

historical study, but ignoring them does a great disservice to those seeking faithfulness through historical reflection.

While Penner's "eyes of faith" may at times appear obscured by rose-tinted glasses, her narrative approach to writing history, and her incorporation of women's voices through the individual profile histories at the end of her chapters, create a volume that is both accessible to the common reader and lifts up the role of women in a story that otherwise reads very male-dominated. In *Circling the Globe*, Penner has written a history of the EMC that a new generation will be able to receive, understand, and engage more critically, and for this we are all grateful.

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Donald B. Kraybill, *What the Amish Teach Us: Plain Living in a Busy World*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2021. Pp. xvi + 184. Hardcover, \$14.95 US.

The noted sociologist Donald Kraybill has published extensively on Amish practice and beliefs, exploring complexities of Amish negotiation with mainstream culture in books such as *Amish Grace: How Forgiveness Transcended Tragedy* (co-authored with Steven Nolt and David Weaver-Zercher in 2007) and *The Amish* (with Karen Johnson-Weiner and Steven Nolt in 2013). Now, Kraybill's first-hand access to a range of Amish families and communities has prompted him to write a short, accessible volume for general audiences, organized around lessons he has absorbed through repeated encounters with Amish individuals in their schools, businesses, and homes. This volume begins with the premise that "the Amish are silent social critics—offering a critique of modern culture that is intellectually provocative yet always practical" (x).

For readers unfamiliar with contemporary Amish practices, *What the Amish Teach Us* serves as an introduction to topics ranging from childrearing to some groups' recent selective adaptation of smart phones. Organized topically around twenty-two themes that Kraybill says have reshaped his thinking about living in a North American "hyper-everything world," the book provides examples of Amish values of patience, humility, and community-mindedness. Among twenty-six hundred church communities scattered across

the US and Canada, decentralization and limited formal schooling remain hallmarks of Amish life. Kraybill argues that the Amish disavowal of bureaucratic structures is both compatible with and countercultural to North Americans' emphasis on individualism and capitalism. He calculates that the approximately 90 percent of Amish children who will retain Amish identity through adulthood will "engineer new inventions, and operate profitable businesses, as they . . . find hundreds of ways to lead satisfying lives" (58).

The book's shortcomings, more evident here than in Kraybill's previous scholarship, are twofold. Despite Amish diversity, with some forty different subgroups—ranging from ultra-conservative to relatively progressive—this book rarely distinguishes one affiliation from another. Near the end of the book is a fascinating discussion of Amish hackers, innovators who strip laptops and desktops of video, audio, web access, and games as a means of making computer usage more acceptable to progressive Amish bishops and others within their communities. But while this discussion illuminates current trends at one end of the spectrum, most chapters simply refer to "the Amish" without differentiation.

*What the Amish Teach Us*, moreover, misses opportunities to add intricacies to readers' understandings of contemporary Amish life. The book's subtext is an outsider's admiration for Amish belief and practices. Yet among the topics warranting attention but receiving little or none in this volume are political behaviour among Amish people (including documented support for Donald Trump in 2016 and beyond), responses from leaders and laity to reports of sexual abuse in an era of #MeToo, and Amish practices around vaccines as reflective of cultural divides regarding public health. Addressing any one of these issue—or all three—may not have readily fit this volume's thesis that Amish people offer a critique of modern culture. But discussion of these elements of Amish life, which would have enhanced this work, remain agenda items for further research and public consideration.

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