Book Reviews

The Absent Christ: An Anabaptist Theology of the Empty Tomb. By Justin Heinzekehr. C. Henry Smith Series, Volume 12. Telford, Pa.: Cascadia Publishing House. 2019. $22.95.

The twelfth volume of the C. Henry Smith Series offers an important contribution to contemporary theological conversations among Anabaptist-Mennonites. The book appears superficially as a revised version of his doctoral dissertation, which bore the title *The Absent Christ and the Inundated Community: Constructing a Process-Anabaptist Micrometaphysics*. But this is not simply a revision. The difference in the title announces a transformation in content as well. While it is a careful reworking that preserves and conveys the dissertation's philosophico-theological substance, it is crafted for a more general but theologically aware readership, displaying a passion for conveying its relevance and importance for anyone concerned about Anabaptist Christian discipleship in the contemporary world.

The image that Heinzekehr makes central is that of the empty tomb, and the literal absence of Christ. Resisting the common tendency to reassure us of Christ's continuing presence, he urges us to embrace the positive possibilities opened up by the fact that Christ is not present. Significantly, this reflection is joined with an insistence on explicitly addressing its unavoidably metaphysical dimensions. Heinzekehr clearly notes at the outset that "metaphysical" here points not to something non- or anti-physical, but to a conscious concern with "underlying patterns that characterize reality as a whole" (18). We find also that "metaphysical" does not necessarily point to traditional categories associated with creedal Christianity, since the book touts the potential of an admittedly "heterodox" *process* metaphysics (originating with Whitehead, but drawn most notably here from Catherine Keller).

For Heinzekehr, understanding Christian theology itself in light of process requires that we understand that process in the shadow of the empty tomb, and of Christ's absence: "Christian theology has been from its beginning a subjective task, requiring an interpretation of an experience or narrative in the absence of an authority figure that could *guarantee* a single meaning" (24-25, my emphasis). The opening chapters trace this insight from the New Testament through the Reformation, and specifically through Balthasar Hubmaier's theology, emphasizing the "liberatory trajectory" of Christianity, with an insightful and compelling focus on sacrament. After a focused discussion on how process metaphysics (along with a bit of phenomenology of otherness) conceptually enriches the significance of absence as a positive phenomenon, the final three chapters attempt to show how the perspective developed can impact political theology, eco-theology, and the theology of pacifism.

My summary here, while it does convey the organization of the book, so far fails dismally to convey the palpable passion with which Heinzekehr pulls his "academic" materials toward a living engagement with the absence that is his theme. Chapter titles come closer to hinting at the deft *poiesis* that he pursues: "The Cords of the Grave," "Un/godly Floods," "The King and the Enemy," "The Reeling Earth," "The Cleanness of My Hands." The author seeks a performative embodiment of the approach to theology he advocates, not just a conceptual description. As a supplement to the central concept of absence, maps and cartography provide a fascinating and accessible set of analogies at various points, with particular poignancy in relation to violence and pacifism. All along, Heinzekehr's prose reminds the reader of his proposal's particularity, openness to discussion, and potential vulnerability to criticism. He embodies openness to the Other to which I and others have gestured in recent Anabaptist-Mennonite conversations.

My own reaction (primarily from a perspective in social theory and philosophy) to the recommendation of process metaphysics is largely enthusiastic, but not without some hesitation, which I will briefly outline in the interest of further underlining the strengths of *The Absent Christ*. I am worried about an apparent tendency, which I have seen often in verbal discussions and popular presentations, to present the process trajectory issuing from Whitehead in rather "all-or-nothing" terms. There is traditional metaphysics, and then there is the process option originating with Whitehead, which delivers us from bondage to the former. The dual connotation (not a logical implication) is that (a) outside the Whiteheadian stream there is no process; and (b) traditional metaphysics is bad, process metaphysics good. To be clear, I do not attribute this view to Heinzekehr! Rather, I am suggesting that it is a "spectral" presence in discussions of process theology; they are "haunted" by it, and this tendency may impact the reception and discussion of the book.

Regarding the first connotation, I suspect that there is not sufficiently widespread awareness of the extent to which both phenomenological and pragmatist thought explicitly embrace a perspective that is metaphysically one of process rather than substance. The technically correct observation that phenomenology (after Heidegger) seeks to "overcome" metaphysics can be misleading, since the word "metaphysics" has taken on a narrower, more specialized role in that context. It is arguably the case that phenomenology in Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and others embraces a process metaphysics, on the broader definition of "metaphysical" given by Heinzekehr. Classical pragmatism (William James, G. H. Mead, and John Dewey) is commonly portrayed (wrongly) as either anti-metaphysical or "anti-realist" (or both, in which case it is easily dismissed as incoherent). The processual metaphysical bent of pragmatism shares much in common with that of phenomenology, and I worry that the recommendation of a process perspective tracing to Whitehead might easily be taken in isolation from these streams, rather than in conversation with them. To take it in this way is clearly very much at odds with Heinzekehr's humble and conversational presentation, and I hope widespread misunderstandings of these other streams do not prevail in Anabaptist-Mennonite conversations.

Returning to the second connation, we should consider what it might mean to see traditional metaphysics as bad. No one is likely to claim that it is all bad. The problem, we might say, is that we must painstakingly sift and discern the good from the bad, and perhaps that this is an unending task. But my worry is that a subtle and pervasive bias against any *traditional* metaphysics may continue to do mischief in Mennonite conversations, even when a general bias against metaphysics is ostensibly resisted. And I am suspicious of the idea that we can discern with clarity and distinctness what is good and what is bad in our tradition(s). Tradition is not something that simply lies behind us, waiting for decisions to be rendered upon it. Tradition follows us, and permeates the ether in which we live, move, and have our being. But the ways in which it follows us entail that it is fraught with danger. It is not that traditional metaphysics is bad, but that it is dangerous. I suspect that it is a matter not simply of making judgments regarding good and bad metaphysics (even if we aver that they only provide provisional closure), but of being in constant discernment of what is the main danger at the place where we are in the process.

Heinzekehr is clearly seeking opening rather than closure. This is central to his project, and the openings he pursues explore precisely some of what he takes to be the main dangers for us now. None of this is to attack his perspective, then; rather, it is to praise his contribution and to join him in the open conversation that he clearly wishes to promote. I highly recommend *The Absent Christ* to anyone interested in the issues with which it deals, and I hope for a rich array of responses from theologians and biblical scholars, beyond my more philosophically-focused affirmations.

Hillsdale College PETER C. BLUM

Jesus, Deliver Us: Evil, Exorcism, and Exousiai. By Willard M. Swartley. Eugene, Ore.: Cascade Books. 2019. $49.

If there is one volume that highlights the life contributions of Willard M. Swartley to academia and to the church, this is that volume, a book published only months before Swartley's death. Swartley's thesis statement reads: "My goal is to bridge [the] two faces of evil: the systemic structural evil in the socio-economic-political spheres *and* evil that oppresses a *person*, for whom exorcism in deliverance is necessary for freedom. I contend that these two faces of evil are *two sides of the same coin*. . . . In my judgment, both derive from the same biblical canon and theology" (3). Swartley identifies three formative life experiences that equip him for this dual approach to the study of evil: (1) his long-term engagement with a seminary course on "War and Peace in the Bible"; (2) his service as a biblical/theological consultant for the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference Oversight Committee assisting Dean Hochstetler in Hochstetler's longstanding exorcism ministry; and (3) his scholarly engagement with the writings of Walter Wink and Rene Girard.

The heart of Swartley's work lies in the rich and wide-ranging biblical scholarship in the first two sections of his volume: "Part I: Progressions in Deliverance from Evil: Crucial Journeys within Scripture" and "Part II: Biblical Perspectives on Deliverance: Multi-dimensions of Deliverance from Evil." Part I (chaps. 1-3) focuses on the understanding of evil reflected within the Old Testament writings and seeks "to examine the 'journey' from the OT to the NT in their respective conceptions of and responses to evil" (35). Here Swartley engages crucially with the Old Testament concept of *herem,* the biblical command "to kill or slaughter enemy peoples . . . to ensure the holiness of the [Israelite] people" (53) and concludes that "the failure of *herem* to ensure God's holiness gives way in the prophetic literature to a grander and more encompassing vision of God and God's holiness" (47). Ultimately, the progression away from *herem* appears crucially in the Christ event, where "Jesus' death kills the enmity, not the enemy" (59) and where Jesus calls his disciples to "Love [their] enemies!" (75).

Part II (chaps. 4-8) analyzes the motif of evil within the major writings of the New Testament: Mark (chap. 4); Matthew and Luke/Acts (chap. 5); Paul (chap. 6); the Johannine writings (chap. 7); and Hebrews, James, 1/2 Peter, and Jude (chap. 8). Here Swartley first discusses the exorcistic ministry of Jesus within the Synoptic Gospels (chaps. 4-5), where "Jesus' entire ministry was a clash between the powers of God and the powers of Satan" (128).

Swartley then engages the Pauline corpus (chap. 6), identifying five Pauline terms/motifs used to addresses the topic of evil: (1) Satan or the devil; (2) demons; (3) sin, flesh, and death; (4) the *stoicheia*, namely, "the forces that lie behind pagan religions and philosophies, and the law as means for self-justification" (150); and (5) the language of "rulership" (151). Swartley adopts a Christus Victor stance on atonement, concluding, "In Paul's writing, the death and resurrection of Jesus means cosmic victory over evil spiritual powers" (156).

Swartley's discussion of the Johannine writings (chap. 7) highlights the "cosmic exorcism" (174) reflected within these texts, where "John's Gospel theology . . . speaks of the *evil one* as *the ruler of this world*" (174), a figure who "will be driven out" through the death of Jesus (Jn. 12:31-32a) and who ultimately "has no power over [him]" (Jn. 14:31b). Swartley views Revelation as an apocalyptic rendition of "God's judgment of evil" (185), concluding that the "paradoxical image of victory through suffering love"—namely, the "slain Lamb" who is now "seated with God on the Throne"—is "the heart of Revelation's Christology" (193).

Vis-à-vis Hebrews (chap. 8) Swartley points to Jesus' victory over evil through his own death (Heb. 2:14). And he highlights the imagery of sacrifice prominent throughout Hebrews: "The book of Hebrews . . . transforms sacrifice: from scapegoating an innocent victim to offering oneself, from recurring sacrifices to a once-for-all Redeemer's self-sacrifice" (203).

In "Part III, Biblical Practices for Deliverance and Witness to the Powers: Toward Faithful Responses," Swartley examines the practical implications of his

biblical exposition for the life of the church, both historical and contemporary. In chapter 9 Swartley focuses on early church practices: exorcism and exorcistic liturgies; the compassionate ministries of the church; and worship which "celebrated Jesus Christ's triumph over the powers of evil" (232).

In chapter 10 Swartley addresses contemporary Christian witness to the powers, setting Romans 13 and its call for Christians to "be subject to the governing authorities" (Rom. 13:1) into dialogue with Romans 12 and its "moral teaching that instructs [Christians] in how to respond to evil" (242). In chapter 11 Swartley offers a nuanced discussion of the theories and practices of Christian deliverance ministries, engaging biblical evidence of exorcism as well as psychological and sociological learnings from the modern/postmodern era. Accordingly, Swartley urges both "that we not rule out demon oppression and obsession (more rarely possession) in a person, and . . . that we do not attribute all physical, emotional illness, and disabilities to demons" (261).

In chapter 12 Swartley lays out his own "Holistic Approach to Jesus' Victory Over Evil" (280). In his words, "The same biblical theology that supports Christian witness to government authorities also supports Christian deliverance ministry. Both appeal to God's kingdom come and the sovereign Lordship of Christ" (281). Swartley closes his volume with a "Summary and Conclusion," a "Prayer" and "Benediction," and three appendices.

The manifest strengths of Swartley's work begin with his own biblical scholarship. Swartley grounds his central thesis about evil within the framework of an overarching biblical trajectory moving canonically from Genesis and the story of Creation to Revelation and the story of New Creation. A lifetime of solid exegetical work with the Scriptures shines through the pages of Swartley's volume. And Swartley's passionate commitment to the "God of peace" (Heb. 13:20), who raises Jesus from the dead and through whom Jesus "defeats the devil" (cf. 201), undergirds Swartley's argument throughout. A correlated strength of Swartley's work lies in his wide-ranging and lively engagement with biblical scholars across the board and their scholarly discussions of evil. A bibliography of more than twenty-five pages signals Swartley's deep commitment to scholarly dialogue.

The challenges of Swartley's volume lie largely on the level of internal organization within the chapters. Here the argumentation is not always clearly structured or obviously sequential in its layout. Sometimes it appears that Swartley, in an attempt to include a wealth of evidence, simply lines up scholarly discussions one after the other without building a single, unified argument throughout a chapter.

Finally, however, it is Swartley's central and original focus on "bridge[ing] the two faces of evil," namely, the systemic and the personal (3), which constitutes the crucial contribution of this volume to the world of biblical scholarship. From his unique life experiences and deeply-rooted faith commitments Swartley has

charted a course for the study of evil within the Scriptures that has potential to shape or reshape biblical scholarship in coming years. Swartley's volume is truly the gift of his lifetime.

Eastern Mennonite Seminary DOROTHY JEAN WEAVER

If Jesus is Lord: Loving Our Enemies in an Age of Violence. By Ronald J. Sider. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic. 2019. $25.

While some might pick up Ron Sider's latest volume and, perhaps with a rolling of eyes, think "some dogs will just not let go of their bone," most will recognize the faithful work of a scholar who has been gripped by the gospel of peace. Thus, even as he interrogates and incorporates younger and contrasting voices into the conversation around the enduring questions of violence and Christian ethics, Sider offers his seasoned voice in a fresh and clear accentuation of cruciform discipleship.

The book is pitched in an accessible tone overall, with strong appeal for use in academic settings, while suitable for some lay readers as well. (Notably, in early 2020, Herald Press released a somewhat different version of *If Jesus is Lord*—aimed at the lay audience less interested in academic minutiae—titled *Speak Your Peace*.) Sider provides a healthy number of footnotes to acknowledge key supports and interlocutors in relation to his argument. The book is a significant contribution to a biblical ethic of peace and violence in the twenty-first century. It responds to historic and contemporary objections regarding the validity of expecting followers of Jesus to love their enemies by refraining from killing them.

In the introduction, Sider seeks to clarify and define several terms central to the book's argument, such as coercion, violence, and pacifism. Sider would be remiss if he had not explored these terms, and he manages to judiciously limit the discussion in service to his main agenda.

The book's trajectory begins firmly in the biblical text, particularly in the New Testament, with Jesus. This is consistent with Sider's titular premise that asks readers to consider if they do, indeed, take seriously calling Jesus "Lord" (i.e., master, ruler, authority). Written decidedly for a Christian audience that would resonate affirmatively with the Lordship of Jesus, Sider emphasizes that Jesus' ministry—from his inaugural sermon in the synagogue to his resurrected manifestations—needs to be understood in the context of historic, Jewish kingdom expectations. Sider affirms the general scholarly consensus that Jesus subverts and transforms many messianic expectations, putting forth "forgiveness, not violence and vengeance, [as] the sign of his messianic kingdom" (17).

Sider honestly and carefully works through Jesus' actions and teachings in terms of the hermeneutical challenge of both fulfilling the Law and, at times, setting aside the Law. In keeping with the claim that Jesus is Lord, Sider argues that Jesus becomes the interpretative standard against which to measure other parts of Scripture. Thus, rather than sidestepping seemingly difficult commands—like love your enemies—Christ followers ought to give more attention to the shape of such love, beyond passivity and into forms of creative nonviolent resistance.

Anticipating objections from committed students of the Bible, Sider turns to address parts of the New Testament that may not fit so well with the peaceful messiah he finds in the text. Here, he joins in a longstanding pacifist tradition that seeks to refute the appearance of soldiers and swords (real and metaphorical), the "cleansing of the Temple," and Romans 13 as possible exceptions to the key ethical directive being advanced: disciples ought to love their enemies. Tellingly, the middle chapter of the book reasserts focus on the central question—if Jesus is Lord—by exploring christological perspectives, the validation of Jesus' love of enemies by his resurrection, the kingdom as both now and not yet, and church as messianic community with a mission to live in imitation of Jesus.

One might argue that the book could have concluded after the theological considerations in chapter 7. However, clearly, Sider felt compelled to address a wider range of issues in his apology for a loving, non-killing ethic, if Jesus is Lord. The back half of the book proceeds to identify and honestly grapple with persistent challenges posed to a pacifist ethic: beginning with its being unloving and irresponsible, moving to reconciling Old and New Testament ethical directives regarding enemies, then coalescing with learnings from Christian history. After defusing several charges against pacifism, in chapter 9, Sider takes the just war tradition to task, challenging Christ-followers who resonate with this ethic to be honest about its shortcomings, hypocrisy, and lack of rigorous application.

Chapter 10 seeks to navigate the significant tension between parts of the Old Testament and Jesus when it comes to enemy treatment. Sider reviews many proposals—including particular attention to Greg Boyd and John H. Yoder—for how to most coherently understand the canonical record (Jesus' Bible) of God commanding death for enemies and the unique teaching that Jesus proclaimed: love your enemies. Though he is not satisfied with any of the hermeneutic proposals entirely, Sider doubles down on what he feels can and must be communicated in the name of orthodoxy and orthopraxy: "The evidence is quite clear. Jesus rejects the way of violence, loves his enemies, and insists that his disciples must do the same. . . . [W]e dare not say that Jesus is wrong. To reject Jesus's teaching on loving enemies is to deny the deity of Christ" (166).

On its face, chapter 12—titled "Nonviolence and the Atonement"—seems like something of a non sequitur in the overall flow of argument. However, the link is made that Jesus' own practice of love for enemies is expressed most powerfully in the cross, a scene of great violence toward him. Thus, theologizing about the

meaning of the execution of Jesus involves dissonant wrestling with an affirmation of his death, while a pacifist ethic shies away from finding any value in killing whatsoever. Sider surveys various atonement perspectives, critically noting strengths and weaknesses in relation to love of enemies. He affirms the need for multiple atonement metaphors, while maintaining, again, that the messianic kingdom context must always inform Christian understanding of Jesus' life and death. While Sider succeeds in showing the logical value of including this chapter overall, the chapter could have been sharpened where it becomes muddled in critiques of atonement metaphors.

The book ends with considerations of history and a final plea. Sider argues—drawing upon his previous work—that pacifism was the normative expectation in Christian ethics until the Constantinian shift of the fourth century, then shows how that ethic sporadically, yet resiliently, was made manifest in various denominations and movements through history. Lest one think that nonviolent pacifism as discipleship was merely a fringe idea in Christian history, Sider demonstrates that prominent evangelical leaders like Moody, Spurgeon, and Stott articulated strong pacifist commitments (albeit, not consistently); he also notes the trend in recent Catholicism away from just war tradition, toward a greater embrace of pacifism.

For decades, Ron Sider has been prophetically calling out the moral and intellectual incoherencies within evangelical Christianity, pointing toward more faithful discipleship. *If Jesus is Lord* adds another log to that fire, pleading with the wider Christian family to more accurately imitate the God known in Jesus, who scandalously loves enemies.

Fresno Pacific University PETER SMITH

The Earth Is the Lord's: Essays on Creation and the Bible in Honor of Ben C. Ollenburger. Edited by Ryan D. Harker and Heather L. Bunce. University Park, Pa.: Eisenbrauns. 2019. $44.95.

This collection of thirteen essays (six on the Old Testament and seven on the New Testament) is written on the theme of creation in honor of the teaching and scholarship of Ben C. Ollenburger and edited by two of his students. Perry Yoder, his colleague for many years at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (Elkhart, Indiana), offers a foreword of appreciation in *The Earth Is the Lord's*, which is organized in canonical order. The theme of creation is apt because of Ollenburger's ongoing interest in that subject of biblical inquiry as part of his significant contributions to biblical theology. Now that Ollenburger has stepped away from

classroom responsibilities, we can only hope that he will take advantage of his additional time to make further such contributions.

The collection's first essay, by Theodore Hiebert, examines the work of the Priestly Writer in Genesis 1. Acknowledging his previous scholarly work resisting the image of dominion in this text, Hiebert now finds possible redemption for this contributor. Though the Yahwist in Genesis 2-3 offers a humbler image of service toward creation by humanity, Hiebert finds a new appreciation for the Priestly Writer [2] as scientist, artist, and theologian. He makes a case that this writer offers a careful taxonomy of plant and animal life. Further, the writer's poetic phrasings suggest an artistic sensitivity, and his theological gifts yield a synthesis of science with theology. Next, Andrea Saner addresses Exodus, making an exegetical argument that the Creator's claim on the earth ("all the earth is mine," Ex. 19:5) serves as the ground for God's covenant with Israel. Drawing additionally from early commentators (Philo, the Venerable Bede) and theological sources (Calvin, Barth), she makes the case that Israel's priestly role had royal authority.

Walter Brueggemann engages Ollenburger's work with the Zion tradition in Isaiah to draw out its creation elements. Brueggemann presents five propositions in service of his thesis that First Isaiah employs creation theology to emphasize YHWH's sovereignty and to render all other claims as penultimate. He concludes by citing the hymn of Isaac Watts, "Before Jehovah's Awful Throne," seldom found in contemporary hymnals. He believes this lacuna is a possible symptom of a contemporary preference for God's immanence, which he maintains is inadequate to resist our tendency to absolutize "our convenient ideologies" (52). Second Isaiah is the subject of Patricia K. Tull, who finds in its concern to heal the rupture between the nation and its God much that can be instructive right now. God who created the world is described as the One who is currently creating a new future for Israel. Perhaps most relevant is the challenge to idol making, which Tull connects to worrisome efforts in biomimicry—human efforts at potentially harmful creative activity. Safwat Marzouk explores Ezekiel's discourse on the land, arguing that the prophet's discourse reveals a balance between divine sovereignty and human responsibility in both devastation and renewal. Ultimately this is a word of hope despite human failure. The essay by Heather L. Bunce examines the Book of the Twelve where she finds a cycle of creation, un-creation, and re-creation. On the final Day of the Lord, God will intervene and achieve the ultimate conquest of chaos.

The opening New Testament essay is by Darrin W. Snyder Belousek, who argues that in the Gospel of Mark Jesus is depicted as Creator, established through a narrative witness. That is, rather than considering titles for Jesus, he discusses two Markan narratives depicting Jesus doing work of the Creator: commanding the wind and sea, and walking upon the sea. For each of these accounts, he explores connections with Old Testament texts to demonstrate that Jesus does what YHWH alone can do. The late Willard Swartley, out of the riches of his commentary research (*John*, Believers Church, 2013), explains Fourth Gospel

creation motifs in seven dimensions: the prologue as a Logos-Dabar creation hymn with echoes from wisdom; the seven-day time structure of the Gospel's first narrative segment; the feasts in the first half of the Gospel in which food, light, and water abound; seven signs in the Gospel as symbols of creation, life, and light; the Gospel "I am" metaphors that reflect the divine goodness of the earth and sky; the action and words of Jesus to his disciples after his resurrection—he "breathed"; and Jesus' seaside breakfast with his disciples involving copious fish from the lake (119-20). The third New Testament piece, by Ryan D. Harker, compares the eschatological role of "children of God" in Paul's letter to the Romans with the land theme in 2 Baruch. Harker argues that in Romans, the redeemed people of God play an important role in God's redemption of creation, moving beyond simply receiving it from God as a gift. Harker also contends that God's redeemed people play the same role in Romans in this regard as does the land in 2 Baruch.

Building upon Ollenburger's Old Testament connection between creation and peace, Tom Yoder Neufeld relates several aspects of the creation theme to the message of peace in Ephesians. Drawing upon previous work with Ephesians (e.g., *Ephesians*, Believers Church, 2002), Yoder Neufeld argues that here it is as Creator that God is Savior. God's people are called to be transformed and also to do the continuing work of creation, challenging rebellious powers alongside their Creator-Savior. Gordon Zerbe (a third Believers Church Commentary writer: *Philippians*, 2016) argues that in Paul's theopolitical vision in Philippians one finds fundamentally a theology of creation. With Philippians 3:20-21 as his focus, but also drawing upon the extended Pauline corpus, Zerbe finds the creation theme in the dynamic (past, ongoing, and future) recreative work of God through Jesus Messiah, most notably in the work of reconciliation of God, humans, and cosmos. Those who belong to Messiah are invited to adopt alternative weapons toward this goal. David Rensberger opens his treatment of the Johannine Letters by acknowledging the conundrum of these texts that allude to creation in 1 John 1:1 ("What was from the beginning") yet also present the world as something one must not love since it lies under the power of the evil one (1 Jn. 2:15; 5:19). After addressing superficial misconceptions concerning the use of "world" in these epistles, Rensberger argues that the opposite of loving the world for these texts means to love God's people by means of divine created goods. The material and physical have value for the salvation brought through Jesus Christ—a salvation brought to the completion intended from creation—when believers love one another. In a fitting conclusion to this collection of essays, Loren Johns explores the creation theme in Revelation. Beginning with the praise of God as Creator found in Revelation 4:11, he argues that the book's plot is one long dramatic movement toward the earth's return to order, rejoining its proper worship that aligns with what is already displayed in heaven. As the head or beginning of the created order, Jesus shares a place with the one seated on the throne (Rev. 3:21).

This collection appropriately honors Ben Ollenburger and his concern for the Bible's theology of creation, a topic that continues to be of significant interest

among other scholars as well. I highly recommend its fascinating engagements with several portions of the biblical canon.

Tabor College, Hillsboro, Kansas DOUGLAS B. MILLER

The Ältester*: Herman D.W. Friesen, A Mennonite Leader in Changing Times*. By Bruce Guenther. Regina, Sask.: University of Regina Press. 2018. $34.95.

The Old Colony Mennonites, having come to Canada in the 1870s from Russia under a set of promises from the federal government, found, by the 1920s, their relationship with government ruptured. On account of assimilationist school policies, they embarked on a large emigration with most who left going to Mexico. However, not all Old Colony Mennonites left Canada. Bruce Guenther sets about to bring these Mennonites more deeply into the historiography of Canadian, prairie, and Mennonite studies. When it came to Guenther's attention that his grandfather, Herman D. W. Friesen, an *Ältester*, or bishop, among the Old Colony Mennonites of Saskatchewan, left behind the largest cache of Old Colony sermons in Canada, he knew a book needed to be written.

Over the course of four chapters and two lengthy, and useful appendices, Guenther demonstrates that the lives of Herman Friesen and his wife, Margaretha, not only reveal much about Old Colony faith and life in twentieth-century Saskatchewan, they also shed light on the patterns of Saskatchewan history itself. As Saskatchewan modernized over the first half of the twentieth century it became increasingly difficult for groups like the Old Colony Mennonites to retain their isolationist agrarian lifestyle. That erosion was aided by growing networks of railways and roads, and by the horse giving way to tractors and cars. As economies changed and land availability became an issue, the siren call of towns and cities was difficult to ignore.

As the biography unfolds, Friesen rises through the leadership of his group to become an *Ältester*. His life is distinctive for he was involved in municipal politics, and he was one of the few leaders not to support migration out of Saskatchewan while helping to nudge those who remained toward work in industry and trades—that is, to think beyond agrarian life. However, Guenther has not simply written a biography. He deliberately and effectively tells a larger story of an ethno-religious group that grappled with large questions of faithfulness and worldliness, migration and community, and culture and religion.

The Ältester connects the story of these late-nineteenth-century immigrants to the larger Canadian nation-building drama, including the government's unfortunate policies regarding indigenous inhabitants. There is the irony of Mennonites escaping the assimilationist policies of the Russian government and

embracing an invitation by the Canadian government to safeguard their culture and religious practice through immigration, though without them knowing, at the expense of indigenous peoples. Then, within only a few decades, Canadian provincial authorities would bring assimilationist pressures of their own to bear on the Mennonites.

As the issue of English-only schools surfaced in the early 1920s, many of these Mennonites were concerned about the direction of life in Canada and sought their freedom to live as Low German-speaking agrarians in relative isolation elsewhere. Guenther observes that it was migrations out of the Old Colony church to Mexico, or smaller migrations to northern British Columbia, that positioned the remaining group members to be more open to change, as the more conservative factions left.

Guenther also explores family life. Herman's wife, Margaretha, despite the strong patriarchal structure of Old Colony life, exercised agency and had a significant influence on Herman. Family life too was marked by a patriarchal structure and Herman himself was described as abusive toward some of his children, certainly by contemporary standards. Guenther writes that "despite the fact that awareness and understanding of domestic violence differs somewhat from era to era, one cannot excuse the physical brutality that some of Herman's children experienced at times. This lack of control was not only inconsistent with the church's cautionary advice of moderation but it damaged his relationship with some of his children" (89).

Yet there were exceptions in which Herman gave ground; Guenther describes how the children "pestered" Herman to such an extent that he agreed to purchase a radio (83). And, as with the radio, some of the trappings of modernity were welcomed and used. Margaretha, for example, was treated in a mental health facility in North Battleford for her clinical depression with electroconvulsive therapy, seen to be at the forefront of mental health treatment. Similarly, on the farm, operations expanded as mechanization continued with the purchase of new farm equipment. Transitions such as these led Herman to recognize that navigating change by expecting everyone to live a separated agrarian life was increasingly difficult, if not impossible. This reality became clearer through the 1950s, with a growing variety of Mennonite denominational options nearby. Meanwhile, English continued its advance, and the arrival of evangelical revivalism also challenged their way of life. Herman sought appropriate compromises—not too fast nor too slow—with the wider world as he, at least implicitly, demonstrated that the simple rejection of specific cultural practices over time was not always preferred.

Guenther deftly explains charges that other Mennonite critics have leveled at the Old Colony Mennonites. For example, he argues that their soteriology, sometimes portrayed as a "works-based" righteousness, might more aptly be seen as a future-oriented theory of salvation that did not embrace a Protestant assurance of salvation. Rather, a lifelong commitment to following Christ within

community demonstrated faithfulness day by day; meanwhile, assurance of individual salvation in the moment could easily feed "spiritual pride and presumption" and sacrifice the deeper communal approach (122).

The story of Herman Friesen ends too soon as he was killed in a tragic tractor accident in 1969. His untimely demise ended the experiment of gradual accommodation as his successor sought a return to earlier ways. How it may have all unfolded we do not know. Guenther ends by reflecting on the connective tissue that is history-writing and how our ancestors leave us with insights that, even if we choose not to follow their prescribed paths, provide wisdom.

Throughout the book Guenther alerts the reader when the historical evidence is thin or nonexistent. In such cases, Guenther uses existing evidence to make inferences and draw reasonable conclusions about what is missing. He has provided a microhistory of a group of Old Colony Mennonites that draws, initially, from a set of sermons—and then from archives and oral histories of family members. He models how to do family history that is faithful to the historical record, respectful of familial ties, and engaging for a wide readership. In the end, as Guenther himself states, "The Friesen family serves as a kind of microcosm of the transitions taking place within the larger Old Colony Mennonite community in the region" (92). This book is revealing, very enjoyable to read, and impressive in the array of historical issues and themes teased out from pursuing the preacher behind a set of sermons.

Canadian Mennonite University BRIAN FROESE

A Potter's Progress: Emanuel Suter and the Business of Craft. By Scott Hamilton Suter. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press. 2020. $39.00.

In this skillfully made book, Scott Hamilton Suter reads the history of nineteenth-century social, cultural, and economic change in drain tile, earthenware flower pots, and stoneware jugs. The pottery in question was produced in enterprises operated by Suter's great-great-grandfather, Emanuel Suter (1833-1902), first on his farm in Rockingham County, in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley, and later in the nearby town of Harrisonburg. Scott Hamilton Suter has found, in the arc of his ancestor's life and career, an entry point into larger nineteenth-century developments such as shifting religious views, farming practices, and visions of community, business, and progress.

Scott Hamilton Suter, who is a professor of English and American studies as well as the director of the Margaret Grattan Weaver Institute for Regional Culture at Bridgewater College (only about eight miles from his great-great-grandparents' farm), is well-positioned to explore this story. His earlier books include a study of

Shenandoah Valley folklife and (with Cheryl Lyon) histories of Rockingham County and Harrisonburg. Here Suter draws on his deep knowledge of the region's history of pottery making, interviews, secondary works, and especially Emanuel Suter's diaries, letters, and business records in the archives of the Virginia Mennonite Conference.

The book's title is revealing and well-chosen. "May we realize the importance of making progress in everything we have before us," Emanuel Suter wrote in his diary on the first day of 1893, "let it be secular or spiritual" (15). Scott Hamilton Suter presents this embrace of progress as a central thread of his great-great-grandfather's life, using it to explain his religious, farming, domestic, and business activities. The "vision of progress" that animated Emanuel Suter did not involve wholesale rejection of tradition but rather openness to change and innovation. Within the Mennonite church, this meant organizing and leading Sunday schools (which were controversial for a time in the nineteenth century) and lobbying to end the selection of ministers by lot. On the farm, it meant embracing mechanical devices such as threshers and reapers that used horsepower rather than manpower. At home, it meant remodeling the farmhouse that he and Elizabeth shared with their many children to achieve contemporary standards of vernacular gentility.

Scott Hamilton Suter devotes two of the book's four chapters to Emanuel Suter's career in pottery. He shows that Emanuel often adopted new technologies: making labor-saving machines, installing a steam engine to power his machinery, and using the expanding rail network to supply his pottery works and sell his wares farther afield in the Shenandoah Valley. He also operated his business year-round. Even during the quarter-century after the Civil War that Emanuel Suter ran his New Erection Pottery from his Rockingham County farm, these innovations distinguished his approach from the traditional hand tools, close-to-home sales, and seasonal work of local potters who trained him and continued to practice the old ways. The differences became even more clear when Emanuel Suter opened his Harrisonburg Steam Pottery Company in 1891. He incorporated the business, sold stock, sourced clay from New York and New Jersey as well as locally, brought in expert technicians to build a new kiln, and traveled widely to study the newest pottery-making techniques and extend his sales into New York and other mid-Atlantic cities. For reasons that are not entirely clear, Suter sold his company in 1897 and farmed for the rest of his life.

The book's analysis is grounded in a granular understanding of regional pottery styles and the minutiae of equipment, materials, and methods. Non-specialists may find the depth of detail on such matters to be both impressive and, in places, excessive. Fortunately, the author regularly moves across scales, explaining, for example, how extrusion marks visible on the inside of drain tile produced in Emanuel Suter's pottery are evidence of his keen eye for market changes and his eagerness to follow industrial potteries in incorporating the latest tools and techniques. Similarly, while the book attends carefully to local history,

Scott Hamilton Suter skillfully connects that local history to regional history. His first chapter argues compellingly that the cultural and economic world of the nineteenth-century Shenandoah Valley extended mainly to the north, down the Great Valley Road to Pennsylvania and the mid-Atlantic, rather than south or east. Suter examines changes in regional identity throughout the book, exploring Emanuel Suter's ties to other parts of the nation and contributions to the growing influence of "regional concepts of industrialism" (13).

The book uses Emanuel Suter's experience to ask important questions about matters such as changing understandings of progress, community, and region. Some of its answers would have benefited from further development. The terms "progress" and "progressive," central to the book and its interpretation of Emanuel Suter, particularly need more definition, contextualization, and analysis. How did Suter's view of "progress" compare to those of his neighbors, both Mennonite and non-Mennonite? Did others agree with Suter's sense of himself as "progressive"? What work did these terms do for Suter and others, and how meaningful are they in studying activities across realms of experience ranging from theological disputes and home renovation to crafting pots and grafting trees? The case could have been strengthened by identifying more specific ties between, for example, Suter's religious beliefs and business practices, rather than invoking a general bent toward "progress." Finally, the author claims that industrial production methods and connections with distant places introduced to the Valley by "progressive thinkers" like Emanuel Suter "began to break down the traditional ties of community and ethnic identity, replacing them with regional connections based on economics and business" (14). The book does not provide enough evidence to establish this claim. Further, one wonders about the ways in which the work of Suter and other well-traveled innovators actually strengthened traditional and local ties and identities. Suter, after all, is remembered today as the South's leading *Mennonite* potter of his era, named his businesses after his communities (Harrisonburg boosters burnished their town's reputation by advertising his success), and apparently spent the last years of his life deeply connected to his people and place.

Scott Hamilton Suter has written a well-researched, well-illustrated book about the world and work of his great-great-grandfather. Suter's skill in looking at and through everyday objects, examining their materiality and exploring the broader questions they raise, ensures that his work, like that of his forebear, will be of interest both in and far beyond the Shenandoah Valley.

James Madison University ANDREW WITMER

Exiled Among Nations: German and Mennonite Mythologies in a Transnational Age. By John P.R. Eicher. New York: Cambridge University Press. 2020.

The transnational turn in Mennonite history has encouraged scholars to think beyond the limitations of the nation-state. *Exiled Among Nations*, by John Eicher, demonstrates the analytical benefits of this approach. Eicher investigates the narratives constructed by two groups of Mennonites who, despite taking different migratory paths, both ended up in Paraguay's Gran Chaco. By comparing the local mythologies that these groups formed in response to the dual themes of nationalism and ecumenicism, Eicher seeks to show how competing narratives of Germanness and Mennoniteness developed during the twentieth century. He also explores how various governments and aid agencies encountered by Mennonites along the way constructed their own narratives about the ethnic and religious identity of these groups. Overall the book demonstrates the various routes available to Mennonites as they navigated a world that treated specific identities as currencies to obtain land, favors, support, and a sense of belonging.

In the first chapter, Eicher follows the migration of Mennonites out of Russia into Canada during the 1870s. According to his analysis, Mennonites from this period can be divided into two categories: associative Mennonites who were willing to explore ideas of democracy and citizenship; and separatist ones, who objected to the extension of state power into their communities. Some members of the latter group would migrate to Paraguay during the 1920s after objecting to the mandatory attendance of their children in English-speaking public schools. They established Menno Colony in the Chaco, replicating not only their street plan from Russia, but also their approach of presenting themselves as subjects instead of citizens to the secular authorities.

The second chapter introduces another migratory group of Mennonites to Paraguay. This group arrived in the Chaco under different circumstances, having escaped from the Soviet Union during the late 1920s and early 1930s. This chapter focuses on how others (the Soviet state, the Weimar republic, the Nazis) defined them as kulaks, German farmers, race comrades. Eicher makes the argument that these interpretations "provided the[se] . . . refugees with new ways to collectively understand themselves. . ." (88). Ultimately, with help from Mennonite Central Committee, these Mennonites would establish the Fernheim Colony near Menno Colony, inspired by ideas of a Mennonite global community.

In the third chapter, Eicher explores the differences in how Menno and Fernheim Colonies interpreted the land, interacted with indigenous peoples, and responded to the Chaco war. By comparing these three categories, he illuminates how the historical narratives (or lack of them) shaped the pioneering life of each group. While Menno Colony could rely on a community-produced narrative based on their religiously inspired cosmology, the Fernheim Colony struggled with this task among its disparate population of refugees. This proved to be a

defining characteristic of the colony and, as Eicher shows, spurred it to engage with the surrounding environment and people in new ways, particularly through missions to the indigenous population.

In the next two chapters Eicher assesses the role of MCC and the Association for Germandom Abroad (VDA) in promoting competing narratives among Mennonites in Paraguay. Since MCC facilitated and funded the settlement of the Fernheim Colony, the aid organization took a special interest in its local development, treating the colony as a "petri dish . . . for Mennonite unity"(169). Eicher demonstrates the tensions that developed between this American, English-speaking MCC-based version of Mennoniteness and the worldview of German-speaking refugees from the Soviet Union. During this period, the VDA also actively engaged Mennonites, and other German-speakers in Paraguay, in a (trans) National Socialist dialogue. As Eicher demonstrates, the two colonies responded differently to this interest. Menno Colony rejected the overtures of the VDA, preferring to construct their own local understanding of Germanness. In contrast, Mennonites in the Fernheim Colony were enticed, finding a variety of ways to try on these ideas as they developed their local narrative. Ultimately, as Eicher shows in the sixth chapter, this flirtation with Nazism was short-lived, as the colony eventually decided to pursue its own understanding of their German identity.

While scholarship on the various constructions of Germanness abroad during the twentieth century has grown significantly during the past decade, Eicher's analysis uniquely shows the multitude of avenues of identification available to German-speakers during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. By comparing two similar, yet distinct, groups of Mennonites, he is able to deftly demonstrate how identities require collective narratives to produce cohesion and how competing ideas about nationalism and religious identity can be interpreted differently depending on the historic stories that groups tell about themselves. By following Mennonites over multiple countries, he ambitiously depicts the dynamic link between mobility and nationalism, showing their influence on definitions of Mennonitism.

In some places, however, the broad and ambitious scope of this book becomes a disadvantage. For instance, the argument that the Fernheim Colony's "historic reverence for monarchical rule predisposed them to view Hitler . . . as a kind of German-Christian sovereign" (213) erases the political shifts that had started to take place among Mennonites in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, particularly during the 1917 revolution. Siberian Mennonites, who made up the majority of the Fernheim Colony, were particularly active in local German political organizations during this period. In addition, the "separatist" Mennonites of Menno Colony sometimes disappear from the analysis in favor of the Fernheim Colony. This limits our understanding of how members of Menno Colony sustained a "mythology that transcended time and space" (292) as the world appeared at their doorstep. More detailed consideration of Menno Colony would also help us understand why even though separatist Mennonites had little

patience for the *völkisch* movement, ideas about civilizational/racial hierarchies arguably can still be seen in narratives produced within the colony.

This criticism aside, Eicher has written an engaging book that will stimulate further discussion on the narratives and mythologies produced by diasporic groups.

University of Winnipeg AILEEN FRIESEN

Book Notes

Thomas-Müntzer-Ausgabe: Kritische Gesamtausgabe, vol. 1: *Thomas Müntzer: Schriten, Manuskripte und Notizen.* Ed. Armin Kohnle and Eike Wolgast. Leipzig: Verlag der Sächischen Akademie der Wissenschaften / Evangelischen Verlagsanstalt Leipzig. 2017. €58.

Although it appears as volume 1, this is the third volume in the critical edition of the works of Thomas Müntzer published by the Sächischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Leipzig. Volume 3 (2004) featured 176 contemporary source documents that referred to Müntzer's life and work. Volume 2 (2010) reprinted the entirety of the radical reformer's correspondence. This volume now completes the thirty-year project by providing a critical edition of the remainder of Müntzer's output—40 texts, sermons, manuscripts, and notes, including the musical notation from Müntzer's 1524 German Evangelical Mass.

———————

I Appeal to Scripture! The Life and Writings of Michael Sattler. By Andrew V. Ste. Marie. Manchester, Mich.: Sermon on the Mount Publishing. 2018. $10.

This biography of the early Swiss Anabaptist leader, Michael Sattler, is the second in the "Cross Bearers Series" written by Andrew V. Ste. Marie and published by Sermon on the Mount Publishing, a company he operates that specializes in publications for plain and traditional Anabaptist groups. Following the pattern established in *March Forward with the Word: The Life of Conrad Grebel*, the biography is intended to be both inspirational as well as historically accurate. The text is supplemented with numerous illustrations and explanatory notes, along with eight primary source documents attributed to Sattler.

———————

Speaking of God: An Essential Guide to Christian Thought. By Anthony G. Siegrist. Harrisonburg, Va.: Herald Press. 2019. $19.

This handbook of Christian theology, intended for a broad readership, seeks to recover the basic language of orthodox Christian thought for modern times. Siegrist, who pastors a Mennonite congregation in Ottawa, Ontario, structures the book around the sweep of the Biblical story, breathing new life into theological terms like "providence," "faithfulness," "reconciliation," "atonement," and "sacraments." Though the book draws on a wide range of theological resources and is intended for readers from all Christian traditions, its central motifs will be familiar to those with a background in Anabaptist-Mennonite theology.

When This Mask of Flesh is Broken: The Story of an American Protestant Family. By David A. Hollinger. Published by the author. 2019. $12.

This family memoir by David Hollinger, Preston Hotchkis Professor of History Emeritus at the University of California, traces the story of two generations of the Hollinger family, beginning with his grandparents, Albert Hollinger Sr. and Annie Deardorff Hollinger. In 1921, Albert, a Church of the Brethren bishop, decided to move from Pennsylvania to the relative isolation of the Saskatchewan prairies. Much of the narrative focuses on the challenges the couple and their seven children faced in the ensuring decades—including economic hardship and mental illness—along with their ongoing connections to the Church of the Brethren and their eventual reunification in Southern California.

AUTHOR E-MAILS

Prof. Agustina Altman: a_altman@hotmail.com
Prof. Ervin Beck: ervinb@goshen.edu
Blake Hamm: blake.hamm@outlook.com
Vanessa Quiring: quiringv@icloud.com