 401. Direct references to southern Ontario—"the heart of the dream/of the new world"—are numerous. For the past several years Brandt has been living and working in Windsor, Ontario, where

pollution levels and cancer rates have forced a new and very visceral awareness of nature's vulnerability. The thread-line separating life and death finds expression in the Detroit River and cross-border shopping in one of the early poems in the book.

The structural division of the collection, into a series called "Zone" and another called "Heart," supports the imagery of dismemberment, separation, and integration. With short, choppy, efficient lines, the "Zone" poems are unflinching in their representation of the diseased landscapes and deformed bodies of a heavily industrialized region. The "Heart" series is, by contrast, much warmer and more organic, with flowing lines and a more elegiac tone. In one of the "Heart" poems, the body is hurtled through space "toward polluted Ontario," while the spirit remains with the "open prairie,/deer among the aspen of La Barrière Forest." In between, "every cobalt/coloured little lake along the Trans-Canada/is flooding where I cried for you." The "Zone" poems – several of which have been set to music by Paul McIntyre – were originally commissioned by the Art Gallery of Windsor to form a dialogue with photographer Stan Douglas's exhibition "Zone: Le Détroit." Mid-way between "Zone" and "Heart," the poems in "Songs for a divorce" further the sense of fragmentation and emptiness through truncated, halting lines and the sheer amount of white space on the page. In these poems—twelve in all and extremely spare—we move through the ruins of a relationship that was—and remains—life-sustaining: "Whatever there is in me/that is singing,/whatever there is in me,/you are there too."

Brandt's language reminds us subtly of our forgotten connections to the physical world. Plants, animals, chemicals, medical equipment, flesh and body parts inhabit each other's space in a sometimes beautiful and sometimes violent or eerie coexistence: the earth spits blood; the throat is a fountain; wildflowers grow in us; a beaver becomes pond; a field mouse becomes sky; a sunset is petroleum tinted; whales sing the songs of humming birds; a series of hip replacements make a body "more metal than flesh." The terrifying insidiousness of Brandt's imagery is highly unsettling. In "for Sherry," "your/new arms between sutured elbow and/wrist sings the knowledge of pavement." The chemical cocktails in our brains and the PCBs in the ravine behind the concert hall corrode as mercilessly as the "lurking cancer cells"—"Knowing before knowing, the grey gnaw in the bone."

Formally, these poems signal both a departure and a return for Brandt. In general, the stanzas are shorter and more stylized, the lines more clipped and punctuated than in her earlier work, but in the "Heart" series we glimpse the breathless, run-on lines we associate with *questions i asked my mother* and *Agnes in the sky*. Brandt has

attributed the change in stylistic direction in this book to her move from “the barefooted freewheeling prairies to the well-shoed industrialized Ontario” and to recent stints in Europe. Brandt also invites a diverse range of voices to speak together with her own here. Dorothy Livesay, René Char, Martín Prechtel, John Donne, W.B. Yeats, Sarain Stump, Louise Halfe, Phyllis Webb, and others all enrich the collection’s overall vocal texture.

Now You Care celebrates without romanticizing, and warns without preaching. This is a timely, vital, beautiful collection from a writer who continues to take important risks in her thought and poetics.

Janice Schroeder
Carleton University

Patrick Friesen and Marilyn Lerner, *Small Rooms*. Westcoast Performance: CBC Radio Vancouver, Studio 1. Compact disk, 2002.

Patrick Friesen, a prolific poet and playwright – and a former Winnipegger, as the insert here announces – is no stranger to collaborative encounters: he has written for the stage, for dancers, for singers. In *Small Rooms*, his texts encounter the improvisatory gestures of Marilyn Lerner – also a former Winnipegger – who knows the piano inside and out. It’s a beautiful disk, a dance between two voices, two talents, a meeting that opens language and the experience of a heart.

The writing here has all of Friesen’s signature preoccupations: the astonishing beauty of the natural world, the allure of childhood and innocence and love, the sharp edge between the urge toward the sacred and the endless falling away of belief, the tortured and beautiful histories we carry into our futures. And Friesen is a fine reader, delivering the oral rhythms of these pieces quietly and deliberately. It’s a spacious delivery, and the rhythms of speech on the cusp of song generate a contemplative quality that exactly suits Friesen’s writing. We have time to linger over his coiled phrases: “he knows about the wreckage, the dead crow down the chimney” (“brett calls”); “the sky, blue as god, could fold its wings and crush a boy on his way up” (“the chair”); “the movement of his hand across paper was not an embellishment but the rehearsal of his name” (“signature”); “some nights you love the ashes in your burning heart” (“forgiven”). There’s a simplicity about this work; weight attaches to it in the delivery, gives it a heft that’s not self-conscious or forced.

The phrases spin out of themselves, inhabit the far corners of these small rooms.

Lerner's piano is the other voice in this duet, counterpointing the spiralling imagery and the gentle resignation of the speaking voice. She takes time, removes us from the forward press of language and locates us in that other logic, the spin of melody, the unwinding of an unlanguage thought. Her stylings run from distinctly jazz – including quotations from Miles Davis and others – through rhythmic allusions to her own Jewish folk heritage; much of the work is pianistic, delicate, almost iridescent, like Debussy. Occasionally, she leans on the percussive potential of the instrument, plucking, tapping, damping the strings. She is an extraordinary player, almost an extension of her instrument, and she listens fully and imaginatively to the writing, lifting us into a more textured apprehension of Friesen's work.

More than half of the eleven texts here come from Friesen's book, *the breath you take from the lord* (Harbour Publishing, 2002). Perhaps that explains why none of them are included in the liner notes. Still, if I have one reservation about the disk, it's that I miss the chance to read the texts, to revisit them by eye. A patient reading would give me a more acute appreciation of the range here and for Lerner's decisions as an improviser: she moves us through a range of textures, and I find myself wishing I could reflect more thoroughly on her responses, fold them more securely into my own.

Small Rooms hovers somewhere between song and suite, a quiet and meditative reflection on living and loving, on memory and desire and the endless effort of the artist – and of these two particular artists – to capture the fleeting moment of knowing.

Charlene Diehl-Jones
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Patrick Friesen, *the breath you take from the lord*. Madeira Park, BC: Harbour Publishing, 2002. Pp. 79. Paper, \$16.95.

who is it you hear speak as you speak sing as you sing what
voices live in you? a harsh call in the clearing and that breath
that deep breath you take from the lord (51)

In this profoundly melancholy collection of poems, Patrick Friesen turns a meditation on breath into an exercise in breathing. Breath is

affirmed as sacred at a radical level reminiscent of Blake's injunction, "All that lives is holy." These poems, however, explore how the breath of life is constricted by human limitations. Words themselves are the most visible evidence of these limits, and it is often the insertion of German words that brings this home to the reader. "heilger geist calling that tongue those voices the insinuations sung into your childish ear" (30). Often the moving air brings with it the stink of the poet's own mortality: "and you smell death that old smell of empty places quick as air across your face" (14).

The poems are more, however, than an assortment of images about breath. Ultimately an affirmation comes with the very breath that sounds out poetry. Friesen never writes without an awareness of the fact that breath is what poems are made of; a sense of the oral basis of poetry is never far from his printed poems. Like notes in a musical composition, the poems are only made real when voiced and voice comes from the throat, from the earthly body. Friesen's effect is often achieved by the deletion of punctuation – by having the poetic line cut across the grain of the rules of syntax.

Consider the following line: "you are a man you don't know how else to say it you are a man who has always sought god" (11). Read it the first time and you feel breathless. To arrive at an ordinary sentence, you have to double back and read it a second time, inserting the implicit punctuation and pacing your breath accordingly. Friesen's use of anaphora similarly involves the reader's breath: "when god tears at your heart [. . .] when the night deepens [. . .] when you crouch at a cold bethlehem" (15). The repetition of the "wh" sound acts out the breath coming and going. The urgent quest conveyed by these quick breaths, however, does not lead to a final answer. The reader has to be content with the life affirmed by that breath itself. The last line of the poem leaves us on the edge of an open clearing: "when you step into the barefoot prayer at last when you pass into the open night" (16).

Friesen's deeply spiritual poetry records the fight for life and breath against the encroachments of the dead hand of the past. If the breath is taken from the lord, then it is not ours and can be taken away. What is grace, however, can also be punishment. The spectres of guilt and regret haunt the poems. The breath that makes the voice of the poems possible is in some mysterious way seen as disconnected from the voice of the ego: "you've always worshipped in your anger in your distances in your utter ignorance" (23). There is in these poems a stripped-bare honesty, a confrontation with the indifference of the universe to the poet's mortality. If Friesen reveals his Mennonite conditioning in this search for an impossible humility, he also reaches repeatedly for an abandonment of all searches that is most un-Mennonite.

The most powerful lyric poetry is paradoxically often written out of a profound sense of the failure of words. “balm of gilead ephraim nazareth rain falling through your menno life bruges the dneiper steinbach” (31). The words seem to be an almost random list and yet they resonate, forming a clearing of sorts. Friesen’s poetic quest repeatedly touches down on familiar Mennonite territory, but just as surely it returns again and again to a place of abandonment that is more Buddhist than Mennonite. “how do you live with snow sane and clear with the nudge of love in your heart and the fox long gone?” (64). The question is like a riddle and the answer is not an answer but rather an acceptance of mystery and an awareness of grace.

Magdalene Redekop
University of Toronto

Ann Hostetler, ed., *A Cappella: Mennonite Voices in Poetry*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2003. Pp. xx, 199. Paper, \$26.00.

In her acknowledgment to *A Cappella*, editor Ann Hostetler describes an anthology as “a form of community in print.” Given the importance of community to Mennonite culture, an anthology is perhaps a particularly appropriate mode of publication for Mennonite writers. Like community, however, an anthology both supports and limits its contributors, an inherent paradox that Hostetler acknowledges throughout. What is especially surprising about this book to a reviewer living in Winnipeg and studying Canadian literature is that it is one of the first explicitly Mennonite anthologies of poetry. In Canada, writers of Mennonite origin like Rudy Wiebe, Patrick Friesen, and Di Brandt are located firmly within the literary canon. In the United States, however, this is not the case, and it is this absence that Hostetler seeks to remedy through the publication of this anthology.

A Cappella collects poetry by writers of Mennonite origin living in Canada and the United States. The oldest writer was born in 1916, the youngest in 1977, a range that reflects the relative newness of much Mennonite literature. Hostetler’s inclusive editorial policy allows her to draw on poets from a wide range of Mennonite experiences. Some writers, like Sarah Klassen, Raylene Hinz-Penner, and Sheri Hostetler were born into Mennonite families and continue their involvement with the church. Others, like David Wright and Todd Davis, joined the church later in life, while several, like Patrick Friesen and Juanita

Brunk, were raised as Mennonites but either are not now practicing Mennonites or do not “write as Mennonites,” in Hostetler’s phrase. This inclusive editorial policy allows for a fascinating discussion between the poets about what Mennonite writing is, as in Jeff Gundy’s “How to Write the New Mennonite Poem”:

Choose from two old bibles, humbly beautiful quilts,
Fraktur, and the *Martyr’s Mirror* in Dutch.
Get the word “Mennonite” in at least
twice, once in the title, along with zwiebach,
vareniki, borscht, and the farm,
which if possible should be lost now. (86)

Gundy’s willingness to engage in this kind of poetic critique is extremely interesting in terms of this anthology, which is full of, well, bibles, quilts, the *Martyr’s Mirror*, lost farms, and rollkuchen. This is not to say that poems using these images are bad or conservative or somehow inferior to less “Mennonite” poems, but rather that there is a danger, in any literary movement, of conventions becoming set in cement. This danger may be particularly acute for Mennonite poets. As they draw on diverse Mennonite heritages, will their poetry become backward looking, disconnected from the lives that Mennonites actually live today? Gundy’s critique, however, also indicates that Mennonite poetry is at a moment of tremendous promise, as the faith (and the poetry) experiences a renewal that retains many core Mennonite values, despite the transmutation some of those values have undergone in different contexts.

The poems in this anthology are of a uniform high quality and a strangely uniform style. With a very few exceptions, all the poems here use the lyric form, a commonality that either proves something significant or else merely reflects Hostetler’s editorial choice. Most deal with domestic or everyday issues, with very few engaging with current political issues (Carmen Horst’s remarkable “Ugly Poem” is an exception). In the aftermath of September 2001, one might have expected to find anti-war poems, though the anthology might have been too far along in its production to have included such recent pieces. A number of poets represented here have written poems engaging directly with contemporary politics, yet Hostetler seems to have passed these by in favour of ones that deal with “Mennonite” issues like the oppression of women in a patriarchal culture. Because of the similarities in tone and form of the poems she includes, it is difficult at times to remember who wrote which poems, or to distinguish between time periods or contexts. *A Cappella* would be a good text to teach from, but it will need to be supplemented by more

such anthologies before a composite portrait of contemporary Mennonite poetry will emerge.

Alison Calder
University of Manitoba

David Wright, *A Liturgy for Stones*. Telford, PA: DreamSeeker Books. Pp. 82. Paper, \$12.95.

David Wright's second collection of poems, *A Liturgy for Stones*, ends with a poem about the forces that would make poetry irrelevant by dictating what it can and cannot address. "Poems Should Not Be" suggests that each poem is a workshop where, in the act of fitting words together and exerting pressure on disparate ideas, discoveries are made. Poetry, in other words, is a way of finding what you didn't know you were looking for. "If poetry matters," Wright said in a recent interview, "it matters because it sensually persists in raising our level of suspicion that mystery and juxtaposition linger nearer to the truth than do statistics and taxonomies." The poems in *A Liturgy for Stones*, often beginning in a flash of insight and wriggling towards a new understanding, give the reader a palpable sense of that poetic discovery and reveal, in the process, a powerful literary imagination.

Currently teaching literature and writing at Wheaton College, Illinois, Wright has a poetic voice that is self-aware yet uncluttered, almost casual. A number of his poems have been included in Ann Hostetler's important new anthology of North American Mennonite writing, *A Cappella: Mennonite Voices in Poetry* (2003); his first collection of poems was *Lines From the Provinces* (2000). While many of the poems in *A Liturgy for Stones* have appeared previously in literary journals and magazines like *The Mennonite*, Wright has crafted a cohesive whole – "the mason's hands marry stones/to the particular stones he finds" (13). Indeed, there is a wonderful abundance of expression on display in this collection, from narrative poems with long and breathless lines to those whose sharply sketched forms are grounded in rhythm and repetition. Wright has a knack for forging striking images – "syllables arching on lips like sparks" – as well as a lovely feel for when to break a line or, as in, "Tending Gardens," when to leave it dangling poignantly over the edge of a stanza.

In the first of five sections, the poems challenge habits of seeing and wrestle wonder from the conventional. A small silver fish shatters

the quiet naturalism of autumn leaves floating on a river; a church janitor tries to clean the scuff marks from the bottom of the baptismal tank (thereby echoing the Anabaptist recognition of the reality of flour and yeast in communion bread). In "Looking at Roadside Bluestem Before Leaving Decatur," indigenous "weeds" rise irrepressible from trash downwind from a factory: "We want to stay where bluestem roots, gnarled as human nerves,/prosper under blackest dirt,/refuse to wither during winter,/drink from sources purer than the air." Many of these poems are very particularly rooted in Wright's home state of Illinois, and bear the influence of Wendell Berry's writings on ecology and rural community.

The collection's second section is more elegiac in tone – "God's grammar is not far from our tongues" – and the third is a group of poems filled with spiritual longing that respond antiphonally to biblical passages. The short poem, "Lydia's Song," illumines a woman briefly mentioned in Acts 16:14: "A heart opens,/unfolds like a bolt of fine purple cloth./And there is God,/wrapped in the body's best linen,/tangled tight within a woman's woven heart,/stretched wide to meet the threadbare world."

The fourth section, "A Liturgy of Stones," acts as the collection's centre of gravity. An eight-part sequence meditating on Luke 19:40 ("He answered, 'I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out'"), it borrows from the liturgical traditions of Judaism and Christianity, and the epic, timeless, exhortations of the Psalms and Prophets. "One maker of atmosphere and ground./A lover of concrete, crushed and gathered./Two weary hands that scour and abrade the fields,/wide and slow as the glaciers that carry an erratic gift/to the world's most fertile prairie." Many critics have identified the risk of cliché and 'churchified language' that Christian poets run when writing about spiritual experience. Wright smelts something of his own out of these mystical registers, crafting a marvelously tactile voice that nonetheless remains elusive and otherworldly. The collection concludes with a whimsical, playful, fifth grouping of poems, including "Sunday Afternoons in the Universe," in which a man making love ricochets from worries about his frail grandmother to metaphysical speculations on the fabric of the cosmos.

Spirited and teeming with ideas, Wright's *A Liturgy for Stones* demonstrates how poetry can be an engaged and vital space. His is a compelling emerging voice that deserves to be listened to attentively and with care.

Christopher Wiebe
Ottawa, Ontario

Evie Yoder Miller, *Eyes at the Window*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2003. Pp. 512. Cloth, \$22.95.

The title of Evie Yoder Miller's first novel, *Eyes at the Window*, points to the one bit of evidence that initiates the plot of this murder mystery. The evidence, it turns out, is not reliable, and the unsolved murder of a child weaves in and out of the longer story, emerging again near the end, where the author serves up a denouement of unexpected strength. But the real strength of this story is its clear depiction of Amish life, highlighting the centrality of religion and culture, the importance of leaders, and the opposite pulls of change and tradition.

Miller's novel spans half a century, 1810 to 1861, stopping short of the American Civil War that will open a new can of worms for the pacifist community. Through her characters' memories, Miller reaches even farther back, to violent encounters between the Amish and aboriginal people, and to the "old country." In this context, the 1810 murder of baby Marie Hershberger, based on an actual event, is only one of many losses and hardships encountered by the Amish in their struggle to make a living, raise children, and keep the church pure. For Yost Hershberger, land is everything. Like the rich man in the parable, he continues acquiring land and builds a barn that people come from far and near to see. Land gives him identity and feeds his pride, even when he no longer has a large family to feed and despite the fact that land has not enabled him to control his sons. For women in the novel, the joy and travail of birth is frequent, and too frequently they mourn the deaths of children.

Living in a new land, surrounded by change, the Amish must act or react. Words like "change," "adapt," and "accommodate," are important in this work. Bishop Henry Stutzman is all for keeping congregations to the straight and narrow, while Bishop John M. Yoder, exercising both compassion and insight, worries that, "The church has been distracted with store-bought suspenders while neglecting to teach the things of the Spirit" (503). And Isaak Yoder would rather farm than try to keep a two-legged, stubborn flock in line. First preacher, then bishop, he takes seriously the care of souls. He summarizes for himself the message from a letter written to ministers in Germany, 1703: "[P]reserve the old customs. Do not make unnecessary change to new and unusual things" (266). But he finds it hard to confront and admonish. "We can not force good works or like-mindedness with Christ onto others," he opines, then he adds, "Would that we could." (267). Just as there are shifting views on conformity within the church, there are varying attitudes toward women. Yost's chauvinistic treatment of his wife, Eliza, contrasts with Isaac's

reluctant willingness to let Sarah be his critic, and with Reuben's poignant gratitude for Anna's faithfulness. Old and frail, Reuben regularly climbs the hill to her grave and tells her what he can tell no other person.

Miller lets eight narrators – five men and three women – tell the story. Each one has, or acquires, some connection to the 1810 crime. Among the men, one becomes a scapegoat in a community where the ban is strictly enforced, while another bears alone the triple burden of a troubled conscience, the conviction that he's unworthy (*Schmutzig*), and the reputation of being useless. Among the women, one is the mother of the murdered child and another is responsible for the inconclusive evidence.

The multiple-narrator device provides both structure and style. The reader is quickly drawn into the story by the immediacy of the narration. The monologues, however, occasionally bog down under the weight of information they must carry: complex family relationships that threaten to clutter the plot and the reader's mind, and bits of lore, however interesting, that must be woven in: healing practices, both sought and criticized; the courtship practises of singing and bundling; the gift of a drawing, a nod to the budding of art in the Amish community.

The eight narrators sometimes speak with a uniformity of vocabulary and rhythm probably not intended to reflect cultural and religious conformity. I couldn't help recalling the five unmistakably unique voices of the four daughters and their mother who narrate Barbara Kingsolver's *The Poisonwood Bible*. An unfair comparison, perhaps, but sometimes I wished for similar distinctiveness of voice in Miller's book. Nevertheless, oriented by the maps and family genealogies appended to the story, I never considered putting down this engaging and sympathetic novel, an impressive addition to accounts of Amish life. It will enjoy a wide readership.

Sarah Klassen
Winnipeg, Manitoba

History and Memoir

Tanya Basok, *Tortillas and Tomatoes: Transmigrant Mexican Harvesters in Canada*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002.

Rodolfo, a composite" Mexican contract worker constructed by Tanya Basok to authenticate her analysis in *Tortillas and Tomatoes: Transmigrant Mexican Harvesters in Canada*, is a low-status, uneducated rural day-labourer who is unable to support his family on *rancho* work. So, like 5000 of his compatriots he became an annual participant in the Canadian-Mexican program that supplies contract workers for mainly Ontario farms. Just the same as any worker, Rodolfo has complaints about his job, but he values the money he earns in Canada, which he, Basok says, considers "a fortune" and wishes to continue working for his Leamington employer. Even though Rodolfo's wife Celia, to continue the composite device, misses him and regrets his absence from their children, she recognizes that legal work in Canada affords substantially higher income than an illegal job in the U.S. would and as well affords greater personal safety and employment security for her husband. Contract workers such as Rodolfo are, Basok asserts, "a structural necessity" for the Ontario greenhouse industry. Though "not necessarily cheap," growers value their Mexican workers highly, considering them "good people ... reliable."

That reliability, a willingness to work long hours seven days a week if needs be, which allows perishable crops to be harvested in a timely and efficient manner, makes the Mexicans, Basok asserts, "unfree". It's an unhelpful construct. Presumably use of the nineteenth century concept of wage-slavery would have seemed too precious; still she elaborates her claim with references all the way from *Das Kapital* to the neo-Marxists. Even though she acknowledges that application of the construct is "not unproblematic," Basok uses "unfreedom" and several other value-laden terms to argue that the condition of Mexican contract workers "comes close to ... slavery." It doesn't really, nor to indentured servitude the other unfree system that supplied the labour market in this hemisphere.

"What," Basok asks plaintively, "makes certain categories of foreign workers willing to accept such conditions of captivity"? In the case of Mexican contract workers at least, the answer is money. The structural inequalities of Mexican society encourage migration north; "they come to work in Canada," Basok explains, "because jobs in Mexico are scarce, insecure, and badly paid." Sure the work in

Canada is tough; no one enjoys stoop-labour. And Mexican contract workers do put in long hours, on the demand of the growers, to get the crop off. In Basok's view that reality makes them "unfree." It is precisely that reality, however, that created the demand for contract labour, labour that is very well paid by Mexican standards. "Rodolfo was glad to earn so much money," she reports, "although he was rather tired." On average, contract workers send home — and these are Basok's numbers — \$1000 monthly, say three times as much as they would from an illegal U.S. job. One year's work in Canada produces the same income as five or six in Mexico. With their Canadian income, contract workers build houses, buy a bit of land, educate their children, pay for medical services, and enhance the family's lifestyle. An essential dimension of Basok's indictment of "the migrant syndrome" is that very little of this income is invested in "productive activities." Well, how much upward social mobility occurs within one generation in any society? In the case of Mexico, there hasn't been much for Indians and Mestizos for 500 years. One might hope that by educating their children Rodolfo and his compatriots are at least making a beginning. And "the longer a migrant works in Canada," Basok reports, "the more likely he or she is to invest productively." Is it possible that the more time a contract worker spends in Canada the more opportunity there is for capital accumulation? Perhaps Rodolfo and his compatriots, unlike Marxist academicians, are able to distinguish between virtual peonage and the real thing in Mexico.

Indeed there is a curious ambivalence to this monograph. Basok claims that she aspires to provide "a voice [for] my otherwise silent Mexican workers." That's worthy. Historically migrant agricultural labour has been among the most exploited in Canada. Certainly it's not all roses in Leamington's fields and greenhouses. Because Mexican contract workers are reluctant to jeopardize re-employment by complaining, they need a voice. Yet when she comes across substantive abuses by growers — finagling on holiday and vacation pay, baulking at higher mandated hourly rates — Basok hurries on to her own project, "unfreedom." During her second summer of fieldwork, a Mexican contract worker asked Basok what good her research was doing him. That's a fair enough question, the answer to which is not to be found in this monograph.

Ross McCormack
University of Winnipeg

Alemu Checole, Bekithemba Dube, Doris Dube, Michael Kodzo Badasu, Erik Kumedisa, Barbara Nkala, I.U. Nsagak, Siaka Traore and Pakisa Tshimika, *A Global Mennonite History, Volume One: Africa*. Kitchener ON: Pandora Press, 2003. Pp. 320, Index.

This volume is the first book of the Mennonite World Conference-sponsored Global Mennonite History Project. This project envisions a five volume series, one history of Mennonites for each continent. According to series editors, John Lapp and Arnold Snyder, the history of "each continent [is to be] written by representatives from those areas" with a special focus on "the context... and the...life of each church" (10). As such this first volume promises to take a different stance than earlier pioneering works on Mennonite missions. If earlier works were North America-centric, mission board-informed, missionary-oriented stories, this one is written by Africans and about Africans.

The book is therefore innovative on numerous levels. African religions are portrayed as harbingers of Christianity, not as false beliefs in opposition to true faith. The people who "receive Christ," and not the missionaries who preach Christ comprise the book's focus. Church growth results not only from the work of foreign mission boards, but within political and national political contexts. The church's central historical moment is not only its founding, but its separation from British imperialism and the indiginization of its leaders in the context of political and cultural nationalism. Almost unrelenting conflict colours the history of the church: traditionalists confront conventionalists, Mennonite Christians contest Muslims and Orthodox Christians, Pentecostal-inclined youth counter gentle quietists. Issues of gender, class and ethnicity are central in the story. Where westerners may see one continental culture in Africa, the volume's nine writers introduce not only regional and national cultures, but a complex array of intersecting localized customs and variables. North American Mennonites who believe that a global history of Mennonitism will finally exorcize the shiboleth of ethnicity have a surprise awaiting them: ethnicity is a central part of the African Mennonite story and the implicit message of the book is that faith takes on vibrancy when it is allowed to move freely with ethnic expressions.

The book is also unabashedly African-centric. True, missionaries receive respect and honour. But they are overshadowed by numerous African leaders whose biographies are compiled in this book, almost in encyclopedic fashion. These indigenous leaders not only take over from western leaders, they invigorate the churches through locally-spawned organizations, African-sponsored missionaries to neighbouring countries, and even traditionalist forms of worship.

When foreign financial support is cut, the churches themselves develop strategies for dealing with poverty, health issues, and local concerns such as polygamy and syncretism. The churches are also intertwined with local politics; members are active in national debates and government officials are invited to bless Mennonite churches. When churches discover Anabaptist history, theology and practice, it is current church leaders, and not the North American missionaries, who receive the credit for taking the churches to their ideological roots. And the book itself seems an implicit critique of so-called objective or scientific-based history of the west; as these authors see it, the church is a "gift of God" (97), leaders "bring the Good News of the Lord" (123), converts give "themselves to the Lord" (168), the "Lord God's mercies endure forever" (186).

The book stands as a watershed and its transoceanic publication was, no doubt, miraculous. Certainly the book could have been improved. Greater care might have been given to the book's appearance; the vibrant colours of Africa are nowhere to be seen in this "black and white" production. Nor is a bibliography of African sources present; space normally given to such a list is taken by a publishers' book list. Even the title could have been more African; a more appropriate title in my mind would have been something like, "African Mennonites: A People of Hope and Struggle," signalling the book's central theme and creating an anticipation for varying titles of the four books yet to come. But these are minor concerns when measured by the book's accomplishment. Where once the North American story served as a trunk history and the southern continents its branches, this book forecasts a series with five major distinctive vines interwoven into one lattice and sharing the same root.

Royden Loewen
University of Winnipeg

Abe J. Dueck, *Concordia Hospital: Faith, Health and Community*. Winnipeg, Concordia Hospital, 2003. Pp, 107. Paper.

In 1928, a group of Mennonite men calling themselves the Concordia Society, got together in Winnipeg, Manitoba and agreed to establish a hospital for the Mennonite community. They were continuing a tradition begun by Mennonites in Russia during the latter half of the nineteenth century. The first location was a five-bedroom facility in a house on Machray Avenue in Winnipeg's North End. It

started with five beds and was initially set up as a maternity hospital. By 1934, this fledgling institution had grown to the extent that a much more substantial facility was acquired on the banks of the Red River, with a capacity of 47 beds. By 2003, on its 75th anniversary and having overcome a great variety of pressures and crises, it had become a substantial hospital, an important part of the Winnipeg health care system serving the northeast part of Winnipeg.

The history of Concordia is chronicled in this very attractive volume. Abe Dueck presents not only the highlights of the emergence of Concordia, but also provides an honest account of at least some of the major struggles the institution faced along the way. Of particular interest are the struggles faced by Concordia between 1934 and 1939. During this period, after moving to its new 47-bed facility, Concordia suffered the stresses and strains of growing pains, requiring a dramatic organizational restructuring. At the same time, board relations were poisoned by bitter disputes between members of different denominations, leaving wounds that took years to heal.

A major crisis for Concordia followed upon the transition to the status of a regional hospital, under the new government hospital and health insurance plan in the early sixties. Concordia was originally founded to provide health care for the Mennonite community under a very practical and effective "contract" system. Now, the Board needed to reconsider the mandate of the institution. How could the Christian-Mennonite character of the institution be maintained? After much soul-searching, Concordia was able to establish a new identity that was rooted in the Anabaptist/Biblical concern for brotherhood and service, while compatible with the interests of the government and the broader public. All of this was encapsulated in the statement: "Your community hospital guided by Christian values." Says Dueck: "The principle of volunteerism allowed Concordia to serve the public in a distinctive way without coercing or imposing its conviction on others."

Dueck has put together a very readable volume. While short on statistics and details, particularly with regard to present-day Concordia, the book provides a broad sweep of the history of Concordia from its inception to the present day. An excellent selection of photographs enhances the presentation. The "boxes" included along the way provide helpful vignettes regarding different departments in the hospital, like "oncology" and "emergency," or activities like volunteer work and spiritual care. Anyone with a connection to Concordia or an interest in a Christian response to health care can expect to enjoy this book.

Paul Redekop
Menno Simons College

John A Harder, ed., trans., *From Kleefeld with Love*. Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press and Herald Press, 2003. Pp. 198. Paper, \$22.00Cdn.

Elizabeth Lenci-Downs, *I Heard My People Cry: One Family's Escape from Russia*. Scottsdale, AZ: Inkwell Productions. Pp xii, 244. Paper, \$26.50Cdn.

Mary A Schiedel, *Pioneers in Ministry: Women Pastors in Ontario Mennonite Churches, 1973-2003*. Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press and Herald Press, 2003. Pp. 206. Paper, \$22.50, Cdn.

These three books do not easily group for review, as they are of varying genres and two of them concern Mennonite life in Russia in the first half of the century while the other pertains to Mennonite church life in Ontario in the last three decades. What they have in common, however, are women, as subjects of or witnesses to Mennonite history.

From Kleefeld with Love is a compelling collection of letters written mainly by Mariechen Harder, but also other women, to relatives in Canada between 1925 and 1933. They document the closing of emigration doors in Russia and the gradual dismantling of home and community life in Kleefeld, the village from which those on both sides of the correspondence originate. Although much of the content is specific to the Harder clan, these are, as Lauren Harder rightly notes in the introduction, "universal stories." The fact of migration underlies them all: it caused the separation that the letters try to bridge; it's the salvation from "the hardship and sorrow permeating the Mennonite communities" (74) those already in Canada have achieved; it's the pursued and longed-for dream of the writers who are still in Russia.

Mariechen imagines the recipients of one letter thinking it is simply "[o]ne Job-like lament after the other" (104). Her circumstances, in fact, allow for little else; nevertheless, the letters are highly interesting and at times quite lyrical, especially about nature or in expressions of familial love. Clearly, the motive for writing was to maintain these bonds, but engaging in the work of correspondence must also have served, in Carol Shields' words about letter writing, as a way of "keeping literate." It is also surprising how bold these writers were in their criticisms of the Soviet regime; were they not afraid of the censors?

Introductions to the texts provide context. The book also contains maps, information about Kleefeld, photos and a genealogical chart; several of the images, however, are incorrectly printed.

I Heard My People Cry tells the true story of Lise (Louise) Huebert Toews, born 1930 in the Crimea, and her dramatic experiences as a child and young woman in escaping Russia with her mother and three siblings. Although stylistically somewhat awkward, the book provides a loving tribute to Lise's mother, who exhibits tremendous courage and a fierce protectiveness of her children in the face of her husband's imprisonment, their removal from the Crimea, emigration to Poland, and subsequent flight from the advancing Soviets. Mother and children reached Canada in late 1947.

Mary Schiedel, ordained as a pastor in Mennonite Church Eastern Canada in 1987, gathered the names of women pastors of that denomination who have served in a congregation in Ontario for at least two years. She sent a list of questions to some 50 women pastors about their experiences in this relatively new role for Mennonite females. *Pioneers in Ministry* book contains the responses of 24. One image several women use to describe their ministry is "midwife"; others describe their ministry as "spiritual companion" to the congregation, "host, welcoming people," "dredger of springs," "gardener," "a song that sings." More traditional images like "shepherd" or "coach" are rare.

Scheidel organizes the stories under the themes of trailblazers, pioneers, women on teams, sole pastors, and pastors and mothers. She introduces the stories and provides informal analysis and summary of the themes. There is also a listing of all the women who have served. Congregations who accepted the ministry of women are important background players in these stories.

This is not a formal or detailed history, but it provides an important compilation of women who have been involved as well as a record of their voices. As their voices build, one after the other, the reader is left with a sense of something rich and wise that has been given to the Mennonite church of Ontario through their contributions.

Dora Dueck
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Harry Loewen, ed., *Shepherds, Servants and Prophets: Leadership Among the Russian Mennonites (ca. 1880-1960)*. Waterloo, ON: Pandora & Herald Press, 2003. Pp. 448. \$42.50, Cdn, \$36.00 US.

Books on leadership fill the book market. Mennonites too have been asking leadership questions - one Mennonite magazine running

a contest for the 20 most influential leaders of the twentieth century, virtually none of whom turned out to be missionaries. This book arrived as AMBS published a book of essays on pastoral leadership. The imagery of shepherd, servant and prophet hardly exhausts either the Biblical or contemporary repertoire, but such images train the reader to see what they will find. Harry Loewen explained in his preface why no biographies of women were included, since the time and themes chosen did not fit them.. Russian Mennonite women did not have “positions of power and influence in the community” though he mentioned their important work as missionaries, nurses, teachers, or their role in surviving the “great trek”, but did not mention their role in rebuilding the faith after the purges. That is, the forms of power, position and influence associated with the roles just named, are not included in this leadership study, it would seem.

In what ways does this biographical collection, claiming to focus on leadership of the Russian Mennonites, now present us with a composite picture? Harry Loewen’s introductory essay identified three kinds of leadership: congregational leadership involving spiritual or pastoral dimensions, “practical” leadership - which really referred to how a colony as full-orbed expression of Mennonite ecclesiology and headed by an Oberschulze with committees still shaped leadership after immigration and dissolution of colony structures; and third, intellectual leadership, once the domain of school teachers (most of the leaders also ordained) and becoming in North America more loosely extended into academia.

To make sense of this leadership theme, the editor’s alphabetical ordering of 24 biographies did not help. I began reviewing what those biographies said about leadership by grouping individuals by six categories, even as I recognized that these individuals usually fit multiple categories. In earlier centuries there were “Renaissance men” whose knowledge was deep and broad, and whose skills were strong in multiple areas. To some extent this collection presents the last of the “renaissance men” of a Russian Mennonite world, which, at least by 1960 had also split its leadership into designated professionals in narrowly defined fields. The language of “our people” has slipped away, both from ecclesial thinking when that occurs, and from speech, where it is now deemed “ethnic” in a negative sense. Here it suddenly appears without theoretical explanation in Loewen’s opening essay, and some notion of peoplehood pervades throughout the book.

We are presented with two dozen male leaders, who exerted their leadership as 1) leaders of an emigration, as 2) teachers in schools (but especially through publications), as 3) editors/journalists, a few as 4) theologians and 5) musicians of the church, and a few in 6) belle

lettres. Aside from Peter J. Braun, Peter M. Friesen and David H. Epp of the earlier generation, and two Anti-Menno writers, all the rest left Russia or the USSR and led another life with Russian Mennonites in new places, mostly in Canada. The majority of leaders selected became part of the Mennonite Brethren sub-community, though curiously two - Cornelius Krahn and C.H. Wedel - exerted their major leadership among General Conference Mennonites when in USA (and their biographers are not Russian Mennonite, as are all the others). There are always choices in such a project, but the references to David Toews and J.J. Thiessen, on whom we have recent biographies, are virtually non-existent, and that is only the beginning of a list of male leaders from the Kirchliche world who would rate inclusion in this reviewer's mind.

Through this study of leaders are we getting an adequate window into the Russian Mennonite tradition? That is still too much to ask of a book, but this book makes one think the question. Not only were there many more leaders who would rate inclusion, had someone produced a biographical sketch, but what this book provides is the uniformity of viewpoint of those who decided that with the Bolshevik Revolution the Russian Mennonite future lay outside in places like Germany, Paraguay and Canada. Hence it needs to be read alongside the short biographical vignettes in John B. Toews's *Mennonite Martyrs* or preferably the longer two-volume original German *Mennonitische Maertyrer*, edited by Aaron Toews, people who stayed. In addition, there are numerous biographies and biographical sketches¹ now available, though often in German, for the life and witness - and leadership role - played by Peter Froese, Peter Epp, Johann Rempel, Johann Penner, Philip Cornies, Heinrich P. Voth (Herman Heidebrecht's biography described him as Shepherd of the Scattered). Indeed reflections on the role of leadership in the resurrection of Mennonite life after the Gulag and Spetkomandantura era, bring to mind another generation, now in retirement, names like Jacob Fast and Traugott Quiring for Mennonites within the Evangelical Christian Baptist Union, Kornelius Kroeker, Gerhard Hamm, Rudy Loewen, even Georgi Vins, within the Reform Baptist Union, Heinrich Woelk, Willi Mathies, and Daniel Janzen within the independent Mennonite Brethren, and Jacob Siebert and Johann Penner of the Kirchliche. To notice the new intellectual leaders in publication and mission, however, we need to notice the generation of the 1990s.

Harry Loewen's introduction ended with an appeal to remember the faith and values that sustained the Mennonites "in difficult times", but the defensive tone and specific claims do warrant further comment and reflection. The theoretical framework for understanding the Russian Mennonite era is rather limited, Loewen

speaking of the closed and open categories that James Urry used some decades ago when writing about the first Russian Mennonite century, since then drawing on more sophisticated social anthropological theory than Loewen's use of old guard and old ways versus 'liberalism' to examine the process of change. What virtually all of the writers in this collection hold in common is an attempt to present "an objective and critical portrayal" of their subject, but to do so from within the Mennonite community's self-understandings. The extensive scholarship on Russia and the Soviet Union to set the context of the Mennonite role is more striking by its absence than by the rare references to it. But then, none of the writers were trained in that history. No doubt for that reason, the articles by Keith Sprunger (Cornelius Krahn), James Juhnke (C.H. Wedel) and Ted Regehr (Walter Quiring) are more seriously embedded in context, namely American and West European.

Loewen concluded that the shepherds and servants (meaning ministers, teachers, administrators) "generally led their people well", but the prophets, though well-intentioned initially were "misguided prophets". Here he had in mind anti-Menno propagandists like David J. Penner (A. Reinmarus), David Schellenberg, and the apparently more able writer Gerhard Sawatzky (tacked on to the Schellenberg biography), who betrayed their faith. But Loewen added that those who today minimize or move away from their Anabaptist-Mennonite heritage, seek to get congregations and conferences to abandon their Mennonite identity "are similar to these early well-intentioned but misguided men"(19).

That raises at least two other questions about the import of the book, where Loewen's well-intentioned appeal to faithfulness to the tradition would have been more readily understood, or less easily misunderstood. One theme that emerged frequently was the debate over the Dutch or German origins of the Mennonites. Many of the leaders chosen for this biography took strong positions on either side, but mostly either to use the Dutch origin claim as shield for Mennonites against the anti-German actions of the Tsarist regime in World War I, or the charges of traitorous Soviet Germans not truly committed to the fatherland that emerged during the loyalty test of 1923-26, and again during World War II. Those who argued for German origins, most notably Benjamin Unruh and Walter Quiring, became supporters of the Nationalist enthusiasm that ended in Nazism in Germany. Driving this pro-Nazi sentiment was a visceral anti-Bolshevism, certainly understandable, but it was also a test of the national idolatry temptation and a test of love of enemy claims where a disturbing number of leaders featured in the book could not be said to have "led their people well". That still leaves lots of room

for acknowledgment of “personal foibles and failings” (to use Loewen’s language, 19) and to note the general Mennonite rejection of Nazism, rejection of undifferentiated opposition to socialism, and of a return to costly nonresistance. This reader too often wondered why the authors suggested that the pro-Nazi sentiments were understandable but moderate (a few remarks about what they knew when would have said more), as if a misreading of the times was not vital. But then the writers who turned pro-Soviet need not serve as explicitly as misguided model either - indeed, Loewen’s remarks later about both Schellenberg and Penner say as much.

The other issue that surfaces too lightly is the Jewish-Mennonite tension. The detailed biography of Walter (Jacob) Quiring by Ted Regehr includes the most extensive information, not only of Quiring’s long term Nazi propagandist role, but of the ways in which his involvement in the elimination of Jews has been established. Regehr’s straight forward account includes numerous moments when Quiring was given support or a role, such as editor of *Der Bote*, without the responsible Mennonites checking his wartime and Nazi past. In describing C. F. Klassen’s struggles with second level staff of the International Refugee Commission (IRO), the author Gerhard Rempel noted that CF and the IRO director W. Hallam Tuck “shared a basic Christian outlook” which resulted in favorable treatment for Mennonite refugees. But then come two cases where someone named Meyer Cohen and another named Ben Kaplan (recognizable Jewish names) delayed refugee approval because of evidence of Mennonites serving in SS and Sicherheitsdienst. A longer quotation from a C.F. Klassen letter make clear that he was pitting his Mennonite loyalties against those of “Jews, Poles, and Latvians” in seeking to bend the ear of American state department officials. One can be thankful to the biographers for telling the story, but it adds meanings to the ‘shepherd and servant’ leadership theme in ways that render that leadership study rather ambiguous.

Generally the biographies are short, read well, and are therefore suitable for group discussion. They are not of equal importance, and longer biographies of B.B. Janz, C.F. Klassen and C.H. Wedel help us understand those individuals better. Frequently I was struck by the inner capacity to continue in ministry, when again impoverished, or devalued by others. J.H. Janzen and A.H. Unruh come through as inspired leaders with depth. Hopefully the questions their stories raise will inspire more interest in one of the more fascinating parts of the modern Mennonite story.

Walter Sawatsky
Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries

Notes

- ¹ For example, Julia Hildebrandt, Heinrich Klassen and Gerhard Woelk, eds. *Aber wo sollen wir hin. Briefe von Russlandmennoniten aus den Jahren ihrer Gefangenschaft, Verbannung und Lagerhaft in der Sowjetunion* (Frankenthal: Verlag Hirtenstimme, 1998); Sarah Klassen, ed. *The Silence Echos* (1997).

Leonard N. Neufeldt, ed., *Before We Were the Land's: Yarrow, British Columbia: Mennonite Promise*. Victoria, BC: TouchWood Editions, 2002. Pp. 285. \$19.95, Paper.

Leonard N. Neufeldt, ed., *Village of Unsettled Yearnings: Yarrow, British Columbia: Mennonite Promise*. Victoria, BC: TouchWood Editions, 2002. Pp. x, 371. \$21.95, Paper.

When Johann Barga and Isaak Sawatsky purchased farmland in Yarrow, British Columbia, in late 1927, Barga prayed, "Our Father in Heaven, give your help and blessing to make this place a Mennonite Settlement!" (113). As more and more Russian Mennonites moved from the Canadian prairies to the fertile Fraser Valley, it seemed that Barga's prayer had been answered. Indeed, between 1928 and 1958, Yarrow was "mainly Mennonite and largely homogenous" (13). For a time in the late 1940s, the Mennonite Brethren church in Yarrow attracted 1,200 to 1,400 people to Sunday morning services, more than eighty percent of the local population. Within a generation, the settlers' hopes of a self-sufficient, closed settlement were fading into memory. Leonard N. Neufeldt, Professor Emeritus of American Studies at Purdue University, together with Lora Jean Sawatsky and Robert Martens, has compiled and edited two volumes chronicling this parabola of Mennonite influence in Yarrow.

The subtitle of both works is *Yarrow, British Columbia: Mennonite Promise*. At the time, Yarrow seemed like the proverbial land of milk and honey for wandering Mennonites. Its settlers wanted to re-establish the village culture forcibly taken from them in Russia. Almost immediately, they had to make adjustments in the face of outside pressures. Still, Mennonite life flourished. While this Yarrow now exists almost entirely in memory, this memory is fresh enough to inspire the many contributors to these volumes.

The first volume, *Before We Were the Land's*, is the more traditional history of the two. The essays in the first two sections, "Who Were These People?" and "Before We Settled the Land," provide a geographic, cultural, and historical introduction to the Mennonite settlement of Yarrow. This provides context to the second half of the

book. Here, Neufeldt has excerpted accounts from the original settlers. Though he draws largely from material written years later, he does include a number of pieces from original journals. The first volume describes the identity of the settlers and their vision for Yarrow – in short, how Yarrow came to be.

The second volume describes the reality of settlement – what Yarrow came to be. *Village of Unsettled Yearnings* is an eclectic collection of contributions. The first section, “A Cultural Mural of Mennonite Yarrow,” has short reflections on such diverse subjects as midwifery, Mennonite soldiers, growing up as a minister’s daughter, and the social and cultural dynamics of picking raspberries. The second section in this volume is “A Gallery of Sketches and Tributes”. It honours a wide variety of individuals and couples. These profiles are not offered as typical of Yarrow, but to “create a cast representing some of the uniqueness and richness of the people in Mennonite Yarrow” (200). For the most part, the authors in both sections have gone beyond recounting memories to a deeper introspection and analysis.

Together, *Before We Were the Land’s* and *Village of Unsettled Yearnings* make for interesting and informative reading. Given the subject, the combination of traditional historical research with personal memories is in this instance appropriate and effective. The two companion volumes do not claim to be rigorous histories, but rather a prelude to a future cultural history. As such, they succeed admirably. Both volumes contain excellent bibliographies for further reading, as well as nominal and topical indices. The books are well organized and attractively presented with many interesting photos and illustrations. A large-scale map, however, would have been a good addition to the numerous town maps. The two volumes of *Yarrow, British Columbia: Mennonite Promise* will have obvious appeal for those with a connection to Yarrow. Beyond local interest, readers will appreciate the familiar trajectory but unique details of the history of this Mennonite settlement.

Peter Dueck
Winnipeg, MB

Galen A. Peters, ed. *The Earliest Hymns of the Ausbund. Some Beautiful Christian Songs Composed and Sung in the Prison at Passau. 1564.* Translated, Annotated and with an Introduction by Robert A. Riall. [Anabaptist Texts in Translation] Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press. Co-published with Herald Press, Scottdale, PA/Waterloo, ON. Pb. pp. 468.

The earliest songs composed by Anabaptists imprisoned at the Passau castle in the sixteenth century are an important source in Anabaptist history, throwing light on much more than historical and theological data. In them we can sense something of the experience of faith put to the test. It is an existential faith that we see here, familiar with suffering and confronted bluntly by harsh and probably uncomprehending authorities. Although the *Ausbund*, which included these songs when it appeared in 1583, has survived the centuries and is still reproduced in a German language edition (mine is the 13th edition of 1962), and apparently still used in worship services, these texts and their music are far removed from most contemporary Anabaptist-Mennonite life. Nonetheless, even apart from the scholarly and historical value of these texts, they are witnesses to the religious faith of a religious community which established what we call the Anabaptist tradition.

Having himself struggled with translations of some of these songs — in that case it was the so-called “martyr ballads” (songs 9 to 29 in the *Ausbund*) — this reviewer can empathize with the degree of difficulty in rendering these songs in a readable English version. Robert A. Riall has chosen to translate these stanzas “as literally as possible and as freely as necessary,” as my erstwhile German professor used to say, and in my view that is a good choice, especially when one considers that the goal was not a new hymnal.

Indeed, accuracy is of the essence here, since these songs are largely an exposition of biblical theology as understood by the Anabaptists. There will be differences of opinion about the suitability of some words or expressions, but in many of these poems the meaning must be clear, and it appears to me that some of the original texts are not rendered correctly in Riall’s translation. I will offer some examples from the first song, “Lord God Father, I cry to you,...

In the third stanza “serve” (diener) has been substituted for “deiner” (yours). In the tenth the lines: “Here the light alone was/ covered with his pure humanity” should read: “but (allein,) the light was covered...” Throughout the word “vernimm” (perceive, hear) is rendered as “understand,” Other mistranslations include: “gut” (13)

(not 'possession' but 'good'), and, in the last stanza: "that (not 'for') you have led us in (not 'into') your wisdom."

This is not to distract from what is in the most part a good, readable translation of sometimes difficult texts. But it is unfortunately the case that in sacrificing rhythm and meter to achieve accuracy of statement this translation does not seem to have fully achieved its objective.

Nevertheless, the usefulness of this attractive paperback is greatly enhanced by its marginal notes, its endnotes, and excellent introduction, bibliography and Scriptural index. Each song is introduced with information regarding authorship and a summary of the text contents, and the endnotes are a veritable mine of relevant contextual information.

Victor G. Doerksen
Kelowna, BC

Adina Reger and Delbert Plett, editors, *Diese Steine: Ein Bildband der Geschichte der Russlandmennoniten*. Steinbach, MB: Crossway Publications, 2001. Pp. 694. Paper, \$25.00Cdn.

Ten thousand copies of the first edition of this volume were printed, no doubt a record in Mennonite publishing. The book was published primarily for distribution, free of charge, among Mennonites in South and Central America, particularly the Old Colony Mennonites in Mexico, and the Russian Mennonite *Umsiedler* (resettlers), now called *Aussiedler*, in Germany. Delbert Plett QC, a lawyer and businessman living in Steinbach, Manitoba, has invested much energy and considerable resources of his own into writing, translating, editing and publishing *Kleine Gemeinde* and Old Colony historical materials. One of his latest books he edited and published, *Old Colony Mennonites in Canada 1875-2000* (Steinbach, 2001), was also distributed free of charge or for a nominal fee. Plett has a burning concern that the Mennonite story, particularly in its conservative form, is understood well and the Mennonite heritage preserved and passed on.

The title, "Diese Steine" (these stones), refers to the ruined Mennonite buildings and institutions in Russia. Adina Reger, author and co-editor of this book, was born in Kazakhstan of the former Soviet Union and has lived in Germany since 1987. In 1994 she first visited the villages in the Ukraine where many of her relatives had lived before the Revolution of 1917. She was saddened to see the

dismantling, brick by brick (she speaks of “forcible destruction of the Mennonite past in Ukraine”) of former church structures and other Mennonite establishments. This sparked her interest in Mennonite history and led her to gather the material and to write this book together with Delbert Plett.

The book is divided into seven parts, consisting of 123 longer and shorter chapters: the historical background; the Chortitza colony; the Molotschna colony; the daughter colonies; exile and resettlement; emigration; and faith matters and reflections (“Zum Glauben und Denken”). While most of the chapters are adapted or excerpted from previously published articles and stories in papers, journals and books, a few were written especially for this volume. Much of the content is familiar, especially to Mennonite historians, but there are chapters that are based on unpublished documents, although parts of these documents have appeared in published form. For example, Anna Sudermann’s story of how the German military occupied Chortitza in 1941, extracted from her unpublished memoirs, *Lebenserinnerungen*, provides interesting, but little-known details of how Mennonites viewed the German “liberators” (pp. 118-122).

The volume provides a wealth of information, including biographies of known and little-known persons; letters from exile; black and white photographs of persons, places and buildings (the numerous pictures alone make the book worth purchasing); maps; an extensive bibliography; and a useful name index. Given Plett’s long-time interest and work in the history of the Old Colony Mennonites, the book’s emphasis is naturally on the more conservative Russian-Mennonite groups’ life, beliefs and practices. The editors, however, have not neglected to include the story of economic and social development of Mennonites under the Tsars and the demise of their institutions during the Soviet period. In fact, the many articles and stories of Mennonite achievement in farming, businesses, and industrial activities in Imperial Russia, make this book a truly rich collection of articles and photographs of what has been called the “Mennonite Commonwealth.”

On a critical note, the quality of German in this volume varies greatly throughout the book. While the German in chapters from previously published German sources is of acceptable quality, the German version of material translated from English sources is quite inadequate and poor (see, for example, pp. 73-76). The entire manuscript should have been thoroughly copy-edited by a person with a good knowledge of German grammar and syntax. Cost considerations must have been a factor in this neglect.

Another major concern for this reviewer are the editors’ occasional biases and distortions in historical interpretation. For example,

Delbert Plett is correct in criticising “liberal” Mennonite historians like “Heinrich Heese, D.H. Epp, Franz Isaak, and especially P. M. Friesen” (p. 73) for not fully appreciating the faith and culture of the “conservative” Mennonites, especially the Kleine Gemeinde and the Old Colony Mennonites (on P. M. Friesen’s view of the Kleine Gemeinde, see *The Mennonite Brotherhood in Russia*, pp. 93-94). But to state, as Plett does, that the conservative Mennonite pioneers who settled in Chortitza in 1789 and whose descendants later came to Canada, were considered by these historians as “a lower class of sub-humans in the genetic, moral, economic and cultural sense” (“eine niedrige Klasse von Untermenschen, im genetischen, moralischen, ökonomischen und kulturellen Wesen und Sinne.” p. 74), is simply absurd. Even P. M. Friesen, whom Plett criticizes in many of his writings, appreciated the fact that the Kleine Gemeinde “was a messenger calling the Molotschna Mennonites to repentance....” (*The Mennonite Brotherhood*, p. 93). And to call P. M. Friesen and the founders of the Mennonite Brethren church “separatist-pietists,” as Plett does in this book and his other writings, is both unfair and inaccurate. After all, most reforming groups in nineteenth-century Russia, including the Kleine Gemeinde, had a tendency to separate themselves from other groups whom they did not consider sufficiently “spiritual.”

These critical comments aside, the publication of *Diese Steine* is a valuable achievement and the editors are to be commended for making the Mennonite story available for those Mennonites who still appreciate reading about their heritage in the German language. It is to be hoped that the book will contribute not only toward a better understanding of the Russian-Mennonite religious and cultural tradition, but also lead toward greater tolerance and acceptance of each other among so-called “conservative” and “liberal” Mennonites.

Harry Loewen
Kelowna, British Columbia

T. D. Regehr, *Faith, Life and Witness in the Northwest, 1903-2003: Centennial History of the Northwest Mennonite Conference*. Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2003. Pp. 524. Paper, \$49.95 Cdn.

North American Mennonites began to write histories of their denominational district conferences in the 1920s. In those early years the volumes were little more than published collections of district

conference minutes. Gradually they utilized an almost standard formula of immigration/settlement history, brief regional and congregational histories, and an overview of conference institutions and programs that emerged in the 20th century. Usually they were written by “insiders,” often ordained leaders from within the conference, and were not overly analytical. These conference histories have gradually increased in size and sophistication – the heavyweight award going to John L. Ruth’s 1380 page encyclopedic history of the Pennsylvania-based Lancaster Mennonite Conference published in 2001.

Ted Regehr’s centennial history of the Northwest Mennonite Conference – one of the smallest district conferences related to the former (MC) Mennonite Church – takes a worthy place on this shelf. In many ways Regehr follows the formula – opening with chapters on pioneers and builders, and continuing chronologically through the end of World War II. The second half of the book covers the post-war era in which Regehr thematically addresses missions, voluntary service, urbanization, church plants, changes in non-conformity, leadership patterns and cross-cultural outreach.

Two things set this book apart from most of its counterparts – one has to do with the author, the second with the current nature of the Northwest Mennonite Conference.

Ted Regehr, an academic Canadian historian who spent his professional life at the University of Saskatchewan, came to this project with little knowledge of the Northwest Conference, as he candidly admits in the introduction. Regehr’s background is Canadian economic and political history, not religious history. He has not participated in denominational structures, though he has a long association with the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada and its projects. This “outsider” academic background is noticeable and has contributed fresh perspectives in his own Mennonite writing, most particularly in his volume 3 in the *Mennonites in Canada* series.

This perspective is also true in *Faith, Life and Witness in the Northwest*. It is reflected in Regehr’s lack of any defensiveness in the straight-forward narration of occasional conflicts; he has no side to protect. His insights on the economic factors that contributed to the decline of some early Mennonite settlements, and his familiarity with government policy on matters of conscription and conscientious objection also reflect his academic background. His analysis of the problems with introducing business enterprises into aboriginal culture at the Calling Lake VS unit is similarly strong (241).

He is less surefooted on theological matters or denominational structures. For example, Regehr attributes the strict dress code of the

Mennonite Church in the early 20th century to fundamentalist influences on the church (107). This is surely debatable, as fundamentalism did not particularly concern itself with matters of external nonconformity. His description of changes in Mennonite Church denominational structure (322) includes some incorrect nomenclature (e.g., the Mennonite Church no longer had a “General Conference,” but rather a “General Assembly”), and there are occasional misspellings of the names of Mennonite leaders outside the Northwest Conference or in the names of other Mennonite district conferences. These latter may catch the eye of the knowledgeable reader, but they in no way detract with the movement and depth of the overall analysis.

The second notable thing about this history is the turmoil existing within the Northwest Mennonite Conference at the time of the book’s release. At the same time that the conference was celebrating its 100 years of faith, life, and witness, it also was severing its denominational connections and facing a very uncertain future. In some ways Regehr’s story of the Northwest Conference’s recent decades is of a conference that had lost its way – first enormous energy expended in one direction like church-planting, then moving on in another. An observer might ask whether the Northwest Mennonite Conference is at chapter 8 of Calvin Redekop’s *Leaving Anabaptism* – the account of the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren departure from Mennonite identity. Only time will tell, but Regehr’s last chapter, “Crossroads” is surely apt.

Ted Regehr has provided another thoroughly researched volume to Mennonite history writing in Canada. The Conference is to be commended for giving him freedom to follow where the research took him and allowing the space to tell the story in adequate detail.

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David G. Rempel with Cornelia Rempel Carlson. *A Mennonite Family in Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union, 1789-1923*. [Tsarist and Soviet Mennonite Studies Series] Toronto/Buffalo/London: University of Toronto Press, 2002. Pp. 356.

The Nestor of Russian Mennonite historians has left us an engrossing family, social and political history of the “commonwealth” established by the Mennonites in southern Russia.

This is history from the inside out, beginning with the Rempel family ancestors and detailing generations of grandparents, uncles and aunts, merging into the remembered experience of young David Rempel himself in pre-revolutionary Russia, an outside world that thrust itself upon the settlement of Nieder Chortiza with a vengeance. This compelling story is told as family memoir, Mennonite community history, social and political history, all of these and more, unified as these perspectives are through the eye of the beholder, the historian as witness.

The first part is the story of the Rempels, Great, Great, Great Grandfather Gerhard Rempel, having moved to southern Russia in the mid 1790s from the Danzig area to be one of the founding families of Nieder Khortitsa in 1803. Beginning with intriguing details about family life, Rempel shows the emergence of larger issues like land, education and so on. Great Grandfather Johann, for example, "as the mayor of Nieder Khortitsa, ... faced down none other than the great Johann Cornies, the authoritarian chairman of the Agricultural Union of both Khortitsa and Molochnaia, ... who wielded such absolute power in the 1830s and 1840s that many colonists called him 'the Mennonite Tsar.' Rempel sides with his forebear, suggesting that if Cornies' regimented ideas concerning village planning had been followed, "if authorities in any of Molochnaia's villages [had] ordered every householder to open his front and rear door at a given hour, one could have seen through every house from one end of the village to the other"(23).

Another Great Great Great Grandfather was Jacob Höppner, who together with Johann Bartsch had been sent to investigate the settlement opportunities before the migration eastward from Prussia. Höppner's success as a negotiator and, in general, his ability to relate to the "local landed gentry" even to the extent of joining them in hunting, was taken amiss by his Mennonite brethren, who blamed Höppner and Bartsch for these benefits, and especially for the choice building sites they received. This, combined with the fact that Höppner quickly became well-to-do, naturally made for bad blood. Legal charges were laid against both Bartsch and Höppner, and Bartsch recanted, while the stubborn Höppner did not. He was banned from his Flemish church and even imprisoned until pardoned by a general amnesty of Tsar Alexander I in 1801. Even then, he was not allowed to rejoin the church and he eventually moved to Schönwiese (Alexandrovsk) where he joined the Frisian church. Jacob Höppner asked to be buried on the family farm, but today Mennonite tourists may see the monuments to Höppner and Bartsch, not in Schönwiese or Nieder-Khortitsa, but in Steinbach, Manitoba, at the Mennonite Village Museum.

The subsequent chapters on the Hildebrand side of the family take the reader into the religious structures that framed Russian Mennonite life. Great Uncle Kornelius Pauls is noted as a preacher of the Frisian church whose sermons were "much like a revivalist's, exhorting all to repent. Some of our parishioners observed that no matter what his biblical text might have suggested, the sermon was always the same" (64). In the later nineteenth century changes in the religious landscape became apparent, as marriages between different Mennonite groups unthinkable earlier came into being.

The great political events that would shape the future of the Mennonite colonies so drastically, are also described from the point of view of family and community life. David Rempel's father, who traveled in his business, could not avoid the feeling that great change was in the air in the period around 1905, since he came in contact with non-Mennonites influenced by Bolsheviks, Mensheviks and other social ideas current at the time. In spite of the reforms initiated by Premier Petr Stolypin, the Mennonites began to feel the unrest and anger of their peasant neighbors. Buildings were burned and estate owners were kidnapped and murdered.

Before the outbreak of the Russian Revolution the Mennonite commonwealth had reached a point at which its own society was stratified, with wealthy estate owners and farmers dominating the social structure and, in some cases, misusing their power. Rempel recounts what he calls "the rapacity of the elite" in a chapter on "Class Conflicts within the Khortitsa Settlement." Stands of trees and rare watering ponds were sacrificed for short-term gain. It remained for some of the women and young people to protest against this waste by a powerful elite.

During the First World War the Russian government passed land liquidation decrees, which caused serious unrest among the Mennonite and other colonists. Since they applied to "Germans," and possibly not to Dutch settlers, the question of which term applied to the Mennonites arose and delegations were sent to the government to put the Dutch argument. The resulting confiscations made the island of Khortitsa part of Alexandrovsk, which thus swallowed the settlement founded by Höppner and Hildebrand. Soon the Civil War and the terror unleashed by the Makhnovites would put an effective end to the Mennonite Commonwealth in Russia. Rempel places the Makhno bandits in a broader context than has been the case in Mennonite history, distinguishing them from philosophically motivated anarchists of the period but pointing out their strategic location between the Red and White armies. He also describes the struggle that ensued between the wealthy farmers and the landless, who took or were given land and houses. Even clothing was to be

redistributed according to "the new principles of liberty and fraternity"(188). When the Bolsheviks had gained control they extorted huge sums from Mennonite farmers and industrialists. These developments took a heavy toll on the social structure of the Mennonite communities, leading to serious divisions.

One such division concerned the traditional principle of non-resistance, which was severely tested at this time. Rempel confesses his own view, namely, that "for years our churches and schools had failed to teach our students the basic Mennonite beliefs and history, that we had enjoyed privileges without having to fight for them.... Might not a deeper foundation in our historic beliefs have lessened the aberrant acts of many and saved up all from some of the retributive horrors later inflicted by the Makhnovites?" (197).

During the German occupation in 1918 there was a "short respite" which the social historian uses to tell of wedding customs as celebrated even under the threat of revolution and war. But then the Civil War returned and eventually the Bolsheviks established control over the Mennonite areas. Rempel witnessed the execution of three bandits in January of 1919, shot outside his classroom by a firing squad. Rempel also tells of an Abram Loewen, who became something of a vigilante, shooting approaching bandits on sight. Some in the community wanted to imprison Loewen; others championed him.

Another brief respite was provided when the community was occupied by the White army, which reversed the changes imposed previously by the Reds. The Whites were seen by most as liberators and Rempel himself volunteered for guard duty at the Einlage bridge. He contracted malaria and was bedridden for five weeks before returning to school to his parent's relief. But in the fall of 1919 the White army no longer could offer protection and the "army" of Nestor Makhno moved into the area.

The Makhno terror has been described in a number of Mennonite histories and memoirs, and Rempel also uses his family as the context for some explicit description. The family of his Uncle Jacob Janzen, estate owners, had to flee several times to save their lives, and faced their greatest danger from erstwhile Mennonites like the bandit Petia Thiessen. This "bizarre intertwining," as Rempel calls it, was to play a fateful role in much of the terror and destruction to follow, as the research of Colin P. Neufeldt and others has shown. The adventures of the "desperado" Loewen came to an end in a nearby hayloft in an act of counter-terror. Jacob Epp was beaten to death in view of his family. Rempel's brother Jacob, who was only sixteen, expecting a like fate, was released unharmed. When David Rempel returned from school, he found that the Rempel household was commandeered by the Makhnovites.

Rempel's account of the typhus epidemic is particularly touching in that it is, as with many others, a personal story. David Rempel himself recovered in time to hear of his father's death. Soon after his brother Heinrich and then his mother succumbed. He recalls her humming her favorite songs in her fever: "Take thou my hand, o Father, and lead thou me...." Her last words: "Boys, if you can emigrate, then go, even if you have to leave everything behind" (247).

What followed the years of war, terror and typhus was the famine. Many Canadian Mennonite families remember the terrible consequences of the famine of the early 1920s in Russia. The droughts of 1920 and 1921 combined with many other factors, not least the devastation left by the previous years, killed some 7 million people. As Rempel says, the death toll among the Mennonites would have been much higher had it not been for the US and Dutch Mennonite relief grudgingly allowed by the Bolshevik government. All of these factors led to a realization that life would not return to "normal," and that emigration was a serious option. Among the deciding factors was the Canadian government's decision to accept Mennonite immigrants and the offer from the Canadian Pacific Railway to advance the necessary funds.

This led to another unfortunate split within the Mennonite community, and in hindsight the decision of many to stay appears tragic. Rempel tells of the consequences for his wider family, and many of us will corroborate his conclusions. Like many others, our family endured years of silent separation followed by meetings with relatives who have terrible stories to tell. David Rempel's history brings all of this personal and family history to life and thus does a great service especially for those who participate in this story of families and community.

The book is generously provided with supplementary information, appendices, a genealogy, glossary, and extensive notes. A preface by the author and an introduction by Harvey L. Dyck, general editor of the series, open the volume. There is also a note by Henry Pauls, a detail of whose painting of Khortitsa is on the dust cover.

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C. Arnold Snyder, ed., *Commoners and Community: Essays in Honour of Werner O. Packull*. Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press and Herald Press, 2002. Pp. 323.

It is indeed a tribute to the honoree of this *Festschrift* that the essays written to express appreciation to Werner Packull are a reflection of the lively, sometimes discordant scholarly exchange that characterizes Anabaptist-Mennonite research today. In a number of iconoclastic analyses, the reader is confronted with a variety of historical interpretations that demonstrate how fluid understanding of movements in the Radical Reformation can be.

Authors portray a readiness to question some earlier views, but then also critically evaluate revisions of those views. Thus, while one writer confidently speaks of “driving the nail into the coffin” (24) of an earlier vision of the origin of Anabaptism (monogenesis), usually credited to Harold Bender, another scholar notes that Packull himself was a major leader in “puncturing” (13) the revisionist view (polygenesis), which he had helped to formulate. The reader is forced to question whether the nail found the right coffin. The shoals of triumphalist historiography can be perilous! It would have been fascinating to have this succession of the “rise and fall” of historical schools of thought subjected to further dissection. Perhaps the next explanation of Anabaptist “genesis” will have a powerful infusion of new genes from Erasmus (cf. Abraham Friesen’s recent book, *Erasmus, the Anabaptists, and the Great Commission*). After all, a good number of early Anabaptist leaders were monks and/or priests who encountered the great humanist’s thought. Menno himself paid numerous tributes to him, while a Mennonite minister writing in the 17th century spoke of Erasmus as though his significance for Mennonites was taken for granted.

Numerous current issues in Anabaptist studies are subjected to careful analysis. Some readers will question assertions about the first efforts made to establish Hans Denck as an Anabaptist (Clarence Bauman, for example, did so well before the cited date, 1972). The role and duration of the “people’s reformation” is given prominent attention, yet to say it was over by 1526 cedes too much to the view that princes, not commoners, shaped the Reformation. I would suggest that in numerous instances, well after 1526, pressure from the masses shaped local reform policies. Hans-Juergen Goertz examines the apocalyptic spirit that impelled some leaders to move beyond the contemporary and seek to bring in a new age. The quoted apostrophe of Ulrich von Hutten may well have expressed the aspirations of many; at the same time, a similar view was expressed by Petrarch two centuries earlier. Also, while Luther and many others spoke gloomily of the present and the future, that did not, it

seems to me, deter them in their pursuit of what they believed to be the divine plan for God's creation.

In a call to reality, James Stayer reminds us that, despite painstaking research, questions such as the number of Anabaptists in a region must remain guesswork. Even if we have many recorded incidents of martyrdom, such an event would usually involve only one member of a family; in addition, how many were able to conceal their adherence to the movement? At the same time, had there been no bloody persecution, how can we be sure Bainton was so wrong, as Stayer suggests, when he wrote that religious liberty in the Reformation might have made Anabaptism "the prevailing form of the church" in some regions? Seen in the context of vigorous persecution, as shown in Brad Gregory's *Salvation at Stake*, it is remarkable, not that many communities of Anabaptism were extinguished, but that some survived. The blood of the martyrs, as Tertullian wrote, may indeed be the seed of the church if persecution is of limited duration. Sustained intensively and at long duration, it may also extinguish the church in the area.

The appearance of Anabaptists in various radical movements seems well established. By the same token, presumably the vast majority of participants in the Peasants Revolt were Catholic or Lutheran. With reference to "Anabaptist Münster," Stayer posits interpretations that challenge common views. If the "propertied elite" was significantly involved in the Münster upheaval, and Kerssenbrock is not reliable in his analysis (66), to what extent was the city "Anabaptist?" If most offices in Anabaptist Münster were held by "property holders" (67), were they indeed re-baptized? And if the city's population included "4000 unknowns," do we have a city controlled by Anabaptists or by a variety of radicals? As usual, Stayer advances strong analyses, and in so doing, raises additional fascinating questions. Perhaps, in dramatic and violent upheavals, whether in Münster or the Peasants War, Catholic, Lutheran and Anabaptist "radicals" made common cause.

In a sweeping overview of a number of historical works on the Reformation, Douglas Shantz raises the question of how much personal biases may color interpretation. He notes that some mystic and pietistic writers helped to bring a better understanding of Anabaptism by suggesting the movement be seen through the eyes of its members, not its opponents. Even today analyses of Anabaptism sometimes tell us more about the writers than about the subject. Clearly, some of the mentioned pietists and mystics detected a kindred spirit in early Anabaptism.

The essay by Michael Driedger portrays the Dutch Mennonite response, often positive and interactive, to the Enlightenment. As he

suggests, the French Revolution carried with it ideas that would transform Dutch society. At the same time, one might note that some Mennonite young men took up arms against the invader; does this suggest a less than enthusiastic welcome of French revolutionary ideals? Also, to what extent did Mennonite successes in the economic, intellectual and artistic arenas undermine traditional religious beliefs and practices? Was the loss of a peace theology a price paid for cultural accommodation?

Following a brief survey of some competing worldviews and analyses of their interaction, A. James Reimer suggests that the early Anabaptist leader Pilgram Marpeck offers a positive, ethical, and theological rationale for responsible engagement in society. Neither withdrawal nor total identification with power structures offers biblical alternatives. The goals and values undergirding writers such as Marpeck speak to the whole of society and recognize that by its very nature, society is less than Christian; at the same time, for those who take seriously the claims of Christ, there is always a state of tension between that which is and that which might be. In another essay on Marpeck, Geoffrey Dipple delineates aspects of tensions between those who called for more openness to persons claiming direct illumination, and those who, like Marpeck, felt that the Scriptures and history provided reliable guidelines. At the same time, some champions of inner spiritual enlightenment responded that they also recognized the significant role of history, and that it often showed how divine illumination had been a determining causative factor.

Seven delightful vignettes by Walter Klaassen introduce us to the lives of "little people." Imbued with a sense of mission, they needed no public affirmation to convince them that their calling was of God. These "kleine Hansen" drew their inspiration from a sense of calling that could not be quenched by social or religious hierarchies. The reader might wish to know more about the source of such calm courage and devotion.

Students of Anabaptism have long seen David Joris as a free spirit, prepared to chart new courses without external determinants. After all, why should he accept human direction when the Holy Spirit was guiding his life? Readers of some of his more fanciful interpretations of Scripture may well wonder from which spirit Joris drew these remarkable insights. Gary Waite has drawn on a remarkably diverse cast of characters to provide a broad context for his analysis; some readers may question some assumptions and descriptions, such as the reference to Donne as a "Spiritual alchemist."

C. Arnold Snyder confronts us with a number of decisive characteristics of Anabaptism. To begin, he defines "Anabaptists" as those who "baptized adults with water." The reader will note that not

all uses of the term in this volume reflect such a definition. Snyder suggests that Anabaptism was not defined in terms of a sacramental experience or forensic justification, but rather by a union with Christ that is reflected in “walking in the resurrection” (Schleithem). Once again, the reader is reminded that early Anabaptism drew deeply from the spring of mysticism; Snyder thus echoes a view expressed by Packull. At the same time, while Packull earlier argued for a sharp distinction between Swiss and South German Anabaptism in their response to mysticism, Packull has modified that view, contending that the affinity is greater than once thought. Another facet of mysticism examined by Snyder is the need for harmony between “inner” and “outer” word, as well as the tension experienced by Anabaptists when they refused to subordinate their inner word to the dictates of society.

An analysis of some of Peter Riedemann’s interpretations of scripture provides a fascinating insight into his view of holy writ. Martin Rothkegel presents some remarkable and different biblical interpretations (as in the case of the camel or ship cable passing through the eye of a needle; or when “thou shalt do no murder” becomes “thou shalt not wickedly spread false teaching”). In other instances, elaborate glosses seem little more than thinly-veiled efforts to consolidate the power and prestige of the “servants of the word.”

In her depiction of community of goods in the Hutterite communities, Astrid von Schlachta traces the striking metamorphosis that prosperity and toleration bring to the practice of community of goods. At first, Hutterite leaders were cooperative and flexible in relating to temporal authority; then, as they became a significant economic force, they were able to wring concessions from local authorities. Also, with greater numbers and increasing prosperity in the communities, earlier emphases on love and voluntary response yielded to dogmatic demands and coerced response. Was this a factor in persuading many Hutterites to accept recatholicization rather than move to a new haven? Had the external form taken precedence over inner substance?

Recent Reformation historiography has devoted considerable attention to confessionalization. No doubt, many parts of Europe witnessed instances where political authorities, working closely with religious hierarchies, gained substantial control over the lives of common folk. At the same time, not all were prepared to resign themselves to the dictates of those who proclaimed “*cujus regio, ejus religio.*” John Roth examines the life – and death – of Hans Landis, Anabaptist leader near Zurich. Earlier Anabaptist martyrs had died because of religious practices; in this instance, Zurich authorities emphasized disobedience to the state, as in the refusal to swear oaths

or bear arms. Landis was beheaded as an enemy of the state. Who knows how his executioners would have reacted, had they been able to gaze into the future and see, almost four centuries later, how Reformed ministers in Zurich would kneel to wash the feet of Landis's spiritual heirs – and beg forgiveness?

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C. Arnold Snyder, ed., *Sources of South German/Austrian Anabaptism*, trans., Walter Klaassen, Frank Friesen and Werner Packull. Classics of the Radical Reformation series, Vol. 10. Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2001. Pp. li, 429. Paper, \$50 Cdn, \$40 US.

With this volume, the Institute of Mennonite Studies at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Indiana continues to provide English language translations of sixteenth century Anabaptist documents. This is the tenth volume in the Classics of the Radical Reformation series.

The articles in this volume represent a wide range of materials from the South German/Austrian Anabaptist movement. Because this Anabaptist movement was diverse, and many of its adherents migrated to Moravia, the articles also reflect this diversity of place and time.

The core of the book consists of translated articles previously published by Walter Klaassen and Frank Friesen, *Sixteenth Century Anabaptism: Defenses, Confessions, Refutations* (1981). That book was published in a limited edition and has been out of print for some time. Instead of simply reprinting that volume, the editors decided to expand the project to include a wider range of articles and thus produce a book that would be more representative of South German/Austrian Anabaptism. A few articles were added from Lydia Mueller, *Glaubenszeugnisse oberdeutscher Taufgesinnter*. Other individual articles were included, some previously published in journals. The articles by Hutterites are taken from a variety of sources, including Bossert's *Quellen*.

The book begins with a lengthy introduction that covers the era from the beginning of Luther's reform in 1517 to the beginning of the South German/Austrian Anabaptist movement in 1526. This introduction provides the historical and geographical background and context for the Anabaptist movement in this area. Each article also

has its own introduction that provides information about the author, the context in which the document was written, and a brief summary of the key points of the content.

A few articles preceding the Anabaptist movement are included (e.g. by Joerg Haugk von Juechsen and Hans Hergot), because they indicate concerns that were later expressed by the Anabaptist movement. The bulk of the articles deal with the origin and development of South German/Austrian Anabaptism.

The origin, as Snyder argues in the introduction, lies largely in medieval mysticism and apocalypticism. The authors make the argument that this mystical and apocalyptic theology was transformed into the disciplined, rule-based communalism of the Hutterite Anabaptist groups in Moravia. For this reason more than a third of the book consists of Hutterite documents from the middle and latter part of the sixteenth century.

Some of the Anabaptists whose works are included are Hans Hut, Hans Spittelmaier, Leonhard Schiemer, Hans Schlaffer, Ursula Hellrigel (*Ausbund* song), Wolfgang Brandhuber, Joerg Zaunring, Katharina Hutter, and Helena von Freyberg. Articles by Sebastian Franck and Urbanus Rhegius, two opponents of Anabaptists, provide a view of how Anabaptists were perceived by some of their contemporaries.

The volume includes various types of documents. There are edifying treatises, letters, prison documents, confessions, recantations, letters of support for Anabaptists, and court records. Two hymns from the *Ausbund* are included, although the editors regret that they were not able to include more examples of the rich hymnody produced by South German/Austrian Anabaptists.

The volume includes extensive footnotes as well as two indices, one of places and names and the other of scripture. This book makes a very helpful contribution to English language sources of sixteenth century Anabaptist documents.

This volume addresses the question about the connection between the Hans Hut kind of apocalyptic and mystical Anabaptism and the communal, rule-based Hutterite Anabaptism. The editors believe that one was transformed into the other. It is also possible that in Moravia the Hut kind of Anabaptism was supplanted by another kind of Anabaptism that originated in the Tyrol and had different intellectual, social, and religious antecedents than the Anabaptism of Hans Hut.

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Gary K. Waite, *Heresy, Magic and Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe*. European Culture and Society series. Houndmills, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003. Pp.296. Paper, \$36.95.

In the context of the apocalyptic fervour that marked the sixteenth century, both witches and religious heretics were seen as members of diabolical conspiracies. Growing incertitude of such doctrines as transubstantiation made it necessary for religious authorities to demonstrate the validity of their cosmological interpretation. What better proof than the pursuit of campaigns against these agents of the Devil? Gary Waite, known to scholars of Anabaptist history for his valuable work on David Joris, offers an interesting explanation of religious persecution in early modern Europe.

Waite traces understandings of the Devil, magic, heresy and witchcraft from the late middle ages through the Reformation to the early seventeenth century development of religious pluralism. Tremendous doubts about Catholic tenets existed among the populace well before the Protestant Reformation. While occasional miracles were useful in bolstering religious belief, persecution of Jews, witches and heretics served to establish the reality of a diabolical realm operating within the human world. Declining belief in the Devil's physical presence, together with Nicodemism and spiritualism, motivated efforts by both Catholics and Protestants to "counteract the expression of skepticism toward the approved understanding of the supernatural realm" by means of persecution (150). Endtimes obsession contributed to this need to maintain order, as did the increasing diversity of religious beliefs which were considered as dangerous as the Peasants' War. Orthodoxy could only be preserved by rooting out diabolical conspirators and consigning them to the flames.

With the successful suppression of heresy, this "demonizing rhetoric" was applied to other ostensible dissenters such as unruly women—witches. Anabaptism inadvertently was partially responsible for this shift. The relative independence of Anabaptist women in particular fed into later witch hunts. Not all regions pursued witches with the same fervour. Waite gives careful attention to geographic differences. Witch hunts were most extensive in those regions which experienced the greatest religious conflict and held the most heresy trials.

Why the ultimate acceptance of religious pluralism? Waite explains that witch persecutions ironically increased skepticism and were largely abandoned at the same time as were attempts to maintain confessional conformity. People came to realize that their sectarian neighbours presented no challenge to local order. Merchants began

to appreciate that religious tolerance was necessary for trade. Authorities eventually acknowledged that doubt and dissidence were not necessarily threats to the existence of the state. Spiritualism and humanism spread from the Dutch Republic, promoting tolerance of religious diversity.

Waite has produced a highly readable book. A useful introductory chapter outlines the historiography of witchcraft for the neophyte—particularly of its intersection with the Reformation—and an extensive annotated bibliography provides greater detail. Throughout the text, Waite gives equal attention to elite convictions and popular beliefs. The remarkable cover artwork leaves the reviewer wishing that illustrations could have been included in the text itself. Those wanting to understand Anabaptism within a wider historical context will find much in this book to satisfy them.

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Peace Studies

Douglas Noll, *Peacemaking: Practicing at the Intersection of Law and Human Conflict*. Telford, PA: Cascadia Press, 2002. Pp. 476. Paper.

This ambitious book by a veteran American lawyer and educator aims to help law students, lawyers and mediators become peacemakers who “transform human conflict rather than merely settle disputes” (20). Drawing on philosophy, religion, theories of justice, game theory and neuropsychology, the book weaves together a comprehensive view of why and how people fight, and how they might make peace more effectively.

Law practice, Noll argues, is too narrowly conceived. Essentially, lawyers are to be peacemakers, but legal education and the judicial system perpetuate the myth that litigation is the best and only way to resolve disputes. This adversarial ideology, along with its foundational individualism and “myth of redemptive violence” (38), often exacerbates conflict and deepens wounds rather than enhancing healing. Lawyers need to understand how the legal system, conflict, and people work, and also to “reconceive” themselves as people who help others resolve conflicts peacefully through cooperative, not adversarial, processes.

Five parts comprise the book: I) "The Law and Peacemaking" sketches the history, values and potential of America's legal profession; II) "Conflict Resolution Processes" describes principles and methods of conflict resolution and mediation; III) "Understanding Conflict" analyzes conflict from seven academic perspectives; IV) "Conflict Analysis" describes sociological and structural theories of conflict; V) "Peacemaking" engages ethical issues involved in apology, forgiveness, conflict resolution and peacemaking. The book's summary (22-25) does not match its actual five-part structure. Further, Noll could reduce repetition and streamline the flow of thought if Part II (mediation) followed Parts III and IV (conflict analyses) and preceded Part V (peacemaking).

Noll leans heavily on recent findings of neuropsychology to argue that in conflict, human responses arise out of preconscious behavior. Therefore it is crucial to understand emotional factors in conflict and abandon the legal profession's assumption of constant rationality. Noll distinguishes helpfully between various types (evaluative, facilitative, transformative, narrative) of mediation, but then unfairly minimizes it in contrast to peacemaking, for his "peacemaking" strongly parallels mediation as many practice it. The book is strong on ethical issues facing lawyers and peacemakers, but with its western focus, misses how cultural differences change ethical equations. On religion, while Judaism and Islam are included, Buddhism and Hinduism are not. Also unmentioned are the "holy war" and "peaceable garden" traditions present in every major religion. Noll's critique of John Burton's Human Needs Theory (333) is insightful, but it misses Burton's more nuanced *Conflict Resolution and Prevention*.

Best suited for graduate and upper level undergraduate students and professionals, the book is readable and clearly organized. At times the research appears thin (e.g., 250-58), and at times sources need more thorough citation. Chapters often begin with an interesting conflict scenario and end with questions to help the reader apply the chapter's contents to real life.

Peacemaking touches all the bases and contains much valuable content; every library should own it. But its primary appeal may be to the converted. Noll's conclusions all attempt to link the chapter's contents to the lawyer's practice, but these precious links are much too thin; indeed, they should be the heart of the book. The book shows how peacemakers differ from lawyers, but does not quite build the golden bridge that inspires lawyers to exchange competition for cooperation.

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Vern Neufeld Redekop, *From Violence To Blessing: How an Understanding of Deep-Rooted Conflict Can Open Paths to Reconciliation*. Ottawa ON: Novalis, 2002. Pp. 408.

The language of conflict transformation is becoming more and more appealing to those engaged in the practice and study of conflict resolution. Rather than simply attempting to resolve conflicts, to solve problems and leave them behind, practitioners and academics are focusing on ways to transform conflict situations and relationships into new creative possibilities. This movement toward conflict transformation has opened up some exciting new pathways toward long-term reconciliation and forgiveness.

Through his profound analysis of the transformation of structures of violence into structures of blessing, Redekop makes a major contribution to this concept of conflict transformation. Redekop stirs together several levels of theory, salting this with his own personal reflections and experiential wisdom, to create a unique new blend of intriguing analysis, provocative questions and enriching anecdotes. The end result is a book which simultaneously challenges the academic reader and stimulates the popular audience.

Redekop begins by asking the question, "What is deep-rooted conflict and how is it related to violence?" In response, Redekop explores definitions and dynamics of deep-rooted conflict through the introduction and integration of two provocative theoretical approaches – the Human Needs Approach to conflict presented by John Burton and the concept of mimetic (or imitative) desire developed by Rene Girard.

The Human Needs perspective begins with an understanding of basic human needs that must be met for conflict between various social groups (or classes or societies) to be prevented. From this perspective, deep-rooted conflict is the inevitable result of unmet needs, including the range of identity-related needs to which Redekop gives some special attention. In the context of this search for satisfiers of unmet identity needs, Redekop then introduces Girard's concept of mimetic desire, explaining the definition of identity through processes of desiring and imitating the Other. For Girard and for Redekop, the concept of mimetic desire is central to an understanding of the violence inherent in processes of scapegoating, of surrogate victimhood and of the human preoccupation with the creation of difference.

Redekop pulls these theoretical strands together and applies them to a discussion of hegemonic structures (defined here as the structures which maintain the dominance of specific social groupings

over others) and ethnonationalism (an overview of ethnic and national identities as these relate to social dominance and deep-rooted conflict). With reference to additional philosophical and psychological literature, Redekop then turns to a consideration of Self-Other relationship dynamics. Here he provides another perspective on the creation of rifts and differences between people as processes of dehumanization and dominance. All this is then tied together with an exploration of mimetic structures of violence. Through patterns of imitation of one another's violent attitudes, rhetoric and behaviour, people are drawn into cycles of violence which ultimately define their identity needs, express mimetic desire through scapegoating and reinforce dominance through hegemonic structures.

This theoretical package forms the background for the second section of the book which includes an analysis of the Oka / Kanehsata:ke crisis of 1990 – a confrontation between the Mohawk of Kanehsata:ke and the Surete de Quebec (and later the Canadian Army). As in previous sections, Redekop adds a personal dimension, accomplished here by a thorough explanation of the research and interpretive methods used to develop the case study.

This confrontation not only forced the Aboriginal situation upon the Canadian consciousness but is also notable for the fact that it was defused with much less violence and bloodshed than expected. Something was operating to hold the structures of violence at bay. Redekop uses this aspect of the confrontation to introduce a discussion of blessing and reconciliation. Mimetic structures of blessing provide a counterpoint to the previously analyzed mimetic structures of violence.

At this juncture, Redekop adds another dimension by a theological reflection on the reconciliation of deep-rooted context. Redekop presents this reflection almost as an afterthought so that the theological discourse does not overwhelm the rest of the book and alienate those readers who would never read a theological book. The book then concludes with a summary of Redekop's framework for the movement from violence to blessing and with an epilogue of personal reflection on the events of September 11, 2001, which unfolded as the book was being completed.

The book can be appreciated on several levels. Redekop integrates a broad sweep of social science theory with some fascinating stories and personal testimonials. The range of theory, which could easily become overwhelming, becomes more accessible through personal reflections and recollections. Through this wide-ranging integration of theory and story, Redekop manages to build a cohesive framework for understanding deep-rooted conflict and to introduce some

significant new ideas to the conflict resolution community and other interested readers.

The Oka case study is also very useful because it does more than illustrate the points Redekop is trying to make; the case study also provides the vehicle for an honest and transparent demonstration of the process of analyzing a relevant case. This section of the book is particularly useful within the academic setting as an excellent example of one way to research and interpret a specific deep-rooted conflict situation.

However, Redekop's discussion of various strands of theory does leave this reader with a few concerns and unanswered questions. Particularly troubling is the reliance on an approach to human needs which has proven controversial within the conflict resolution field. The work of the Human Needs theorists has been challenged for what may appear as arbitrary choices of specific human traits characterized as "basic needs". Some analysts also decry the assumption that these basic needs will predetermine, or at the very least strongly influence, human responses. Such an assumption limits the range of choice available to human actors and appears to predetermine the outbreak of conflict under specific conditions. Redekop makes a good case for the usefulness of this approach but his case could be strengthened if he could also respond directly to significant critiques of the Human Needs approach.

This shortcoming is all the more problematic because of the centrality of this approach to Redekop's whole theoretical edifice. Questions raised about the general categorization of human needs can also apply to Redekop's definition of specific basic identity needs. Particularly troublesome here is Redekop's analysis of ethno-national identity which does not adequately acknowledge and respond to the distinctions between ethnic and national identities noted by many students of ethnicity (including several of the writers used by Redekop to reinforce his own definition of ethno-nationalism). This reviewer suggests that Redekop's integration of ethnic identities and national identities under the one label of ethno-nationalism results in an unnecessarily vague description of identity as a whole and is, therefore, not very helpful in attempting to understand the complex roles of ethnic and national identities in deep-rooted conflict.

Despite these concerns, I highly recommend this book for an academic audience and for any serious reader seeking a deeper understanding of deep-rooted conflicts. Academic audiences will be tantalized by a refreshing new perspective on the resolution of such conflicts and by the introduction of some provocative new voices into the field. Non-academic readers may find the theory a bit heavy but

can gain fresh insights from the stories and reflections which build upon the theory.

For the Anabaptist reader, Redekop's personal voice provides an additional benefit because of the author's frequent reflections on the interaction of identity and conflict within his own Canadian Prairie Mennonite upbringing. His theological reflection also has some significant implications for Mennonite and Anabaptist peace theology. While not attempting to speak directly for or to Mennonites, Redekop demonstrates how his Mennonite identity has shaped his own journey from structures of violence to structures of blessing.

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Melanie Springer Mock, *Writing Peace: The Unheard Voices of Great War Mennonite Objectors*. Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History, Volume 40. Telford, PA: Cascadia Publishing House, 2003. Pp. 346. Paper, \$23.95 US, \$35.95 Can.

World War I was a holy cause for many Americans. At the time, as Melanie Springer Mock observed, the "Great War" was infused with several noble ideals. It was not only the war to end war, but also the war to make the world safe for democracy. Within the cultural and political aspirations of achieving peace and safety through warfare, both society and government considered criticism and rejection of that formula as unpatriotic, even subversive. Building on previous Mennonite historical examinations of the period by Gerlof Homan and James Juhnke in particular, Mock continues the conversation of American Mennonite experiences during the Great War.

Mock combines historical and literary analyses of four diaries, written by representative Mennonite objectors. These four diarists, Gustav Gaeddert, Ura Hostetler, John Neufeld and Jacob C. Meyer, represent the (Old) Mennonite Church, the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Amish Mennonite church. Mock is aware that the examination of such a select group of diarists "will not turn historiography on its head" (21). However, she makes the case that the inclusion of Mennonite diarists in the literature of the Great War serves as a witness to those who navigated the tensions between religious beliefs and government demands. She divides her book into two parts, the first establishing the historical and literary context of the diaries, and the second, consisting of the diaries themselves,

edited by Mock. Mock's analytical weight situates the diaries firmly in the literary context, where they are a literary genre.

Touring Europe in spring 2001, Mock observed how the carnage and violence of the battlefields of a century ago gave way to nature's rehabilitation, turning battlefield gray into "verdant green" (15). This process informed her project, as, "the now-peaceful valleys of northern France do little to remind us not only what the great costs of violence were in 1914-18, but also what the costs of violence might be for us today" (15). She also treats the rationale behind societal opposition to the position of Mennonite objectors as apparent parasitical and lazy abuses of religious freedom (35).

Those arguments, as Mock demonstrates, were often cast in gendered and sexualized language glorifying a vision of wartime masculinity (35-42). Although hers is a study of male experience, it is less a study of constructing masculinities than it is a study of marginalization (104, 110). Mock traces some Mennonite literary tropes through the diaries, in particular those of work, martyrdom and community. Additionally, themes of alienation, isolation and loss locate the diaries as a "counter-notion" to the Great War canon. Mock has written a fine book, on a timely matter, that blends the large context of World War I with the marginal experiences of four individuals. In that context, Mennonite objectors not only absorbed some of the military culture, when military jargon was used (178), for example, but also "exploded the familiar Great War myths" (240) when, on occasion, a highly educated and articulate Mennonite refuted the common belief that pacifists were intellectually weak.

Mock's engaging prose, combined with sensitivity to detail and context, makes for an effective presentation supporting her contention that diaries reveal, in the daily chaotic details of life, a search for order. In addition, through these four men, she rightly illustrates that Mennonite pacifism during the Great War was no monolith. Remaining focused on the diaries, Mock insightfully deals with an intersection where religion, politics and society collide.

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