

AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SELECTED AMISH READINGS

Provided by the Amish Youth Vision Project, Inc.
P.O. Box 191
Topeka, IN 46571
800-483-4364, ext. 2
www.ayvp.org

This bibliography is neither comprehensive nor exhaustive. It does reflect several primary works we in the Vision Project have found useful in understanding the Old Order and in our work. All annotations are the opinions of the individual reviewer and do not reflect the views of the Amish Youth Vision Project, Inc.

Hostetler, John (1993). *Amish Society* (4th Edition). www.press.jhu.edu

Although Hostetler died several years ago, this work remains the essential sociological study of Old Order Amish customs. The work is becoming dated, as Amish life changes; however, the fundamental understanding of Amish life remains intact.

Hurst, C. E., & McConnell, D. L. (2010). *An Amish Paradox: Diversity and Change in the World's Largest Amish Community*. www.press.jhu.edu.

Hurst and McConnell describe the intricacies of the Ohio County Old Order and Swartzentruber settlements. The text is current in terms of acknowledging social problems the Amish face, such as social issues and those who leave the church. The overview is sufficiently broad so as to provide an understanding of Amish that carries to many other settlements as well.

Johnson-Weiner, Karen (2007). *Train Up a Child: Old Order Amish & Mennonite Schools*. www.press.jhu.edu

Johnson-Weiner's book is a study of the variety of parochial school settings in which the Old Order Amish and Old Order Mennonites teach their children. The differences in emphasis on academics and religion, worldly influence, and use of texts are a fascinating discussion. She includes a philosophical discussion in the last chapter on the various purposes perceived for education by various groups.

Johnson-Weiner, Karen (2010). *New York Amish: Life in the Plain Communities of the Empire State*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. www.cornellpress.cornell.edu

So that the readers can better understand Amish origins and their relationship to other Christian groups, New York Amish traces the origins of their religious confrontation and political upheaval from the Protestant Reformation and describes contemporary lifestyles and practices. The churches in different regions of the state range from the most conservative to the most progressive.

Kraybill, Donald (2010). *Concise Encyclopedia of Amish, Brethren, Hutterites, and Mennonites* (2010). www.press.jhu.edu

An encyclopedia devoted exclusively to these Anabaptist groups, it covers both historical and current information for each.

Kraybill, Donald (2001). *The Riddle of Amish Culture* (Revised Edition).
www.press.jhu.edu

Kraybill is the internationally recognized expert on Plain Peoples, including the Amish, in the field today. Based in Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania, his primary focus is the Pennsylvania and Ohio Amish; however, he has an excellent grasp of all Old Order settlements. This book discusses the intricacies of Amish life, and their ability to interface with modern culture.

Kraybill, Donald (ed.), (2003). *The Amish and the State* (2nd ed.). www.press.jhu.edu

A series of chapters that detail both Amish perceptions of the role of the state and their relationship to it, and landmark decisions. Thoughtful and thorough analyses of Wisconsin v. Yoder, the Supreme Court decision that permitted the Amish to leave school after the 8th grade, and struggles with exemptions from social security as well as intergroup differences on slow-moving vehicle signs.

Kraybill, Donald, & Bowman, Carl (2001). *On the Backroad to Heaven: Old Order Hutterites, Mennonites, Amish, and Brethren*. www.press.jhu.edu

An excellent sociological study of four Anabaptist groups, this analysis places the Amish in context with other Plain Peoples and increases understanding of their role within that broader culture.

Kraybill, Donald, Nolt, Steven, and Johnson-Weiner, Karen (in press). *Amish in America*.

Currently in the final stages of writing, this is projected to be the authoritative book on the Amish experience in the United States. The three authors are considered the three leading experts on Plain Peoples in the world. A publication date has not yet been set for this volume.

Kraybill, Donald, Nolt, Steven, and Weaver-Zercher, David (2007). *Amish Grace: How Forgiveness Transcended Tragedy*. www.josseybass.com

In the wake of the killings at the Amish schoolhouse at Nickel Mines, Kraybill, in particular, became a spokesperson for the Amish. This book examines the Amish propensity for forgiveness, both from a cultural and spiritual perspective. It is a powerful statement on the spiritual aspects of Amish culture.

Kraybill, Donald, Nolt, Steven, and Weaver-Zercher, David (2011). *The Amish Way: Patient Faith in a Perious World*. www.josseybass.com

This is a follow-up volume to *Amish Grace*. It expands on Amish spirituality in the context of culture, using the same format previously developed to explain forgiveness. A broader and more comprehensive overview, this book is one of the more focused efforts to interpret the conundrum of Amish culture as an outgrowth spiritual/theological beliefs.

Kraybill, Donald, and Olshan, Marc (1994). *The Amish Struggle with Modernity*. Hanover, NH: University of New England Press.

This is an excellent series of essays on the Old Order response to change, and ever-evolving technology. It places the at times puzzling responses of Amish culture into perspective, providing the rationale for many of their decisions regarding when and how to adapt to or avoid change.

Kriebel, David W. (2007). *Powwowing Among the Pennsylvania Dutch: A Traditional Medical Practice in the Modern World*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University.

Powwowing is called *Brauche* or *Braucherei* among the Pennsylvania Dutch. The folk healing practice is thought to draw upon the power of God to heal both physical and spiritual ills. Although the Old Order Amish are a small subset of the "Dutch" communities to which Kriebel refers, the history of powwowing and similar practices exists in their communities. Although this scholarly reference depicts the existence of the practice today, it is also clear that he describes a dying spiritual art.

Lehman, James O. and Nolt, Steven M. (2007). *Mennonites, Amish, and the American Civil War*. www.press.jhu.edu

The Amish pacifist position was tested in the Civil War, particularly as the aims of the war focused on the emancipation of slaves. This is an interesting historical review of the manner in which a pacifist faith struggled with the paradigm of political and social involvement in the upheaval of civil war.

Mackall, Joe (2007). *Plain Secrets: An Outsider Among the Amish*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press. www.beaconpress.org

Mackall's first-person account of his friendship with an Amish family is one of the few in print that describes the Swartzentruber Amish, among the most cautious of Amish sects in accepting technology and interacting with the world. At times stark in his characterizations, this is nevertheless an accurate depiction of the "line in the sand" that non-Amish will find in their efforts to interact. He also narrates the difficulties an adolescent experiences in choosing to leave the Swartzentrubers, rather than be baptized into the church.

Nolt, Steven (2003). *A History of the Amish* (Revised and Updated). www.goodbks.com

This is the essential history of the Old Order Amish, from their creation of a separate Anabaptist identity to their current status. It is recognized as *the* history on the Amish. Nolt is a highly readable author; a historian by training, he is engaging in his style.

Meyers, Thomas, and Nolt, Steven (2005). *An Amish Patchwork*. <http://iupress.indiana.edu>

Meyers and Nolt are professors at Goshen College. Their work with the Amish is secondary only to Donald Kraybill in its scope and international recognition. This book serves as a primer on the Old Order in Indiana. Highly readable, it gives an overview of demographics and community life.

Meyers, Thomas, and Nolt, Steven (2007). *Plain Diversity: Amish Culture and Identities*.
www.press.jhu.edu

This volume takes a more in-depth look at Old Order Amish communities in Indiana than *An Amish Patchwork*. It provides more sociological analysis, and greater characterizations of the Amish than their earlier work.

Reynolds, Margaret C. (2001). *Plain Women: Gender and Ritual in the Old Order River Brethren*.
University Park, PA: University of Pennsylvania.

The Old Order River Brethren are actually a branch of the Brethren in Christ, but in their "Plain" outlook resemble the Amish. Although use of technology and religious practices vary from the Amish, this is a good reference to understand the role of women in maintaining cohesion in a collectivist culture.

Stevick, Pauline (2006). *Beyond the Plain and Simple: A Patchwork of Amish Lives*. Kent State
University Press, Kent State, Ohio

Stevick is a professor at Messiah College with an extensive interactive experience with the Amish. She provides stories that characterize the main facets of Amish life. Her stories are broad-based and interesting, and include a number of pieces on Amish women. However they do not provide in-depth analysis of the Amish or culture they describe.

Stevick, Richard (2007). *Growing Up Amish: The Teenage Years*. www.press.jhu.edu

Stevick is a psychologist. This work attempts to explain the psychological processes by which Amish teens make their choice to join the church and enter Amish society. It falls short of its goal, but nevertheless is an interesting perspective (and one of the few academic perspectives) on Amish adolescents. Of further note, Stevick bases most of his observations on Pennsylvania Amish, so that generalizations to other settlements are at times limited.

Stoltzfus, Louise (1994) *Amish Women: Lives and Stories*. Good Books, Intercourse, PA.

The author was raised Old Order, and provides an interesting view of the lives of Old Order women. Her stories have are poignant in their placement of Amish females within their culture. The stories make no attempt to critique or analyze, but do provide insight into this comparatively neglected area of Amish life.

Weaver-Zercher, David (2001). *The Amish in the American Imagination*. www.press.jhu.edu

Weaver-Zercher is a professor at Messiah College in Pennsylvania. This work is an excellent overview of the changing attitudes of the Amish across time, and in particular the influence of specific authors and advocates in molding the perceptions of the general public.

Wesner, Erik (2010). *Success Made Simple: An Inside Look at Why Amish Businesses Thrive*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass. www.josseybass.com

Wesner has one of the more intriguing outlooks on the Amish, beginning his interest in their sect selling the Family Bible Library door to door, and ending working with Dr. Donald Kraybill and conducting in-depth interviews with multiple Amish entrepreneurs to create this critique of Amish business practices. His work provides a nuanced and balanced view of the Amish in the marketplace, filling a niche that has been minimally researched.

Wittmer, Joe (2007). *The Gentle People: An Inside View of Amish Life*. (3rd Edition). www.blackbuggy.com

Wittmer is a Professor of Education Emeritus at Florida State University. He was raised among the Indiana Amish until he left at age 16, and continues strong ties here. His book is a compilation of reflections and observations on the Old Order Amish way of life, many from the Old Order themselves.

Zimmerman Umble, Diane, and Weaver-Zercher, David L., Eds. (2008). *The Amish & the Media*. www.press.jhu.edu

Zimmerman Umble is a professor at Millersville University, while Weaver-Zercher is at Lancaster College. This collection of essays reviews the variety of media presentations of the Amish, and offers commentary on the impact of these presentations on both the general public and the Amish themselves.

There are a number of "tell-all" books available that purport to describe the abuses and cult-like behavior of the Amish. They may not be the first choice to read; but in any area densely populated by the Old Order there will also be a contingent of those who have left the church, either prior to baptism, so that they remain in good standing, or who have left after baptism, and so are shunned to some degree. Reading these books can give a sense of attitudes toward the Amish as well. Two autobiographies which provide a relatively balanced view of the effort to separate from Amish life are the following:

Garrett, Ruth Irene, with Farrant, Rick (2003). *Crossing Over: One Woman's Escape from Amish Life*. www.harpercollins.com

Wagler, Ira (2011). *Growing Up Amish*. www.tyndale.com

Also among the diversity of "popular" programs about the Amish, there are few that have merit. One standout among the crowd is a British production:

Keo Films (2010). *Meet the Amish* (4 episodes). www.keofilms.com.

The film follows five Amish adolescents and young adults through England and Scotland as they experience a lifestyle totally different from their own. The diversity and experiences for both cultures is generally handled in a tactful and tasteful manner and serves to educate about both the Amish and ourselves.