Book Reviews

Liberating the Politics of Jesus: Renewing Peace Theology through the Wisdom of Women. Edited by Elizabeth Soto Albrecht and Darryl W. Stephens. London: T & T Clark. 2020. $ 30.95.

Liberating the Politics of Jesus: Renewing Peace Theology through the Wisdom of Women centers the voices of women and brings together perspectives from educators, administrators, and practitioners alike. This collection of vibrant, sensitive, and thoughtful reflections advances Anabaptist-Mennonite peace theology in several important and liberatory ways.

As co-editor Darryl Stephens observes in the introduction, "The exclusion of women's experiences and voices from Anabaptist peace theology has impoverished this tradition, resulting in a distorted understanding of the politics of Jesus and collusion with abuse" (3). The volume offers a helpful corrective to this historical inattention and significantly advances a constructive and holistic peace theology that promises to reshape future scholarly and ecclesial directions in important ways.

The book's title does not shy away from explicitly naming "women" as the marginalized demographic to which it will attend. However, this attention is neither overly narrow nor exclusive. Indeed, several of the essays (especially in the first three parts of the book) engage with intersectional identities related to race, sexuality, and nationality, among others. In this way, the collection attends broadly to the many ways in which peace theology is articulated and actualized.

This collection of essays is divided into four parts: "Retrieval, Remembering, and Re-envisioning," "Living the Politics of Jesus in Context," "Salvation, Redemption, and Witness," and "Responding to and Learning from John Howard Yoder's Sexual Violence." The order of these sections is important. Although the volume's title alludes to Yoder's well-known book, reserving the chapters covering recent processes related to Yoder's abuse rightly suggests that the constructive voices of women deserve to be heard first and not merely as a response.

The first part of the book offers three models of women engaging in theological reflection. Nancy Bedford's essay, "The Retrieval of a Liberating Christology," explores the construction of a liberating Christology. Carol Penner points to another venue for women's engagement in constructive theology as her essay "Jesus and the Stories of Our Lives" reviews how contributions to the Mennonite Central Committee's *Women's Concerns Report* reveal the development of Anabaptist-Mennonite women's theology. The final essay in this section, Elizabeth Soto Albrecht's "The Politics of Suffering and JustPraxis," coins the term "JustPraxis" as a way of describing the liberation process.

The book's second section explores how liberation gets played out across different contexts. Karen Suderman explores the context of South Africa under apartheid in her essay "Hospitality as Revolutionary In-Subordination in South Africa." Alix Lozano moves the reader to another part of the globe in her contribution, "Women of Faith Advocating Peace in Colombia." Regina Shands Stoltzfus's essay transports the reader to the racialized context of the United States where she explores Mennonite urban mission efforts to Black communities in her essay "Nonviolence and the Assault on Marginalized Bodies."

The third section of the book advances Anabaptist theological scholarship in important ways. Linda Gehman Peachey's essay "Salvation for the Sinned Against" explores articulations of soteriology and atonement theology that promise a more empowering and liberating expression of holistic salvation, especially for those who have endured suffering. Erin Dufault-Hunter takes this idea a step further. In her essay "Never Merely Victims," Dufault-Hunter explores how survivors might find redemption by breaking the cycle of violence imposed upon them by perpetrators. The final essay in this section, Hilary Jerome Scarsella's "Bearing Witness to Jesus, Resurrected Survivor of Sexual Violence," offers an important and well-nuanced argument advocating for the importance of bearing witness to accounts of sexual violence, even where evidence may be limited.

The book concludes with three essays detailing institutional and denominational processes that emerged out of the aftermath of John Howard Yoder's abuse. Sara Wenger Shenk reflects on such processes at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in her essay "Repairing the Moral Canopy after Institutional Betrayal." Linda Gehman Peachey's essay "Adopting the 2015 MC USA Churchwide Statement on Sexual Abuse" sheds light on similar processes at a denominational level. Finally, Karen Guth reflects on the ecumenical ripples of these processes in "Lessons from Anabaptist Women's Responses to John Howard Yoder's Sexual Violence."

Any discussion of the whole book would be remiss if it were not to note its visual components. The serious tenor of the book was well-balanced with the chapter frontispiece illustrations drawn by Teresa Pankratz. Even as the written content of the book pointed to the importance of holistic well-being, the illustrations served as a subtle reminder of the holistic experience for the reader. In this way, the physical volume itself pointed toward the importance of acknowledging and learning from embodiment in the theological task.

Given the many strengths and ample ground covered in the volume, it seems unfair to dwell too long on its deficiencies. Nonetheless, I confess that as a biblical scholar, I found myself wishing for greater engagement with biblical texts. To be sure, several authors did connect at least tangentially with biblical material. Other authors pointed to the role of the Bible in the theological task. For example, Lozano comments on the way in which the Bible contributes to constructing the patriarchal systems against which the rest of the book pushes, writing, "If the biblical text has been a colonizing instrument . . . it is necessary for women to have a say in ecclesial spaces, academia, and theology" (94). Beyond just the misuse of the Bible, Dufault-Hunter also points to the ways in which particular constructions

of theologies of powerlessness are actually "unbiblical" (144). Thus, given the use and misuse of the biblical text to perpetuate theologies of oppression, it would have been instructive to see greater attention to the question of how that text might be reclaimed (or not) for the more liberating theological positions explored throughout the volume.

This minor issue aside, the volume commends itself to a wide range of audiences and uses. Although the book includes contributions from highly trained academic authors, the writing throughout the volume is both consistent across the essays and very accessible for lay audiences. Likewise, though the book addresses Anabaptist-Mennonite theology and concerns in particular, its larger lessons related to the construction of a liberating peace theology are applicable beyond the narrow bounds of the Anabaptist-Mennonite world, as Guth observes in her essay.

The editors and authors of this volume are to be commended for recognizing, centering, and celebrating women's voices as an important source for constructive theology. The church, academy, and society have much to learn from the wisdom collected here.

Fresno Pacific University MELANIE A. HOWARD

The Lives of Amish Women. By Karen M. Johnson-Weiner. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. 2020. $49.95.

Based on thirty-five years of research as a participant-observer in Amish communities across five states, anthropologist Karen Johnson-Weiner presents a thorough assessment of Amish women's lives in contemporary America. Her study makes an important contribution to a growing literature that portrays the Amish woman as someone who is much more complex than the stereotypical farm wife in a bonnet. The author focuses on the diversity of Amish women's experience in the twenty-first century, as some continue to live a traditional agrarian life while others live in communities that support themselves primarily through entrepreneurial activities or wage labor.

Johnson-Weiner begins her study with a brief history of Amish women's origins among the persecuted and martyred Anabaptists of Reformation Europe before moving to the American portion of their story, including immigration to colonial Pennsylvania, movement into the Midwest in the nineteenth century, and subsequent divisions into multiple affiliations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. She then closely examines specific categories of female experience in contemporary Amish life: socialization in girlhood; marriage; Amish women's group activities; the experiences of women who are not wives and mothers; women's contributions to the family economy; and Amish women's reading habits. As she considers each of these topics, Johnson-Weiner notes significant variations in women's experience depending on whether they are members of an agrarian, entrepreneurial, or wage-earning Amish community.

In her chapter on women who do not conform to the prescribed role of wife and mother, Johnson-Weiner draws attention to a population that Amish studies scholars too often neglect. In a society organized around patriarchal families with numerous children, the widow, childless wife, and never-married woman are what the author refers to in her chapter title as "Women Out of the Ordinary" (133). Nevertheless, she finds that these women make a place for themselves in their communities and enact the supportive, nurturing, and mentoring characteristics of ideal Amish womanhood in roles other than those of wife or mother. A never-married woman might become a schoolteacher or devote herself to the care of aged parents. Depending on the community, a childless wife and her husband might help raise nieces and nephews, take in foster children, or build a business together. Johnson-Weiner recounts the experiences of an unmarried Amish woman who started a house-cleaning business and now mentors the younger Amish women in her employ. In all instances, these women report a sense of purpose in their lives and accept their lack of a husband or children, or both, as part of God's plan.

Johnson-Weiner's investigation of Amish women's reading material best demonstrates the diversity of their lives in the twenty-first century. Analyzing the content of three distinctive women's periodicals, and reader response to that content, Johnson-Weiner deftly differentiates the experiences and self-image of Amish women in agrarian, entrepreneurial, and wage-earning communities. Readers of *Little Red Hen News*, such as members of the Swartzentruber Amish in upstate New York, continue to live the life of their ancestors. They forgo all modern conveniences, reside on family farms, and view farming as a sacred way of life that involves all members of the family. In this decidedly low-tech publication, typed and photocopied on plain paper stock, readers share recipes and how-to advice and read stories that illustrate the value of hard work and obedience. The world portrayed in *Little Red Hen News* is one where women and men work cooperatively in the farm family economy and enact their faith on a daily basis as they maintain responsible stewardship of God's land in order to bequeath it to the next generation of Amish farmers. Biblical injunctions about women's proper place are unnecessary.

In contrast, the glossy magazines *Ladies' Journal* and *Keepers at Home* present an Amish world where men work away from home and women identify themselves chiefly as homemakers and housewives. Johnson-Weiner notes that a Pennsylvania Amish woman introduced her to *Ladies' Journal*, and the periodical best responds to and reflects the experiences of women in entrepreneurial communities, such as the Old Order Amish of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Here, where the scarcity and expense of farmland have increasingly caused Amish families to move off the farm and into family-owned businesses, Amish women and their families necessarily engage with members of the outside world as their customers or business associates. In the pages of *Ladies' Journal*, readers and contributors acknowledge the existence of the modern, secular world but reinforce the choice of Christian women to remain steadfast in their commitment to faith and family, whether they are at home or at work in the family business. Biblical references remind readers that they and their family members should submit to

God's authority, but the magazine represents submission as a quality equally important for both women and men.

In *Keepers at Home*, on the other hand, articles and readers' letters emphasize women's submission to both God and their husbands. Highly popular in Indiana's Elkhart-LaGrange settlement, where Amish husbands earn factory wages while their wives tend the home, *Keepers at Home* emphasizes a narrower role for women and employs biblical language to underscore their identity as housewives. As Johnson-Weiner acknowledges, however, the women who write to and for the publication are active participants in the creation of this new way of being Amish women.

In her concluding chapter, Johnson-Weiner builds on her analysis of periodical literature to argue persuasively that as an Amish group moves further away from cultural traditions and practices, it relies more heavily on scriptural texts and interpretations to maintain its identity. For those women at furthest remove from their historical role on the farm, personal expressions of faith and frequent reference to biblical authority become commonplace as they define themselves as full-time Amish housewives. In doing so, however, the gulf between themselves and more traditional Amish women grows wider. Johnson-Weiner leaves her reader with the question of what makes a woman an Amish woman when both a Swartzentruber farm wife and an Elkhart-LaGrange housewife can claim the same identity. As she notes, a common history, a common language (Pennsylvania Dutch), and an Amish self-identity are among the elements that bind diverse communities of Amish women together. Johnson-Weiner brings her study to a close by quoting an Amish woman who explains, "What makes someone Amish is they're born that way" (246).

Johnson-Weiner has produced a lively, accessible book that is filled with Amish women's own voices. In her admirable attempt to reach a lay audience, however, the author sometimes employs language that scholars will find lacking in nuance or precision. For example, she frequently uses the broad designations of "conservative" and "progressive" when differentiating one branch of the Amish from another. Even then, the newcomer to Amish studies may still have difficulty understanding which group is which. Inclusion of a chart listing characteristics of the various Amish groups and a map showing the locations of their major settlements would have aided such readers. Johnson-Weiner's study nevertheless remains a career-capping achievement and is a significant addition to the literature of Amish studies, Anabaptist studies, and gender studies.

Ohio University KATHERINE JELLISON

Field Language: The Painting and Poetry of Warren and Jane Rohrer. Edited by Julia Spicher Kasdorf, Christopher Reed, and Joyce Henri Robinson. University Park, Pa.: Palmer Museum of Art (Pennsylvania State University). 2020. $39.95.

This splendid book was published in conjunction with two exhibitions, one at the Palmer Museum of Art (Pennsylvania State University), and the other at Woodmere Art Museum. Curated by Joyce Robinson, the assistant director of the Palmer Museum, in collaboration with two guest curators, poet Julia Spicher Kasdorf and art critic Christopher Reed, the exhibition celebrates the paintings of Warren Rohrer (1927-1995) and the poetry of his wife, Jane Turner Rohrer (b. 1928). Both exhibitions were postponed as a result of the pandemic, adding heightened value to this book.

I have been told that academic art critics pay little attention to the ephemeral publications that accompany exhibitions. At their best, however, exhibition catalogs like this one have an educational value matching that of an academic monograph. At the same time, you might want to keep this book on your coffee table for frequent enjoyment, as I have done for the long months of this pandemic. Printed by Friesens, it contains more than fifty high quality reproductions that make it possible for a reader to imagine what it might be like to stand in front of an actual painting by Warren Rohrer. Nancy Locke and Christopher Campbell write: "They teem and pulse like transmissions from a world we haven't seen, bearing messages in alphabets we can't read" (146).

Philosophers have written for centuries about the deep affinity between poetry and painting and have made repeated efforts to translate between the two different languages. Leonardo da Vinci may have come the closest when he famously said: "Painting is mute poetry and poetry is blind painting." The challenge for any curator exhibiting both painting and poetry is to find a way to guide the viewer to a confrontation with this mystery. The website of the Palmer Museum of Art offers resources for those who cannot travel to see the exhibition but who are interested in how the curators dealt with this formidable challenge. An intriguing feature, for example, is the creation of "sound domes" where visitors hear the voice of Jane Rohrer reading her poetry.

No experience of art is unmediated, and the editors of this book had to work within the limits of print. They chose to begin with a poem called "Place":

> The words *dappled with sunlight*
> floated across the open field
> as I drove by.
> You understand the dapples
> did not float
> or the sunlight
> just the words . . . (xvii)

This poem is deceptively "plain." When I read the lines out loud to myself, I heard an echo from a "fancy" poem by Gerard Manley Hopkins: "Glory be to God for dappled things . . ." and I imagined the "floating worlds" of Japanese prints. Others will have other associations. Which is to say that the best poetry, however

plain the letters on the page, can also come to us bearing messages "in alphabets we cannot read."

I have not seen this exhibition, so I wonder how the curators worked around the elephant in the room--namely the inherent lopsidedness in this comparative study. To put it bluntly: the man is famous and the woman, albeit a very fine poet, is not. The paintings of Warren Rohrer are held in the collections of major American museums and he paints in a signature style. Christopher Reed writes: "For Rohrer the field became a paradigm. 'I work a canvas in much the same way a farmer works the land--it's just a different field'" (15). Sally McMurry describes Rohrer as working with an "abstract aesthetic involving pure form, color, line, light, technique, and texture." He insisted that the things he looked at were not his subject: "My subject is the STROKE" (98).

Jane Rohrer's words stand in contrast to that manifesto: "Warren's subject was the fields, and my subject was Warren" (56). When the resulting art is exhibited together it risks replicating old sexist stereotypes. In his fine essay on Warren Rohrer, Christopher Reed cites Virginia Woolf's modernist novel *To the Lighthouse* as analogous to the multiple points of view in Warren Rohrer's paintings (14). He could have gone on to point out that Jane Rohrer's poems are written in the space opened up for female subjectivity in that same feminist novel. Mrs. Ramsay, although a mother and a wife, is not the object of a male gaze but a subject looking at the lighthouse and offering one perspective among many.

Julia Spicher Kasdorf's essay on the life and poetry of Jane Rohrer is firmly grounded on the territory pioneered by Woolf. Kasdorf draws attention to the love story that is written in between the lines of this book. Jane speaks of her "wild love for this particular man" (1). The penultimate page of the book is a travel poem entitled "Leaving Venice." The speaker in this poem is a widow and her grief is palpable. Like Mrs. Ramsay, she looks out at the world while at the same time allowing us a glimpse of her rich inner life (212).

One review cannot do justice to the range of topics explored in the eleven essays collected here. Together all the essays confirmed my sense that there is something about Mennonite history that leads our artists repeatedly back to confrontation with a simple basic question: What is art? Artists from Mennonite backgrounds have to break free of the rigidity that derives from a literal interpretation of Scripture. It takes courage for a Mennonite brought up to conform, as was Warren Rohrer, to locate his art in what he himself described as "that uneasy gap when there is not immediate understanding" but where you are moved to make a mark (9). As a Swiss Mennonite artist influenced by Rohrer, Douglas Witmer has emulated that courage in the "marks" he makes. In his moving contribution, Witmer struggles to define what is "Mennonite" about Rohrer's abstract art. "To place such a high value on the most humble of painting actions . . . a kind of individual mark that depends upon a community of others like it to fully function and convey meaning—this strikes me as coming directly from his Mennonite upbringing" (182).

The Rohrers themselves resisted efforts to define them as "Mennonite artists" and this book is clearly intended for a wider audience. Indeed, with the exception of Witmer's essay, the history of Mennonite hostility to art is downplayed. Many

Mennonite readers will nonetheless be aware of it as an implicit background to the courageous achievements of this painter and this poet.

University of Toronto MAGDALENE REDEKOP

The Word in the Wilderness: Popular Piety and the Manuscript Arts in Early Pennsylvania. By Alexander Lawrence Ames. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press. 2020. $99.95.

In the Menno Simons Historical Library at Eastern Mennonite University, we have shelves of books devoted to the art of Fraktur, but very few books about Fraktur text itself. In *The Word in the Wilderness,* Alexander Lawrence Ames encourages readers to look beyond the Fraktur images and take time to consider the words and their meaning. He provides rich context for the creation of these illustrated manuscripts, explaining in depth their origin, uses, and importance to a variety of religious groups in early Pennsylvania. He also introduces a vivid cast of characters including teachers, preachers, mystics, laypeople, and collectors who created and sustained this art form over a number of centuries. The result is a work that puts manuscript arts at the intersection of book history, Reformation studies, immigration, Christian pluralism, and early American civic life.

The book is divided into five chapters, each detailing an aspect of Pennsylvania German manuscript arts. The first describes the impact of the Reformation and the growth of radical Protestantism in Europe that led to the persecution and immigration of German Protestants to the American colonies. From there, Ames explores the emergence of Pietism with its hallmarks of "personal spiritual introspection and emotionally sentient religious community" (23). He discusses the similarities between German Pietism and English Puritanism, both of which made their mark on the colonies of North America (27). He explores the diversity within the Pennsylvania German community, caused by different waves of immigration, differing religious denominations, and the lack of a singular German homeland.

The second chapter dives into the aesthetic of the texts, tracing the connection from European manuscript culture to the handwritten manuscripts of the Pennsylvania Germans. Ames explains the use of calligraphy as a devotional tool and explores the fonts used in much of Pennsylvania German fraktur—Gothic scripts called *Frakturschrift* or *Currentschrift*. He writes that, "as the head of the neo-Gothic family, Frakturschrift is an ornamental hand that draws attention to important text" (57). Ames argues that the aim of these illuminated manuscripts was to provide the artist and reader with divine insight to the biblical text. The letters, he writes, "tie scriptural lessons and personal piety together through looping and cyclical calligraphic forms (71).

The third chapter explores the role of manuscript arts in education. Educators like Christopher Dock and Johann Adam Eyer used penmanship samples to promote and pass on literacy and faith. Often given to students by teachers to

commemorate accomplishments or as practice sheets, these special pages taught students how to write beautifully and how to live lives according to God's will. Ames contrasts this with the Puritan and Anglo-American methods of teaching literacy, which also encourage good penmanship, but lacked the same scriptural focus (87).

The fourth chapter discusses the connection between hymn texts and tune books and Fraktur. Fraktur in hymn books is often found on title pages with scriptural references to singing or praising God. The aim of Fraktur in these books was to have the visual and oral expression of praise working in tandem, each providing a unique approach to worship.

The fifth and final chapter discusses what might be the best-known examples of Fraktur: birth or baptismal certificates, marriage certificates, and other documents that mark the rites and rituals of life. Mostly used for family records rather than as official documents, these can be found across many different Pennsylvania German religious groups. They provide an important genealogical record for families and are beautiful examples of illustrated manuscripts. In this chapter, Ames also discusses the slow decline of this manuscript culture in the United States, citing the emergence of public education, industrial printing, and a move away from the German language as reasons for its gradual disappearance (159-162).

Woven throughout the text are stories of people who saw the value of these illustrated manuscripts and helped preserve the art form by producing or collecting such works. Ames opens and closes his book with stories of Samuel Pennypacker (2-5, 166-170), who was a Pennsylvanian statesman and keen historian who believed in the important contribution of Pennsylvania Germans to early American life. He touches on the Heebner family (79-82), who produced a number of talented Fraktur artists. He also takes the reader to early Europe, introducing Johannes Trithemius (46-47), a German abbot who championed the cause of handwritten manuscripts during the advent of the printing press. These stories bring to life the history and importance of this art and elevate it from a folkish craft to a field worthy of deeper study.

Ames paints a picture of an early colonial culture that embraced religious pluralism, ecumenism, and a continued connection to its European homeland. He argues that though much focus is put on the English Puritan colonies and their influence on modern American culture and governance, the example of the Pennsylvania Germans is perhaps closer to our modern understanding of tolerance amidst diversity.

I found this book to be a fascinating and thorough examination of the significance of manuscript arts to the early Pennsylvania Germans. It was clear that beyond an expression of decorative arts, the ritual of copying and illuminating text provided a meaningful spiritual practice to many. What was less clear was how such plain people were allowed to make such fancy artwork. Mennonites in particular embraced plain and simple lifestyles, so this beautiful penmanship with its flourishes and decorative drawings seems at odds with all other aspects of their lives. Why were these highly decorative manuscripts acceptable expressions of faith, unlike the iconography and other high-church trappings that they rejected

during the Reformation? I would have been interested to read more exploration of the church's perspective on these works.

I have seen no other book like this in the field of Fraktur scholarship. The depth and breadth of Ames's research sheds new light on the manuscript culture of Pennsylvania Germans and on the early settlement of the Pennsylvania colony. This book will be a treasure trove to anyone interested in book history, Fraktur, and early German immigration, settlement, and religion in the Pennsylvania colony.

Eastern Mennonite University SIMONE HORST

Recovering from the Anabaptist Vision. Edited by Laura Schmidt Roberts, Paul Martens, and Myron A. Penner. London: T&T Clark. 2020. $81.

"The Anabaptist Vision," Harold Bender's 1943 speech to the American Society of Church History, has proven to be a remarkably resilient framework for interpreting Anabaptist history and explaining Mennonite identity. During the closing decades of the twentieth century, it also served as a reference point for an intense discussion about theological method among academic theologians, most of whom were employed in religion departments at Mennonite colleges and universities.

A defining controversy in this discussion was whether Mennonite theological method should be developed in ways that distinguished Mennonite theology from classical systematic models or whether instead such a method should provide an Anabaptist emphasis within the basic framework of classical orthodoxy. The former position generally embraced the three priorities of the Anabaptist vision—discipleship, community, and peace—as key features of the Jesus narrative found in the New Testament, which provided the point of departure for distinctly Anabaptist theologizing. The latter position emphasized instead the ecumenical and spiritual value of grounding Anabaptist convictions in basic trinitarian orthodoxy as expressed, for example, in the Nicene Creed. Except for a few notable exceptions, the theological camps in this debate tended to be on opposite sides of the U.S. and Canadian border, with proponents of a distinctive Anabaptist theology on the U.S. side and advocates for orthodox Anabaptist theology on the Canadian side.

With this history in view, it is not altogether surprising that the new collection of essays entitled *Recovering from the Anabaptist Vision* is a mostly Canadian project that rehearses and expands the arguments for reframing Anabaptist theological method within the ecumenical bounds of classical orthodoxy. Insofar as prospects for a distinct Anabaptist theology undefined by orthodoxy were grounded in the influential work of John Howard Yoder, the discrediting of his theology through the disclosure of his serial sexual abuse can be seen to vindicate the arguments for an orthodox Anabaptism.

Indeed, the first essay in the collection, by Paul Martens, persuasively makes the case that the fall of Yoder represents also the fall of the Anabaptist Vision—at

least as a theological framework for abstracting Anabaptism from its historic communities into a singular big idea that is cross-culturally persuasive. While Martens seems open to a more pluralistic theological future, the second chapter by Karl Koop makes a clear case for building on confessional orthodoxy in the pursuit of such a future, even if he assumes a generous confessional model that acknowledges Anabaptist diversity. Koop's expertise in Anabaptist historical theology shines through in this chapter and he employs it to review his case for a theological method that privileges an Anabaptist standpoint toward Scripture while assuming a broadly trinitarian doctrinal grammar.

In the third chapter, Laura Schmidt Roberts brings a sophisticated model of hermeneutics to her account of Anabaptist theology as a complex tradition of meaning and interpretation, marked by the same kinds of possibilities and failures that characterize any tradition, including the larger Christian tradition. Roberts relies on the work of Paul Ricoeur to sketch a critical retrieval of the Anabaptist tradition capable of acknowledging both the creative capacities and ideological traps that it carries, including the trap of assuming an exceptional stance in relation to the catastrophes of Christendom. Roberts stresses that any narrative of spiritual selfhood constructed from Anabaptist texts should never assume closure but rather remain dynamically open to revision and refiguration.

Three chapters then follow that describe contexts of meaning and experience that arguably need to be considered in any credible Anabaptist theological project of retrieval and revision. Carol Penner tells the story of the "Women Doing Theology" conferences held over the course of twenty-five years in which Mennonite women offered new approaches to theology, including greater integration of worship with academic discussion, working toward more cultural and racial diversity, and extending participation beyond the academy. Stephanie Chandler Burns makes use of Patrick Cheng's queer theology to argue for an Anabaptist theology that is accountable to queer experience, including queer interpretations of Scripture, and that rejects the binaries of systematic theology. Melanie Kampen challenges the privileged location of capable purity from which much Anabaptist theology has thus far been developed, redefining violence beyond mere conscientious objection, and attending to those traumatized not only by the violence of the state but also by the silencing of the church.

In case the reader is wondering just how far beyond traditional frameworks Anabaptist theology might go as it embraces a greater diversity of meaningful contexts for critical retrieval, Jeremy Bergen's chapter appears next to make it clear that, at least from his perspective, Anabaptist theologizing must accept a reforming posture within the boundaries of Nicene orthodoxy, even if the historical record of actually existing Anabaptist theology does not support such a commitment.

Bergen's essay makes explicit a dismissal of historic Anabaptism merely implied by several of the other chapters in the book. On the one hand, of course, it is right for Anabaptism today to be willing to go beyond the constraints of sixteenth century habits of thought, including certain Anabaptist practices and convictions that are no longer helpful. On the other hand, Anabaptism does in fact offer a specific tradition of argument and commitment over time to which the

authors included in this volume appear to claim loyalty. For example, Laura Schmidt Roberts acknowledges that "tradition preserves the possibility of hearing the voices of the past" and that to retrieve a tradition is to engage with its texts. And yet, with the exception of Karl Koop's chapter, the essays in this book seldom mention any Anabaptist texts created earlier than Bender's Anabaptist Vision. One could be forgiven for taking away the impression that for many of the writers in this volume the Anabaptist tradition is reducible to Bender's 1943 speech and the several decades of discussion about it that followed.

The two closing essays of the collection reflect themes of dialogue and restlessness. R. Bruce Yoder offers a case study from the experience of Mennonite missionaries in West Africa who sought to contextualize their theological commitments by establishing a dialogue between North American missionaries and church members in Nigeria. Paul Doerksen concludes the book with a manifesto for Anabaptist restlessness, a posture that disconnects theological method from Mennonite identity maintenance and resists a "grasping, holding, and possessing impulse in theology." And yet, in keeping with the emphasis on staying within the boundaries of classical Christianity, Doerksen cautions against the temptation for such restlessness to question the church's creeds and confessions, associating such questioning with agnosticism, cynicism, and nihilism.

While this book presents many fruitful venues for pursuing Anabaptist theology beyond the Anabaptist vision, I find it odd that so many of the essayists insist on circumscribing Anabaptist restlessness within the boundaries of creedal Christianity, given the long history of imperial and colonizing projects of "grasping, holding, and possessing" identified with Nicene orthodoxy—including the control of Anabaptist heretics in the sixteenth century. Surely Anabaptist restlessness should instead accept the principle articulated by Luther, and cited by Stephanie Chandler Burns: "no fixed rules for interpretation of the Word of God." For, as Menno also pointed out,

> where the Spirit, Word, sacraments and life of Christ are found, there the Nicene article is pertinent, I believe in the holy, Christian church, the communion of saints, etc. But where the Spirit, Word, and sacraments, and life of Antichrist is, there the church of Antichrist is, and not the church of Christ, although we might boast a thousand times, I believe in one holy, Christian church, etc."

Is there room in Anabaptist theology today for the restless Menno with his unorthodox Christology and relativizing of the Nicene Creed? Might Anabaptist theology be permitted to assist the church in not only recovering from the abstract discipleship of the Anabaptist Vision but also from the propositional faith of Nicene Christianity?

Bluffton University GERALD J. MAST

Once Removed. By Andrew Unger. Winnipeg: Turnstone. 2020. $21.95.

Andrew Unger's debut, *Once Removed*, is a complicated little thing. Yes, it is yet another novel about a young Mennonite resisting an oppressive patriarch in a small town on the Canadian prairies, but this one has a twist. Readers of Canadian Mennonite fiction familiar with stories of patriarchs wielding religion and ethnocentrism to try and maintain the community's old ways will be surprised to find this town's patriarch has little interest in religion and less in history, and that it is the ostensible heroes of the novel who are clinging to the community's past. Set in the fictional town of Edenfeld, Manitoba, the novel recounts a slow battle between BLT Wiens, the town's progress-loving mayor set on transforming Edenfeld into a modern suburb of box-stores and mega-marts, and the town's fledgling Preservationist Society, which is looking to retain the town's historic buildings and its connection to its Mennonite heritage. At the center of the conflict is Timothy Heppner, an aspiring novelist, amateur historian, and reluctant member of the town's Parks and Recreation Department. Together with his Chomsky-quoting wife, Katie, his home-brew-loving best friend Randall, and Randall's soon-to-be girlfriend, "Brenda from loans," Timothy undertakes a range of half-hearted acts of resistance to the mayor's agenda, including ghostwriting memoirs for aging Mennonites, partially straightening the town's historic plaques, and speaking Low German when no one is listening.

A literary satire that is both self-aware and laugh-out-loud funny, *Once Removed* reads almost as if Paul Hiebert had set out to rewrite Rudy Wiebe's *Peace Shall Destroy Many* for the twenty-first century. (First as tragedy, as the saying goes, then as farce.) Unger may be inviting the comparison with Wiebe, having separated *Once Removed* into four sections named for the seasons, just as Wiebe did in his debut. Such parallels may be coincidental, but it is clear that Unger is well aware he is on heavily tilled territory. In fact, Unger is the latest of a growing number of Mennonite authors who self-consciously locate their fiction within an established world of Mennonite Canadian writing. As in works like Jan Gunther Braun's *Somewhere Else* and Casey Plett's *Little Fish,* the Mennonites in *Once Removed* read other books about Mennonites on the Canadian prairies, including work by Di Brandt, Sandra Birdsell, and Miriam Toews, and they openly reflect on the role such work has played in their own lives. Unger's novel also includes a running subplot about Elsie Dyck, a fictional Mennonite writer who was apparently driven into exile after her book *Scandalous Quotations from a Mennonite Diary* made her a minor celebrity in the 1990s. When the Edenfeld book sale is suspiciously low on key works of Mennonite literature—"They had none of the Toews classics," we are told; "No Brandts or Janzens or Bergens. . . . Not even any of the Wiebes" (106)—Katie plants copies of Elsie Dyck's books in the stacks in hopes of sparking "a revolution" (110). But if it is tempting to view the novel's metafictional elements as part of a larger comedic celebration of Mennonite writing and culture, such a reading becomes more difficult as the novel progresses. There's no question that Mayor Wiens, who made millions with an automated quilting device that put the town's grandmothers out of business, is meant to be a villain, but as the plot unfolds it becomes increasingly difficult to tell who, if

anyone, is meant to be the hero. Perhaps, as another saying goes, all comedy is tragedy if one looks hard enough.

Although the novel's breezy prose and quick-moving humor make *Once Removed* an undeniably fun read, I suspect it will be enjoyed most by readers already familiar with Russian Mennonite history. Unger is mercifully uninterested in lecturing his readers about the intricacies of Mennonite history, but it takes a well-informed reader to appreciate the ironies of Brenda's Johann Cornies tattoo, for example, or of the fact that one of Timothy's clients aspires for his memoir to include the world's largest collection of photos of the Chortiza Oak. Unger leverages his informed readers' prior knowledge to give his fictional community an admirable sense of local history. He treats the imagined history of Edenfeld in the same glancing manner, making passing references episodes such as "the Great Schism of 2006" (40), which leads Katie to re-do her baptism, or the "complete disaster that was the South Edenfeld Women's Ministry *somma borscht* at last year's Sunday school picnic" (75), which is invoked to resolve a dispute at the Preservation Society. It is the absurd conceit of presumed shared knowledge of these hyper-specific details about Edenfeld's past—as if all the book's readers not only know about that infamous *somma borscht* disaster but surely have strong opinions on it—that makes such jokes land. Folded into the novel's constant referencing of actual Mennonite history, these types of jokes help to give Edenfeld an impression of real depth.

Once Removed is an impressive debut, but it is not without its limitations. There are some awkward slips in tone, key strands of plot that go missing, and a conclusion that will leave some readers unsatisfied. At times, the novel's episodic structure begins to read like an extended excuse for puns, including the (admittedly hilarious) list of mock titles for the many volumes of the Harder family history. More substantially, it is not always clear that Unger is in full control of the various critiques he is looking to muster. The novel is rightly suspicious of the "heritage nostalgia" in which his characters openly indulge, for example, but Edenfeld appears to be the type of homogenously Mennonite town that exists only in fiction, and much of the novel's humor relies on the very *fissure* of recognition that it is aiming to parody. Similarly, I was surprised to see Unger make the question of whether or not a reader can "get" satire a key plot point of the book's conclusion. It's hard not to hear Unger, the creator the popular satirical Mennonite news site *The Daily Bonnet,* creeping in here, as if he is exasperated at having to explain yet again that he knows no one has ever died from eating too many *rollkuchen*. It may be that I am simply one of the readers who is missing the point, but one of the aspects of the larger novel that I found most compelling was that it seems to productively frustrate these types of easy readings.

Well-paced and genuinely funny, *Once Removed* deserves the place it has found on local bestseller lists. It also deserves a close second reading, for beneath its quick prose and staccato puns is a close engagement with longstanding Mennonite debates about progress, heritage, history, and literature. Readers of this journal will want to measure the accomplishments of the Edenfeld Preservationist Society closely, and consider the implied fate of the town with care. Is this a comedy

masquerading as a tragedy? A tragedy masquerading as a comedy? Or is it simply a farce? The answer, as I suggested, is complicated.

York University ROBERT ZACHARIAS

Serpent in the Garden: Amish Sexuality in a Changing World. By James A. Cates. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. 2020. $39.95.

The request to review James Cates's *Serpent in the Garden* came with a few gentle warnings from my colleagues to be careful and to tread lightly. And indeed, upon learning of the content of the book, you may wonder if it is possible to write about Amish sexuality in a way that captures the complexity of sex and gender in the Plain population. You would even be forgiven for wondering if this text is merely another sensationalized retelling of *rumspringa* debauchery. I was guilty of similar thoughts as I skeptically began this treatise on gender and sexuality within Amish society. The topic is indeed fraught. In deciding to forgo naming the specific Plain people who provided the anecdotes, stories, and data for this book, Cates himself argues that "writing about Amish sexuality crosses a line" (xv). So imagine my surprise when Cates delivered a stunning, well-researched, theoretically-grounded piece of research on the gendered and sexual dimensions of Amish life. And yet, the intellectual expansiveness of the text doesn't let Cates off the hook for publishing data obtained without the explicit consent of his patients. The material featured in Cates's analysis is ethically ambiguous at best, and everyone from psychologists, to qualitative methodologists, to the Amish themselves will not be wrong in arguing that Cates's work does indeed cross a line. The *Serpent in the Garden* is located at a moral crossroads, and begs the question—what is the role of informed consent, of confidentiality, and of trust within the field of Amish studies? The *Serpent* certainly offers us the fruit of knowledge, but is it worth the price we must pay?

Cates, a private practice clinical psychologist based in northeastern Indiana, offers this "professional perspective on Amish sexuality" (x) by way of nine chapters, each beginning with a brief vignette to animate and contextualize the topic at hand. Anabaptist scholars will likely find Chapter 2, "Peculiar People, Queer Theory," to be most interesting, as queer theory seems to be a strange bedfellow in Amish research. Nonetheless, Cates uses queer theory to great effect, finding that it provides the tools "to queer a traditional Christian collective culture for whom sexuality is integrated in complex and sophisticated ways (26-27). Queer theory allows Cates to explore the Amish *heteronormative*, or the broad cultural framework that establishes the social norms that govern everything from gender roles to sex and sexuality. The Amish heteronormative threads through subsequent chapters, beginning with Chapter 3, "The Birds and the Bees (and the Horses and the Cows): Learning about Sexuality," where Cates considers the delicate balance that shapes Amish sexual education: namely what is taught and

what is not. Here, too, Cates considers broader questions of the collective versus the individual, of pleasure versus procreation, of cultural limitations in an age of sexual proliferation. In Chapter 4, "'Knowing' One Another: Ramification of the Physical Act," Cates explores how Amish society enforces the heteronormative, using everything from guilt to public confession to the ban, in an effort to regulate practices ranging from dating and early courtship to controlling fertility and birthing children. In Chapter 5, "Gender Roles: Housework and Harvesting," Cates considers gender as a hallmark of Amish life, and concludes that, "while the roles may be inflexible, performing them is not" (72). This chapter offers Cates a moment to contemplate how Amish "soft patriarchy" (88) functions through the years, from early childhood, through rumspringa, into marriage and beyond, in a way that "anticipates the submission of women. Yet that submission is neither inflexible nor consistent" (88). Chapter 6, "Intimacy: The True Serpent in the Garden," explores intimacy as expressed within the Amish heteronormative, and Cates "queers intimacy" to understand familial intimacy, marital intimacy, and cultural intimacy as a "powerful social force that binds Amish culture" (105). In Chapter 7, "Suffer Little Children: Child Sexual Abuse," Cates turns his attention to the role of forgiveness in cases of sexual abuse, and "examines the ramification of the Amish penchant to sidestep direct confrontation with this traumatizing issue" (109). Here he tackles the question that vexes us all: namely, how do we protect Amish children in a way that respects the Amish social order? Chapter 8, "Victorian's Secret: Paraphilias and the Amish," Cates looks at fetishes and other personal deviances within a high-context, collective culture. Again, Cates demonstrates that "the heteronormative is at least as powerful as formal mechanisms of discipline" (136) in managing Amish fetish behavior. And finally, in Chapter 9, "The Love That Won't Shut Up: Sexual Minorities and the Amish," Cates presents an argument on Amish control: "The reason for the church's success in discouraging the development of a gay Amish subgroup is simple. . . personal identity is subsumed to the group" (142). Cates identifies same-sex desire as "the wolf at the door" (152) in Amish society, one that will likely continue to tax the Amish heteronormative in new ways.

Cates begins this book by suggesting that "Amish sexual behaviors and sexuality are universal in so many ways, and that is the point of including these stories" (xiii). What *Serpent in the Garden* offers is a framework for situating these universal behaviors within the particulars of Amish society, made possible by Cates's deep familiarity with the culture, with the Ordnung, with the faith, and—fundamentally—with what he terms the Amish heteronormative. Cates's fluency with queer theory facilitates this, but he diligently resists any urge to devolve into academic jargon—Cates has the rare talent of being able to leverage the theory to help us simply see new things. Scholars interested in Amish society will certainly find Cates's work groundbreaking, both for the nuance it renders and the broader questions it poses. Conversely, queer theorists will no doubt find the Amish to be an innovative and provocative application of the theory, providing additional evidence of its growing usefulness in helping us parse the world around us. Methodologically, the work asks us all to consider broader questions of informed consent, of patient confidentiality, and of trust, particularly in vulnerable

communities such as the Amish. Certainly all will appreciate Cates's titular metaphor, as the snake continues to mesmerize us:

> The serpent can be seen as symbolic of the deep and unmet need that abides in each of us, the desire to be known and understood, and the simultaneous fear that others may know us too well. That universal struggle, symbolized by the serpent, leaves us vulnerable, longing, hopeful, and dismayed (90).

Cates's *Serpent* is all of these things; it is the forbidden fruit we have been waiting for, though the cost of that knowledge may be higher than we realize.

University Of Washington–Tacoma NATALIE JOLLY

Thomas Müntzer: Scritti, lettere e frammenti. Edited by Christopher Martinuzzi. Torino: Biblioteca universitaria Claudiana. 2017. €24,00.

Hans Denck: Scritti religiosi. Edited by Marco Vannini. Firenze: Lorenzo de' Medici Press. 2018. €12,00.

Menno Simons: Fondamento della dottrina Cristiana (Studi battisti. Testi e documenti, 2). Edited by Fabrizio Tartaro. Chieti: Edizioni GBU. 2019. €16,00.

In Italy there seems to exist a sympathetic interest in the Radical Reformation, not only among academic historians, but also in public discourse, and especially among readers affiliated with the evangelical minority churches. In the context of a society once dominated by Roman Catholicism, the religious nonconformists of the sixteenth century and the victims of the Inquisition have been perceived as historical points of reference by proponents of liberal and democratic ideas from the late nineteenth century on. Readers of *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* may remember the novel *Q* published under the collective pseudonym "Luther Blissett" in 1999 (English translation, 2003) in which the story of the sixteenth-century Anabaptists served as a parable of the Italian left of the present. On an academic level, Italian historiography of the Reformation does not marginalize the "radicals" (in contrast to German research with its focus on the "magisterial" traditions), but tends to ascribe to them, and especially to the Italian "heretics," a seminal significance for the history of ideas. In one way or another, this can be observed in contributions by twentieth- and twentieth-first-century historians like Delio Cantimori, Aldo Stella, Antonio Rotondò, Adriano Prosperi, Massimo Firpo, Mario Biagioni, and Luca Addante. Yet another perspective results from the theological interest in "radical" traditions on the part of those Italian evangelicals who trace their denominational identities back to broad perceptions of the Reformation, which include the medieval Waldensians and the magisterial Reformations of Wittenberg, Zürich, and Geneva, as well as Anabaptism. This theological approach is much indebted to the life and work of Ugo Gastaldi (1910-2007), author of a valuable and admirably comprehensive two-volume history of Anabaptism (*Storia dell'Anabattismo*, 1972-1982). Not only Italian Baptists and

Mennonites, but also many other evangelical Christians in the country, would consider the Anabaptist tradition as part of their theological heritage.

The first of the three volumes, *Thomas Müntzer: Scritti, lettere e frammenti*, appeared in an academic textbook series of the Waldensian publisher Claudiana. It is the second major collection of Müntzer texts in Italian after Emidio Campi's translation of Müntzer's *Scritti politici* (1972). The translator and editor, Christopher Martinuzzi (b. 1984), received his PhD from the prestigious Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa with a thesis on Thomas Müntzer (published as *Allstedt 1523: Müntzer nei giorni della riforma*, 2017) and is currently affiliated with DePaul University (Chicago). The volume consists of a brief introduction (7-30), including a sketch of the historical situation in which Müntzer's texts of 1523-1525 originated. This is followed by the translation of ninety-three letters (33-184) and most of Müntzer's writings, with the exception of the liturgical texts (which actually comprise more than half of Müntzer's printed oeuvre), and three related contemporary documents (187-306). The appended bibliography (307-331) seems to be limited to publications quoted in, or used for the preparation of, the present edition, but is obviously not intended as a representative selection of research contributions or as a further reading list. Indices of names, places, and Scripture quotations add to the usability of the volume.

The translations of the letters (33-184) are based on the new critical edition by Siegfried Bräuer and Manfred Kobusch (*Thomas-Müntzer-Ausgabe*, vol. 2: *Briefwechsel*, 2010 [ThMA 2]). Although the volume is advertised as a complete translation of the writings and letters of Thomas Müntzer, Martinuzzi omits nine letters written prior to 1518 (ThMA 2, #1-9) and two letters addressed to Müntzer in 1519 and 1524 (ThMA 2, #12 and 94). In one case, Martinuzzi seems to disagree with Bräuer's hypothetical dating of an undated letter (p. 38, cf. ThMA 2, #10), but does not state a reason. Nor does he, generally, indicate which datings are documented and which are hypothetical. The footnotes supply concise and helpful information about persons and matters mentioned in the translated texts and refer to Bible allusions and quotations.

The second part of the volume containing translations from Müntzer's works and papers (187-306) is based on the edition by Günter Franz (*Thomas Müntzer, Schriften und Briefe*, 1968 [MSB]; this edition has meanwhile become outdated by the publication of Armin Kohnle et al., ed. *Thomas-Müntzer-Ausgabe*: *Schriften, Manuskripte und Notizen*, in 2017 [ThMA 1]). Martinuzzi includes the following texts: (1) The shorter German version of the so-called Prague Manifesto (cf. MSB 491-494). (2) The wording of the title page of *Deutsches Kirchenamt* (MSB 30) combined with the *Vorrede ins Buch dieser Lobgesänge* (MSB 161-162). (3) The preface of *Deutsch-evangelische Messe* (MSB 163-165). (4) *Ordnung und Berechnung des Deutschen Amts* (MSB 208-15). (5) *Von dem gedichteten Glauben* (MSB 218-224). (6) *Protestation oder Erbietung* (MSB 225-240). (7) The fragment on baptism (MSB 526-567). (8) *Auslegung des andern Unterschieds Danielis* (MSB 242-263); earlier Italian translations were published by Cantimori (in: Umberto A. Padovani, ed., *Grande antologia filosofica* (1964), 8: 1446-1467) and Campi (1972). (9) The manuscript exposition of Luke 1 (MSB 267-319); this is a preliminary version of what was printed a few months later as *Ausgedrückte Entblössung*. An Italian version of the

latter was published by Campi (1972). (10) *Hochverursachte Schutzrede* (MSB 322-345), an Italian version was already published by Campi (1972). (11) The eleven articles of Mühlhausen (ThMA 2, 373-383). (12) Müntzer's alleged depositions at trial (MSB 543-549). And, finally, (13) Müntzer's alleged recantation (MSB 550). If one compares this list with the forty text units collected in ThMA 1, it is necessary to state that this is not a "traduzione italiana completa," as promised in the blurb, but rather a reasonable selection of the most important pieces.

From the three translations to be reviewed, translating Müntzer was probably the hardest task, given the linguistic difficulties of Müntzer's peculiar German and Latin style. Martinuzzi's book is also the most ambitious of the three in terms of academic rigor. I wonder, however, whether his translation is always clear. Some obscure renderings may be printing mistakes, like "minatori" ("miners") instead of "ministri" ("ministers," i.e., clergy) on page 179. More strange are instances like "il nostro veritiero e benedetto Gesù Cristo" for "unser warhaftiger seligmacher Jesus Christus" ("our true/truthful savior Jesus Christ") on page 191, or "il culto portato avanti da un servo di Dio dovrà essere aperto" for "offenbarlich ampt zu treyben ist einem knecht Gottis gegeben" ("a servant of God [i.e. minister] is commissioned to officiate [i.e. celebrate mass] in public") on page 198. "Gedichteter Glaube" ("imagined/pretended faith") is rendered "immaginaria fede" rather than "falsa fede" (207). An "hochverursachte Schutzrede" is an "highly necessitated apology" (with "highly" either referring to the elevated status of the addressees or to the urgency of the case), but by no means a "confutazione ben fondata" (278). "Bedingung" is used in the sense of "declaration," not "condizioni" (298); a "beschloss" at the end of a series of articles is rather a "conclusione" than a "decisione" (p. 301). Most irritating is Martinuzzi's awkward rendering of a Latin passage alluding to Ezekiel 13:22-3 (Vulgate) (297). While I am not linguistically qualified to assess the overall quality of the Italian version, random observations like these seem to recommend a certain measure of caution in the use of this new translation.

The second book considered here, *Hans Denck: Scritti religiosi*, contains complete translations from the German of six texts by Hans Denck. The editor, Marco Vannini (b. 1948), is an idiosyncratic freelance scholar who specializes in medieval German mysticism. Besides numerous translations of texts from the mystic tradition, he has published a number of books on philosophical and religious topics. The latter include an irritatingly fierce polemic against Martin Luther and Protestantism (*Contro Lutero e il falso evangelo*, 2017) in which the author advocates a kind of Neo-Neo-Platonic universalism which he claims to be the essence of Catholicism. Hence it seems to have been a sense of spiritual kinship rather than an historical research interest that drew the editor's attention to Denck. The slim volume of *Scritti religiosi* contains an introduction based on the long-since-outdated biographical sketch prefixed to Walter Fellmann's critical edition of the original texts (*Hans Denck, Schriften*, Part 2, 1956). Vannini seems to be unaware of the contributions by Werner O. Packull (*Mysticism and the Early South German-Austrian Anabaptist Movement*, 1977), Clarence Baumann (*The Spiritual Legacy of Hans Denck*, 1991), and James Beck ("The Anabaptists and the Jews: The Case of Hätzer, Denck and the Worms Prophets," *MQR* 2001), to mention just a few titles. Anyway, the translation as such (which corresponds to 20-26 and 48-113

of Fellmann's edition) is well done and will be appreciated by those who work with source texts in class or in church, and the inexpensive booklet is affordable even for students. By the way, this is not (as stated on 21) the very first translation of Denck texts into Italian. Umberto A. Padovani, ed., *Grande antologia filosofica* (1964), 8: 1467-1479, already contained a translation of Denck's *On True Love*. Vannini's assertion that Denck had virtually arrived at abandoning "the entire remaining burden of Scripture, . . . the burden of books that had been defined as 'holy' by fourteen centuries of tradition" (20) may account for the lack of a Scripture index.

The third volume under review, *Menno Simons: Fondamento della dottrina cristiana*, was published on behalf of the Italian Baptist Union (Unione Cristiana Evangelica Battista d'Italia, UCEBI). The readable and clear Italian version of Menno's *Foundation Book* by Fabrizio Tartaro (b. 1971) is not based on the Dutch original, but rather on the English translations edited by John F. Funk (1871) and John C. Wenger (1956) and thus reproduces what generations of readers, both in academia and congregation, have accepted as standard texts. The translation is introduced by a footnoted historical and biographical essay on Dutch Anabaptism and on Menno Simons (7-63). It seems that a number of important research contributions of the last three decades were not available to the author. Helmut Isaak, *Menno Simons* (2006), for example, is not mentioned at all; Abraham Friesen, *Menno Simons* (2015), is listed in the bibliography, but seems not to have been consulted. While the theological profile of Menno's thought remains rather vague, the introduction provides key information that will help readers find their own way through the *Foundation Book*.

From a philological point of view, Menno Simons is probably the most neglected founding father of Anabaptism. Given the complicated history of the text, it requires some courage to translate the *Foundation Book*. Menno published a first version of his most famous work in 1539-1540, probably in a printing shop located in eastern Netherlands. This "Ur-Fundament," which had the title *Dat fundament des christelycken leers* (Horst #10) was republished in a critical edition by Hendrik W. Meihuizen in 1967. A revised and enlarged version with the title *Ein fundament unde klare anwisinge* (Horst #11) appeared in the clandestine printing shop in Fresenburg, Menno's refuge near Oldesloe, in 1554 (this is the date proposed by Marja Keyser and Paul Valkema Blouw, while Irvin B. Horst had assumed 1558). While the first—and, even more so, the second edition—was composed in a hybrid mixture of Netherlandish Dutch and Low German, a stylistically edited version in more standardized Dutch was printed posthumously (in one volume along with several other pamphlets authored by Menno) in Emden by Willem Gailliart in 1562 (Horst #12). This collection was reprinted several times by other printers. One of these reprints, produced in Steenwijk by Herman 't Zangers in 1567, served as the template for a translation into High German, which was printed in Cologne in 1575 (Horst #21); Valkema Blouw ascribed the print to Nikolaus Schreiber). The 1575 German edition was reprinted both in Basel and in Pennsylvania in the eighteenth century (Horst #22-23). An eighteenth- or early nineteenth-century reprint of the German version was translated into English, with significant variations from the original, by a Pennsylvanian Mennonite, Israel Daniel Rupp. This translation appeared first in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in 1835

(Horst #30). The 1871 Funk edition of Menno's *Complete Works* (Horst #8) reproduced a revised version of Rupp's translation.

In the meantime, a 1583 reprint (Horst #16) of the 1562 Dutch edition had been reprinted in the Netherlands in 1646 as part of the *Groot sommarie*, a one-volume comprehensive edition of Menno's works (Horst #2). From this edition, the *Foundation Book* text was reprinted in 1681, with numerous typos, in what unfortunately became standard reference edition for Menno scholarship (Horst #3-3a). One of the funniest distortions of the famous 1681, or *Opera omnia theologica*, edition is the statement that Jesus is the "Herod of our souls" ("Herodes onser zielen," 67) rather than the "shepherd" ("herder", cf. 1 Pet. 2:25). The 1956 English version edited by Wenger (Horst #9) was produced by the Reformed minister Leonard Verduin on the basis of the Dutch comprehensive editions of 1646 and 1681, which were reprints of reprints of the 1554 *Fundament unde klare anwisinge*. No complete Dutch edition of Menno's writings has appeared since 1681. Meihuizen's 1967 edition of the 1539-1540 *Fundament des christelycken leers* is so far the only major writing of Menno's available in a philologically reliable modern edition.

Such details may seem tedious but need to be mentioned here because Tartaro, who graduated from the Italian Adventist University "Villa Aurora" (Florence) in 2014 with a thesis on Menno Simons, failed to give an account of the textual tradition in his editorial note (pp. 65-67), which neither mentions the Meihuizen edition of 1967 nor makes recognizable use of Horst's *Bibliography of Menno Simons* (1962). In spite of this philological negligence, Tartaro nevertheless succeeded in recovering a coherent sense of the text by comparing the 1871 Funk and the 1956 Wenger versions. As far as I was able to check textual details (including the cases in which Tartaro's footnotes indicate substantial differences with Funk's and Wenger's readings), it appeared that the translator made sound and plausible decisions and quite appropriately rendered the eventual *textus receptus* of the 1554 revision. The appended Scripture index and an index of names and places will be appreciated by the reader.

Some objections are in place: In the front matter colophon (p. 4) the title of the Dutch original is given as "*Dat fundament des christelycken leers* . . . 1539-40, revised in 1558." In reality the text rendered by Tartaro is, in substance, that of *Ein fundament unde klare anwisinge* (1554). The mistake is repeated on page 73, instead of translating the wording of the title page as found in Funk and Wenger. Throughout the translation, section headings are rendered only in shortened form (while the full wording is translated in footnotes). The Scripture references of the original are reproduced incompletely, the marginal notes not at all. However, these observations do not substantially lessen the high appreciation which this translation rightly deserves. Menno speaks Italian now: may his words reach many open minds and open hearts in Italy.

Theologische Hochschule Elstal MARTIN ROTHKEGEL

Eine freie Kirche in einer freien Gesellschaft: Freikirchliche Perspektiven auf das Verhältnis von Kirche und Staat. Beiträge einer internationalen Tagung des Berliner Instituts für vergleichende Staat-Kirche-Forschung in Kooperation mit der Theologischen Hochschule Elstal, Berlin, 6. und 7. Dezember 2017 (Schriftenreihe des Berliner Instituts für vergleichende Staat-Kirche-Forschung 30). Co-edited by Reinhard Assmann and Martin Rothkegel. Berlin: Gesellschaft zur Förderung vergleichender Staat-Kirche-Forschung. 2019. € 14.90.

This book acknowledges that church and state are bound to each other in their pursuit of freedom. As with a symphony, it is not that they play different instruments in the same orchestra (the original Greek word "sym-phonia" literally means "together - sound"). Rather, in a Believers' Church perspective, state and church lead different orchestras—they are independent. But they have shared instrumentation. They hold together as they rely on voluntary commitment, responsible citizenship, equal rights, freedom of faith. Pronouncing freedom as the main theme of both church and state, this book offers a melody of constructive state theory in a Believers' Church perspective.

This collection of historical essays is derived from an international conference in Berlin in 2017. Reinhard Assmann and Martin Rothkegel compiled twelve essays (three in English, the rest in German), to which they have added an elaborate introduction. They refer the reader to the North American "Baptist Faith and Message" (1925): "A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal" (13). That means, the founding of free churches longs for a liberal state order. The reverse is also true: A free state is not conceivable until the independence of church power is secured. The essays explore variations of freedom in church-state relations, reflecting on struggles and connections, including the ways in which they have historically shaped each other and continue to do so today.

The collection begins with an essay by Astrid von Schlachta on the first generation of Anabaptists in sixteenth-century Europe (19-40), followed by Sascha Salatowsky's examination of Socinian pacifism in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Poland (41-88). Here Anabaptist forebears learned to differentiate secular and spiritual authorities, and tried to establish alternative orders. Then follow essays in English by John Coffey about the English Revolution, 1640-1660, (89-113) and by Curtis W. Freeman on the Constitution of the United States (113-140), which sketch the formation of new state orders through ideas of liberty and desire for independence. At the same time, the "wall of separation" between church and state was not immovable, as demonstrated by Peter Vogt's analysis of another attempt—this time by the Moravian Church, which envisioned a transnational church order in the early eighteenth century (199-231). Gerhard Lindemann shows how the Dissenters in nineteenth-century England gained political power, using it to confront the state church and to tackle social issues like slavery and poverty (141-170). Michael Haspel argues that in the U.S. the Black church and the civil rights movement brought the U. S. Constitution to its full meaning (171-198).

Then follow three contributions focused on Germany. Thomas Hahn-Bruckart notes that many free churches were established in the nineteenth century, but

remained widely apolitical even though the country was roiled by democratic movements (233-254). Andreas Liese argues that this apolitical stance led the majority to collaborate with the Nazi regime (255-286). Nevertheless, the state saw itself threatened at times by a simple apolitical preaching of conversion, as Imanuel Bauman demonstrates in his essay on the early German Democratic Republic (287-302). Two more essays—Tadeusz J. Zielinski's report on the contemporary legal and corporate status of Believers' Churches in the "liberal Catholic Republic" of Poland (303-321) and Harald Mueller's parallel account in the German context (323-331)—conclude the volume.

All of the authors are leading scholars in their fields, well suited to address the subject at hand. They hail from a variety of free church denominations (e.g. Baptist, Methodist, Seventh-Day-Adventist, Moravian, Mennonite) and also from mainline churches. Unfortunately, the short biographies at the end of the book fail to note the church affiliations of the authors. For scholarly purposes, a detailed name register is provided.

The main takeaway of this volume may be that even Believers' Churches are never detached from the developments in state and society; rather, they are inextricably linked, whether they want to be or not. Some Mennonites, especially those in the "Yoderian" tradition, have always shown a kind of ignorance towards state power. The reality is that Christians cannot simply focus on the gospel and leave state and society behind. Churches cannot survive by themselves as independent agents; they need the protection of a state order. The Catholic Church had to find new protectors when the Roman Empire collapsed. And even the Anabaptists needed safe spaces and political allies when they were persecuted.

At the same time, however, this book of essays reminds churches that they have to guard their independence and pick their public allies deliberately. There are times when they must end alliances in response to certain state orders or enter into new ones to remain truthful to their mission. To help Christians and churches in these decisive moments, it would be useful to describe theologically the idea and duties of a state. A constructive state theory is needed particularly in a Believers' Church perspective—not only a theory of a free state order, but also a theological framework for a free society. The title of the book speaks of a "free church in a free society" (*Gesellschaft*), but the essays focus mostly on the church-state relations. Especially towards the end of the book I would have welcomed further readings to inspire free church commitments to the welfare of the wider society in the present and the future. We hear that in contemporary Poland and Germany the free churches are still at the margins of society. What does this mean for those of us living in these countries? The prophet Jeremiah called the marginalized Israelites into responsibility (Jer. 29:7); I wish that we might have heard a similar call at the end of this book.

But this is, after all, a scholarly book. Perhaps such prophetic calls are still the domain of pastors.

Karlsruhe, Germany JOEL DRIEDGER

Book Notes

A Collected History: Mennonite Heritage Museum. By Roland M. Sawatzky and Andrea M. Dyck. Steinbach, Manitoba: Mennonite Heritage Village. 2014. Pp. 67.

This souvenir booklet for the Mennonite Heritage Village in Manitoba offers photographs and documentation for thirty-eight different customs and traditional arts to be found at the village, including, of course, the famous reproduction windmill. But the book transcends the usual souvenir book in becoming not only a depiction of interesting individual items but also a guide to the range and depth of collections to be found at the museum. The contents also represent, in their comprehensive nature, the rich culture created by "Russian Mennonites" more broadly, in Manitoba and earlier in Ukraine. The documentation is so good that an alert reader can glean a basic history of Russian Mennonites in both Ukraine and Manitoba. The splendid color photographs, generous layout, and fine printing create an artful publication. Some special subjects depicted include a historic Old Colony Church building, a clone of the Chortitza oak tree, a sod house, a fraktur love letter, a *brommtopp* drum for mumming, and a Brandenburg lace wedding dress. I had known the museum only through Nomi's disparaging comments on it in Miriam Toews's *A Complicated Kindness.* The reality is different—Mennonite history in wonderful objects and customs. I wish I could visit it.

Goshen College ERVIN BECK

19th Believers' Churches Conference

CALL for PAPERS

Duke Divinity School Office of Black Church Studies, Shaw Divinity School and The Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology will co-host the 19th Believers' Churches Conference 20 – 22 January 2022 on the campus of Shaw University, Raleigh, North Carolina, USA. Founded in 1865, Shaw is among the oldest Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the nation and enjoys a rich history of activism and service.

Call for Papers for the 19th Believers' Churches Conference

With an interest in exploring the global impact of Believers' Churches with a focus on their public witness as communities called by God, gathered in Christ Jesus, and scattered by the Holy Spirit, we invite proposals for papers to be presented around the conference theme:

Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Global Witness of Believers' Churches

King is a product of the Believers' Churches movement. His theology and ministry continue to inform and inspire churches and movements in various countries to work toward freedom from economic exploitation, racial/ethnic marginalization, local and global militarization, and freedom for human flourishing and community wellbeing.

Gathering during the month of King's birth, the Conference is informed by his public witness, prophetic vision, and global impact. Paper proposals, however, are not restricted to explicit explorations concerning King. Examples of themes that might be explored could include, but are not limited to:

- How has the public witness of Believers' Churches been expressed locally, nationally, or globally?
- In what ways do denominational or regional expressions of the Believers' Churches movement engage concerns about racism, capitalism, and militarism?
- How is the present pastoral and prophetic work of Believers' Churches informed by the past and/or inspired the future?
- Where are Believers' Churches in the journey toward racial justice?
- Other topics that may or may not be directly connected to the theme.

Presentations should reflect a thoughtful engagement with scholarship while being accessible to a broad audience including scholars, practitioners, students, and interested lay people. Presentations should last approximately 30 minutes to be followed by interaction with attendees who will participate on-campus and online.

Please submit a one-page CV and a 250-word abstract for a paper or a complete panel/workshop session (with presenters indicated) by 1 August 2021 to David Emmanuel Goatley (**obcs@div.duke.edu**). Conference organizers will respond by 1 September 2021.

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