

Reviews

Ziefle, Helmut. *Gegen Hitler und das Reich - Erinnerungen an eine glaubensstarke Mutter.* Metzingen, Württemberg: Ernst Franz Verlag, 2000, 189 pp., ISBN 3772203515, EUR 11.50.

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This book gives a narrative account of the way the Ziefle family lived, suffered, and triumphed during the climactic years of the Third Reich, 1938-1945, and the weeks and months immediately following, without its members compromising themselves or their deeply-rooted, fervent Christian commitment. It does not bypass or minimize the stresses, struggles, and even anguish the Ziefles felt at various times during this period, but it ultimately gives moving witness to the power of prayer in their lives and their confidence in God's providential leading.

Gegen Hitler und das Reich begins with descriptions of the relatively comfortable home life of the Ziefles in beginning months of 1938, but then also tells of growing pressures on the church, falling church attendance, brown-shirted attempts at disruption of worship services, and increasing attempts to bring Christians forcibly into line with Nazi ideology and practice. It tells of brutal measures, including sterilization, taken against Frau Ziefle's brother when he openly termed Hitler a scoundrel before his fellow workers, and of the fierce beatings suffered during the "Kristallnacht" of November 9, 1938, by the family's doctor, who was married to a Jewess whom he refused to renounce.

The outbreak of war in September, 1939 only increased the pressures on the family. However, despite the family's fears, the authorities accepted the plea of the father, Georg, that it was against his conscience to bear arms, and trained him as an ambulance driver and medic. His wife was exempted from attending Nazi meetings when their physician agreed

to write a certificate attesting to her very real health problems. Two of the three school-age Ziefle children held firmly to their faith, despite pressures of various kinds, but a third fell temporary prey to the lure of Nazi propaganda. Ultimately he, too, regained his Christian moorings, but only after experiencing some of war's horrors first-hand and being badly wounded.

As the war proceeded, and particularly after 1942, the family's concerns intensified. Both Ziefle sons eligible for military duty served in the army, with the younger of them, Reinhold, forcibly assigned to a Waffen-SS unit. Soon bombs began to fall, first in Heilbronn, the nearest larger city, and then even in Sonthofen, where the family resided. Few nights passed without sleep interrupted by air raid sirens and the fearsome explosion of bombs and rockets. Food became scarce, and as more and more houses fell victim to British bombs, it became increasingly difficult to find shelter.

War's end brought relief of sorts, but severe hunger then intensified, shortages of goods necessary for daily life multiplied, and the behavior of American occupying forces was unsettlingly inconsistent. Adding to the tension was the violent, sometimes murderous behavior of Polish forced laborers out to wreak vengeance for the suffering they had endured at German hands during wartime itself. Then there was the family's anguished uncertainty about Reinhold, who had spent the war's final months on the Eastern Front and who had been taken captive and sent to Poland for what proved to be five years of forced labor under brutal conditions.

All throughout its privations, fears, and harrowing experiences, however, the Ziefle family was wonderfully sustained by its recourse to prayer and confidence in the Lord's guiding hand. Not only did its members speak prayers during the "Dämmerstündle" they held each evening; they also, frequently under the leadership of Frau Ziefle, spontaneously prayed any time of the day or night when peril threatened. When the family ultimately was reunited in 1950, each of its members knew that it was only by God's grace and His provident answer to their countless prayers.

Helmut Ziefle, the book's author, who has enjoyed a long career at Wheaton College, does not attempt in this volume to do historical or sociological analyses of what went wrong during the Nazi period. His intent clearly is to describe instead the war's day-by-day effects on his own Christian family and the town in which they lived, to pay tribute to the constancy of his parents'-and particularly his mother's-faith, and to celebrate God's faithfulness, even in times of dire threat. This he does effectively, and at

times with great poignancy. It is clear that he wrote this book carefully, prayerfully, and with consistent attention to the accuracy of such historical detail as it contains.

Ziefle's style is clear, frequently compelling in its descriptions, and always appropriately simple. Some of its passages, particularly those in which he describes the devastation of war, could be profitably used even toward the close of first-year German courses. And particularly in the aftermath of September 11, teachers and students alike can surely benefit from the book's compelling reminders that even in the most dire circumstances, there is an Anchor that holds.

Smith, David I., and Carvill, Barbara. *The Gift of the Stranger: Faith, Hospitality, and Foreign Language Learning.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000, xv + 233 pp., ISBN 0-8028-5708-0, \$15.

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Between the Foreword by Ron Wells of the Calvin Center for Christian Scholarship and the last chapter, which samples curricular materials from the Charis Project of the Stapleford Centre in Nottingham, UK, *The Gift of the Stranger* is anchored between two institutions dedicated to fostering Christian scholarship in academic disciplines. At the same time, the work embodies the considerable talents and experience of its two authors intent on establishing Christian foundations for the discipline of foreign languages.

The US scholars David Smith and Barbara Carvill are leading exponents of the thesis that one can theorize in a Christian way about the teaching and learning of second languages. With their roots in European and Continental cultures, and their additional combined experiences and research foci touching at least the Australian and Asian continents—if not the whole globe—the authors have produced a book of fundamental interest to language educators.

The authors seek understanding of their own work as language