

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Just Policing, Not War: An Alternative Response to World Violence.* Edited by Gerald W. Schlabach. Collegeville, Minn. Liturgical Press. 2007. Pp. 234. \$27.95.

This volume brings together eight voices—six Catholic, one Baptist and one Mennonite—in the fullest exploration of “just policing” yet produced. Gerald Schlabach, the primary architect of “just policing” and the primary author of this book, opens with a chapter clarifying the “just policing” concept and its place in the ancient debate between pacifists and just war theorists. While one side has emphasized justice and the other side peace, there is growing agreement that both are essential. He states the twofold thesis of the “just policing” proposal as follows: “If the best interests of the just war theorists were operational, they could only allow for just policing, not warfare at all. If Christian pacifists can in any way support, participate, or at least not object to operations with recourse to limited but potentially lethal force, that will only be true for just policing” (3). He shows how modern wars increasingly involve civilian deaths and how most military/political struggles cannot be won by military means alone, thus requiring the abandonment of just *war* in favor of the more limited practice of just *policing* on the basis of just war theory’s own criteria. Making this switch is the primary challenge for Christians in the just war tradition. At the same time, “coming clean” about policing in pacifist circles, taking account of pacifists’ reliance on potentially lethal force, is necessary in order for there to be fruitful conversation with those in the just war tradition. If pacifists are to convince just war advocates they must show “*in practice* that they have ways to participate in governance that can be as effective as they claim to be faithful” (19).

This concern that “effective” alternatives to war must be found both to overcome the pacifist/just war divide and to deal with the most serious problems of the contemporary world is central to the book. Chapters 2 and 3 contend that there are such effective alternatives. Ivan Kauffman argues that Gandhian nonviolence, as applied in many settings, proves that there is an effective alternative that does not require a choice between justice and peace. Glen Stassen, father of “just peacemaking theory,” makes the case that the war on terrorism is not only wrong but less effective than alternatives for confronting this threat.

In chapters 4 and 5 Schlabach develops further the “just policing” proposal, beginning by arguing helpfully that, while there are similarities, war and policing are different and that the differences “make a difference” (69). He continues by showing how 9/11 brought unresolved issues to the fore for pacifists. A number of pacifists supported a “crime paradigm” instead of a “war paradigm” in opposing the war on terror. A crime paradigm presumably requires “police” and, at least potentially, the use of armed force to bring the criminals to justice. He also sees more ambivalence on the question of policing than on the question of war in some pacifist writers, focusing especially on John

H. Yoder. Perhaps the differences that make a difference leave room for pacifists to accept, or at least not to oppose, policing even while they continue to oppose all war.

Chapters 6-8 compose a section of the book titled "And *Just* Policing: Elaborations." Margaret Pfeil challenges the reading of the history of just war thought that sees the obligation to maintain justice (as understood traditionally) as more foundational to it than the presumption against violence. She suggests that "justice" needs to be understood in a holistic framework (*shalom*) and illustrates an alternative conception of justice by referencing "peacemaking circles" among First Nations peoples in Canada and drawing on the restorative justice literature. Tobias Winright argues for a "community policing" (or "social peacemaker") paradigm for domestic police, instead of a "crime fighter" paradigm, and asks whether and how this paradigm might apply internationally. Reina C. Neufeldt deals with what is probably the most common objection to the view that policing can replace warring internationally: relatively nonviolent policing in a society depends on having a sense of community, a vision of the common good and order, and these are absent internationally. She notes that technical, economic and cultural divisions are breaking down in the modern world and states are becoming less central. These developments increase the possibility of international policing.

John Paul Lederach, in his chapter on "The Doables: Just Policing on the Ground," makes arguments that resonate with those of Neufeldt. He emphasizes a significant shift that is underway, from a focus on "national security" to "human security." This shift in focus, together with attending to examples of just policing-like actions that are occurring in many settings, make just policing more thinkable internationally. He sees a convergence of Catholic and Mennonite traditions as both attend to *human* security and to concrete issues of human security rather than to more abstract theological debates. At the same time, he notes that just war adherents and pacifists will continue to diverge on the question of whether or not "just police" must be disarmed in order to be acceptable.

In the final chapter of the book Drew Christiansen explores whether or how just policing can overcome differences between pacifists and just war followers, differences that have made war a church-dividing issue. He writes out of a concern for church unity, and from the perspective of a consultant in the International Catholic-Mennonite Dialogue. Christiansen observes that Mennonites and Catholics have been moving toward one another on many issues. This is a churchly development that, like developments in the modern international system, makes unity more thinkable. Just policing provides another opportunity to draw closer to one another and is a proper extension of the movements already under way. His argument "is that because of developments which have already taken place in both communities further changes in the direction of just policing will not constitute infidelity to the gospel" (196). He outlines theological shifts that will be needed for convergence and obstacles to that convergence. Perhaps the biggest difficulty is faced by Mennonites for whom "the step from peacebuilding to just policing may be a very long one indeed, since just policing will inevitably entail some limited force" (210).

Christiansen has put his finger on the central question raised for Mennonites by just policing: should we take the “long step” he would like to see us take? Indeed, the whole book presses us to face this question of pacifism anew as it also presses Catholics to reject the longstanding tradition of just war in favor of just policing. By doing so the book helps to clarify issues faced in our contemporary world as it challenges old ways of thinking and probes new possibilities for limiting violence and fostering better ecumenical understanding.

I am not convinced that just policing is the most faithful way for Christians to respond to violence and injustice. Nevertheless, this book, especially the chapters by Schlabach, makes it clear that just policing presents potent challenges to both pacifism and just war, even as discussions of it clarify issues for both. It calls upon all of us to think again about the implications of the Gospel in a rapidly changing global context. Students of war and peace in Christian thought and practice would do well to read and ponder *Just Policing, Not War*.

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TED KOONTZ

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*A Feast of Longing*. By Sarah Klassen. Regina, Sask.: Coteau Publishing. 2007. Pp. 288. \$16.95.

Sarah Klassen’s *A Feast of Longing* offers a banquet of stories that will resonate with adult readers of any generation. In this, her second collection, Klassen weaves together fourteen stories that touch on the human desire to construct meaning and to share the stories—complete or incomplete—that have shaped how we understand the world. Whether sampling only one short story or completing the entire collection, readers will find that *A Feast of Longing* draws us all to the table.

Readers unfamiliar with the Canadian author’s award-winning poetry, essays and short fiction will find diverse subjects and characters: a young college student’s friendship with an emotionally disabled neighbor (“Adelia”); five graduate school friends reuniting for a weekend (“A Perfect Location”); a middle-aged father’s ritual visit to a church (“Wednesday is Adoration”); a young adult’s summer experience teaching English in Russia (“Saved”). Those who know her work well will recognize plots related to Klassen’s Russian Mennonite heritage; literary allusions and characters who are teachers; and thoughtful reflections on identity and faith.<sup>1</sup> Most of the stories are set in Klassen’s Winnipeg hometown where she taught English and now writes, but her narrative perspective veers from first to third person, from female to male, from teenager to elderly. What these stories and characters share, though, is a

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1. See *Journey to Yalta* (Winnipeg: Turnstone, 1988); *Poets in the Classroom*, co-edited with Betsy Struthers (Markham, Ont.: Pembroke, 1995); and *Simone Weil: Songs of Hunger and Love* (Hamilton, Ont.: Wolsak and Wynn, 1999), respectively. For a complete bibliography of Klassen’s work see the Manitoba Author Publication index, [www.mbwriter.bm.ca/mapindex/k\\_profiles/klas-sen\\_s.html](http://www.mbwriter.bm.ca/mapindex/k_profiles/klas-sen_s.html). Six poems by Klassen were featured in the online Center for Mennonite Writing, *For Young Readers* 2.3 (May 15, 2010). — [www.mennonite-writing.org/journal/2/3/](http://www.mennonite-writing.org/journal/2/3/).

longing for community and for moments of connection to bring understanding and peace.

Klassen's title, *A Feast of Longing*, establishes the theme of unfulfilled desire, as her characters strive for connection to something larger than themselves, their family or their immediate community. At times they succeed. A character's longing is satisfied by literature ("Ending with Poetry") or the promise of faith ("Thursday at Agape Table"). People fulfill another's longing in unexpected encounters ("Still Life") or routine relationships ("Eye of the Moon"). In one story a discarded pamphlet on a bus seat answers a need ("The Seven Steps"), while an ordinary action like helping her grandmother with eye drops brings a young woman unexpected healing ("Eye of the Moon"). In every story, characters try to connect in spite of differences of time and place, age, and faith, but they do not always succeed. A college student loses a friend to depression and a handicapped neighbor to an institution in "Adelia"; a mother finds that an art class, which she took to occupy herself after the death of her daughter, only leads her to more memories in "Still Life."

Klassen's choice of the short story genre itself contributes to the theme of longing as readers are drawn to make connections with characters as well as among the repeated themes, perspectives and concerns. Unlike a novel that, no matter how fragmented or complex the narrative structure, prescribes an order for the reader, the short story urges readers to construct an overarching meaning for the text. While Klassen's stories can be meaningful in isolation and the reader can enter the text at any point, the collection as a whole allows meaning to accrue as the collective story casts a shadow on an individual character or scene. One example of collective meaning emerges from her memorable older women, who grapple with the contrast between the memories of their youth and the limited, disorienting world they now inhabit. In "The Wind Blows Where it Chooses," Verna attends every funeral at her church, whether or not she knew the deceased. The narrator observes, "Funerals were not sorrowful occasions for Verna, who throughout the decades had shed plenty of tears over loss and disappointments . . . Loneliness, she had concluded long ago, was inevitable, and therefore a state to be embraced, not shunned. She believed that. Most of the time" (26). During sharing time at one funeral meal, Verna stands, takes the microphone, and comments on a woman she had never actually met: "Sheila Soderstrom was a good woman. And . . . I believe she is sitting somewhere at a table, like this one, here . . . Only, her table, it's piled high" (39). Somewhat embarrassed by her outburst, Verna hurries from the church and is surprised when the deceased's young niece runs after her with Verna's forgotten handbag. After Verna thanks her, the girl moved "quickly away from her, but then, as if drawn by Verna's gaze, or as if she too realized the need for something more, she stopped and slowly turned" (41). They both wave farewell, a visual metaphor for their desire to be present for one another, even if only for a moment.

On the other hand, the isolation of a given story also suggests that the impulse to construct meaning may never be complete. Throughout *A Feast of Longing*, Klassen creates a community populated with contemporary Mennonite characters who have divergent life experiences and varying links to their Anabaptist ancestors. While they strive for shared understanding, sometimes the

only common meaning comes from the shared journey. "Beyond the Border," which has the most overtly Mennonite setting, follows participants of a "Heritage Tour" to an unnamed ancestral village, presumably in present-day Ukraine. Through shifting points of view, the narrator reveals differing and at times conflicting expectations and fears. One tour participant, Anya, explains her motive for undertaking the journey to their Russian translator Larissa.

When I was a child, . . . my mother told me stories about this village. One story after another, as if she wanted to fill me up with them. Well, I couldn't contain them. They overflowed. I've forgotten most of them. But some things I can't forget. (157)

Anya describes the land as her mother did, with flourishing fruit trees, soft breezes, "a small sample of heaven" (157). She wants Larissa to "understand why I, why we . . . we all . . . why we have to come. We have to see for ourselves what it was like. How beautiful it was, this place we lost" (158).

Klassen's shift to the translator's point of view reveals that individual desires to connect with a selected community can blind people to others' suffering. In response to Anya's story, Larissa says that, as a Jew, she has ancestors who had been killed in a ghetto of the Russian city where the tourists were staying. To further complicate the reader's assumptions about Mennonite history, the narrator adds that "Anya didn't know that somewhere near the orchard she had re-imagined for the translator, Jews lay buried in a mass grave. She did not know that among her ancestors were those who had hated Jews and were implicated in their disappearance from that landscape" (159). Klassen's story unearths a much more complicated community than what Anya's mother's stories conveyed and reveals gaps in meaning that her characters have missed.

"Beyond the Border" goes further in challenging assumptions of a story's unified meaning by introducing the perspective of descendants of former Russian peasants who had lived alongside Russian Mennonites. An old woman follows the tourists to a cemetery, where epitaphs in German testify to Mennonite separation from Russian culture even as they lived and thrived on Catherine the Great's green tracts of land. Speaking in Russian, the old woman rages against the tourists, whom she fears are Mennonite intruders come to reclaim property. Her people, she tells Larissa, did not leave like the Mennonites, who "snuck away like thieves in the night" (167). Nor were those Mennonites saints, she notes, but treated their Russian servants and neighbors badly even as they "looked out only for each other" (167). After Larissa reassures the old woman that they were only visiting, the old woman urges, "Tell them what I told you . . . About the cruelty. Tell them the truth" (168). But Larissa concludes,

The truth has many faces . . . She decided at once that she would not relay this woman's version of it, a version that might not be groundless, might be a mix of accuracy and exaggeration equal to . . . Anya's [version]. But it was not the kind of truth the travelers had come to hear. . . . [W]ho was she to confront them with possible flaws—theirs or their forefathers? (168-169).

The layers of story in "Beyond the Border" emphasize that that connection may also cause pain, interpretation will be incomplete, stories are built on silences, and the desire for community may result in rejection.

Yet the cumulative effect of these stories creates a community—albeit temporary and incomplete—of interwoven lives. Readers, like the characters themselves, will find hope in the effort—always limited and at times futile—of sharing our flawed, yet awesome, lives with others. In the collection's final story, "In Such Circumstances," one woman, who has recently settled in a retirement community with her once unfaithful husband, slips outside at night and watches the northern lights along the lake.

Looking up, she sees the darkness lit by a swirling dance of coloured lights. As the dance gains tempo and the colours intensify; she imagines herself in a church where a choir is singing; *Holy, Holy, Holy*. Then the movement winds down, the colours pale and she is left, a solitary watcher beneath the cathedral dome of a black sky seeded with stars. She gazes at them the way humans frequently do—in silent wonder. Some claim they can read the stars; the wife is not one of these. It's the wideness of the firmament that impresses her. And the silence. How much grander than all human achievements and structures on planet earth. How much vaster than rage and infidelity. (274)

Like the reader's striving for connection among, and a larger meaning for, these stories, this character reveals the greatest longing of all—to connect with God, the larger spirit of the universe. Our desire to connect with each other is part of a greater longing for meaning in life. Even small attempts at understanding can bring us closer to the truth.

Although Klassen's range of characters is wide in *A Feast of Longing*, her style is spare, with simple sentence structure predominating and action taking second seat to characters' reflections: "Once, he had been a child with no greater worry than defending himself against the other side. How did he ever get from there to here?" (63). Some descriptions are visually arresting. But more often her prose is slow paced, following the trajectory of a bus trip, an evening meal, a person's day. Readers longing for more action may not be satisfied. Like Virginia Woolf in *Mrs. Dalloway*, where the web of meaning is created from one day's events, Klassen utilizes an understated narrative style. Setting a leisurely pace, she encourages the reader to meander among the stories and weave together strands of connection.

Readers who cross paths with *A Feast of Longing* will need to construct their own meaning, an undertaking worth the effort.

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BETH MARTIN BIRKY

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*In Harm's Way: A History of Christian Peacemaker Teams*. By Kathleen Kern. Eugene, Ore.: Cascade Books. 2009. Pp. 604. \$49.

Christian Peacemaker Teams (C.P.T.) began in 1986 as a response to Ron Sider's call at Mennonite World Conference to create a nonviolent peace force in which its members would be willing to lay down their lives to reduce international conflict. Documenting the history of a mobile organization with short- and long-term projects across five continents requires persistence.

Fortunately, two factors have contributed to what is an exhaustive and timely history of the first twenty years of Christian Peacemaker Teams. First, C.P.T. sees external communication as a major focus of its work, leaving behind a thorough real-time accounting of small and large events as well as the evolution of each project on an online news service known as CPTNet. Second, Kathleen Kern, who was on site as a member of C.P.T. throughout the breadth of the work, conducted extensive research over several years. Based on internal written communication, C.P.T. documents, interviews and personal memory Kern provides a thorough and transparent history of C.P.T. that includes a detailed account of the facts as well as the full range of emotions and tensions within teams and the organization as a whole.

While the organization has not yet met the original call to deploy thousands, C.P.T. has grown dramatically in pursuing its original goal to witness to Jesus Christ by seeking “to identify with the suffering, promote peace, reduce violence, identify with those caught in violence and oppression and foster justice by using the techniques of non-violent direct action” (5). By the end of 2006, C.P.T. counted 47 full-time volunteers, 154 reservists (who serve in short-term assignments) and 15 support staff, as well as dozens who participate in delegations to the six current projects (551).

Chapters trace the conflicts in Haiti and in urban projects in the United States, in indigenous communities in North America and in Chiapas, Mexico, weaving the history of a project’s development and the critical incidents where Christian Peacemaker Team workers intervened. Kern makes clear that C.P.T. does not claim to be neutral: “Teams live with people whom those in power oppress and exploit. Rather than neutrality, the C.P.T. model is more like guests in the house of the disenfranchised . . . who greet the oppressors at the door” (209). Kern conveys this perspective in her reporting on these conflicts, offering detailed information not easily accessed through conventional news sources. At the same time, she carefully steps back to report, without taking sides, the internal C.P.T. debates, motivations and challenges to staying or leaving in each project. Decisions were often influenced by the lack of available workers or funding in C.P.T. or by individual members who chose to return home.

Three chapters are dedicated to C.P.T. work in Hebron and the West Bank of Palestine. Beginning in 1995, this work represents the longest-standing project with the most news releases. Kern provides ample background and numerous examples of the suffering of Palestinians and how C.P.T. members served as witnesses, companions and advocates for Palestinians in the face of encounters with Israeli settlers and soldiers. For readers less familiar with the expansion of settlements, the second *intifada* and the increased militarization of Palestine, these chapters provide a perspective that reflects C.P.T.’s commitment to “get in the way” in the midst of oppression and violence. One learns of the creative use of nonviolent direct action, such as a 700-hour public fast that C.P.T. organized to protest the 700 Palestinian homes that were threatened with demolition.

The peacemaker teams work at the invitation of a local organization, a partner in the work. The Colombia chapter emphasizes the strong partnership with the Colombia Mennonite Church, which has suffered directly from decades of civil war. This work opened a new chapter for C.P.T. as Colombians joined the team,

forcing C.P.T. to rethink the assumption that their witness was effective due to members' international status. Working in the rural area of Barrancabermeja, C.P.T. witnessed frequent murders by paramilitary forces that drained workers who were already overextended due to replacements not being granted visas.

Hardship was not limited to those they served. While Sider's original call asked for Christians to lay down their lives and every worker was prepared for this possibility, C.P.T. was shaken by kidnapping and death in Iraq. Kern depicts the confusion and stress created for the organization as it responded to the kidnapping of four C.P.T. workers by a little-known fundamentalist group. Serving as a witness against the U.S.-led invasion and abuses by U.S. forces and its allies, C.P.T. had to rethink how to relate to these governments who were now intervening on C.P.T.'s behalf. After four months of waiting in the international spotlight, C.P.T. learned of the murder of Tom Fox and the British rescue of the remaining three hostages ten days later. Many lessons were learned and the organization became stronger as a result.

A volume that will serve lay readers and future researchers, *In Harm's Way* provides an exhaustive historical account of the first twenty years of Christian Peacemaker Teams. Kern carefully documents each project's development and provides a window into the dissension and the decision-making within C.P.T. and with project partners. Each chapter offers a set of issues that arose from the project. Extensive quotations and detailed footnotes strengthen the credibility of the study. The relationship between C.P.T. and its partners merits further explanation. Reading the footnotes reveals in more detail the complexity and difficulties in cultivating and listening to local partners, each with their own self-interests and expectations.

Kern's writing brings each project to life in a way that makes it possible for the reader to grasp the breadth of events with multiple actors. That said, maps of each project region, a glossary of terms, and a timeline showing the overlap of projects would have been useful. An online index is available for those interested in using the text for research or study.

One deviation in the book relates to the chapters on Palestine. Unlike other chapters that primarily focus on C.P.T., these chapters provide a much fuller account of the injustices and evolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Kern seems compelled to counter the imbalanced reporting she sees in mainstream and conservative media coverage. As in the rest of the book, however, the transparency of the writing allows readers to draw their own conclusions.

*In Harm's Way* provides a well-documented history of Christian Peacemaker Teams, based on personal experience and primary documents. The historical record can now be examined by outsiders who might have different research interests and perspectives. While Kern does not in the end render a judgment on Christian Peacemaker Teams, there are many lessons that C.P.T., other Christian groups and peace activists can take from this study. Christian Peacemaker Teams joins the long history of nonviolent direct action and *In Harm's Way* will ensure that this important chapter is better understood.



*Acts of Conscience: World War II, Mental Institutions, and Religious Objectors.* By Steven J. Taylor. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press. 2009. Pp. 484. \$45.

The inaugural volume in the series *Critical Perspectives on Disability* published by Syracuse University Press, Steven Taylor's *Acts of Conscience* traces the role of American conscientious objectors who launched a broad national movement to improve mental health institutions during the 1940s, based on their experiences as attendants at state institutions as part of Civilian Public Service. Building on Alex Sareyan's 1994 history *The Turning Point*, Taylor, a sociologist with expertise in disability studies, brings to the topic a sympathetic perspective toward the conscientious objectors' efforts to expose the abusive practices they documented across institutions. Taylor writes: "[This] is a history about pacifism and national service, disability in America, the nature of reform movements, and the complexity of social change" (5). He argues that in the long run, the reformers were only marginally successful in altering the treatment of America's mentally ill populations.

In 1942, Eastern State Hospital in Williamsburg, Virginia, began accepting Civilian Public Service (C.P.S.) workers as staff attendants. Over the next half decade, more than 2,000 conscientious objectors would help to alleviate serious labor shortages at forty-four mental institutions across the United States, often replacing attendants who were drafted or were shifting into defense industry jobs. Hundreds more C.O.'s would staff fifteen "training schools" for people with retardation and other intellectual disabilities. Here, too, standards of care were often low, and Taylor recounts how, in institution after institution, C.P.S. assignees discovered appalling situations of patient neglect and abuse. Working with C.P.S. administrators and sometimes with the cooperation of reform-minded hospital superintendents, the C.O.'s worked to eliminate the harshest practices and replaced them with more humane procedures.

One important reform effort was the 1944 publication of a newsletter, *The Attendant*, which was aimed at mental health aides in state institutions and emphasized professionalization. *The Attendant* was the work of C.O.'s assigned to the American Friends Service Committee's C.P.S. program at the Philadelphia State Hospital. Based on initial positive reaction to *The Attendant*, four C.O.'s—Harold Barton, Leonard Edelstein, Willard Hetzel and Philip Steer—launched a nationwide campaign aimed at improving care for mentally ill patients. As the Civilian Public Service program came to an end, these men and their coworkers collaborated with photojournalists at *Life* magazine to expose conditions at some of the most derelict institutions, and met with Eleanor Roosevelt and other leaders supportive of mental health care reform. As these C.O.'s garnered support for their new National Mental Health Foundation, they also received laudatory coverage in *The New York Times*, *The Baltimore Sun* and other papers around the country.

These promising beginnings were bolstered by the founders' efforts to join causes with two rising psychiatric professionals, W. Walter Menninger and Karl Menninger of Topeka, Kansas, who had been working to improve training of

mental health care workers and welcomed the conscientious objectors' arrival on the national mental health scene. But although the National Mental Health Foundation enjoyed some early successes in raising public awareness and making alliances with the progressive Menninger Foundation, Taylor argues that the fledgling organization was destined for failure. It would suffer from leadership turnovers and chronic financial strains. By 1950, the weakened National Mental Health Foundation merged with two other organizations to become the National Association for Mental Health. Despite the similarity in names, Taylor describes the resulting entity as bureaucratic and static. "Merger," Taylor writes, "killed the national foundation in spirit" (388). The conscientious objectors' reform efforts, so visible and vibrant in the mid-1940s, had been lost.

In the end, Taylor suggests that the C.O. reformers "failed to have a lasting impact on the fields of mental health and developmental disabilities . . . [because the founders of the National Mental Health Foundation] never questioned institutionalization itself" (393). A generation later, he points out, renewed movements would trend toward community-based care and heightened advocacy for the rights of the mentally ill and for citizens with a wide range of disabilities. Remembering the World War II conscientious objectors for shining a bright light on a broken mental health care system, he suggests, is key to understanding the larger history of this social reform movement with its repeated bursts of activity.

Many chapters in *Acts of Conscience* address topics related to the history of Civilian Public Service that have already been the subject of exhaustive research—in fact, the first half of the book offers little that is new. Often repetitive, *Acts of Conscience* could have profited from tighter editing. But to his credit, the author, writing for an audience attracted to the interdisciplinary field of disability studies, takes pains to provide historical context about the unique wartime program of C.P.S., and emphasizes the differing religious and philosophical perspectives that characterized it, as well as controversies that developed within it.

Some notable aspects of mental health reform from the World War II era are left unexamined in this volume. At the same time that the Philadelphia C.O.'s were putting together the fledgling National Mental Health Foundation, other conscientious objectors were working to establish a mental health program sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee. Mennonite Mental Health Services, as it came to be known, helped to establish small psychiatric centers, including Brook Lane in Maryland; Kings View in California; Prairie View in Kansas; and others in both the U.S. and Canada. Taylor credits Mennonite Mental Health Services with playing "a significant role in the community mental health center movement of the late 1950s and '60s" (395). But he does not probe its history, nor does he explore the longer-term impact of C.P.S. mental health involvement on alternative service a decade later, when many Mennonite and Brethren men did 1-W work in government mental hospitals.

*Acts of Conscience* draws heavily from both secondary and primary sources, and offers some previously unpublished material based on the author's interviews with former Civilian Public Service men, notably a group at the

University of Pennsylvania who served in medical experiments involving the transmission and treatment of hepatitis.

Washburn University

RACHEL WALTNER GOOSSEN

*Christian America and the Kingdom of God.* By Richard T. Hughes. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. 2009. Pp. 211. \$29.95.

In the wake of President George W. Bush's two terms in office and the Christian Right's corresponding influence in public life, there has been a surge of publications by authors who find the Christian Right's political and social agenda more troubling than Christian. Authors such as Jim Wallis and Ronald Sider, who have challenged the Christian Right's hegemony for decades, are joined in this effort by three relative newcomers: Gregory Boyd, Brian McLaren and Shane Claiborne. Richard Hughes's critique, *Christian America and the Kingdom of God*, is, for the most part, a work in the same vein. Hughes sets forth a tripartite thesis: that the notion of Christian America is diametrically opposed to the kingdom of God; that America has acted in ways that are fundamentally "unchristian"; and, finally, that when Christianity—especially fundamentalist Christianity—becomes enmeshed with national politics, Christians "implicitly transform their religion into a highly destructive force that erodes justice for the poor and threatens the peace and stability of the world" (4).

After describing the pervasive nature of the myth of Christian America among today's theologically conservative Christians, Hughes examines the origins of the idea that America enjoys a privileged and divinely chosen status among the nations and is meant to carry forward God's plan in the world. The heart of the book is chapters 2 and 3, which explore the notion of the kingdom of God in the Hebrew Bible and New Testament respectively. This discussion is intended to demonstrate the incongruity between the kingdom of God and earthly nations. Chapter 4 examines the reasons many people think of America as having an essentially Christian identity, while the final chapter focuses on the way fundamentalist beliefs and attitudes have exacerbated the political, social and ethical problems of our day.

Like many of the authors who have challenged the Christian Right on their grounds, Hughes has been shaped by Anabaptist theology. Indeed, the notion that the kingdom of God and the kingdoms of this world represent conflicting regimes is part and parcel of the Anabaptist worldview. Virtually all of today's "neo-Anabaptist" authors have been influenced by the writings of Mennonite scholar John Howard Yoder. Hughes also acknowledges a special indebtedness to Donald Kraybill, whose *The Upside-Down Kingdom* (Herald Press, 1978, 1990, 2003) frames his treatment of the New Testament. And like others, Hughes points his readers to the recent and inspiring example of forgiveness by the Amish of Nickel Mines, Pennsylvania.

While many of the themes in Hughes's book are in basic continuity with his earlier books, such as *Myths that America Live By* (University of Illinois Press, 2004), and those of like-minded authors, *Christian America and the Kingdom of God* provides substantively new contributions. Unlike others who write for a more popular audience, Hughes is recognized as a first-rate scholar of American religious history. Not surprisingly, he provides a more sophisticated analysis of

the historical trajectory of Christian nationalism, reaching all the way back to the fourth century. Then, in the American context, he emphasizes the role of Reformed theology, the Puritan influence and the rise of American evangelicalism. It is instructive to recognize, as Hughes demonstrates, that the myth of Christian America has its origins in the very foundations of American identity. Often, popular debates become polarized—either America's origins were fundamentally Christian or fundamentally secular. Yet these competing conceptions of American identity coexisted at the outset. The question is, therefore, not whether or not America began as a Christian nation—which must remain a matter of interpretation—but how does our nation's mythology, including the idea of Christian America, continue to shape the way people think?

*Christian America and the Kingdom of God* is also distinctive in its attempt at a serious explication of Christian Scripture in defense of the book's overall theses. Charging Americans with biblical "illiteracy," Hughes challenges conservative Christians on their own terms. The book is also set apart by its provocative climax. Not content to merely point out the inconsistencies between the idea of Christian America and the Christian motif of the kingdom of God, Hughes uncovers the dark side of fundamentalism. According to Hughes, as Christian fundamentalists ascended to unprecedented levels of political influence, they, in league with George W. Bush, framed a potentially catastrophic vision of the world where Christian fundamentalists and Muslim fundamentalists were "locked in mortal combat" and continue to wage a war they believe to have apocalyptic significance (136).

While *Christian America and the Kingdom of God* is a convincing work, it is not without several weaknesses. First, Hughes could have been more successful in bridging the hermeneutical gap between his own approach to Scripture and that of his more conservative readers. Many conservatives, for example, will be skeptical of Hughes's historical-critical approach. They will not share his assumptions on dating and authorship; nor will they be comfortable with Hughes's consistent appeals to New Testament scholars such as John Dominic Crossan. Conservatives will also find Hughes's assertion that the Hebrew Bible contains within itself contradictory storylines a compromise of scriptural unity. Hughes might have crafted his arguments in ways that those he wishes to persuade would find more compelling—something other writers in the same genre, such as John Howard Yoder or Jim Wallis, have done more successfully.

Second, Hughes could have been more specific in regard to the varieties of both fundamentalists and evangelicals. He certainly acknowledges this diversity, but he tends toward overgeneralizing, especially when discussing the fundamentalist threat in the concluding chapter. The book places a host of individuals—J. Gresham Machen and Ann Coulter, James Dobson and Republican members of Congress, George W. Bush and Osama bin Laden—in the fundamentalist category without adequate explanation of the major differences between the kinds and degrees of conservatism these individuals represent. Added to this is that fact that Hughes hastily blends a discussion of fundamentalism as a historical development within American Protestantism with fundamentalism as a comparative phenomenon of world religions, specifically within Islam. While this may be justifiably helpful in certain cases,

there are significant challenges to this approach and Hughes offers little rationale for handling fundamentalism in this way. His discussion, therefore, lacks the degree of precision that one would expect to find in a work where this subject is central to one of the book's three main arguments.

Third, in finishing with such a strong emphasis on the radical right, Hughes gives the impression that ultrafundamentalists and the Christian Right speak for the majority of evangelicals. Yet many evangelicals have rejected the kind of nationalistic fundamentalism Hughes describes. The majority of moderate or left-leaning evangelicals, for example, reject the political agenda of the Christian Right, remain committed to issues of social justice and are highly skeptical of Christian America rhetoric.

Despite these shortcomings, *Christian America and the Kingdom of God* offers a compelling and sobering message. It will challenge many readers to reexamine the sense of identity they have as Americans and will no doubt provoke many others to think seriously about the moral and political consequences of confusing Christian America with the kingdom of God.

Grace College

JARED S. BURKHOLDER

*Nightwatch: An Inquiry Into Solitude.* By Robert Rhodes. Intercourse, Pa.: Good Books. 2009. Pp. 202. \$9.95.

*Nightwatch* opens on a cold December night, a few days before Christmas, a foot-deep in snow, at the Starland Colony in Gibbon, Minnesota. Our guide, Robert Rhodes, has drawn the most solitary of assignments at this colony of 120 Hutterites; while everyone else heads to bed, he is beginning his shift as watchman. The cold, at least for people who live south of Minnesota, is remarkable. It's 20 degrees below zero, with an unrelenting wind from the north bringing a touch of Lake Superior. Rhodes, equipped with a flashlight, is wearing a denim barn coat and a beard. He points out that while he carries a set of keys, most of the doors on the 2,000-acre property are unlocked, reflecting a community built on trust. He hops into a small Ford pickup, which starts right up, and we're off. The first stop is the metal shop.

The narrative technique in *Nightwatch* lends a touch of suspense (Will the watchman encounter any troubles?) even while telling a more complex story. For a page or so, we are with Rhodes at the colony, looking over his shoulder as he checks to be sure that no machinery has been inadvertently left on in the metal shop. Then we leave the colony to travel across time and space, as he sketches both personal and communal history. We always return to the watchman's rounds, ready to sweep the flashlight across the church room or to check for the smell of gas in the two-story kitchen.

Early in the book, Rhodes takes us back to Moravia in 1528, where a group of believers "formed a community in which everything was shared, following Christ's Biblical command to sell everything and follow him" (47). The community gained many converts, including an Austrian hatmaker named Jakob Hutter, who was burned at the stake in 1536 but whose name and witness live on.

Rhodes also breaks away from his watch at the Starland to tell us about his growing up years and about how he and family came, as outsiders from Arkansas, to take up residence at the colony. In 1995, they took a leap that few Americans would make. Rhodes puts it less politely: "our family made what could only be interpreted by most people as an act of total madness" (29). Robert quit his job as an editor at a newspaper in Fayetteville, Arkansas, and his wife, Duann, left her position in the business office of a hospital. They were 31 years old, with a 2-year-old daughter, Shelby, when they left their home to join the Starland community.

It was, in many ways, an improbable match. Rhodes grew up in a Southern home of privilege. His father, the son of a millionaire lumber baron, owned an insurance company and traded stocks and bonds. The family maintained servants, including an older woman named Josephine Polk. Rhodes recalls riding along in the family's green and white Cadillac with electric windows to take Josephine home, feeling as if they were on a parade down "one of the poorest roads in Mississippi" and "committing a grave offense" in doing so (15). He also tells us about an accident he suffered at 13 that would leave him confined to bed or in a wheelchair for long stretches, and of a friend, introduced to us as Aurora Finn (the author notes that a few names have been changed), who gave him a book of Shelley's poetry and the deepest of friendships.

The decision to join the colony was no doubt deeply multilayered, as was the decision to leave. We know that Rhodes was raised as a Catholic, and that he turned to agnosticism as a young man. We know that he had come across Hutterites as a teenager on a trip to Montana, a meeting that had stayed in his mind. So when Rhodes and his wife were looking for "a place where we could live a very different, even radical, kind of existence," the Hutterites offered a well-grounded spiritual home (37). One of the ironies that emerges is that the Hutterites—or at least some of them—are hoping that they themselves will become more like the Rhodeses in their openness to God's leading.

Rhodes sketches a nuanced portrait of Starland, one in which some Hutterites long for a more spiritually vibrant, mission-driven community. In the epilogue, he notes that he and his family were not alone in leaving; several families and individuals likewise moved on, apparently in keeping with their own spiritual questing. In one poignant note, he discloses that the Rev. David Decker Sr., the colony's senior minister and a dear friend, died early in 2009. Still, Rhodes assures us, "a core group of families dedicated to keeping Starland vital seems to have emerged among those still living there" (200).

Though Rhodes clearly feels a certain protectiveness for the well-being of the colony, he also seeks to be an honest reporter. For example, he describes the eagerness of a group of twelve young people to be baptized one spring. Some in the group, though, did not seem fully committed to the Hutterite conviction that baptism signifies a commitment to the community for life. "Something of an uproar" (101) ensued, as elders counseled some of them to wait for baptism. Many in this group of young people eventually left the colony, either to join a "holiness" movement in Pennsylvania or to assimilate in the world at large. Rhodes will disappoint any readers who hope for an idyllic description of life in the colony. At one point he says that he had learned what it is like "to be alone,

in many ways, among 100 other people – to be strangers among strangers” [37]). One suspects that his wife, Duann, having left a professional career for a colony where women lived subserviently, would have much to contribute to this account of feeling alone.

As *Nightwatch* ends, some readers may wonder what the Hutterites themselves would make of this memoir. The Rhodes family arrived at the community in December 1995 and left in January 2002: by traditional Hutterite standards, in which communitarian roots are measured by generations, it was a short stay of six years. Would the Hutterites of Starland view the book as a window on their world shared by an insider? Or by an outsider? Would they welcome the attention? Would they think that it is a generous but honest account of a flawed people doing their best to live out the Gospel on a farming commune in northwest Sibley County? These are questions that linger, at least for one reviewer.

But the overarching sense is of the author’s deep gratitude. In closing, Rhodes remarks that he sometimes puts on an old homemade shirt and that barn coat and slips back to his days as a night watchman. He may be living in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, but part of his spirit remains back on the colony. Rhodes is at his lyrical best in closing:

*Across the sleeping fields, crisscrossed by foxes, I see the lights of the houses and sense the lives I realize I am a part of and yet can never truly touch again, certainly not from such a distance. In a world filled with such barbarity as the many wars we insist on waging, and the sinful starvation we inflict on so many around the world even while we build more bombs to kill them with, I can only say that my spirit resides on a distant road, in a faraway place where I no longer live, under moonlight. I left a large part of myself there, and I don’t think I will ever get it back (198).*

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DUANE C.S. STOLTZFUS

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*Mennonites in Early Modern Poland and Prussia.* By Peter J. Klassen. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. 2009. Pp. 260. \$50.

Peter J. Klassen has enjoyed a distinguished career as a historian of Reformation-era Europe and in particular of Protestant nonconformists in a period marred by widespread intolerance and religiously-motivated violence. His *Mennonites in Early Modern Poland and Prussia* tells the story of one of the rare early modern groups to wholly renounce violence, and their acceptance in one of the few early modern lands to treat them with broad tolerance. The stated purpose of the book is to examine the Mennonite experience in the Vistula Delta of Polish, or Royal, Prussia, especially in the prepartition era (to 1795) that has received far less scholarly attention than the subsequent period in which the area was incorporated into the Kingdom of Prussia. An equally present purpose is to trace those features of early modern Poland that made it the “haven in troubled times” (1) to which Mennonites from the West flocked in the face of religious persecution and political upheaval, and which Klassen believes marked Poland

as dynamic and progressive. While drawing upon a breadth of original research culled from Polish, German, Dutch, British, American and Canadian collections, Klassen presents this underexplored material with a nonspecialist audience in mind, producing a work subdivided into easily digestible small sections, modest in notes and bibliography, and richly illustrated, often with photographs from the author's private collection.

Klassen fills the brief space of his book with a surprising amount of information. The preface situates the rise of the Mennonite movement and its persecution by church and state authorities within the context of the early modern crisis of authority and the confessionalization paradigm that have been familiar frameworks in early modern historiography for some decades. It was, Klassen suggests, not only the Mennonites' dissenting theology and the blanket condemnation of Anabaptist groups by Catholic and Protestant authorities alike following the Münster debacle of 1535 that were responsible for the persecutory backlash Mennonites faced from the confessional church-state complex, but also their fundamental rejection of official churches based on the close connection between church and state—the building blocks of confessionalization itself—that placed the Mennonites in the crosshairs of the powers that be. Chapter 1 describes the first movement of Mennonites fleeing from Spanish persecution in the Low Countries to Royal Prussia and introduces the argument (carried forward throughout the book) that the extremely decentralized nature of the Polish state and the early spread of Lutheranism and later Calvinism among Polish nobles and towns mitigated against the formation of an intolerant Polish state church. Poland instead opted for confessional coexistence and the settlement of religious disputes through negotiation, policies enshrined in the famous Confederation of Warsaw of 1573, which Klassen praises in the strongest terms as “one of the most inspiring highlights of the Reformation era” and a “remarkable triumph of the human spirit” (15) that provided inspiration for later reform movements, including the American Revolution. Such religious policy, combined with the generally benevolent attitude of the Polish crown and the *de facto* freedom of large landowners (towns, bishops, noblemen, etc.) to establish their own settlement policies for their lands, created a welcoming atmosphere for Mennonite immigrants to travel along the already well-worn paths of commercial contact between the Netherlands and Prussia and settle into their new home.

Subsequent chapters trace the settlement and activities of Mennonites in Royal Prussia from region to region (chapters 2 through 4), the connections they helped maintain between their new homeland and the Netherlands (chapter 5), various aspects of Mennonite religious life (chapter 6), and the changing relations between Mennonites and the state as the Vistula Delta passed from Polish into Prussian control (chapters 7 through 9.)

Although the nonconfessional nature of the Polish state set the general framework for the reception Mennonites received in Royal Prussia, the deeper question posed throughout the work is why Polish towns and landowners, including many members of the Catholic hierarchy itself, chose to welcome Mennonites onto their lands when they were under no compulsion to do so. The answer Klassen provides is primarily financial: Mennonites were industrious



farmers and effective civil engineers, expert at turning wasteland into productive (and thus revenue-producing) farmland. They were also key in introducing a range of valuable industries into Royal Prussia, including the production of lace, which played an important role in the modernization of the Prussian economy. To top this off, Mennonite communities were known to offer their landlords substantial monetary “gifts” at moments when their permission to remain on the land was being called into doubt. The central thrust of the book’s argument, in fact, is that the story of the toleration of Mennonites in Royal Prussia usually boiled down to “the relative importance of religious versus economic issues” (135), and that “both secular and religious leaders could make adjustments when the price was right” (156).

Mennonites in Royal Prussia may indeed have “enjoyed a relatively large measure of integration and acceptance” (51), but it is important to note that the toleration extended to Mennonites was never more than relative—that it was always, as one section heading proclaims, “toleration but not equality” (156). Mennonites faced a series of restrictions on where they were allowed to reside; on gaining citizenship in the towns; on where (or whether) they could build their own churches and operate their own schools; and on whether they could be freed from paying dues to the local Catholic or Lutheran congregations. Navigating through these restrictions could entail significant sacrifice and cost. The most divisive of all issues, especially in the period after incorporation into the Prussian monarchy, was the tension between the Mennonites’ traditional pacifism and increasing state demands that able-bodied males provide military service. Klassen skillfully points out the irony that Prussian Mennonites’ residence in a “progressive” state holding to the liberal principles of the equal treatment (and obligation) of all before the law and the freedom of individual religious conscience created heated rifts within the Mennonite community. Some believed that the tolerant welcome they received required them to accept military service obligations while others emigrated to hold on to their pacifist principles. The generally upbeat tone of the volume is also tinged with a touch of melancholy over the ultimate fate of the Prussian Mennonite communities following World War II, a sense powerfully evoked by numerous photographs of Mennonite buildings that have either fallen into decay or that no longer exist.

Although Klassen clearly succeeds in making the story of Mennonite life in the Vistula Delta available to a broad audience, there are certain places where the book is open to critique. The geographic and thematic organization of the work is such that the reader often encounters the same piece of information or analysis in multiple chapters, a pattern that could have been limited with tighter editing. More significantly, I wish that Klassen had more explicitly explored the potential of the Prussian Mennonites’ narrative of local religious accommodation and the predominance of economic factors over a concern for religious orthodoxy so as to complicate our understanding of the confessionalization paradigm itself that he presents as one of the framing elements of early modern European history.

*The Origin of the Schwarzenau Brethren.* By Marcus Meier. Trans. Dennis L. Slabaugh. Philadelphia: Brethren Encyclopedia, Inc. 2008. Pp. 246. \$40.

Marcus Meier's *The Origin of the Schwarzenau Brethren* is a major achievement in the study of Brethren origins. The book investigates the events, people and ideas that shaped the beginnings of the Brethren movement, which took concrete form in 1708 with the baptism by trine immersion of eight people in Schwarzenau, Germany. Meier's study aims to determine why a small group of religious separatists who had rejected the organized church decided to form a visible congregation based upon strict adherence to the New Testament. Meier is particularly interested in situating Brethren thought and practice within the history of ideas. Using a wealth of new primary sources, he provides the most thorough and nuanced explanation of Brethren origins to date. In doing so, he hopes to advance the discussion of the relationship between Anabaptism and Pietism in that period.

The book includes a historical section (chapters 1-6) and a theological section (chapters 7-12). In the first, Meier carefully constructs a picture of the early Brethren by exploring the biographies of significant figures; surveying the social, political and religious conditions in the Palatinate leading up to the founding of the first Brethren congregation; and discussing the state of Anabaptism and Pietism during that period. In the theological section, Meier investigates the sources of Mack's views, discusses the basic principles underlying Brethren belief and practice, and explores four theological themes: the normativity of the early church, baptism, ecclesiology and eschatology.

Meier's analysis rules out any simplistic distinctions between Anabaptism and Pietism during the period in question. His analysis of the sources demonstrates a complex interplay between Anabaptist and Pietist ideas, showing that the two movements had many common interests. The only significant omission in Meier's treatment is a discussion of the centrality of regeneration in both Anabaptist and Pietist thought. Regeneration is the foundation of the revitalized personal and corporate life desired by both movements. The new birth is as essential to the *praxis pietatis* as to the *Nachfolge Christi*.

Besides its fresh treatment of the relationship between Anabaptism and Pietism, Meier's work carefully distinguishes several schools of thought within the Radical Pietist movement itself: a "pure spiritualism," a "more moderate mystical spiritualism" and an Anabaptist strand. Meier demonstrates that the Brethren were most influenced by the Anabaptist strand (145). He also compares the Brethren to the Amish, citing parallels in the thought of Alexander Mack and Jakob Ammann on such matters as separation, obedience and the ban (59-61).

On the basis of his analysis of Anabaptism and Pietism, Meier tackles the question of the relative influence of the two movements on Brethren origins. For the most part, his analysis is insightful and carefully nuanced. For example, he argues that the Brethren commitment to believer's baptism derives from Anabaptism, while their practice of trine immersion derives from Radical Pietist sources (121, 124). Meier makes a forceful case for the importance of Jane Leade and the Philadelphian movement, alongside these two traditions, to the genesis of the Brethren. Although this Philadelphian influence has been suggested by

other researchers, the case has never been made so strongly. On this subject I would contest some of Meier's conclusions.

To argue for Philadelphian influence on Brethren ecclesiology, Meier attempts to distance the Brethren from Anabaptism by contrasting the ways in which Menno Simons and Alexander Mack appropriate the example of the early church. He notes, correctly, that Mack's retrieval of the early church begins with historical accounts and moves from there to the New Testament; Menno, by contrast, begins with Scripture and refers to church history only for apologetic reasons. However, Meier then concludes that the different starting points demonstrate different sources of authority: "The life of the original Christian congregation, thus, is given a far greater significance [in Brethren thought] than in Anabaptism, because the argument from Scripture had lost credibility for many after the Thirty Years' War" (109).

Whatever may have been the case in Europe more generally, the argument from Scripture had not lost its appeal for Alexander Mack. Mack drew on history more than Menno did, probably because he had more historical resources available to him. The histories provided an entry point into the apostolic church. However, for Mack, as for Menno, the only source of authority was the Bible, particularly the command and example of Christ and the apostles as recorded in the New Testament. Like Menno, Mack rejected appeals to human testimony rather than to the commands of Christ.<sup>2</sup> Meier's distinction between Menno's appeal to the apostles' teaching and Mack's appeal to their lives resembles the oversimplifications of Anabaptism and Pietism that Meier is seeking to overturn.

Meier's contention that the Philadelphian view of the church was "decisive" in the genesis of the Brethren (128; cf. 134) is his most ambitious and problematic claim. He asserts that the Brethren derived their idea of the restitution of the true church from the Philadelphian movement rather than from Anabaptism (108, 128). Mack's emphasis on unity and love among brothers and sisters derived from the Philadelphian ideal (83). The early Brethren attracted people from various confessional backgrounds, just as the Philadelphian movement desired to overcome confessional divisions by gathering true Christians in a nondenominational church of the Spirit (128, 131).

However, I would argue that the interconfessional nature of the early Brethren congregations was more an accident of history than a theological commitment. Mack's perspective is not nondenominational but sectarian. Although Mack deplores the variety of opinions within Radical Pietism,<sup>3</sup> he has no interest in interconfessional unity. In *Rights and Ordinances*, he calls for separation from the world (the "body of Satan"), including "all false sects and religions."<sup>4</sup> Like the Anabaptists before him, he insists on unity *within* the separated group, not beyond it.<sup>5</sup> Unlike Jane Leade, he rejects all claims to direct

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2. Alexander Mack, *Rights and Ordinances*, in *European Origins of the Brethren*, ed. Donald F. Durnbaugh (Elgin, Ill.: Brethren Press, 1958), 395.

3. *Ibid.*, 380.

4. *Ibid.*, 363.

5. *Ibid.*, 370-371.

revelation from the Spirit, insisting that the Spirit always agrees with Scripture, which will create unity in the church.<sup>6</sup>

Meier's proposal on Brethren ecclesiology is intriguing but finally unpersuasive. Whatever initial inspiration Brethren may have received from Philadelphian ideas, their developed ecclesiology is thoroughly Anabaptist. The Brethren bear the same relationship to the churchly Pietism of their time as the Anabaptists did to the magisterial Protestantism of theirs: they believe that reform of the established church(es) is not enough; faithfulness to Scripture requires the establishment of a separated congregation that practices the New Testament ordinances such as baptism and the ban according to the New Testament model.

Despite these reservations, I commend the prodigious scholarship that has gone into this volume. Meier's impressive research greatly expands our understanding of Brethren origins and gives us a much clearer picture of the complex movement that was Radical Pietism. His careful analysis of the sources shatters any superficial notions of the relationship between Anabaptism and Pietism in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. As a theologian in the Anabaptist-Brethren tradition, I welcome the publication of this work in the Brethren Encyclopedia monograph series. It is an outstanding contribution to the field of Brethren studies.

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BRENDA B. COLIJN

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*Restoring the Household: The Quest of the Grace Brethren Church.* By Todd Scoles. Winona Lake, Ind.: BMH Books. 2008. Pp. 279. \$12.99.

This book by Grace Brethren pastor Todd Scoles aims to explain the theological tensions, challenges and opportunities facing his denomination. He sets these tensions in the context of American church history, and shows how each choice (for example, in favor of evangelicalism or fundamentalism) in turn presented the group with a new set of choices. Scoles seeks to encourage new and renewed theological discussion in Grace Brethren circles on this, the 300th anniversary of the Brethren movement (1708-2008).

Readers of this journal may appreciate a bit of context for the book's argument. The Grace Brethren, formally known as the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches (F.G.B.C.), with a college and seminary in Winona Lake, Indiana, is one of several Brethren groups that trace their origins to the Schwarzenau Brethren of 1708. The Brethren, whose members soon immigrated to North America, emerged from a mix of Anabaptist and radical Pietist influences. During 1881-1883 a major split in the movement produced three groups: the so-called old orders, who became the Old German Baptist Brethren; the so-called progressives who became the Brethren Church; and the so-called conservatives, who retained the title German Baptist Brethren but later renamed themselves Church of the Brethren.

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6. Ibid., 384.

In 1939 the Brethren Church (the progressive group), in turn, split. The portion of the denomination anchored at Ashland, Ohio, retained the name Brethren Church, while the so-called Grace group (rallying around Grace Theological Seminary, which had organized in 1937) became the F.G.B.C. Then in 1992 the F.G.B.C. divided, as the Conservative Grace Brethren separated from the F.G.B.C. The 1992 schism centered on the requirements for church membership and the mode of baptism (the Brethren having traditionally insisted on trine-immersion), and the ensuing controversy led to a decline in membership of the F.G.B.C., which until then had been the only Brethren denomination that was growing.

Scoles devotes the majority of his work to tracing these developments and the redefinition of identity that took place in the wake of each schism. He also explains major Brethren practices and theologies, and examines earlier New Testament, Reformation, Anabaptist, Pietist, American evangelical and fundamentalist influences.

Scoles has extensive experience within the progressive wing of the Brethren movement. He is a minister of some standing in the F.G.B.C., and has graduated from both Grace Theological Seminary (M.Div.) and Ashland Seminary (D.Min.).

As a work of history, *Restoring the Household* supersedes the standard history of the F.G.B.C., Homer Kent's book, *Conquering Frontiers*, first published in 1958.<sup>7</sup> Kent's optimistic work was written during a time when the young denomination was growing and emboldened by a focus on missions and dispensational fundamentalism. In 2003 David R. Plaster heavily revised Kent's book and republished it as *Finding Our Focus: A History of the Grace Brethren Church*. Plaster wrote a decade after the painful 1992 split had robbed the F.G.B.C. of its confidence, and he presented a forced optimism that the F.G.B.C. would renew itself through mission. Five years later, Scoles sees a denomination that is still in need of reform and direction.

Scoles is insightful, then, when he reflects on the dilemma of the F.G.B.C. in twenty-first-century America. He draws on historian Robert G. Clouse to express a frustration: "The Grace Brethren today reminds one of an old coin which has passed from hand to hand so often that the inscription on it is almost undecipherable unless it is held to the light at just the proper angle" (216).<sup>8</sup> Scoles contends that "The danger to the Fellowship is not that its members *cannot* discuss doctrinal differences. The danger is that either, because of a lack of trust, *they will not*, or, because of a lack of opportunity or concern, they *do not* enter into such discussions" (225). He suggests prophetically: "I believe that without continued cooperation on projects that further Christ's purposes for His church in a way that preserves the freedom of the local congregations, the Fellowship

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7. Homer A. Kent Sr., *Conquering Frontiers: A History of the Brethren Church* (Winona Lake, Ind.: BMH Books, 1972). Kent revised and updated the volume in 1972. In 2003 David R. Plaster heavily revised and updated it further when it was published as *Finding Our Focus: A History of the Grace Brethren Church* (Winona Lake, Ind.: BMH Books, 2003).

8. Robert G. Clouse, "Brethren and Modernity: Change and Development in the Progressive/Grace Church," *Brethren Life and Thought* (Summer 1988), 205. See also Clouse, "Changes and Partings: Division in the Progressive/Grace Brethren Church," *Brethren Life and Thought* (Fall 1997), 180-198.

will find no real reason to exist" (246). Scoles's reform, as it turns out, is a denominational structure that encourages this cooperation and a renewed set of values emphasizing the Great Commission. But he also suggests new vigor in emphasizing Brethren ordinances (such as baptism and the love feast) as a way of demonstrating obedience to Christ (238-239).

There are some significant weaknesses in this work. First, Scoles relies on E. H. Broadbent's *The Pilgrim Church*, which leads him to conclude that the Brethren are not really Protestants and also makes his treatment of the church prior to the Reformation come off as anti-Catholic.<sup>9</sup> Second, while Scoles is able to speak of the 1939 Brethren Church schism with some objectivity, he is heavily influenced by a traditional narrative that interprets the split as a result of the modernist/fundamentalist controversy. Such an interpretation, however, is historically problematic. For example, in an extensive investigation into the causes of the 1939 division, Jerry Young notes that the Brethren modernist/fundamentalist controversy came to a conclusion in 1921 with the publication of the *Message of the Brethren* that signaled victory for the fundamentalists. Young makes a convincing case that the ensuing fighting in the 1930s was more of a lover's quarrel among fundamentalists.<sup>10</sup> *Reforming the Household* would have been enhanced by a discussion of Young's assessment.

Third, unlike Kent, Scoles is weak on emphasizing the efforts of the Grace Brethren abroad. This is odd given the strength and activity of Grace Brethren International Missions. For example, the number of Grace Brethren in Africa alone is about ten times those of their American counterparts. Last, Scoles's emphasis on ordinances may leave some with the feeling that he has not dug deeply enough. For example, he does not enter a larger conversation on discipleship that includes the Anabaptist themes such as social justice, peace or reconciliation. However, Scoles may have some success in gently prodding the F.G.B.C. to reexamine itself and its theological heritage as it continues to move into the future.

Readers will benefit the most from this book if they view it as having been written as a work of a pastor making a theological case more than as a work of church history. This explains the two meanings of the title *Restoring the Household*. The first includes the role of Christ in the church, and here Scoles mentions the Brethren patriarch Alexander Mack. Mack "recognized only one Lord and Householder of the Church, and His will was expressed through the words of the Scripture" (111). The second meaning is to suggest the need for more theological conversations concerning the restoration of a small denomination in numeric decline. To this reviewer it seems that although Scoles has painted a sobering picture of the F.G.B.C., his narrative suggests hope that its members will find ways to extend God's grace to others as much as they have focused on the grace that God has given to them.

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9. E. H. Broadbent, *The Pilgrim Church* (London: Pickering and Inglis Ltd., 1974).

10. Jerry Young, "The Relationship Between Local Grace Brethren Churches and Their Denominational Leadership" (D.Min. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, May 1996).