

# Book Reviews

Al Reimer, editor, *Arnold Dyck, Collected Works, Volume II, Koop enn Bua opp Reise, Koop enn Bua Foare no Toronto and Koop enn Bua enn Dietschlaud* (Winnipeg: Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, 1986). Hardcover, 508 pages, \$25.00.

Volume III, *Dee Milljoonäa fonn Kosefeld, Onse Lied enn Oola Tiet, Forsteijeschijchte, Wellkom opp'e Forstei! Dee Oppnom, Dee Fria and Koop enn Bua Tus* (Winnipeg: Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, 1988). Hardcover, 604 pages, \$25.00.

These two volumes of *The Collected Works of Arnold Dyck* make even more clear what the first revealed: that we are in the presence of a writer of stature. Just how great that stature will be remains to be seen. Fortunately these volumes will help us to assess Arnold Dyck's importance not only in Mennonite but also in German and world literature. That he is preeminent among early Mennonite writers is, I think, clear, but the second question is moot.

A more careful look at all of Dyck's works is now possible and will, of course, be even more possible with the publication of the fourth and last volume which will include the previously unpublished works.

Volumes II and III are devoted to the Low German works. Here for the first time the reader has access to all presently available Low German publications of Arnold Dyck. No longer will it be necessary to find the paperbacks in which they were originally published and which are available, generally, only in Mennonite libraries.

The second volume contains the three previously published novels telling the stories of the travels of Koop and Bua: *Koop enn Bua opp Reise, Koop enn Bua Foare no Toronto* and *Koop enn Bua enn Dietschlaud*. Between the covers of this volume, the reader has ready access to Dyck's three central Low German works. They are, perhaps, his most important works.

The third volume which includes Dyck's shorter sketches, his two plays and the early "Koop enn Bua Tus" sketches is especially valuable. To have available in one place all of the earlier sketches of Koop enn Bua which appeared in the *Steinbach Post* and in *The Mennonitische Volkswarte* will delight both the scholar and the general reader. These stories, as well as the

previously uncollected "Forsteijeschijchte" will give the general reader hours of pleasure and will provide the critic ample material to study the development of Dyck's style and technique. This collection reveals the wide range of Dyck's interests, his careful attention to detail and his comic skill and delightful satire.

Published in hard-back editions with illustrations by the author and with perceptive introductions by Al Reimer, these volumes at a reasonable price—ninety-five dollars for the set of four is a cheap price to pay today for the collected works of any author—now make it possible for those who have followed Arnold Dyck's career as well as for new readers to buy copies of the collected works.

Al Reimer, as we have come to expect, has done his usual competent editing. Perhaps no one is more competent to edit Arnold Dyck's Low German works. He knows both the language and the writer. His defense of the use of the Low German orthography used in *The Collected Works* is convincing, and this reviewer, at least, found the revised spelling much easier to read. Reimer's sense of the place in which the sketches are set gives him an insight into the works which others would not have.

Perhaps one of the most important aspects of Reimer's introductions is that he knows, as Arnold Dyck did, both the Mennonite Low German community and the literary tradition in which these works must be placed if they are to be properly assessed and enjoyed. Reimer is aware of the prototypes of the characters, the immediate influences upon Arnold Dyck and the literary traditions both Mennonite and beyond upon which Dyck drew to create his plays, his characters and his literary types and techniques. To be knowledgeable about the literary history upon which Dyck drew, to pay attention to the techniques of comedy, to be aware of the comic spirit, to call attention to Dyck's irony as Reimer does, adds much to our understanding of Dyck's works.

Reimer's decision to keep the editorial apparatus to a minimum is generally wise. We can read the works themselves without the impediment of voluminous footnotes and explanations. However, in some instances more information, particularly about colloquial expressions and references to specific incidents, would have helped the reader not familiar with the language and practices of Manitoba Mennonites to understand the stories better.

It would have been more convenient, moreover, if the dates of the works, particularly the dates of the sketches of Koop and Bua, had been given immediately after the work itself as well as in the introduction. One more minor point: it would be helpful if the title page indicated where the *Collected Works* are published.

These editorial practices sometimes leave the impression, not intentionally I'm sure, that Arnold Dyck is *only* or primarily a Mennonite ethnic writer. Sometimes Dyck himself seems to leave that impression. To be sure

Arnold Dyck's little village of Musdarp is without doubt the most convincing portrayal of a Mennonite village that we have. Koop and Bua are without doubt the most imaginative creations of the Mennonite character that we have. Most Mennonites recognize both the community and the characters immediately even if they have never lived there or met Koop and Bua. Indeed neither the Mennonite community in which I grew up nor the Mennonite people I knew were like Musdarp or Koop and Bua. Yet I recognized both as quintessentially Mennonite when I first read Dyck's stories.

Because of this verisimilitude in his portrayal of place and character, I would argue that Musdarp is more than a Mennonite village and Koop and Bua more than two *Struckfoarma* living in Manitoba. Like Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha County, Musdarp is a village in which all of us live, Mennonite or not. Koop and Bua exemplify not only Mennonite characteristics but also characteristics shared by, if not all, then many of us.

These two volumes pose a different problem. Mennonites who know Low German can appreciate Arnold Dyck, particularly his love of and high regard for their *prost enn groffe Buasprook*. They can even understand, though not agree with, his insistence that to be a genuine Mennonite one must speak Low German. They know that Bua would get very little agreement today that "wann etj't mett eenem Mennist too doone habe saul, dann mott etj mett am kjenne plautdietsch nobre" (Vol, III, p. 603).

But how can that speech and what it can say be shared with others who do not know that blunt and coarse peasant speech which rolls so mellifluously off Arnold Dyck's pages? If Dyck is a writer whose work should be more universally recognized, certainly more widely shared, the language poses a problem. Much of his work, perhaps his most important work, is written in Low German, a language fewer and fewer people know, at least in North America. There is no indication that the numbers of Low German speakers will increase. There is rather every indication that they will decrease.

I do not have a satisfactory answer to that problem. Translation seems to be the only answer, but can Dyck's Low German be translated? Apparently Dyck doesn't think so. In his introduction to the *Forsteijeschijchte* he argues that only in Low German can these stories about the Forest Service be told: "Nä, Lied, wann ut miene Forsteijeschijchte waut Woaret woare saul, mott etj se plautdietsch fetale. Jo, plautdietsch, soo plautdietsch aus wie opp'e Forstei råde" (Vol. III, p. 156). He is right, of course, particularly when he argues that Koop and Bua would not be themselves if they spoke High German. How much, then, would they lose if they spoke English?

In spite of the difficulties of translating Dyck's Low German which depends so much on the nuances of the language which never strays far from the rhythms and vocabulary of the vernacular, at least the most important works can, I think, be translated. Elisabeth Peters' translation of Dyck's "Twee Breew" in the *Journal of Canadian Fiction* (No. 16, pp. 17-32) is evidence enough of how powerful a translation can be. But only if the

translator herself is an artist. Translation, then, is the only answer we have. Fortunately Al Reimer is already at work on such a translation. (See the two translated chapters of *Koop and Bua Go Traveling* in this issue. Ed.)

Elmer Suderman  
Gustavus Adolphus College  
St. Peter, MN.

Hildi Froese Tiessen, ed. *Liars and Rascals: Mennonite Short Stories* (Waterloo: University of Waterloo Press, 1989) Softcover, xi-xiii + 227 pages.

Canadian Mennonites have been writing fiction in English for just over 25 years, Rudy Wiebe's first novel appearing in 1962. By now there is a small but growing body of quality fiction—novels and short stories—that is making its presence felt in the Canadian literary scene, especially in Western Canada. The publication of *Liars and Rascals*, a collection of 22 short stories (a few of them excerpted from novels) by thirteen different writers, is a timely showcase of what Canadian-Mennonite writers of fiction have achieved so far. And one can say without hesitation that the fiction gathered here is good enough to be placed alongside some of the better fiction this country can offer.

What strikes the reader of this collection immediately is its consistent quality. While some of these stories are better than others, all deserve to be included here. And that would indicate that the editor had some latitude of choice and was not hard-pressed to include virtually everything that lay to hand. Another sign of strength is the wide range of themes and treatment represented here: a surprising number of the stories show an admirable lightness of touch and a deft comic manner, and even the serious ones are not lugubrious or suffering from the traditional Mennonite writing disease of creeping didacticism. Indeed, many of them deal with "Outsiders" (the subtitle of one of the three sections) and with situations and themes that depict Mennonite conduct, prejudices and principles from the point of view of those who feel excluded, hurt or betrayed by them. Good fiction is always in some sense subversive and unmasking, and one is heartened by the courage and honesty with which these writers twitch aside the curtain and peer into the inner sanctum of Mennonite life, or dare to cast aside the (s)mothering weight of the traditional Mennonite church-community security blanket. That is not to say, of course, that there are not stories in *Liars and Rascals* that do bring out the more positive aspects of Mennonite values and faith, but they are organically presented through the characters and narrative situations, and not by means of easily digested "messages."

As might be expected, some of the strongest stories are by such well-

established writers as Rudy Wiebe and Sandra Birdsell, with three each, followed by Warren Kliever, Andreas Schroeder, David Waltner-Toews, Sara Stambaugh and Armin Wiebe, with two each. While most of the stories have been published before, some several times, four of them are appearing for the first time. When read together in one volume, these stories, in the words of Editor Hildi Froese Tiessen, “can play off each other in the reader’s mind: augment and illumine each other’s characters, enlarge and challenge each other’s themes, propositions and obsessions” (xiii). In reading them, one is struck by just how “Mennonite” these stories are, even when their authors are no longer writing from within the Mennonite community or establishment.

In this connection, the “Liars and Rascals” of the title has been well chosen, as the traditional view was that Mennonites who wrote fiction were by definition liars and rascals beyond the pale of Mennonite respectability. The obvious paradox, however, is that it is these very “liars and rascals” who are now bringing home some challenging truths and insights to Mennonites who are open-minded and willing to expand their personal and ethnic horizons.

Space does not permit a discussion or even a mention of all the stories in this volume, but a few deserve to be singled out as particularly fine examples of the short story form. There is little doubt that Sandra Birdsell and Rudy Wiebe are the class of this field and their stories have received critical recognition elsewhere. It’s also interesting to find poets like David Waltner-Toews and Patrick Friesen as adept at short fiction as they are at poetry. Other strong contributions by lesser-known writers are Victor Carl Friesen’s “Old Mrs. Dirks,” Sarah Klassen’s “The Letter,” Katie Funk Wiebe’s “A Real Live Death,” and Elaine Driedger’s “White Christmas.” Warren Kliever and Armin Wiebe weigh in with such fine comic stories as the former’s “UHF” and the latter’s “Practising” and “Oata, Oata.”

But what exactly is it that makes the fiction in this collection “Mennonite”? The question is worth posing even if there is no easy answer to it. And it raises a second question: How does one define “Mennonite” writers—by birth and ethnic background, by religious conviction, or more subtly by whatever Mennonite experience was imbedded in their psyches during their formative years irrespective of their present attitudes, mind-sets or lifestyles? What is remarkable about these writers as a group is that they display a verbal exuberance and a confident play and stretch of the imagination which are not much in evidence in the earlier Mennonite writing in High German. That written tradition has had no perceptible influence on these writers. But the oral tradition in Mennonite *Plautdietsch* was far less restrained; in it language and story were constantly embellished, expanded and imaginatively projected. That tradition is reflected in the verbal gusto and imaginative flair we find in the Low German works of Arnold Dyck. And it is instructive to note that almost all of these writers are no more than a generation—in most cases less—away from the active use of *Plautdietsch*. One can feel the

energy and spirit of *Plautdietsch* in much of this writing: the solid plain-speaking linguistic platform from which the serious and comic flights of wordplay launch themselves. Armin Wiebe, of course, deliberately plays off this Low German oral tradition, but it is there in a more subtly diffused form in many of these stories.

That fact alone makes this distinctive “Mennonite” writing, even if one does not consider the preoccupation with Mennonite forms of faith or their betrayal, Mennonite ethnic experience with its narrowness and isolation, the struggle to get behind the stolid peasant mask, the pain of being estranged or isolated from the exclusivity that only a parochial closed society can push to cruel extremes.

Compiled and edited with care and competence, *Liars and Rascals* deserves a prominent place on the growing shelf of this exciting minority literature.

Al Reimer  
The University of Winnipeg

Sarah Klassen, *Journey to Yalta* (Winnipeg: Turnstone Press, 1988), 87 pages, \$7.50.

In the past two years Turnstone Press in Winnipeg has published first volumes of verse by three Mennonite women poets. First came Audrey Poetker with *i sing for my dead in german* (1986), followed by Di Brandt's *Questions I Asked My Mother* (1987). Both volumes were critically acclaimed, with Brandt's collection being short-listed for the Governor General's Award for Poetry. Both Poetker and Brandt are brilliant young poets who have boldly staked out an adversarial stance for themselves vis-à-vis their Mennonite background and community, and much exciting (and perhaps controversial) work may be expected from them in future.

Sarah Klassen is a very different kind of poet, but she fully deserves to be placed, if not in the same company, at least on the same level of accomplishment with the other two. There is nothing adversarial or controversial about Klassen's poems, but that does not mean that she is, given the Mennonite context, an “in house” kind of poet. If she is more accepting that Poetker and Brandt, she is so because she is writing from a more mature, a wiser, and a more empathetic perspective. Hers is essentially an elegiac voice, controlled, austere rather than mournful, compassionate but grittily honest, constantly lifting itself into simple eloquence with what appear to be modest technical means. She concludes a poem about her great-grandfather in Russia, who married a much younger second wife, with a wry but unforgettable picture:

She walked quietly beside him, bore him  
 eight more sons. Millers and strong farmers  
 they surround the old man  
 sitting in honour beside her coffin.

And in a fine poem about the Livadia Palace where a sick President Roosevelt attended the Yalta Conference in 1945, she makes the laconic judgment:

In the end there is no evidence  
 that he took up his bed  
 and walked, any more here  
 than in Washington.

The more than twenty poems that make up *Journey to Yalta*, Part I of the volume, are so fine individually and collectively as a unit that they make the rest of the book seem somewhat pale by comparison. Skilfully interweaving poems about her Russian grandmother, who spent the summer of 1918 in a Yalta sanatorium fighting T.B., with poems about her own trip to Yalta as a Canadian tourist many years later, Klassen presents a complex, elegiac portrait of her family's struggle to survive and to understand its past and present on two continents. These poems finally achieve in their luminosity and dignity of perception the status of family myth, a symbolic microcosm of the tragic Russian-Mennonite story and its bitter aftermath.

The second half of the volume, while containing some strong individual poems, lacks the overall emotional power and the vividly focussed themes and situations of the Yalta poems. In these later poems the poet, or authorial speaker, is much more often a sympathetic observer than a participating character, but she remains a totally committed and shrewdly refracting observer who sees the lesser prophets of the Old Testament as well as the routine shocks and exigencies of daily life with a poet's steady eye and wholeness of vision.

Al Reimer  
 The University of Winnipeg

Omar Eby, *A Long Dry Season*. A Novel (Intercourse, Pennsylvania: Good Books, 1988), Hardcover, 216 pp. \$14.95 U.S.

This novel, set in eastern Africa, is about a missionary-teacher who is torn between western and African ways in general and his love for his wife and the African people he serves in particular. The "long, dry season" in that part of Africa is symbolic of Thomas and Maxine Martin's relationship and their struggle to come to terms with their role as missionaries. While Thomas is convinced that his place is in Africa—although he has doubts at times—Maxine feels that Africa will not only stifle her artistic talents (she is a painter) but also limit her in every way as a person. Eventually Maxine and her daughter leave Thomas for a holiday on the coast. She needs time and

distance to resolve her situation. Thomas is counselled in the meantime by an African bishop to place this marriage above his responsibilities to the African people, for his wife and their relationship are more important than his mission work. In the end Maxine "finds herself" and her art and decides to remain with and support Thomas in Africa.

The novel deals with the usual problems that missionaries encounter on the mission field. There are the African brothers and sisters who on the one hand appreciate the missionaries' work among them and on the other criticize their failure to understand their ways. There are the white adventurers (Peters) who embarrass the missionaries and the church with their dishonesty and loose living. There are also the natives who often take advantage of the white missionaries. There are even scenes of attempted sexual seduction and the missionary's (Thomas) victory over temptation. The characters and events thus provide often interesting glimpses into everyday life on the mission field.

While the novel is at times quite moving in its description of Thomas' tensions, difficulties and temptations, it deals with the conflict between the two traditions and within the protagonist's heart rather superficially. If the reader expects profound insight into African culture and ways, she will not find it in this novel. We are merely told that the western and African ways are different but not shown fully now and to what extent. Moreover, the question with regard to the purpose and role of mission work today is merely hinted at, not probed significantly. It seems to me that any serious work on missions today, including fiction, must wrestle significantly and honestly with what it means to be a missionary to people who do not share the missionary's religion and culture. It is to be hoped that Mr. Eby or some other novelist will some day write such a work on missions.

Harry Loewen  
The University of Winnipeg

*Mennonite Identity: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives.* Ed. Calvin Redekop, Samuel Steiner. Institute for Anabaptist and Mennonite Studies, Waterloo, Ontario (Lanham: University Press of America, 1988).

The conference that took place in May of 1986 at Conrad Grebel College on the general theme of Mennonite identity or self-understanding was successful in bringing together not only a representative body of speakers from the various disciplines and areas of study, but also in hosting a large gathering of interested participants. The question of identity in its several ramifications was and remains acute (see Harry Loewen's collection *Why I am a Mennonite*), whether one wishes to view it as an unfortunate crisis or a healthy periodic self-examination.

The papers dealt with the perspectives of theology, history, philosophy, sociology, psychology and aesthetics. The fact that the major papers were too long for satisfactory discussion during the conference is no longer a factor in their presentation in book form, where each is placed with its prepared responses in the conference sequence.

Hans-Jürgen Goertz addressed the conference theme in general, looking at the sweep of the "confessional heritage" and comparing the original stance of a Menno to the state of the German Mennonites in 1933 and more broadly to the modern situation in which "the Mennonites have made their accommodation with bourgeois, capitalist society. More than that, they have availed themselves of the opportunity to participate and profit from this system, without noticing the extent to which they have thereby come into contradiction to their confessional heritage" (p. 11). This, Goertz maintains, constitutes the substance of the crisis which Mennonites face.

Goertz' North American colleagues have other perspectives to add in considering the Mennonite "elephant" from its various sides, attempting to describe the object within the parameters of the sociology of knowledge, as perhaps apart from what would previously have been called "salvation history." And although the queen of the sciences leads the way with the presentations of A. James Reimer, what is most significant is the major shift of focus that has occurred when the stated parameter is "sociology of knowledge." Thus the preponderance falls onto the social sciences, with sociology, history (increasingly social history), and psychology taking up much of the enquiry.

It is impossible here to look more closely at the individual papers and/or their discussions. The scope is simply too wide and the discussions each deserving of undivided attention. Much work has been done in some of these, like sociology, and some like the last section on art and literature are still in a relatively early stage of development. The whole volume, though, offers a rich *Bestandsaufnahme* of the current state of Mennonite studies. As such it complements the first volume of the *Journal of Mennonite Studies* (1983), which reported a similar conference in Toronto of several years ago. It appears that the Mennonite world has arrived at a phase of navel-gazing, quite understandably so, as long as this is done properly and then progressed beyond with a healthy self-consciousness (*Selbstbewußtsein*) which can integrate past and present, faith and culture, tradition and world.

Victor G. Doerksen  
University of Manitoba

Samuel J. Steiner, *Vicarious Pioneer: The Life of Jacob Y. Shantz* (Winnipeg: Hyperion Press, 1988). Paperback, 224 pages, \$16.95 Can.

Samuel Steiner prefaces his book with a prologue, a brief account of the European origins of the American and Canadian Mennonites. It is an attempt to provide, however briefly, a larger historical context for the story of an illustrious if somewhat eccentric and highly individualistic descendant of sixteenth-century Anabaptists. A prologue such as this will no doubt prove useful for non-Mennonite readers.

The book itself traces Jacob Y. Shantz's more immediate American ancestors and describes in considerable detail his rise from humble farm boy to highly respected industrialist and business entrepreneur in the Kitchener-Waterloo area. The author makes it quite clear, however, that Shantz is remembered today not for his business acumen but rather for his unselfish devotion to the cause of settling Mennonite immigrants in Canada. Shantz's compassion for the destitute, landless Russian Mennonites, his tireless efforts to raise the necessary funds and his ultimate success in settling these pioneers in Canada's Northwest will remind many readers of Lord Selkirk's efforts on behalf of the poor Scottish crofters some fifty years earlier.

There is a great deal of statistical information in this book. Steiner has thoroughly researched his subject and has provided students of Mennonite history with much useful information on the early development of the Kitchener-Waterloo area, the first Canadian Mennonite revival and reformation movements and the numerous difficulties encountered by the first Mennonite settlers in the prairie provinces. The first two appendices, "Narrative of a Journey to Manitoba," and "Testimony to Parliament," will be of special interest to Western Canadians.

Of greatest interest to non-historians will most likely be the human portrait that gradually emerges as the story unfolds. Jacob Y. Shantz was obviously unconventional, for his time at least, an adventurer, a risk-taker in every sense of the word. Nevertheless he was a deeply religious man, as his personal writings in religious periodicals testify, a man who, in his own way, always remained true to his Anabaptist heritage. He could be aggressive in his business transactions and rather cosmopolitan in his political views but he never wavered in his belief that the principle of non-resistance was essential to the Christian faith. He was shrewd, discerning and highly rational in financial matters and yet he developed a strong interest, in his later years, in the non-rational ideology of the Christian Science Church. His conviction that he had a cure for cancer also strikes the present-day reader as idiosyncratic. To Steiner's credit, the revelation of such intimate details does not in any way diminish the stature of his subject.

The book is, on the whole, quite well written and the material is organized and presented in a highly readable format. Much of the statistical information is placed in the footnotes and only occasionally, as on page 108,

is an interesting anecdote in danger of becoming lost in the fine print. One might wish that the author had seen fit to edit the "Narrative of a Journey to Manitoba" in order to remove the most glaring and irksome errors in expression. Nothing of historical value would have been lost if this had been done. This appendix constitutes an invaluable addition to an interesting biography and should therefore be made as readable as the rest of this scholarly work.

Samuel Steiner has given his readers a fascinating perspective on the Mennonites in Canada during the latter decades of the nineteenth century. Both Canada and Canadian Mennonites have changed dramatically since then. As the "Testimony to Parliament" reveals, Canada's politicians of that day could not disguise their impatience with the Mennonites' resistance to assimilation, nor could the Mennonites of the 1880s foresee the problems that would accompany the pressures to assimilate in the very near future.

Peter Pauls  
The University of Winnipeg

D[elbert F.] Plett [ed.], *Profile of the Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde 1874*. Vol. 4 of The Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde Historical Series (Steinbach: DFP Publications, 1987). Paperback, 312 pages.

After his rather comprehensive historical account of the Kleine Gemeinde in volumes 2 (1812-1849) and 3 (1850-1875), Plett pauses at the point of its immigration to North America to complete a detailed profile of its membership. Actually, the present volume brings together primary data from various sources on the basis of which a profile could be constructed.

The first and longest chapter consists of the genealogy register begun by Ältester Peter Toews in 1873, supplemented by extensive commentary and footnotes by Plett. The 163 families listed include about three quarters of the Kleine Gemeinde membership just prior to its emigration. Dates of birth, baptism, marriage and death are given for most entries. The register includes some thirty couples married after 1874, i.e. in Canada.

All but five of the immigrating families of the Toews register are identified on the Quebec Passenger Lists printed in chapter 2. Not only the cross listing, but especially Plett's additional footnotes are helpful for further genealogical work.

Municipal tax and fire insurance records for the early 1880s locate Kleine Gemeinde families by village in the Manitoba East Reserve and Scratching River settlements and give some indication of their economic status. This concludes the "profile" of that portion of the Kleine Gemeinde which settled in Manitoba.

The division of the Kleine Gemeinde in 1866 had not yet fully healed by the time of the emigration in 1874. As a result, some 30 families of the

“Heuboden” group, with their leader, *Ältester* Abraham L. Friesen, chose to settle in the U.S.A. Part two of the book consists of Henry Fast’s history of the *Kleine Gemeinde* in Jansen, Nebraska, and Meade, Kansas, until its dissolution in 1943. Included in this section are eleven pages of family data, ship passenger and tax lists, and census and property listings.

Part three consists of a number of personal accounts of pioneers in North America. The most significant of these is the 1872-1878 portion of the diary of *Ältester* Peter Toews, which details the steps leading to the migration, decisions regarding the administration of school, fire insurance, and *Waisenamt* in Canada, and indicates Toews’ early contacts with American evangelist Johann Holdeman. The memoirs of Abraham Klassen, son of delegate David Klassen, shed interesting light on the Holdeman division in Manitoba in 1880-81.

The final eighty pages, part 4, consist of genealogies, the most significant of which is that of Abraham von Riesen (1752-1810), a number of whose descendants served as *Älteste*, ministers and deacons, or were related to them by marriage. A three-page bibliography lists additional genealogies relevant to *Kleine Gemeinde* history.

The name index gives initials and dates for almost all entries, a very helpful feature given the fact that at least 12 *Abr Friesens* are listed.

This book contains an enormous resource for further study of the *Kleine Gemeinde*. Plett has not only compiled the material, but made it much more usable by the many linkages provided in his notes.

The format of volume 4, unfortunately, is unchanged: the same small print in the text and smaller in the footnotes. The number of typographical errors is perhaps even higher than in previous volumes. One hopes that the proofreading in the many tables of data has been more thorough than in the “prose” sections; otherwise genealogists will need to use the data with great caution.

The weakest part of the book is the Appendix, “All That Blisters: James Urry attacks the *Kleine Gemeinde*.” As a response to Urry’s review article (*JMS* 4 [1986]:228-50) on volume 2 (entitled “All that Glisters...”) it would have been more appropriately published in the *Journal*. But the tone, and to some extent the style, of Plett’s response, as suggested by the title of the Appendix, might have been unacceptable to the *Journal* editor. As a “counter-attack” which focuses on details of fact and interpretation, Plett’s response fails to engage in the broader discussion of several important themes suggested by Urry, such as the use of “insider” documents, a more carefully nuanced assessment of the influence of pietism, and the content of 19th century Mennonite understanding of Anabaptism.

Adolf Ens  
Canadian Mennonite Bible College

Ted Regehr with Jacob I. Regehr, *For Everything a Season. A History of the Alexanderkrone Zentralschule* (Winnipeg: CMBC Publications, 1988). Hardcover, 161 pages, \$24.95.

The Molotschna colony Zentralschule at Alexanderkrone was the twelfth and last of its type to be built by the Mennonites under the Russian tsars and their Soviet successors. With a level of training equivalent to a North American junior college, this school appeared at the peak of development for the most extensive system of private school education ever created by Mennonites anywhere in the world.

The book is, in the first instance, a tribute to the “fathers” who were so central to the Alexanderkrone school story throughout its 35-year story. One must read the book to understand why this in itself might be a worthwhile reason to undertake the project. Readers will sense immediately though, that this is more than merely a salute.

*For Everything a Season* is a comprehensive, one is tempted to say, definitive history of this institution. Its entire period of existence, 1906-1941, is depicted here in a wide range of aspects, including its beginnings, staff relations, administration, curriculum, student enrollment, and that complicated and often painful process of changes which took it from the “golden era” of Mennonite life in the Ukraine to the closing of the institution at the outset of World War II.

The persons who “made” the school, really come to life in this account. Partly this is due to the wealth of documentation which became available for research, and partly to the skill with which the range of source materials is worked through by the author. The personalities of the directors and staff, a never-ending series of larger and smaller problems which had to be solved, a program of studies designed to reflect both the requirements of the state and the ideals of the people whose children were being trained—all have their detailed place in the story, but without losing sight of the whole.

There is not quite the precision of detailed movement in the Soviet period, as is possible to sketch in the pre-Revolution years. What the Zentralschule experienced is however a microcosm of what the country went through at every level, the wrenching alterations, painfully disruptive, while seeking somehow to reconstruct what had been torn down. Here one can get beneath generalizations and see what this meant for education in particular. In the Mennonite story of Russia this has not been done this way before.

Is anything missing at all then in this publication, so well-supplied with photos, several good maps and properly furnished with a good bibliography and index? Not much. A title or two could have been added to the bibliography perhaps. On the question of Mennonite loyalty to the regime (p. 102) one might for instance direct attention to Meir Buchsweiler’s study, *Volksdeutsche in der Ukraine am Vorabend und Beginn des Zweiten Weltkrieges. Ein Fall doppelter Loyalitaet?* (Bleicher Verlag, 1984). The Mennonite newspaper, *Der Botschafter*, which was published in Ukraine between 1906

and 1914, and *Mennonitisches Jahrbuch* (1903-1913), as well as *Unser Blatt* (1925-1928) may have been consulted but are not mentioned. Someone might ask whether more textbooks could have been found. What about the relationship of the school to the Conferences?

It is probably quibbling as well to mention a few “bits” that were missed in this otherwise well-edited volume—an incomplete sentence (p. 115), a few typos, as in Mitter’s book title (p. 153), and several dates in the chronology (the “birthday” of the Revolution is usually dated October 25, 1917), and the White Army occupation dates seem confused. One could add that the reference to the Alexanderkrone Kommerzschule (cutline, p. 78) appears to be a misprint.

It must be said again that this volume sets an elevated academic standard of historical research and history-writing and truly delivers what it sets out to do. Many other Russian and Ukrainian Mennonite themes need to be dealt with in a similar manner. *For Everything a Season* suggests quite clearly that more stories are waiting to be shared, and proves that they can be told well.

Lawrence Klippenstein  
Canadian Mennonite Bible College

Theron F. Schlabach, *Peace, Faith, Nation. Mennonites and Amish in Nineteenth-Century America*. The Mennonite Experience in America, Vol. 2 (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1988). Paperback, 415 pages, \$19.95 U.S., \$24.95 Can.

The first volume in this important series was a radical departure from the kind of *Heilsgeschichte* historiography which religious groups have traditionally used for their self-understanding (and justification). The search for a “better land” was almost literally understood there, and although there is a detectable shift of emphasis in this second volume, that element of a secure economic base is not absent here either. Rather, in this continuation of the American Mennonite story there is a more balanced juxtaposition of the spiritual and material worlds. One chapter is called “Land, Wealth, Community” and the next “The Inner Life,” and that is as it should be in a volume that tells of the physical movements westward as well as the movements of the spirit that went through these communities.

For the reader who begins with this volume Schlabach rehearses some of the earlier history and introduces the themes which will be dealt with at some length, like separation from the world and humility. For the Canadian reader (especially the Russian-Canadian Mennonite) the latter of these, which is already introduced in the first volume, is largely unfamiliar ground and Schlabach’s explanation and historical narrative are excellent in showing some of the differences in the American experience. For although he too must

deal with the movements which had their origin in 19th century Russia (the Kleine Gemeinde, the Mennonite Brethren, etc.), their arrival in time in America is onto a different scene, one in which the earlier settlers in Pennsylvania and the east coast had created new varieties of the Mennonite species, who were among other things more American than the Russian Mennonites had been Russian.

Schlabach devotes considerable effort to sorting out the question of Anabaptism and Pietism, one which is unavoidable in Mennonite historiography. Schlabach takes some issue with the thesis of Robert Friedmann about the apparent contradiction between these two streams of thought, feeling that a Mennonite synthesis was not only possible, but probably of some benefit. Where he leaves something to be desired in his history is perhaps in not distinguishing between earlier and later Pietism and the continental *Erweckungsbewegung*, which brought new elements, like Methodist preaching, into the forefront of the religious life. It is this after all which brought about the changes in southern Russia in the 1850s and '60s which are still very much part of the American and Canadian religious scene.

But he is excellent in a chapter like "Keeping the Old Order" in describing the elements of Old Order religiosity, *Gelassenheit*, *Demut*, and particularly *Ordnung*, the principle which perhaps more than any other informed the Amish/Old Mennonite way of life. Schlabach's telling of the coming of the Russians to Kansas and other frontier states is good reading and good history. He is able to tell concrete stories and cases well and wholistically, setting the spiritual story in a very real material world, showing the protagonists as the humans they were; no hagiography here! The story ends, for the time being, in the shift at century's end from a theology of humility and separation to one of activism, mission and Americanism.

Unfortunately, the excellent footnotes and bibliography are much too hidden by their format. It is needlessly tedious to look up endnoted references (find the chapter number, then the appropriate note section), and the bibliography is divided into too many categories (Primary/Secondary Sources of Special Value/Other)! Otherwise the volumes (mine are paperback) are a model of humility and good taste. The author, who is also the series editor, is to be congratulated on a history well researched and well told. The quality of the first two volumes bodes well for the whole set and the final two volumes will be anticipated with interest.

Victor G. Doerksen  
University of Manitoba

Charles Scriven, *The Transformation of Culture* (Scottsdale/Kitchener: Herald Press, 1988). Paperback, 224 pages.

Thirty years ago John Howard Yoder began to teach Anabaptist history and theology to budding young Anabaptists at the newly relocated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Indiana. We in that first class in Elkhart were the beneficiaries of his pioneering work in Anabaptist studies.

Yoder's careful analysis of Anabaptist origins was supplemented by provocative comparisons between Anabaptists and other Christian traditions. For such comparisons he often referred to H. Richard Niebuhr's classic work, *Christ and Culture*, which had been published less than a decade earlier. Yoder was quite critical of this work, and those who have read it know that Niebuhr in turn had critical things to say about the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition.

Now thirty years later a Seventh Day Adventist scholar, Charles Scriven, has decided that it is time to reconcile Niebuhr and Yoder. In broader terms, Scriven wishes to show that the Anabaptist tradition, as interpreted by Yoder, is the tradition that Niebuhr *should* have chosen when he described the various ways in which Christians have attempted to understand the relationship of Christ to culture.

To understand Scriven's argument it is necessary to recall what Niebuhr was trying to do. The question he was asking might be phrased as follows: "How, in their attempts to be obedient to Christ, have Christians in the past understood their duty to their surrounding culture?" ("Culture," in Niebuhr's view, is synonymous with "civilization." It is "the artificial secondary environment which man superimposes on the natural.") Though he uses a five-part typology to answer this question, three of the main types are sufficient to understand his and Scriven's argument. First, there are the "Christ of Culture" advocates, who uncritically identify Christ with the world's culture and therefore see little need to criticize or change that culture. The opposite position is taken by the "Christ Against Culture" proponents, who distinguish radically between Christ and the world of culture. It is into this category that Niebuhr places Mennonites and, presumably, the Anabaptists. (There is only one reference to Mennonites in *Christ and Culture*, and none at all to Anabaptists. However, Scriven is probably correct in assuming that Niebuhr had the Anabaptists in mind, along with other groups, when describing this position.) Niebuhr himself seems to prefer an intermediate position, in which Christ is seen as the "transformer" of culture. In this way of understanding Christ's relation to culture it is assumed that the world in which the Christian lives may often be at odds with the teachings of Jesus but there is no *fundamental enmity* between Christ and the world. Therefore the purpose of the Christian, in this view, is to take responsibility for the world and try to change it. This is in contrast to the views of the "Christ Against Culture" advocates who, according to Niebuhr, feel that it is necessary to condemn the world and to withdraw from it.

According to Scriven, Niebuhr misinterpreted the intention of the Anabaptists, especially as that intention is interpreted by Yoder. As Yoder has argued in his book, *The Politics of Jesus*, and elsewhere, the creation of separated, obedient Christian communities can be understood not only as a condemnation of the surrounding culture but as a witness to it. In fact, according to Yoder, and Scriven, this is precisely the way in which Jesus hoped to transform the world—not primarily by working through the world’s own institutions, which Niebuhr seems to have in mind, but through dedicated Christian communities. Therefore, Scriven concludes, in defending the Christian’s duty to transform the world, Niebuhr, instead of rejecting the Anabaptist position should have embraced it.

Has Scriven successfully harmonized the Anabaptist position with Niebuhr’s transformational objectives? It is highly dubious that either Yoder or Niebuhr (if he were still alive) would agree that he has. Scriven himself acknowledges that both positions need “refining” in order to bring them into agreement with each other. One may well ask what point is served in trying to reconcile two viewpoints when that can only be accomplished by changing them. The answer must be that Scriven feels that the differences between the two positions are minor. Niebuhr, presumably, would have understood the Anabaptist position differently if he had read Yoder. The latter, on the other hand, could fit his program into Niebuhr’s if he would only drop some legalisms and clarify a few puzzling statements.

However, the gulf between Niebuhr and Yoder, and the traditions they represent, is much wider than Scriven admits. Recent Anabaptist scholarship has confirmed that most Anabaptists posited a fundamental enmity between the Christian and the world. Niebuhr deliberately, and quite decisively, rejects this position. Though Yoder emphasizes God’s concern for the world, and clearly wishes Christian communities to be transforming bodies in the world, he maintains that in the end the Christian is not responsible for the world. Christian love, Yoder affirms, “seeks neither effectiveness nor justice....” This is one of the puzzling Anabaptist views that Scriven would like to refine. Unfortunately, for the sake of Scriven’s argument, it is quite characteristic of the Anabaptist tradition and is consistent with some of the basic assumptions of that tradition. Further, Scriven accuses Yoder of being too legalistic in holding to a radical non-violent position in the Christian’s confrontation with injustice. The charge of legalism may be valid, but such legalism is rooted in Anabaptist attitudes to the world and to questions of justice. Therefore Scriven underestimates the significance Anabaptists attach to the teaching of non-violence. Their rejection of the world involves the rejection of what they consider to be the world’s methods.

It is possible to agree with Scriven’s criticisms of Anabaptism and to wish that the inheritors of the Anabaptist tradition would move closer to Niebuhr’s view of Christ and culture, but it is not scholarly tenable to

reconcile these views as they have historically developed within these traditions.

Roy Vogt  
University of Manitoba

Daniel Liechty, *Andreas Fischer and the Sabbatarian Anabaptists: An Early Reformation Episode in East Central Europe* (Scottsdale/Kitchener: Herald Press, 1988). Hardcover, 167 pages, \$41.95.

The book under review is a good piece of critical scholarship which ingeniously assembles from a mosaic of disparate sources a workable biographical and theological study of the Sabbatarian Anabaptist, Andreas Fischer. Fischer was a significant Anabaptist leader in Silesia, Moravia and Slovakia, a part of the heterogeneous Anabaptist group life that flourished in East-Central Europe after persecution had largely suppressed Anabaptism in South and Central Germany. We can trace his career with some certainty only from ca. 1528 until his martyrdom ca. 1540, when he was thrown from the castle tower of a Slovakian baron.

Liechty's accomplishment is in part the correction of the earlier historical tradition which confused Andreas Fischer with the Slovakian priest, Andreas of Kremnitz. In an earlier article in the *Archive for Reformation History*, Liechty used handwriting samples to demonstrate this "case of mistaken identity." Especially because of his association with Oswald Glaidt, Fischer can be confidently associated with Hans Hut's branch of Anabaptism; beyond that, sources that may or may not refer to him would point to birth in the German Bohemian town of Luttaw, university study at Vienna, and involvement with Anabaptism in the Upper Austrian town of Wels. The challenge a study of Fischer posed was that it had to rest on only three significant original sources—a polemic of 1528 or 1529 against Fischer's Sabbatarian beliefs by the Silesian humanist Valentine Crautwald, a Catholic diary by Cunrad Spervogel that gives a hostile and somewhat distorted account of Fischer's preaching in Silesia from 1529 to 1532, and a letter Fischer wrote in 1534 to the town council of Neusohl, which situates him in the Moravian historical scene. The two hostile sources were much the more valuable ones, so there could be no possibility of "letting Fischer speak for himself" in the manner of traditional Anabaptist scholarship. The hostile sources had to be sifted with critical ingenuity and the study filled out by the choice of appropriate contexts.

Liechty interprets Fischer as a product of Upper Austrian Anabaptism. The Sabbath controversy was with Schwenckfeld and his associate Crautwald. Fischer's appeal in Slovakia may be more understandable against the

background of the Slovakian miners' revolt of 1525-26, so a section of the book is devoted to each of these contexts. The final chapter on "the teaching of Andreas Fischer" interprets him in the framework of what might be called the author's concordance of Anabaptist historical and theological scholarship, in which the often quarrelsome interpretive literature has had its pointy edges filed off.

What is most important in the book is the ingenious and broadly successful excavation of the Anabaptist Sabbatarian position from the writings of Krautwald against Fischer and Schwenckfeld against Glaidt. Liechty is in this way able to give us an accurate impression of Glaidt's *Vom Sabbath* and Fischer's *Scepastes Decalogi*, to the point of drawing contrasts between Glaidt's chiliastic arguments for a Saturday-Sabbath and Fischer's more legalistic arguments. One of the odd results of Liechty's study is that the two Sabbatarian authors, Glaidt and Fischer, had different group affiliations within Moravian Anabaptism. Before his Sabbatarian phase, Glaidt left the magisterial Anabaptist community of the "sword-bearers," which lived under the protection of Leonard von Liechtenstein. Glaidt was a Hutterite in the last years of his life (the *Hutterite Chronicle* reports his martyrdom in Vienna in 1545). Fischer, on the other hand, gave a Sabbatarian colouring to the "sword-bearers" and was their leader in succession to Balthasar Hubmaier and Hans Spittelmaier from 1532 until the great persecution of 1535. As late as the early seventeenth century, the Jesuit, Christoph Andrea Fischer, still makes passing reference to the Sabbatarians as part of the Moravian sectarian scene.

Liechty interprets the Saturday-Sabbath teaching of Fischer within a broad framework of Anabaptist restitutionism. Fischer argued that a late second-century pope replaced the early church's Saturday-Sabbath observance with Sunday worship as a move in the direction of Latinizing and paganizing Christianity. Just as a restitution of the early church required adult believers' baptism for all Anabaptists, for these Anabaptists, Liechty argues, restitutionism required observance of a Saturday-Sabbath. Liechty's point that "Sabbatarian Anabaptism did not occur as a foreign graft onto the main body of Anabaptism," requires him to recognize the Law as more explicit and prominent in Anabaptist theology than previous theologies of Anabaptism have held. Even more important, Sabbatarianism does not fit comfortably into a definition of Anabaptism as "New Testament Christianity." Each new figure assimilated into the broadening historical perspective on Anabaptism produces subtle shifts and tensions within any projected "theology of Anabaptism." Appreciation of Andreas Fischer's respect for the Old Testament leads Liechty at least to hint at a theological critique of Pilgram Marpeck. Whether that outcome is some sort of theological *reductio ad absurdum*, this reviewer must leave to the judgment of those learned in Anabaptist theology. As history, Liechty's book is valuable indeed!

*Cornelius. H. Wedel Historical Series.* Published by Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas, 1987 ff.

More than sixty years ago the Mennonite Historical Society of the Mennonite Church launched its studies in Anabaptist-Mennonite history and embarked upon a teaching and research programme to develop what has become known as the "Anabaptist Vision." What Harold S. Bender and his colleagues in Indiana have accomplished is both phenomenal and gratifying. Not only have these "Goshen people" helped to correct the historical and theological record of Anabaptism through their research and publications, but they have also initiated, encouraged and sponsored a series of books whose list on the backcover of *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* is most impressive.

The success of this research emanating from Goshen and Elkhart has been so outstanding that for most students of Anabaptist studies it is Bender and his colleagues who come to mind first when they think of early Anabaptist-Mennonite historiography. People often fail to realize, however, that there were other teachers and scholars in North America who even before the "Bender school" of historiography thought deeply about what it means to be Anabaptist-Mennonite and sought to implant Mennonite-Christian values in the students they taught in Mennonite institutions.

Cornelius H. Wedel, first president of Bethel College from the beginning of its classes in 1893 until his death in 1910, was one of the early scholars, teachers, and advocates of Anabaptist-Mennonite studies in North America. His four volumes of Mennonite history, *Abriss der Geschichte der Mennoniten*, published from 1900 to 1904, outline the Mennonite story beginning with the pre-Reformation period and including medieval Christian groups, the Waldensians, the Anabaptists, and of course the modern Mennonites. As David A. Haury of Bethel College writes: "Wedel saw Anabaptist-Mennonitism as part of a tradition of Biblical faithfulness going back to the early church. He strove to see his people not in isolation, but as part of God's wider plan in world history" (From the series' Preface).

The recently launched C. H. Wedel Historical Series, of which four volumes have appeared, is a most welcome addition to the ever-widening stream of Anabaptist-Mennonite research and publications. Ranging thematically as broadly as Wedel's conception of Mennonite history and cultural interests, the series promises to affirm the view of many historians that Anabaptist-Mennonitism, while focusing on certain recognizable beliefs and values, includes many and varied traditions and streams of thought.

Bethel College has initiated the series as part of its centennial celebration in 1987. Haury, the series' editor, states: "Bethel College, chartered a century ago this spring [1987], had a founding vision to promote the liberal arts through the cultivation of the intellect in all fields of knowledge and to serve the church through the preservation of Mennonite values and preparation for service" (From the series' Preface). Haury hopes that these goals will be

furthered “by making available several hundred copies of books at reasonable prices using the recently developed computer technology for desk top publishing with laser printers.”

In Volume I of the series, *Authority and Identity: The Dynamics of the General Conference Mennonite Church* (1987, pp. 123), Rodney J. Sawatsky begins by saying that as a descendant of the conservative Bergthal Mennonites who came to North America in the 1870s, he has come a long way from the anti-intellectualism of an Elder Gerhard Wiebe who warned his people around 1900 against learning institutions like Bethel College. Dealing with such categories as unity and diversity, essentials and non-essentials, Anabaptism and other denominations, evangelical and liberal, divine and human, Sawatsky argues that the General Conference Mennonite Church, while trying to preserve its Anabaptist identity, seeks to cooperate with and learn from other Christian traditions. In this, according to Sawatsky, C. H. Wedel, C. Henry Smith and other early American leaders showed the way. While Wedel as a historian did not work from primary sources and was limited to the German language, he nevertheless “presented a very important understanding of Christianity which for a time served the identity of the General Conference very well” (p. 44).

According to Sawatsky, Wedel recognized the importance of the Anabaptist heritage, but he also criticized its legalistic and literalistic aspects. As Wedel stated: “They [Anabaptists] too sharply separated church and world, having overlooked that although Christ’s kingdom is not of this world, it must develop in this world and that art and science (*Kultur und Wissenschaft*) can serve this purpose” (p. 45). Sawatsky believes that this emphasis of Wedel is coming more and more into its own as North American Mennonites wrestle with what it means to be a Christian in today’s world. He concludes with the hope that the church will listen to and obey God’s authority and yet “not quench the freedom of the Spirit to continuously critique and renew every and all the necessary institutionalizations of this authority” (p. 102).

Volume II of the series, *Dialogue With a Heritage: Cornelius H. Wedel and the Beginnings of Bethel College* (1987, pp. 109) by James C. Juhnke, is a delightful and important introduction to the first president of Bethel College and to what it means to be a Mennonite in the modern world. Juhnke’s “dialogue” with Wedel is divided into five parts: I. The Ethnic Dialogue; II. The Spirituality Dialogue; III. The History Dialogue; IV. The Community Dialogue; V. The Culture Dialogue. In a postscript Juhnke compares and contrasts C. H. Wedel and Harold S. Bender and the two traditions they represent: The one is the Dutch-Prussian-Russian tradition with its greater openness to culture and the arts, and the other is the Swiss-South German tradition with its emphasis on the “Anabaptist Vision” and its greater reluctance to enter the secular world. Juhnke concludes: “Mennonites today will be renewed in Christian faithfulness, I believe, not in ‘going back to’ any movements of the past, but rather in selective appropriation of the best in our heritage and in other traditions to meet the challenges of our time” (p. 98).

W. R. Estep in Volume III, *Religious Liberty: Heritage and Responsibility* (1988, pp. 88), deals with the Baptist heritage and its contribution to the Evangelical and Mennonite traditions. The topics dealt with include: I. A Crisis of Faith: The "Livilie Experiment" under Fire; II. The Anabaptist Legacy; III. The English Connection; IV. Conflicting Visions in Puritan New England; V. The Revolution Within the Revolution.

After investigating the magisterial and radical reformers' attempts to come to terms with the relationship between the church and the state, Estep concludes that to this day there is no unanimity concerning how "salt, light and leaven best penetrate an immoral society" (p. 83). He suggests, however, that our approach to the world should not be by the arm of flesh but in the power of the Spirit.

In Volume IV, *Letters from Susan: A Woman's View of the Russian Mennonite Experience (1928-1941)* (1988, pp. 152), edited and translated by John B. Toews, Susan Toews of Ohrloff, South Russia, writes to her relatives in Canada about her and her people's experiences in a most difficult period and her hopes of and yearning for freedom in a new country. Susan's hopes were not realized. She and other members of her family perished during World War II. The letters are not only interesting reading but also a monument to love, hope and faith in God in tragic times.

Published in reasonably priced, perhaps needlessly plain paperback and hardback volumes, these books in the series are highly recommended to students, teachers, educated lay readers and scholars. Information concerning the series may be obtained from Series Editor David A. Haury, C. H. Wedel Series, Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas 67117.

Harry Loewen  
The University of Winnipeg

Hans-Jürgen Goertz, *Das Bild Thomas Müntzers in Ost und West* (Hannover: Niedersächsische Landeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1988). Paperback, 54 pages.

In this bibliographical essay, Professor Goertz, well-known for his work on the Reformation in general and Thomas Müntzer in particular, provides a valuable review of the most important Müntzer studies to date. In an introduction and six brief chapters Goertz traces the changing image of Müntzer in East and West, beginning with Martin Luther's distortion of his arch-enemy and ending with the major studies of this sixteenth-century radical reformer in modern times.

The works Goertz discusses or refers to include, among others, Wilhelm Zimmermann, Karl Kautsky, Friedrich Engels, Ernst Bloch, M. M. Smirin, Karl Holl, Heinrich Böhmer, Max Steinmetz, Alfred Meusel, Gerhard

Zschäbitz, Annemarie Lohmann, Hayo Gerdes, Carl Hinrichs, Günther Franz, Manfred Bensing, Walter Elliger, Eric W. Gritsch, Thomas Nipperdey, Hans-Jürgen Goertz and Abraham Friesen.

Goertz does not just summarize the works of these authors but comments on them critically, pointing out their strength and shortcomings. His detailed analyses of Bensing and Elliger are especially probing and informative and his criticism of his own 1967 Müntzer study is well taken (pp. 44-45).

Goertz's knowledge of his subject does not end with the published works on Müntzer. In the last chapter he also comments and reports on the ongoing scholarship in the field, naming scholars and projecting dates of publications. The informed general reader and student of the Reformation will find this booklet a useful guide to the Thomas Müntzer literature. Written in a most readable style, the booklet might even create a curiosity about Müntzer among those who know little about this rebel-theologian who was born 500 years ago (1489) and whose life and message have remained controversial to this day.

Harry Loewen  
The University of Winnipeg

Peter Klassen, *Die Mennoniten in Paraguay: Reich Gottes oder Reich dieser Welt* (Weierhof: Mennonitischer Geschichtsverein e.V., 1988). Paperback, 383 pages.

Peter Klassen's history of the Paraguayan Mennonites will be a pleasant surprise especially for those readers who do not know this author from his earlier belletristic writings. Klassen could never hide his historical inclination, but in his latest book, *Die Mennoniten in Paraguay*, his historical instinct comes into its own.

Klassen's book begins with a good introduction to the history and geography of the country in which the Russian Mennonite Commonwealth has been recreated with astonishing success after a very difficult start. Paraguay is the only country that not only tolerated the development of that "Commonwealth" but it recognized the benefits for Paraguay from that development and therefore gave its moral support to Mennonite endeavors.

The author also pays special attention to Paraguayan immigration policies from the time of the country's independence (1811). The reader will find in this book valuable information on the policies of Paraguayan governments which show an amazing consistency over 150 years of immigration history. This consistency may explain the attraction which Paraguay has continued to have for Mennonites. Today there are twenty Mennonite colonies in Paraguay with a population of approximately 23,000.

The book deals with individual colonies and pays special attention to the difficult pioneering days of the Menno colony, the colony founded by Canadian Mennonites in the late 1920s. The Russian Mennonites who joined the Paraguayan venture in 1930 founded Fernheim and Friesland. The difficulties and crises of these three early colonies are being discussed in the context of international and Paraguayan events. Although the other Paraguayan colonies may not find as much space in the book, there is generally a good balance in the treatment of their existence, size and social make up. Even the smallest of colonies and such smaller groups as the Amish and Old Order Mennonites in Paraguay have not been neglected.

Klassen also deals with Mennonite traditions, culture, and religion in the colonies. He raises the question as to the allegiance of the Mennonites in Paraguay: "Reich Gottes oder Reich der Welt?" and he does not shy away from some rather difficult questions of the Mennonite experience in Paraguay. Much appreciated will be the good maps of the colonies. The only serious complaint must go to the printers—the photographic reproductions are not even second rate; however, that does not detract from the otherwise excellent text.

This new book has all the depth that is so often lacking in our history writing. It is obvious from the first page that the author has been researching his subject for many years, and what he presents is not dry knowledge but living history. Klassen has that rare historical instinct that escapes many professional historians. He has the feeling for what is essential, and in spite of the fact that he writes history of events that are still fresh in the memory of many and where some of the history is touching the writer every day, he comes through with rare objectivity. This book will provide every reader with much pleasure, and at the same time satisfy even the critical reader of Mennonite history. The story of the Paraguayan Mennonites has not been suspended in midair; it develops in the context of world history and of its immediate neighbors, the Latin Americans. We congratulate the author and the "Mennonitischer Geschichtsverein" on producing an excellent book. This is a valuable addition to Mennonite historiography.

G. K. Epp  
The University of Winnipeg