

AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SELECTED AMISH READINGS

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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.

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.

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, & 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, 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.

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.

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.

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.

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

Streiker-Schmidt, Lucinda (2008). *A Separate God: Journal of an Amish Girl*.

www.tatepublishing.com