

Book Reviews

James Urry, *None But Saints, The Transformation of Mennonite Life in Russia, 1789-1889* (Winnipeg: Hyperion Press, 1989); 328 pp. Paperback.

Students of Imperial Russian Mennonite history will already be familiar with the work of James Urry, Senior Lecturer in Anthropology at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. Appearing in numerous journals, much of it has emerged from research completed for a most impressive dissertation ("The Closed and the Open", Oxford University, 1978).

With this publication, however, Urry has done much more than present a condensed version of doctoral work, instead bringing to that earlier research a careful reading of recently published relevant studies as well as additional mining in primary sources. *None But Saints* also bears the marks of a maturity that few can garner in the franticness of graduate studies.

It is difficult to overstate the importance of this study, or the debate that it will arouse. While various scholars have been turning their attention to specific elements of the Mennonite experience in the USSR/Imperial Russia, few have attempted to present that history in a coherent form, beginning with the earliest settlements in 1789. This monograph makes a unique contribution in this regard.

Urry has based his study on a range of sources in English, Dutch, German, and Russian, and includes previous histories, contemporary newspapers and journals, and an overview of recent literature in the field. One gathers that most useful for him were the works written by Mennonites themselves, with the *Odessaer Zeitung* especially well utilized. He has clearly demonstrated the value of this publication for further research. Though Russian and Dutch language sources figure prominently in the first section of the book, they function in the footnotes more as further reference points than as utilized documents. At times this leaves the actual basis of his judgements unclear, examples of which will be provided below. But the varied sources also reveal the concern Urry has had in telling the Mennonite story from a variety of perspectives, and point to the valuable research waiting to be done with these and other materials. His desire to fit his work into the larger context of Imperial Russian history is reflected in the widespread use of recent western historiography.

As the title suggests, Urry's basic argument is that Mennonite society was

transformed in Imperial Russia. Beginning as homogenous, self-contained, preacher-controlled communities on the Russian steppe in the late eighteenth century, two trends marked their course in the following century. On the other hand, they became far more "heterogeneous" (24), with increased differentiation along economic and social lines that saw some become very wealthy. There also emerged a differentiation in living arrangement from the villages alone to one that included massive estates owned by Mennonites along with urban-based settlement. Integration into Imperial Russian society accompanied these trends. If that is the case, however, Urry also maintains that Mennonites by 1880 still had a collective identity that was captured in notions of the "commonwealth," which still allowed them to be distinguished from Russians, Ukrainians, or even other Germans living in the empire. It is, in short, a finely tuned argument that seeks to have it both ways. While I have some question of his success at defending or maintaining this thesis (more on this below), I have no question with the detailed accounting that comprises this study.

It is here that Urry, a self-styled "story teller," (278) has made his greatest contribution. The study comprises fourteen chapters (along with introduction and conclusion), and is divided along chronological and thematic lines. While that takes some juggling at times, the overall effect is most successful. Beginning with a look at diverse Anabaptist origins, we move briskly to the early settlement of Khortitsa and Molochna. Here Mennonites lived in villages controlled by their own church ministry and situated on a largely unsettled steppe north of the Black Sea. An especially good chapter entitled "Strangers and Brethren" describes the role Mennonites played in the early settlement of New Russia, as it was called, along with their early relations with the Russian state. Indeed, Urry demonstrates that Imperial authorities remained actively involved in Mennonite matters throughout the period under study.

If an individual can account for the shaping of an entire society, then Johann Cornies was just that man. He embodied the spirit that came to define the Mennonite world in Imperial Russia, with economics separate from, and dominant over, faith questions, and with an adulation for science and progress (with one chapter even called "The Prophet of Progress"). A central issue in this regard was the desire to wrestle control of education away from congregational leaders.

On this foundation the tale of the emergence of a Mennonite industrial elite by mid-century seems hardly surprising. If anything weakens the force of this argument, it is the sources and writing style which occasionally lack clarity. We are told, for example, that in response to Cornies "people again hoped that the old ways would return" (p. 134, with the same looseness found on p. 136). Here the reader must ask: how do we know what "people" thought? How many thought that way? Somewhat later on we are told (152)

that "while commercial practices had brought security and prosperity to *many*, it had resulted in hardship for *others*" (Emphasis mine). While the lack of sources likely will not allow for greater precision, and while this reviewer would agree with this interpretation, such statements as presented here must be seen more as conjecture than fact.

Urry prepares us well for the calamities of the 1850s and 1860s which saw Mennonites experience divisions along socio-economic and religious lines, and it is here that his research skills shine. In this regard his best chapter, "Reform and Reaction," captures well the class tensions that had emerged among Mennonites by the 1860s, a time when the empire as a whole was undergoing change. The remaining chapters outline the rapid expansion of Mennonites into estates and other colony settlements in the 1860s and 1870s, and the increased need to define a "Mennonite" identity in contrast to both Russian and German nationalists. 1889, then, allows for an endpoint that is rather affirming of the entire Mennonite experience, itself an important corrective to the inclination to end with the pain and loss of 1917 and its aftermath.

There can be no doubt that Mennonites were fundamentally transformed in nineteenth-century Imperial Russia. What this work does not settle (how could any one work do so?) are the questions of exactly how this did occur, and with what final results. On this Urry's clear decision not to limit himself to any one approach, or explanation (24) has resulted in a lack of clarity on what shaped Mennonite society. Put another way, what accounted for the transformation described here, and how widespread was it? Can these changes be attributed to the work of certain individuals, as is argued with Cornies (126-33; also 124-127), or ideas and faith (98-101), or economics (207), as Urry maintains in the most passionately written paragraph in the book? It is not possible to argue that all answers are correct, and Urry's shifting from one explanation to another becomes ultimately confusing. If the shaping of Mennonite society by its elite was the most important element, and if they were successful, then we can talk about a transformed ("open") community. But if we stay with the class-like analysis of Mennonites which Urry introduces, then we can conclude that perhaps only the elite of Mennonites had been transformed and integrated into the larger Imperial society by the 1880s, whereas the majority of Mennonites remained "closed".

The confusion here lies in the fact that, having established that Mennonites had become clearly differentiated and stratified by the 1860s, with very different life experiences, Urry returns to the former argument by his conclusion. At that point we again read about a common Mennonite identity, with the suggestion that the elite were successfully shaping the identity of all Mennonites by 1889. Perhaps this indeed occurred, though the information at hand will not allow for such a conclusion.

It is possible that the difficulty in finding our way out of this conceptual quagmire lies in the lack of required sources (277), or perhaps in the fact

that Urry, having just presented a most provocative assertion in the tenth chapter, made a slight conceptual retreat. Or perhaps, ever a story teller, Urry has left enough possible approaches to inspire others to join in the debate. And there is no doubt that this debate will occur.

Several additional comments are in order: Khortitsa in the text becomes Chortitsa in maps; I am unaware of any reliable census information for New Russia in 1881, as cited in the text (229); the reference to Mennonites becoming involved in *zemstvos* in the 1880s is tantalizing, though no reference is provided for such a significant assertion; the paintings of Henry Pauls add an evocative touch to Urry's work; and the overall format is clear, attractive, and aided by maps and tables.

James Urry has made a major contribution to Mennonite history in Imperial Russia, and nothing stated above — nor the modest claims of his own introduction — should be allowed to detract from it. All readers interested in this subject owe him a debt of thanks.

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Beulah Stauffer Hostetler, *American Mennonites and Protestant Movements: A Community Paradigm* (Scottsdale/Kitchener: Herald Press, 1987), Hardcover, 366 pages.

Here is a book that tells the story of how a Mennonite community struggled to remain faithful to its charter values in the face of American Protestant movements such as Pietism, Revivalism, Institutionalism and Fundamentalism. The focus is on the Franconia Mennonite Conference, a district conference of the Mennonite Church, located in southeastern Pennsylvania. This Conference grew out of the oldest Mennonite settlement in North America dating back to 1683. In this setting the author examines the religious beliefs of the Franconia Mennonites by comparing them with their religious neighbours and the different religious movements that penetrated the community. Here she discovered spiritual fervour and wisdom which challenged many of the negative views of the community held by outsiders.

Hostetler begins by locating the charter values of the Franconia community in the Schleithem statement of the "Brotherly Union" of 1527 which was available in written form to the community. The seven articles of this document, commonly referred to as the Schleithem Confession, contained statements concerning baptism, the ban, the breaking of bread, separation from the world, shepherds in the church of God, the sword, and the oath.

According to Hostetler's research this charter, and not the Dordrecht Confession officially adopted by the Conference in 1725, guided the religious organization and social relationships of the community and its subsequent encounters with religious movements.

Each encounter with a movement brought about continuity and change over one or more of these values. For example, revivalism introduced camp meetings, crisis conversions and perfectionism to a community based on nurturing the faith through repentance and obedience. Institutionalization challenged the values of separation and nonresistance by introducing interdenominational societies and denominational superstructures. Fundamentalism with its aggressive leadership, millennialism, nationalism and militarism cut deeply into the community values. The Conference responded by codifying its practices (e.g., centralizing authority), identifying cultural symbols (e.g., bonnets, plain coats), and restricting associations with outsiders.

This defensive structuring strategy collapsed in the 1950s. Rapid acculturation and a revitalized peace emphasis created a new vision for the Mennonite community. From now on separation from the world and nonconformity would be expressed, not by a distinctive appearance, but through participation in peace and service programs. The Franconia Mennonites, Hostetler concludes, are now, as they were in the beginning, very similar to their religious neighbours. Adaptations have been made but basic Anabaptist principles continue to undergird their customs and religious forms.

This account of the faith struggle makes for interesting reading in that Hostetler relies on primary documents such as personal letters and biographies to identify issues, characterize tensions and describe rituals. Published works intended to shape beliefs and values are documented throughout the book to identify individual and community positions. The author is to be commended for the thorough research noted in the extensive footnotes which in effect introduce the reader to a substantial body of literature pertaining to religious movements in North America. Numerous pictures of people and places give the book a very personalized quality. For outsiders like me some maps, charts and statistics tracing the development of the community would have enhanced the analysis.

This analysis makes the reader keenly aware of the vulnerability of Mennonite charter values in the American Protestant milieu. Each movement brought schism and compromise to the community as some members were taken in by the new values. It is precisely here that Hostetler is trying to correct some misperceptions about the Franconia community. They were not petrified, legalistic nor backward as the critics suggested (e.g., Oberholtzer Division, 1847) but sought to maintain a community structure and life style guided by the charter values.

One Protestant religious movement that failed to make the book is the Social Gospel movement. Clearly its counterpoint, Fundamentalism, is viewed

as the major force shaping 20th century Franconia Mennonites. Could it be that the mounting interest in peace and social concerns issues during this period should be attributed to the Social Gospel movement? At the very least some disclaimer is required to justify excluding this literature.

This book adds a significant dimension to our understanding of the dynamics of change and continuity in the Mennonite world. Frequent references to other Conferences and the larger Mennonite Church (MC) makes it a valuable denominational study. It is an excellent companion volume to earlier Franconia Mennonite studies by John L. Ruth, *Maintaining the Right Fellowship* (1984), and by J. C. Wenger, *History of the Mennonites of the Franconia Conference* (1937). For Mennonites outside of the Mennonite Church tradition this book will be very informative. Many parallels may be drawn between the Franconia experiences and that of other Mennonite branches.

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Balthasar Hubmaier: Theologian of Anabaptism, translated and edited by H. Wayne Pipkin and John H. Yoder. *Classics of the Radical Reformation* vol. 5. Scottdale, PA and Kitchener, Ont.: Herald Press, 1989. Pp. 608. US\$39.95, Can\$49.95.

This fifth volume of the *Classics of the Radical Reformation* is a major achievement. Much of the credit for seeing this work of many years to completion goes to Professor Cornelius J. Dyck, editor of the series. The work of translation was the cooperative work between a Baptist and a Mennonite scholar, a fitting achievement in view of the high esteem in which Hubmaier has been held for most of a century among Baptists in the United States. Also fitting is the happy circumstance that Wayne Pipkin has been appointed to the faculty of AMBS, succeeding C. J. Dyck.

Congratulations also go to the publishers, Herald Press, who can rightly be proud of a growing shelf of Anabaptist writers in English translation. The Press' readiness to undertake a project that is not commercially viable has resulted in a major contribution to Anabaptist studies in North America. It has put major primary sources of the Mennonite tradition within the reach of students in colleges and seminaries, as well as of pastors and members of believers' churches. At least one more volume in the series is certain. Perhaps we can even hope for more.

This is not the first English translation of Hubmaier's works. Until now we were dependent upon an unpublished complete translation by George Diuguid Davidson, and translations of single works by others, including more

recently William Estep. These were, however, not thoroughly reliable. Fortunately we are able to receive this new translation with confidence in its simple accuracy. All of the earlier translators were Baptists. They were interested in Hubmaier especially because, while they sought for a foothold for their tradition in the Reformation of the 16th century, Hubmaier was the one Anabaptist writer who put forward a view of the relationships between church and government they found compatible.

Who then was Balthasar Hubmaier (1488?-1528)? This is not the place to offer a detailed biography. For that readers should go to Estep's work based on the critical biography by Torsten Bergsten (1961), or to the short biographies by Christof Windhorst (*Profiles of Radical Reformers*, ed. H.-J. Goertz, 1982) and David Steinmetz (*Reformers in the Wings*, 1971). Still, some basic facts about the life of Hubmaier are called for here. Before he became an Anabaptist reformer he was on the faculty and then rector of the University of Ingolstadt, cathedral preacher in Regensburg, and Zwinglian reformer in Waldshut. His was the most successful attempt of several to establish an Anabaptist reformation in co-operation with civil government in both Waldshut and Nicsolsburg. He was the only Anabaptist leader who held a doctorate in theology. This can be clearly seen in his writings. He does not fit into the now established identifications Swiss, South German, and Dutch Anabaptism. That is partly because he was dead by the time those labels came to have some precision, and partly also a function of his views on the sword in which he distanced himself very deliberately from Swiss and South German Anabaptism. For this reason he has been an embarrassment for the tradition from the beginning. The *Hutterite Chronicle* rescued him by reporting that Hubmaier had recanted of his position on the sword in a letter, but this seems an invention. The *Chronicle* attempted a similar rescue for Thomas Müntzer. It is interesting that in both cases the connecting link was Hans Hut. Hubmaier's Zwinglian position on the sword also excluded him from Bender's "evangelical Anabaptism." But Hubmaier made the most thoroughly reasoned, scholarly defence of believer's baptism that has been preserved from the 16th century. Hence there can be no doubt of his Anabaptist credentials which were then also confirmed in his death by fire in Vienna on a spring day.

The volume is a collection of 32 items of which 25 are Hubmaier's formal writings. The other seven, statements by Hubmaier at the Second Disputation in Zürich 1523, letters to Oecolampadius and the Zürich Council, two items relating to his recantation in Zürich, Johann Faber's testimony concerning Hubmaier, and a hymn of dubious authorship, were not included in the critical edition of 1962. They do, however, help to round out the life and thought of the Reformer. The works are arranged in chronological order of publication. However, this results in disturbing the chronological order of writing. It would make more sense to place no. 14, "Dialogue with Zwingli's Baptism Book," ahead of the items relating to Hubmaier's incarceration in

Zürich, since it belongs to the controversy initiated with Hubmaier's "Christian Baptism of Believers." Each item is introduced by the editors to locate it historically and theologically. The numerous notes at the bottom of the page are important aids to understanding. A second set of notes represent comments and references by Hubmaier himself, which in the originals appeared in the margins.

The translations were made from the critical edition of 1962. Pipkin translated approximately 60% of the whole and Yoder the rest with some assistance from others, notably Mrs. Elizabeth Horsch Bender. The translations are readable and unambiguous throughout which is partly a function of Hubmaier's own simple and lucid style. There is not a single instance of uncertainty in the translation notes. There were two editions of no. 17, "Old and New Teachers on Believers Baptism." The editors offer us the first edition complete (pp. 246-64), and add to that the additions and changes from the second which were mostly notes from the Church Fathers, Popes, and early church councils.

Two matters relating to the translation could be mentioned. The first is the difference in the translation of Hubmaier's motto by the two editors. Pipkin translates "Die Wahrheit ist untödtlich" as "Truth is Immortal", while Yoder with the more literal but graceless "Truth is Unkillable." The rationale for both is provided (pp. 76-7 and 42 respectively). The reviewer chooses the first, not simply because it is more elegant, but because of the arguments advanced by Pipkin for its use. A slight case of carelessness is the inconsistent translation of *himeln* on pp. 241 and 242. Hubmaier followed the Greek New Testament, in each case using the plural.

In contrast to Menno Simons and Pilgram Marpeck whose writings were spread over decades, Hubmaier's Anabaptist corpus was crowded into less than three years. Of the three years, he spent nine months in Waldshut and 12 in Nicosburg as Anabaptist reformer. The rest of the time was spent in prison in Zürich and in the Kreutzenstein Castle north of Vienna. His writings exhibit a passion that was perhaps in part a reflection of the urgency and tension of his very short working life. He knew how precarious the life of an Anabaptist reformer was. Nevertheless, he gave himself to his work with vigour and purpose. He prepared short teaching manuals in the form of commentaries on the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed (nos. 15 & 16) and a short catechism (no. 21). He drew up orders for the observance of the rites of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and a tract on fraternal admonition (nos. 24, 25, 23). There are also prayers for use before and after meals which are prayers of praise, but emphatically not pleas to bless the food (pp. 356-7).

The short treatments on the Lord's Prayer and the Creed would be prime candidates for a volume on Anabaptist spirituality, since both are in the form of a prayer. They are prayers from the heart, bearing evidence of the stress

of imprisonment and coercive attempts of former friends to turn him from his faith.

Hubmaier's writings reveal his rootedness in late medieval theology. His interpretation of the Parable of the Good Samaritan (p. 84) has medieval antecedents as does his tri-partite view of man. There is the same close link between faith and works as well as the rejection of predestination and emphasis on free will. We find the *facere in quod se est* that so discouraged Luther, presented as part of the process of salvation (p. 85). All of this was more obvious in Hubmaier because of his *via moderna* training.

Hubmaier's final composition is titled "Apologia from Prison". It was to be a recantation, but it is nothing of the sort. In some ways it resembles Hans Denck's so-called Recantation of a few months earlier in that Hubmaier promised to suspend the practice of baptism and the Lord's Supper until the expected council should have met and considered the contentious issues. He pledged his submission to the decision of the church at that time. He fully expected to be released and appointed as pastor somewhere. This may now seem like empty dreaming, but in 1528 the great contention in Europe had not ended, and Christians of widely divergent views could still hope that a properly constituted church council would bring peace to the church.

Perhaps a word is in order on the alleged baptism of Denck by Hubmaier referred to on pp. 17 and 296. The editors are evidently not willing to accept Werner Packull's argument of 1973 that there are no grounds for assuming that Hubmaier baptized Denck, and attribute Packull's argument to his rejection of the older monogenesis theory. If the evidence which is presented by Packull were considered on its own merits, even the position that Hubmaier *might* have baptized Denck becomes untenable. It ought now to be abandoned for the same reason that earlier scholarly linkage of Zwickau with Müntzer with Anabaptism was abandoned, namely because of a total lack of evidence.

The volume has a good cloth binding and the type is clear, making for easy reading. There are indices of Scripture passages, names, place names, subjects, and of scholars. A good bibliography of sources and secondary literature relating to Hubmaier is included. A new printing will require very careful proof reading since there are a lot of printing errors (pp. 78, 83, 95, 318, 427, 451, 563, 573, 574, 575, 577, 578. This is not a complete list). There is a problem of apparently displaced words or lines at the beginning of the first full paragraph on page 374. As it stands, it is unintelligible.

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Hans-Jürgen Goertz, *Thomas Müntzer. Mystiker, Apokalyptiker, Revolutionär* (München: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1989). Hardcover, 216 pp.

Thomas Müntzer has been decried as a rebel and war lord by some historians and hailed as a social revolutionary by others. Following Luther's view of Müntzer, some historians have branded this radical reformer as a rebel rouser who sought to destroy not only the old church and institutions but also the Protestant reformation in general and Luther's work in particular. Those who see Müntzer as *the* sixteenth-century reformer — mostly Marxist and other left-wing historians — consider him a revolutionary leader of the common people engaged in a just war against spiritual, economic and political oppression. These contradictory interpretations of Müntzer have contributed, as Goertz shows, to the distorted image of this radical reformer.

In this new biography of Müntzer, Goertz steers a middle course between the two opposing views of the man and his work. In a clear and a most readable writing style Goertz seeks to understand Müntzer's life and reformation activity from within the time in which he lived and from his stated intentions and objectives as a reformer within the Protestant reformation. What emerges in this biography is a zealous reformer who was steeped in the medieval mystical tradition and who sought to renew the individual within his society and with the renewal of the individual transform society. For Müntzer, according to Goertz, there was no sharp division between the inner and outer aspects of life, as there was in Luther's thinking. Müntzer combined the inner and outer spheres of life and sought to transform the individual and institutions into the image of God. In his proposed new society there was to be justice for all, especially for the common people who had been oppressed for many centuries.

According to Goertz, Müntzer was a deeply religious and spiritually committed person and revolutionary. Yet he failed to bring about justice and brotherhood in his time not because of a lack of spirituality, but because of the combined forces of ecclesiastical and secular powers and because of the ill-preparedness and disorganization of the "common man." Ironically, in the end even the peasants whom Müntzer had sought to inspire and lead in battle left him and his cause to be destroyed by the establishment. The sixteenth-century world was apparently not ready for this prophet and visionary of a new social order.

Goertz is careful to point out that there is little documentary evidence for much of Müntzer's life and work. This paucity of source materials forces the biographer to engage in educated conjectures and guesses, particularly with regard to Müntzer's movements, motives and even relationships to his contemporaries. What sources there are Goertz uses to good effect, leaving

the reader in the end with a fairly complete story of his subject and a most believable major reformation figure.

This well written biography would have no doubt benefitted from a more complete treatment of Müntzer's connections with, and influences upon, important contemporary individuals and groups. While the relationship between Müntzer and Luther is fully treated and interpreted, there is hardly anything in this biography about Müntzer's relationship to such reformers as Carlstadt and major Anabaptist leaders. It is well known that the Swiss Anabaptists valued highly some of Müntzer's writings, especially those on baptism and faith, and sought to establish contact with Müntzer their "beloved brother" (Letter of Sept. 4, 1524). Yet aside from brief references to Hans Denck and Hans Hut, there is little in this biography on Müntzer's influence on, or connections with, Anabaptism. To this reviewer this omission tends to confirm — without the author intending it — the earlier view in Anabaptist historiography that "peaceful Anabaptism" was essentially different from, even opposed to, Müntzer's objectives and methods, a view no longer held by many Anabaptist scholars.

With regard to Müntzer's objectives as a revolutionary reformer and his methods to achieve his aims, Goertz, while sympathizing with Müntzer, leaves no doubt in the readers mind that the two antagonists, Luther and Müntzer, acted similarly in at least one main area: Both were prepared to ally themselves with the princes and use force and violence to achieve their ends. Like Luther, Müntzer appealed to the princely rulers in the hope that they would help him to establish God's kingdom on earth ("Princes' Sermon"); and like Luther, who "commanded" that the peasants be slaughtered, Müntzer urged the common people to take up arms "against the godless." Questions of justice or injustice aside, both Luther and Müntzer justified violence in their respective causes. The difference in this was that the one succeeded while the other failed.

This biography gives rise to another reflection. Had Müntzer and the peasants won the battle against their oppressors, what kind of society would have emerged? Müntzer wished to establish a society based on justice, love, equality and the rule of God. We know what happened in Münster where the Anabaptists established the rule of the "common man" and of the saints, and in Geneva where Calvin and his theologians ruled by divine decree. Was Müntzer perhaps overly optimistic about the "common man" and human ability to interpret the will of God for others? Perhaps the drafters of the Brotherly Union at Schleithem and their heirs were more realistic in their suspicion of the nature of all temporal rulers and the method of sword power which they regarded as being "outside the perfection of Christ."

This pithy, concise, and disciplined study of Müntzer is a masterpiece of biographical writing. It uses the available sources both exhaustively and economically, it fills in the gaps with historically-based suggestions and hints

where the sources are lacking, and it causes the reader to reflect upon the importance of the protagonist's vision and action of reform. While Goertz may not have written the definitive biography of Thomas Müntzer, no student of this revolutionary radical can afford to bypass this study.

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John Friesen, ed., *Mennonites in Russia. Essays in Honour of Gerhard Lohrenz* (Winnipeg: CMBC Publications, 1989). Hardcover, xi + 387 pages.

The two-hundredth anniversary of Mennonite settlement in Russia has been celebrated with many projects including publication of this collection of essays honouring the personal and scholarly contributions of Gerhard Lohrenz to the Mennonite community. This attractive and well-edited volume "presents the state of research to the present" in order "to open up and inspire new research . . . and suggest areas that require further study" (ix). It succeeds in both respects.

The volume is divided into three chronological units (1788-1880, 1880-1914 and 1914-1988), but, for review purposes, the articles can be regrouped according to a central question of the strength of the Mennonite identity. Some historians tend to examine the factors which unified the community while others treat the factors which challenged its unity.

Lawrence Klippenstein coordinates older accounts with more modern scholarship to narrate the migrations of 1786-1806 which established the Mennonite presence in the Russian Empire. Similarly, John Friesen describes the gradual, and difficult, unification of different Mennonite church groups between 1789 and 1850 into a common Mennonite identity despite religious differences. Adolf Ens extols the achievements of Mennonite education in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, showing that the colonies' schools providing greater opportunities than other German, Russian and North American Mennonite schools. Wesley Berg traces the evolution of Mennonite music from simple hymns to complex choral forms, seeing in religious music an important bulwark of Mennonite identity. Al Reimer reviews Mennonite "print culture" between 1870-1930 and finds it more developed than previous observers had thought. He argues that the Russian Mennonites were on the verge of producing a significant contribution to literature when the Russian Revolution intervened.

John Toews continues the argument into the Soviet period, asserting that the Mennonites maintained the essentials of "peoplehood" despite moder-

nization, the Revolution and Communist Purges. Mennonites maintained their own schools and churches, in the 1920s, while later, after losing their settlements and institutions, the Mennonites' continued attachment to language and religious customs sustained their identity. Victor Doerksen illustrates this process of "Survival and Identity" with extensive quotations from a contemporary diary.

James Urry takes a contrary tack by arguing provocatively that the Mennonite community tended towards dissolution in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Placing Mennonite economic development in the context of the Russian Empire's rapid economic and social change, he shows how Mennonites adapted to the economic modernization in South Russia (the Ukraine) by commercializing and varying their own economic practices. This process of Mennonite expansion led individuals to move to new geographic areas, a development which further threatened the integrity of the Mennonite community. Unfortunately, success provoked the hostility of their Russian and Ukrainian neighbours both on the political right and left. The break-up of the community was accelerated by the First World War and the Revolution.

Similarly, George Epp identifies the emergence of a significant urban element among the Mennonites, despite the predominance of rural settlement, as a natural concomitant of the region's industrial growth in the late nineteenth century. Achieving prominence in small towns and even some larger regional cities, urban Mennonites led the way towards a new pattern of Mennonite existence. Abe Dueck's examination of "Mennonite Churches 1850-1914" shows the religious turbulence which, he asserts, reflected social change. Harry Loewen argues more specifically that the small number of Mennonites who chose to emigrate indicates that the large majority had decided to travel the path of other European Mennonites towards integration with the larger society. The alternative military service offered by the Tsarist government and accepted by the Mennonite community came to signify community control rather than adherence to strict religious principles.

Harvey Dyck's study of "Landlessness in the Old Colony: The *Judenplan* Experiment 1850-1880" partly conforms to this pattern. Basing his study on the voluminous diaries of Jakob Epp, Dyck traces the experiences of a poor but well-educated farmer who eschewed a teaching career in favour of settlement as a "model farmer" in a Jewish farming community established by the Tsar. Epp's experience and those of other participants, both Mennonite and Jewish, was not a happy one. Epp's experience serves to remind historians that the Golden Years in Russia were difficult ones for many Mennonites. Dyck's essay also leads in other directions such as his intriguing preliminary speculation on Mennonite-Jewish relations.

Walter Sawatzky eloquently traces the transformation "From Russian to Soviet Mennonites 1941-1988," challenging the feasibility — and desirability — of maintaining a distinct Mennonite identity in the Soviet Union. Sawatzky

sees the deportation and resettlement of Mennonites in the East as leading Mennonites to merge with other Germans ethnically and with other evangelicals (such as the Baptists) religiously. Younger Mennonites are adopting Russian speech and bringing Russian spiritual values into a new synthesis with their Mennonite traditions. A postscript added shortly before the book went to press reflected on the new freedom to emigrate to West Germany opened up by the Gorbachev government. So many Mennonites (and other Germans) responded that the future of the community is in doubt. At the same time, political change in the Soviet Union has permitted an unprecedented increase in religious activity so that some Mennonites are choosing to remain in the Soviet Union to undertake missionary activities among their neighbours, regardless of language.

It is in no way a criticism of this volume to point to subjects which warrant future study. First, there is a tension between viewing the Mennonites as a religious group and as a nationality that should be explored, even if it may never be resolved. Second, ethnic Mennonites outside the community should be studied, particularly those who cooperated, voluntarily or involuntarily, with the Soviets. Third, the Mennonites' relationship with other German-speaking peoples needs analysis. This topic includes both the Mennonites' relations with other German-speakers in Russia (especially their neighbours in the Ukraine) as well as Mennonite relations with Germany proper throughout the entire period (including the Nazi period).

Daniel Stone
University of Winnipeg

C.P. Toews, Heinrich Friesen & Arnold Dyck, *The Kuban Settlement* (Winnipeg: CMBC Publications and the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, 1989). Paperback viii, 93 pages, \$9 Can.

After 1900 there was a brief renaissance in historical writing by Russian Mennonites, mainly concerned with their Russian past. Besides the well-known massive tome of P.M. Friesen, there also were numerous other articles, pamphlets and books. David H. Epp published a number of historical sketches, at first serialized in his newspaper the *Botschafter* and later issued as separate booklets. Epp also actively encouraged the publication of selected historical documents in the newspaper. This was all part of a strategy to promote the study of Mennonite history, especially Russian Mennonite history. In Russia a historical archive was established before 1914, although the papers, carefully collected by the Halbstadt Commerce School teacher Peter Braun before and after the War, were seized by Soviet authorities in the late 1920s.

In 1913 the religious leaders agreed to include the teaching of Mennonite history at all grades in the school system. To this end people were invited to write textbooks suitable for use in the schools. A better knowledge of Mennonite history was part of a broader campaign by the elite to increase Mennonite cultural awareness, the intention being to prepare the Mennonites better to withstand the reforming zeal of a Russian state bent on creating a civil society where Mennonite special privileges and cultural distinctiveness would be subordinated to the demands of the national interest.

War, revolution, civil war and emigration put an end to most of these plans. But the Chortitza elite who emigrated to Canada remained true to the pre-war ideals, especially the former staff and ex-pupils of the Chortitza Central School. Dietrich H. Epp, David's brother, continued the *Botschafter* policy of publishing historical sketches and documents in the immigrants' newspaper, the *Bote*. B.J. Schellenberg attempted to found a new archive. Then, in the early 1940s the ex-pupils of the School held a reunion and they agreed to publish historical accounts. The result was the Echo Verlag series. The name of the series was derived from the phrase "ehemal-Schüler der Chortitzer Zentralschule." The leading figure in the promotion of the series was Arnold Dyck who edited, printed and distributed the booklets as well as designing the distinctive symbol of the Verlag: a depiction of the "Thousand-year oak" of the Old Colony. Between 1945 and 1965 fourteen volumes appeared. Some were reprints of works published previously in Russia, but others written especially for the new series.

In 1987 the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society in association with CMBC Publications agreed to publish English translations of the series under the general editorship of Victor G. Doerksen. The first volume, number nine in the original series, on the Kuban settlement has now appeared translated by Herb Giesbrecht. The volume is well translated, pleasantly printed and includes a new preface by the translator and new illustrations in the text.

During the 1940s and 1950s access to Mennonite historical sources was extremely limited in Canada and most of the authors of these booklets were not trained scholars, but rather interested lay-people. The result was a selection of booklets which varied considerably in size, scope and value. Some were, and will remain classics, including Epp's *Johann Cornies* and Bartsch's *Unser Auszug nach Mittelasien*. Others provided new accounts where few other sources exist, such as Sawatzky's book on the Templars, and important documents such as Victor Peters' final volume of the series. But one wonders whether all the volumes warrant the effort of translation and the cost of republication.

The problem lies perhaps in the question of the intended audience. If there is indeed a readership no longer able to comprehend the German texts yet eager to have the accounts one could justify the venture. But does such an audience exist? If, however, the translation is intended to encourage research,

even by amateurs, then surely the series should be translated with more scholarly rigour, with proper introductions and the inclusion of footnotes and new sources. But if this were done a number of the original texts quickly would become redundant.

There is a need to collect and publish primary sources on Mennonite history as well as publishing new interpretive accounts. And there is also a need to produce translations of many documents from the German and especially from Russian sources. Not all, however, can be justified as publishing ventures. Given this need, one cannot help but feel that while the English translations of the Echo Verlag series are to be welcomed, the efforts of the translators and the costs of the publishers could have been put to more profitable ends. The spirit of historical writing and publishing symbolized by the Echo Verlag, as well as the hopes of the earlier generation in Russia, needs to be rediscovered. New research, translations and writing is what is needed, not the creation of a set of translations of dubious writings as if they are somehow sacred texts embodying great truths.

James Urry

Victoria University of Wellington

Levi Miller, *Ben's Wayne* (Intercourse: Good Books, 1989), Hardcover with Dustjacket, 165 pages, \$US14.95

This novel deals with a summer in the life of Wayne Weaver, an eighteen-year-old member of the Amish community in Holmes County, Ohio. Wayne tells us his own story about what happened to him and his community during the summer of 1960.

The young man lives a basically contented life on his father's farm, surrounded by neighbours and relatives. Wayne is courting a lovely young woman and expects to marry her in the near future and start his own family. Everyone else also shares his expectation. All seems to be going well as the summer unfolds, and young Wayne seems happy enough. However, not all is calm within. He has always been satisfied in his little world, but could there be much more excitement and contentment beyond? Every now and then he casts a wanton glance at that other world out there past the borders of the Amish community. He is lured by evidence of the excitement and challenges of this outside world that penetrates his protected sphere. His older brother Roy has left his faith some time ago and seems to be leading an attractive, adventuresome, if rather hectic and unstable life in the world. His visit home during this summer seems to nurture Wayne's flirting with the larger world. The visit of a young student doing research also exerts a profound influence

on him. Wayne begins to waver more and more. Then a terrible tragedy happens and puts an end to everything. Wayne finds himself firmly turned back to his faith and abandons his thoughts of possibly leaving the community. A term in the alternative service at a hospital further confirms his choice. In the end Wayne resolves firmly to stay, as this is where he is needed, where his appointed place is.

Levi Miller's novel tells a powerful story, and it is very well written. The author avoids the common pitfall of overstating Wayne's dilemma and of being biased from the start. There is a great deal of subtlety and a remarkable sensitivity in the treatment of Wayne's problems and those of his community.

The author is, of course, on familiar ground when he deals with the Amish and their way of life. His own parents left the Amish to join the Mennonite Church when he was still an adolescent, and many of his relatives still remain Amish. His depiction of the Amish world is accurate and sympathetic. Miller does not indulge in moralizing and he avoids being judgemental. In his dialogues he tries to catch that special flavour of a group caught between two languages and cultures. A fair number of German words are used in the novel. This need not be seen as a problem, however, since the uninitiated are usually treated to a translation, or the context makes the meaning clear. The speech of the Amish is rendered in English, but this English has a definite German flavour. The characters use many German interjections and religious terms, and they often use expressions that are literally transposed from the German. At times this is, frankly, a little overdone and seems just a trifle appliqué. All the same, this does no harm to the vigorous flow of the narrative.

This novel makes for excellent reading and presents a well-told and carefully constructed story. The reader is allowed easy access to the world of the Amish. As well, the novel deals not merely with problems relating specifically to the Amish but with universal human problems. Further works by this author will be anticipated with great curiosity and high expectations.

André Oberlé

The University of Winnipeg

Donald B. Kraybill, *The Riddle of Amish Culture* (London & Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), hardback & paperback; xiv, 304 pp. US\$35 (hdbk), 8.95 (pbk)

Calvin Redekop, *Mennonite Society*. (London & Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), hardback & paperback; xiv, 397 pp. US\$40 (hdbk), 14.95 (pbk).

The Johns Hopkins University Press has published a number of volumes on the society and culture of Mennonite and related groups, most notably John A. Hostetler's volumes on the Hutterites and the Amish. Now two new volumes have appeared in this series.

At first sight one would wonder why the Amish need another volume given that Hostetler's volume is now in its third revised edition. But Kraybill's volume is a worthy addition to Hostetler's book with a fresh approach and strikingly new insights.

The 'riddle' in Kraybill's title involves how Amish (especially those in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania), living in the heart of modern America, have not only survived into the present age, but have also negotiated their survival. This negotiation has involved the careful preservation of certain aspects of their agrarian way of life and their core values. The Amish, however, have not remained untouched by the society around them. The process of negotiation has resulted in change and compromise but Kraybill argues that this has occurred in a gradual and careful way. The Amish, Kraybill suggests, are rational social actors in control of their own destiny.

To illustrate his argument Kraybill painstakingly outlines the bases of Amish society, the central values of Amish life and the core social and cultural practices. He then examines how the Amish have had to negotiate over schools, technology, tourism and the regulations of the state at both the local and the central level. These are the external forces operating on Amish society. But there are also internal pressures caused not just by wayward members seeking to open avenues with the larger society, but also by the contradictions inherent in Amish society and life styles. The increasing pressure of population, the rising costs of land and the desire to remain in close contact with family and friends has forced many Amish to find new forms of work. The rise of Amish manufacturing plants and businessmen has presented an entire new set of problems, especially those involved with technology, which have had to be negotiated.

Kraybill illustrates his argument with numerous examples drawn from Amish history and particularly events in the twentieth century. The book is extremely clearly written and finely argued. It is a pleasure to read a sociologist who can write not only clearly, but with style, humour and warm insight.

Now and then there is slight repetition and occasionally the author resorts to lists of explanations which seem to spell out the obvious.

In terms of the theoretical argument, however, I have one minor and one major reservation. The minor reservation is that Kraybill has a tendency to make the Amish appear more rational in their recognition of the threat of the "new", in terms of their decisions and in the manner of their negotiations than perhaps can be warranted from the evidence. Too often Kraybill speaks for the Amish, assuming the dubious role of "if I were an Amish . . ." rather than supporting his case with evidence from the native point of view.

The major reservation lies in Kraybill's use of the long bankrupt idea of "tradition" versus "modernization," usually referred to as "modernization theory". The Amish are a "traditional" people and then there are (us?) "Moderns." Firstly such a model cannot account for the dynamics of social and cultural life which Kraybill is at pains to show, and secondly without a proper understanding of the nature of modern, industrial society, the "moderns" appear merely as caricatures of the wider society. In fact Kraybill does discuss the dynamics of Amish life well, but he cannot account for the real complexity of the interaction between the Amish and the wider world because he retreats into a simplistic duality of traditionalism versus modernization. This is clearly indicated in the final chapter where the author creates his own apologetic dialogue not for Amish society, but for the ways of the modern society. The agrarian way of life is now past in North America; popular romanticism should not be confused with the reality of industrial society.

In spite of these criticisms Kraybill's book will become essential reading for all those interested in the Amish and related groups. I only wish I could say the same for the book on Mennonite society.

Redekop's book ranges across a wide field and adopts a range of analytical approaches. After an historical and geographical overview, Redekop attempts to define the Mennonite ethos which includes faith, community organization, cultural developments and apparently something called the Mennonite personality. The next section examines Mennonite institutional life and finally the internal and external stresses on the Mennonite way of life. Approaches range from a passion with typologies, models and an appropriation of any sociological and psychological theory which at that moment suits the authors argument. Sometimes his grasp of theoretical ideas appears a little shaky. I have trouble for instance recognizing ideas attributed to Durkheim. At other times "Great" names are dropped merely for affect: "Kant and Hegel capture many of the central elements of this [liberalism and modernism] movement" (283). There is no central theme or theoretical approach to bind the book together.

Although the book concentrates on North American Mennonites, at times it appears to be more ambitious and to incorporate an overview of all Men-

nonites on a global scale. It is this ambition which is perhaps the book's undoing. The author has an annoying habit of referring to *the* Mennonite society as if it is, or has been, an organic whole. Unlike the earlier books published by Johns Hopkins Press on the Amish and Hutterites, Mennonites, even in North America, are far too numerous and diverse to be subsumed under such a simplistic title as *Mennonite society*. Historically, geographically, culturally and socially Mennonites are just too different to be swept together like this. Redekop perhaps should be congratulated for his efforts, but not for the results.

At times this reader was left unsure as to whom the book is addressed. Sometimes the discussion assumes far too much knowledge on the part of an outsider, while in places points seemed to be addressed more to internal Mennonite debates than to matters of substance. In places I was unsure whether there was real substantive analysis of what exists or an attempt to propose a programme for social engineering; the social scientist as prophet rather than analyst. For example he writes:

“... the ‘rediscovery’ of the relevance of Anabaptist faith and life by rank-and-file Mennonites, especially young people, *will* increasingly produce energy for the achievement of a consistent and biblical expression in all areas of life, which *will* include the role of women in the religious life of Mennonite society and hence *will* place increasing pressure on Mennonite institutions to allow women fair access to all aspects” (171, my emphases).

The quotation above also provides a typical example of some of the problems of Redekop's prose and mode of discussion. What, one might ask, are the “all aspects” women are to be given fair access to? But if there are problems with the book's subject matter, theoretical argument and direction, there are also major problems with the writing and presentation. At the start of the book Redekop states that the term Anabaptism is derived from Latin; it is in fact Greek. From here on things are all down hill. The writing is clumsy and irregular. Some sociologists still need to learn that writing an academic work is not just a matter of getting the “facts” right. How a work is written, and the choice of terms adopted to delineate phenomena are crucial to clarity of argument. Redekop's use of terms is confusing and often misleading. In different places he talks of the Anabaptist movement, the Anabaptist revolution (48), the Anabaptist tradition (65), the Anabaptist-Mennonite utopian tradition (55) and even the Mennonite project (276). Even where Redekop depends on other peoples' ideas (he has a habit of “lifting” quotations and linking them together with poor prose) at best there is misappropriation, at worse misrepresentation. Some references are missing from the bibliography and others have incorrect names or titles.

I have to admit that it pains me to be so critical about this book, but I feel I have little option. It is difficult to believe that two books from the same publisher should vary so greatly in terms of quality of argument, writ-

ing style and even editorial production. If Redekop's book is about North American Mennonite society, readers will gain a better understanding of Mennonite societies from historical studies such as those by Frank Epp and the excellent new series on *The Mennonite Experience in America* than from this book.

James Urry
Victoria University of Wellington

Leo Driedger, *The Ethnic Factor: Identity in Diversity* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1989). 450 pages.

It is an unfortunate consequence of the hegemony of American sociology in Canada that it often results in the adoption and use of American sources in sociology courses offered at Canadian universities. Their use leads to the adoption of a variety of untested assumptions about the parallels between Canadian and American societies which may or may not be valid. Perhaps nowhere do such assumptions have less validity than in the area of ethnic studies. The ethnic composition of Canada is dramatically different from that of the United States. The history and development of ethnic relations have been substantially different as well. Professor Driedger's effort to provide a comprehensive text on ethnic relations in Canada is therefore a welcome endeavor. Driedger has himself contributed substantially to this field, as reflected for example in the number of citations in the bibliography, and he brings a considerable degree of knowledge and authority to this task.

The first part of the book addresses the question of theoretical focus in the study of ethnicity. The emphasis is on the classical sociological theorists in the opening chapter, with special emphasis on Max Weber. Marx and Durkheim are also discussed briefly, with reference to the impact of industrial change. The Chicago school is also discussed. The second chapter focuses more directly on models of ethnic change and persistence.

Part 2 includes a demographic history of ethnicity in Canada, as well as an examination of regional differences. These chapters are informative and comprehensive. The information provided underlines not only the uniqueness of Canada's ethnic composition, but also the degree of regional variation within the country. Part 3 examines various aspects of ethnic identity. An introductory chapter presents a model of ethnic identification. Subsequent chapters deal with more specific interests. One is devoted to ethnic identification among the Francophones of Quebec. A second compares ethnic identity formation and solidarity among three smaller and less influential ethnic groups: Indians, Hutterites and Jews. A separate chapter examines the im-

pact of urbanization on ethnic identity, with special reference to Mennonite, Chinese and Portuguese communities. This is a topic that Driedger has himself contributed to substantially, and his knowledgeability is reflected in the discussion.

Part 4 is devoted to issues of stratification and inequality. The first chapter in this section examines the relationship between ethnicity and socioeconomic status in Canada, on the basis of a fairly substantial body of research which has emerged on this topic, inspired by John Porter's hypothesis of a negative association between the two. The second chapter deals with racial inequalities, and prejudice and discrimination. The final section is concerned with issues of rights and freedoms relating to ethnicity in Canada.

While there is much that is worthwhile in this book, there are also some problems. One is the rather difficult style which, together with frequently awkward grammatical constructions, will make this book a struggle to read for most undergraduates. Secondly, while Driedger does a very capable job of bringing together a wide range of empirical research in this volume, his theoretical analysis is at times problematic. We are first exposed to a number of theoretical perspectives and models. These are combined in one complex diagrammatic representation which serves to confuse matters more than to clarify. The author then introduces a variety of theoretical frameworks and models in separate parts of the book, which adds to the confusion. An additional problem has to do with a tendency to confuse theory and policy. This tendency is particularly evident in the chapter on theories of ethnic change and persistence. For instance, in discussing assimilation Driedger states that: "There were a sufficient number of who did assimilate, as Park predicted, to keep American researchers preoccupied with documenting the progress of their assimilation." In other words, assimilation is a theoretical construct for predicting the course of ethnicity, and as such, subject to empirical test. However, on the next page he states that: "The Americans . . . have stressed assimilation more than the Canadians, and have evolved a stronger feeling of nationalism than Canadians." This is clearly a statement about policy. The two are bound to influence one another, but this is all the more reason to distinguish them clearly from one another.

Despite these difficulties, this book will provide a valuable resource for those interested in the study of the complex topic of ethnicity in Canada.

Paul Redekop
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Rudy Wiebe, *Playing Dead: A Contemplation Concerning the Arctic* (Edmonton: NeWest, 1989), 168 pages, quality paperback \$12.95, clothbound \$22.95

Rudy Wiebe's thought-provoking collection of essays on northern Canada is undoubtedly one of the most intelligent recent contributions to our understanding of the north. To be sure, there has been a lot of talk about "our nordicity" for some time now, but there has not been any noticeable real change in our awareness of and attitude towards the north. The essays in this volume attempt to bring about just such a change. The author's provocative insights force us to come to terms with our cliché-ridden, apathetic attitude to what most of us see as that virtually empty, uninhabitable space "up there" on our map.

In fact, the first thing the reader is confronted with when he opens this book is a map that is turned upside down and is provocatively labelled "Inuit View to the South". This map depicts our densely-populated regions to the south as virtually empty spaces, while the north is teeming with place names and signs of life. Thus readers are challenged before they even read a single line in the book.

As an introduction to his collection of essays Wiebe quotes the beautiful myth on "The Origin of Ice" as told by Ikpakhuag and Uloqsaq, Copper Inuit, 1913-1916. What we are told in this myth stands in complete contrast to our own explanations on the nature of ice. Yet, there is something very compelling about the Inuit explanation. Within their own sphere their story is entirely logical. The point made here, namely that we must change our perspective completely, that we must try to understand the north by trying to understand the way it looks to those who inhabit it, is brought home by the author time and again.

The body of the book consists of three essays that might be read independently but are very closely connected in theme. All three essays — "Exercising Reflection," "On Being Motionless" and "In Our Own Head" — are reflections on the nature and importance of the north. Wiebe observes that we usually think of the Canadian north in negative terms, that we are always "wishing ourselves something we aren't," that we "always stand staring south across that mockingly invisible border longing for the leeks and onions of our ancient Egyptian nemesis, the United States."

In these essays Wiebe then proceeds to reflect on the physical nature of the north with its vast empty spaces, the language of the Inuit, especially the important role played by the notion of linear movement and aureal stillness, and the myths and songs of the Inuit. We read the stories of the voyages of the well-known explorers in versions that are quite different from those we found in our schoolbooks. We become witness to the not-so-civilized ways

our "heroes" employed to bring our "values" to the "barbarians" and "savages" up north. In this critical and unexpurgated revision of our textbooks it is the Inuit who emerge as the true heroes.

The author stresses that our only means of coming to a better understanding of the north is to completely re-evaluate and thoroughly revise our traditional notions. Above all, he pleads with us, we must begin to see the importance of the north in our national heritage and in our national identity. If we fail to make a real effort, the north will always remain nothing but a remote domain. It will continue to be a foreign country on our own soil, a rich but disowned inheritance, instead of something that is not just history, but a place that is alive now and that is part of us.

Rudy Wiebe is to be commended on a fascinating and thought-provoking book. The book is exceptionally well written and makes excellent reading. Readers will have the much needed opportunity to come to a better understanding of our north and they will be challenged in just about all of their present views on the subject.

André Oberlé
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J. Winfield Fretz, *The Waterloo Mennonites: A Community Paradox* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1989). Paperback, 391 pages, \$16.95 Can. 19.95 U.S.

The Waterloo County Mennonites represent a microcosm of Mennonites in Canada. "No where else in the Mennonite world do you find such a variety living in one geographical area" (p. xvii). With this conviction Fretz launched a sociological community study that covers a period of almost twenty years. At the time he was a professor of sociology at Conrad Grebel College and, in the earlier years, also served as president of the college. It was in 1972 that he undertook a detailed census of Waterloo County Mennonite church members. This data combined with several other smaller projects and Canada Census data provides the empirical evidence for this book.

This Mennonite community traces its beginnings to the first quarter of the nineteenth century when approximately 1200 to 1500 Mennonites from Pennsylvania settled in Waterloo County. Later Amish Mennonites from Europe and some Russian Mennonites also settled in the area. Census data indicate that in 1861 they made up 11.2% of the population and in 1981 had declined to 4.9%. Although they declined in proportion during this period the actual growth in numbers has continued from approximately 4000 to

15000. Originally the Mennonites were a rural people but today more and more are moving into urban areas.

The Waterloo County Mennonites are comprised of fourteen separately organized bodies which Fretz divides into three communities — conservatives (Old Order Mennonite, David Martin Old Order Mennonite, Elam Martin Old Order Mennonite, Reformed Mennonite, Old Order Amish, Old Colony Mennonite), moderates (Waterloo-Markham, Conservative Mennonite Conference, Beachy Amish, Evangelical Mennonite Mission Church) and progressives (Mennonite Conference of Ontario, Western Ontario Mennonite Conference, United Mennonite Conference, Mennonite Brethren Churches of Ontario). The distinction between these communities is the “degree of discipline exercised over members” (p. 48) as this is reflected in their respective lifestyles and practices. The conservative-moderate community emphasizes a rigorous enforcement of discipline, limits freedom of choice, and encourages self-sufficiency. On the other hand, the progressives support service organizations, pursue an active peace witness and promote Mennonite church unions. As each institution (family, church, school, recreation, health, finance and economics) in the respective communities is described comparatively one acquires an understanding of the diversity and richness of this people.

The local spice of life is reflected by giving the reader an inside look at details such as an Old Order Mennonite pantry, farming methods and financing, Mennonite surnames and nicknames, church financing, courtship patterns and weddings, and moral training in Mennonite schools. Details about the process of switching church memberships to achieve congruity between beliefs and changes in life style and practice makes one aware of the tensions of living in this community. Intermarriage is identified as one factor that impels members to migrate from conservative-moderate to progressive and even to non-Mennonite congregation.

There is little doubt that Fretz sympathizes with the conservative-moderate communities yet recognizes the realities facing the Waterloo Mennonites. The rural-urban shift is inevitable even though it represents “a great impoverishment of the Mennonite heritage” (p. 324). Secularization of the progressive Mennonites threatens to comprise the witness of the Christian community. Apart from these misgivings Fretz is pleased with the fact that Waterloo Mennonites have produced good common people instead of a few heroes, and that the different Mennonite communities have a mutual respect for each other’s life style and values. The future of Mennonitism, as a Christian witness, rests on their ability to find “a balance between individual freedom of choice, on the one hand, and social control of group behaviour on the other” (p. 327).

Throughout the book one finds a thoughtful interpretation of the facts based on astute observations and interactions with Mennonites. The comparative perspective is consistently applied and most informative. It is sup-

ported by a generous dose of statistics which at times distracts from the analysis. Some of the samples are very small, statistical tables don't always fit the period under study, and generalizations are debatable. The analysis is enhanced by informative appendixes, descriptive endnotes, an extensive bibliography and a complete index.

This book represents a labour of love by a pioneer Mennonite sociologist. It makes a significant contribution both to the community study tradition of the discipline and to our understanding of the Mennonite community.

Jacob Peters
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Torches Rekindled. The Bruderhof's Struggle for Renewal. Told by Merrill Row, with Forewords by Tom Sine and John Perkins (Ulster Park, N.Y.: Plough Publishing House, 1989). xv + 309 pp., \$10.50.

"Are you ready then to surrender yourself completely and to bind yourself unreservedly to God, to Jesus Christ, and to the community?"

In the last four words of this question, which is among those addressed to Hutterite novices at the Woodcrest Bruderhof, New York, is encapsulated the challenge of Christian communal living. Woodcrest was founded in 1954, and in this book Merrill Row, who lived in the community for more than thirty years, informally recounts its story. The result is an unusual glimpse into the joys and sorrows of this way of witnessing for Christ.

It is a "warts and all" story. The narrator is afflicted by neither false pride nor mock humility. There is happiness, peace and unity, as well as discord, strife and separation. We see that the Hutterites can attain the heights of spiritual experience, and also that members can be "opinionated and unbrotherly." Concerning the struggles of community life, Merrill Row declares that "the most important thing about them was and is to know what they are about and what they are for. If that is not known, then struggle can be extremely tragic, and people can be hurt very seriously."

The devastating fire of 1957; the toy-making industry; the ministry of Heini Arnold; relations with Hutterites elsewhere — it is all here. The deeply pietistic roots blend with a concern to be about mission in modern ways — a concern which claimed the lives of two would-be mission pilots on a practice flight.

In 1975 a "Covenant of the Lord's Supper" was adopted. It is a most interesting document, in which these peaceable folk gird up their loins in pugilistic terms, for example: "We declare war against all emotional and physical cruelty toward children." Again, these Hutterites, with their roots in an

older age, are up to the minute in addressing the issues of the "modern" age: "We declare war against all forms of magic or curiosity about satanic darkness." They also reaffirm their desire to be one in Christ, to receive all necessary graces, and to be a light in the world.

The book is enhanced by a tribute to the late David Merrill Row, numerous excellent illustrations, a chronology, and a helpful and necessary glossary of Bruderhof terms.

There is a "word to the wise" in John M. Perkins's Foreword: "We as God's people have got to go beyond individual conversion!" Perhaps the underlying message of this book (though we here articulate it in our own way) is that, contrary to the emphasis of post-Enlightenment individualism which has so devastated ecclesiology, the churches are not aggregates of saved souls or, for that matter, of consumers. They are fellowships of faith. As the new millennium approaches all Christians need to learn afresh — and now in a post-Constantinian, pluralist world in which the assumptions of Christendom are being questioned — how to be the *people* of God. Relatively few will make the Hutterite experiment; how will the majority respond? If they do nothing, then at best Christian witness will be impaired; at worst anarchy will prevail in the churches.

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Thomas N. Finger, *Christian Theology. An Eschatological Approach*. 2 vols. (Scottdale/Kitchener: Herald Press, 1985, 1989). Hardcover. Vol. 1, pp. 367; Vol. 2, pp. 544.

What follows is not a review of Finger's two-volume systematic theology. I merely wish to comment on how "anabaptist" this theology is.

Finger's method of doing theology is different from that of other, classical, theologies, be they Catholic or Protestant. Whereas other systematic theologies begin with God and end with the "last things," this theology begins with the "blessed hope" of the believing community and ends with God.

Similar to theologians of hope (e.g. J. Moltmann), Finger sees the early Christian communities as living in the "end time," in the kingdom of God which Christ came to establish. According to this view, believers not only live with the end in mind, but they also seek to bring about changes in society which will reflect the coming of God's kingdom. Anabaptists also sought to establish model communities which would exemplify kingdom principles, inviting men and women to pattern their life according to these principles.

Following theologians such as Gordon Kaufman, Finger proceeds from the premise that an experiential knowledge of God is derived not from abstract theologizing about God but from experiences in the world and within a believing community. The underlying assumption is that Christian faith and life is basically ethical rather than dogmatic in nature. To use Hans Denck's line, to know Christ is to follow him in life. Finger's emphasis on community, brotherhood, and discipleship reflects generally an Anabaptist or believers' church theology.

Another deviation from traditional theology is Finger's concern for dialogue. His theology is provisional or tentative theology. All chapters include many questions, expressing humility and modesty with regard to issues dealt with and inviting Catholics, Protestants and Mennonites "to discuss things." There are even suggestions that Christians need to dialogue with non-Christian communities about what it means to believe and to bring about God's rule in a fallen world.

Thus eschatology, community and dialogue, three important marks of Anabaptism, characterize this systematic theology. It is a most welcome and timely believers' church contribution to doing theology. No serious student of religion or theologian can afford to bypass Finger's work.

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