Book Reviews

John B. Toews, *Perilous Journey: The Mennonite Brethren in Russia 1860–1910* (Winnipeg, Manitoba/Hillsboro, Kansas: Kindred Press, 1988). Paperback, 94 pages, $9.95 US, $12.95 Can.

This new study of the early history of the Mennonite Brethren is both timely and most welcome. In the year in which Canadian MBs are celebrating their 100th anniversary (1888–1988), this book will remind them of their beginnings in Russia and help them to reflect upon the positive and negative strands in their formative years. While the author writes as a sympathetic insider, he is objective and balanced in his approach, trying "to tell both sides of the early Brethren story" (p. v).

The story Toews tells is based on the available documents, primarily the diaries of Mennonite ministers and teachers, including David Epp, his son Jacob Epp, and Hermann Neufeld. Since this is largely a religious history, Toews begins by sketching the "moral decadence" of the Mennonite brotherhood as seen through the eyes of concerned persons in the Old Church (diary of David Epp from the 1830s and 1840s), and then traces the development of the MB church as a religious institution until prior to World War I.

Toews does not speculate whether the break in 1860 could have been avoided had both sides acted more reasonably and with greater consideration toward the other side. He merely interprets the factors which led to the emergence of the MBs and shows how each side acted and reacted in the situation. Toews seems to leave no doubt that the religious-moral reformation among the Russian Mennonites was historically inevitable and resulted in important changes for both sides.

As the title of the study suggests, the early Brethren embarked upon a "perilous journey." The perils for the MBs consisted of excessive exuberance and despotism in the early years, struggles in their search for recognition and an identity, and outside influences and connections which shaped their theology and life style. The influence of German Pietism and the Baptist connection were especially dangerous to the early MBs, for they threatened to undermine or deemphasize the specifically Mennonite principles (such as nonresistance and separateness) of the Russian Mennonites. However, these outside influences also contributed to the MB emphasis on personal conversion and a pietistical inwardness which led to an active evangelism and mission work among non-Mennonites.

Toews' interpretation of the role of Eduard Wüst in the formation of the early MBs comes a bit as a surprise. While some historians, including J. A. Toews, stress Wüst's one-sided emphasis of free grace and an inner experience, Toews shows that this Lutheran preacher in the last years of his ministry and life insisted — often with little success — on "works" and discipleship as fruit of true faith. The MBs, according to Toews, sought to combine both aspects of the Christian faith in their preaching and practice, especially after the "June Reforms" of 1865.

With regard to the social and vocational background of the Brethren Toews remains cautious, perhaps even a bit ambivalent. According to Toews, while "no surviving registers clearly designate occupations of the early Brethren" (p. 40), many apparently "belonged to a landless intelligentsia" (p. 41). James Urry in his studies is slightly more specific in this regard, showing that the early MBs, while "landless," were persons of influence and means and belonging to the emerging Mennonite middle class in Russia (see Urry's article in this issue).

Toews concludes his story by intimating that toward the end of the 19th century the Brethren and the Old Church were moving closer together. The larger issues and problems which now faced all Russian Mennonites helped them to forget their earlier differences and prepare for a future in which cooperation seemed both desirable and necessary. In the years which followed 1914 such things as form of baptism, open or closed communion, dramatic or gradual conversion, and other differences among Russian Mennonites no longer seemed all that important. In earlier studies (*Lost Fatherland*, 1967; *Czars, Soviets and Mennonites*, 1982) Toews has shown that in those subsequent years questions of mere survival were uppermost in the minds of Russian Mennonites.

This slim volume is attractively designed, well bound, and relatively free of misprints (Note: The manifesto of Catherine II was proclaimed in 1763, not 1863, p. 60). Teachers and students of Mennonite Studies will find this book most stimulating and helpful.

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Harry Loewen, ed. *Why I am a Mennonite*, (Kitchener, Ontario and Scottdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press 1988), Pp. 350. Paper. $19.95 Can. 12.95 U.S.

Each of us interprets life out of our own experience which has as its center the interplay between me the individual and my past. For us as Mennonites this interplay transcends the individual and includes as well the inter-relating of us with our corporate past. It is this latter connection that is the common denominator in *Why I am a Mennonite*. Written from the standpoint of the

1980s, the book bespeaks volumes about what we as Mennonites are, and are not; what we were, and no longer are; and what we continue to be, in the light of our long, long tradition as a people.

To be sure, the Mennonite experience unites all thirty authors included in this publication, in their autobiographical sketches that flow readily and expressively, thanks to the creative planning of Harry Loewen, who conceptualized the volume in the first place.

This book merits a broad audience. Each and every essay is worth a careful reading, for the total volume of essays as a whole helps one see more of the Mennonite elephant, and not just the tail, or tusk, or ear. Which disciple, among us, is not deserving of an audience, when he or she is speaking from the heart about faith-related experiences — highly personal and the result of a deep wrestling with the Mennonite "me," and "us"?

Very apparent, in this set of thirty essays, is how different are our several Mennonite traditions, to wit, the Russian Mennonite (Low Country) North American experience, contrasting with the Swiss-South German North American experience. Added to this is the unique Mennonite Brethren experience as well, with its own spirit and substance. Yet several writers seem able to transcend these several traditions — Katie Funk Wiebe and Walter Klaassen to name but two — who find elements of faith and spirit common to all Mennonites.

Here are some clues from this volume that suggest something of this deeper commonality among the several Mennonite traditions. Lois Barrett has been able, for example, to sort through the Mennonite maze, in part, because she had not even met a Mennonite until her student days at the University of Oklahoma. When asked if the name Barrett was Mennonite, she could honestly say, "It is now." Barrett was attracted to the Mennonites in large part because of two interrelating foci: a theology of peace, and a sense of community. As for the first, she elaborates, "Peace is not just another commandment, but is essential to the gospel." (22) As for the second, she pinpoints one important group dynamic, as follows: "Being Mennonite is committing myself to being in dialogue with this group of people, whether or not we agree on every point." (24)

A few more ideas from this volume merit inclusion here as food for thought and digestion: Victor G. Doerksen believes that "at the present time the real Mennonites, those who are consciously Mennonite, are on the growing fringe of the Mennonite world. The church that I knew is interchangeable with most of the mainline evangelical institutions and that is very different from what the Anabaptists were all about." (48) Abraham Friesen recognizes the essential interplay between form and content, theology and practice, faith and action: "Discipleship is the personal integration of faith in one's life; that same integration must take place on a corporate level in the experience of the Christian life of the church. " (89)

John Friesen reaches for ideals, yet also wants to acknowledge openly and consciously Mennonite shams and hypocrisies for what they are, and

even laugh at them. (97) Walter Klaassen recognizes the potential for a transcending newness within our heritage: "I would like us to open up and be ready for the new world that is emerging. I would like to be at the front and not at the rear of the process." (152) Al Reimer, recognizing the difficulty in living out "such Anabaptist-Christian tenets and practices as discipleship, peoplehood, nonresistance, peace, and love . . . ," still intends "to devote what remains of [his] life to finding out what that means." (265, 267)

Katie Funk Wiebe resonates with many of the autobiographers when she says: "A person is never a Mennonite until he or she chooses to identify with, not the culture accretions, as joy-bringing as they may be, but with the group's spiritual realities." (326) Her views on nonviolence may also well be that of other women: "My acceptance that nonviolence could be a powerful witness to Christ's love came fairly late in life, possibly because I, a woman, never had to decide its relevance to me." (333) And surely, her observations on history per se become essential reading for all of us who desire growth, and relevancy: "To have a history means change has taken place . . . Any change that takes place in a congregation or denomination contributes to that group's spiritual identity — or lack of it. Likewise, individuals either grow or stagnate as they discard their spiritual legacy or allow it to change their lives." (335)

Most of the writers will need to go unnamed in this review. All of them merit a careful reading. To be sure, the types of writers included in this volume do not exactly match the Mennonite population as it really is vocationally. Close to two-thirds are professors in academia. A handful are ministers and writers. Di Brandt is a poet; F. J. Ross, a physician; Art DeFehr and John Schroeder are in business. The latter also farms. Such is the vocational mix, within this unusual volume, that also mixes types of spiritual experiences and individuals with varying degrees of continuing connections with the gathered Mennonite community of believers.

The editor, Harry Loewen, holds the Chair in Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg. His own incisive Introduction also includes implicit autobiographical reflection, and in-depth interpretation. The following quote grants a taste of Loewen's posture, vis-à-vis each of the thirty writers included in *Why I am a Mennonite:* "All of them seek to make the world around them a better place to live in, or to put it in religious terms, to contribute to the building of the kingdom of God. And, after all, is this not the most significent legacy the Anabaptists and early Mennonites have bequeathed to their spiritual heirs?" (14)

" . . . The historical-biblical insights and principles of peace, love, justice, tolerance, community building, and peoplehood are an essential part of the Mennonite tradition, not found with such an emphasis elsewhere. Nearly all writers in this book attest to the fact that one or more of these historic principles either attracted them to the Mennonite faith or induced them to remain with the Mennonite people." (16)

Each and every one of us ought to go through the exercise of plumbing

our faith and history. The thirty examples of persons who have done it are extremely helpful in this regard. In short, coming to terms with our identity must include wrestling with the "I," and the "we," separately and together. To reflect periodically on these things will help propel us into a future more attuned to God's history past and future as we grope somewhere in between in what is called the present for handles and a walkway beneath our feet. Harry Loewen is to be commended for making these exercises in spiritual identity a reality and readily available in an attractive and well crafted tome.

Leonard Gross
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Leo Driedger, *Mennonite Identity in Conflict* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1988), 226 pp.

The question of identity is a highly significant one for contemporary Mennonite scholars and lay people alike. The dramatic social changes which have overtaken Mennonite communities in recent decades, over and above traditional divisions, and coupled with the emergence of new kinds of Mennonites in North America and other parts of the world have made the question of what it means to be a Mennonite an increasingly complex and difficult one. These new social changes require new means of analysis and understanding. Leo Driedger, a sociologist specializing in ethnic and community studies, is one person who has embraced this task. Professor Driedger has been actively involved over the past two decades in research directed toward the impact of recent social changes on contemporary Mennonites. The question of what it means to be a Mennonite in modern Canadian and American society has been a consistent issue through the course of this research.

This volume brings together a number of articles previously published by Professor Driedger over the years in a wide range of academic journals. These articles are presented in this volume as "sociological scenes . . . to show some of the types of conflict that (Mennonites) face, as they seek to reshape their Mennonite Identity." The articles are linked by the theme of Mennonite identity in conflict in contemporary society. In the introductory chapter, Mennonites are characterized in terms of Van den Berghe's concept of a "middleman" minority. This is a type of group which has been forced to leave its original homeland, and has subsequently found a niche in another country, where its members live in relatively small, culturally closed communities. A key fact of life for such minorities is the ongoing conflict experienced by members, between maintaining their distinct identity, and accommodating to the host society.

A second frame of reference explores the more ontological aspects of

identity in terms of Peter Berger's concept of a sacred canopy. The Mennonite sacred canopy is seen to be held in place by four "stakes": Biblical precepts, community of disciples, ethnic culture, and land. This frame of reference is employed specifically to account for the changes experienced by contemporary Mennonites in Western Canada, who, with the decline in the significance of land and ethnic culture as stakes in the canopy, have shown a revitalized interest in the historical Anabaptist vision, and efforts to renew the caring community in an urban setting.

Subsequent chapters demonstrate the range of topics which Professor Driedger has pursued over the years. An essay on the moral implications of the fact that Mennonites in Western Canada accepted grants of land which had been taken from Native peoples is one example. Another is a case study of a dissident Mennonite in Saskatchewan which employs a rather complex analogy with Erik Erikson's model of identity development, applied at the level of community. A second case study concerns a Mennonite community in Saskatchewan which withstood the efforts of a multinational corporation to build a nuclear refinery within its boundaries. Later chapters focus more directly on what has been an abiding concern of the author over the years; the impact of urbanism and urbanization on Mennonite identity and experience. Separate chapters explore attitudes and values associated with urbanism, compare different models of Mennonite urban settlement, and apply social network analysis in an urban setting.

Overall, this volume brings together a significant body of work by Professor Driedger under one cover. As such, it will be important to anyone interested in the social changes which are shaping the destiny of Mennonitism in contemporary society. The work does not succeed entirely as a unified monograph, however. Not all of the articles really fit well under the rubric of identity in conflict, unless this theme is defined in the broadest possible terms. The unity is also undermined in various other ways, such as the sometimes repetitious summaries of Mennonite history, references to facts or arguments developed in other chapters, without acknowledgement of such, and by the sometimes confusing array of theoretical frames of reference contained within the one volume. There is nevertheless a rich body of material here, and the author develops some important themes which will help to provide direction for further study and research.

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C. Norman Kraus, *Jesus Christ Our Lord. Christology From a Disciple's Perspective* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1987), 263 pages, $27.95 (Can.)

Norman Kraus's book, *Jesus Christ Our Lord*, merits the attention of

serious students of theology and mission. The author has written his volume on christology out of a wealth of experience in Christian work in the United States, Asia and Australia. In fact, *Jesus Christ Our Lord* was born in the midst of a mission assignment in Asia and Australia (1980–1987) under the Mennonite Board of Missions.

Kraus's guiding purpose throughout the book is to present a peace theology, which he says "should be a cross and resurrection theology" (p.17). Stated otherwise, a peace theology is centered firmly in the Christ-event in which God disclosed himself creatively and redemptively to humanity. In working out this "Christology from a disciple's perspective," the author divides his discussion in two major parts. The first deals with the identity of Jesus as Messiah, Son of God; the second with the mission of Jesus as Messiah of God.

The chief value of the book is in its uncompromising presentation of a contemporary Anabaptist understanding of the person and mission of Jesus Christ. Norman Kraus grounds his thought and argument in actual human experiences, not simply in human experience as an abstraction. His complaint against standard theologies is precisely that they tend to extrapolate ideas from the primary Christian sources and render them in elitist language of Anglo-American culture. By contrast, this book, while it is thoroughly conversant with some of the major Christian thinkers of Europe and America, is occasional, situational, practical. Its theological metaphors are exemplified from real human interest stories, particularly those of the Far East (e.g. pp.117f.).

Even though the discussion does not carry a polemical tone, it soon becomes evident that the author is dissatisfied with the mode of language and thought in theology developed in the West by both Protestant and Catholic theologians. For him, the context of theology is the church and its missionary vocation (p. 34). While this approach marks a significant departure from what is generally considered to be the norm of theological discussion, it is not avowedly an Anabaptist version of liberation theology (pp. 28f). Nevertheless, Kraus, in seeking to present "a coherent theological portrait of Jesus," distinguishes himself from theoretical theologians in favor of a theology of praxis not unlike that of some of the theologies of liberation thus: "Does that mean we are going to speculate, theorize, and dogmatize about Jesus? Should we not be more concerned to *experience* Jesus as Christ, proclaim him as Savior, and follow him as Lord? . . .In a word, it is *theory in the service of practice.*" (pp.36f).

On the question of the identity of Jesus, Kraus acknowledges that the language of christology, including the language of Scripture, is restricted to metaphorical imagery. He investigates the various images of Jesus represented in the several titles (Son of God, Messiah, Word, Lamb, etc.) and descriptions attributed to Jesus by the post-Easter church and from them all seeks to construct a *Gestalt* understanding of the significance of Jesus for the Christian community in the world. Above all, Jesus was/is God's self-

disclosure. His deep significance is in the character of his kingship as *agape*. God's self-disclosure in Jesus is simultaneously a "self-giving"; the incarnation is God's gift to humankind out of his nature, which is *agape*. What is important is not the substance of the personality of Jesus as Son of God (debated repeatedly throughout Christian history), but the action of God in raising the crucified Jesus to Lordship, thus opening up the way to participation in the divine life.

For Kraus "participation" should be a principal idea in our understanding of Christology. Too much emphasis has been given to the forensic idea of the justice of God and not enough to the idea of relationship, as in a parent-child relationship. Christology properly understood should deliver us from shame and guilt and lead us into solidarity with God though Christ, giving us self-worth because God gives himself to us. "God is justified by an incarnation which finds its consummation in the cross, and not by a legal transaction which took place on the cross" (p.157). In working out his christology, Kraus has redefined meaningfully the Anabaptist understanding of discipleship (*Nachfolge Christi*). Participation in Christ, solidarity with Christ, means more than reading the narratives of Jesus' activity in the Gospels, more than obeying the injunctions of the Sermon on the Mount. It involves the Christian in a radically new life in the midst of the old, a new kind of existence epitomized in the cross of Christ.

One is hard pressed to think of ways to improve this volume. Perhaps the following points should be considered. If the book should be revised some day, the note in the preface (p.19) about the unavailability of sources should be deleted and the sources found and cited. Again, Norman Kraus sustained his thesis with flashbacks and repetition, but the repetitiveness at times intruded on the development of the argument. Furthermore, less headings and subheadings would enhance the flow of thought throughout the book. And while this author is to be commended for his diligence in handling the text of the New Testament, he seemed not to be acquainted with some of the outstanding New Testament scholars of our time. One in particular, E.P. Sanders, would have given substantial support to his thesis on participation in Christ. Kraus did cite the well known New Testament scholar, W.C. Davies, except that he misspelled his name at every citation (even in the bibliography) as, "Davis".

Despite these few criticisms, this book is praiseworthy and should be studied by Christians concerned for themselves, their families and the world.

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Hans-Jürgen Goertz, *Pfaffenhaß und groß Geschrei. Die reformatorischen Bewegungen in Deutschland 1517-1529* (München: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1987), Paperback, 300 pages.

Professor Hans-Jürgen Goertz, University of Hamburg, is no stranger to students of Reformation and Anabaptist history. His books and numerous articles on Thomas Müntzer, the Radical Reformers and the Anabaptists have established his reputation as a Reformation scholar of note. Together with Klaus Deppermann, Peter Blickle, James Stayer and others he belongs to those social historians who are on the cutting edge of new interpretations of the Reformation period, challenging and revising both Marxist and Western historiography. For Mennonite historians who had followed Harold S. Bender's views of "normative Anabaptism" and the "Anabaptist vision," Goertz helped shape a new interpretation of Anabaptist origins, emphasizing the multiple and varied beginnings of the movement.

Pfaffenhass und gross Geschrei does not present altogether new material, nor does it offer interpretations readers of Goertz are not familiar with. Based on his earlier work and lectures on Reformation history, the book develops in greater detail Goertz's argument that the Reformation was not a unified movement intent on changing the church and society, but rather movements which included multifaceted and complex, even contradictory, issues which eventually changed the structures and institutions of the 16th century. Underlying, however, the religous, social, economic and political movements was a deep-seated and persistent anticlericalism, according to Goertz. The erosion of feudal structures, the decline of churchly morals, and the fiscal malpractices in secular and ecclesiastical institutions during the latter Middle Ages had contributed to an increasing resentment among the general public against the priveleged and powerful "clergy" from the pope down to the many eccesiastical and secular functionaries.

According to Goertz's detailed analysis of the Renaissance and Reformation period, it was primarily anticlericalism which lay at the basis of the concerns and work of pre-Reformation reformers, humanists, and later the Protestant magisterial and radical reformers. As far as the Radical Reformers were concerned, including the Anabaptists and Spiritualists like Franck and Schwenckfeld, this anticlericalism began with their opposition to Rome and later, after their disillusionment with Luther and Zwingli, extended to the mainline Reformers and their followers as well.

Anticlericalism, according to Goertz, became especially evident and focused in the concerns of the "common man," the peasants, and in the Anabaptist movements. Goertz demonstrates convincingly that the peasants around 1525 and the religious dissidents from the magisterial reformers demanded not only better social and economic conditions for themselves, but that they also intended to democratize and laicize the church and society. Claiming "the priesthood of all believers" for themselves and applying the

gospel to their external conditions — not only to their inner religious faith — the common people sought to bring about greater equality and freedom in church and society. A demand for direct participation in their congregational and communal affairs was part of their rebellion against the powers that be.

Goertz agrees with Depperman, Packull and Stayer that it is unhistorical to view Anabaptism as a unified movement which began in Switzerland and from there spread to the rest of Europe. While Zurich was no doubt the "cradle" of the "Swiss Brethren," there were other Anabaptist origins and movements which emerged independent of and sometimes in opposition to the Swiss view of the church and society. Individuals like Hans Hut, Hans Denck, Balthasar Hubmaier, and Melchior Hofmann, and centres such as Augsburg, Strassburg, and Münster developed theologies and social programmes different from each other and with vastly different results. However, the one thing they all had in common, according to Goertz, was their anticlericalism coupled with a desire to change the church and society according to their insights.

Goertz argues that similar to the magisterial reformers, all Anabaptists, including the Swiss and South German groups prior to 1527, hoped to reform *their societies* according to their understanding of the Gospel. Only after the defeat of the peasants in 1525 and the opposition of the mainline reformers to the views and practices of the Radicals, did the Anabaptists withdraw from the world and establish sect-like "free churches." A withdrawal theology such as presented in the Schleitheim Confession was thus the result of the existential situation of the Anabaptists, not one that had been "normative" from the beginning.

As a social historian Goertz focuses on those social and economic forces and factors which shaped the various reformation movements. His analysis, while referring to such humanists and writers as Erasmus, Hans Sachs and Sebastian Brant and to the so-called "godless painters" of Nürnberg, is less concerned with the literary and artistic works of the time and how these works reflected the mood of the Reformation period. Even a side glance at such writers as Boccaccio in Italy and Chaucer in England would have confirmed Goertz's thesis that anticlericalism was one of the major motivating forces of the period, not only in Germany but also in the rest of Europe.

Goertz's view of anticlericalism as a major factor in the Reformation of the 16th century is no doubt valid and certainly borne out by the mass of evidence presented in this book. While the argument is not altogether new, it is Goertz who has focused on anticlericalism as an important key to our understanding of the diverse and complex issues of the Reformation movements. In this focus lies the contribution of Goertz's studies, including this book. It might be asked, however, whether anticlericalism was all that unique or characteristic to the late Middle Ages and during the Reformation of the 16th century. Does not all reform and social change seek to modify or replace the representatives of the old institutions and structures? "Anticlericalism" is thus at the root of all reformations and rebellions in history. The "clergy,"

be they secular or religious, become the personification of the forces that oppress and keep in bondage those who seek change and a better life for themselves. Goertz is, however, correct in emphasizing that the anti-clericalism during the Reformation period was theologically and socially more focused and of more far-reaching consequences than was the case before or after the sixteenth century.

This in an important book. The Reformation scholar and the educated layman will find this study informative and stimulating. There is no such clearly written summary of the Reformation movements anywhere. It is a pity that readers not fluent in German will not benefit from this interesting book. It is to be hoped that an English translation will not be too long in coming.

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The Chronicle of the Hutterian Brethren Volume I, known as *Das große Geschichtsbuch der Hutterischen Brüder.* Translated and edited by the Hutterian Brethren (Rifton, N.Y.: The Plough Publishing House, 1987). Hardcover, pages I - LXXV + 887, $36.00.

Like much else about the Hutterian Brethren, the publication of this English translation of *The Chronicle* is a marvel. This book may be seen as a symbol of Hutterite faith, perseverance, endurance and longevity. Doomed to destruction from their initial establishment as a community in 1528, the Hutterites have not only survived many centuries of severe persecutions, but they have also saved and preserved their important writings which both recorded their blood-drenched history and gave them comfort and strength in times of duress. It seems ironic that these simple, down-to-earth people, who throughout their history have avoided book learning, are in a sense a people of the book. Could one perhaps say that it is the book — that is, their high regard for the written work of their leaders — that enabled these men and women to survive, maintain their cherished Anabaptist tradition, and assure the future of their faith community?

The Chronicle is translated from the *Geschichtsbuch der Hutterischen Brüder*, edited by Rudolf Wolkan (1923) and *Die älteste Chronik der Hutterischen Brüder*, edited by A. J. F. Zieglschmid (1943). The German editions will remain the documents for scholars; but now the history of the Anabaptist-Hutterites from their beginning to 1665 is also available for those many English readers, espeically students in colleges and universities, who no longer understand German. Since most of the Hutterites today reside in English-speaking countries where there is much interest in these latter-day Anabaptists, this translation was long overdue.

Readers of *The Chronicle* may be disappointed to find that the trans-

lators and editors of this accurate and well-written translation are not mentioned by name. But then this anonymity is in keeping with the Hutterian concept of Christian community. Like some artists, architects and scholars of the Middle Ages who worked anonymously within their communities for the glory of God, the translators and editors of this *Chronicle* disappear behind the work itself, which, as they state in the Introduction, "is the record of a movement of Spirit that still today can convert hearts, reverse lives, create a new society, and gather a Christian brotherhood on earth" (p. XIX). However, other, non-Hutterite scholars like C. J. Dyck and Leonard Gross who encouraged and assisted this translation project are gratefully ackowledged by name.

The latest scholarship in Hutterian studies is reflected in extensive reference and content footnotes. Like the *Chronicle* itself, which records both the complimentary and negative aspects of Hutterite history and life (p. XIV), the editors have not shied away from references to scholarly findings concerning aspects of early Hutterite leaders which cast some shadow upon them. Thus we read in a lengthy footnote, for example, that Jacob Hutter, after whom the Hutterites are named, may have participated in the Peasants' War and even carried "a hand gun or other weapon" (p. 83). This frankness and scholarly approach adds to the credibility of the work.

There are, however, some omissions from recent scholarship. With reference to the "Anabaptist chapter" in Grimmelshausen's *Simplicissimus* novel (1669), the editors still believe with Zieglschmid and Elizabeth Bender that Grimmelshausen "must have known the Mannheim Hutterities" (p. 765). As I have recently shown, while Grimmelshausen may have known the Mannheim community, the author of *Simplicissimus* could not have modelled his Anabaptists on the Hutterites in Mannheim. There is little similarity between the real Hutterites in Mannheim and the ideal community in the novel (see my "Grimmelshausens Wiedertäufer und der Utopie-Gedanke im 'Simplicissimus'," in *Mennonitische Geschichtsblätter*, 1982, and a slightly revised English version in *Visions and Realities: Essays, Poems, and Fiction Dealing With Mennonite Issues*, ed. by Harry Loewen and Al Reimer [Winnipeg: Hyperion Press, 1985], pp. 61–74).

In addition to copious footnotes, the volume includes appendixes, maps, a diagram of an underground hiding hole, facsimiles of the "1580" and "1581" codices of the *Chronicle*, a Glossary, a Selected Bibliography, an Index of Bible References, and a useful General Index.

The editors announce that Volume II of *The Chronicle*, known as *Das Klein-Geschichtsbuch der Hutterischen Brüder*, will be forthcoming. The "small *Chronicle*" (actually as large, if not larger, than Volume I) records Hutterite history from its beginning to modern times, including Hutterite life in Russia and North America. The Hutterian Brethren are to be congratulated on this excellent translation and encouraged to proceed with the translation of Volume II.

And the price — $36.00 for this huge and well-bound hardcover volume — will no doubt make it possible even for students to own *The Chronicle!*

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Willard M. Swartley and Cornelius J. Dyck. Eds. *Annotated Bibliography of Mennonite Writings on War and Peace: 1930–1980.* (Scottdale, Pennsylvania and Kitchener, Ontario: Herald Press, 1987). Hardcover; 740 pages; $59.95 U.S., $79.95 Can.

It took some seventeen years of research work by the Institute of Mennonite Studies in Elkhart, Indiana, to produce this important annotated bibliography of Mennonite writings on war and peace issues. The bibliography annotates most things Mennonites have written or published in English on war and peace between 1930 and 1980. The volume includes over 10,000 entries listed topically and alphabetically by authors, and covers books, articles, editorials, theses, term papers, archival and other writings by Mennonites. According to a Herald Press news release, "It is at once a history, a theology, a sociology, and a library" of Mennonite writings on war and peace concerns.

The categories and subcategories into which the annotations are grouped include among others the following: Alternate Service; Arms, Armaments, and Disarmament; the Bible, Peace, and War; Church and State; Civil Disobedience; Conscientious Objection; Justice; Mennonite Central Committee; Military Service; Nationalism; Race Relations; Refugees; and Wars.

The bibliography deals with such specific issues as war tax resistance, abortion, labor unions, amnesty, civil defense, women, Christian-Marxist dialogue, nuclear war, communism and anti-communism, and others.

This is a handy and most valuable reference work. According to Cornelius J. Dyck, one of the editors: "Anyone wishing to speak or write on these subjects has a significant summary at hand even without having access to the specific documents themselves."

There is no doubt that this bibliography will soon become an indispensable tool for all those pastors, teachers, and students who work in various Mennonite institutions. Moreover, anyone picking up this big volume will not only welcome the book for its usefulness, but will no doubt be impressed with the serious involvement of Mennonites with issues that are at the heart of Anabaptist-Mennonite concerns, namely war and peace and what they practically mean for the world. While Mennonites certainly do not have all the answers with regard to peace issues, it is most instructive to find that they have not evaded these concerns in their writings but have dealt with them frankly and often in agony. At the risk of becoming sentimental, I might quote Willard Swartley in a news release concerning the book: "I wept when I

read the section on conscription and draft, for I saw more clearly than ever before what forms the heart of Mennonite identity." In all their writings on war and peace Mennonites have sought to understand, interpret, and apply the Christian message concerning love, peace, and justice for all people.

The book contains a most useful Author Index and a Guide to Topic Search. It is well bound and relatively free of misprints.

The editors together with their assistants at the Institute of Mennonite Studies and Herald Press deserve to be commended for producing this fine bibliography.

Harry Loewen
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Barbara Smucker, *Jacob's Little Giant* (Markham, Ont.: Penguin Books, 1987). Hardcover, 101 pages.

Jacob's Little Giant, Barbara Smucker's eighth novel for children, represents something of a new direction for its author. From *Henry's Red Sea* (published in 1955) to *White Mist* (1985), Smucker's novels typically are set at tumultuous moments of history: Mennonite emigration from Russia after the 1917 revolution, abolitionist foment in the days preceding the American Civil War, and the armed enforcement of the U.S. Indian Removal Act have all furnished Smucker with occasions and themes for her children's novels. The sweeping brushstrokes of these novels are not to be found in *Jacob's Little Giant*. This story is, by contrast, a sketch of the domestic lives of both Jacob and the Canada goose known as the little giant.

The central character of the novel is six-year-old Jacob Snyder, the fifth child in an Ontario Mennonite family, who is impatiently waiting to grow up and stop being the youngest, smallest, and least competent person he knows. His chance comes when his father decides to register for a government program designed to preserve a nearly-extinct species of Canada goose. It is hoped that the pair of giant geese delivered to the Snyder farm will nest and raise a family. To encourage them to do so, a protected platform is set into the farm pond and a regular feeding schedule is established. The rest of the family being occupied with more important concerns, Jacob is put in charge of the geese. His care and vigilance is rewarded at the end of the novel when the Natural Resources officer Mr. McLean suggests that Jacob "did the best job of all the co-operators" and his family agrees that perhaps he should no longer be called "little Jakie."

Jacob comes to feel a special affinity for the littlest gosling. The last of the brood to hatch and the weakest of the flock, this gosling occupies the same place in its family that Jacob does in the Snyder family. By hiding the gosling from the critical eyes of the adults and by reserving corn for it from the supply he tosses into the water for the rest of the geese, Jacob gives the

"little giant" the time and space it needs to develop into a full-fledged bird. By the time the geese leave the Snyder pond to migrate south for the winter, the littlest gosling is able to fly with them.

Seen against the backdrop of calamity, growing up in the other novels often seems to be a series of crises. In *Jacob's Little Giant*, however, growing up is more a matter of time passing. The novel spans the seasons of growth, opening on a spring morning with the return of a flock of wild geese and ending on a fall morning with the flight of the Snyder flock. Jacob's development, like the geese's, is measured in increments in this novel. He wins no athletic contests; he experiences no flashes of understanding. He merely grows a little taller, becomes a better baseball player, and is allowed occasionally to help on the farm machinery.

The episodic plot Smucker uses in this novel is quite different from the adventure stories she has written previously. Much of the story of *Jacob's Little Giant* does not move the main plot of the novel forward in any way. Such incidents as a friend's birthday party, planting potatoes, fishing for the "biggest fish in history," and sister Lydia's wedding, for example, have little or no relation to the Canada goose story. In fact, the problems of *Jacob's Little Giant* are the result of Smucker's failure to follow through on the episodic structure she has chosen. This story is not a driving linear narrative, but Smucker often fails to provide sufficient detail to entice the reader to explore the diversionary incidents. For example, we are told that Jacob is thrilled to be allowed to help on the potato planter, but the amazing equipment is described only by a rather specious image: it seems "a magic machine from outer space." The reader with little experience of potato farming is left to wonder just what a four-row potato planter looks like and just how it works.

Even in the main plot of the story, specific detail usually is eschewed. Considering the amount of time Jacob spends in his tree observing the giant geese, we learn surprisingly little about the characteristics and habits of the species. The information that is given often seems offered apologetically, with Smucker suggesting that "Jacob had read about this with [his brother] John in the book about geese."

Smucker's habit of generalizing about ideas rather than observing the world is nowhere more evident than when the subject of the Snyders' religious and cultural traditions is mentioned. The visit of an uncle and aunt from Pennsylvania is an obvious example. Smucker begins her account of the visit by noting the generic class to which Uncle Ephraim and Aunt Fanny belong: they are "conservative Mennonites." She then offers two particular examples that illustrate this: the men wear suspenders and the women wear long, dark dresses. In conclusion, she cites the relevant belief that explains the examples: they believe in "plain and simple living." I am unconvinced that any mind takes in a situation by such a rigidly-ordered series of vague abstractions, but I am convinced that the six-year-old mind to which it is attributed most certainly would not.

The recognition in *Jacob's Little Giant* that growing up can be a slow and sure, sometimes painful, but always wonderful, process earns this novel the right to a place on children's shelves. Had Smucker more often lost herself in the wonder and pain of the process, that place would be a more significant one.

Mavis Reimer
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John R. Mumaw, *Preach The Word* (Scottdale/Kitchener: Herald Press, 1987), Paperback, 286 pages.

In his Foreword to *Preach The Word*, Myron Augsburger speaks to the point when he says, "For many of us who were students of homiletics under Brother Mumaw . . . reading this manuscript has been a review of his teaching" (p. 11). Some readers will say that is the great value of the book: a restatement of what seemed good over the decades when John R. Mumaw taught seminary courses in preaching. To this reader, however, that appears also as its greatest weakness.

Of course, there is a sense in which what was once good, remains good. Beginning preachers and lay pastors without theological training, could do much worse than to rely heavily upon the deeply urgent and practical pleas made and demonstrated by Mumaw: *for* the expository "method" *and* his examples of application to preaching through the Book of Ephesians. They do call to biblical encounter. However, I was surprised and disappointed to see little in *Preach The Word* to show that the author has kept up with the literature on biblical preaching.

One of the great dangers in "expository" preaching has been to read unwarranted meanings into the text (eisegesis). An example of this may well be Mumaw's Sermon 24 (pp. 245–250). Without reference to any of the "critical" variations of interpretation about "submission," we are given a sermon outline that blesses marital relationships of "one-upmanship" (pun intended) like we heard them thirty years ago, prior to the discovery or acknowledgement of spouse abuse and feminine egalitarianism.

Instead of the strong emphasis on the preacher with a Bible, today's homiletics calls for the preacher with hermeneutic community together discerning how the Bible inductively conveys the ongoing drama of God with humankind. This does not do away with "prophetic" preaching, because any authentic attempts "to get into the biblical plot" will grab both the proclaimer and those who hear.

In my Pastoral Theology classes I see more and more Mennonite preachers grabbing for the lectionaries designed by other denominations. In them are outlines that lead preachers into confrontation with Old Testament, New Testament, and Gospel lessons in systematic and season-related themes that

confront us with the total Bible. This "total picture" preaching is most obviously prophetic and expository when it comes from our brothers and sisters of the "two-thirds world" (liberation theology?).

Mumaw's book may be a good review for us students who graduated more than two decades ago. But it is only that. If we want to be contemporary bearers of the expository, prophetic, engaging, communication (should that be communion?), of God's Word like "fire in thy mouth" — Jeremiah 5:14 (cf. Donald G. Miller, *Fire in Thy Mouth* — Abingdon, 1954), we must *build upon* Mumaw's foundations. And that "building" needs considerable exposure to contemporary hermeneutics literature. Above all, it will require a more profoundly inductive approach to the "total" Bible with a greater sense of letting God's Word do the preaching.

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John Rogers, ed., *Medical Ethics, Human Choices* (Scottdale/ Kitchener: Herald Press, 1988), Paperback, 159 pages.

John Rogers, in his Preface to *Medical Ethics, Human Choices*, reminds us that in the Genesis accounts of the first human sins, Adam, Eve, and Cain tried to be irresponsible. But, God would not allow them to separate themselves from the consequences of their choices. And LeRoy Walters, Brethren in Christ bioethicist at the Kennedy Institute of ethics, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., states in the Foreword that medical ethics today is once again a "laypeople's movement." Until quite recently, medical ethics was considered the realm of professionals — medical and theological. But new challenges have arisen, and they bring the issues back into the hands, minds, emotions, and souls of all people.

There have been incredible shifts in health care and related issues. Ann Raber, a Mennonite Mutual Aid wellness educator and one of the 13 writers in this book, mentions some of these changes. Once the focus of health care was upon the illnesses/diseases themselves. Then there was the technology explosion and people hoped that machines would make us well or at least replace worn-out body parts. Today we are being returned to a realization that the most significant element in health care is "responsible living."

Such lifestyle diseases as heart disorders, cancers, accidents, alcohol and other drug-abuses, passive living, too much stress, poor nutrition, undisciplined spirituality, toxic environment, and lack of self-esteem, cannot be simply treated by pharmacology or by technology. However, our daily choices greatly affect their prevalence. Thus, health care is, to a great degree, in our hands. Add to that the expanded potential for influencing genetic makeup, for affecting reproductivity, for choosing when to end or abort at

the beginning as well as the end of life, and we are faced with a plethora of dilemmas on our hands.

Medical Ethics, Human Choices is a first attempt by Mennonite, Brethren in Christ, and Church of the Brethren leaders to give us their best insights on the many contemporary challenges of health care. A theologian (David Schroeder) takes a fresh look at the biblical-theological perspective of life and death. Another one (Conrad Brunk) helps us look anew at the age-old attempt to understand the "image of God." Organ transplants and genetic engineering become subjects that laypeople can and must relate to.

The book, with its thirteen chapters is intended for use as a quarterly study in church school or other groups. Relevant questions come with each topic. It is a "must" resource for all people interested in the future of health care.

While the topics included will stretch the understanding of most readers, this book is not comprehensive and it is frequently less than profound. It fails to give us sufficient foundations to make the tough choices. Graydon F. Snyder's recent *Tough Choices* (Brethren Press, 1988) offers significantly more practical help in this regard.

The controversial issue of abortion seems to be deliberately avoided in this study. Why so? I expect it is done in part for readers to reflect on the larger world of health decisions in order to put abortion into perspective. That may be appropriate, but I believe it should then be stated. Many will be disappointed that the book does not give at least one chapter out of thirteen to this volatile issue.

This book deserves study in all our churches. It is in keeping with Anabaptist theology that health care is seen as the responsibility of all believers and the state, instead of being left to almost any professionals and the state. Erland Waltner's "Where do we go from here?" appropriately concludes that such a study can lead us first to face our own "health needs" and to "strengthen a style of wellness" (p. 150) and lead us to encourage and assist others in a similar direction.

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David Waltner-Toews, *Endangered Species* (Winnipeg: Turnstone Press, 1988), 91 Pp., Paperback.

In reading this fourth volume of poems by David Waltner-Toews, one is reminded of Friedrich Hölderlin's statement: where there is danger, there also grows the rescuing word of the poet. Many of the poems in *Endangered Species* address the threat which place humans and other beings in precarious positions. In "Generations," for example, the poet's young son reminds his

father that species disappear every day and that sea turtles and whales are mistreated and exterminated "for no apparent reason" (p. 22). Humans and other living beings are caught in a web of extermination, a web so complex that the ones who are themselves on the edge of nuclear destruction are also the very beings who through their political and technological forms of domination endanger the rest of the natural world.

The poems of Waltner-Toews penetrate the constricting web of exterminist thinking by sketching what might be termed a pacifist grammar. The poem "Peaceful Linguistics" (p. 50) examines how the word "peace" is to be wedded to other words in an enriched vocabulary of conscience. In "Images of Peace," a six-part poem, Waltner-Toews examines the slaughter that has marked human history:

> Pacify eliminate put to sleep do away with keep the peace
> police capitally punish normalize protect save carry out justice
> these are the words we use to justify
> to eulogize our slaughter
> They are the strategies of hate
> the lies from which
> we make ourselves (p. 42)

In Part IV of "Images of Peace," the unspeakable torture of a Guatemalan mother at the hands of death squads bears witness to a world whose heart is pained, "stunned beyond weeping" (p. 47):

> Adelaida Aleman
> Mother of Jesus
> when the guardia's slitting steel
> tongue licked your neck
> split your belly
> sick angry young man possessing
> death death's clammy flesh
> when he took the boy
> seven months Wholly Child seven months
> held the boy *This is my flesh*
> *Do this in remembrance*
> when he threw it to the dogs
>
> was there the upward beat of wings?
> a scream in the wind? (p. 46)

Waltner-Toews sketches his grammar of peace not only by naming the horror, but by displaying through his poems a love and respect for what is other: other cultures, other persons, other living beings. Attunement to otherness allows for the possibility of viewing the world as one body, as interconnected, as not separable into unrelated domains. Such a vision is ecological and ecumenical in the broadest sense. These poems are forms of prayer, acts of communion and reverent attention to a world of sorrow and of great joys. These poems entreat us into ways of peace-making by which

humans redeem themselves and — in recovering their humanity — mend a broken world. By "singing against all images of slaughter" (p. 49), the poet utters the words through which endangered species of all kinds might be saved.

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