

revealing the subtlety of a spectrum of ideas that have not been explored before in any depth for the Baptist community. In drawing attention to the variety of forces that shaped Baptist education policies—philosophical, theological, pedagogical, and regional—the volume invites Canadian scholars to explore still further, and by exploring to delineate, the Baptist contribution to the philosophy and practice of Canadian higher education.

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James C. Albisetti. *Schooling German Girls and Women: Secondary and Higher Education in the Nineteenth Century*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988. Pp. 327. \$49.95 U.S.

Albisetti's book covers the changes in opportunity for secondary and higher education of German girls and women in the nineteenth century and to 1914, with emphasis on the liberal reform period of the 1860s and 1870s, and on the powerful push for female access in the 1880s and '90s. He tests the assertion of some writers that Germany lagged behind other countries in this area. His comprehensive archival research results in a contextually based treatment of both Germany and feminism. Unlike many current opinionated treatments of the history of women, Albisetti presents the views, efforts, and retrospective

advantages of "moderate" as well as "radical" feminists; he notes the division between middle-class and working-class women organizationally and regarding reform objectives; he includes the significance of temperament, tactics, personality, and self-interest. His early quotation from David Blackburn, "there are more fruitful ways of approaching modern German history...than to address it with questions to which the answer is always 'No'," captures his own open and thorough study of the subject. The reforms are located in the current of German history at the time, for example, in reference to Germany's industrial take-off, to Bismarck's *Kulturkampf*, and to the reform-rich liberalization of the Weimar period between the two world wars.

One must look closely to find the general background, however. Albisetti stays very close to his subject. He shows why the proper study of European education demands so much thoroughness from the scholar, and why it is fruitful to pursue a methodology of exhaustive anecdotal documentation from the rich literature of German ministries, conferences, and personal testimonies. The disadvantages are the danger of highlighting the most verbal or visible actors, e.g., Helene Lange, and the problem of finding context and interpretation out of the painstakingly constructed array of reported actions and statements. This is even more difficult with regard to the question of how changes in female education related to criticisms of and reform proposals for education generally. For

example, his useful coverage of the role of both private and public schools fails to point out that private schools are commonly vehicles for group segregation and often for innovative practices; the battle has always been about the public school. In rightly pointing out, under "Propaganda of the Deed," the importance of establishing a foothold, a point of departure for further action, the author is led historically to the statement that what was needed was normalization (which happened between 1899 and World War I), and thereby to the question of institutionalization of the reform instances, which is always the critical point in a reform initiative. Another example of the importance of the general context is the reference to the "unprecedented expansion in the opportunities for German girls to obtain some form of education beyond elementary level" (between 1800 and 1870). The unprecedented expansion in opportunity for *everyone* meant that the opportunities for girls could increase while decreasing relatively. This is a key question for studies involving perceived social or institutional disadvantage. Finally, as a more intricate question of context, the two major themes given for late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century education of women: the fear of miseducation (*Verbildung*) and the preparation for their calling (*Bestimmung*) to be wives and mothers, might find general education counterparts in reform emphases on civic education and on practical life skills, both developing at the same time.

The chapters take the reader through German ideals and ideas of womanhood; school, teacher, and organization development in the period; debates about woman's nature and place; the achievements of female forerunners in gaining access to higher education and the professions; and legislative and institutional actions at the end of the nineteenth and in the early twentieth centuries. Comparative information on accomplishments in the education of women offers important detail not only on other European countries themselves but also toward the comparative conclusion on the question of German backwardness. It is disappointing, however, that most of the comparative sections are not interpreted sufficiently to provide more than supplementary detail. The final section provides interesting conclusions for specific countries: Scandinavian countries led in secondary coeducation; Italy was among the most open to women, including female professors, at university level; Oxford and Cambridge granted degrees to women only from 1920/21, and the Grandes Ecoles in France excluded women until late—1910 for instance in the case of the Ecole Normale Supérieure. It also presents important comparative conclusions: Germany itself opened general access to medicine (along with secondary teaching, a primary target of access demands for women) later than most other European countries, but surpassed them by the 1920s; Germany lagged generally behind "not the daughters of the West European bourgeoisie but those of the Russian

gentry and Jews"; and most importantly for the whole study, no country consistently led or trailed in the opening of opportunities for women at secondary, higher, and professional levels.

The first chapter sets out the polarization of sex stereotypes which obstructed philosophically and rhetorically efforts to open higher levels of education to women. Support for the idea of the separate nature and destiny of the sexes, and therefore limitations on what was possible and desirable for women to aspire to, was derived from the writings of Goethe, Kant, Fichte, and Arndt, among others. Reformers would have to reckon with the notion of a separate *Bestimmung* for women throughout the period, either by countering the argument, by word or deed, or by co-opting it. Although the first strategy has been described more often in current literature on women's education, Albisetti's documentation of the basis, the toughness of the early challenges, and the stubbornness, maliciousness, and sometimes comedy in the arguments against women's access is as unique as is his particular coverage.

Especially in the chapter on "Woman's Nature and Place," he draws out arguments based on male privilege, on physiological differences, and on threats to society. Male privilege was an issue not only generally but for teachers and school administration. It seems to have been used more for self-interest inside the profession than as a social argument. University professors were notable spokesmen against women's access,

often showing more conservatism than the ministries and certainly more than middle-class parents, although some professors early welcomed women into their classes, and some like Carl Bernhard Bruhl are cited for support of women's entry ("a prejudice is all the more difficult to purge from human thinking, the more individuals derive material profit from it" (p. 179).

The issue of physiological differences is the one exemplifying most extreme arguments. The main thrusts were size and capability of the brain (e.g., a popular pamphlet by a professor of gynaecology entitled, "On the Physiological Feeble-Mindedness of Women"), and general physical detriments (menstruation, pregnancy, stamina). Attractiveness appears to have been a two-sided issue for conservatives: on the one hand, attractive women were seen as potentially disruptive to serious work; on the other, it was claimed that only unattractive women, unable to marry, would want to pursue higher learning and professions. ("In Berlin, a great number of weary old women of scarcely thirty years creep about in an attempt at acquiring a man's education; all vivacity of feeling, all womanly emotions, and physical health as well have left them. Truly educated and cultured men avoid them, uneducated ones flee them, and the healthy, natural women shun their society. Thus these girls stand like hermaphrodites between the two sexes" [Kölnische Zeitung, 1888] (p. 195).

The issue of threat to society was a much more dangerous and persistent one. It was, however, the other side of

the issue, that of social benefit to be gained from the appropriate advancement of women's particular nature, strengths, and social tasks which was seized on by moderate reformers to co-opt the idea of separate *Bestimmung* to their own advantage (compare Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, 1982). In the four early reform themes: translating equal rights for women into girls' schooling; upgrading the academic quality of the higher girls' school; providing practical training for jobs for single women; and education for wives and mothers—the idea of *difference* not only allowed moderates to gain necessary public support for their cause but also offered some advantages to the development of education. The linkage of the spiritual distinctiveness of women in their family roles to Pestalozzian and Froebelian pedagogies is an obvious linkage to emerging reforms which came radically to change teaching methods and to introduce the study of child development in teacher training. The notion that the female difference could counter the harsher instincts of males as manifested in industrial and urban development is one that returns in the modern period without the strict sexist basis but with the value placed on women's contribution to a more balanced universe of human activity. Institutionally, aside from Rousseau's extreme notion that girls were better off *because* they were out of school, Albisetti notes that the reports of women on their own schooling do not reflect the bitterness of many male reporters and that some considered their separation from the false

academic standards of the mainstream to be an advantage. Subjects like the "chemistry of nutrition" and "economic household management" were clearly part of the opening of curriculum to a broader secondary population. More generally, the *Studienanstalten* eventually providing public academic secondary education for girls, "without the weight of the past that encumbered the boys' schools," they "could choose a curriculum that provided a balance between educational tradition and the needs of the time" (p. 280).

Albisetti covers women's organization, major parties to the ongoing debate, and the specific position of teachers and of female university students. His main thrust is how beliefs were turned into arguments by leading spokespeople, to resist or advance change. In his selection of the crucial years and the crucial procedures, he puts his emphasis on the dogged persistence of female activists, moderate and radical, and on the interactive and communication mechanisms that permeate social institutions, ensuring long-range effect. He pays attention to the procedures of reform: what affected public consciousness, how legislation was implemented, how female students responded to new opportunities.

The conclusions of Albisetti's study, other than those obviously historical identifications of points and swings in the activity of the period, are structural—legislation adopted and schools created; demographic—fields and universities selected, academic and religious-ethnic backgrounds of

the new female students; and social-comparative. While acceding to Margaret Bryant's view that reform was "contained within the established framework for conventional social structures and attitudes," the author considers the reforms of the century, and particularly their realization between the 1890s and 1909, to have been a major victory for German feminism. Further, he considers that German women, in general, had levels of access to higher studies and opportunities for training and employment as teachers that were relatively similar, if limited, to their counterparts elsewhere in Europe.

In the first chapter, the French historian Olwen Hufton is quoted on the difficulty of "locating a *bon vieux temps* when women enjoyed a harmonious, if hard working domestic role and social responsibility before they were downgraded into social parasites or factory fodder." This consciousness of the need for time and culture perspective, even among historians, on socially and emotionally loaded issues is as refreshing in Albiseti's work as is the disciplined use of his craft in excavating the treasures of this historical site.

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William A. McKim, ed. *The Vexed Question: Denominational Education in a Secular Age.*

St. John's: Breakwater Books, 1988.
Pp. 288. \$14.95 paper.

Newfoundland's denominational school system, a unique survival from the age of religious warfare in North America, has long been an object of contention among residents of that province, especially those involved in education, and a curiosity to most mainland observers. The effective entrenchment of the system by provisions in the 1982 Constitution Act which exempts it from challenges under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees that it is likely to remain so for some time to come.

Editor William McKim, of Memorial University, has assembled a collection of essays which explores Newfoundland's educational system from a variety of perspectives—historical, economic, philosophical—and from the points of view of both opponents and defenders of the principles of denominational education. Aimed at both the scholar and the general reader, the book is designed to explain the mechanics of the denominational system of education, and its origins and historical evolution, and to provide assessments of its efficiency, effectiveness, popularity, and desirability in an increasingly secular society. As is often the case with collections, the book is uneven in the quality of the selections, incomplete in its treatment of the question, and somewhat unbalanced in its generally critical tone with respect to education in Newfoundland.

Easily the best selections are two chapters by Phillip McCann which outline the development of the