

BOOK REVIEWS

Churches Engage Asian Traditions. Global Mennonite History Series: Asia. By I. P. Asheervadam, et al. Intercourse, Pa: Good Books; Kitchener, Ont.: Pandora Press. 2011. Pp. 376. \$11.95.

Over the past 150 years the Mennonite Church grew from a small denomination dispersed across North America and Europe to become a global church family, a family that today includes over 265,000 members in thirteen Asian countries. *Churches Engage Asian Traditions* forms part of the Global Mennonite History Series that was launched by the Mennonite World Conference at its thirteenth Assembly held in Kolkata (Calcutta), India, in 1997. The series sought to “tell the story of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ Churches” and to promote “mutual understanding, and stimulate the renewal and extension of Anabaptist Christianity worldwide” (inside front cover). The resulting five-volume history series has been written largely by individuals from their respective continents to reflect the “experiences, perspectives and interpretations of the local churches.” Volumes included Africa (2003), Europe (2006), Latin America (2009), Asia (2011), and North America (2012). The entire series was under the general editorship of John A. Lapp and C. Arnold Snyder.

Churches Engage Asian Traditions is divided into ten chapters written mostly by pastors, teachers, conference leaders, and theological educators drawn from Indonesia, India, China (including Taiwan), Philippines, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam (chapters 3-9). The work of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ missions in Asia was considerably smaller in scale when compared with the work of their Protestant and Catholic counterparts, with the bulk of the investment concentrated in India, Indonesia, and Japan. A smaller growing group of Mennonite congregations exist in the Philippines and Vietnam. Most of these Mennonite churches emerged in the past 125 years out of a combination of evangelistic outreach and development efforts of missionaries, the efforts of indigenous converts, and the incorporation of existing church groups (especially in India and Vietnam). Mennonite missions emerged in the colonial period before World War II in Indonesia, India, and China, and possessed a longer continuous history that in the case of China was abruptly cut short with the advent of Communist rule in 1949. The Mennonite churches in Japan, Philippines, Taiwan, Macau and Hong Kong, and Vietnam emerged mostly in the second half of the twentieth century.

Mennonite churches in Asia were typically made up of small congregations that pursued evangelistic outreach and service in the areas of education, health, rural development, and theological training. The various chapters detail the historical evolution of these congregations, their leadership and organization structure, theological orientation, and style of worship. Many churches increasingly practiced the elimination of distinction based on gender (with many

churches allowing women to take on leadership responsibilities), caste (in India), and ethnicity. In India a distinct brand of low caste (dalit) theology emerged that has added to the theological diversity that can be found in the global church today. Interestingly, the commitments of these congregations to the historic Mennonite roots of pacifism and concern for social justice have found uneven expression in Asian Mennonite churches. The text is supplemented by numerous maps, photographs, and miscellaneous information packed into sidebars.

There is no single narrative that can neatly explain the growth of Mennonite mission work around the world. The work was driven by various forces both at home and around the world, nourished by circumstances that were historical, cultural, theological, and social. Themes that recur in these global narratives of Mennonite history include the following: the problem of translating the Gospel for reception in indigenous cultures; the cultural and economic inequalities that defined relations between foreign missionaries and the communities they worked in (see I. P. Asheervadam's chapter on India for discussion of these issues); the impartation of theological training; the varied development works undertaken by missions in the areas of education, health, rural development, disaster relief, and rehabilitation.

Churches Engage Asian Traditions is a remarkable product of a collaborative effort that spans countries, traditions, and perspectives. In addition to providing the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches with a long overdue history of its global presence, it will also be of use to general readers, scholars, and those involved in Christian ministry. It provides a rich starting point for further scholarly work in cross-cultural encounters in world history (conversions, theological adaptations, postcolonial writing), church history, and theoretical and practical aspects of mission in the twenty-first century. Given the nature of this project there is bound to be some unevenness in the organization, content, and orientation of the chapters. I suggest the following. The two introductory chapters by Alle Hoekema could have been fused into a single chapter while an additional chapter might have explained the push factors in Europe and North America that caused Mennonites and Brethren in Christ to send missions overseas. A section on research methodology (archives, surveys, interviews, etc.) would be a valuable addition to the introductory chapters. Mapping for similarities and differences across regions that unified Asia and the rest of the world into a single analytic field would have resulted in a truly *global* history. The photographs could have been enlarged since it is difficult to discern the details of individuals in many of them. A separate pictorial version of this global history would be a welcome and valuable addition. Schematic diagrams showing the evolution of various congregations in a country would have helped readers better retain the rich details provided in the individual chapters. Some minor editorial corrections include Rabban "Sauma" not "Sauna" (10), "Andhra" not "Andra" (134), and "Chattisgarhi" not "Chattisgarh" (168). It is unclear where the Historical Library and Archives of the Mennonites in India is located (150-151).

Takanobu Tojo's concluding chapter on "Asian Missions as *Missio Dei*" presents a timely reminder through a powerful critique of the shortcomings that

have wracked Christian mission work—which have been closely affiliated with the imperialistic, nationalistic, and other ideological projects of states, business corporations, and their agents in a media-saturated world. Tojo calls for recentering Mennonite agency in the twenty-first century around a vision of brotherhood, discipleship, and peace witness—something that had eluded the Christian church for centuries. The great challenge for missions in the twenty-first century is renewing the message of Jesus Christ in the midst of the unbridled pursuit of wealth, the emergence of neo-liberalism and state power, rising global inequality, and the growing cultural capital of modern science and new information technologies. The peace witness and social justice concerns operationalized within an upside-down kingdom whose subjects are the salt and light expressions of Christian faith is a vision that is still relevant, and indeed more urgently so, in today's world. The Mennonite and Brethren in Christ church, small as it is, will continue to speak to our world and its needs.

Messiah College

BERNARDO A. MICHAEL

Ecclesial Repentance: The Churches Confront Their Sinful Past. By Jeremy M. Bergen. London: T. & T. Clark. 2011. Pp. 338. \$130, hardcover; \$39.95, paperback.

From time to time a doctoral thesis produced for the scholarly halls of academia merits wider circulation. This is certainly the case with *Ecclesial Repentance*. For some decades now the effort of churches far and wide to address and redress their “sinful past” has piqued public interest in the church and beyond. Thus it is timely that Jeremy Bergen offers for public consumption the results of his careful research into an issue that has come to plague the church in our day and that begs for in-depth theological scrutiny.

As the title states, this book is about the theological implications of ecclesial repentance, which the author defines as “the act in which church/denominational bodies make official statements of repentance, apology, confession or requests for forgiveness for those things which were once official church policy or practice”(3). The book is divided logically into two parts. In the first part, entitled “Counter-Witness and Scandal: Repentance for Historical Wrongs,” Bergen presents and analyzes a variety of examples of wrongdoings that have implicated the church in the past century. In the course of his report he highlights theological questions that arise, questions that provide background for second part of the book, entitled “Doctrine and Practice: Frameworks and Implications.”

The first chapter on “divisions among the people of God” targets two issues. The first of these, disunity within the Christian church, has been widely viewed as problematic, especially since the onset of the modern ecumenical movement. The second, offenses against the Jewish people, a problem that dates back to the beginning of the Christian Era, has only recently been recognized (by some) as an offense.

The second chapter, entitled "Western Colonialism and its Legacy," discusses offenses against aboriginal people in Canada, as well as issues of slavery, racism, and apartheid. As the author states, "this chapter is about repentance for the part played by churches in European exploration, conquest, colonialization and settlement, especially in the Americas, Australia and South Africa" (58).

The third chapter is something of a miscellany of samples of abuse, including clergy sexual abuse, war, civil war, the Crusades, women, homosexual discrimination, relation to science and scientists, and environmental destruction.

The fourth and final chapter in the first part is devoted entirely to the Roman Catholic Church's Day of Pardon, initiated by the aged Pope John Paul II and held on March 12, 2000. The Day of Pardon has been widely recognized as a qualitatively unique event in the history and life of the Catholic Church in that the Catholic Church went further than it ever had in admitting wrongdoing.

In the second part, Bergen offers extended theological reflections on several of the problems uncovered in the earlier section. The first of these, highlighted in chapter 5, deals with the difficulty of bridging the space between past sins and present-day initiatives. As a framework for a resolution to this issue, the author turns to the doctrinal confession of the church as "the communion of saints." Within this rubric, the present church converses with its own past and, prospectively, with its eschatological future.

The second issue, which Bergen discusses in chapter 6, concerns the question of how a church that claims to be holy can confront and admit its sinfulness. The Catholic Church claims that it is the members of the church that sin, not the church as such. To Bergen this position seems theologically untenable. How can the church exist apart from its members? On the other hand, most Protestants readily admit that the church sins, but rely on the universal principle of the grace of God to forgive the church of its misdemeanors and restore it to holiness. Bergen questions whether this recourse takes sin seriously enough, as it begs a rationale for justice and for reparation. Rather than side with the Catholic view or, on the other hand, with the Protestant view, Bergen proposes that both together would do well to reexamine their ecclesiology. Indeed, the possibility for mutual reexamination is there, given what both groups are learning from their sometimes humbling efforts at ecclesial repentance.

The final chapter of the book discusses questions that belong typically to the latter stages of a process of ecclesial repentance. For there to be genuine repentance, there must be reciprocation by way of forgiveness. Bergen proposes that the sacrament of penance (which he renames the "sacrament of reconciliation"), drawn from the Catholic tradition, holds promise for the achievement of forgiveness, especially where social groups are seeking the repair of broken relationships. When penitence involves individuals, persons need to be "guided into a way of life that seeks to overcome [sin]" (282). When the penitent party is the church itself, appropriate measures to transform structures and repair brokenness need to be implemented.

I have a high regard for Jeremy Bergen's work. He has amassed an impressive amount of material on the subject, in terms of both case studies and theological reflection. With few exceptions (108-114) he keeps his writing focused on the

subject at hand. His treatment of abuse relative to aboriginals is outstanding. His theological acumen is well attested, particularly in his presentation on "Memory and Reconciliation" (123-133), and in his case for "the communion of saints" as a theological rubric for bridging past, present, and future.

It does strike me as somewhat unusual that a theologian in the Mennonite tradition would advocate so strongly for the sacrament of penance as a way of dealing with forgiveness and reconciliation. Historically, and dare I suggest that to good effect, Mennonites have concentrated more on an ethical response to sinfulness—on the reparation of wrong done, and on mediation and justice—than on sacramental rituals. Something similar could be said for the author's concentration on "the communion of saints" as a way of connecting with wrongs of the past. Here too, the Mennonite way would be to elaborate and engage in constructive reparation.

Further, to the question of how one might proceed with this topic from within the Mennonite tradition, I think much could be gained by referring to the Scriptures on the major theological themes of the subject at hand. For example, how might a biblical theology of repentance contribute to the topic? How might the Scriptures, particularly the Old Testament, offer perspective on how to deal with the sins of previous generations? Where do the teachings and example of Jesus provide clues for viewing and reckoning with sin? How might a biblical ecclesiology such as we find in the Book of Acts, in the Letter to the Ephesians, to the Galatians, or to the Hebrews provide grist for the hard work of nurturing ecclesial repentance in our time?

Jeremy Bergen has offered the wider church a most important book on a vital topic. Without detracting from my enthusiasm for this work, I must add that the manuscript would have benefited from the careful attention of a copy editor.

Canadian Mennonite University

HELMUT HARDER

The Ethics of Evangelism: A Philosophical Defense of Proselytizing and Persuasion. By Elmer John Thiessen. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press. 2011. Pp. 285. \$24.

During the past few years I have received a couple memorable knocks at my door. The first was from a salesman, presenting a carpet cleaner that he promised would remove any stain within minutes. "I'm not interested," I said. "Let me first show you how it works," he insisted. "No, thank you." We went back and forth a few times before he finally relented and moved on to the next house.

The second knock was from two Mormon missionaries, offering me a pathway to salvation. While they were not as persistent as the carpet cleaner, my response was again a firm no—yet my encounter with the missionaries left me feeling more uncomfortable than my encounter with the carpet cleaning salesman.

We are constantly bombarded with ads on television, billboards, the Internet, and radio, and in our mailboxes, newspapers, and magazines that seek to persuade our conscious and, more often, unconscious minds to desire all manner

of products. Is this practice a nuisance? Sometimes, but typically we accept such pitches as normal and acceptable. Yes, they may be crass or offensive, but generally we regard this commercial outreach as simply the way capitalism works.

When the goods being sold are religious, however, people often react differently. Who are these Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Catholics, evangelicals, or Muslims to be so bold? In contrast to commercial sales, religious evangelizing in the West is not simply regarded as a nuisance but often as offensive, uncivil, and sometimes even unethical. Why this double standard? Perhaps because more is at stake. The Mormons at my doorstep were offering a metaphysical certainty, which offends and intrudes upon our pluralistic sensibilities. Perhaps this accounted for my discomfort. Is religious proselytizing unethical in a way that commercial sales are not? These thoughtful and important questions animate Elmer John Thiessen's engaging and well-argued book, *The Ethics of Evangelism: A Philosophical Defense of Proselytizing and Persuasion*.

Thiessen, a Canadian philosopher of education, makes an important contribution to an area of human experience that often goes without careful examination. He systematically exposes the charges against religious proselytizing, making a philosophical case for ethical religious proselytizing. This work is a valuable addition to his other noteworthy scholarship (see *Teaching for Commitment* [1993] and *In Defence of Religious Schools and Colleges* [2001]) that critiques and exposes a liberal pluralism that is often illiberal and intolerant with regard to religious voices and commitments. Thiessen contends that "those opposed to proselytizing on the basis of protecting pluralism are really not liberals at all but closet totalitarians" (128). Rather than a spacious plurality, too often a conforming secular totality is imposed. Thiessen's larger project is to defend the rights of religious groups to pursue their own particular vision of the good life, duly respecting the ethos of democratic pluralism and tolerance.

Ethics of Evangelism consists of four parts. In the first, Thiessen carefully defines the terms of discussion and draws upon real-world examples to sharpen the focus of study. His analytical task reveals the confusion surrounding this subject, while his real-world examples expose how pressing this issue is, especially given the persistence of religious violence and the unquestioned link between evangelization and religious violence.

Condemning the extreme forms of proselytizing that dehumanize and disrespect persons, Thiessen embraces a Kantian ethic that upholds the universal dignity of human persons. Given this, he asks, what might constitute ethical evangelization? Is the attempt to persuade and invite someone to change their religious belief and behavior inevitably unethical? This question animates the second part, wherein Thiessen examines the objections to proselytizing. Here Thiessen's astute analytic philosophical training is on display. Noting the cases wherein religious evangelization is clearly unethical (use of physical and psychological coercion; manipulative inducements; intolerance and misrepresentation of other faith traditions) Thiessen explores charges that are

less clear-cut. For example, he takes on the claim that persuasion, which is at the heart of evangelization, is inescapably immoral. Rather, he argues that persuasion is inescapably part of human discourse and can be done in a way that is moral or immoral.

Thiessen challenges the assumption that an exclusive view of absolute truth necessarily leads to immoral proselytizing. Acknowledging the many cases in which belief in universal and absolute truth “has led to proselytizing that is arrogant and disrespectful of persons holding contrary beliefs,” Thiessen argues for the ideal of absolute truth, while recognizing “the limitations inherent in the human search for absolute truth” (67). Only this balance, he argues, can do justice to conservative religious traditions, while also resisting the immoral practices that can accompany evangelization.

In the third part, Thiessen considers the positive benefits of proselytizing. Drawing from John Stuart Mill, Thiessen underscores the importance of including vigorous religious voices in public conversation: “To silence the proselytizer because he or she may be in error is to make the very questionable assumption of infallibility” (134). Drawing from John Rawls, he defends proselytizing as “an expression of liberty of conscience” (136). While religious evangelizing may offend our sense of etiquette, it does not mean it is immoral.

Finally, in fourth part, Thiessen takes on the constructive task of defining what constitutes ethical proselytizing. He invokes the spirit of Aristotle throughout this section, which is to say that the criteria are not clear-cut absolutes but require practical judgment to be applied on a case-by-case basis. Nevertheless, Thiessen articulates some guiding principles of ethical proselytizing, including humility, tolerance, cultural sensitivity, and the Golden Rule.

Herein lies the heart of Thiessen’s contribution, since there is limited scholarship on the ethics of proselytizing, most notably by evangelizing religious traditions themselves. In contrast to a wholesale rejection of proselytizing (by secular voices) or an uncritical embrace of the good of evangelizing (by religious voices), Thiessen seeks a middle ground, and does so masterfully.

The Ethics of Evangelism is a fine and needed addition to the field of interreligious dialogue. The Enlightenment dream—shared by modern atheists among others—that religious perspectives will eventually fade away has proven to be illusory. Religion is here to stay. The task to be worked out is how to speak well and humbly to each other, while respecting religious traditions that constitute and enrich the plurality of voices. Thiessen’s work makes an invaluable contribution to this conversation.

Widening the Circle: Experiments in Christian Discipleship. Joanna Shenk, ed. Harrisonburg, Va.: Herald Press. 2011. Pp. 246. \$14.99, U.S.; \$17.25, Can.

Over the last fifty years, a growing number of North Americans have been attracted to the Anabaptist-Mennonite vision of discipleship, community, and peacemaking. Coming from outside of historic Mennonite centers, these individuals have decided to form communities with others of similar conviction to live out their Jesus-centered faith. The editor of this volume, Joanna Shenk, notes that these followers have “chosen to share life together as a response to the individualism and materialism of North American culture and religion” (226). In the book’s foreword, Mary Jo Leddy, a Canadian Catholic activist and writer, and Ervin Stutzman, the executive director of Mennonite Church USA, discuss the significance of the book. Leddy notes that the great Anabaptist word of the sixteenth century was not “faith” but “following”; she claims that the basic “countercultural” impulse, forged in the crucible of Christendom, is what has enabled Christian communities shaped by the Anabaptist experience to “see an emperor a mile away” and to fight the original sins of empire—racism, violence, and the abuse of the environment and the outsider (11). Stutzman notes that the search for a deeper and more widely shared commitment to God’s peace and justice in the world requires radical commitments reflected in both an inner and outer journey—a commitment to transformation of oneself through the insights and discipline exercised in communal interaction and a path toward a more just and peaceable world nurtured by a communal vision.

This anthology of nineteen stories traces new and continuing expressions of this vision of discipleship found both at the margins and within the Mennonite Church in North America over the last half century. The book identifies three waves of renewal since World War II. The first wave (chapters 1-5) represents experiments forged during the difficult Cold War era of the 1950s and 1960s. The reflections of Vincent Harding and his late wife, Rosemarie, on their work in Atlanta provide a fascinating and inspirational window into the Civil Rights movement. Rosemarie (chapter 2) notes that the Mennonite House in Atlanta was one of the only places in the early 1960s where interracial conversation and community were being consciously created in the South. The fact that black and white people were living together was “a sign of a promise” (40) demonstrating that integration was possible “right in front of them” (39). Reba Place Fellowship (chapter 3) and Lee Heights Community Church (chapter 4) represent two other early expressions of renewal in urban settings that arose in relation to the so-called Concern movement among Anabaptist scholars of the 1950s. Finally, chapter 5 tells of Hedy Sawadsky’s pioneering peacemaking paths in relation to broader antiwar movements of the 1960s.

The second wave encompasses community experiments of the 1970s and 1980s. Two of the chapters discuss the roles of influential organizations based in Washington, D.C.—Sojourners (chapter 6) and Church of the Saviour (chapter 8). The Bijou Street Community (chapter 7) and Christian Peacemaker Teams (chapter 9) provide examples of different incarnations of Mennonite peacemaking efforts. In an intriguing chapter, James Nelson Gingerich explores

the relationship between maintenance and mission in the context of a community-based health center (chapter 10).

Finally, the third wave expressions that span the past two decades receive the most attention. This section includes a fresh look at the Jubilee Vision of a Mennonite Voluntary Service Unit in Elkhart, Indiana (chapter 11), and Little Flowers Community in Winnipeg, Manitoba, which wrestles with the richness of Christian traditions—evangelical, Anabaptist, and Catholic—in ways that challenge North American Mennonites to think more proactively about the changing shape of the church (chapter 16). Also included are the testimonies of Christians who are “letting go of the American Dream” (chapter 13) and moving toward a radical commitment to community and shalom (chapter 15). Others are grateful for their early Mennonite formation but are now choosing a more ecumenical orientation to better foster interconnectedness with creation (chapter 14). There are also chapters that explore what it means to become a “priesthood of all believers” in Urban Village Pasadena (chapter 12) as well as how Anabaptist Christology has led the Alterna community in LaGrange, Georgia (chapter 17) to pray “Christ be our Good Coyote, leading us into the kingdom” (203). Chapter 18 offers reflections on race and community and its implications for “sacrificing for new life,” while chapter 19 offers poetic musings on the themes of identity and home.

For an edited volume, the chapters reveal remarkable cohesiveness despite the diversity of the case studies, demonstrating the editor’s “keen eye and ear, strategic sensibility and passionate commitment” to the research process (18). Readers will be reminded of the power of narrative in giving voice to local and diverse processes, particularities, and expressions. The contributors should be commended for the vulnerability required in freely sharing personal stories of communal imperfection, risky experimentation, marginalization, and exclusion. At the same time, their voices form a rich tapestry of what it means to be Anabaptist in North America, exemplifying the commitment and creativity required to be faithful disciples of Jesus.

Having said that, many readers will quickly discern that this book represents only one stream of Anabaptism, as diverse as that stream may be. Although the introduction acknowledges that “this is only a subset of the wider transformations going on in the global church,” it simultaneously claims that “this volume is representative of the various currents that are seeking to embody discipleship in contemporary North America” (18-19). The latter statement raises a number of questions.

First, it is increasingly clear that North America itself is undergoing a religious transformation of historical import. The fact that the demographic shift in global Christianity from North to South has occurred simultaneously with the reversal in global migratory flows (from South to North), has positioned the U.S. as one of the most dynamic laboratories for religious interaction. Furthermore, Mennonite Church USA (MC USA) serves as a key institutional arena for this encounter between “global Mennonites” and homegrown ones. In light of Conrad Kanagy’s 2006 study, *Road Signs for the Journey*, which concluded that the racial-ethnic congregations were a (if not the!) major source of renewal and

vitality for MC USA, it is striking that none of the immigrant congregations (African, Hispanic, or Asian) are profiled in this volume.

Second, an implicit assumption of the volume seems to be that “movements” that emerge outside of, or on the margins of, the institutional church are key bearers of renewal. While this may be an accurate observation on some level, it is also clear that an increasing number of immigrant groups today—perhaps up to one-fourth of MC USA member congregations—are choosing to affiliate with the institutional denomination. And they are the very same ones that many Mennonites uphold as hopeful centers of renewal and vitality.

Finally, there is no doubt that Empire and its original sins continue to be a key arena of witness for followers of Jesus in North America. In fact, the book’s introduction names the following three trajectories of North American churches as corollaries of Empire: dis-illusionment, dis-establishment, and de-centering (16-17). Yet for many Mennonites originating from the Global South and now living in the U.S. and Canada, *Empire* (as often referred to in this book) is not the definitive construct by which to measure faithful adherence to community, discipleship, and peacemaking. One wonders, for example, whether a Congolese or an Indonesian Mennonite (whether in North America or in their home country) would recognize themselves in these descriptions or whether they would even name them as such. Perhaps this simply reveals the complexities of contemporary experiments in Christian discipleship—thus the book’s call to “widen the circle.”

Fuller Theological Seminary

MATTHEW J. KRABILL

The Hutterites in North America. By Rod Janzen and Max Stanton. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press. 2010. Pp. 373. \$45.

Rod Janzen and Max Stanton’s *The Hutterites in North America* is so well researched and carefully written that it supersedes John A. Hostetler’s 1974 classic treatise, *Hutterite Society*. It also supplants Hostetler because Hutterianism has evolved in critical ways since the 1970s, requiring a new grid for describing, analyzing, and interpreting the movement.

Janzen’s historical approach meshes naturally with Stanton’s anthropological approach, allowing for a marvelous wedding of the cultural-social with the faith-history that lies so central with this people. To quote the authors:

We hope that together we have provided an objective account of a distinctive people. The work combines narrative history with participant-observation anthropological assessment; it offers social-cultural analysis from a historical perspective. Both authors have an appreciation for Hutterian beliefs and practices and a commitment to telling the story as it is (xv).

It is remarkable how two outside scholars were able to gain the confidence of the whole spectrum of Hutterites, from the most traditional to the most progressive. Their empathic spirit, combined with their ongoing, deeply personal relations with the Hutterites that began for each already in the 1980s, held them

in good stead as they slowly won the confidence of all the groups. The authors report that they even shared early drafts of chapters with the various *Leut* (Hutterite subgroups) to critique and then made changes, accordingly.

Janzen and Stanton divide their work into thirteen chapters, beginning with a chapter on North American communal groups that serves as a general background and setting for Hutterian communitarianism. Chapter 2 considers the European historical origins of the Hutterites and their faith and practices until their emigration to the United States, and chapter 3 extends these themes for the next 130 years or so within the United States and Canadian context.

Chapter 4 focuses on one major difference between the European phases of Hutterianism (before 1874) and the North American phases (after 1874)—namely, the splitting of the heretofore united movement into three discrete “*Leut*,” or groups. Then, in 1992, one of these groups (the Schmiedeleut) again split to form yet a fourth group. Hutterianism today thus comprises: 1) the Schmiedeleut One; 2) the Schmiedeleut Two; 3) the Dariusleut; and 4) the Lehrerleut.

The theme of chapter 5, “Beliefs and Practices,” lies at the very heart of what Hutterites deem central and vital in life. And here the authors capture magnificently the depth of Hutterian faith, as, for example, in the following summation:

One cannot be committed to God without being united with one’s brothers and sisters. Hutterites do not consider a personal relationship with God unimportant, but it is always viewed communally, in the context of the church. There is no boundary between one person and another, between the spiritual and the secular, between personal interest and community interest, between profession and home. All parts of life are joined together holistically (95).

Chapters that follow cover family life, folk traditions and culture, education, colony structural organization (including the role of women), population and demographics, how Hutterites deal with change, and Hutterite relations with non-Hutterites. Each of these chapters is as well documented and fleshed out as the chapter on Hutterian faith. And indeed, for a balanced understanding of the whole of Hutterianism, each and every chapter is essential.

The final chapter, “Facing the Future,” serves as something of an epilogue, reflecting on the significance of Hutterianism. Amid all the changes, and the countless differences among the roughly 500 colonies that currently exist, the authors did find one element that was a constant:

At Hutterite colonies across the United States and Canada, we see strong commitment to communal Christianity and a growing interest in spiritual issues, and we see the elements everywhere in all of the *Leut*. They take on different forms and are expressed differently. But wherever one goes, there is forthright and thoughtful discussion of beliefs and practices. The Christian faith is taken very seriously, whether from the traditional or the progressive perspective (303).

And the authors conclude:

Even those who do not accept the existence of a life beyond the grave or the guidance of a divine being can stare in amazement at the social and ideological power and example of the Hutterite communal order here on earth (306).

An appendix ("Hutterite Colonies in North America, 2009"), and a glossary of Hutterian terms—along with a dozen figures and tables, and four maps—complement the basic text.

The co-authors, Janzen and Stanton, have both been breathing Hutterianism for a quarter-century, and have perceptively distilled the current Hutterian essence to an astonishing degree. They have in fact accomplished what no insider could have done at this time: creating a comprehensive survey of all four Hutterite Leut.

Having received the blessing of many within each of the four groups means, however, not plumbing all the reasons and details of the events leading to the most recent split, which led to the formation of the Schmiedeleut One and the Schmiedeleut Two. The decision not to do so is probably wise, since a detailed description of this most recent history is presently available from only one side (the Schmiedeleut Two), as found in Samuel Kleinsasser's perceptive "Community and Ethics" (a 228-page, unpublished text circulated widely among the Hutterites and available in the Mennonite Historical Library, Goshen, Indiana). A comparable interpretation from the Schmiedeleut One is not in existence. In any case, it is too soon to interpret in depth the causes and outcome of such a recent split.

By way of critique, three observations can be made: 1) without delving into the 1992 schism, the authors might nevertheless have made more of Samuel Kleinsasser's profound descriptions of the Hutterian vision, as found in his "Community and Ethics"; 2) an essential volume overlooked in the bibliography is Astrid von Schlachta, *Hutterische Konfession und Tradition (1578-1619): Etabliertes Leben zwischen Ordnung und Ambivalenz* (2003), an important monograph detailing the history and times of the Hutterites during their golden era; and 3) on page 206, "Diener des Notdurfts" should read: "Diener der Notdurft."

There is much in this volume for a non-Hutterite to reflect on: the process of collective discernment (9); the idea of corporate salvation (95-96); measures to stem the inroads of materialism and individualism (299-301); and, throughout the volume, an emphasis on how the life of each member is acknowledged and held to be precious—which has also been the experience of this reviewer.

Janzen and Stanton have succeeded in their attempt to be sympathetic yet objective, producing a monograph representative of all four Hutterian groups, within the context of the larger Anabaptist tradition and the experience of North American communal groups generally.

Goshen, Ind.

LEONARD GROSS

History and Mission in Europe: Continuing the Conversation. Mary Raber and Peter F. Penner, eds. Schwarzfeld, Germany: Neufeld Verlag, 2011. Pp. 420. \$19.99, U.S.; \$22.99, Can.

Mary Raber and Peter Penner have compiled a rich volume on mission and history in Europe from an Anabaptist perspective. The work is dedicated to Dr. Walter Sawatsky, who has committed much of his life and work to the church and to church history in Soviet and post-Soviet contexts. As a result, this edited volume contains chapters written in the three languages in which Sawatsky worked: English, German, and Russian, with abstracts in English of the chapters written in Russian or German.

The book begins with two chapters focused on Sawatsky's life and work. And subsequent chapters are divided into three sections reflecting the most influential areas of his work: historical studies; mission studies; and future directions for mission.

The historical studies section includes seven chapters covering the religious life of Mennonites in the mid-1920's in the Ukraine; how some Mennonite communities in the Ukraine interacted with the German Army, the Red Army, and the White Army during 1917-1920; the development of theological education in Eastern and Central Europe during the twentieth century; the history of the "Initsiativnik" movement within the Russian Baptist Church; how the Russian Baptist Church rethought the concept of church after World War II; the evangelical movement in Russia; and women as pillars of revival within the Russian church.

The topics within this section are a bit eclectic when grouped together but present a beautiful picture of the strong scholarly field of Russian-Ukrainian Protestant history. Four of the chapters are written by Russian and Ukrainian authors, who bring valuable local insights to the history of the church and mission in Eastern Europe. Historically, Christians in the former Soviet Union were denied educational opportunities at the university level. These essays present a new generation of Christian thinkers from within the former Soviet Union who are well educated and are developing a voice that deserves to be heard alongside respected Western voices.

The topics within the mission studies section of the book flow nicely. The first chapter, by Johannes Dyck, discusses the development of Mennonite theology from a post-Gulag perspective, offering a model of three concentric circles. The core circle represents scripturally-based faith. The second circle represents a foundational value in Anabaptism, the "living" church community. And, the third circle identifies "living faith as witness" (210). The remaining chapters in this section weave an interesting tapestry using Dyck's model. For example, chapter 12 speaks to circle one (faith grounded in the Scriptures), by addressing theological education. Chapter 13 addresses circle two (living church community) by presenting the development of an Anabaptist church community in London. Chapters 14 and 15 speak to all three circles by addressing state approaches to church-state relations in Eastern and Central Europe and theologizing in community. Chapter 16 speaks to circles one and two as it discusses raising new thinkers to contribute to their community's understanding

of Scripture. And chapter 17 speaks into circle three by building support for living a countercultural community witness.

In the closing section, the book turns to future directions for mission in Europe. Church demographics within a global context are changing dramatically. In a world made smaller by technology and transportation, people and cultures are moving and integrating as never before in history. This leads to the four future directions for mission identified by the authors in the final four chapters of the book.

Leonard Friesen presents valuable insights in the search for a global ethic, using the Russian Christ presented by Fyodor Dostoyevsky as a model. Primary to the Russian Christ is the challenge to “embrace lives grounded in sacrificial love, lives in which forgiveness and responsibility for all were to be embraced, even at great personal cost” (359).

Heinrich Klassen identifies the rise in urban centers and gives a challenging call to the church in Europe, specifically Germany, to develop mission in the cities. He provides three specific steps to engage this mission. First, the church must begin working more in the cities. Second, the church needs to build relationships and serve the community in which it is situated. And, third, more lay persons in the church need to better engage those outside the church.

HansUlrich Gerber identifies the need for the European Mennonite church to move beyond the traditional influences within the church and to embrace diversity. He states it this way: “One of the key questions is whether Mennonite churches will allow the typical anxiety and attempts to salvage the traditional and institutional church to preoccupy their agenda, or whether they can open up to what was a mark of early Anabaptism: non-conformism, faith, and compassionate *Gelassenheit*” (398).

Finally, Olga Zaprometova identifies a fourth future direction for mission as allowing religious experience to influence doing theology. She observes that in the search for self-identity within a Christian worldview it is becoming more accepted to focus on the experiential approach to theology. In support of this view, she cites Paul’s transformative Damascus Road experience and the writings of the Russian philosopher Vladimir Solovyov.

This book is a must read for anyone who has a deep love for and interest in the Anabaptist church tradition in Europe, both East and West. As an edited book there is cohesiveness between topics within the three sections, but each chapter also stands on its own as a resource for more focused research and information. My primary critique of the book is that the first section is heavily weighted toward Eastern Europe both in topic and authorship, while the second section is weighted toward Eastern Europe in topic, and the third section is weighted toward Western Europe. This imbalance makes it challenging at times to connect ideas from one section to another. One wishes, for example, to discover if the contributors from Eastern Europe would identify the same four future directions for mission as did the Western Europeans.

Raber and Penner have done a masterful job of compiling material that is a tribute to the work of Walter Sawatsky. *History and Mission in Europe: Continuing*

the Conversation is a valuable resource in the discussion and further development of Anabaptism in Europe, both East and West.

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KENT EBY

The Activist Impulse: Essays on the Intersection of Evangelicalism and Anabaptism. Jared S. Burkholder and David C. Cramer, eds. Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick Press. 2012. Pp. 427. \$49.

The Activist Impulse is an effort long overdue. Since the relationship between American Anabaptists and evangelicals was treated in such a thought-provoking way during the late 1970s and 1980s in works by C. Norman Kraus, Theron Schlabach, and Beulah Stauffer Hostetler, both groups have explored various forms of rapprochement, and scholarship about each has sufficiently explored new directions to justify a fresh look. How then, ask Jared Burkholder and David Cramer, should we reassess the ways in which evangelicals and Anabaptists have engaged each other and their host cultures? How can we make sense of hybrids and intersections, not just of departures?

Despite the diverse backgrounds of its authors, Burkholder the historian and Cramer the theologian, the volume is remarkably well organized. The editors refused to chop it up along academic disciplines and instead chose four clusters of contact and exchange. John Fea's clarion call against abusing the past as ammunition simply deserves its own volume, and sets the tone for the book's one exclusively historical part: four essays on the fundamentalist-modernist controversy aim to show how fundamentalism, in lieu of evangelicalism, could be a valid resource for Anabaptists, mostly Mennonites. No longer objects of Anglo-Protestant acculturation, Mennonites appear as agents over a "fundamentalist phenomenon" that "developed as much within American Mennonite communities as it did outside of them" (187). Those drawn to "free grace and personal salvation" left, pulled in by fundamentalism as well as pushed out by a Mennonite "fundamentalist mentality" manifest in "aggresso-conservative activism," and just as fundamentalist as tent revivals (209). For Burkholder, fundamentalist is a behavioral descriptor like "uncompromising" or "dogmatic" more than a theological concept.

This contested understanding of fundamentalism, detached from a definition more attentive to the movement's actual theology and ecclesiology, seems to lend a generous tone to the other historical essays as well. Two of them cast a new and rather flattering light on a controversial Mennonite bishop, Daniel Kauffmann. Nathan Yoder effectively employs communal epistemology in his portrait of a yielded churchman whose borrowing from fundamentalism was a form of cautious modernization. Benjamin Wetzel demonstrates that other Mennonite leaders borrowed even more uncritically, with even less sensitivity to communal cohesion. Here, Kauffmann's attention to precise doctrine versus behavioral Anabaptist codes and his "conservative viewpoint" become an "authentically Anabaptist 'third way'" (109). Grace Brethren's Alva McClain was not a sell-out

either, writes M. M. Norris: "his was a fundamentalism adapted for a uniquely Brethren context" (182).

Many contributors see "plenty of opportunity for integrating the two traditions" (3). And while most of them define Anabaptism on the go, by denominational or ethical contexts, Steve Nolt is the only one to explicitly circumscribe evangelicalism, citing David Bebbington, as a movement "marked by an emphasis on religious conversion, active and overt expression of faith, the authority of the Bible, and Christ's death on the cross" (13-14). Yet such a generous definition, which many other contributors seem to assume as well, omits the well documented paths from personal conversion to an individualistic view of self and community, from active faith to coercive politics, from biblical authority to modern biblical inerrancy, and from the cross to penal substitutionary atonement. It does not explain why evangelicalism could be so controversial, why Kirk MacGregor's sensitive proposal for a nonviolent atonement needs to labor so hard to convince evangelicals of its historic orthodoxy, or why the Mennonites in Nolt's excellent and entertainingly written contribution view evangelical radio as "the downfall of the Mennonite church" or saw evangelicalism and capitalist entrepreneurship as "twin blessings" (36, 32). Consequently, John D. Roth's invitation to consider Pilgram Marpeck's incarnational theology as a moderator in a dialogue on shared challenges, not differences, is wise, promising, and telling: it is needed because, as Roth himself notes, while "evangelical" was good enough for Harold Bender to describe early Anabaptists, the term had soon taken on such sharp edges that Mennonite scholarship refused to use it as a positive reference point altogether.

Two essays on the church's public role are unique: Felipe Hinojosa's treatment of "evangelico-Anabautista identity" in South Texas not only offers the only study of the intersection of Anabaptism, evangelicalism, and ethnicity—a surprising shortcoming of the volume, given the varied evangelical impulses in Anabaptism from its growing communities in the Global South and among ethnic minorities in North America—but also stands out as an effective description of evangelicalism's many faces and its clashes with Anabaptist codes of belonging for a people between "John 3:16" and "proclamations of peace and justice" (259). David Swartz provides an equally convincing description of evangelical diversity and the struggle to envision a core of Anabaptism. Simple living, equality, and creation care came to be a resource for certain evangelicals. Swartz's focus stands alone too—in a volume without any female voice among contributors (except for Sarah Wenger Shenk's sensitive afterword), his is the only essay that features women agents. And as Matthew Eaton and Joel Boehner describe the balancing act of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ (a forefather of today's Missionary Church) between Anabaptist ethics and low-entry-level evangelism, that community's fusion of Anabaptism with Anglo-Protestant flavors appears as particularly well-suited for reflection on the topic. Timothy Paul Erdel, the denomination's archivist, provides a lucid case for discipleship as a link between Anabaptism and evangelicals' "engaging the culture," and David C. Cramer is sure that pacifism is "perfectly consistent with core evangelical commitments" (400).

By the end of the book, one wonders if bridgebuilding is really that easy. If Anabaptism was indeed nothing more than an easily accessible and uncontroversial variety of evangelicalism plus pacifism and discipleship, then why retain “evangelical” at all, a label big enough to just as well include the Mark Driscolls, Ralph Reeds, and Joel Osteens? And why do converts from contemporary evangelicalism to Anabaptist bodies often feel like they have climbed over a sizeable fence, not just stepped over a little bush, to get to where they are? Why have formerly Mennonite churches who moved toward evangelical parachurch networks often eliminated any reference to an Anabaptist past from their church signs and websites? Perhaps it is because both the evangelical “emphasis on personal religious faith” and Anabaptism’s “embarrassing particularities” (37, 38) run a good bit deeper and ask a good bit more of those who claim them than parts of this volume care to admit.

If simply adding peace and justice to an otherwise perfectly compatible and endlessly malleable expression of Christianity does not provide a full portrait of either side, perhaps it is life together as *ecclesia*, community praxis, that must be considered in future dialogue. Whatever the fate of denominations in Menno City, USA, urban liberals and Hispanic charismatics still meet, as do rural ethnic churches and African-American traditions. They meet because they have to; because they are bound by the tradition of a gathered body that is older and a confession that is bigger than each one of them—a harmony in parts, often out of tune, but real. Evangelicalism, on the other hand, has thrived on the dismissal of inherited communities that enforce fellowship with those who are different. As this volume capably shows, it has been (mis)used in many a conflict and acted as a purifier of theology, style, and gray areas among those it gathered from the ruins—a praise band boldly marching ahead; intriguingly in sync, but potentially deafening, and notoriously hard to track.

In what way such a movement can serve as a health-giving resource in answering the challenges a diversifying contemporary Anabaptism faces remains unclear. Yet this conversation must be had. The scholarship of *The Activist Impulse* is the needed place to start it.

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PHILIPP GOLLNER

Howard Raid: Man of Faith and Vision. By Elizabeth Raid. Kitchener, Ont.: Pandora Press. 2011. Pp. 266. \$21.50.

Before the days of online seminars and pop leadership books by the corporate glitterati, the teaching of business fell to more humble folk like Howard Raid, a longtime professor at Bluffton (Ohio) College. His remarkable story, told here by his daughter, Elizabeth, is more than a fond portrait of a parent; it is also an engaging account of an important gift to both the church and the postwar Mennonite business community.

Raid was born in southeast Iowa in 1912, the eldest of four sons. When his father abandoned the family, never to be heard from again, young Howard took

on the mantle of maintenance, aided by a robust work ethic and a maturing Christian faith that saw life in the congregation as “part of something bigger” (37).

Teaching triumphed over business and farming as Raid’s career of choice. After college he got a job teaching science, history, and literature at a small school near Iowa City. When he received his first paycheck he exulted—“And they pay me to do this!” (47). He also felt drawn to the pastorate and agreed to be a summer pastor at a Mennonite church in Missouri. He ended up staying two years and “got his hands into the soil and fiber of the everyday life of his congregants,” Elizabeth writes (58). To help model economic options Raid bought a pair of Holstein and Jersey cows to produce milk to sell, and chicks and cockerels to raise laying eggs for a hatchery. Pastoring was more than preaching; it was also “entering into the lives of people and helping them work with the challenges of daily living” (60).

Meanwhile, rural sociology and agricultural economics beckoned as avenues to what would be his life’s calling—to bolster community for Mennonites emerging from a war economy. He went to work on a master’s degree in economics at Iowa State University and later a Ph.D. in economics from Ohio State University, where he was mentored by none other than Kenneth Boulding, the prominent Quaker “peace economist” and Nobel nominee.

Raid showed up at Bluffton College in 1947 to head the department of economics and business. His focus was business in the small community. He brought to the classroom not only academic credentials but also the wisdom of the trenches. He and his brothers already owned a limestone quarry company in Iowa that produced crushed rock for construction and farm use. They knew the ups and downs of business, including having to empty their own pockets to meet payroll. Describing the tight cash flow, Raid quipped, “the money turned around so fast that it squealed as it came in and out of our office” (74).

Raid saw the business as more than just a way to augment earnings; it was an opportunity to serve the common good by making roads, buildings, and productive fields (with limestone to neutralize soil acidity): “For our family it provided the opportunity to prove that we could produce and create good for the needs of the world” (79).

Raid’s hands-on approach was just what students needed to improve their own families’ enterprises. He expected senior students to read *The Wall Street Journal* to better understand the world they were entering. He organized a stock market club for students to pool funds and buy actual stocks. He led field trips to businesses and invited local business people to speak on credit, sales, and accounting. He helped link “town and gown” by having students conduct downtown surveys to learn more about how businesses operated.

Raid wanted his students to be not only hearers but also doers, even to the point of actually running a business. Accordingly, he arranged to buy a local manufacturer of kitchen shredders and graters and turned it into a student-run Business Management Lab, as the *Bluffton News* described it in 1961. Students, staff, and faculty were given a chance to buy stock in the Bluffton Slaw Cutter

Company. For the next 22 years students acquired specific skills—from manufacturing to market research—at no cost to the college.

Raid's scope was broad. Accounting students, for example, were not just mastering columns of digits; they were also learning a "new universal language" (118) with which they could "analyze any institution, be it a business or a church . . . or a family." He saw "a robust business department in a liberal arts setting as a way to strengthen the church," (120) a view not always shared by colleagues who held business studies in low regard. "He shared not only business savvy and economic wisdom but encouraged young minds to embrace faith and ethical values to permeate shop and marketplace," writes a former colleague, Robert Kreider, in the foreword (8). One former student reported that in Raid's time there was no specific course called Business Ethics because "we learned business ethics in every class we took" (236).

Business, in Raid's economy, also had intrinsic value as a means for people created in God's image to exercise innate gifts. "It is as creative," he wrote, "to create a business which produces goods and services as it is to produce a song, or a picture" (148). When Bluffton set up the Howard Raid Endowed Chair in Business in the 1980s, Raid saw it as a form of recognition for business. Writes Elizabeth, "It was about gaining acceptance for business people in the church as equals with pastors, missionaries and any other workers. Howard's belief was that everyone with a heart for God is in ministry" (156).

Raid served the church widely through organizations that included Mennonite Mutual Aid (now Everence) and Menno Travel Service. In 1967 these involvements ran to seventeen inter-Mennonite or General Conference Mennonite organizations. He found the broader involvements life-giving. It was difficult to leave his wife, Pauline, and daughter, Elizabeth, home alone, "but the church work always seems important" (128). Chief among his churchly passions was mutual aid, which he saw as a spiritual duty. "Christian mutual aid is to step in when the load becomes too heavy for the other Christian," wrote Raid (111), who would earn the sobriquet Mr. Mutual Aid. Moreover, it "provides opportunity for those with more resources to demonstrate that their resources do not control them" (111). Resources certainly did not control Raid, depicted as a frugal, generous man who eschewed debt. His personal economic motto was said to be "save 10%, give 10% away and live on the rest" (160). Reading this book, one longs for more saints cut from Howard Raid's kind of cloth.

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WALLY KROEKER

Reading the Bible after Christendom. By Lloyd Pietersen. Harrisonburg, Va.: Herald Press. 2012. Pp. 259. \$19.99, U.S.; \$22.99, Can.

The Constantinian alliance of church and state has resulted in ways of reading the Bible that are alien to the way the early church read the Bible. Lloyd Pietersen helps us understand this historical development and makes a compelling case for a different reading of the Bible. Pietersen also provides a model for an alternative

reading, using the emphases and hermeneutical principles of the sixteenth-century Anabaptists. Specific examples show how a different biblical interpretation can affect our spirituality, mission, and ethics.

Pietersen's book is divided into three parts. The first part provides a historical overview of biblical interpretation, with a critical examination of Christendom. Pietersen's analysis makes this the strongest part of the book. The text explores how the New Testament writers reinterpreted Jewish scriptures in light of Jesus' life, teachings, death, and resurrection, producing thoroughly Christocentric readings. He articulates well the limited multiplicity of the four Gospels and gives summaries of the interpretive principles of the earliest church leaders, such as Irenaeus and Origen.

Enter Constantine. Theological debates became the affairs of the state. As the emperor conversely rewarded and punished bishops of his choosing, set himself up as the final authority at the Council of Nicea, and personally chose which of the disputed books should go into an imperially authorized New Testament, he placed biblical interpretation into the hands of those in power. And while the Protestants elevated the importance of Scripture, they still left the interpretation of Scripture in the hands of government officials, failing to challenge the theological grid that went with the Constantinian synthesis.

The Anabaptists, however, rejected Christendom in favor of a church free from state influence. This choice helped shape a different hermeneutic, featuring the convictions that Scripture is self-interpreting, that Jesus' words and story hold authority over all other Scriptures, that Spirit revelation be balanced by communal discernment, and that the application of and obedience to Scripture remain central in the lives of believers. And while there are weaknesses to this hermeneutical matrix, as Pietersen aptly shows, this is a needed grid for the post-Christendom world the church finds itself in.

Part 2 explores how Jesus is central to biblical interpretation, as prophet, pastor, and poet. This Christocentric view means using Jesus as the norm for ethics, and not just as the one who recapitulates and fulfills Israel's history. This emphasis points to two guiding principles. First, both testaments are important, but, using Hebrews 1:1-3 as a central reference, Jesus is the interpretative key for the entire Bible. Second, we view the Bible "not as a rule book or repository of timeless truths but as the foundational script for an unfinished drama that requires sensitive performance in the present to move the drama towards its ultimate conclusions" (104).

This view of the Bible is key, but it is exactly here that the book falls short. Instead of emphasizing the overarching storyline of that drama, Pietersen tackles each book of the Bible separately. His literary analysis has merit, but misses the point. What underlying story did the early Anabaptists seize that helped them see how Christendom misinterpreted the Bible? The claim of the book calls for more emphasis on stories that show a rejection of imperial power and more emphasis on the paradoxical dance between the threat of syncretism and the call to be missional. Where is the retelling of Jeremiah's Temple sermon (Jeremiah 7) or his call for Judah to submit to Nebuchadnezzar (Jeremiah 27)? How should one interpret the interplay of pro- and anti-monarchy comments in I Samuel

chapters 8-12? How is the story of Jesus' temptations in the wilderness anti-empire?

Perhaps for scholars these stories are too obvious, but many in the pews, who may themselves be subject to a Constantinian reading, need these clear examples. The author does handle some difficult texts well, such as the books of Revelation and Daniel, Romans 13 and texts of terror, such as the concubine of Judges 19 and Jephthah's daughter (Judges 11). He does help reveal a God more complex than "the omnipotent, omniscient, unchanging, impassible, patriarchal god of Christendom" (149), although his notion that God needs to "recover from an abusive past" (149) sounds somewhat Marcion. But the very form of part 2, plodding book by book, works against the drama it needs to portray. If God's project is shalom, how do the little stories contribute to the big story of God bringing shalom (216)? And how does the concept of shalom, as played out in the unfolding drama of the whole biblical narrative, challenge empire?

In part 3, Pietersen now turns to practical ways of reading the Bible for a post-Christendom world. In a chapter devoted to spirituality, he calls for Bible study based on a community reading of the text that engages both sides of the brain. His juxtaposition of four texts is a beautiful example of canonical reading. In his chapter on mission, he tackles the inadequacy of late-Christendom-style evangelism and asks us to enter the delicate dance of sharing a particular story and worldview and, at the same time, offering deep respect for the Other. Mission in a post-Christendom age must dance this dance, with an emphasis on economic justice, a remedy from powers such as militarism, consumerism, and hedonism, and an attraction to others that comes from authentic relationships and lifestyle.

Pietersen calls for nothing less than for us to open ourselves to the possibility of an alternative worldview that stands in contrast to that of our dominant culture. This call (coupled with Pietersen's readable prose) makes this an important book for people in the pew as well as in the classroom. We must question whether we use the Scriptures merely to confirm what we already believe or, worse, justify our oppression to the poor. We must be ready to see how we have shaped Jesus into our own image instead of the other way around. This is a difficult task, for unlike the early Anabaptists, we don't already live on the margins of society. There is something to lose if we read the Bible like the early Anabaptists. But as Pietersen clearly shows, there is so much more to gain.

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BOOK NOTES

Making Welsh Quilts. By Mary Jenkins and Clare Claridge. Cincinnati: David & Charles. 2008 (U.K., 2005). Pp. 128. \$24.99.

As suggested by the subtitle—*The Textile Tradition That Inspired the Amish?*—this book offers the best evidence yet that Welsh quilts are the presumed origin of the distinctive designs of early Amish quilts made in Lancaster County. Most of the book is devoted to patterns for making quilts according to traditional Welsh designs, but those instructions are preceded by illustrations of twenty-nine antique Welsh quilts, all made in Wales and now in public and private collections there. Twelve of those quilts could easily be mistaken for antique Lancaster County Amish quilts, especially the diamond-in-the-square (Welsh “Starfish,” 23) and bars (Welsh “Strippy,” 24), patterns for which Lancaster Amish quilts are best known. Most of the other seventeen antique Welsh quilts use the same geometric patterns as Amish quilts but are made of chintz (Welsh “satin cotton”) cloth with small figural designs. Both Amish and Amish-like Welsh quilts are made of plain woolen fabric quilted with fine, intricate stitching designs. Welsh quilts of that kind date from about 1850. The Lancaster Amish quilting tradition dates from about 1870. The how-to design for “Pennsylvania Echo Quilt” (68) is based on a diamond-in-the-square quilt made by Welsh in Pennsylvania in 1818, almost fifty years earlier than the Amish tradition. Welsh settlers, many of whom were Quakers, gave the place name of Lampeter Township to Lancaster County, reflecting their origins in Lampeter (Welsh *Llamed*, Ceredigion) in southwest Wales.

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