

for access to some consumer goods. The relationship between these two groups became so close that, when the shortage of farm land led Old Colony Mennonites to emigrate to Mexico in the 1920s, the Jewish population also departed from Winkler (23, 61-62).

Werner attributes the post-war economic success of Winkler to the creation of non-agricultural industries within the town, particularly a sewing factory and a recreational vehicle manufacturer (Triple E). He excerpts Heather Robertson's condemnation of the "hucksterism" of Winkler's annual sidewalk sale, known as Old Time Value Days. He himself is less critical of employer-employee relationships in Winkler businesses. The tensions between school and business, for example, are left unexplored – specifically the connection between exploitation of a pool of uneducated (though skilled) labour and comparatively low high school graduation rates. This despite noting that "it was always a challenge" to see rural students graduate from Garden Valley Collegiate (181). More effective is his brief explanation of the link between the absence of labour unions and the religious beliefs of Mennonite business owners and workers alike in Winkler.

The production qualities of this book are excellent. Interesting sidebars – ranging from quotations, letters to the editor, and newspaper articles, to poems – are interspersed with the text. Numerous maps, photographs, and statistical tables are included, all with sources provided (too often a rarity in local histories). Two appendices of early Winkler families and of civic officials are included, as well as a bibliography, copious endnotes, and an index.

Werner, and the Winkler Heritage Society, are to be congratulated on producing such an informative, well researched, and well written history.

Janis Thiessen
Westgate Mennonite Collegiate

Reviews of Religious Studies and Social Science

Ray Gingerich and Ted Grimsrud, eds., *Transforming the Powers: Peace, Justice and the Domination System*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2006. \$20.00 (US).

Walter Wink is well known for his work on "the Powers," which can be summed up in three statements: the Powers are good, the Powers

are fallen, the Powers must be redeemed. Wink himself continues to develop his work (which draws on insights developed by Hendrikus Berkhof, G.B. Caird, William Stringfellow, John Howard Yoder, and so on), and others are also engaged in exploring and extending that work in various directions. *Transforming the Powers: Peace, Justice and the Domination System* comes out of a 2001 conference at Eastern Mennonite University, and includes essays, mostly by Mennonite scholars, which seek to offer tribute to Wink and to contribute to the task of testing and applying his insights in ever-broader spheres of life.

Transforming the Powers is organized in three parts, including several contributions by Wink. Part 1, "Worldviews and the Powers," focuses largely on discussions of Wink's notion of worldviews (fundamental presuppositions about reality) in relation to the social sciences. In the second part, "Understanding the Powers," the focus shifts to an attempt to gain clarity regarding the relationship of the Powers to the difficult question of the existence and influence of evil in the world, and the distorting effects of fallen Powers in areas such as epistemology, economics and politics. Part 3, "Engaging the Powers," includes essays that address questions of transformation, justice, nonresistance, and peacemaking.

One of the interesting contributions made by this particular collection of essays is that it nicely brings to view the fact that Wink's work can be taken in several different directions, both represented within the larger framework of Anabaptist thought. That is, Wink's work can be taken up and extended further into the world of social science, as shown clearly by Daniel Liechty's essay. Liechty argues strongly that it is possible to arrive at a "social-scientific understanding of the biblical-theological category of the Principalities and Powers," that "Wink definitely designates as Principalities and Powers the same unseen forces toward which a social scientist would point." In fact, argues Liechty, "Many paragraphs Wink has written on what he calls the World Domination System could have flowed from the pen of a phenomenological sociologist without any significant alterations."

This kind of an attempt to uncover common ground between biblical/theological notions and social-scientific view of the same phenomenon is quite different from the direction that Wink's work is taken by scholars such as Willard Swartley. Instead of seeking the kind of common ground in which Liechty is interested, Swartley believes Wink is misleading in viewing the Powers "primarily in the spirit-personality manifestations of structures and institutions." Swartley wants to rehabilitate an understanding of biblical teaching that pays closer attention to specific spiritual beings that act in this world. He is concerned that we are so steeped in the scientific worldview that we are prone to reduce all reality to the empirical. While he is not

explicit in saying so, Swartley would undoubtedly see Liechty's essay as reductionist in exactly this way. In fact, Swartley insists that "even God-talk points only to function of belief, not to an actual being," which also holds true for talk of fallen Powers and Principalities.

The divergent responses to Wink's work serve minimally to show the richness of his work, and the possibilities that lie within these insights. Especially interesting to me are the essays which, in seeking to extend Wink's biblical/theological insights even further, take seriously spiritual realities, the life of the church, the life of Jesus and the power of the Spirit, and in doing so, engage the world within which these realities are manifested.

Paul Doerksen
Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute

Helmut Isaak, *Menno Simons and the New Jerusalem*. Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2006. Pp. 158. Paperback. \$20.00 Cdn., \$19.00 U.S.

This new book is important in that it seeks to alter the traditional portrait of Menno Simons. Walter Klaassen writes in the Preface: "Helmut Isaak has moved the work of recovering Menno Simons ahead, in considerable measure. Anyone working on Menno from now on will need to engage this work."

The first chapter of the book, "The Social and Religious Context for the Emergence of Anabaptism in the Netherlands," is in my view the best chapter in the book, describing the society in which Menno lived and worked. Most previous biographies of Menno have not dealt in detail with the religious, social and economic world into which Menno was born. The subsequent three chapters trace Menno's spiritual and theological development, dealing with: Menno and Münster: a Vision of the New Jerusalem; the Heavenly Jerusalem has Descended Upon this Earth; and the Eschatological Anticipation of the New Jerusalem. The concluding chapter summarizes Isaak's findings. Of the 158 pages, there are forty-two pages of notes and bibliography.

Mennonites who thought they knew their Menno Simons well, will be surprised to find that there are aspects to their spiritual leader they did not know before. Having read and worked from *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons* (translated by Leonard Verduin and edited by J. C. Wenger, published in 1956), I found, after reading this new book, that my portrait of Menno did not quite fit the one painted by Helmut Isaak. Isaak's close reading of Menno's earlier and then his

revised later works lead him to a more nuanced portrait of Menno and a fresh understanding of his theology. This new portrait is different from the one readers of the *Complete Writings* and of Bender's biography have been familiar with. The new image brings Menno closer to the fanatics of Münster, the radical Anabaptists from which he later sought to separate himself. Historiographically, this book puts Isaak into the so-called "polygenesis" camp of historians.

The *Complete Writings*, according to Isaak, do not always convey the exact meaning of Menno's words. For example, the English translation uses "polygamy" to translate the Dutch "veelheyt der wijven" (plurality of wives?), but according to Isaak, Menno "is very reluctant to use this term in regard to Münster" (p. 129, note 119). Or, Verduin's translation of "dat uytwendige Rijck Christi op Aerden" with "the visible kingdom of Christ" is, according to Isaak, "not correct." Isaak explains: "The difference between 'external' and 'visible' is very basic for the understanding of Menno's concept of the kingdom of God. Münster was only external because it was motivated by selfish ambition, greed and lust. The truly spiritual Kingdom of Christ becomes visible reality through repentance, regeneration and new life" (p. 131, note 154).

While Isaak deals primarily with Menno's original writings and does not rely much on the secondary literature, he does include secondary works in his bibliography, and notes which agree with his view of Menno and excludes those which don't. For example, Menno's peace position might have received more attention in this book. Scholars, including Abraham Friesen, have shown that Menno was influenced especially by Erasmus in this regard. There is, however, no reference to Friesen's work, nor to C. Arnold Snyder's *Anabaptist History and Theology* which shows Menno as an opponent of Münster from the beginning. Egil Grisli's insightful four articles in the *Journal of Mennonite Studies* (5/1987, 8/1990, 9/1991, 10/1992) on Menno's views of the Incarnation, "good works," the Lords Supper, and the Apostle Paul, are not referred to nor included in the book's bibliography. Had the above works been taken into account, Menno Simons would have retained more aspects of his traditional image. As it is, in Isaak's study Menno appears as a sympathizer of the Münsterites, whom he continued to call his "dear brothers and sisters." Only in his later works did he fight them because it was dangerous for Menno and his followers to be identified with them.

It is at this point that the book becomes contradictory in my view. On the one hand, Menno is seen as a near-Münsterite and on the other as a leader who seeks to follow Scriptures in matters of a pure church, congregational discipline, and the eventual victory of the Kingdom of God. The more traditional portrait of Menno as one who grieved over those of his followers who were led astray by the Münsterites, and then

wrote against the grave errors of his former followers, seems more convincing to me than the contradicting image which emerges in this book.

Isaak's analysis of Menno's view of governments, while not all that novel, is an important part of this book's theme, namely the Kingdom of God (the New Jerusalem) in Menno's thinking. It is known that Menno did not follow the "Schleitheim Confession" (1527) of the Swiss in regard to Christians' relationship to the state. He believed, at least at first, that the Kingdom of God would transform society and rulers would play an important part in this transformation. In many of his writings he appealed to rulers and governments to repent and then govern as "Christians." In the end, however, Menno was disappointed that rulers did not follow his advice, but he continued to believe in the possibility of the existence of pious Christian rulers.

At the end of the book (p. 107) it comes as a bit of a surprise when Isaak suggests that Mennonites who established states within the state in 19th-century Russia and in 20th-century Latin American countries, may have realized, at least in part, Menno's vision of a "Mennonite government." I doubt that Menno had such states as developed in Russia and Latin America in mind. Were/are these "states" really Christian? About fantasies to create a "Mennostaat" in the 1930s, see James Urry's article in *Journal of Mennonite Studies*, Vol. 14, 1996. So Mennonites and other believers will no doubt have to wait with Menno Simons for a real "New Jerusalem" in the future!

Harry Loewen
Kelowna, British Columbia

Karl Koop, editor and introduction, *Confessions of Faith in the Anabaptist Tradition 1527-1660*. Classics of the Radical Reformation 11. Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press (co-published with Herald Press), 2006. Pp. 366. Paperback, \$36.50 Cdn, \$33.00 U.S.

In recent years we are learning that the earlier assumption was untrue that sixteenth-century Anabaptists (and Mennonites of the next generations) were non-creedal and more interested in ethics than in theology. Relatively recent works that counter this stereotype include Howard John Loewen, *One Lord, One Church, One Hope, and One God*, J. Denny Weaver, *Keeping Salvation Ethical*, Thomas Finger, *A Contemporary Anabaptist Theology*, Gerald Biesecker-Mast, *Separation and the Sword in Anabaptist Persuasion*, and Karl Koop,

Anabaptist-Mennonite Confessions of Faith. *Confessions* now joins this last book as a companion volume, presenting the primary source material on which Koop's first book was based.

Confessions is a welcome addition to our growing resources for Anabaptist theology in English translation. The volume presents fourteen Anabaptist and Mennonite confessions of faith from four Anabaptist streams. The time period of these confessions, 1527 to 1660, bridges the era from the emergence of early Anabaptism to the end of the first phase of Anabaptist and Mennonite doctrinal development. Factors that brought an end to the confessional age of Dutch Mennonites in the 1660s include early enlightenment influences, the rise of early pietism, and distaste for the divisions among Mennonites brought about by strict confessionalism (p. 2).

Selections for this volume from the Swiss/South German Anabaptist tradition include the Swiss Congregational Order, the Schleithem Brotherly Union, Jörg Maler's Confession and the Swiss Brethren Confession of Hesse. From North German/Dutch Anabaptism are the Kempen Confession, the Wismar Articles and the Concept of Cologne. Three documents come from the Waterlander stream of Anabaptism – the Waterlander Confession, the Short Confession and the Thirteen Articles. The final section has four confessions from the Frisian, Flemish and High German Anabaptist tradition, namely the Thirty-three Articles, the Jan Cents Confession, the Dordrecht Confession, and the continuation of this stream in a Prussian Confession.

The book's introduction provides an overview of scholarship on Anabaptist confessions, along with brief discussions of the function, authority, and theological orientation of confessions. Brief comments introduce each confession as well.

Reading these confessions side by side one after the other, impresses one as much with the variety of expression they contain as by any elements of a unifying theological tradition. Putting these confessions in close proximity provides ample discussion fodder for both sides in the arguments about whether early Anabaptist and Mennonite theology is primarily orthodox Christianity with a few additions or rather one or more new streams posing a contrast to inherited, standard orthodoxy.

The introductions to the book and to the various individual confessions hint at an issue that needs further analysis. During the time frame of this book, Mennonites produced a great many confessions, perhaps more than any other Reformation group. These confessions frequently provoked divisions. But they were written with other goals in mind – discovering the identity of a group or providing a basis for unity among groups in conflict. What characteristics of Anabaptists and Mennonites produced the need for this number of confessions, and

what accounts for the two, apparently conflicting results of attaining unity and provoking divisions? What the introduction does not explain is that whether a confession provokes division or creates unity depends less on the character of the confession than on how it is used. To define identity by describing what a group believes or to develop a confession to discover what groups can agree on for unity purposes are primarily descriptive tasks. However, once the descriptive task is finished, an inevitable shift occurs. The moment it is declared, "This we believe," the active impulse of the confession shifts from description to prescription and the confession begins to function as a norm that divides those inside from those outside the group. In other words, the one confession plays two roles, first as a uniting document and then as a potentially dividing document. This fine collection of documents invites extended historical analysis of the history that produced these confessions in light of the contrasting functions of description and prescription, or of uniting and dividing.

A book designed for serious study needs an index. This book is no exception. A user misses being able quickly to locate theological themes throughout the confessions or to track the authorities quoted in the introductions.

J. Denny Weaver
Bluffton University

Donald Kraybill and James P. Hurd, *Horse-and-Buggy Mennonites – hoofbeats of humility in a postmodern world*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006. Hard cover, \$40.00 US; Paperback, \$19.95 US.

Most people identify horse and buggy people as Amish. In Manitoba this summer, when a group of Old Order Mennonites began a settlement, the press identified them as Amish, because they assumed this was the identification that would communicate. In this volume, Kraybill and Hurd discuss the origin, faith, and history of Old Order Mennonites, and as such, provide a much-needed corrective to popular misunderstandings about both Old Order Mennonites and Amish.

Old Order Mennonites in the United States began in 1893, within the Lancaster Mennonite Conference. The conference had been experiencing tensions over issues of modernization for some time. These tensions came to a head in the early 1890s. The issue was not dress or use of technology, as one might have assumed since these are often the most visible signs of the Old Orders, but rather religious innovation

and forms of worship.(11) As the division developed, other issues of modernity and relationship to the world were included, and gradually the two groups moved further and further apart.

The long list of issues that divided the two groups primarily arose out of two major influences upon Mennonites. One was evangelicalism, and the innovations it promoted, like revival crusades, Sunday Schools, use of the English language in worship, evening church services, new hymnody, foreign missions, and higher education. All of these things seemed to be leading to pride, individualism, and “worldliness.” The other influence was the rapid increase in technology after the American civil war. New innovations like telephones and automobiles in the early twentieth century created new issues of how to relate to the “world.” On the issue of automobiles, the conviction not to use automobiles only developed gradually, with numerous members initially owning cars. The Old Orders eventually felt that owning a car was an expression of pride and individualism, and disruptive to community.

The Groffdale Old Order Mennonite church initially consisted of about 500 members, all living in Lancaster county, Pennsylvania. Over the years the church has multiplied into many districts, each centred around a meetinghouse. (The term “Church” is used for the people gathered, not the building.) Because of the high cost of land in Pennsylvania, the Old Order Mennonites have moved into nine states, and number about 8,000 baptized members.(2) The total number of people in their communities, including children, is about 18,000. They are scattered from New York in the east to Iowa in the west, and from Missouri and Kentucky in the south to Michigan in the north. They have been remarkably successful in passing on their faith from one generation to the next.

Groffdale Old Order Mennonites are organized in about 49 church districts. They meet in meetinghouses, and not in homes as do the Amish. Ministers from the 49 districts meet twice a year to discuss issues related to the *Ordnung* (principles and rules about life and faith), and thereby maintain a remarkable unity and similarity in all the church districts. They work together to make changes gradually, rationally, and in ways that will maintain community. They are in fellowship with Old Order Mennonites in Ontario and Virginia, although neither of those groups is formally part of their conference.

There are multiple names for this group of Old Order Mennonites. They are also called horse-and-buggy Mennonites, Groffdale Conference Mennonites, because their founding bishop, Joseph O. Wenger, was a preacher at the Groffdale churchhouse in Pennsylvania, Wenger Mennonites, because of their first bishop, and team Mennonites, because they use the horse and buggy team.

None of the descendents of the Groffdale Old Order Mennonites have settled in Canada. The Old Order Mennonites in Ontario began locally a few years earlier, in 1889, when Mennonites near Waterloo divided between progressives and conservatives. Their story is told very well in a recent publication by Donald Martin, *Old Order Mennonites in Ontario: Gelassenheit, Discipleship, Brotherhood*. (Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2003).

After a very fine historical introduction to the Groffdale Old Orders Mennonites, Kraybill and Hurd discuss their faith and life under eight different topics. The topics range from “The Fabric of Faith and Culture” to “The Rhythm of Sacred Ritual” to “Pilgrims in a Postmodern World.” The authors sensitively help readers see the Older Orders’ profound Christian faith, their deep commitment to follow faithfully the teachings of the Bible, their conviction that resources for renewal and change can be found within their own heritage, and their humble commitment to Christian discipleship.

The authors end their book with a very appropriate summary statement, “They [the Old Order Mennonites] believe that true progress and deep satisfaction emerge when people yield to the collective wisdom of a redemptive community and that those who surrender to the precepts of providence, embedded in communal wisdom, will receive the blessings of contentment and fulfillment.”(266)

John J. Friesen
Canadian Mennonite University