

BOOK REVIEWS

Jörg Maler's *Kunstbuch. Writings of the Pilgram Marpeck Circle. Classics of the Radical Reformation 12*. Edited by John D. Rempel. Kitchener, Ont.: Pandora Press. 2010. Pp. 753. \$45, Can.

The present book is a major accomplishment. For the first time it presents the forty-two writings of the *Kunstbuch* anthology in a reliable English translation, based on the German critical edition of 2007 in *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer*, volume 17. It uses earlier English translations that the editor has carefully examined and revised, as well as new English renderings of previously untranslated portions of the *Kunstbuch*. John Rempel probes with great insight into the theological meaning of the texts. However, his view of the *Kunstbuch's* historical setting resists the scholarship of the past fifteen years—not only the groundbreaking findings of Martin Rothkegel, based on the location of new primary sources, but also the interpretations of Rothkegel's German coeditor, Heinold Fast, published in 1997. Hence what we have here is an English translation taking an oppositional stance against the German scholarship on which it is based.

Beside Rempel's work as translator and editor, an especially important part of the work of new translation was done by Victor Thiessen, Gerhard Reimer, Walter Klaassen and Leonard Gross, as well as seven other coworkers from the community of North American Mennonite scholars. The texts of the *Kunstbuch* are of unequal dimension: there are about 208 pages of writings by Pilgram Marpeck, 35 pages by Leupold Scharnschlager and 28 pages of writings by Cornelius Veh, Sigmund Bosch, Hans Bichel and Helena von Freyberg, all affiliated with the same Anabaptist group as that of Marpeck and Scharnschlager. Thus, approximately 270 pages of text are products of this particular group, which the editor calls the "Marpeck Circle." Jörg Maler, the compiler of the *Kunstbuch*, is the source of 58 pages of text in this English edition. As will be noted, his connection to the "Marpeck Circle" is a central problem in understanding the significance of the *Kunstbuch*. A family of texts by Hans Hut and his followers, Leonard Schiemer and Hans Schlaffer, consisting of 77 pages in the present volume, represents the branch of Anabaptism that won Marpeck to the movement in 1527-1528 in the Tyrol and that left a clear mark on his thought in later years. However, writings by Valentin Ickelsamer (and possibly by Caspar von Schwenckfeld), Christian Entfelder and Lienhart Schienherr—about 70 pages—can be loosely classed as "Spiritualist," while the texts by the Lutheran nobleman Hartmut von Cronberg and the Austrian martyr Hans Has von Hallstadt—another 30 pages—are broadly Protestant, without being Anabaptist or Spiritualist. So, excluding the writings of Maler himself, about 350 pages of the collection represent Marpeck's variety of Anabaptism together with its antecedents, while 100 pages definitely do not fit that description. Added to the problem of interpreting the significance of Maler's collection is the fact that a second volume accompanying the first has been lost. Hence it is impossible to

draw reasonable conclusions about particular works of Marpeck and his affiliates being excluded from the collection, because only half of it is available for examination.

Heinold Fast assesses Jörg Maler's role as compiler of the *Kunstabuch* in a biographical essay that introduces the German critical edition, "Vom Amt des 'Lesers' zum Kompilator des sogenannten Kunstabuch. Auf den Spuren Jörg Malers," first published in 1997 in a Festschrift for Hans-Jürgen Goertz. Fast points to Maler's role as a "reader"—describing him as somewhat less than an Anabaptist elder, sometimes affiliated with the Swiss Brethren, sometimes with Marpeck—and suggests that in his last years Maler came to a "Spiritualist Anabaptist" position comparable to that of Hans Denck. This is confirmed by Maler's marginalia to one of the Marpeck letters (*Kunstabuch* document 7) in which he suggests that the Christian truth is missed not only by Papists, Lutherans and Zwinglians, but also by "false Anabaptists," among whom "the foremost ones are the Hutterites, the Swiss, the Pilgramites." In the beginning of his essay Fast states that Werner Packull correctly challenged the notion of the *Kunstabuch* as a collection of the Marpeck Circle: "A great many of the writings in the *Kunstabuch* would hardly have been taken up in a devotional collection assembled by Pilgram Marpeck himself." On this point, however, in the English version of the *Kunstabuch*, Rempel challenges Fast's conclusion about Maler and the *Kunstabuch*. He cites with approval the assessment of the recent Marpeck biography by William Klassen and Walter Klaassen: "The *Kunstabuch* was the last, herculean effort of an aging follower to give the Marpeckian heritage new life in a radically different setting." The problem with this is Rempel's conception of the Marpeckian heritage. "Marpeckite Christology and ecclesiology," he writes, "constituted the most sophisticated Radical Reformation rebuttal of Spiritualism. It made the case for a believers church on the grounds of the incarnation." The *Kunstabuch*, as it stands, is an Anabaptist/Spiritualist anthology—such a product cannot reasonably be said to embody the "Marpeckian heritage."

John Rempel's major scholarly work is *The Lord's Supper in Anabaptism: A Study in the Christology of Balthasar Hubmaier, Pilgram Marpeck, and Dirk Phillips* (1993). This scholarship supplies his point of departure for his theological interest in the *Kunstabuch* texts that are overwhelmingly expressions of Marpeck and the Anabaptist current with which he was affiliated. Rempel's introductions to the individual writings are strongest in acquainting the reader with this theology, which he thinks of as an Anabaptist "via media—a mediating path, an alternative to trends that took hold in early Anabaptism." He stresses Marpeck's distinctive conception of the "co-witness" of the Holy Spirit and the practices of the church, which amounted to a middle way between Spiritualism and biblical literalism, both of which Marpeck regarded as detrimental to churches based on believer's baptism. Marpeck's orthodox Chalcedonian Christology stressed the incarnation, the human (as well as divine) nature of Christ, in a way that the northern Anabaptist traditions of Melchior Hoffman and Menno Simons clearly failed to do. Since the early scholarship of William Klassen (especially *Covenant and Community*, 1968), Marpeck's theological affinity to Martin Luther has continually been remarked upon. Rempel guides us through the nuances of theological likeness and difference between Marpeck and Luther. Neal Blough

noted in 1984 that Marpeck borrowed from Luther's writings against Karlstadt in constructing his anti-Spiritualist statements. Nevertheless, as Rempel shows, Marpeck has a distinct, non-Lutheran soteriology marked by an insistent attack on the predestinarianism of classical Protestantism. Denouncing Luther's characteristic teaching that Christians are "simultaneously justified and sinners," Marpeck held that the regenerate are free from sin—Rempel insists that Marpeck means that regenerate Christians are free from *major* sins, suggesting something like the traditional Catholic distinction between mortal and venial sins. It is interesting to observe that, unlike Marpeck, Leupold Scharnschlager (*Kunstabuch* document 32) is capable of producing a statement of justification theology that seems entirely Lutheran in substance, despite his routine dismissal of "Papists, Lutherans, Zwinglians, false Anabaptists"; the only thing missing there is an explicit avowal of predestination. Marpeck uses Hans Hut's theme of the "gospel of all creatures" to stress human beings' solidarity with Christ in suffering—"all creatures exist for our sake, we exist for Christ's sake, and Christ exists for God's sake." Twentieth-century Mennonites discovered in Marpeck their most attractive theological teacher.

It remains to be examined whether the title of the present volume, which describes the *Kunstabuch* as "writings of the Marpeck circle," is a fortunate choice. We have already noted Heinold Fast's opinion that had Pilgram Marpeck assembled the anthology, he would have chosen a different collection of writings than Jörg Maler did. Even more important is the question of whether it is time for Anabaptist scholarship to discard the conception of a "Marpeck circle." Rempel informs us that the idea of a "Marpeck circle" was authored by Jan Kiwiet in the 1950s. Just now the editor of the final critical edition of the *Kunstabuch*, Martin Rothkegel, holds the opinion that the use of the term "Marpeck circle" to describe "the whole 'network' of congregations affiliated with Marpeck [is] somewhat misleading." Rothkegel has the distinction of finding previously unknown source material about the seven congregations in Moravia and Lower Austria, the "Brethren of the Covenant" centered in Austerlitz, which were the focus of the Anabaptist group to which Marpeck was connected. We know that Marpeck was won to Anabaptism through the impact of Hans Hut and his disciples in the Tyrol, fled to Bohemia and Moravia in 1528 and appeared in Strasbourg before the end of that year, commissioned to baptize by the "church in the land of Moravia." The Brethren of the Covenant emerged in that same year, 1528, in the aftermath of the conflict in 1527 between Balthasar Hubmaier and Hans Hut in Nikolsburg. Their first leader was Jacob Wiedemann and their first headquarters was Austerlitz. In a series of schisms that led eventually to the formation of the Hutterian Brethren in 1533, Marpeck maintained his loyalty to Austerlitz. Jacob Wiedemann, like Jacob Hutter, died in the severe persecutions of 1535 and 1536; but the Brethren of the Covenant survived into the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century as a better educated, more urban Anabaptist group than any of the others. Marpeck spent the rest of his life, until his death in 1556, in Strasbourg, Appenzell and Augsburg, employed by urban governments as an engineer. He led small conventicles and engaged in extensive writing and publication on behalf of the Brethren of the Covenant; and intermittently, he made trips to Moravia, as in his effort in 1541, together with his

fellow elder Cornelius Veh, to win over the Hutterites. The notion of a "Marpeck circle," or even a "Marpeck brotherhood," was current until the late twentieth century because of insufficient knowledge of the importance of the "church in the land of Moravia" with which Marpeck was affiliated. Starting with the surprising discovery by Frank Wray in 1956 that Marpeck's *Admonition* (1542) was substantially dependent on the Münster Anabaptist Bernhard Rothmann's *Confession of the Two Sacraments* (1533), scholarship has become increasingly aware of Marpeck's reworking and editing of the writings of others. Also, in the service of the Brethren of the Covenant, he undertook editing and writing projects in tandem with Scharnschlager and others, and published the works of other writers. It is difficult in many cases to distinguish Marpeck's personal contribution from that of his associates. This is not meant to demean Marpeck's originality; in the case of Sebastian Franck too, compiling, editing and authorship fade into each other. However, it accords with Rothkegel's description of Marpeck as "one who deliberately remained a largely anonymous partner in a collective leadership." I can find no basis at all for Rempel's declaration: "The saints in Moravia were not Hutterites but seven congregations located at Austerlitz, Poppitz, Eibenschütz, Jamnitz, Znaim, Vienna, and one referred to as 'am Wald.' They were brought into being through the work and inspiration of Pilgram Marpeck himself" (371). Pilgram Marpeck was not an Anabaptist denominational leader in the manner of Menno Simons.

Certainly, there are many unresolved issues connected with the *Kunstbuch* and the Marpeck publications, not least their impact on the religious trajectory of the Swiss Brethren in the later sixteenth century. Hans Bichel, a spokesman for the Swiss Brethren at the disputations of Pfeddersheim (1557) and Frankenthal (1571), has a letter in the *Kunstbuch* (document 36) that demonstrates his association with Marpeck in 1555. Scholarship can often provide only approximate answers to the questions it poses. Nevertheless, the historical scholarship of the editors of the German critical edition of the *Kunstbuch* is very impressive. The consistent effort to resist it by the editor of the present English edition seems misguided.

Queen's University

JAMES M. STAYER

Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries. By Everett Ferguson. Grand Rapids, Mich.; Eerdmans. 2009. Pp. 953. \$60.

In this impressive tome of 860 pages of text, 24 photos of ancient baptisteries and nearly 100 pages of indexes, Everett Ferguson offers a comprehensive and thorough review of patristic literature in the first five centuries of the Christian era for what it says about baptism. He begins with a look at records of Greco-Roman pagan washing practices, at "bapt" root words in classical and Hellenistic Greek, and at Jewish ceremonial washings to check their possible influence, or absence of influence, upon Christian thought and practice. In part two he surveys canonical and noncanonical accounts of the baptism of John and his

baptism of Jesus, plus all specific biblical references and allusions to baptism such as Titus 3:5 and John 3:5.

In parts 3 to 6 Ferguson covers the second to the sixth centuries successively, doing a patient reading of the documents from these respective centuries to learn their views on the meaning of baptism and their descriptions of its practice—its liturgies and ceremonies. In addition the author devotes two chapters in part 7 to archaeological findings about the baptisteries surviving from these centuries for what they might suggest about baptismal practice. Almost all of these baptisteries have fonts more or less a meter deep, with several steps in them leading down and up. They stand in the middle of former baptistery buildings adjacent to church sanctuaries.

Baptism was a very important rite for the early church already in the era before Constantine when conversion to Christianity could incur persecution and even martyrdom. The author's findings suggest that there may have been considerable variation in the earliest period—for example, baptism in (or into) only the name of Christ instead of the later standard baptism in the name of the trinity. But all earliest frescoes show baptizands standing in water, as The Didache suggests, with the officiant's hand upon the head of the baptizand, prepared to immerse the individual.

The importance of baptism inclined church fathers to see foreshadowings of it in any and every mention of water in the Old Testament or New, from Genesis 1 to Noah's ark to Jacob's well, even to the ax head that swam in the story of Elisha. Typology was, of course, a favorite method of interpretation during this time.

Despite the claim of the church fathers that they adhered to tradition, they made baptism more elaborate in successive centuries. Thus a typical rite of the fourth century might begin with a three-year catechumenate, with priests consecrating the water, sometimes by breathing on it, sometimes by making the sign of the cross in it, though the theology of this era claims Christ's baptism had already consecrated all water. The liturgy required baptizands to face west to thrice renounce the service of Satan, then to face east with hands outstretched to embrace the service of Christ. They were then anointed with consecrated oil before baptism. Next they stepped down nude into the font and, confessing their faith in words of the Apostle's or Nicene Creed, had their heads submerged three times under the hand of the officiant. Sometimes this trine immersion was explained in terms of identification with Christ's three days from burial to resurrection (Romans 6:3-11), sometimes in terms of the trinity mentioned in the basic command of Jesus in Matthew 28:19, 20. Following their baptism a priest or bishop laid hands upon or breathed upon the newly baptized and/or anointed them with oil and myrrh to receive the Holy Spirit. They were then led in white garments to the church for their first eucharist, which for the newly baptized might include milk and honey. In some cases those baptized were expected to wear their white garments for an entire week.

The rite of baptism was modified for the sick, who may have sought baptism before they died. Patristic writers allowed affusion in clinical baptism, although it seems to have involved a considerable amount of water poured over the

patient. Sickness or imminent death was very likely the reason for the development of child or infant baptism, says Ferguson. It was an age of high infant mortality, and since baptism was the only path to salvation, families did not want to let children die unbaptized. This may seem inconsistent to us today, seeing as the earliest justifications of infant baptism before Augustine, especially in Eastern Christianity, defended it in spite of the absence of sin in children, let alone guilt for Adamic sin.

Infant baptism did not, however, become universal practice during this era. In one chapter on the fourth century Ferguson lists the names of eighteen church fathers from Christian families who were baptized only as “responsible adults.” Moreover, the liturgy remained one directed to responsible adults, even if “sponsors” answered for a child being baptized, saying, for example, in the question about faith, “N believes.” Numerous defenses of infant or child baptism suggest it was far from universal practice during the centuries under discussion, even in Christian families. The author mentions one church father who suggests the age of 3 for child baptisms so that children might be able to speak the desired responses for themselves. Some church fathers also began to stress the importance of Christian rearing for baptized children.

The author devotes two chapters to Augustine of Hippo (354-430), the chief architect of the doctrine of children’s guilt for Adamic sin that influenced much of subsequent Christianity. The author argues that Augustine moved logically from the already widespread practice of infant baptism to the conclusion that infants must therefore be guilty of Adam’s sin. This reviewer is inclined to recognize more Manichaean influence from Augustine’s student days than Ferguson does.

The patristic era saw baptism as an “efficacious” sign that conferred what it signified: forgiveness of sin, regeneration, faith, the gift of the Spirit, death and resurrection with Christ, enlightenment, membership in the church, a transformed moral life in the service of Christ, and the hope of eternal life. Baptism was the exclusive door to salvation. By especially the fourth and fifth centuries (the time after Constantine) the church became increasingly aware of some hypocritical baptisms—and even more, lapses after baptism—for which the church councils instituted penance. The Catholic Church rejected rebaptism, even in the case of converts from what it considered heretical or schismatic sects, provided their baptism had been in the name of the Trinity, which made it genuine.

A member of the Churches of Christ, Ferguson seeks to remain objective, although recurring remarks in passing throughout the book indicate that he wants his readers to be sure to notice that standard baptismal practice of the era under study was believer’s baptism, and that by immersion. He does not explicitly suggest what today’s churches should learn from his exhaustive study. Perhaps he refrains from this to avoid any appearance of bias. But this reviewer and some other readers, I’m sure, would have welcomed his opinions as a respected churchman on what the practice of baptism in the patristic era might teach the church today, when such teaching is much needed.

Everett Ferguson, a distinguished scholar in residence at Abilene Christian University, is a patristics scholar equipped with a knowledge of the requisite languages for this study: Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and even German and French. These latter allow him to comb also a multitude of secondary modern sources, footnoted at the bottom of the page, where footnotes belong, and for which the publisher Eerdmans is to be thanked. This study will remain an important reference point for some time to come on the doctrine and practice of baptism in the first five centuries of Christianity.

Goshen College

MARLIN JESCHKE

Christian Attitudes to War, Peace and Revolution. By John Howard Yoder. Edited by Theodore J. Koontz and Andy Alexis-Baker. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Brazos Press. 2009. Pp. 472. \$34.99.

The theologian and ethicist John Howard Yoder is known to many through his books and essays. But he was also a classroom teacher, first at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary and later at the University of Notre Dame, where his lectures influenced scores of students and where he tested many of the ideas that later appeared in his published works.

One of Yoder's most important courses was *Christian Attitudes to War, Peace, and Revolution*, which he taught from 1966 until 1997. For many years Yoder assigned Roland Bainton's textbook *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace* as a framework for the course, lecturing and expanding on Bainton's themes. In the 1970s, Yoder's class lectures were recorded, transcribed and eventually mimeographed as a spiral-bound volume bearing the title "Christian Attitudes to War, Peace and Revolution: A Companion to Bainton" (various versions through 1983).

Now Theodore Koontz and Andy Alexis-Baker have edited and polished the "Companion," making accessible to a much wider readership Yoder's signature course and something of his classroom lecture style. As such, this book is not a typical piece of scholarship. It sometimes bears an oral flavor, it is not footnoted, and parts of the book are obviously dated or reflect issues and arguments of an earlier era. Nevertheless, the book is a highly significant contribution to understanding Yoder's thought, and it can serve anyone who wishes to better understand the historical developments related to Christian pacifism and the just war tradition. The editors have included many of the original study guides that Yoder developed for the course (421-457).

In chapters 1 and 2 Yoder defines four typologies—pacifism, justifiable war, the "blank check" and holy war—that he employed throughout his course, and he illustrates the internal coherence of each view. He observes an "incompleteness" in the development of just war doctrine, offering "no one single classic statement of all the criteria" for just war (31). His intent to address this deficit in some detail marks a departure from Bainton. By analyzing the historical "points at which fundamental differences of axioms, logic and context make for consistent differences in character, decision, and behavior," Yoder seeks to present a systematic outline of just war theory alongside various strains of

pacifism (28). The “blank check” and holy war streams receive relatively less attention.

Chapters 3 through 8 delve into the origins of both the just war tradition and pacifism. Yoder argues that while pacifism remained consistent with the earliest Christians’ responses to killing, and a majority position in the early centuries, the understanding of justifiable war resulted from a blurring of the church’s ecclesial and political lines. After compiling a historical outline of just war criteria from Augustine to the post-World War II era, Yoder offers a succinct analysis of just war theory. Concluding that there is a coherent theoretical logic to the just war ethical position, he questions whether the conditions of just war criteria, as historically defined, could ever be met.

In chapters 9 through 21, Yoder discusses nonviolence and pacifism from the medieval period through the present, including a brief consideration of pacifism in rabbinic Judaism. Yoder’s discussion of sixteenth-century Anabaptism contends that it offered a more viable peace witness than the earlier Waldensians or the *Unitas Fratrum* because Anabaptism produced Free Church institutions. In Yoder’s presentation of Anabaptism, the emphasis falls on the separatist Schleithem statement (186-192) with its clear separation from the sword and resultant dualism and theology of martyrdom.

Following a sweeping critique of Enlightenment influences on just war and pacifist thought, Yoder takes up Quakerism as a Free Church model. He examines the relationship between church and state in the Holy Experiment of the Pennsylvania colony in an attempt to demonstrate the political relevance of Christian pacifism. Accounts of optimistic nineteenth-century and liberal Christian pacifism follow, but largely serve as a precursor to Yoder’s treatment of theologian Reinhold Niebuhr’s Christian realism.

Yoder takes seriously Niebuhr’s realist critique of liberal Christian pacifism. Dismissing pacifism on the grounds of humanity’s sinfulness and the political irrelevance of Jesus’s ethic, Niebuhr argued for a degree of Christian responsibility that could affirm a pragmatic political ethic. In the structure of the book, Niebuhr’s role is critical because Yoder builds chapters 19 and 20 as an engaged, relevant Mennonite pacifist response to Niebuhr’s contention that Mennonites were ethically consistent only to the degree that they were withdrawn and socially irrelevant (301). In fact, chapter 20 is “Biblical Realism and the Politics of Jesus.”

Chapters 22 through 24 examine the moral challenges posed by war, nuclear weapons, revolution and liberation movements. His attempt to trace dialogues between proponents of just war theory and pacifism, specifically on the subject of nuclear war, is one of the most compelling features of the book. He demonstrates the integrity of each tradition through his interlocutor’s willingness to give and receive criticism within the context of moral discernment.

In the final chapters Yoder reflects on ecumenical dialogue and the status of just war and pacifist positions in Roman Catholicism and in the World Council of Churches. Although just war has been one Catholic approach, “it is not the official one and not always operative” (397). He states that wherever just war theory has been employed to criticize war, “the outcome has been a kind of

pacifism" (400). Because there has been "no profound dialogue" on the morality of war within the World Council of Churches, Yoder questions the council's ability to facilitate such discussions (413). He claims past dialogues have not allowed for different voices to be fairly represented at the table. Regarding the progress of ecumenical discussions on the subject, he concludes that in conversations asking "whether or not we are to kill people, no breakthrough is possible" (416).

Although Yoder offers a constructive critique for ongoing discussions about the morality of war, he does not—in this book, at least—clearly suggest a way forward in ecumenical dialogue. I share some of his skepticism about the role of the World Council of Churches in this process, but I find Yoder's pessimism a bit too dismissive. Still, it is clear that Yoder's operative framework is ecumenical. Throughout these lectures he resists making this an internal conversation among Mennonites or historic peace churches.

The scope of this work is remarkable. Yoder's theoretical analysis of just war doctrine and his thorough investigation of pacifist expressions in the pre-Reformation and Reformation periods are substantial additions to Bainton's survey. He takes historical analysis deeper and asks questions that are more pertinent to current ecumenical discussions. This resource will be useful for those involved in ecumenical conversations on issues such as the "responsibility to protect," selective conscientious objection, just policing and nuclear pacifism. This book is essential reading for those on any side of this ecumenical conversation.

Goshen, Indiana

KENT YODER

The War of the Lamb: The Ethics of Nonviolence and Peacemaking. By John Howard Yoder. Glen Stassen, Mark Thiessen Nation and Matt Hamsher, eds. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Brazos Press. 2009. Pp. 230. \$24.99.

In his posthumously published book *The War of the Lamb*, John Howard Yoder grounds peacemaking completely in Jesus Christ and theological analysis. Taking a page from his former teacher Karl Barth, Yoder demonstrates that theology *is* ethics and "ethics is also theology" (38). Furthermore, he weaves this initial insight into the fabric of the entire book, arguing that the only ethic that can adequately respond to the "destructive reflex at work, which will not go away and whereby violence perpetuates itself," is an ethic that makes Jesus and the cross normative (30). In so doing, Yoder has provided us with a radically Christocentric natural theology—one in which the form and shape of Christian life is "living in and into a new world" (40).

Yoder addresses several topics in *The War of the Lamb*, including the way theology undergirds Christian peacemaking, war in the Old Testament, how Jesus is normative for Christian ethics, the relationship and tension between just war and pacifism, and why nonviolent peacemaking is ultimately more realistic than warfare. Some of these topics are not new to Yoder, and although four of

the fifteen essays were previously published, they have still not been widely available or known. Yet Yoder both deepens and expounds on claims made elsewhere and approaches topics in fresh ways. For example, in chapter 1, "A Theological Critique of Violence," Yoder expands on his claim in *The Politics of Jesus* (102) that an ethic that makes Jesus normative would be "more radically Nicene and Chalcedonian than other views." He also adopts a Protestant critique of "images" in an innovative analysis of violence and peacemaking in chapter 14.

One of Yoder's primary targets in this book is Kantian ethics (52, 61, 179). Since Kant, moral reasoning has been divorced from classical theology and reinscribed onto self-contained individuals. Shorn of theological particularities, modern ethics is concerned with identifying behaviors to which every right-thinking person can assent. The basic principles of moral life do not depend on divine commands, which cannot be known and whose authority must be questioned. Theology becomes a private affair and the provincial man Jesus becomes irrelevant to public action. Modern ethics, therefore, is primarily based on an idealist epistemology in which we "image Christ" (165), that is, impose our *a priori* assumptions about what can and cannot be done upon the world. In response to the ethics of the Enlightenment, Yoder critiques violence by using classical creedal formulations and by reviving and reinvigorating Protestant iconoclasm. In addition, he forcefully argues that Jesus calls people to public political acts, "not to understand him, but to follow him; not to master a mantra, but to join a movement, to proclaim news, and to bear the cross" (169). Yoder is thus a radical realist in his epistemological convictions: instead of *a priori* concepts that we impose on the world, Yoder insists that we know God's will only by a real community that witnesses to Jesus. Thus the "images" we have of Christ arise from the material, historically-mediated community that practices the politics of the cross.

Yoder's realist epistemology, grounded in the Christian community, which is constantly looped back to Jesus of Nazareth, causes him to reject completely the just war tradition because it is not grounded in the reality of the cross. Unfortunately, some modern ethicists have appropriated Yoder's works to bolster the just war tradition so that even the summary on the book's back cover makes the bizarre claim that Yoder believes the "Christian just war and Christian pacifist traditions are basically compatible." Yet this assertion stands in stark contrast to Yoder's own words in which he makes it abundantly clear that he has "never considered that system to be morally adequate" (109) and that based on decades of study "the just war tradition is not credible" (116). Yoder writes: "I don't dialogue with the just war tradition because I think it is credible, but because it is the language that people, who I believe bear the image of God, abuse to authorize themselves to destroy other bearers of that image" (116). Furthermore, Glen Stassen claims in his solo introduction that Yoder's "support for the United Nations" and its peacekeeping missions implicitly endorses Stassen's own "just peacemaking" agenda. But Yoder's one paragraph in *War of the Lamb* on U.N. peacekeeping forces is meant to show that their "commitment not to shoot" is an effective tool to contain hostilities (131-132) and that by not firing their weapons U.N. soldiers are beginning to move "with the grain of the universe" rather than against it (179). Yet he certainly did not here endorse

Christians carrying or firing weapons, nor endorse military interventions per se, let alone just war theory.

In *The War of the Lamb*, it is Yoder's notion of "the grain of the universe" that weaves together each chapter. Starting and ending with a doxologically grounded theological ethics, Yoder had planned to show us just how radically Jesus has altered reality. This book, more than any other, supports Stanley Hauerwas's Gifford lectures in which he argues that Yoder provides a better natural theology. This is a profound book that covers a lot of ground and deserves careful study.

At times, however, Yoder would have been better served by more rigorous standards in the editorial process. First, the editors chose not to adequately cite many of Yoder's sources by leaving out page numbers for numerous quotations, not clarifying vague page references and omitting bibliographic material for several books cited in the text. Second, several of the footnotes contain errors. Finally, the index is less than helpful because it does not conform to standard indexing practices.

Although the book deserved more editorial attention at points, this is perhaps Yoder's best work because of how he deepens the theological critique of violence and thoroughly grounds nonviolence theologically. We are all in Stassen's and Nation's debt for bringing this work to fruition.

Marquette University

ANDY ALEXIS-BAKER

Grief, Grace and Hope: The Autobiography of Pakisa K. Tshimika. Intercourse, Pa.: Good Books. 2009. Pp. 208. \$11.95.

The publication of Pakisa Tshimika's autobiography is a welcome addition to the Mennonite corpus. His engaging book is encouraging and challenging, offering us the opportunity to see life from the point of view of a Mennonite from Africa, the continent with the fastest rate of church growth in the world.

Although I do not know Tshimika personally, the person I met through this autobiography possesses warmth, a sense of humor and a great capacity for friendship both inside and outside his own community. His fearlessness and resiliency are remarkable. He traveled through Europe alone with physical limitations and without hotel reservations, and he stood up to police and soldiers in the Democratic Republic of Congo whenever necessary for the safety of others. Tshimika has allowed pain and grief to strengthen rather than embitter him. His adult life has been ineluctably shaped by a car accident the summer before his senior year of college. Not only did it leave permanent physical effects, but it also ended his plans for medical school. For those who have experienced accidents or disabilities, Tshimika's story reveals what is possible through personal determination, a willingness to change plans and openness to help from others. Tshimika also experienced tragedy in the untimely deaths of seven of his eight siblings. As Tshimika describes it, "this is my life—a life of grief, and yet full of grace and hope" (7).

Readers of this journal may know of Tshimika through his work in the global Mennonite fellowship. Tshimika has been a staff member of Mennonite World Conference, most recently as a global church advocate. He and Tim Lind held Global Gift Sharing workshops around the world for Mennonite World Conference and reflected on their experiences in a book entitled *Sharing Gifts in the Global Family of Faith: One Church's Experiment* (2003). Tshimika has been part of the Global Mennonite History Project from the beginning, contributing a paper at an early consultation, serving on the Organizing Committee and helping to author the Africa volume, *Anabaptist Songs in African Hearts* (2003). He is also on the management board for the Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online.

Tshimika is particularly well-known in Mennonite Brethren circles. He grew up in the Mennonite Brethren church in Congo and graduated from Fresno Pacific College in 1977. He earned a master's degree in public health from Loma Linda University in California and returned to Congo to serve as the first non-missionary administrator of a Mennonite Brethren hospital. Tshimika was honored by Fresno Pacific in 1986 with the Distinguished Alumnus award. After receiving his doctorate in public health, also from Loma Linda, he returned again to the Congo and helped the Mennonite Brethren Church there establish a Department of Health and Development. He later served as Africa director for Mennonite Brethren Mission and Services International.

Tshimika recounts a conversation with someone at an airport who asked him, "Are you really a Mennonite?" (157). The exchange is ironic since Tshimika, like many Mennonites in North America, was raised in the church from birth. In fact, his father was a Mennonite Brethren pastor who helped build the Mennonite church in the Congo, planting and overseeing numerous congregations, working in ministry until the day he died. For Tshimika, there is no conversion story; his autobiography contains no decisions about whether or not to join the church. His faith just is: it requires no explanation or justification, and it is demonstrated in his life of service to the church. Tshimika's testimony of active faith is a tribute to his parents, who are true heroes in this autobiography. They embodied rich Christian lives of love, generosity and integrity. Tshimika describes the warmth and freedom of family time after dinner when they "talk[ed] about everything and nothing" (70), including the "hard questions and issues of life" (71). His parents practiced hospitality, with guests at almost every meal. His father was a person of principle, and, as Tshimika puts it, "[H]e wasn't afraid of anyone, whether they were military, government officials, or missionaries" (77). He equally confronted missionaries who were rude and soldiers plotting crimes.

Tshimika's autobiography is valuable for scholars and others who wrestle with the significance of the fact that there are now more members of Protestant denominations in the global "South" than there are in the "North." According to Mennonite World Conference, in 2009 there were 387,103 members in the United States and 592,106 in Africa, with Congo itself having 220,444 members. Life stories offer insights into the individuals, history and issues behind the astonishing statistics. Tshimika reveals the colonial context of missions in Congo and its impact on missionaries and the church. We see the challenges facing African church leaders when interacting with a global church in which

Westerners have the bulk of the financial resources or when struggling with how to deliver health care amid poverty and corruption. While receiving these glimpses of the particular, we also see the universal, the experiences we can all relate to no matter where we live. We witness the love and care of parents as well as expressions of human courage and human betrayal.

My suggestions relate to the formatting and editing of the book. I would have welcomed a preface by one of Tshimika's Mennonite colleagues. It would also have been helpful to have a table of contents and an index. While the collection of photos distributed through the text were wonderful, there was no list of illustrations. As a historian, I prefer the chronological unfolding of events, whereas this autobiography jumped back and forth through time for reasons that were not obvious. It did serve to keep the book unpredictable and lively, which was perhaps the goal. All these matters are minor, however. We can only be grateful to Good Books for making possible the publication of this Mennonite autobiography. It is only the third one, of which I am aware, from the Global South, following *Kisare, A Mennonite of Kiseru: An Autobiography as Told to Joseph C. Shenk* (1984) and *Christians True in China* by James Liu and Stephen Wang and edited by Robert Kreider (1988). The reminder that Tshimika's autobiography provides of the value of individual stories will hopefully spur more deliberate effort to publish Mennonite biographies and autobiographies from the Global South.

This book challenges North American Mennonites to take seriously the development of the gifts of every member of the body of Christ. In their book, *Sharing Gifts*, Tshimika and Lind relate an exchange between them and a Nigerian bishop. They asked him, "Why is it that when we talk about gifts, people speak to us of their needs?" He responded, "Of course, we know that we have gifts and that we have many gifted people. But there are things that stand in the way of these gifts. That child over there is an orphan; her parents have both died of AIDS. She has no one to pay her school fees. How can her gifts be developed?" (29-30). How is it that Tshimika has been able to share his gifts with the global Mennonite fellowship? One reason is that a group of Mennonite Brethren missionaries in Congo agreed to sponsor his education at college, making it possible for him to attend. The development of Tshimika's gifts, and his willingness to share them, has benefited all of us who are part of the Mennonite family of faith.

Messiah College

ANNE MARIE STONER-EBY

Mennonite Perspectives on Pastoral Counseling. Edited by Daniel S. Schipani. Elkhart, Ind.: Institute of Mennonite Studies. 2007. Pp. 258.

This collection of writings by Mennonite professors and pastoral practitioners grew out of a concern that "no texts on pastoral care and counseling have been written explicitly from an Anabaptist-Mennonite perspective" (1). The editor intends to show how the uniqueness of Anabaptist-Mennonite theology impacts pastoral counseling.

The book is divided into four broad sections: foundations of pastoral counseling; pastoral counseling in the congregation; other settings for pastoral care and counseling; and two studies on pastoral care and counseling in specific cultural contexts.

While the authors do not attempt to create a unified understanding of Mennonite theology or to agree on exactly how Mennonite theology impacts pastoral counseling, several themes emerge. Most prominent is the theme of community. In the third chapter, "Counseling, Connectedness and Community," David Augsburg proposes that healthy people have significant relationships with at least a few people in several arenas in their life, such as family, church and coworkers. "The quality of community that surrounds the counselee is one of the crucial factors—perhaps ultimately the most significant—that contributes to his or her success in therapy" (46). When that sense of community is lacking, the counselor can provide a connection with community. "Counselors who offer care from an Anabaptist frame represent not only their own skill, training, gifts, or art. . . . [They] represent a community, act and speak in solidarity with others in that community, and extend grace and forgiveness on behalf of that community" (46).

Lonnie Yoder, in a chapter titled "Communal Pilgrimage: Formation in Pastoral Counseling from an Anabaptist-Mennonite Perspective," critiques the promotion of individualism on the part of organizations such as the American Association of Pastoral Counselors and leaders in the field such as Gerard Egan. He notes that "perhaps the greatest gift that Anabaptist-Mennonites have to offer the larger pastoral counseling movement [is] the conviction that we grow best not as detached individuals but as fellow pilgrims on the way together" (76). His long description of Eastern Mennonite University's short-lived master's program in pastoral counseling seemed more reflective of a personal interest than the larger goals of this book.

Delores Friesen develops other Anabaptist themes in "Mutual Address and Accountability in Couples Therapy." These themes include suffering, servanthood, Priesthood of all Believers, Discipleship and Mutuality. At times she presents an ideal sense of mutuality in marriage, but she admits that her home faith community did not always live out these values. "Although Anabaptists have valued the principles of mutual address and accountability in the larger faith community, we may have few historical Anabaptist models for living out these principles in the give-and-take of intimate relationships" (161).

Many of the authors advocate for the inclusion of pastoral counseling within the umbrella of the church. As Daniel Schipani states in the first chapter, "Pastoral counseling must be defined and carried out as part of the church's ministry of care rather than as an arm of the psychotherapy industry or as a mental health profession" (12). Interestingly, he does not see any contradiction between that advocacy and his work in a community health center, a practice setting Schipani addresses later in a chapter on "Pastoral Counseling in a Community Health Care Center." In Marianne Mellinger's chapter, "Pastoral Counseling as a Form of Pastoral Care," Mellinger observes that "pastoral counseling is one aspect of care within the larger framework of pastoral and

congregational care" (132). She proposes that pastors use a brief therapy model so that they do not spend too much of their time providing counseling. With more difficult cases she recommends that pastors refer to an outside counselor, but continue to provide pastoral care to the individual.

Marcus Smucker examines "the unique role of pastoral counseling and spiritual direction in the ministry of the local congregation" (115) in a chapter titled "Spiritual Direction and Pastoral Counseling in Mennonite Perspective." Smucker recognizes that not all mental health needs can be addressed in the congregation, but "these ministries—if they are to continue to develop in the service of God—must not become totally separated from congregational life" (126).

The target audience of this book is not clearly identified. A few chapters seem to have in mind students of pastoral counseling, perhaps intending this text for a pastoral counseling course. Other chapters aim toward a much broader audience. Greater clarity about the target audience would have produced a more cohesive book.

Some of the authors are prominent leaders in their field and clearly were able to articulate their understanding of how Mennonite theology creates a unique perspective on pastoral counseling. Two of the chapters stand out as examples. David Augsburg provides keen insight into the importance of considering community rather than focusing solely on the individual, which has often been the focus of pastoral care and counseling. Marcus Smucker presents an insightful overview of pastoral counseling and spiritual direction and demonstrates how each could be used in complementary ways.

Two chapters gave pause. The chapter on hospital-based pastoral care, "Glimpses of the Heart of Caring: A Chaplain's Story," was written by Leah Dawn Bueckert while she was studying clinical pastoral education and her faculty adviser was the editor of this book. Her chapter was based on pastoral visits with "Sunny" and her theological and theoretical reflections on those visits. While this chapter has merit, I was surprised that a seasoned Mennonite chaplain, who could have offered much greater depth, was not selected to write about such pastoral care.

"Religion and Culture: Understanding Javanese Indigenous Religion and its Implications for a Ministry of Pastoral Care in Java," by Mesach Krisetya, addresses cross-cultural pastoral care in interesting ways, but it does not explicitly connect to the theme of Mennonite theological contributions, and thus it seems out of place in this book. In contrast, the other chapter in the final section of the book, "Postmodernism, Mennonites, and Pastoral Care," by Lies Brussee-van der Zee, outlines postmodern culture in the Netherlands, examines the relevance of pastoral care and then demonstrates how Anabaptist theology was relevant to the setting: "In Anabaptist theology, pastoral care – looking after one another—in its essence flows naturally from the building up of the community of faith" (255).

In summary, this book achieves its goal: to create a text on pastoral care and counseling from an Anabaptist-Mennonite perspective. Since the chapters do not build upon each other, each is written on an introductory level. Had the book

been configured with an introductory chapter and then chapters that each examined a different contribution of Mennonite thought there could have been greater depth and a more significant contribution to the field of pastoral counseling. Hopefully, future works will expand and improve upon this introductory venture.

Lancaster, Pa.

KEITH ESPENSHADE

Tabor College: A Century of Transformation, 1908-2008. By Peggy Goertzen, Richard Kyle, Lynn Jost and David C. Peters. Douglas B. Miller, ed. Hillsboro, Kan.: Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies. 2008. Pp. 236. \$50. Accompanying DVD and CD.

Tabor College: A Century of Transformation, 1908-2008 offers a centennial review documenting the people and events that have shaped over 12,000 alumni. Tabor College, located in the quiet town of Hillsboro, Kansas, is one of two Mennonite Brethren colleges in the United States, the other being Fresno Pacific University.

Embedded within an attractive design and surrounded by hundreds of photographs is a substantive historical narrative, which provides a detailed description of the Tabor College story. Four chapters, each by a different author, highlight chronological eras in the life of the school: "Birth of a Vision" (1908-1931) by Peggy Goertzen; "Years of Crisis and Transition" (1932-1956) by Richard Kyle; "A Time of Stability and Growth" (1956-1980) by Lynn Jost; and "The Vision Expands" (1980-2007) by David C. Peters.

Goertzen begins by describing how a vision emerged among Mennonite Brethren and Krimmer Mennonite Brethren for an institution of higher learning that would reflect their particular perspective and values. Although the constituency favored establishing a Bible college, the school's founders had a broader purpose in mind, which eventually led to the formation of an accredited liberal arts college. When the original building burned to the ground in 1918 the constituency rallied around the college, which was able to maintain an average yearly enrollment of just under 300 students during the 1920s. Despite this progress and prosperity, Goertzen highlights how the personal estrangement between the founding president, H. W. Lohrenz, and the vice president, P. C. Hiebert, who was also the founding chairman of Mennonite Central Committee, finally led to Lohrenz's resignation in 1931.

In the second chapter, Kyle locates a particularly tumultuous period in Tabor's history, involving five different administrations, within the larger context of the Great Depression, the Second World War and the fundamentalist-modernist conflict. The national economic crisis of the 1930s, coupled with a plummeting enrollment (only sixty-six students in 1933) forced the board to close the school for the 1934-1935 academic year. World War II challenged both faculty and students to practice or reject their inherited peace position. While Tabor was attempting to be a respectable liberal arts college, the Mennonite Brethren constituency was drinking deeply from the wells of fundamentalism and dispensationalism and expected Tabor to protect students from worldly threats by enforcing a rigidly legalistic lifestyle. President P. E. Schellenberg's advocacy

for more freedom of thought became a catalyst for “the perceived conflict between the compatibility of Scripture with scientific inquiry” and his eventual resignation (83).

Jost continues Tabor’s story during a time when the college was able to realize a more tentative balance between the constituency’s demand for evangelical piety and the college’s academic pursuits. Tabor received full accreditation as a four-year college in 1959, student enrollment jumped significantly, and major building projects were initiated. Jost observes how the 1960s provided an expansionist and creative energy that propelled students “to rebel against a world of violence, racism and injustice” (107). While the 1970s brought an Anabaptist reawakening to questions of Mennonite Brethren identity, students also challenged behavioral boundaries, which the college struggled to enforce. Constituency support waned and the college became involved in risky real estate development schemes in an attempt to ward off financial collapse. Retrenchment and consolidation characterized Tabor College during the late 1970s.

In the final chapter, Peters highlights Tabor’s development over the last thirty years by tracking presidential and faculty changes, facility expansion and program enhancement. Financial pressures, concerns about enrollment and efforts to maintain a good relationship with the Mennonite Brethren constituency continued to be key issues.

Scattered throughout the book and set off from the main historical narrative are intriguing sketches of particular individuals or descriptions of specific programs of the college. While these “side stories” are a bit distracting when following the narrative, they do provide the opportunity to highlight significant aspects of the Tabor story. The appendix lists all employees of the college along with faculty and student recipients of awards and recognition. The accompanying DVD contains two lectures from the 2003 Center for M.B. Studies symposium on the history of Tabor music, as well as a copy of every Tabor College annual, *The Blue Jay*. A collection of representative vocal and instrumental groups is also included on an additional CD.

Tabor College: A Century of Transformation offers a valuable overview of the life of the college. All four authors include a great deal of historical detail, meticulously documented to accurately record what happened and who was involved. They do not shy away from honestly facing the difficulties and failures that are part of this story. Kyle and Jost, however, move beyond simply recounting what happened by providing a window into the larger cultural and theological context in which Tabor’s story is played out. By locating the events and issues facing the college within this context, they are able to offer the reader a fuller explanation and more nuanced interpretation of their significance. This kind of reflection and assessment would have enhanced the final chapter as well.

While *Tabor College: A Century of Transformation* is clearly intended to appeal to alumni and supporters as a keepsake of memories, the story of Tabor College is also significant because it serves as a representation of the Mennonite Brethren experience in the United States. As such, readers will discover a much broader narrative of struggle and survival in this rich historical account than just that of a particular Midwestern college. The challenges faced by faculty and students at

Tabor College reflect Mennonite Brethren concerns for faithful discipleship in the midst of ongoing acculturation and uncertainty regarding the integration of their Anabaptist and evangelical theological traditions. Often the college appeared much more willing than the constituency to view engagement with the world as an opportunity rather than as a threat. The Tabor story sheds light on the continuing Mennonite Brethren struggle to understand their own theological identity in the midst of a shifting cultural context.

This centennial marker celebrates the people who sacrificially gave of themselves to promote the vision of Tabor College in the face of tremendous difficulties. Their determination reveals deep-seated Mennonite Brethren convictions about the value of an education that seeks to express one's faith in all areas of life.

Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies, Winnipeg

DOUG HEIDEBRECHT

Amish Abstractions: Quilts from the Collection of Faith and Stephen Brown. San Francisco: Pomegranate. 2009. Pp. 128. \$29.95.

From 1920 to 1976 the German-American artist Josef Albers (1888-1976) made hundreds of paintings and prints in his series "Homage to the Square." From about 1880 to 1940, Old Order Amish women made hundreds of quilts in a kind of homage to the Diamond in the Square and other geometric designs. To scan "Homage to the Square" via Google Image and to leaf through the portfolio in *Amish Abstractions* yields the same kaleidoscopic flash of "square formats, solid colors, and precise geometry" (metmuseum.org) that links antique Amish quilts to the fine art world of modern abstract art, especially of the geometric, hard-edge abstraction, color field and op-art subtypes.

It is no accident that in 1971 the Metropolitan Museum of Art devoted its first one-man show for a living artist to Albers, and in 1971 the Whitney Museum of American Art sponsored the exhibit "Abstract Design in American Quilts," where Amish quilts were first "discovered" by collectors, museums and art critics.

As the title indicates, a recurring theme of this book is that antique Amish quilts are modern abstract art. At the heart of the book are the full-page color reproductions of seventy-four dazzling Amish quilts, owned by Faith and Stephen Brown of California, that were exhibited at the de Young Museum in San Francisco in 2009-2010. The director of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, John E. Buchanan Jr., introduces the book, and interpretive essays are provided by the Browns and three authorities in American quilts.

The Browns' collection of over 100 antique Amish quilts must be one of the finest in the U.S.—perhaps second only to the former Esprit collection now gloriously housed in the Lancaster Quilt and Textile Museum in Pennsylvania. The color plates in the book present fifteen fine, although rather predictable, quilts from Lancaster County, as well as more creative and surprising quilts from Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa and Kansas. The reader can understand the

experience of the Browns when they first saw Amish quilts (quoting Emily Dickinson): "as if the tops of our heads had been taken off."

Predictably, the director of museums praises the Browns for their "connoisseurship," which stems from their "knowing and unerring eye," and for their "steadfast dedication" as collectors and "stewards" of the quilts. The quilts may have been made by Amish women, but the collection itself becomes an expression of the owners, whose collecting (made possible by apparent wealth) reflects an earnest kind of aesthetic moral heroism.

Such credit is not misplaced, even though it results in a kind of cultural "appropriation" of the quilts, considering their origin in a humble folk group rather than in the studios of mainstream artists. Since the quilts were purchased by the Browns at several steps removed from their original makers and owners—via pickers, dealers and other collectors—most exact information about place of origin, maker's name, intended use, family and community history has been lost, leaving only the artifact itself. That, of course, was one of the goals of geometric abstract artists—to remove a work of art from any referential field. The Browns understand this problem but say that seeing Amish quilts as modern abstract art does "pay tribute to the creativity and artistry of Amish women" (9). To which Joe Cunningham responds by claiming a kind of cultural condescension in that view. He says: "In elevating a quilt to the status of art object—by considering it a painting that just happens to be made of cloth—we elevate it only partway. We make it a kind of second-class art object. After all, no one ever says, 'That's not just a painting, that's a quilt!'"

The three major essays in the book acknowledge the abstract nature of this Amish folk art, but attempt to appreciate the quilts in other terms as well. Cunningham examines the relationship of Amish quilting to the history of general American quilt-making, and finds little that is absolutely unique about the Amish, who learned quilting and borrowed patterns from their neighbors and mass publications. Cunningham, who makes quilts and gives workshops on quilt-making, analyzes several individual quilts, speculating on the eccentric and improvisational choices by the maker that turned a borrowed pattern into a creative piece of art. Such an analysis, he finds, reveals the "quiltmaker's inner struggles, her priorities and her preferences, and we seem to get a glimpse of the maker herself" (48).

In his chapter, "Fundamentally Abstract," Robert Shaw, a quilt consultant and curator, repeats the claim of "abstract art" for the quilts, contrasts Pennsylvania with Midwest Amish quilts, and, like Cunningham, analyzes quilts for the creative choices that went into making them. He says that knowing more about each maker and her context makes each quilt "gain power." He errs, however, in claiming that "the Amish were among the first people in the world to create works of modern visual abstraction" (37). Primitive groups the world over have preferred geometric abstraction in their decorations, and Islamic culture has always cultivated that kind of art, since the Koran, like Amish theology, forbids representation.

Janneken Smucker, a graduate student in the history of American civilization program at the University of Delaware, presents an ethnographic analysis that

explains the “power” that Shaw cites, and that gives the makers and their community the kind of consideration that they deserve. Her point is that the quilts are the impressive expression in art of the religious and social values that are the basis of Amish community life. On a surface level, the quilts reflect some of the “rules” that Amish people observe, as in the solid, dark colors of the quilts coming from the principles of Amish costume choices.

On a deeper level, the quilts reflect the Amish theological emphasis on *Gelassenheit*, or submission, which values “the community over the individual, humility over pride, thrift over extravagance, and familial bonds over material attachment” (24). Such values are often the direct opposites of those given to the quilts by the art establishment (e.g., art for art’s sake, worldly renown, luxury value). The quilts help form a “yielded” community insofar as their makers cherish patterns used by ancestors, collaborate with friends and relatives in making quilts, and reinforce familial and communal relationships by making quilts as personalized gifts for life-cycle rituals, such as coming-of-age and marriage. All of these meanings are obscured by hanging the quilts on the walls of museums as modern American abstract art.

Oddly, this book, like others, omits one crucial discussion: of exactly how the quilts are related to geometric abstraction as a field and as practiced by individual artists such as Albers, Victor Vasarely, Piet Mondrian, Mark Rothko, Frank Stella and Robert Indiana, with whose works the quilts are often superficially compared. If they really are modern American abstract art, then exactly how do they contribute to that tradition? Or are they really just an anomalous footnote in the discussion?

Goshen College

ERVIN BECK

Realizing Our Intentions: A Guide for Churches and Colleges with Distinctive Missions. By Albert J. Meyer. Abilene, Texas: Abilene Christian University Press. 2009. Pp. 287. \$19.99.

There is no end in sight for the production of books, articles, seminars and programs concerned with the Christian component of “Christian higher education.” Whether the world needs more of these, and whether the mission of God in the field of education is advanced by most of these, remain open questions.

It takes an unusual person with an unusual set of experiences and skills to bring something new to these sorts of conversations. People who care about Christian higher education should welcome *Realizing Our Intentions* as such a contribution—an insightful analysis and set of prescriptions that draw upon the diverse and wide-ranging life’s work of Albert J. Meyer.

This book benefits from Meyer’s unusual blend of skills and experiences: trained as a physicist, Meyer worked for twenty-eight years as the head of the Mennonite Board of Education and served for two years as chair of Executives for Church-Related Higher Education (described in the book as an umbrella group for most Catholic and Protestant schools in the United States). He also served as a consultant on behalf of the North Central Association, one of the

primary accreditation institutions in the United States; in this capacity he made extended site visits to more than sixty colleges and universities. The result is a book different in tone and perspective from those written by historians, education scholars and theologians (whose work fills the shelves on Christian higher education).

Realizing Our Intentions is straightforward in its intentions and presentation: Christian colleges and universities are under significant pressures to reduce or eliminate their distinctiveness; holding onto that distinctiveness is relevant to the ongoing mission of the church in a post-Establishment era; and even though the pressures toward homogenization are significant, all is not lost for those working to make higher education materially relevant to the life of discipleship.

Meyer's book provides a thorough review of factors contributing to the loss of distinctiveness among Christian colleges and universities—some of these factors are well covered elsewhere (e.g., the rise of academic disciplines in shaping curriculum, the hegemonic influence of the research university model on all areas of higher education, the professionalization of the professoriate). Meyer usefully attends to some factors less emphasized elsewhere, including the partial success of schools in the American Christian mainline to shape the secular social and cultural environment—with some “religious” ideals and values absorbed by the larger culture, the need for Christian education with a difference seems less obvious. Meyer notes how Christian colleges and universities have contributed to the “civil religion” of the United States—a construct he finds theologically inadequate for Christians, but one with considerable power and influence in how Christians think about church, secularization and the non-Christian worlds in which they live.

As suggested by the title of part II, “Who Might Want Schools That Are Different?”, Meyer is willing to raise important questions that are too often presupposed or neglected by others. This raises the key question of whether there are churches capable of forming people with a desire for higher learning grounded in discipleship and Christian life, and whether there are churches willing to welcome (and employ) graduates of robustly Christian higher education. Churches that have accommodated themselves to the larger culture are unlikely to have the inclination or capacity to sustain anything more than colleges that imitate secularized private schools in most significant respects.

Meyer's familiarity with organizational theory allows him to illustrate the reality of “institutional isomorphism”—that is, those processes that work to make organizations resemble one another in terms of structure, governance and process over time. One of the problems to be addressed by those committed to substantive notions of Christian higher education is the power of existing definitions and categories to discipline one's sense of the reasonable, the desirable and the normative. As Meyer writes (85):

Everyone knows what something that calls itself a college is supposed to be and do. Educators are not the only ones who are conventional: parents, students, taxpayers, and citizens in general all have in mind some well-established conventions about what educators are expected to do and how schools are to work. School people are expected to follow their scripts. In

the process, the question of what is really important may never get seriously raised.

A strength of Meyer's book is its understated demonstration that the typical circumstance of Anabaptism—having to form Christians, in congregations and sometimes in schools, without the formal or informal support of the state and non-Christian civil society—now obtains for schools and churches (Protestant and Catholic) closer to the cultural establishment. It may also imply a gentle caution to those Anabaptist congregations seeking to become more generically evangelical and acculturated. At several key points in *Realizing Our Intentions*, Meyer usefully compares the responses to secularization in higher education with competing views of how the church ought to relate to the larger culture (for example, establishment vs. non/post-establishment ecclesiologies). The overall effect is that, while modestly stated, many of Meyer's insights are substantively radical in many of their implications.

To his credit, Meyer tries to offer some practical guidance (on matters ranging from boards of directors to faculty recruitment, for example); his final chapter, "Intervening in the System," provides an inventory of possible actions at all levels of higher education. Some of his suggestions (on faculty recruitment, for example) may be more practical for small denominational colleges than other sorts of schools, and some of the book's transformative energy seems to diminish as he moves into more conventional and "practical" recommendations in the second half of the book. The book is mostly silent on the relations between capitalism and higher education, and how some aspects of that interaction (the reduction of education to socialization and training for the labor market, class segmentation, etc.) affect strategies to enhance the Christian character of educational institutions.

Overall, however, this is a valuable and effective book. It is neither nostalgic nor sentimental—Meyer is clearminded and practical, and ultimately hopeful. All is not lost, historical trends to the contrary notwithstanding; according to Meyer, homogeneity and blandness are not the inevitable fate of all Christian colleges and universities.

DePaul University

MICHAEL L. BUDDE

Acts of Conscience: Christian Nonviolence and Modern American Democracy. By Joseph Kip Kosek. New York: Columbia University Press. 2009. Pp. 352. \$50.

Historically speaking, at least, Mennonites have had a conflicted relationship with liberal Protestant pacifism. Such Christians, intoned Guy F. Hershberger in 1943, "have a wrong conception of sin, of Christianity and of the kingdom of God. . . ."¹ Many Mennonites, accordingly, distanced themselves from liberal pacifists who, in turn, kept Mennonites at arm's length. Hence, in *Acts of Conscience*, Joseph Kip Kosek's sweeping narrative history of liberal Protestant

1. Guy F. Hershberger, "Biblical Resistance and Modern Pacifism," *MQR* 17 (July 1943), 127.

pacifism in twentieth-century America, it is no surprise that Mennonites appear only on the margins of the story. Even so, scholars of the Anabaptist and related traditions would do well to pay close attention to it. In this book, Kosek argues that the Christian nonviolent tradition, "by putting the problem of violence at the center of its theory and practice, offers an alternative model of political action and an alternative history of the twentieth century" (1). Focused primarily on a "radical religious vanguard," the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) in the years from World War I through the 1960s, and thoroughly rooted in the papers of FOR and related organizations as well as the secondary literature, Kosek's analysis accomplishes this end in an impressive manner. He has, simply put, produced a remarkable book that belongs on the must-read shelf of anyone interested in the interrelationship between peace, war and religious faith in recent U.S. history.

Perhaps the best way to convey the scope of Kosek's accomplishment is to follow the main lines of his narrative. Since "the crucial developments in modern American nonviolence spring from the Christian culture" of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Kosek argues (7), the place to begin is with that organization's founding. For some early FOR leaders like Kirby Page, this occurred in the progressive evangelical milieu of the Y.M.C.A. For others, like Norman and Evan Thomas and John Haynes Holmes, it would occur in a growing commitment to individual moral reform. All early FOR leaders, though, would be profoundly shaped by the traumatic experiences undergone in the Holy War atmosphere of World War I America. The repression they faced then, at the hands of heretofore progressive champions like Woodrow Wilson, plunged them into deep wrestling with a key question: "What was the place of absolute moral standards in complex modern societies?" (71).

In the 1920s, according to Kosek, this debate led FOR leaders in two directions. They embraced new forms of labor organization, expressed in a growing sympathy for socialism and epitomized in ventures like A. J. Muste's Brookwood Labor College. FOR leaders also learned how to utilize the new mass-media avenues that wartime propaganda experts had pioneered. In their frenetic public speaking and book-selling campaigns, people like Page and Sherwood Eddy applied the new communication technologies of "social evangelism." But nobody else came to deepen their appreciation of the potential of nonviolence as a "public spectacle" as the emerging new figure they quickly came to fixate upon: Mohandas K. Gandhi. "FOR leaders embraced Gandhi," writes Kosek, "with an enthusiasm that bordered on worship" (82). Amid the adulation, however, the critical American work on Gandhi emerged from a somewhat bookish lawyer turned nonviolent theorist named Richard Gregg. Kosek develops Gregg's work with particular depth and care, even tracing his early anticipation of feminist and countermodernity theory. Especially important, however, was Gregg's production of manuals of Gandhian tactics. These downplayed Gandhi's saintly aura and instead emphasized his strategies of resistance and power through "public performances" such as strikes and boycotts. The rapid acceptance of Gregg's works moved the group's understanding of nonviolence away from moral absolutes and toward an engagement in strategic politics.

Kosek then explores how it was the wedding of these two FOR commitments—toward socialism and Gandhian nonviolence—that plunged FOR into such deep internal conflict in the 1930s. “The ferment of Christian nonviolence in the Depression decade,” he argues, “sprung from an attempt to incorporate Marxist insights without succumbing to Marxism wholesale” (123). By the later 1930s, the Fellowship of Reconciliation could no longer straddle this contradiction and soon found itself in deep internal division. Former allies like Reinhold Niebuhr left FOR ranks to present tough new criticism on points where the organization was especially vulnerable, like its naively optimistic view of human nature. Hence, FOR entered the World War II years toughened by the internal infighting of the previous decade as it then faced the “tragic choices” wrought by the war. In his account of such choices Kosek comes closest to a tough critique of the organization. Some Fellowship leaders tended to a moral equivocation of fascism and the democracies, he admits, and “the plight of European Jews brought pacifist ethics to its limit” (160).

While liberal pacifism was ably defended by Fellowship of Reconciliation leaders like A. J. Muste, the multiple intellectual challenges of Christian realism and political isolationism, added to the immense public pressures of the war, took their toll. The Fellowship of Reconciliation found itself in a state of “protracted crisis,” from which it was rescued by a “new generation of Fellowship leaders” (161). This was a younger cadre, many of whom had been initially housed in Civilian Public Service camps before walking out, who realized “the power of absolute pacifism as a media spectacle” (164). Propelled by an adept use of the power of the media, activists like George Houser and James Farmer began to pioneer an American grain of nonviolent activism on behalf of racial justice for incarcerated Japanese-Americans and oppressed African-Americans. It was a model that would be increasingly characteristic of Christian pacifism in the postwar years. Though not without ensuing internal debates occasioned by new allies like the Congress of Racial Equality (which did not insist on a commitment to nonviolence by its membership), the Fellowship of Reconciliation was poised for an era when it would exert its maximum influence. This occurred in seminal protests like the witness against civil defense and, especially, the Montgomery Bus Boycott, where FOR leaders like Glenn Smiley pushed the emerging civil rights struggle to fully realize the potential of nonviolence as performance.

Of course, such new tactics had their drawbacks too, and in his closing Kosek acknowledges several. “The mass media had an autonomous logic,” he notes, “that radical Christian pacifists did not fully recognize” (239). Their opponents became more media-savvy, and the success of nonviolence came to partly depend on a “culture of celebrity” (239) around figures like Martin Luther King that diminished its effectiveness. As a result, he argues, the movement of liberal pacifism embodied by FOR peaked in the latter 1960s in spite of some continued moments of triumph, like the nuclear freeze and Latin American solidarity campaigns of the 1980s.

Even so, in conclusion, Kosek chooses to highlight the achievements of liberal pacifism as a useful corrective to certain trends in current scholarship that stress

the novelty of church-based black protest and of nonviolence in general. One may certainly choose to take issue with these and other of his conclusions. Problematic, for instance, is a basic premise of the book: that FOR could serve as an all-encompassing stand-in for the multifaceted nature of liberal Protestant pacifism in twentieth-century America. I am surprised that Kosek missed, as the scholar Anne Applebaum has recently summarized, the communal dimension of nonviolent activism in the immediate postwar years. I was likewise disappointed in his relatively minimalist treatments of important liberal pacifist projects like Civilian Public Service or the antinuclear protests by the Committee on Nonviolent Action.

Even so, I think the more appropriate response to a work of this range and scholarship is one of praise. These criticisms aside, this remains a phenomenal book, one of the best we have now on the course of liberal Protestant pacifism in twentieth-century America. Many scholars of the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition would have a hard time quarreling with Kosek's passionate case for the continued relevance of Christian nonviolence, with its "unrealized possibilities in the future" (245). Beyond the world of scholarship, current pacifists would do well to pay close attention to this analysis because of the thorough way that Kosek roots this movement in "the ambiguities of modern politics" (230). Mennonites of all stripes may find this an apt point of reference as they increasingly navigate such shoals themselves.

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PERRY BUSH

Mennonite in a Little Black Dress: A Memoir of Going Home. By Rhoda Janzen. New York: Henry Holt and Company. 2009. \$22.

Rhoda Janzen, a professor of English literature, teacher of creative writing and notable poet, has turned her pen to personal narrative in *mennonite in a little black dress: a memoir of going home*. She opens her story with self-admonition: "[T]he year I turned forty-three was the year I realized I should never have taken my Mennonite roots for granted" (1). Employing the tone and technique of wit and stereotype, Janzen identifies herself as a Mennonite to fashion her memoir's satirical texture—one that has proven to hold widespread appeal. The reader will no doubt identify with Janzen when she lances the tension between tradition and acculturation that many in contemporary culture face. Within the narrative is Janzen's nuanced writing from the site of her disenfranchisement in the Christian church. In this manner, she also speaks for an ever-expanding demographic within our society. Even more than this, the overarching theme that emerges from this memoir has a universal appeal. No matter how independent, successful, beautiful or intelligent we strive to be or have become, we bear an indelible desire to belong somewhere and to be unconditionally loved. As Janzen's memoir bears out, if that love arises from family, we find it all the more affirming.

The narrative assumes its starting point when Janzen's husband—with whom she has built an upscale life complete with its lake house, ultramodern décor and

“no children” — has “left [her] for a guy he met on Gay.com” (12). Driving home one night from a board meeting, post her abandonment *and* still recovering from a hysterectomy, she is struck by a drunk driver. Broken, on so many levels, Janzen realizes that even if she has meticulously ordered her life and achieved her goals, financial and professional, she is ultimately not in control of circumstance. She wonders, “Under circumstances like these, what was a forty-three-year-old gal to do?”

Janzen’s story is about how she “went home to the Mennonites” (15). The memoir’s title is a clever wordplay. The book’s jacket, a bonnet, hung from the up-curl of the “e” in the word “Mennonite,” may seem to suggest that the author/protagonist stems from an Old Order ethno-religious way of life wherein bonnets and black dresses are still the markers of identity. But Janzen’s family, traditional as it may be, and whose “God is a guy” (7), is not of the horse-and-buggy ilk. As most readers of this journal will know, the Mennonite identity is not homogenous, spanning instead a spectrum from closed community to fully acculturated citizens, also implied by the little black cocktail dress on the book cover. However, within this expansive category of identity there are idiosyncratic ineradicable markers—food, language, traditions—which Janzen treats with her sharply-honed humor. Vignettes about borscht (“it’s important to note that at some point in the last century Mennonite *hausfraus* began to substitute Campbell’s tomato soup for beets,” 112); Low German (“There’s a Low German proverb . . . *Ji jileada, ji vikeada*; the more educated a person is, the more warped,” 57); and the Mennonite work ethic as well as why Mennonites don’t dance (“you could dance until the cows came home, but you’d never have anything to show for your dancing. In fact, it was precisely this lazy shiftless revelry that was the problem with the native Russian Peasants,” 133) are hilarious to the insider. Her descriptions of family members will likely resonate with anyone who hails from a traditional background with its far-reaching, entangled family ties (Rhoda’s father, Si Janzen, “once the head of the North American Mennonite Conference for Canada and the United States, is the Mennonite equivalent of the Pope, but in plaid shorts, and black dress socks pulled up snugly along the calf” (2), and her mother Mary suggests that she date her cousin, thinking it would be fine since Rhoda “can’t have kids anyway” (20).

As Janzen seeks healing among her parents and siblings she weaves a tapestry of reminiscences about her upbringing in a Mennonite household and church family together with her experiences of recovery—physically, emotionally and, in a manner, even spiritually. The assortment of people in Janzen’s memoir read like characters in a best-selling Anne Lamott novel that centers on themes of community and acceptance—and come to think of it, her side-splitting, often irreverent voicing also brings to mind Lamott’s work in memoir. Like Lamott in her early memoirs, Janzen is not reticent about accentuating her narrative voice with expletives, and she, too, writes candidly about sex, body parts and bodily functions, religion and faith, usually within the same chapter.

Both writers depict the strange amalgam that is the sacred and profane. Indeed, it seems that the characterization of Janzen’s mother as forthright and unrefined, yet a model of Christian faith, is a representation of this. In a chapter

titled after a hymn, "The Trump Shall Sound," Janzen bluntly discusses her mother's "hortatory flatulence." In this episode about her flatulent (as in gassy) mother—a dear woman who delivers *Zwieback* and homemade jam to feeble seniors—Janzen weaves in reflections about virtue. She wonders if her mother "would be so nice if she hadn't been raised in a simple community, innocent and underexposed" (175). Considering her own circumstances, she concludes that "virtue isn't a condition of character—it's an elevated action. It's a choice we keep making, over and over, hoping that someday we'll create a habit so strong it will carry us through our bouts of pettiness and meanness" (175). Her moments of self-exploration are held together by the few thematic threads that run, albeit loosely, throughout it. For example, "What I want to measure, what I can control, is my own response to life challenges" (176). Janzen's musings are echoes of Lamott's who writes, "[h]ope begins in the dark, the stubborn hope that if you just show up and try to do the right thing, the dawn will come. You wait and watch and work: you don't give up."

Clearly, Janzen responds to her life's challenges with humor, and with gratitude, in particular for her mother, whom she acknowledges as her hero, and her sister Hannah, "who was born with a mature sobriety that I have never achieved" (81). Also interspersed between the laugh-out-loud sections of the narrative are introspections about those traditional values and virtues imbedded in the ostensible rigidity of the Mennonite lifestyle that Janzen had rejected on her way to a life in academia and outside of the church. She refers specifically to a fundamentalist view of women's roles, homosexuality, abortion and the "narrowness" of salvation.

In this memoir, Janzen revisits her earlier assumptions about the incongruity of faith and intellectual pursuits; but Janzen has yet to make distinctions between faith, tradition and organized religion. Her mother's homespun wisdom offers insight, serving as another of the memoir's thematic statements. After an argument with her brothers about women's roles, Janzen questions her mother about her brothers' choices to stay rooted in the Mennonite lifestyle of marrying young, having a large family and staying active in church. Her mother replies, "Oh, they'll mellow over time. When you're young faith is a matter of rules. What you should and shouldn't do. That kind of thing. But as you get older, you realize that faith is really a matter of relationship—with God, with the people around you, with the members of your community" (136). Janzen later observes, in a segment about Mennonites and dancing, how her brother Aaron, "who has never danced a step in his life," watches his daughter's ballet recital. For Janzen, that moment speaks volumes about "this man, prepared to go without a second car so that his daughter could ripple like water" (145). The reader recognizes, alongside the writer, that both her mother's declaration and her brother's action are the outworking of unconditional love, profoundly more meaningful than religious mores.

mennonite in a little black dress is an entertaining read as Janzen, a scholar, cuts loose. Humor is its strength; even so, at times it seems to act as a form of avoidance from any lingering consideration of the larger issues such as worldview and life's ambiguity that are at the memoir's core. It also

overshadows the glimmers of Janzen's poetic voice. As well, Janzen's first-person address, a rhetorical device that implies intimacy, at times offers mere gossip rather than confidences (she and Hannah "were looking forward to a talkfest" and wonder about Yvonne's sex life, or lack thereof, and her "hirsute patch"). In places the memoir dissolves into the tones of a kiss-and-tell, a little like Gilbert's *Eat Pray Love*, when Janzen offers up the names and accounts of a blind-date and a past fixation. Janzen's offhand remark early in the memoir that "one of [her] friends, Carla, [who] said I could use her real name in this memoir as long as I described her as a svelte redhead . . ." (21), also prompted me to wonder about the techniques and the role of imagination in creative nonfiction memoir. As in a novel, dialogue and characterization are particularly strong throughout the memoir; nonetheless, some of the people seem inconsequential to her story other than their being Mennonites whom Janzen encounters during her time of convalescence, albeit the framework and context for this book. All the same, Janzen's extraverted narrative persona will capture and hold the reader's interest.

Readers will enjoy coming to know Janzen's open-hearted Mennonites, just as Miriam Toews's best-selling fiction *Complicated Kindness* intrigued the mainstream with Nomi Nickel's insular Mennonites. Although young Nomi remained in East Village, Rhoda Janzen could be likened to that of a grown-up real-life Nomi returning to her place of belonging. Those who enjoy stories about the journey to one's place of acceptance and the works of contemporary best-selling authors Miriam Toews, Anne Lamott and Elizabeth Gilbert will wish to read Rhoda Janzen's *mennonite in a little black dress: a memoir of going home*.

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CONNIE T. BRAUN

BOOK NOTE

The Brethren During the Age of World War: The Church of the Brethren Encounter with Modernization. A Source Book. Stephen L. Longenecker, ed. Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Press. 2006. Pp. 342. \$25.95.

This source book offers edited, annotated primary sources documenting the history of the Church of the Brethren from 1914-1950. Editor Stephen Longenecker, a professor of history at Bridgewater College, also provides a twenty-page introductory essay and interpretive headnotes for each source. The book's arrangement is chronological, beginning with two chapters on the World War I era; then three chapters on the 1920s (dealing with "Change," "Conflict" and "Division"); a chapter on the Great Depression and deepening international crises; and concluding chapters on the Second World War and post-war relief work (including the birth of the Brethren-inspired CROP program and Heifer Project). Major themes in these sources are war and peace, negotiating conscientious objection and alternative service. Other prominent topics include foreign missions in Nigeria and China, fundamentalism, the Dunkard Brethren schism of 1926, women's activity in the church and the origins of Brethren

Voluntary Service. Sources include private letters, excerpts from *Gospel Messenger* and other periodicals, and minutes and reports from Brethren annual conferences. Photo illustrations complement each chapter.

The volume is the fifth in a series of Brethren primary source books that was launched by the late historians Donald Durnbaugh (*European Origins of the Brethren*, 1958, and *Brethren in Colonial America*, 1967) and Roger Sappington (*Brethren in the New Nation*, 1976, and *Brethren in Industrial America*, 1985).

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