

Book Reviews

Harvey L. Dyck, editor, *The Pacifist Impulse in Historical Perspective* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996). Cloth, 444 pp. \$70.00

Harvey Dyck is to be congratulated for making available 22 of the papers presented at an international conference on "The Pacifist Impulse in Historical Perspective" convened at the University of Toronto in May of 1991, a date coinciding with the release of Peter Brock's comprehensive three-volume history of pacifism to 1914 (University of Toronto Press). Given the intellectual stature, reputation and longevity of Peter Brock, one is hard pressed to imagine a more aptly dedicated Festschrift on this subject; the list of contributors constitutes a veritable "who's who" in peace studies.

Following the editor's eloquent tribute to the prolonged and synergistic role played by Peter Brock in the scholarly discipline of peace history, the essays are subsumed under four broad categories: "Approaches to Peace History," "Christian Traditions of Pacifism and non-Resistance," "Gandhi and the Indian Tradition of Non-Violence," and "Pacifism and Peace movements in the Modern World, 1890-1955." A precis provided at the beginning of each section attempts, in an unforced and generally helpful manner, to fit the widely divergent essays and approaches within each given subdivision into a coherent, overarching framework.

While each of the essays was in its own way highly stimulating and often

enlightening, I did have my favorites. Of the three contributions subsumed under "Approaches to Peace History," the most illuminating for this reviewer was Martin Ceadel's "Ten Distinctions for Peace Historians." Ceadel, a lecturer in politics at Oxford University, demonstrates that the terms and concepts at the heart of the peace-studies lexicon are imbued with meanings contingent upon time, place, circumstance and ideology, and are therefore understood in such varied and at times contradictory ways as to make their misuse by historians an inevitability unless extreme caution is exercised. And Charles Chatfield, in "Thinking About Peace in History," wisely observes that while analytical distinctions are an important tool of academic analysis, the resulting cognitive domains can sometimes reify to the point where they are incapable of either noticing or accommodating the dynamic and complicated social contingencies and dilemmas underlying the theory and practice of peace peculiar to specific peoples in particular times.

The eight chapters comprising the second section of the book, "Christian Traditions of Pacifism and Non-Resistance," focus for the most part on Quaker, Mennonite and Brethren understanding and application of peace teaching found in the New Testament. Here, it was John Howard Yoder's study, "War as a Moral Problem in the Early Church: The Historian's Hermeneutical Assumptions," that proved to be highly thought provoking and, at times, mildly disturbing, for this reader. Yoder points out that since the literary base upon which the myriad conflicting views on the subject are constructed is so slim, it follows that more attention should be paid to the hermeneutical assumptions undergirding these views. He alerts readers to the dangerous tendency to draw conclusive generalizations on the peace views of early Christians, about whom we have only fragmentary and highly selective written material. This practice, readily observable, alas! in much Mennonite in-house writing on the subject, including my own, illustrates the ease with which, in Yoder's words, we "hide some historians' value biases under the cover of what pretends to be simple historical description." (94)

The four chapters comprising the book's third division, "Gandhi and the Indian Peace Tradition," remind the reader not only of Gandhi's significant impact on Western pacifism and Indian non-violence, but of other powerful streams, Buddhist, Hindu and Humanist, contributing significantly to a larger pool of human peace thought and action. Under the rubric "Pacifism and Peace Movements in the Modern World, 1890-1955," the final seven chapters of the book offer vignettes into personalities and developments intersecting with peace movements in Europe, North America and Russia. In addition to an index, the book also contains a chronologically arranged bibliography of "Books and Articles on Peace History by Peter Brock."

As one would expect, each of the chapters is well documented, pointing to sources and ideas beyond the scope of the essay itself. Contributors have maintained a consistently satisfactory standard of lucidity, cogency and clarity, thus making this book a notable exception to the intellectual and

stylistic unevenness often characterizing Festschriften. The essays are neither polemical nor controversial. But they are an intellectual feast guaranteed to deepen the reader's appreciation for the complexity of coming to grips with that most perennially elusive of human dreams through the millennia - peace.

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Stephen Scott, *Introduction to Old Order and Conservative Mennonite Groups* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 1996). 252 pp. Paperback. \$8.95 U.S.

For too long scholars paid little attention to the rather uneven and confusing religious terrain of old order and conservative Mennonite communities in North America, the remainders of over a century of Mennonite denomination building and consolidation. Recently Steven Nolt reminded us that these neglected Mennonite groups were poised to eclipse the Mennonite "mainstream" due to the non-stop old order baby boom. Now Stephen Scott has provided us with a long overdue encyclopedic treatment of one family of old orders and conservatives: those left behind by the "old" Mennonite Church during two centuries of conflict and transformation. These "old" Mennonite splinter groups are located mainly in the eastern and midwestern United States and in Ontario.

Scott has already written numerous books on the habits and practices of old order groups, most of them published by *Good Books*, and most of them designed to interpret these communities for visitors, not academics. This new book, however, will be appealing to both tourists and scholars. While it is very readable, attractively arranged, and loaded with photographs, it is also carefully written, well-documented and quite informative. Moreover, the book includes historical and sociological data about many conservative splinter groups which are simply not yet available anywhere else. I am especially impressed that Scott has included information on the numerous conservative congregations that are unaffiliated with any larger fellowship and whose histories and practices are normally forgotten in any systematic accounting of Mennonite life.

While giving attention to the complicated details associated with the multitude of these distinctive Mennonite groups, the author has not neglected the larger picture. Quite compellingly, he tells the story of (old) Mennonite modernization and acculturation and of old order and conservative resistance

to these trends. While this narrative often tends to frame historical changes in (old) Mennonite Church polity rather simplistically as a struggle between conservative keepers of tradition and liberal advocates of change, it does capture quite effectively and sympathetically the old order and conservative views of changes in the Mennonite Church. In this sense, the book provides the beginnings of an alternative North American Mennonite historical narrative, one that both supplements and demonstrates the limits of such mainstream histories as *The Mennonite Experience* in America series.

Following a cursory introduction to Mennonites in general, the book is divided into two sections; one deals with the old order groups that broke away from old Mennonite conferences in the late nineteenth century and the other focuses on the conservative movements away from Mennonite Church conferences (including the Conservative Mennonite Conference) in the mid to late twentieth century. The book provides detailed descriptions of the conflicts that led to schisms and includes plenty of charts and tables to help the reader keep track of the churches involved and issues at stake.

The most daunting task taken up by Scott is categorizing and defining the post World War II conservative Mennonite movements. The origins, motivations, and identities of these groups vary a great deal and to my knowledge no one has ever sought to provide an accurate road map of these movements. Scott manages to consolidate the conservatives into five different categories: the ultra-conservatives, the intermediate conservatives, the moderate conservatives, the fundamental conservatives, and the theological conservatives. While these five categories provide a useful heuristic device, they don't adequately capture or explain the more fundamental divide between the first three groups who emphasize cultural uniformity on the one hand and the remaining two groups who are mainly concerned with doctrinal orthodoxy on the other hand. This divide constitutes two dramatically different understandings of the label "conservative." What possible definitional connection there remains (other than common identification with the word "conservative") between contemporary Conservative Mennonite Conference congregations and Conservative Mennonite Fellowship congregations remains unclear. In fact, I can imagine that some congregations in the conservative districts of the Mennonite Church's Lancaster Conference (say Juniata or Martindale) are closer in cultural and spiritual identity to ultra to moderate conservative groups than are many of the more culturally liberal congregations in the Conservative Conference. Of course, almost any categorization scheme will be unable to account for the many exceptions and vagaries arising from "uneven development" in many of the cultural and religious trends that led congregations and fellowships to go their own way. Yet future scholarship will need to give close attention to the variety of different rhetorical functions of the word "conservative" in establishing movements that challenged mainline Mennonitism.

Scott has captured quite correctly the spirit and sentiment of the old order and conservative Mennonite movements. In his conclusion to the section on

conservative Mennonites, Scott remarks: "Conservative Mennonites tend to be very thorough people. Many of the congregations and groups meticulously and articulately address every conceivable area of doctrine and practice in their effort to follow the full counsel of God. Their aim is complete Christian consistency (199)." My own experience of growing up in a Conservative Mennonite Fellowship church confirms this statement's accuracy. There is among ultra to moderate conservatives a rather profound commitment to "getting it right," a commitment that leads conservatives to investigate the meaning of Christian obedience in every single aspect of life. This commitment also leads to much disagreement and conflict, of course, and thus to much schism, separation, and reorganization. Ironically, conservatives' concern for being in "right fellowship" has led them toward a congregationalism that exceeds that of many (old) Mennonite conferences. This area of church and fellowship organization among conservatives is not given much attention in Scott's book, but will hopefully be taken up by other scholars more directly. In fact, one important strength of this book lies in such previously uncharted waters of research to which it shows the way.

Finally, this book reminds us that moves toward organizational unity are always based on certain exclusions and that there is always a remainder to any consensus. Old order and conservative Mennonite groups constitute a clearly visible "outside" that haunts (and threatens to eclipse) all expressions of "mainline" Mennonite normativity. In studying them, Mennonite scholars will not only learn more about the contested character of North American Mennonite identity, but they will also become aware of the particularity and historicity of any narrative that seeks to speak for Mennonites in general.

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Pamela E. Klassen, *Going by the Moon and the Stars: Stories of Two Russian Mennonite Women* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1994) 151pp.

During the various sessions at the "Quiet in the Land" conference (Millersville, 1995), women, besides reading academic papers, told stories, nursed babies, spoke of personal pain, presented women's lives in creative forms, read poetry. Topics included history of women's dress and head covering, women's creativity, women's roles in the church, women's journals. There was plenty of interacting, casual or intense, over food, but no formal banquet was programmed

in. The arts were generously included and so were presentations by “outsiders,” women from other ethnic groups. Do women have a distinct way of doing history?

The subtitle of Pamela Klassen’s *Going by the Moon and the Stars*, promises “Stories of Two Russian Mennonite Women.” That promise is kept, but the book does more than fill in the gaps left by the untold stories of women in the official annals of Mennonite history. The author writes: “This book is not a historical assessment of these women’s lives, but rather an inquiry into memory—an intimate reflection on what Agatha and Katja remember about their lives, and how these memories continue to shape them.”

Klassen’s “inquiry” and “intimate reflection” are governed by the fact that for this project (a master’s thesis) the process was as important as the stories obtained. Discussion of process and methodology is, therefore, given space alongside the stories. The book is, in part, biography, in which not just the two Mennonite women, but also the analyst/biographer, are subjects. In this process the (young) biographer collaborates with her (older) subjects and the spin-off is something like friendship. As the analyst equipped with feminist and ethnographic methodologies, author Pamela Klassen admits to being in a position of power in the process and she makes clear that responsibility for the final interpretations is hers. She also admits to fear of barging in and hurting her subjects, two women made vulnerable by going public with their lives. “Turning the stories of a woman’s life into text can be a profoundly disturbing act.”

Agatha Janzen and Katja Enns (not their real names) belong to that group of women who lived in the southern Ukraine during World War II, saw the detainment, exile or death of their men, fled with the retreating German army through Poland, lived as refugees in Germany and emigrated eventually to Canada. Presently Agatha and Katja are members of the same church in the Waterloo/Kitchener area. The chapters where Klassen allows them to tell, in their own voices, their stories of war and escape will no doubt be remembered longest by many readers. But the storytelling, the author cautions, has already been filtered through subsequent experiences, and that includes the experience of entry into Canada where their stories were not always willingly heard.

Klassen identifies two main plots in the stories of these women: the war plot and the marriage plot. In the case of both women, these plots do not fit the conventional plot of the traditional Mennonite woman and when they arrived in the Mennonite church community in Canada, their problematic stories prevented their easy reception into that community.

In the terror and danger of war, the women survived even without men. But such independence, endurance and courage pose a problem in an “order where men reigned” and where a woman’s “power for survival would be ignored or sanitized and attributed only to God.”

Both Agatha’s and Katja’s marriage plot, as in the case of many women of that migration, included irregularities that disturbed the Mennonite community.

This resulted in further pain of rejection for the women before they could finally be integrated into the church where both subsequently became active.

Besides raising important questions about the treatment of immigrant women like Agatha and Katja in the Canadian Mennonite community, Klassen also raises questions about the women's ambivalence to the Nazis whom they, on the one hand, consider saviours from a cruel regime, but, on the other, abhor for their genocide. "Asking the difficult questions in trying to understand women's stories evokes grief and pain," Klassen observes, both for the subjects and the analyst; nevertheless she insists that, "As long as Mennonites do not explore their connection with Nazism, the stories of both men and women who suffered in the war while affiliated with the wrong side will be silenced."

She admits that this dimension of her subjects' stories makes it "more difficult to view Katja and Agatha as either saints or victims," and that their survival, a combination of strength, luck, and, according to them, God's help, should be respected, but not revered."

Ultimately, Klassen, a student of religion, is interested in how the experience of each woman has shaped her present religious life. She compares the women's descriptions of their early lives at a time when formal religious education and church life had ceased to exist in the Mennonite colonies. While both women remember their mothers as faithful, godly women, Agatha sees herself as being like her mother, while Katja differentiates herself from hers. The author also compares their experience of God in times of hardship and danger, and their present religious life. Both are active in the church, but where Agatha has felt called to preach, Katja believes the preacher's role is not for women.

Klassen makes this interesting observation: "The way they tell their stories (and the way others listen) affects how they feel connected with or differentiated from themselves, God, other Mennonites, and the church." Clearly, if a woman's story is the greatest gift she can offer, listening to her story must be the reciprocal gift.

Going By The Moon And The Stars will be a valuable resource, both for the two personal stories it offers the reader and for its contribution to Mennonite women's scholarship.

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P. Travis Kroeker, *Christian Ethics and Political Economy in North America: A Critical Analysis* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill/Queen's University Press, 1995).

This important book provides a critique of the liberal political economy and Christian attempts to address the problem; it also offers an alternative political economy based on Augustinian realism. Kroeker begins this study by identifying a spiritual crisis in North America's political economy. At its core is liberal thought and, particularly the notion of a productivist paradigm that insists on progressive expansionism. This creates an 'iron cage' in which humans are isolated from each other, from community, and from nature. In liberalism "our choices are ever more narrowly constricted within short-term utility calculations and collective slavery to material processes...." (13)

Kroeker sets out to analyze the thinking of influential Christian social ethicists and show that these ethicists do not rise above some faulty theological assumptions. Both American and Canadian representatives of the social gospel, Walter Rauschenbusch and James Woodsworth respectively, are described and both are credited for attempting to "make theology relevant to the social order by elaborating a public ethic." (41,42) While the social gospel recently has been seen by scholars—Ramsey Cook, Allan Mills, David Marshall—as the ironic harbinger of secularization, Kroeker concentrates on the religious claims of the social gospel. In the process Kroeker offers a withering critique of the social gospel. Its problem is that it assumes that God is becoming present in western civilization and that democratisation, technological growth, and the modern sciences, will ensure the realization of human good. So, while the social gospel takes exception to parts of liberal society, in the end it cannot begin to address the spiritual crisis of the denial of transcendence and the estrangement from nature. (44)

Reinhold Niebuhr's Christian realism and the work of the Fellowship for a Christian Social Order [FCSO] are also analyzed. Kroeker defends Niebuhr against charges of being ideologically driven, describing him instead as someone who sought to work out his theology in the rapidly changing political economy of the 1930s and 1940s. In essence, Niebuhr called for a Christian realism based on a "frank dualism in morals" seen in the pursuit by "self-transcendent individuals and the more limited moral capacities and resources of collective action." (53) The FCSO, on the other hand, leaned more toward Marxist social analysis to develop policy proposals. The FCSO saw humans as products of their relationships to others in society and in nature. However, when the FCSO sought to provide a way out of the capitalist morass, it fell into the "social gospel pitfall," a utilitarianism in which people come to rely on socialist planning for abundance. (86) In Kroeker's estimation, both of these visions of society fail to account for an appropriate theology of creation. Instead, they fall into a trap that narrows the purpose of being human and fails to see the divine purposes of creation.

Kroeker is also critical of the Catholic bishops approach to the problem. His careful analysis of several statements on the economy, including that of the Canadian bishops in 1983, concludes that these initiatives are too narrowly anthropocentric. While the Catholic positions may address issues such as rights of labour, redistribution, democratisation, they fail to get at the underlying cause of the crisis, the progressivist assumptions of the modern liberal society. Again, in Kroeker's view, an adequate creation theology is left unexplored.

In the final chapter, "Toward a Moral Theology of Creation," Kroeker outlines a theocentric utilitarian vision of life. He returns to classic Augustinian realism to chart the path that will see "public life... oriented toward the common good of the created order". (122) Augustinian realism "seeks the establishment of the true order of love by referring all thought, action, and desire to God..." (138) There exists a divine order to things, and humans and nature can only function properly when this is understood and when things are used, not in service of progressive expansionism, but in a manner consistent with intended purpose.

This book is compelling. It critiques at least three major attempts to address the North American political economy from a Christian position, and then provides an alternative based on Augustine. The breadth and depth of this attempt is part of the attraction of this book. The critiques blend sympathy with incisive analysis. This analysis is timely and in some ways devastating, since it is difficult to know if the church can extricate itself from this deep-rooted worldview, or even recognize the nature of the problem.

The emphasis on transcendence based on a creation theology is also well-placed. Kroeker provides his answer without entering (explicitly) the ubiquitous discussion of modern versus postmodern thought. Instead, transcendence here is not esoteric, but a grounding from which the 'reality' of life can be addressed in a profoundly Christian manner. He also avoids the separation of group versus individual ethics, insisting that each part of the world has a purpose within the fellowship of the created order. (141) Kroeker is ultimately convincing in his postulation of a moral theology of creation. It is refreshing to read a treatment that goes beyond partisan debate. And he does this without creating 'straw-men'.

However, it strikes me that Kroeker's critique is more compelling than his own argument for Augustinian realism. He makes only a brief foray into the problem with fundamentalism, leaning heavily on Owen Barfield. Why not pursue the issue of conformity and loss of religious symbols further? If religion can be a tool of ideology that is destructive to human life and the common good (124), then this problem of perception and faith needs to be addressed more explicitly. The notion of character building as a vital part of Christian ethics as they relate to the political economy is not pursued far enough. What implications might this idea have for policy or practice within the larger society? Further, Kroeker's promotion of the concept of purpose and place for all things within

the creation order avoids any mention of Alisdair MacIntyre, including his *After Virtue*.

This is an important book that will motivate the church to rethink its ethics. I noted recently that universities are beginning to use this book as a text, and it seems that its message will be disseminated widely, which is as it should be.

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Delbert F. Plett, *Sarah's Prairie* (Winnipeg: Windflower Communications, 1995). Trade paperback, 349 pp. A Novel.

Mennonite histories often leave the impression that the real story is somewhere between the lines. Delbert Plett's novel, *Sarah's Prairie*, attempts to tell the story between the lines of the history of the Mennonite East Reserve in Manitoba, by exploring the life of Martien Koep, whose Old Laender Mennonite family is torn apart when most of his siblings join the Morsavians, an unsavory religion imported from Oaten College in Texas.

There is certainly fertile ground for a novelist's imagination here, and Plett has used his extensive knowledge of East Reserve history to fill the book with colorful characters such as Offenbarung Jauntz and Rosie Bolson, the evangelist's seductive wife. He gives the reader an elaborate picture of the East Reserve community and its links to Russia, Kansas, and Saskatchewan. As a youth Martien has many rollicking adventures. He is sexually aroused by his sister, Susch, seduced by Rosie Bolson, learns to dance with French girls and drink homebrew with the Ukrainian bootlegger's daughters. He has unlimited access to motor cars, albeit with bumpers painted black. Somehow he comes through all this with his innocence intact and becomes an upright member of the Old Laender community, a community that knows how to forgive and take care of its own.

Unfortunately, *Sarah's Prairie* reads like a rough draft and it is regrettable that the publisher did not provide Plett with an experienced fiction editor to guide him through a rewriting process that could have turned this book into a powerful, and I dare say, a popular novel.

Part of the problem is that Plett packs too much information into the story and tries to juggle too many characters. There are many interesting events, but he loses the focus on the Koep family and this human drama where children join a church that is openly contemptuous of the parents' whole way of life.

When Martien's sister, Susch, elopes with the Morsavian minister's son, we are not shown how this affects her parents. A teardrop on a tablecloth or a father's trembling hand might have taken the reader into the experience.

Plett uses very specifically dated chapter titles and this makes a literary discussion in a 1920's bush camp about Ruby Wiebe, who wasn't born until 1934, a puzzling anachronism. There are many discussions in the novel which provide background information about the religious conflicts, but because Plett has chosen to use fictional designations such as "Morsavian" and "Old Laender" and "Bolsonite" the reader is not enlightened very much as to who's who, who believes what, and what is the fuss about anyway? The irony of Manitoba Mennonite communities being the target for missionary work is never explored. Martien and the omniscient narrator are obviously on the side of the Old Laenders and the satire in the novel is directed largely at the Morsavians. Plett uses many Low German words and expressions in his writing and sometimes this works and at other times it isn't clear whether he is in control of his language. The words "Jeisus" and "Erloeser" seem to verge on unintentional mockery when used in the same context as the satiric "formulaerfoarung" of Offenbarung Jauntz.

I hope Delbert Plett finds the motivation to rewrite this novel. In fact, he could use this book as a source for three or four full-length novels; there certainly are enough stories in it. On the other hand, perhaps he should use his considerable skills as an historian and write a no-holds-barred history of these religious wars. Why should there be stories that historians fear to tell?

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Harry Loewen and Steven Nolt, *Through Fire and Water: An Overview of Mennonite History* (Kitchener ON and Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1996). 350 pp. \$18.25.

Loewen and Nolt have authored a "book designed as an introduction to church history and the Mennonite faith story." It has been written for "individuals who want to learn more about Anabaptists..., congregations looking for a way to teach... Mennonite... beliefs, and students in Mennonite high schools...." Subtle questions of historical adequacy I will leave for the experts; my review will deal particularly with the book's potential appeal to students such as those I taught in high school during a 43 year teaching career in Canada and Africa.

Teachers, who in a semester usually have 20 weeks or less to complete a course, will appreciate the structure of the book. It is divided into four sections, with 15 sub-sections of about 20 manageable pages each. At the end of each of the four sections are essays by Carol Duerksen and Elwood Yoder which discuss key issues of our story. Included in each section is a thoughtfully phrased challenge to the faith and reasoning power of the student. More study questions would have been very helpful. For a thorough study, students need the stimulus that interesting study questions provide. This is especially important for high school teachers, who may have to teach five or six courses each day.

The book's balance keeps the larger Mennonite constituency in mind. Both the Swiss and Dutch origins of Anabaptism are traced through to their North American incarnation. The reasons for the many migrations, including those to Latin America, are sympathetically analyzed. The authors recognize that "the Germanic ethnic element is still strong," but they see the Anabaptist heritage as a faith and emphasize "congregations in many parts of the world, including Asia, Africa and South America." (204) Many illuminating personal anecdotes featuring women (such as the steadfastness of Anneken Hendricks in martyrdom) balance the gender lines without the embarrassing self-consciousness that political correctness sometimes brings.

One of the strongest teaching features of *Through Fire & Water* is its use of source material. Not only does it have two pages of easily accessible resources "for further reading", its text constantly quotes directly from available historical sources. The notes range from early writings such as *Martyrs Mirror* to modern works, such as Al Reimer's edition of *A Russian Dance of Death*. Recognized Mennonite authority such as Bender's *Anabaptist Vision* are quoted at length (101), but unexpected connections such as the story of Dostoyevsky's Grand Inquisitor and his call to return to Christ's teachings are also linked to our Mennonite ideal (58).

A refreshing aspect is the tendency to move away from what James Urry has called Mennonite "triumphalist" history. The authors "want to tell the Mennonite story sympathetically but fairly" (21), and their personal identification with the faith provides a steadying hand to the account of events. But they are not afraid to present the ugliness of the Münster rising (105), or the harshness of the ban (116). The book opens with one of our heroes (Blaurock) interrupting a worship service, but without demonising the "other side": moreover, the peace position is fairly presented as "treason" in the eyes of a wider society under threat of Turkish invasion. At other times moderation is the tone: our forebears were "often better Christians than either Catholics or Protestants." (112)

Will the students be as keen about *Through Fire & Water* as most teachers will be? Unless it works well with today's students, any history book is pointless. We need a history book that will interest and inspire our teenagers. Thoughtful students will appreciate the sectional focus on four distinctives of their Mennonite faith. In "*How do you know your church is faithful?*" students

will understand the cleansing power of church discipline. They will see how important this was to the believers' church as it sought to avoid the impurities of the state churches. They may then better understand the questions raised by such writings as Patrick Friesen's *The Shunning*. In "*Is your life a witness to the Spirit, water, and blood?*" the Anabaptist story itself becomes a call to discipleship. Faith's price is dramatized in the accounts of the cruel deaths of Michael Sattler and Anneken Hendricks and countless others. Our young people will be challenged to adopt a personal peace position in "*What does it mean for you to be a peacemaker?*" which brings us into modern times. The experience of Siegfried Bartel, a Mennonite officer in the *Wehrmacht* who heard his "enemies" on the Russian Front singing Christmas carols, and the experience of Jennifer Lindberg, whose poster "100,000 Faces" dramatized the human sacrifice of the Persian Gulf War will both serve to move our young people toward this classic distinctive of the Mennonite faith. In "*Where does your citizenship lie?*", which concludes the section on the Russian Mennonites, the common pressure in Russia and America to move into the secular mainstream is addressed. Fred, a fourth-generation military man, decides that Christ's kingdom demands a higher allegiance than his nation-state. The last section that asks "*Do you see many members forming one body in Christ?*" is the story of the world-wide reach of today's Anabaptist churches. And it will reassure those young people who fear their church is some colony or ghetto.

For more casual students, the book provides a lively style—this is no costive narrative. Almost every page is lightened by maps, illustrations, photographs, or cartoons. Humor is rarely far from the surface. This humor may be laconic, as in the reference to the 46-verse hymn written to honour martyr Landis, who could not be kept behind bars! The authors are not afraid of corny puns—how did Luther like his Diet of Worms? Cartoons such as the one dramatizing the personal hygiene problems of Saint Simon Stylites on his pillar bring a smile. A colloquial vocabulary and short units with catchy titles ("Luther's Red Hot Pen" and "Escaping Across a Frozen River") may awaken flagging student attention spans.

But my strongest praise comes for the way in which the history is presented. It is told through intensely personal anecdotes which then lead to clear and concise summaries of their historical importance. Students brought up on "Davie Crockett" myth-making history will be fascinated by the story of the murder of Felix Manz in Switzerland, of a card-playing Menno Simons as a "trickster" on the coach to Emden, of the gentle Hans Denck and courageous Helen of Freyburg in southern Germany, of Jakob Hutter who brought Christian communism into our faith. Then these diverse tales about a coterie of saints leads to a clear summary of the distinctive faith these Anabaptist heroes bequeathed the world (137). Similarly, the stories of a bandit attack on Jakob Höppner, of the upside-down trees of the enlightened dictator, Johann Cornies, and of the bizarre Bride Community of Claas Epp are background to a scholarly summary of "Mennonite firsts in Russia." (218)

This book will serve well as a text and resource for the teaching of Mennonite history in North American schools.

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Carl F. Bowman, *Brethren Society: The Cultural Transformation of a 'Peculiar People'* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995)

This book tells the story of a peculiar people whose peculiarity was purged, and of "plain" people who did not stay "plain." It explains how and why members of the Church of the Brethren exchanged bonnets and beards for earrings and neckties, unsalaried elders for professional pastors, simple meeting houses for modern church structures, and church discipline enforced by shunning and banning for open and tolerant church policies.

The organization of the material is broadly historical, but the interpretation relies on sociological methodologies and analyses. It is based mainly on denominational archival materials, and on a questionnaire circulated by the author to members of Brethren congregations.

The author first provides an overview of traditional Dunker (renamed Brethren in 1908) culture before 1850. This is followed by a more detailed examination of the paths which took the Brethren away from, or beyond, the plainness and peculiarities of their traditional culture. This factual information provides the raw material for a very cogently presented analysis of the radical transformation of Brethren culture.

In his analysis, Carl Bowman argues that in the period from 1850 to 1920 two discrepant religious and cultural moral orders influenced Brethren life—the memory of their traditional Dunker heritage and the dynamism of North American evangelicalism. There were intense struggles between the forces of resistance and accommodation, with accommodation gaining the ascendancy by 1940.

Bowman argues that in their attempts to maintain a balance between change and continuity, Brethren found it necessary to ensure that a perception of faithfulness to the inherited culture be preserved when changes were accepted. Since the Brethren were non-creedal, they used symbols to reconcile past peculiarities with contemporary diversity and tolerance. Specifically, he argues, symbols were used in two ways.

First, some important symbols were retained by their moral content or meaning was fundamentally altered. Bowman calls this "symbolic bridging." Examples cited include the symbols of footwashing and the love feasts. The traditional Dunker interpretation of footwashing had emphasized the mutual responsibility of believers to cleanse, purify and admonish one another in the Christian life. The symbol was retained when Brethren became more tolerant of religious diversity, but it became a symbol of service where once it had been a symbol of purification and mutual admonition. Similarly, the Brethren love feast (communion) had been reserved in traditional Dunker practice to those in good standing with their church. Great care was taken to judge the worthiness of participants, but by 1951 the Brethren abandoned the requirement of close communion. A symbol of love for like-minded Christians committed to the peculiarities of a separatist tradition thus became a symbol of openness.

Other symbols and practices of Brethren culture underwent a series of subtle changes until they came to represent values and commitments quite different from those of traditional Dunker culture. Bowman refers to such changes as "symbolic translation," and cites as a prime example symbols of Brethren non-conformity. Distinctive dress codes and denunciations of all so-called "worldly" social practices, symbolizing the separation of the faithful from the unregenerate outside world, had been a salient feature of the traditional religious culture of the Brethren. Brethren communities were, however, strongly influenced by religious renewal movements during the second half of the nineteenth century and this brought them into closer contact with other Christians who placed less emphasis on visible symbols of non-conformity. As a result, the Brethren gradually replaced specific symbols of non-conformity with more general admonitions that Christians lead simple and unostentatious lives. The old symbols of non-conformity had separated the Brethren from all others, while the new emphasis on a simple virtuous lifestyle brought them closer to other evangelical Christians. Then, gradually, as Brethren became more prosperous, even this approach was abandoned, and emphasis was placed on the spiritual dimensions of life, rather than on any outward symbols of simplicity.

The traditional Dunker doctrine of non-resistance underwent a similar transformation as the emphasis shifted from the simple refusal to participate in war to a broader form of Christian pacifism and then to an increased emphasis on activist strategies of peace-making and reconciliation.

Another startling manifestation of symbolic translation pertained to Brethren concepts of Christian unity. Sameness, exclusivity, purity, and the preservation of their own peculiarities were the salient features of traditional Dunker unity. Increased contact and co-operation with other evangelicals, resulted in an entirely new concept of Christian unity, focusing on inter-church cooperation and an emphasis on the things which united all Christians. This new, more tolerant, concept of Christian unity shattered the old rules and practices. Diversity, subject only to the unity inherent in an individually interpreted

commitment to a Christ-centered life, became a notable feature of Brethren life. The Church of the Brethren had once sought unity in similarity, but now seeks it in the acceptance of diversity.

These examples raise some troublesome questions which the author seeks to address in his concluding chapters. If the Church of the Brethren has lost its distinctive characteristics, what is the justification for maintaining a separate denominational identity? This question is made more difficult because the Brethren reject all creeds and catechisms, insisting instead that the Bible is the only creed they need. Theology, therefore, offers no common focus for an increasingly diverse religious society whose main symbols of identity have been radically transformed. Even the name "Brethren" has problematic gender-related connotations. Clearly the Brethren have been swept into mainstream evangelical Christianity, but many still remember a unique, family-like shared heritage of "otherness," and feel uncomfortable with "the tranquilizing whirlpool of contemporary 'hot-tub religion,'" (p. 417) and market-driven evangelism attuned to the latest fads and fashions of American religiosity.

Bowman acknowledges that Brethren and Mennonites have a shared religious heritage, but argues that the cultural transformation of Brethren Society has developed further and occurred faster than it has for most Mennonite groups. He notes that there was a time when Brethren who sought to escape Dunker plain-dress regulations could join a more liberal Mennonite congregation. Now, Bowman writes, the liberation migration is more likely to flow the other way. It can, however, be argued that plain dress and peculiar cultural practices are not the most important features of either Brethren or Mennonite societies. Bowman admits that his work does not focus on major twentieth century Brethren pacifist and service initiatives. Brethren were, however, active in such initiatives, and it is these initiatives, rather than plain dress or cultural and ethnic peculiarities, which have strengthened Mennonite commitments to Anabaptist concepts of discipleship. Bowman tells the story of Brethren cultural assimilation into mainstream American evangelical life, documenting that it was faster and earlier, and perhaps also somewhat different than the experience of other Anabaptist groups.

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William Schroeder and Helmut T. Huebert. *Mennonite Historical Atlas*. Second Edition. (Winnipeg: Springfield Publishers, 1996). Paperback, maps, bibliography, index.

Many thoughts course through a person's mind when reading and studying an atlas of places where Mennonites have lived, established homes, and died peacefully with family around them, or from which they too often have been roughly uprooted and been forced to, or felt driven to, migrate to other distant unfamiliar places. To many Mennonites this will be a highly personal atlas. For instance, I find my grandfather's and grandmother's hospital in Waldheim; I think of Rudy Wiebe's *The Blue Mountains of China* where the movements from continent to continent surely boggle the minds of readers who know no Mennonite history; and I see the farm villages and commercial centres of the Canadian prairies where many readers of this journal grew up. Others will have their own associations.

The prime objective of the two authors, ably assisted by cartographer Weldon Hiebert, is to locate on maps of various scales those places in selected parts of the world where Mennonites have lived, and to depict routes they have travelled in their great community migrations. The central principle for map selection and broad organization is that profound nexus of Mennonite life, South Russia; this includes the movement of people to that area, the formation of communities, settlement distribution in Russia, and then the dispersal of Mennonites to other parts of Russia and distant parts of the world. A cogent text effectively tells the story behind the maps, and must be studied along with them to get the most out of the atlas.

Much is covered. We start in western and central Europe and the places associated with Menno Simons and Mennonite origins, and then continue eastward along the North German plain. Next we turn to Russia, later the Soviet Union. Half of the approximately 130 maps in the atlas concern Mennonite settlements and events in that vast domain. Much of this is a vital exercise in information retrieval as the authors turned to various people with access to family and community memory to draw maps of particular villages, identify who lived on the many lots, and designate institutional, commercial and industrial buildings. In many parts of the world, the nineteenth century with its railway building, its steam engine, and its increasing commercial agriculture was a time of expansion. No less here, as the maps trace the extension of Mennonite settlement to many parts of the Russian empire. Quickly there follows the heartache of out-migration in the later nineteenth century, the horrors of the twentieth century through two World Wars, the rise and ultimate fall of communism, and the resulting tragedies visited on Mennonite communities. Together the maps and concise text provide a sense of the utter dislocation and brutality of those times in Russia/Soviet Union.

The migrations from Russia to various countries in North and South America beginning in the 1870s are clearly depicted and described, including the founding of new colonies in Canada and the United States. Within the New World, movements of many Mennonite communities, of course, continued for a variety of reasons, and we learn of new settlements in countries such as Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, and Bolivia. The atlas ends with a series of three maps locating Aussiedler Mennonite congregations in Germany in 1994, and six maps on Hutterian migrations and colonies.

The complexity of Mennonite movements over the earth, and the ever recurring challenges of establishing new settlements in harsh environments (which sometimes proved to be lands of lasting difficulty) is driven home in this compact atlas. Many years ago, when I was doing field work in Mexico I was asked by some Mennonites, at a time when they were feeling the heavy cultural hand of the Mexican authorities, what the settlement capabilities were of one more possible haven—Greenland. In examining this atlas, I find this is one of the few major areas in the world that has not been tried.

In the introduction, the authors make it clear that this is not an analytical atlas along thematic lines providing information on population density, family size, agricultural production, mission activity, and the many other topics that could be pursued. Fair enough: leave that to others to map as research in Mennonite studies continues. This compilation, a labour of love in history and geography, has accomplished much and it is appropriate that it remain focussed on location and movement.

In future editions, and I hope they will come, perhaps world maps could show where Mennonite populations were located at selected critical time periods in the twentieth century. This would include the east coast settlements in the United States and those in Ontario. The world map at the beginning of the atlas, and the map of Mennonites in the Soviet Union about 1870, hint at this, and should be carried further. At the same time, at the other end of the scale, the authors might consider showing a few field patterns and land allocations used in selected villages in Russia, Canada, Mexico and Paraguay, even if only in approximate form to indicate how the farm villages functioned.

The occasion of publishing this much expanded second edition of the atlas in 1996 is the 500th anniversary of the birth of Menno Simons, and it is a highly worthwhile endeavour. Mennonite history is a story of movement, and this is an affordable, essential reference source for all students of that history.

John Warkentin
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Brian J. Fraser, *The Study of Religion in British Columbia: A State-of-the-Art Review* Vol. 5 *The Study of Religion in Canada* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1995). Paperback, 127 pp.

This little volume is a well-written, engaging description of the history and present state of the study of religion in British Columbia. It covers a history of just 100 years and is limited to institutions in Vancouver and the Fraser Valley.

The survey is offered in three chapters: 1) Origins and Developments; 2) Programs and Curricula; 3) Faculty, Research, and Publications. Such an arrangement runs the risk of repetition but the author generally avoids that pitfall. Each chapter deals with the Department of Religion at the University of British Columbia (UBC), the conservative evangelical institutions, Regent College and Trinity Western University, the Vancouver School of Theology (VST), and provides very cursory attention to several other institutions such as The Roman Catholic Seminary of Christ the King and the Columbia Bible College.

The opening story, both of post-secondary education and the study of religion in B.C., is set within the Canadian context where the differences between Ontario and B.C. are clearly identified. Despite its relative institutional youth, the formal study of religion in B.C. began, as elsewhere in Canada, as a programme of the church to train Christian ministers. These emerged in the 1890s and ultimately became Union College (United Church of Canada), and Anglican Theological College in 1927 when both institutions located on the UBC campus. These two amalgamated in 1971 as the Vancouver School of Theology.

The “truly critical and objective” study of religion assumed the form of a department of religious studies at UBC in 1964. The fact that the only department of religion in British Columbia developed in a secular university explains in part its relatively minor attention to Christian studies.

In 1970 Regent College, an energetic theological graduate school for conservative evangelicals, came into being on the UBC campus. It, too, had antecedent institutions. The last of the four major institutions discussed in this survey is Trinity Western University which began its life in Langley in 1962 as a theologically conservative, church-sponsored college. In 1979 it received a charter with the right to grant degrees.

Of the four institutions only the department at UBC gives major attention to religions other than Christianity, and requires no personal religious commitment from its faculty. The programmes of all the others are designed to train lay and clerical leaders for the churches which support them. While their aims are avowedly Christian, a systematic, critical academic approach to the study of religion is taken for granted by all. The statements of faith at Regent and Trinity Western clearly reveal the limits within which that study moves.

The Regent story is by far the most interesting as told by the author, partly due to the dynamism of the school. It is easily the most successful and visible of the four institutions. It is much younger than the VST and represents a modern version of the shift to a more questioning stance toward Christian faith which the denominations of the VST negotiated a century ago.

Thus while there is some convergence of approach among the theological schools, even among them there is very little cooperation, not to speak of the department at UBC. All have faculties with graduate training at major North American and European universities. The potential for cooperation would therefore seem to be great in terms of the variety of specializations and also of approach to questions of religious phenomena and commitments. Apparently theological differences make rapprochement between the VST and Regent College difficult, and methodological and philosophical considerations between the theological colleges and the Department of Religion at UBC. The descriptions also suggest that Regent College and Trinity Western University have far clearer ends and means orientation than the VST. There is the further implication that the theological schools, especially VST, while *de jure* graduate schools, are *de facto* not. That is because many of their students come with no preparation in religious, specifically Christian, studies, but with a variety of degrees including professional training. The seminaries are therefore required to do catch-up in content and method on what should have been done at the undergraduate level. Many students therefore begin with new programmes instead of building on already established foundations. A truncated version of Christian studies is the result, not to speak of anything beyond that. The Roman Catholic Seminary of Christ the King is, by comparison, a true graduate programme of theological studies.

There are, of course, other institutions where Christian studies have been and are being done. Fraser lists a number of them such as Columbia Bible College in Clearbrook and the Roman Catholic Seminary of Christ the King (1951) now in Mission. The latter school and its preparatory arts faculty are not extensively described in terms of their curricula and the publications of their faculty. This appears to be the main gap in this survey. Okanagan Baptist College, which existed in the early years of this century at Summerland as a prep school for theological studies, gets no mention, nor does the existing Bible school at Kelowna. Other odds and ends of religious studies, for instance individual courses at Okanagan University College, are mostly invisible because they are hidden in other departments such as History and English. The author could perhaps not be expected to include these in this institutional survey which makes it important to mention them here.

This volume, together with the four earlier volumes on religious studies in Alberta (1983), Quebec (1988), Ontario (1992), and Manitoba/Saskatchewan (1993), and, one hopes, another for the Maritime Provinces, gives an overview of the state of the study of religion in Canada. It adds to the evidence that theological studies still dominate the field. It is by no means clear what the

significance of this is in a rapidly secularizing society. The author does not venture answers.

Walter Klaassen
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Anna Ens, *In Search of Unity: Story of the Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba* (Winnipeg: Canadian Mennonite Bible College Publications, 1996). 290 pp. \$20.00.

Harvey Plett, *Seeking to be Faithful: The Story of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference* (Steinbach, MB: Evangelical Mennonite Conference, 1996). 188 pp. \$6.95.

From the titles and introductions, one expects to see methodological similarities in these two conference "stories." Harvey Plett's aim is to write "a popular but accurate history" for longstanding and new conference members, taking "a nontechnical storytelling approach." Anna Ens, presumably writing for the average member, presents her information "as much as possible in chronological order." But the two books could hardly be more different.

Ens demonstrates how organizational history can be shaped into a readable narrative. She spices up her research with photographs, helpful tables, profiles of congregations and comments from individual players in the story, including diverse comments from women. She carefully plots the transition from the original six *Gemeinden* (churches made up of several congregations) to today's conference of 52 congregations, tracing the development of institutions such as camps, schools, and missions. The book's organization into "structural eras" can be frustrating, however, as the stories of particular developments keep being interrupted and picked up later in the narrative.

Plett's book is not the history of an organization, but a rather haphazard tale of a small "renewal group" struggling to hold its own against threatening forces within and without. Of the 18 chapters, 11 deal with beginnings in Poland and Russia—the sordid church squabbles are presented in a quagmire of detail that threatens to implode for lack of context and interpretation. It is not clear whether Plett's aim is to create a "myth of EMC origins" or to demythologize the whole Russian Mennonite story. Four concluding chapters touch on the beliefs and forms of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference. One wishes for more. Plett alludes to conflicts over "assurance of salvation" and dispensationalism,

for example, but never spells them out. The brief description of the Holdeman division left this reader with many questions. Steinbach Bible College, the conference's major educational institution, is relegated to one paragraph. (Oddly, more space is given to EMC involvement in the public school system.)

The appendices provide an interesting glimpse of EMC distinctives. The "Resolutions of 1899" have surprising similarities to Old Order Mennonite concerns: Sunday schools and "singspirations" are prohibited because they "lead away from the simplicity in Christ;" photographs are banned because they lead to idolatry and "ultimately to immorality and un-Christian marriages." A 1937 ministerial document urges "a unified headcovering" for women, and warns against life insurance and mixed bathing. Unlike most Russian Mennonite groups, the EMC continues to include footwashing among its ordinances. A 1995 chart lists the conference's 49 congregations in six provinces. (The identical chart in the "EMC 1996 Yearbook" lists 53 congregations.)

Conflict is also at the heart of Ens' book, but her sights are firmly set on those impulses leading toward unity and greater tolerance. To this end, she wends her way carefully between the aggressive Russlaender and the intractable Bergthalers, trying to find a balance in even the most "ugly episodes," such as the bitter estrangement of Winnipeg's First Mennonite Church from 1945 until 1968. Missing is a sense of the ferocity and emotional upheaval that accompanied seismic shifts in the conference, such as the dethronement of the Aeltester and the change from German to English. Given Ens' drive toward unity, it is surprising that she does not venture farther into inter-Mennonite relationships or even the broader Manitoba context. The first chapter, "Manitoba, Aboriginal People and Mennonites," holds out the promise of a more inclusive history, but the chapter is really about immigration. The relationship, or lack thereof, between Manitoba Mennonites and their neighbours-native, French, Ukrainian and Icelandic-may be beyond the scope of this book but it needs to be explored.

The EMC story would also have benefitted from more comment on how this small, insular group has related to other Mennonites over the years. (The narrow scope of Plett's story is illustrated by his misleading equation of Manitoba Bergthalers with the Chortitzer Conference, a small segment of the total group.) Plett does mention that the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference sought affiliation with the EMC in the early 1940s, but the EMC, "still very cautious about outsiders" after the painful Holdeman split, did not invite the visitors to participate in communion. That story needs updating in the light of current cooperation.

Both these conference histories end in "confessional" pleas to today's church, reinforcing the sense of commitment both writers bring to their subjects and to their story-telling task.

Margaret Loewen Reimer
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Piet Visser and Mary S. Sprunger, *Menno Simons: Places, Portraits and Progeny* (Krommenie, Netherlands: Knijnenberg; Altona, MB: Friesens; Morgantown, PA: Masthof Press, 1996). 168 pp. 23x30.3 cm.

This is a truly outstanding volume with many virtues and only a few weaknesses, published separately in English, Dutch and German, in 3,500, 2,500 and 750 copies respectively. It has a good bibliography and a lengthy donors list. Although the book acknowledges the wide dispersion of the Mennonites, it is intentionally limited to the Netherlands, from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries.

Part I, "In the Footsteps of Menno," begins with an introduction and a map of the Netherlands. In a brief overview the authors offer a few highlights of the life of Menno Simons. Realistically, they acknowledge the paucity of the sources. Yet the story, as they tell it, is rich with meaning and proceeds briskly. Ordinarily each page of text is faced with a page, filled with appropriate photographs. The total impact is powerful and exciting. One can read a page at a time, or browse through the entire volume, equally appropriate for a coffee table or a shelf of scholarly books. The readers' general knowledge of Mennonite history is assumed. Such major reformers as Martin Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin as well as "the heretic" Melchior Hoffman are not further identified; also not spelled out is the meaning of "Anabaptism" and the role of "Münsterite rebels" for Menno's life. Menno's life story is outlined in 23 brief sections (14-59) by way of reference to locations and dates of significant events in Menno's life, such as "Witmarsum, 1496-1523", "Utrecht, 1524," and so on. This book tells much about Menno's diligent outreach and the territory covered; just noting these locations and the distance between them will be not only an experience in geography, but also an eye-opener to Menno's missionary diligence.

Most sections are introduced with a brief quotation from Menno. Over it is placed a small contemporary photograph of the location under discussion. Then follows a short and clear account of the most significant events and issues. Although without footnotes, the data are scholarly reliable. Occasionally a beautiful sense of mystery is added by a too-literal translation from the Dutch, such as "the gas is now out of the bottle" (20), "the sudden demise of king Jan has deprived the first fruit of his pen of any topicality," (28) and "having to tie himself in all manner of knots" (48). Care to translate these gems back into the original Dutch?

Menno's life, of course, was not a lighthearted story. Precisely because the authors do not indulge in praise, allow the facts to speak for themselves, and on several occasions are even critical of Menno, the account is somber and deeply moving. Given the state of the historiography, the authors can offer only the broad-brushstroke statement that martyred were "thousands" of Menno's followers." (7) Indeed, the situation was dreadful and as the authors note, there

was “a fierce hunt for Mennonites.” Under such circumstances it is not surprising that information about Menno is so limited. By disclosing information about himself Menno would have facilitated his capture; he was active but remained intentionally inconspicuous. Yet while Menno’s biography remains obscure, we do have his numerous publications. I do wish that these had been not only enumerated, but discussed at greater length; this would have yielded additional biographical information. For example, in his lengthy discussion of what it really means to preach “at night” (cf. *The Complete Works*, 1956, 634-636) we learn a great deal about his faith, courage, and sensitivity. Likewise, it would have been in order to note Menno’s profound knowledge of the Bible as well as his remarkable eloquence.

At the same time the authors do need to be praised that their story moves rapidly. Occasionally this means that some technical terms remain unidentified: Schieringers and Vetkopers (14), sacramentarians (18) and incarnation (42 and 48). On a few occasions, as noted above, the rather literal translation from the Dutch has not provided for greater clarity. Less serious is the awkward phrasing of the opening sentence, claiming that Menno “was the only Reformer native to the Netherlands” (7). Something must have been lost in the translation or printing. If the authors did not want to include Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam and David Joris, at least Dirk Philips should not have been left out.

I must note, however, that I felt disappointed only at three points in this section. First, the authors have not proven that initially Menno had “to present a clean slate, bleached of all Münsterite stains and dirt” (11). I think that the authors are in error when they condescend: “Out of sympathy for him we grant Menno the benefit of the doubt as an informant” (11). Abraham Friesen, whose work is cited in this book, has carefully shown that Menno never shared the Münsterite position. Hence Menno had nothing to “bleach out”!

Secondly, the authors certainly have a point that in the course of time the issue of discipline did become divisive. But it is inaccurate to generalize that “The movement is cracking on all sides” (54). After all, the movement did survive. Moreover, the authors condemn without a scholarly reflection: “In some letters Menno endeavors to rationalize his inability to stay within his own boundaries”(56). Which letters? What boundaries? In changing circumstances, is it necessarily wrong to adjust, even to change, one’s position? The authors criticise, it seems, all-too-knowingly: “The always compromising leader has little remaining time. With a gnawing conscience he will realize that his roll [sic!] has been nearly played out” (56).

Thirdly, the authors offer an evaluation which needs to be interpreted. They write, “He has given his followers their own voice, but the reward of his work is that his Mennonites have outgrown him.”(58) If Menno is seen as a pastor and teacher of his flock, then these are words of praise. However, Menno’s ministry also had a prophetic dimension. He was a faithful and eloquent proclaimer of the Word of God. Can all this have now been “outgrown”?!

In addition to their beautiful and valuable text, the authors have also supplied an immense number of pictures. In addition to the contemporary photographs, already noted, the authors provide a truly magnificent spread of ancient engravings and prints as well. These include title pages of books, maps, photos of important buildings, commemorative plaques, portraits and many other illustrations. While one can thank the authors for including the only extant letter in Menno's handwriting (47) it is reduced in size (8.5x13 cm), and difficult to read even with a magnifying glass.

The second section of this book is entitled "The Many Faces of Menno" (61-105) and contains 147 portraits of various sizes, several in colour. The introduction by Daniel Horst (62-63) bravely faces the problem of identification. Namely, the earliest "likeness" is an engraving by Christoffel van Sichen, done 45 years after Menno's death. As one looks over the additional Menno "types" by different artists the best that can be said has been noted by Horst: increasingly "Menno" looks more and more distinguished. Horst explains, "This promotion to church reformer keeps pace with what was then a fairly general social elevation of Mennonites in the Netherlands." Thus the image of Menno's head is engraved in our memory and we can say every time, without hesitation, 'yes, this is Menno Simons'" (63).

The third, final, and most colourful section is entitled "The Changing Image of Menno and the Mennonites in Dutch Art, ca 1535-1740" (107-153). Initially the Mennonites were cruelly persecuted and therefore also ridiculed without mercy. In this early period what predominates are engravings of torture and executions. This is followed by an age of tolerance. Now art celebrates mutual tolerance and begins to pay positive attention to the lives of ordinary Mennonites. The concluding period (123-153) attests to the great social and financial success of Mennonites. The faces of the portraits are invariably dignified, the clothing expensive and the colours beautiful. A brief and eminently readable summary statement of Mennonite religious life (123) is followed by attention to these men—mainly men—who could afford the commissioning of their own and group portraits. Indeed, "whatever generated the market was painted—heads were money" (142). It is from such a perspective that the authors pay virtually all of their attention to those who were painted rather than to those who did the painting. This is even true in the case of Rembrandt (1606-1669). His painting of the Mennonite merchant and preacher Anso (147) is described in some detail. Inexplicably, the authors do not note that in the Gemäldegalerie Berlin the painting is entitled "Der Mennonitenprediger Anso und seine Frau, 1641." More significant is the omission of any discussion concerning Rembrandt's faith. They do not develop the observations in *The Mennonite Encyclopedia* and Robert Wallace's *The World of Rembrandt* that a very close association had developed between Rembrandt and the Mennonites.

However, minor criticisms do not detract from the truly magnificent accomplishment which is this book. In story and portrait, quickly and simply for those in a hurry, yet with many wonderful references and clues for those

who want to read with care, this volume is a notable contribution to the understanding of Menno's great accomplishments.

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Albert W. Wardin, Jr., *Evangelical Sectarianism in the Russian Empire and the USSR: A Bibliographic Guide* (Lanham, MD: American Theological Library Association and Scarecrow Press, 1995). 867 pp.

This bibliography is the result of many years of tedious work and is truly a landmark in the evolution of religious scholarship on a country which has had such a fascinating, though often tragic, religious history. With the end of the Soviet Union and its very repressive religious policies in 1990, it is particularly fitting that this bibliography covers the entire period of Russian and Soviet sectarian Christianity until 1990.

The bibliography is divided into three major sections: I. Pietistic influences and Protestant Missions (1693-1917); II. Evangelical Sectarianism, (1855-1917); III. Evangelical Sectarianism in the USSR and Adjoining Territories (1917-1990). Each section begins with a brief foreword and contains many topical and chronological subdivisions. Various groups (such as the Mennonites), institutions, societies and individuals are dealt with separately. The bibliography lists published works (including many articles in newspapers and journals) as well as unpublished manuscripts, dissertations and other materials. Sections two and three also identify the major archives in the former Soviet Union and the one western collection, the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives in Nashville, which is identified as "the most extensive collection of materials outside the Soviet Union on evangelical sectarians of the Russian Empire and the USSR." The listing of Russian and related language sources is extensive. The annotations are also very useful.

Mennonites should, by and large, be very pleased with this additional tool for research. The listing of Mennonite related material is extensive. This is particularly true for the Mennonite Brethren, whose kinship with evangelical sectarians and Baptists clearly places them within the main scope of this reference work. In fact, Wardin indicates that there are about 200 specific works cited on the Mennonite Brethren (65), many of which would not be found elsewhere.

The place of Mennonites in the scope of such a reference work, however, also creates a dilemma for Wardin. In his Preface (xxiii), Wardin gives his

definition of evangelicalism and then states that his “work will therefore, by and large, exclude Lutheranism, the Reformed church, and traditional Mennonites....” Such a distinction between traditional Mennonites and evangelical Mennonites is often difficult to maintain and, indeed, if Wardin errs he errs on the side of including more than might be expected. The difficulty, however, is that such definitions weave in and out of denominational boundaries over time.

Wardin rightly observes that Mennonite Brethren have, until recently, made inadequate use of German Baptist and Russian sources (65). With greater access to archives in the former Soviet Union that circumstance may gradually be changing, but even the materials that have been available in the West have not been used extensively enough.

The work also includes other significant features, such as two extensive indices, one on individuals and the other on topics and places. These will be of tremendous help to scholars. The individual listings also usually indicate where the items can be found, although the list is not comprehensive. Eight Mennonite libraries/archives are listed, only one of which is in Canada (Mennonite Heritage Centre). Abbreviations are not always consistent (e.g., Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives appears either as TNSB [xxxv] or SBHLA [68]). Also, a number of items have certainly been missed (e.g., Heinrich Braun, *Bundes-Statistic der Vereinigten, Taufgesinnten, Mennonitischen Brueder-Gemeinde in Russland*, 1905 and 1906).

One of the results of the method used by Wardin is that many items have multiple listings and annotations. This creates some redundancy (e.g., Walter Sawatsky’s *Soviet Evangelicals Since World War II* is listed at least 31 times in various sections, each time with complete title and publication details and often with annotations). Although this makes the work more user-friendly, eliminating the need for cross-referencing, it also makes the work much more bulky. Indeed, the binding already showed signs of weakness in the reviewer’s copy.

All in all, this work is without question a very valuable resource and should be in the reference section of every Mennonite library.

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Ernest Sirluck, *First Generation: An Autobiography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996). Hardcover. 409 pp. \$35.00.

On the surface, a lengthy autobiography by a Jewish university professor and controversial administrator of the University of Manitoba is hardly a subject to arouse the interest of a Mennonite reading audience. However, the opening chapter entitled simply, "Winkler, 1918-1935", awakens our interest. The chapter is devoted to Sirluck's growing up in the southern Manitoba Mennonite town of Winkler and sprinkled throughout the book are additional references to the benchmarks established by this experience.

Sirluck grew up Jewish in a prairie town where, as he says, "the doctor, the bank manager, the station-agent, and the druggist were of British descent; there were eight or nine German Lutheran and as many Russian Jewish families; the rest were Mennonites."⁽³⁾ The extended Sirluck family were Jews from Russia and although the numbers of Jews in Winkler were already declining during his adolescence, Sirluck still remembers the two-room synagogue and the Jewish classes after the "public-school day ended and other schoolchildren played baseball or hockey."⁽⁶⁾ The Sirlucks owned numerous enterprises in the community including a store and, after the 1920s, a farm bought from Mennonites moving to Mexico.

Through the sensitive Sirluck's eyes we see how Mennonite culture looked to an outsider. When he was five, children on the playground surrounded him and accused him of being "a dirty Jew who had killed Christ."⁽⁸⁾ More likely attributable to his petulant nature than his Jewishness were the frequent encounters with the physical punishment meted out by Mennonite teachers. His image of Mennonites is appropriately summarized by the description of area farm folk. Shopping trips to Winkler were, he says, "epitomized by the characteristic family procession of the area farmers come to town—man walking in front, wife in loose floor-length skirt covering lapsed belly next, and the three or four youngest children who had helped to break her body trailing behind."⁽²⁵⁾ Sirluck's adolescence coincides with the rise of Nazi Germany and although he suggests that he made himself "too much a part of the community to be really lonely," clearly the 1930s were difficult for him.⁽¹⁷⁾ Winkler was a "fertile ground for Nazi propaganda."⁽²⁰⁾ His sensitivity and the lessons "about how precarious the friendship of a Gentile for a Jew can be" strained his relationships with Mennonite friends. The entrance to University in 1935 marked the end of a formal connection to Winkler and Mennonites, although there were sporadic visits to his parents and the family store that remained in Winkler.

Even a cursory reading of Sirluck's Winkler years reveals the complexity of inter-ethnic relations in a predominately Mennonite town. Clearly his childhood memories reflect the necessity for both Jewish and Mennonite parents to establish a basis for boundaries between 'us' and 'them.' It is also apparent that the conjuncture of adolescence and Nazism intensified young

Sirluck's sensitivity. Sirluck also shows how Mennonite youths exhibited contradictory responses to Nazism. Jack Funk, for instance could claim that his presidency of the local organization of a pro-Nazi party had "nothing personal in it, and I hope we can stay friends." (22)

Sirluck's image of Mennonites retains a monolithic character. Except for the local Mennonite doctor and member of the provincial legislature, C.W. Wiebe, Sirluck retains an image of Mennonites as a narrow-minded, religious, agrarian people. The combination of their German and Christian identity disposes them to the anti-Semitism.

Despite his rather negative portrayal of Winkler, Sirluck refers to this past throughout the biography. He reads *Sarah Binks* and is pleased that the author, Paul Hiebert, "was a Mennonite."(41) He refers to Mennonites in Winkler in his coming to terms with the war. He was touched to see many Winkler Mennonites" at his father's funeral.(263) Sirluck lived most of his life far from Winkler, but he seems unable to escape its grasp. He is forced to admit that the farm in this Mennonite community "has remained something of an anchor for me and my family." (396)

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Diane Zimmerman Umble, *Holding the Line: The Telephone in Old Order Mennonite and Amish Life* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996) Hardback; 192 pp., 35.00 U.S.

The car, the internal combustion engine, the tractor, electricity, the radio and television, computers, nuclear power, birth control, pasteurization, the pneumatic tire, fluoride, and the telephone, all technologies thought by many to increase productivity, leisure, health, and the wealth of the nation, have been the subject of contentious debate and resistance. Luddites saw in technology the very source of their oppression. Marxists have celebrated the emancipatory potential of technology. These debates, seldom conclusive, are often elevated to tragic proportions, and find their full expression in such epochal events as the Cultural Revolution in China or Pol Pot's Kampuchea. Utopians, left and right, struggle with technology. Thoreau wrote that "Our inventions are wont to be pretty toys, which distract our attention from serious things. They are but improved means to an unimproved end." And religious communities, like experimental socialist states, have similarly ennobled and chastened the innovators and users of technology.

It can be argued that the Anabaptists, Hutterites, Mennonites, and Amish are a barometer of modernity. They are a kind of test market for both the limits and potential of technological innovation and diffusion. They stand opposed and they embrace. They are both inside and outside the projects of modernity. They define the limits of membership by degrees of technological innovation; that is, the civil society starts and stops with technology itself or what is made possible by it. Hutterites, clearly among the most technologically sophisticated in the history of farming, marvel at the simplicity of the Old Orders and their “English-speaking neighbors.” From automated kitchens to factory hog production, these communal peoples took the covenant seriously. They built a kingdom with sweat and technology, lots of it. A senior minister among the Hutterites once told me that “if Joseph had had a Lear Jet, he’d never have taken a donkey.” A Hutterite farmer quipped, “technologically, the Old Orders are what we are not, though we do like to visit them.” They become the exotic “other” in the Anabaptist mix.

For the Old Orders, the Hutterites may be seen as tergiversators. For the “modern” Mennonites, these are communities of dissenting distant cousins, to be occasionally visited; they are the sacred sites, where one can experience authenticity. Or perhaps they are merely a means to spice up a dull dish. One can even imagine a kind of technological teleology running from the yeoman households of the Old Order Mennonite and Amish to the industrial farming of the Hutterites. And there are certain ironies. The Hesston Corporation, for example, a giant farm implement manufacturer now owned by multinationals, was brought into being by technology and communications wary conservative Church of God in Christ (Holdeman) Mennonites. One could write the history of Anabaptism as an Armageddon for or against the ever expanding and encroaching means of production: the three-field system, the tractor, the telephone—from farm field to domicile.

The metaphor is apt, but in the Anabaptist cottage industry created by Johns Hopkins University Press, *Holding the Line: The Telephone in Old Order Mennonite and Amish Life*, by Diane Zimmerman Umble, is a disappointment. She sets herself the task of providing a new account, not just of the telephone among conservative Anabaptist communities, but a more general attempt to critique conventional understandings of technology diffusion, acceptance, and resistance. Umble seeks to capture the communicative process, what she calls the “web of communication,” in the quotidian acts of ritual. She writes that habitual communication among the Old Order Amish and Mennonites was structured by the rituals of worship, of silence, of work, and of visiting, and was anchored in the home. These patterns of communication built and maintained strong, primary relationships within the circle of church life. Even when Old Order people interacted with their “English” neighbors, their dress, dialect, and identification with the church reminded them where they belonged.

These everyday acts create, maintain, and transform the borders within and among communities and with the “outside” world and, most important,

instantiate cultural identity. For reasons not altogether clear, perhaps convenience or acquaintance, she picks the Old Order Mennonite and Old Order Amish in Lancaster County, PA. Indeed, the book's strength—the use of comparative cases—becomes its central weakness. Though a comparative method is implicit in the selection of two groups—the Old Order Amish and Mennonite—we are never treated to an explication of its logic, design, or clear application. The first chapter, an attempt at providing a coherent theoretical framework or argument, reads like a literature review from a doctoral dissertation. Here we are led through a labyrinth of anthropology, communication theory, sociology, and history, all in an effort to tease out a framework that will allow for the examination of “the telephone in the context of social practices and shift the theoretical focus to questions about the meaning of the telephone. An emphasis on the meaning of the telephone provides the theoretical space for the analysis of *adoption of the instrument and resistance to it*” (19). Thereafter theory makes only cameo appearances that cling on the narrative like gypsy moss.

What is missing in the narrative are the myriad ways that the telephone is made meaningful in everyday life. There are no voices and no conversations. The focus of the narrative is on church schism and internal disputes over the adoption of telephone technology. And though important gaps in church history may have been filled by this study, the everyday use of the phone, and the construction of meaning and identity around it is a project unfulfilled. For those socialized into the canon of Anabaptist ethnography and history, chapters two and three can be skipped. These are the all too familiar tropes, almost liturgical, presenting the canonical ethnos from the Reformation to the present, the struggle with modernity, potentate, nature, war, and religious orthodoxy. The rest of the story, embellished with anecdotes from church histories, newspapers, occasional interviews, and local publications, is a thoughtful account of schism. And for those interested in schism, this book is worth a good read. For those interested in the telephone, the construction of meaning and identity around and through it, this will be a great disappointment.

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David Bergen, *A Year of Lesser* (Toronto: Harper Collins, 1996). Paperback, 215 pp., \$16.00 Cdn. A novel.

This arresting first novel by David Bergen marks a radical departure from the more traditional forms of Mennonite novel we have grown accustomed to. Although the village of Lesser is situated in the heart of Mennonite country (Steinbach/Landmark/Grunthal) in south-eastern Manitoba, it deals with Mennonite characters and lifestyles which Mennonite readers over forty will have trouble accepting as “Mennonite” or relating to as a Mennonite world. Within an atmosphere of charismatic Christianity that seems too contrived at times to be believable, this cast of Mennonite characters, from teenagers to the middle-aged, go their sinful ways, smoking pot, drinking heavily and fornicating with casual abandon.

The central character is Johnny Fehr, a thirtiesh, rather hapless feed supply salesman whose compassionate nature has led him to set up and run, in his spare time, a youth centre for Lesser adolescents. Johnny’s own life is complicated by a king-sized libido which drives him in and out of relationships with women, including Charlene, his alcohol-ridden wife whom he still loves, and Loraine, a widow who runs her own chicken farm and becomes his obliging mistress. Johnny’s other obsession is spiritual and takes the form of a strong lust for conversion and redemption, the more dramatic the better. The point, of course, is that his sexual and spiritual needs are intertwined with each other and together keep him on a self-obsessed quest to experience the ultimate high. As he says to his wife at one point: “I’ve known joy. Not all the time and maybe never for very long, but I’ve known joy.”

Beneath his thoughtlessly exploitative ways and self-indulgent lifestyle, Johnny Fehr is that familiar figure in literature, the beautiful loser or despised Christ figure, the holy fool who is hated precisely because he is at heart innocent, loving, compassionate and utterly lacking in pride or worldly dignity. In the words of the novel, “He is easy, a likable and gullible fool.” The trouble is that the holy fool, because of his very innocence, his lack of guardedness, his vulnerability to others, not only gets hurt by others but is himself the cause of others being hurt and defeated.

The first to go down is Charlene, the wife, who through her alcoholic haze still loves Johnny even as the bottom drops out of her world when she discovers that Johnny has gotten Loraine pregnant. Unable to have a baby herself, which she desperately wants, Charlene, in effect, is consumed in the fire of her own unhappiness. Loraine, who is tougher and a survivor, has Johnny’s baby and tries to domesticate him, but ultimately she too has trouble forgiving Johnny for who and what he is. There are younger victims as well. Loraine’s teen-age son Chris also gets his girlfriend Melody pregnant. When she turns to Johnny for help in getting a secret abortion, he responds and drives her to Fargo, across the American border, on the very day, it turns out, that Loraine gives birth to her child. In the end, Melody turns into a kind of religious zombie under the

care of Phil, the evangelist, while young Chris disappears, feeling embittered and betrayed.

David Bergen is a fine young writer with a promising career ahead of him. Like all good writers of fiction he knows how to bring his fictive world alive through vivid imagery, carefully observed details and narrative situations that point with precision and inevitability to meanings larger than themselves. The novel is full of shrewd insights and wise observations on the human condition. Bergen's Mennonite sensibility asserts itself throughout in its uncompromising honesty and lack of pretentiousness, in its gritty sense of realism that never fakes glamor, and above all in its affirmation of the beautiful loser who snatches greedily at the joy of redemption and the gift of grace.

And yet, it is as a "Mennonite" novel that *A Year of Lesser* is at its weakest. The charismatic Christianity, as embodied by Phil Barkman, is not quite believable as growing out of Mennonite religious roots and practices. In spite of his Mennonite Brethren ministry (baptism by immersion) Phil lives a little too serenely in a world of teenage pregnancies and backsliding, drinking and philandering sinners like Johnny Fehr. It is left to a non-Mennonite academic, Michael the physicist, to expose for Johnny's benefit, the spiritual posturing and hypocrisies practised in this Mennonite community. But there is never a real sense of this Mennonite world having grown out of a more traditional one. Instead, it seems somehow culturally and spiritually disembodied from what most of us would recognize as a Mennonite community with a Mennonite set of values and beliefs. And yet, David Bergen is a writer of such searing intensity and naked honesty that one hesitates to dismiss his fictive world as having no counterpart in the actual world. Perhaps this talented young writer simply sees more deeply into our current culture than the rest of us do.

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Gloria Neufeld Redekop, *The Work of Their Hands: Mennonite Women's Societies in Canada* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1996). Paperback, xvi + 172 pp., \$24.95.

Historically, women have responded in three ways to their exclusion from roles and institutions reserved for men. Some women chose to acquiesce to the barriers placed before them. Some actively resisted the fact that some doors were closed to them by virtue of their sex. A third group of women created their own organizations and structures in which they could carry out activities and exhibit abilities that were disallowed in the male domain.

It is this third response which is explored in Gloria Neufeld Redekop's historical study of Mennonite women's societies in Canada. Redekop's main proposition is that women's societies (*Vereine* in German) functioned as a "parallel church" for Mennonite women who were denied leadership roles in the church. In this gendered context, women could "speak, pray, and creatively give expression to their own understanding of the biblical message" (1).

Although the title is general, Redekop limits her investigation to women's societies of the two largest denominational groups of Russian Mennonite background, namely, those of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada and the Canadian Mennonite Brethren. Her findings are based in large part on a detailed survey sent to 304 women's groups in 1988, with a notable return rate of just over 60 per cent. Redekop's conclusions are thus founded on substantial quantitative analysis of her surveys, supplemented by published histories of women's groups, church records, and periodical literature.

Redekop offers interesting descriptive detail on the changes over time in the naming of organizations, their stated purposes, chosen biblical mottoes, and primary activities. She follows the emergence of women's societies beginning in the 1870s, their "flowering" in the 1950s and 1960s, and decline from the 1970s to the present. Well informed by the fields of Canadian women's and church history, this study shows that Mennonite societies experienced an evolution similar to that of other Protestant women's societies.

Especially interesting is Redekop's attempt to understand change in women's societies in the context of the evolution of women's roles in Mennonite society. Thus, she attributes the flourishing of women's groups in the fifties and sixties in part to an ideological emphasis on "homemaking, motherhood, and subordination in church and home" (61) that restricted women's roles in the church. Similarly, Redekop relates the decline of women's societies in numbers and activity in recent decades to women's increased employment outside the home as well as their gradual acceptance into traditionally male-dominated aspects of church life.

While there is substantial evidence of both change and continuity in women's societies, I wish that Redekop had pushed at the analytical edges a bit harder. One wonders particularly about the relationship between women's societies and the churches they served as auxiliaries. What are the implications of the fact that some church buildings were constructed in large part using the financial resources generated by women's work? How were women's societies affected by the decreasing emphasis of Mennonite relief organizations on the material aid produced by women? And how was Mennonite nonresistance understood by women who sewed and knit for soldiers overseas during both world wars? Was/is there anything subversive about Mennonite women's societies, as some theorists of women's culture and separate spaces would argue?

Redekop is to be commended for her pioneering work on this topic. An important addition to the growing canon of Mennonite women's history, this

book raises, if not always explicitly, a range of intriguing questions regarding women's religious experience and the place of women's work within the institutional structures of Mennonite relief and fundraising.

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C. Arnold Synder, *Anabaptist History and Theology: An Introduction* (Kitchener, Ontario: Pandora Press, 1995). Paperback, 434 pp, \$35.00 US/\$38.00 Cdn.

C. Arnold Synder, *Anabaptist History and Theology: Abridged Student Edition* (Kitchener, Ontario: Pandora Press, 1995). Paperback, 269 pp, \$25.00 US/\$28.00 Cdn.

Self-published by the author, this is a useful textbook on the history and theology of Anabaptism. The larger edition is intended for the academic community, while the abridged edition is suggested for college students, church study groups, and lay readers generally. The larger edition is comprehensive, detailed, and well written. To this reviewer it is not clear why an abridged student edition is needed. Surely, students and other educated readers can appreciate and benefit from the larger edition.

This book, according to the author, seeks to synthesize Harold S. Bender's so-called "normative Anabaptism" and the later revisionists, the "polygenesis" historians who argued that Anabaptism originated in various European centres independent of the Swiss Brethren. As Snyder states in the Introduction: "...this text is an attempt at a new synthesis and organization of the historical and theological material, and an attempt to integrate insights from different (and sometimes antagonistic) historical methodologies"(3). Quite appropriately, Snyder uses the quilt analogy to illustrate his methodology. He wishes to weave *all* the appropriate threads of Anabaptist life and thought into a "word tapestry." In doing so Snyder claims to ignore the old quarrel between the so-called "secular" historians and the theologians. Instead he seeks to emphasize the many and various factors—social, political, economic and religious—which shaped the Anabaptist movement. Taking into account the recent work of scholars such as Joyce Irwin and Linda Huebert Hecht, Snyder also includes in his narrative the significant roles women played (or were not allowed to play) in the Anabaptist story. This is a welcome and long overdue corrective in Anabaptist scholarship. Regrettably, these sections are significantly shortened

in the abridged edition, to the detriment, no doubt, of the importance of this subject of study.

While Snyder generally succeeds in writing a balanced history, he nevertheless tips his hat in the direction of the “secular” historians and tends to exclude, or just allude to, the work of historians who like Bender stressed an “Anabaptist vision” for Mennonites today. For example, Thomas Müntzer (who was not an Anabaptist and was criticized by the Swiss Brethren as early as 1524, and whose militarism was rejected by the South German Anabaptists) is treated in great detail as one who had a great influence on the Anabaptist movement; indeed, he almost appears as its veritable father. Snyder appears to go out of his way to “correct” Bender on this point. Ironically, Snyder’s (and the revisionists’) interpretation of Müntzer and Anabaptism is as old as Luther’s and Bullinger’s, historically incorrect, view of the Anabaptists as the progeny of Müntzer and the Zwickau Prophets. The work of scholars such as Abraham Friesen, who interpret Müntzer less sympathetically, and in my opinion more accurately, is more or less ignored in this text.

Menno Simons, on the other hand, is portrayed as a weak leader, dominated at times by fellow-elders, and vacillating in his theological views. Moreover, Menno is shown as one obsessed with the idea of “purity” which, according to Snyder, led to legalism among Mennonites (346-47). While Menno may appear legalistic, especially through late twentieth-century lenses, many of his writings, including his letters to individuals, breathe a spirit of humility, love and concern for the survival of Anabaptist-Mennonites. Snyder is especially harsh in his discussion of shunning (the ban) in Menno’s ministry. Without a shred of evidence, in fact contradicting Menno’s own words, Snyder states: “Although Menno denied that such shunning was a ‘divorce’...the distinction was a fine one indeed: marital shunning was a *de facto divorce* - a divorce in all but name” (286). We know that the practice of martial avoidance occupied Menno to the end of his life and was most painful to him. Nevertheless, he believed that he acted scripturally and in his writings he emphasized that shunning ought to bring the sinning member back to congregational fellowship. In Menno’s thinking marital shunning was certainly no divorce.

There are important recent studies that portray Menno’s concern for a “pure church” more positively than this book does. Egil Grisliis of the University of Manitoba, for example, has written numerous articles on Menno Simons, including articles on Menno and Pauline theology, on Menno and “good works”, on Menno’s concern for New Testament moral purity, Menno and the Lord’s Supper, and on Menno’s monophysite views concerning Christ’s incarnation (see *Journal of Mennonite Studies*, Vols. 5, 8, 9, 10 and 11). There is no reference to these articles in the text nor are the articles and the journal in which they appear included in Snyder’s bibliography. Moreover, even Menno’s strict puritanism has been shown as an aspect in Menno’s theology which attracted *especially* women both to Menno and to Anabaptism (see, for example, Adela D. Torchia, “Purity and Perseverance: Menno Simons’

Understanding of Practical Holiness and Early Anabaptist Women," *JMS*. Vol. 12). All this is not to say that Menno and other Anabaptist leaders were above reproach. It is to say, however, that their "weaknesses" and "failure" need to be described fairly within the context of their time and stated intentions.

Snyder's book includes a useful index, a fairly extensive bibliography of primary and (selected) secondary works, maps, and copies of pictures of persons and places. However, both the type and the black and white pictures are of poor quality. Throughout my review copy there are lines that are smudged and hard to make out, and in Chapter 4 endnotes 32 to 38 (i.e. pages 65-66) are missing. There are also numerous typos and spelling errors. This otherwise useful text should have been published by an established press, which might have prevented many of the above deficiencies.

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David T. Priestley, ed., *Memory and Hope: Strands of Canadian Baptist History* (Waterloo: Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion, 1996). Paperback, viii + 211 pp.

A Baptist Heritage Conference at the North American Baptist College in Edmonton in 1990 brought together leaders and scholars from all but one of the dozen or so national Baptist bodies in Canada. The 14 essays that make up this volume resulted from this gathering. The bulk of the papers deal with the various movements and structures that have linked, and divided, Canadian Baptists over their 200 plus years in what is now Canada. Two prominent "strands" that occur in numerous essays are unity and identity.

That these two issues should persist is not surprising, given the dual European origins of Baptists in the Puritan movement of seventeenth century England and the continental Radical Reformation of the sixteenth. This gave rise to two distinct theological orientations in the Calvinist (Particular) and Armenian (General) Baptist groupings. In North America, including the Maritime region of Canada, Baptist origins were closely linked to the Great Awakening. This provides an on-going inclination toward current American evangelicalism.

Caught up in the fundamentalist-modernist controversy of the 1920s, Canadian Baptists experienced major schisms over general theological orientation rather than over Baptist distinctives, such as regenerate church membership and believers baptism. One stream thus moved in the ecumenical, mainstream

Protestant direction, publishing a hymnal in 1936 that was virtually identical to that of the United Church, and joining the Canadian Council of Churches in 1944, the very year of its formation. That connection faltered over the development of the United Church's new Sunday School curriculum in the 1960s. The Baptist withdrawal from the Canadian Council of Churches and affiliation with the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada in the 1980s signaled the latest direction.

Like Mennonites, some Baptist groups have retained North American denominational connections which, to a considerable degree, counteract national Canadian ties. The body with most parallels to Canadian Mennonite experience is the North American Baptist Conference (formerly German Baptist Conference), the focus of two essays in this collection. In western Canada especially, the character of this group was shaped by German immigrants of the 1870s and prolonged by the large new immigration of ethnic Germans in the 1920s and the years after World War II. As its title indicates, the NABC remains a North American, rather than a Canadian body.

Of particular current interest is the recent formation of a Canadian Convention of Southern Baptists. It resulted from dissatisfaction in some Canadian Baptist circles "over the powerful interdenominational para-church groups which recruited Baptist young people and financial resources for their projects, yet refrained from supporting denominational programs" (100). It is, thus, seen by its current champions as symbolizing doctrinal rather than national loyalty.

Mennonites will find in Baptist history many themes that parallel their own: a struggle between congregational and denominational autonomy; a balance between ecumenical openness and courageous sharing of unique denominational distinctives; the role of the Canada-US border; and, perhaps most of all, the challenge of living in a family of a dozen siblings that are not ready to unite.

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Elizabeth Bloomfield, *Waterloo Township Through Two Centuries* (Kitchener, ON: Waterloo Historical Society, 1995).

Jacob Guenter, et.al., *Hague-Osler Mennonite Reserve, 1895-1995* (Hepburn, SK: Hague-Osler Reserve Book Committee, 1995).

Contrasting historical circumstances enabled Mennonites to establish large, relatively compact settlements in both Waterloo Township, Ontario and the Hague-Osler Mennonite Reserve of Saskatchewan. Anniversaries associated with each of these settlements have produced two historical volumes, *Waterloo Township Through Two Centuries* and *Hague-Osler Mennonite Reserve, 1895-1995*.

The Mennonite settlement in Block Number Two of the Six Nations Indian lands on the Grand River, renamed Waterloo Township in 1816, is sometimes referred to as the first Mennonite bloc settlement in Canada. A syndicate of Mennonites from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, purchased 60,000 acres from a land speculator, Richard Beasley, in 1805 and resold subdivided lots to settlers. Dr. Elizabeth Bloomfield describes three eras of development and change that followed that purchase, culminating in the dissolution of Waterloo Township as a political entity in 1972.

Most of the founding settlers of Waterloo Township were Mennonites, but some were River Brethren (also known as Tunkers or Dunkards, and later Brethren in Christ). Other families belonged to the Amish, United Brethren, Moravian, Schwenkfelder, Swedenborgian, Quaker, Methodist and Lutheran churches. The first Roman Catholic settler is believed to have arrived in 1829. By 1861, almost 20 percent of the total population in Waterloo Township was Roman Catholic. Another 29 percent were Lutheran and 22 percent were Mennonite. The Mennonite share remained relatively constant until the 1930s when it gradually dropped, reaching 19 percent in 1941, 13 percent in 1961 and 11 percent in 1971. *Waterloo Township Through Two Centuries* is a fascinating and attractive illustrated study of all the groups of people who lived in Waterloo Township during the period of Bloomfield's study.

The Hague-Osler Mennonite settlement on the South Saskatchewan River in Saskatchewan was a group movement of Mennonites from Manitoba under the auspices of the Old Colony Mennonite church. Bishop Johan Wiebe and Superintendent Franz Froese met with the Canadian Minister of the Interior in 1894 in Winnipeg, and requested the reservation of land in the west to establish daughter settlements. This led to the creation of a reserve of four townships by order in council early in 1895, to which was added a fifth township by order in council on 24 June, 1898. Another five townships adjoining this reserve to the east were set aside by order of the Commissioner of Dominion Lands on 19 August, 1898, in order to accommodate more Mennonite settlers. Later in the same year an area of 11 townships adjacent to the northern edge of the original

reserve was set aside for Mennonite homesteaders for five years. The Hague-Osler Mennonite Reserve Book Committee provides short histories of some 34 villages and "agglomerated settlements" that were established by 1905. The Committee provides longer histories of the "trading centres" of Warman, Hague, Osler and Martensville.

The pioneer families of the Hague-Osler Mennonite Reserve were almost exclusively Mennonite and this book is written for their descendants. The Book Committee gathered "stories of our people" (669) and photographs that would encourage readers "to examine their past, to reflect upon their current condition and to reaffirm their faith" (702). These stories include pressures to assimilate, imposition of secular education, difficulties confronted by pacifists during the two world wars, the drought and depression of the 1930s, changes in farming technology, and "temptations of affluence" (iii).

Both *Waterloo Township* and *Hague-Osler* are products created within distinct contexts for specific markets. The Waterloo Historical Society, which sponsored the Waterloo book, is an established secular organization with limited Mennonite membership. Accordingly, the Society hired a non-Mennonite with strong academic credentials to write a detached, analytical study in the context of Ontario history. The resulting work appeals to a cross-section of people interested in Ontario political, religious, social and genealogical history. It received the Scadding Award of Excellence from the Ontario Historical Society in 1996.

The Hague-Osler Book Committee, on the other hand, is a grass-roots organization of Mennonite local historians without outside institutional support or financial backing. Accordingly, the Committee used their own talents and networks to assemble anecdotal stories and photographs from many contributors relating narrowly to Russian Mennonite history. I was surprised to note, for example, that there was no mention of Louis Riel or Almighty Voice. The resulting pictorial history has limited appeal to people without roots in the Hague-Osler community. Its strengths lie in unique details of oral history which are recorded here for the first time, and the photographs which document many aspects of Russian Mennonite life. I found the inclusion of many photographs of physically challenged persons especially interesting. One rarely sees this side of Mennonite life in Canada.

Both books have been well received in their respective communities. *Waterloo Township* is sold out and will be reprinted. *Hague-Osler* has already been reprinted.

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The Preservings. Steinbach, MB: Hanover-Steinbach Historical Society. Biannual Newsletter, 1993-1996.

The efforts of the Mennonites in the Hanover Steinbach Historical Society of Manitoba, Canada, have produced some noteworthy results, including their newsletter, *Preservings*, now under review here. Begun in 1988, the organization's purpose is "to research and write the history and heritage of the R.M. [Rural Municipality] of Hanover and the Town of Steinbach. The emphasis is on the period 1874-1910. Through public meetings, writings and publications it seeks to foster an understanding and respect for the rich heritage of the community." (loose sheet, Dec. 1995)

This clearly stated focus is on the Russian Mennonite immigrants of the 1870s, the so-called "Kanadier" Mennonites, who came to the Manitoba East Reserve as two distinct groups. The Bergthaler were from near the Sea of Azov, a daughter colony of the Chortitza or so-called "Old Colony" settlement in Southern Russia, now Ukraine. Today this group is primarily represented by the Sommerfelder and Chortitzer groups. The second immigrant group was the Kleine Gemeinde, a small reform movement in the Molotschna Colony in southern Russia. Today in Canada this group is called the Evangelical Mennonite Conference.

This publication, the result of current interest in local history, is growing rapidly. From the modest first issue of January 1993 (6 pp.) to the two-part behemoths of June (124 pp) and December 1996 (148 pp), the term "newsletter" appears inadequate to describe the size of this publication. Although under the impetus and sway of editor Delbert F. Plett, a lawyer and historian in Steinbach, Manitoba, these issues contain pieces by many persons. A serendipitous conjunction of Plett's interests, computerized word processing, graphics software, and the writing abilities of contributors has resulted in a commendable legacy. We also learn (June 1996, pt. 2, 2) that the publication is funded in part by the "D.F. Plett Foundation Fund."

Many of the pieces are biographical—written by descendants, but other topics help broaden the appeal. Examples are "Researching Pioneer Families" (June 1996, part 2, p. 39), "Mennonite Burial Customs" (June 1996, pt. 2, 48). A few articles are by university-based historians (eg.: Royden Loewen, "Elisabeth Rempel Reimer: Immigrant Woman," Dec. 1995, 2). Apparently Mr. Plett has reserved the translations of primary source documents for his equally hefty monographs, for one finds few of these in the newsletter. One discovers the usual tidbits of information: reunion announcements, the fact that pop music star John Denver has Kleine Gemeinde ancestors (June 1996, pt. 1, 30), tours to the Russian homeland of the Kleine Gemeinde led by Delbert Plett (June 1996, pt. 1, 11), book reviews, and numerous illustrations.

Scholars, especially those in the areas of social history and folklore, will gain benefit from publications such as this newsletter—empowered by the forces of genealogy and local history. Such scholars should remove any

blindness of disdain in order to utilize the rich treasures which are exemplified in *Preservings*. In turn, the editor of the newsletter could broaden its use by making some alterations. For example, the long-term usefulness of the periodical is compromised by the lack of a thorough table of contents for each issue, or any stated plans for a subject and/or name index. Of course, a good index could be produced at any time. Also, the identification and description of primary sources could be published on a regular basis as an aid to scholars.

Higher editorial standards could widen the readability and appeal beyond the in-crowd of descendants of the "Kanadiers." So, too, could the translation of numerous German words, including some words in article titles (eg. "Aeltester Gerhard Wiebe (1827-1900): A Father of Manitoba," June 1995, 1). Some of the longer articles have an annoying habit of "meandering" throughout the issue rather than focussing a compact presentation on consecutive pages (eg.: "Education in the East Reserve: 1874-1920," June 1996, pt. 1, with 10 interruptions). Certain illustrations could be more fully described, such as the valuable map of Chortitza, Russia, in 1830 (June 1996, pt. 1, 59). The inclusion of multi-generational outlines, conceivably reaching back to seventeenth century Poland-Prussia, could provide the advantage of visualizing links among many generations in a compact space.

The focus on the period from 1874-1910—the immigration of the Kanadier Mennonites—is probably a useful and sensible restriction in the early years of the historical organization. One hopes for a future broadening of the scope to include the Russian Mennonite immigrants of the 1920s to the East Reserve, the so-called Russländer Mennonites. Certainly the historical interdependencies, either in conflict or cooperation, of these two streams of Russian Mennonites is an important enough theme to cause an eventual widening of the scope of this local historical society. If broadened in this way, even more persons could benefit from the inspiring nurture of heritage themes which this periodical fosters.

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Cornelius J. Dyck, ed. and trans., *Spiritual Life in Anabaptism* (Scottsdale, PA and Waterloo, ON: Herald Press, 1995). Paperback, 311 pp.

Daniel Liechty, ed., trans., and intro. *Early Anabaptist Spirituality. Selected Writings*. (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1994). Paperback, 304 pp.

Writers on the Anabaptist tradition in the last few decades have tended to emphasize the movement's ethics rather than its spiritual life. In contrast to the inwardness of pietistic evangelicalism and the dogmatic sacramentalism of mainline churches, Anabaptism was seen as a social protest movement, calling for human justice in the face of religious and political oppression.

Two recent collections of Anabaptist spiritual texts come as a useful complement and corrective. Liechty's volume in the excellent *Classics of Western Spirituality* series includes a preface by Hans Hillerbrand and then presents complete texts by Felix Mantz, Balthasar Hubmaier, Hans Hut, Leonhard Schiemer, Hans Schlaffer, Hans Denck, Peter Walpot, Dirk Philips and Menno Simons. There are also six early songs from the *Ausbund* and an Appendix with 10 illustrations from the *Martyrs' Mirror*. The texts are accompanied by introductions and annotation.

In his collection C.J. Dyck puts forward a thesis about Anabaptist spirituality, distinguishing it from the monastic religiousness of the Middle Ages. It was active rather than passive, he argues, emphasizing community, following the example of Jesus in active service and becoming involved in the social world round about them. Dyck writes: "If there is a difference between the medieval view and Anabaptism, it is in the latter's rejection of a long sacramental-liturgical tradition, in intense small-group Bible studies, a sense of mission, and in a new awareness of the meaning of free will for discipleship, among other non-monastic themes" (21).

The book's chapters are organized by subject rather than by author: an interpretation of the Apostles' Creed, the conversion of Menno, the new birth, Word and Spirit, discipleship, peace and justice, lifestyle, faith and encouragement, the church, prayer and meditation for spiritual discernment. Selections are taken from the following writers: Leonard Schiemer, Michael Sattler, Felix Manz, Hans Hut, Balthasar Hubmaier, Hans Denck, Pilgram Marpeck, Menno Simons, Dirk Philips, David Joris, Hans de Ries, Peter Riedemann, Lijsken Dirks, Anna Jansz, Andreas Ethrenpreis, Margarete Endris, Maeyken of Deventer, Maeyken Wens, Hans Schlaffer and Pieter Pietersz. According to Dyck, "Perhaps the crown of this volume is Pietersz' *The Way to the City of Peace* in chapter 13. It is a serious *challenge* against the growing social permissiveness, wealth, and luxurious living. Most interesting also is his strong reaction against smoking, which had recently come to the Netherlands" (25). Indeed, Pietersz' concerns are an example of how Anabaptist-Mennonite spirituality related to ethics and morality.

Both volumes are generally well translated into clear English from the original languages. They make important texts available to a wide audience. Scholars may wish for clearer annotation regarding the editions used and others that are available, as for example the classic *Von der wahren Lieb* by Hans Denck, which has been translated several times, while the Pieter Pietersz *Wegh na Vreden-Stadt* appears in English for the first time.

The two collections are complementary in their content and parallel in their attractive format. Though relatively free of errors, there are a few wrong numbers in Dyck's edition which should be noted: the decree issued by Anna of Oldenburg was in 1544, not 1545 (41); the reference to the Pipkin-Yoder edition of Hubmaier should be pp. 235-36, not 12-13 (65); the letter is from Menno to Bouwens, not the other way around (159).

Harry Loewen and Victor Doerksen
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Migration North: Mennonites From Mexico (Winnipeg: Mennonite Central Committee, 1995). Video, 40 mins.

Migration North depicts the culture, values and spiritual beliefs of the Old Colony Mennonites of Mexico. It is an orientation tool for educators, health care professionals, employment councilors and others who provide social services to Mexican Mennonites migrating to Canada. As such it seeks to provide a better understanding between the social serving agencies and the recipients of their services. As well, the video has attracted a wide viewing audience of Canadian Mennonites who feel a sense of kinship with the conservative Mennonites of Mexico.

The video begins with a historical overview of the Mennonite move to Mexico. Beginning in 1922, approximately 6000 Mennonites from Manitoba and Saskatchewan migrated south following a loss of their right to maintain private German language schools. The video then presents the views of present day Mexican Mennonites on such issues as education, family planning, employment opportunities for youth, economic conditions and the large return migration (c. 27, 000) to Canada where employment and better living conditions beckon. The video ends by examining the experiences of Mennonites who have "retrace[d] the steps of their ancestors and move[d] North," with a view of how they have adapted to a new life in Canada.

Much of the video is shot in Mexico where the videographer had access to an unusually wide spectrum of Mennonite life. Rare scenes from the ordinary and everyday life of Old Colony Mennonites, which to outsiders is the life of an extraordinary group of Mennonites, is the great strength of *Migration North*: woman busy with domestic tasks, farmers working irrigation equipment, steel-wheeled tractors at work, horse-drawn vehicles kicking up dust, girls posing in wide brimmed hats trimmed with matching black bows, children at school and even people attending church. A rare find, indeed, is the clip of hymn singing at church.

Excerpts from interviews with these “extraordinary” people are featured throughout the video. For a society that wishes to remain isolated, an impressive range of individuals consented to be filmed. Among them are a traditional medical/midwifery, husband/wife team as well as a licensed Mennonite medical doctor; a minister who gives the classically evasive answers to questions about Old Colony faith to an outsider, as well as a minister who discloses his departure from traditional teachings; a young cheese factory labourer who plans to move to Canada because he cannot make ends meet to support his family, as well as a successful apple grower and community leader.

This wealth of information is presented through the eyes of the scriptwriter/narrator whose grandparents chose not to move to Mexico in 1922. Although personable, this approach makes *Migration North* the narrator’s story rather than that of the people to whom it belongs. The potential which is apparent in the footage, that of the Old Colony Mennonites presenting their *own* struggle as their traditional life is threatened and rapidly changing, is not fully realized. The video, in the main, deals with why a people would choose to leave their homeland to face the hardships of a transitory life in Canada; the narrator’s interpretive grid results in the viewers’ encountering Old Colony Mennonite life from a Canadian perspective rather than from an authentically Old Colony one. This is unfortunate. The directedness of the interview questions, pursuing a specific purpose, also leaves the viewer feeling that more and other information might have been forthcoming if the questions had been more open-ended.

In spite of these weaknesses, *Migration North* provides a useful and informative overview of life among Old Colony Mexican Mennonites both for its intended audience as well as a more general one.

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Leo Driedger, *Multi-Ethnic Canada: Identities and Inequalities* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1996). 352 pp., including references and index.

When you pick up this book and get the feeling that you have seen this before you probably have. It is really a revised edition of Driedger’s *The Ethnic Factor: Identity in Diversity* published by McGraw-Hill Ryerson in 1989. The upgrade involves incorporating the 1991 Census data, acknowledging new sources and removing older sources, using more politically-correct language (e.g. Aboriginals instead of Natives, French Québécois instead of French Canadian), refining the index, adding key events such as the Quebec referendum 1995, and drawing in new research findings.

The author takes the position that Canadians must view their society as "unabashedly multi-ethnic and pluralist". The analysis is framed in 12 chapters divided into five parts. Part I identifies a theoretical focus by looking at what classical, American and Canadian sociologists have written about ethnicity. Weber's conception of ethnic identity based on race, culture, tribe, nationality, and religion is selected to guide the analysis. Six theories of ethnic change and persistence are used to develop a conformity-pluralist model intended to reflect the various experiences endured by ethnic groups in Canadian society. The balance of the book is devoted to comparing the ethnic groups identified in the different dimensions of the model.

To support this analysis the author provides, in Part II, an empirical look at the diversity of the Canadian population using census data from 1871 to 1991. Immigration trends and origins of immigrants are traced. Four ethnic types emerge from the immigration patterns: the *Aboriginals*, the *charter-Europeans*, the non-charter Europeans, and the visible Third World minorities. The data also show that the distribution of the ethnic groups is very uneven across six Canadian regions.

Part III focuses on voluntary ethnic identity and solidarity. The significance of a language symbol system is shown by examining the French Québécois experience. Other sociocultural and symbolic dimensions such as territory, institutions, culture, history, ideology and charismatic leadership are assessed by comparing findings involving a variety of ethnic groups. The role of the "sacred canopy" in shaping identity is illustrated by the Aboriginal food-gatherers, Hutterite agriculturists and Jewish urbanites.

The stratification of Canadian society in terms of political power, social prestige, socio-economic status, ecological segregation and racial inequalities is explored in Part IV. The author concludes that ethnic stratification is essentially involuntary, and that it may be both a resource and a drawback when it comes to social mobility. The segregation of minorities is shown to vary enormously by cities and by groups. Studies of Blacks, Chinese and Japanese in Canada provide ample evidence of apartheid segregation and racial inequality.

Evidence in Part V suggests that Canadian attitudes show considerable goodwill toward a variety of ethnic expressions that support pluralism. At the same time data show that ethnic origin, race and religion lead to differential and unfair treatment. The recognition of some aboriginal and multicultural rights by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) is highlighted to show the need for minority rights to limit future injustices such as the expulsion of the Acadians, undermining of the Métis nation, unsettled Aboriginal land claims, and hostilities toward the Jews.

This book brings together a wide range of empirical and analytical work pertaining to ethnicity in Canada. For some readers the extensive theoretical references and the liberal use of statistics will be distracting and overly academic. Others hoping for more theoretical insights in a field that needs

some consolidation may be disappointed. The conformity-pluralist model is helpful as an organizing framework for the book but adds little to theory development. A concluding chapter evaluating theory construction in a polyethnic society and suggesting further research and policy directions would have been welcome.

A careful proof-reading of the text and tables would have eliminated typographical errors and repetition of material. My guess is that the book will be a difficult read for undergraduate students but it will stand as a good reference book. It makes a clear case for a multi-ethnic view of Canada again.

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Miriam Toews, *Summer of My Amazing Luck* (Winnipeg: Turnstone Press, 1996). 192 pp., \$16.95.

Get ready for some rollicking picaresque fiction in the maternal mode. This is part *Don Quixote*, part *Lunatic Villas*, and the unlikely combination is one of the things that makes Miriam Toews' debut novel so delightfully humorous, subversive, and naughtily clever. "It's a nutty life when you try to combine romance and taking care of little kids," comments Lucy, wide-eyed 18-year-old narrator and single mother, bewildered to find herself suddenly plunged into the life of the poor and the outcast, in public housing and on the "dole" (132). It's the nuttiness of single welfare mothers' lives in a society that treats them like semi-criminals and cons, instead of honouring their 24-hour-a-day exhausting work, performed for the most part, despite the lousy wage and job conditions, with devotion, pleasure, and certainly love, that Toews chooses as her main subject here. "Paternity is a legal fiction," wrote James Joyce, and Toews' parody of our society's ongoing obsession with fathers as the only proper sanction for human reproduction, despite their ephemeral role in the reproductive process, and the well-known unreliability of fathers' social support for their offspring (some of whom they may not even know about), takes the Joycean play on genealogy to a new level of revision here.

The success of the narrative hinges on being able to convince us simultaneously that on the one hand, the women at Have-a-Life Housing, or Half-a-Life as the residents like to call it, are there because of unfortunate and often violent circumstances in their pasts, and on the other, that their lives are interesting, that they possess desires and hopes for themselves and their loved children,

that their lives have intrinsic and social worth, whether or not they're on their way to improved circumstances. (And even, occasionally, that they are able to enjoy life in a particularly spontaneous and joyous way *because* of their lack of place in the symbolic order.) The success of the text depends on Toews' ability to sustain the crazy comic pace she sets for herself, jampacked with whacky coincidences, a dizzying array of characters, wonderful wordplay and other assorted tricks, and through all this, an interesting plot line that is neither overwhelmed by the *bricolage* texture, nor so strong as to render this patchwork world as secondary to the action. This is a difficult thing to pull off: in picturing the single welfare mother as semi-outlaw, as fun-loving adventurer, as temporarily incarcerated drifter with a pack of fatherless children in tow, Toews not only challenges the traditional stereotype of the mother as absent, or silent self-sacrificing homemaker secondary to a more powerful father, but also sets our whole notion of home and road (and who belongs to which) on edge. The novel succeeds marvellously on both counts. The narrative energy never flags; and by the time Lucy decides to accompany her friend Lish on her road trip in a borrowed van to find her long lost boyfriend (whom Lucy has been impersonating in the form of postcards sent from various bogus American locations to cheer up her friend), accompanied by their five young children, we have been drawn so far into the carnivalesque logic of *Half-a-Life* that, like Lucy, we think this is an exciting, marvellous, even important plan.

One of the many pleasures in reading this novel is the detail with which Toews documents the daily heroism involved in raising young children on a low income. Getting strollers and wagons through revolving doors becomes a major carnival feat; coping with the vicissitudes of croup in the night and mosquito bites and spilled juice becomes a glorious challenge. It's almost impossible to write the kind of interrupted, hilarious multifaceted dialogue that occurs around young children. Toews does it better than anyone I've seen. Here's an excerpt:

“Letitia was crying a bit because she'd peed on her dress, her favourite dress. Alba, in her bossiest voice, was telling her, ‘Well, you should have spread your legs farther apart and lifted your dress high, right mom? Right mom? RIGHT MOM? MOM, MOM, LETITIA SHOULD HAVE SPREAD HER -

‘YES ALBA! She should have. Drop it already. She's already forgotten about it. Good grief. Lucy, Lucy, I'm sorry this has all gotten so...GET IN THE VAN,’ she yelled, ‘YOU'LL FALL IN THE DITCH LEAVE THAT GARBAGE ALONE. Geez Hope, Maya, haul Alba and Letitia into the van,’ Lish said.

‘Ugh, she's covered in pee, I'm not touching her,’ said Hope.

‘ALBA HELP YOUR SISTER RIGHT NOW FOR GOD'S SAKE HER DRESS IS ALREADY DRY.’

‘I always have to do everything, why can't Maya...’ (148)

After you've left those sensuous, high-spirited, incredible early years of parenting, you forget how complicated and fast-paced and engaging it all was. Toews' novel with its close-up lens on that very undernarrated segment of our collective and individual lives reminds us with humour and panache.

An incidental pleasure for Manitoba readers will be seeing our recent tribulations with flooding and bugs documented here in all their true horror. None of us will forget the summer of the rains, which brought to life seven years' worth of drought-delayed mosquitoes all at once. The only consolation that year brought was its storymaking potential. Toews uses the legendary summer's crisis-filled trajectory to great effect, a sympathetic backdrop, as it were, to the crisis-filled lives of the women at Half-a-Life. When the sun finally comes out for a few hours, the whole community celebrates.

Those Mennonite readers looking for overt Mennonite content in the novel (after all there have been so few novels written by Mennonite women and we are all hungry for fiction about ourselves), will at least initially be disappointed. This is a portrait of contemporary Canadian urban life below the poverty line, and the community it portrays is a mixed one, both racially and culturally. On the other hand, what is Mennonite under these circumstances? Certainly Toews' relentless interrogation of fatherhood as the only legitimate access to the symbolic order, when so many fathers are in fact absent or unreliable, and very few participate in the intense hands-on responsibilities of parenting young children to the extent that mothers do, is a timely Mennonite (as well as non-Mennonite) theme. I like to think of Lucy and her mother's ability to laugh a lot as a Mennonite trait, though it is surely true that the reason they can indulge themselves in it so freely, given their unorthodox lives, is because they are not circumscribed by a judging Mennonite community, just as Toews' narrative derives most of its permission for parody and the carnivalesque (it seems to me) from non-Mennonite sources.

I don't want to discuss the outcome of the novel here (you should all go out and buy the book and find out for yourself), except to say that there is a satisfying climax and resolution to the dilemmas facing our undaunted heroines Lucy and Lish, and the many social questions raised here; the kind of trick ending that leaves you feeling surprised into joy. There is even, for those of you worried about the fate of fatherhood in a story like this, a kind of redemption, though not without its respective price, for a few select and willing fathers. Brava, Miriam Toews.

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Armin Wiebe, *The Second Coming of Yeeat Shpanst* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: Turnstone Press, 1995). Soft-cover, 298 pp., \$17.95.

This, the third novel from Armin Wiebe, combines his distinctive vision of Mennonite life in rural Manitoba with an overarching apocalyptic tone. The influences of the outside world threaten the rural community of Gutenthal with an onslaught of television media and unfamiliar fashions. Further more, multinational capitalism, encroaching American culture, and irreconcilable constitutional debates threaten to tear apart the entirety of Canada in a whirlwind of identity crises. Things seem fairly bleak. The novel itself is even at risk in these last days, as Koadel Kehler, the teacher's son, warns, "A person going to write a posthole modern style book should hurry it along before Generation X decides to help the neo-conformatives to propel us forward into the past."

Yeeat Shpanst, the vanishing politician from the final pages of *The Salvation of Yasch Siemens*, reprises his elusive role. His return and ensuing disappearance remain a mystery, while in his new absence, those who witnessed his curling rink address repeat and multiply his words. The Tales of the Land of Them and the Land of Us, read from Yeeat's notes, bring a new voice to the narrative. These nationalistic fables, together with the parodically rewritten Prime Minister's speech, and a stirring manifesto—"I see millions of beetweeders, with hoes sharpened, descending on our choking fields"—conjure the colloquial, well-intentioned voice of grassroots politics.

Contributing to the complex, sometimes confused structure of the novel, Wiebe has found a surrogate author in Oata Siemens. Writing all that she sees with a carpenter's pencil in a Farmers' Union notebook, she helps ground the novel, often sprawling under its excess. With her decision to "Write her way out of this black and white summer all by herself," Oata records a personal vision, an exploration of her own past which parallels the larger, apocalyptic call for change in these troubled times. Oata views this epic action through her own imaginings and watches them on the television, but when she hears her own words broadcast, the source of the visions become confused—the lines which separate politics and the pastoral world of Gutenthal tangle inseparably.

Considering the recent announcement of the closing of Roger's Sugar in Winnipeg, and with it the apparent demise of the Manitoba sugar beet industry, *The Second Coming of Yeeat Shpanst* arrived, in retrospect, as an appropriate harbinger. By depicting the concerns of rural life and keenly dramatizing the Low German language and culture, Armin Wiebe has opened a space for writers from this tradition. With that, his work also brings humour to a literary tradition oftentimes guilty of being overly earnest.

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C. Arnold Snyder and Linda A. Huebert Hecht, eds., *Profiles of Anabaptist Women: Sixteenth Century Reforming Pioneers* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 1996). xxii + 438 pp, maps and 10 b/w plates. Paper \$28.95

One of the most interesting results of feminist scholarship in religious history has been to demonstrate how the inclusion of women's experience by its nature leads to a revised and more nuanced understanding of the traditional narrative. By drawing on recent Reformation and feminist scholarship, and by its sensitivity to the specific Anabaptist context, this attractively presented collection of over seventy group and individual profiles by Canadian, American, Dutch and German Anabaptist scholars makes an important contribution to that endeavour.

Assuming as their organizational pattern the familiar polygenesis approach to sixteenth-century Anabaptism, the editors have divided their selections into three geographical areas: Swiss, German/Austrian, and German/Dutch Anabaptists, each prefaced by a map and a brief but helpful introduction. With only a few exceptions, the focus is on the developmental stage of the Anabaptist movement, the late 1520s to 30s, a period, it is argued, when, despite certain gender limitations on the activity of women, there existed enhanced opportunity for egalitarianism as "Spirit-elected" women leaders assumed a variety of roles within their communities. What follows is an astoundingly rich tapestry of how women of different socio-economic backgrounds were able to integrate the experience and the propagation of the new Anabaptist religion into the demands of day to day life. Such a focus on women's largely private world calls for a skillful reconstruction of limited sources. John Oyer, for example, draws on court records to reconstruct the activity of nine women leaders in Augsburg, who during the brief period 1527-28 quietly, by offering hospitality to refugees or through bible reading in spinning and sewing circles, were able to hold the movement together in the face of persecution. Lois Barrett is able to tease out of published pamphlets and local records the remarkable prophetic visions and leadership activity of Strasbourg's Ursula Jost and Barbara Rebstock, both of whom had a deep impact on Melchior Hoffman. The range of topics and experiences covered is extensive, and generally eschews a hagiographic approach. Thus Linda Huebert Hecht offers insight into the motivation and context of a number of Anabaptist women in the Tirol who recanted, while Marlene Epp and Julia Roberts explore sexual attitudes by examining the unusually benign reception given to victims of rape by the early Hutterite communities.

Though the volume contains a few minor flaws (most notably the idiosyncratic decision to relegate contributors' names alphabetically to the back of the book), it offers considerable potential for both teaching and further research. Especially useful for teaching purposes is the inclusion of excerpts of printed

texts in a number of articles, such as “Anna Jansz of Rotterdam” by Werner Packull, and Arnold Snyder’s “Magdalena, Walpurga, and Sophia Marschalk von Pappenheim”. Instructors in search of texts which do justice to both the larger narrative of Reformation history and to women’s religious experience will also welcome the editors’ clear introductory exposition of Anabaptist belief and practice. And, while the book’s thrust is in the first place to recover women’s stories rather than to offer a gendered approach to Anabaptist history, by showing the intersection of women’s domestic and religious roles and by drawing attention to points of contact with feminist studies of medieval spirituality, these profiles offer tantalizing glimpses into the way the inclusion of gender into religious history deepens our understanding of continuity as well as of change.

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