

BOOK REVIEWS

Des communautés mouvantes : Les « sociétés des frères chrétiens » en Rhénanie du nord Juliers, Berg, Cologne ver 1530-1694. By Mathilde Monge. Geneva, Switzerland: Librairie Droz. 2015. Pp. 316. 41 CHF.

In research both thorough and important, Mathilde Monge, an assistant professor of history at the University of Toulouse, examines Anabaptism in the Imperial free city of Cologne and the surrounding duchies of Juliers-Berg, covering the period from 1533 until the end of the seventeenth century. While never becoming Protestant, this region was initially attracted to Erasmian ideals of reform before eventually deciding in favor of Counter-Reformation Catholicism. The area was also populated by small communities of Lutheran and Reformed dissidents, the latter finding themselves in more or less the same legal situation as Anabaptists.

Having consulted extensive archival resources, (cf. 21-23), mostly records of interrogations, Monge identified 724 Anabaptists living in the region between 1530 and 1650, 259 from Cologne itself. In Appendix 5 (292-301), the author describes in detail the methodology used to analyze the sources, and the functioning of local institutions from which they originate. Maps and analytical illustrations are found throughout the work and in the appendices.

An important methodological guiding point consists of describing Anabaptism as a relational phenomenon, defined as much by outsiders as by the groups themselves. Through the examination of the social and geographical networks of which they were a part, as well as of mechanisms of societal inclusion and exclusion, Monge concludes that these Anabaptists were not as separated from surrounding society as is often claimed.

The first three chapters of Monge's book study the external factors contributing to Anabaptist identity. She begins by examining the way the notion of heresy contributed to the definition and exclusion of Anabaptists, creating a descriptive identity that often did not correspond to reality. Catholics and Protestants alike used the designation of "heretics" to construct and consolidate their own rival orthodoxies, while political institutions used the notion to affirm and strengthen their power over the territories they ruled.

In any event, the extremely harsh laws promulgated against Anabaptists were often not applicable. Local officials would sometimes resist imperial decrees (for example, the death penalty) in order to affirm their own authority and resist hierarchical encroachment. They viewed their role as one of keeping peace in their own jurisdictions wherein sympathy for religious "dissidents" was often observed. In addition, lacking the financial and political means necessary to deal with "heretics" meant that local authorities would often simply look the other way.

Denunciation of Anabaptists occurred most frequently in prison and under torture. Local populations were hesitant to denounce their neighbors and often remained silent, thus providing a kind of tacit support for Anabaptists (as well as for Lutherans and Reformed).

Monge's study provides the reader with different reasons for the tacit acceptance of Anabaptists between the periods of heavy persecution. (Note that the majority of executions happened between 1557 and 1565). The difference between their everyday life and practice did not correspond with the more official, negative, post-Münster description of Anabaptists. Neighbors to Anabaptists during this period were becoming more familiar with the co-existence of different interpretations of Christian faith and practice, perhaps an early indication of European privatization of "religion."

After examining external factors contributing to the identity, inclusion, and exclusion of these Anabaptists, Monge focuses on the description of the communities themselves (chapters 4-6). They are first placed in the larger historical context of dissidence and "deviance" already present in the area in previous centuries. These communities were also part of a larger international network (the Netherlands, Aix la Chapelle, the Palatinate, Alsace), something which helped to build and reinforce identity over time.

Different rituals, such as baptism, communion, and discipline (exclusion), were important identity-shaping factors for these communities, although Monge claims that most members did not really understand the theology of their leaders (166). Daily life, along with other more frequent practices and the attitudes they shaped, also played an important role in the creation of an "Anabaptist culture." Reading Scripture, singing together, and the importance of certain leaders contributed to this culture in which martyrdom was an important element. Several writings that circulated in these communities, or that were published in Cologne, are mentioned (von Imbroich, Rothmann, Hoffmann, Denck, Kautz) without any major content analysis. As time went on, these small local communities formed their identity, and fit into a larger European Anabaptist network.

Chapter 7 provides a detailed, descriptive analysis of where Anabaptists lived and their social relationships with their neighbors. In fact, there was no separate "Anabaptist neighborhood" in Cologne. Lutherans, Calvinists, and Anabaptists were scattered throughout the city. Monge concludes that Anabaptists were thus not living in ghettos separated from the rest of society and found their place among others, who often kept silence about their neighbors or even protected them.

The final chapter leads us to the period of the dissolution of Anabaptism, at the beginning of the seventeenth century in Cologne and at the end of the century in the territory of Juliers-Berg. Monge rightly argues that emigration and assimilation into the larger society were the two main reasons for this disappearance. She then follows up with a detailed descriptive analysis of the networks of emigration.

A certain modesty in Monge's conclusions is to be appreciated, as there is no claim to have written an exhaustive history of Anabaptism in this area or assertion that the archival evidence can be generalized beyond the episodes related.

The results nevertheless point to a certain tension or ambiguity in the identity of these small Anabaptist communities. While holding to traditional Anabaptist tenets relating to baptism and oaths, Monge does not consider these communities as “radical” or “separatist,” due in part to the fact that they continued to live alongside of others and to integrate themselves as much as possible into society. These Anabaptists lived out the tension between their “radical spiritual choice and the continuity of everyday life” (250).

Mathilde Monge does an impressive job of interpreting the available data and applying her chosen methodology. Much can be gained from the examination of Anabaptists over a longer period of time rather than staying within the framework of early beginnings. The splintering of Western Christianity generated the “confessional” period in Europe, and the development and survival (or disappearance) of Anabaptist communities needs to be considered in that context. The existence of these communities along with dissident Lutherans and Reformed in Catholic territory signified that religious and political authorities were faced with a plurality of “heresies,” something which, at times, created more peaceful bonds between Anabaptists and others, especially the Reformed.

Perhaps due in part to my own research and methodology, I find that her examination of the content of theological texts and hymns might have been more thorough. While it is possible that “ordinary” Anabaptists did not have the theological understanding of their leaders, it must be said that maintaining their convictions demanded courage, and the theological content of those convictions did much to contribute to Anabaptist self-identity. Monge claims, for example, that it was more the simple fact of singing together than the theological content of Anabaptist hymns that was identity-building (172). Of course, as the book asserts, Anabaptists did sing the songs of others. This is hardly surprising given the fact that Anabaptists did share basic elements of a common identity with other Christians. That being said, Anabaptist hymnody was an important vehicle of more specific Anabaptist emphases, including believers’ baptism and the refusal of violence, and it is hard to believe that the content of these songs played little or no role in the formation and maintenance of identity.

More specific references to *Ein schöne bekanntnus* of Thomas von Imbroich and the Concept of Cologne (1591) would have contributed to a more complete understanding of the self-identity of these communities. Even though Anabaptist communities disappeared from Cologne, the Concept contributed to maintaining relationships between the Dutch and the Swiss Anabaptists of the Palatinate, Switzerland, and Alsace. Through the influence of Cologne being a kind of “geographical bridge,” Alsatian and Palatine Anabaptists adopted the Dordrecht Confession during the seventeenth century and Dutch Mennonites helped those in the South when they were hard pressed by their governments. The longer term effects of documents are also an important part of identity-formation and network relationships beyond local communities and languages.

Mathilde Monge’s research is part of an expanding French-language literature related to Anabaptist history and theology. For such work, she is to be thanked. It is my hope that those writing about this subject in English, German, or Dutch will

also take into consideration and embrace French voices in the ongoing quest for a deeper understanding of Anabaptism.

Centre Mennonite de Paris

Faculté Libre de Théologie Évangélique (Vaux sur Seine)

NEAL BLOUGH

A Companion to the Swiss Reformation. Edited by Amy Nelson Burnett and Emidio Campi. Leiden: Brill. 2016. Pp. 682, 81 full-color images, 8 maps. \$255.

This book sets itself an ambitious goal: to provide a comprehensive account of the Reformation in Switzerland over the course of the sixteenth century. As the editors note, textbook descriptions of the Swiss Reformation are usually “limited to developments in Zurich, subsumed under the categories of urban reformation and the Eucharistic controversy, and presented as background to the ministry of Jean Calvin and the development of ‘Calvinism’” (introduction, 3). The birth of Anabaptism is also usually told as part of the Swiss Reformation story, its origins and the first five years or so of its existence often described in detail. The book as a whole, by contrast, aims to “go beyond the traditional narrative, which concentrates on the earliest, most dramatic phase of the Reformation” (introduction, 9). It intends to expand the narrative not only chronologically over the full sixteenth century, but also geographically by including less prominent states and territories.

It must be said that this volume succeeds admirably in attaining its goal, with one regrettable exception about which more will be said later. The contributions by the fourteen different scholars and specialists are of excellent quality, summarizing a wide range of original research that often lead to surprising insights. In scope and detail this book has no equal in the English language—or perhaps any language for that matter. It is a worthy, more detailed companion and successor to Bruce Gordon’s excellent survey *The Swiss Reformation* (Manchester University Press, 2002).

The book is divided into three parts. The first part is composed of only two contributions, the introduction and opening chapter, “The Swiss Confederation Before the Reformation,” by Regula Schmid. The latter provides the late-medieval background to the complex political, social, economic, and religious reality of the states and territories that made up the Swiss Confederation at the beginning of the sixteenth century. This first chapter and the last (chapter 16: “Religious Stalemate and Confessional Alignments,” Thomas Maissen) can be read as bookends, highlighting the way in which the Reformation complicated but ultimately contributed to the political formation of the Swiss Confederation over the course of the sixteenth century. Looking to the looming Thirty Years’ War from the vantage point of the end of the century, Maissen notes that even though “confessional plurality” at one point threatened the existence of the Confederation itself, and prevented the pursuit of a univocal foreign policy, nevertheless this same plurality “ultimately benefitted the Swiss because, uncertain as they were among themselves about eternal, divine truth, it allowed them to abstain from the

destructive wars that were being waged over these issues in the rest of Europe" (chapter 16, 618).

The heart of the book is found in Part II, containing nine substantive chapters describing the Reformations in Zurich, Bern, Basel, Schaffhausen, St. Gallen, and Appenzell, the "Failed Reformations," the Reformation in Grisons (Graubünden), and the Reformation in the Francophone Territories, and ending with a chapter on "The Swiss Anabaptists." In all of these chapters, with the exception of the last, the historical narratives succeed in extending the Reformation story over the length of the sixteenth century. Chapter 2 ("The Zurich Reformation," Emidio Campi), for example, not only reprises the well-known story of Huldrych Zwingli and the dramatic events of the 1520s and 1530s, but gives a full account of the institutionalization of the Zurich church under Heinrich Bullinger, carrying the narrative through the Second Helvetic Confession (1566) into the era of orthodoxy and the Synod of Dort (1618-1619).

Zurich's significant role in promoting its vision and model of reform is evident throughout, but the subsequent chapters reveal the limitations of Zurich's influence and highlight the considerable independence of the individual Swiss states. The chapters on "The Reformation in Bern" (chapter 3, Martin Sallmann) and "The Reformation in Basel" (chapter 4, Amy Nelson Burnett) illuminate how differing political aims of the Swiss city states shaped the progress of reform. While Zurich looked primarily to the east, Bern looked to the west, securing the Vaud and other Francophone territories in 1536 and providing military and political support to Geneva in its quest for religious reform and political independence. Chapter 9 ("Francophone Territories Allied to the Swiss Confederation," Michael W. Bruening) expands and extends the story begun in chapter 3, outlining in addition the tensions between Geneva and Bern/Zurich and the eventual resolution of differences between French-speaking Calvinists and German-speaking Reformed.

Basel, which joined the Confederacy only in 1501, occupied territory bordering on the Holy Roman Empire and the Swiss states. The only Swiss state with a university, and famous for its resident humanists and printing enterprises, Basel too followed its own course, initially looking more to the north; it integrated only slowly into the Swiss Confederacy. The full institutionalization of the Reformation in Basel did not come until the last quarter of the sixteenth century. The complicating details in these studies of Zurich, Bern, and Basel, the three largest Swiss Reformed states, bring a helpful, refracted light to a reforming process that was anything but simple and direct.

The next four chapters in the book are particularly welcome for English-speaking readers, since the Reformation in these Swiss territories is often overlooked in summary narratives. "The Reformation in Schaffhausen" (chapter 5, Erich Bryner) traces the reforming process in a vulnerable and politically-dependent city, in the absence of strong reforming personalities. Schaffhausen only found its own reforming voice after 1566 under the leadership of native son Johann Conrad Ulmer. In "The Reformation in St. Gallen and Appenzell" (chapter 6, also by Erich Bryner) and "Failed Reformations" (chapter 7, Sundar Henny) the enormous political and religious consequences of the Second Kappel War (1531)

are made clear. Not only was Zwingli killed and the evangelical states defeated, but the war marked the end of evangelical expansion and rolled back earlier gains made by the reformed Swiss states; indeed, it threatened to destroy the Confederacy along confessional lines.

Although from one perspective the story of the Swiss Reformation can be told as a steady march toward confessionalization and Reformed orthodoxy, the history of reform after 1531 in the less powerful Swiss states reveals remarkable levels of institutionalized coexistence worked out between Catholic and Reformed citizens and various lordships. Here the histories of St. Gallen, Appenzell, Toggenburg, and the Rheintal (chapter 6), Thurgau and Glarus (chapter 7), and the Graubünden (chapter 8, "The Reformation in the Three Leagues [Grisons]," Jan-Andrea Bernhard) are instructive and informative. They reveal unique local arrangements and differences of opinion concerning the relationship of church to state.

In view of the stated intention of this book to present an expanded chronological and geographical narrative, readers of this journal will wish to know how Anabaptism fares. Chapter 10 by Andrea Strübind is titled "The Swiss Anabaptists," but by its content it would have been more accurately named "The Beginnings of Anabaptism in Zurich (again), with some appended generalizations." In a substantial chapter of fifty-four pages, the oft-repeated history of Zurich and Anabaptist beginnings before 1527 take up the first thirty! The detailed scholarly argumentation on Zurich beginnings is not without merit as such, and reflects the author's own area of expertise; but the strong focus on Zurich does not adequately speak to the aims of this book. In fact, a good bit of the information on early Anabaptism in Zurich is a repeat of what has already been presented in summary fashion in chapter 2 (see 75-76; 80-83). Even the noteworthy discussion of Heinrich Bullinger and the Anabaptists (437-438) was first summarized in chapter 2 (see 111-113). Excellent published studies exist that could have been used to extend the Zurich story to the end of the century, but they were not used to deepen or extend the narrative. (For example, Urs B. Leu and Christian Scheidegger's *Die Zürcher Täufer, 1525-1700* [Theologischer Verlag, 2007]).

In terms of the spread and continuation of Anabaptism in Swiss territories, chapter 10 is highly selective and chronologically limited, devoting only fourteen pages to Anabaptism in St. Gallen, Appenzell, Basel, and Bern, with these accounts ending around 1527 with one passing reference to the 1530s. Again, studies of Anabaptism exist that carry the story into the end of the sixteenth century, such as Hanspeter Jecker's study of Anabaptism in Basel, *Ketzer-Rebellen-Heilige. Das Basler Täuferium von 1580-1700* (Verlag des Kantons Basel-Landschaft, 1998) and for Bern, the volume edited by Rudolf Dellsperger and Hans Rudolf Lavater, *Die Wahrheit ist untödlich: Berner Täufer in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Simowa Verlag, 2007). Although the existence of these works is noted, they are not used to extend the chronological narrative in the chapter. Thus, although the author claims to be awaiting "studies of Swiss Anabaptism with a wider sweep" (390), many such studies already exist, but were not fully utilized. Even collating and referencing passing comments to Anabaptism in the chapters co-published in the Swiss Reformation book itself would have helped flesh out chapter 10 more adequately.

Some omissions are inexplicable. Chapter 10, for example, has no mention at all of Anabaptism in Schaffhausen or Graubünden, although the presence of Anabaptism in those Swiss territories is well known. Careful readers of the volume will find valuable information on Anabaptism in those territories in their respective chapters (see chapter 5, 223-224; 227-229; chapter 8, 298; 309-311; 318-319; 329-330; 355-356). The meager seven pages that chapter 10 devotes to "The Further Development of Anabaptism" return the reader to Zurich around 1530 and, apart from the attention paid to Bullinger, one meets only broad generalities concerning underground churches, meetings in border areas, flight to Moravia, and disputations. There is no summary of the situation lived by Anabaptists in the individual Swiss states for the latter part of the century.

In short, the chance to tell the Swiss Anabaptist story from its birth to the end of the sixteenth century, in the context of a book that tells the Reformation story in such a chronological sweep, and the chance to extend the Anabaptist story to the much-neglected Swiss territories, were simply opportunities missed. Likewise the significant social and economic impact in Switzerland of mass Anabaptist migrations to Moravia in the later sixteenth century as well as the persistent Anabaptist opposition to religious centralization and Anabaptist appeals for religious toleration were all aspects of the extended story that go unmentioned. Readers interested in how Anabaptism interacted with the wider Swiss Reformation will nevertheless find useful supplementary information here and there throughout the book, noted in passing in individual chapters.

Part 3 of the book, devoted to "Outcomes," moves away from localized historical studies to retrospective conclusions about the results of the Reformation in Switzerland. Emidio Campi provides a "Theological Profile" (chapter 11), concluding that the "doctrinal distinctives" of Swiss Reformed theology are "the synodal form of church government, a new understanding of the sacraments, and the unity of the covenant of grace that stretches from the Old to the New Testaments" (486-487). The covenantal unity of the Testaments in particular was opposed by Anabaptists with increasing sophistication as the century progressed. In "Polity and Worship in the Swiss Reformed Churches" (chapter 12), Bruce Gordon points to the shared points of polity and institutionalization achieved by the end of the century. Just as one can trace the development of theological distinctives through individual chapters, so one can also profitably trace the ongoing discussion of the place of the church as a part of the state, a point on which Anabaptists also were engaged interlocutors and critics up to the end of the century and beyond.

Chapter 13 ("Schools and Education, 1500-1600," Karin Maag) summarizes the substantial advances achieved in education over the century, while chapter 14, "Swiss Society: Family, Gender, and the Poor" by Kaspar von Greyerz, concludes that Reformed states and churches cooperated in the control of morals, becoming increasingly less concerned with theological orthodoxy and more with social control (566). Chapter 15 ("Reformation Culture," Irena Backus) addresses the vaguely-defined subject by focusing on some specific examples from Zurich: prophecy, witchcraft, magic, and schools. The book ends with a retrospective look at political developments (chapter 16, "Religious Stalemate and Confessional

Alignments: Dynamics and Stagnation in the Confederation from 1531 to 1618," Thomas Maissen), a fitting conclusion to what is, overall, an excellent "Companion" to the Swiss Reformation.

Notwithstanding disappointment concerning the limited treatment of Anabaptism in the space allotted to it, the book is collectively of the highest quality, without doubt the best available in its field.

Conrad Grebel University College

C. Arnold Snyder

Martyrs Mirror: A Social History. By David L. Weaver-Zercher. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. 2016. Pp. 440. \$49.95.

The largest book printed in colonial America, the 1748/1749 German translation (produced at Ephrata, Pennsylvania) of Thieleman van Braght's *Martyrs Mirror or Bloody Theater*, is a quintessential example of the Anabaptist martyrological tradition. Yet this volume and its large family of *Martyrs Mirror* editions and translations are little known and barely understood outside the Anabaptist faith. David Weaver-Zercher's beautifully written and meticulously researched book, *Martyrs Mirror: A Social History*, thus provides an invaluable service to anyone open to learning about the journey of the book and the faith that reveres it. Weaver-Zercher masterfully weaves into one coherent narrative the *Martyrs Mirror's* historical background in the Anabaptist persecutions, its textual precursors, van Braght's pivotal collecting endeavor culminating in the 1660 publication in Dutch, the various illustrations (especially Jan Luyken's influential engravings in the 1685 edition), its various translations and editions in Europe and America, and its contemporary uses among different orientations within the Anabaptist faith.

The book is divided into three parts: Part I surveys the *Martyrs Mirror's* religious, historical, and literary background all the way through the completion of van Braght's momentous publishing project, fulfilling his goal of connecting early Christian, medieval, and Reformation-age martyrs in one continuous genealogy of the true church. In part II, Weaver-Zercher traces the history of the illustration, adaptation, translation, publication, and dissemination of the *Martyrs Mirror*, chiefly in North America, which became the gravitational center of the international Anabaptist movement. Part III synthesizes contemporary approaches to reading, buying, teaching, and using the *Martyrs Mirror*, chiefly among the Anabaptists' three main subdivisions: tradition-minded (especially Old Order Amish), conservative, and assimilated. Throughout its long history, the *Martyrs Mirror's* many republications have usually been triggered by one of two, seemingly contradictory, conditions: a slacking of Anabaptist faith during times and in places of relative comfort and toleration as well as persecution, war, and the resulting fear that Anabaptists' commitment to nonresistance might be coming under pressure. The motivations and goals were the same: to "fortify" the resolve of each generation to follow the Anabaptist martyrs by committing to the principle of defenselessness and to practice true discipleship.

Each part of the book comes with specific strengths and highlights: Part I provides a useful summary of the Anabaptist movement and the waves of persecutions it experienced; its pan-European spread and diversification; and the beginnings of the martyrological tradition within a variety of textual genres, ranging from prison letters to hymns to early martyr books. Part II contains a detailed treatment of Jan Luyken's iconic illustrations, first included in the *Martyrs Mirror's* 1685 edition, which became the emotional touchstones of the Anabaptist reverence for the martyrs. Here, Weaver-Zercher also gives a tightly written account of the Ephrata Cloister's almost mythic feat of translating the Mennonites' Dutch *Martyrs Mirror* into German. Though the story has been told many times, his analysis explains better than other scholarship how trans-denominational concepts of persecution, suffering, and discipleship provided a common spiritual matrix among German-speaking dissident groups and thus helped to overcome qualms about doctrinal differences. Part III begins with an overview of the varieties of North American Anabaptism that is most helpful for readers outside the fold and would serve as an effective teaching tool for any course on the history of religion in America. In surveying the various uses and roles of the *Martyrs Mirror* among these groups, Weaver-Zercher effectively employs interviews and other oral evidence to paint—especially for non-Anabaptists—a most intriguing portrait of the book's place in the faith today.

Throughout, Weaver-Zercher opens for outsiders a fascinating window into the history and variety of lived Anabaptist experiences and the *Martyrs Mirror's* role in it. Yet his preface, too narrow and bare-bones, misses the opportunity to articulate fully the relevance of this martyr book for a wider audience. For example, the few "central questions" (10) raised in the preface do not provide enough critical focus to propel readers through a lengthy account of the book's genesis and publication history; moreover, this narrow questioning sells short the incredibly rich issues and questions emerging at the end of Weaver-Zercher's book. There, he intriguingly fleshes out crucial critiques and reappraisals of the *Martyrs Mirror* among various Anabaptist groups that strongly appeal to any reader's contemplation of issues such as doctrinal and inter-religious conflict, a Christian's response to violence and war, the tension between separation from and engagement with the world, and the deep philosophical debates between dualistic and relativist worldviews. In comparing John D. Roth's praise of the *Martyrs Mirror's* central insight that "truth is knowable" (244) with Melvin Goering's sprawling critique of the book's moral absolutism, Weaver-Zercher invites readers to question their own response to worldly developments and conflicts. Assimilated Mennonites today in many ways share the academic principle of critical thinking, which considers "good" and "evil" as part of the prevailing discursive regimes of specific social and historical moments rather than philosophical and moral absolutes. The result is a flirtation among more "liberal" Anabaptists with an ecumenism that would require an end to vilifying the descendants of the martyrs' executioners. More importantly, Anabaptists vary in determining whether their historical commitment to "defenselessness" still necessitates a non-engagement of political and social problems or whether a more engaged social activism would more properly constitute the modern analogues of two key stories already part of the martyr tradition: Simon the Shopkeeper's

refusal to bow to an oppressive church hierarchy and Dirk Willems giving up his life to save his pursuer. In fact, the increasing popularity of the Willems story and illustration throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries demonstrates the drift of many Anabaptist groups toward a more socially activist version of their faith.

Weaver-Zercher skillfully lays out these deep philosophical, spiritual, and (within the Anabaptist fold) ecclesiastical questions toward the end of the book, but he wisely never takes sides or privileges one position over another. Yet, for me, he could have maintained such neutrality while still emphasizing—especially at the outset of the book—the significance of these issues for readers outside the Anabaptist faith. The fundamental dilemmas confronted by the martyrs in van Braght’s martyrology concern all of us more than ever, especially in the face of a worldwide upswing in authoritarianism, intolerance, and ultra-nationalism: how do I stand up for my beliefs (whether they are deeply religious or staunchly humanistic) in the face of official and non-governmental antagonism? Which final consequences am I willing to bear? Perhaps the central insight and resulting question that has made the *Martyrs Mirror* an enduring classic is this: the bigotry that enabled sixteenth-century “Christians” to imprison, torture, and execute defenseless Anabaptists will, sadly, continue to rear its ugly head in the world. What, then, are we going to do about it?

University of West Georgia

PATRICK M. ERBEN

Mennonite Disaster Service: Building a Therapeutic Community After the Gulf Coast Storms. By Brenda D. Phillips. Foreword by Pam Jenkins. Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books. 2014. Pp. 222. \$39.99.

At key junctures in this book Brenda Phillips, a sociologist and disaster studies scholar, worries that her analysis of the Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) will cause Mennonites considerable discomfort. The book emerged out of an extensive yearlong evaluation of the disaster recovery work of MDS along the Gulf Coast following the devastating hurricanes of 2005 (Katrina and Rita) and 2008 (Ike). A detailed and meticulous report based on over 800 surveys, hundreds of interviews, documentary analysis, and participant observation, *Mennonite Disaster Service* will be a primary reference on the organization for years to come. Indeed, the book deserves a wide readership among MDS volunteers, church leaders, service agency and mission board staff, and a broader Mennonite public. Phillips’s concern with Mennonite reception is therefore, on the surface of it, a thoroughly viable one: her book will be read critically and thoughtfully by numerous Mennonites who are deeply invested in the organization.

But it is the reason for her concern that is of note. If this were a report card, it would be a perfect A+. The conclusion: MDS carried out consistently outstanding work. The praise that Phillips heaps on the organization, primarily via quotations from MDS clients, is extraordinary, perhaps unprecedented, even breathtaking. Working with a team of researchers, including students from Hesston College and Canadian Mennonite University, Phillips presents interviews that paint a picture

of profound success. "They did a magnificent job," states one interviewee (76). Another client sheds "happy tears" during the interview (81). "The Mennonites opened the door to the happiness in my heart," exclaims a homeowner (88). "There's so much God in them," reveres a family from Texas (174). Phillips's anxiety is that Mennonites will find all of this praise thoroughly embarrassing. It is precisely this awkwardness—the humble lifted up in glory—that she reluctantly inflicts on her Mennonite readers.

As far as suffering comes and goes, however, the embarrassment of this situation is a relatively mild one, and it certainly should not dissuade Mennonites from reading this book. It is good to celebrate positive change, and MDS's remarkable work in disaster relief and reconstruction since its founding in the early 1950s deserves much celebration. Such moments of public acknowledgment are pivotal for sustaining and elaborating practices of care, compassion, and service. Readers, and not only Mennonite readers, will enjoy this book for the ways in which it inspires hope.

The climax of this glowingly positive evaluation of MDS is the concluding chapter, which holds the organization up as a model of best-practice. In a brief but comprehensive ten-point summary, Phillips details the value of actively listening to clients, involving them in decision-making, and taking the time to learn about local cultures (175-177). Her ninth point locates MDS in a wider argument: "disaster-prone communities would be well-advised to turn to religions to recruit volunteers." She specifies the usefulness of religion by discussing how it correlates with high levels of volunteerism and strong social networks, the capacity to tap into other resources, and cultural and theological norms that "produce therapeutic effects." While the general point is well made—religion should indeed be taken into greater account in disaster recovery processes—the danger of Phillips's framing is its reification and homogenizing of diverse religions and also its implicit instrumentality whereby each religion is viewed, not on its own terms, but rather as a "resource" for managers and technocrats.

The most significant shortcomings of the book, however, do not arise from its generic, instrumentalized approach to religion, which are largely incidental, and, in any case, reflect broader tendencies in sociological scholarship. Instead, the primary drawback stems from its evaluative terms of reference. Focused on the question of whether MDS achieved its goals, a series of fascinating and important questions are either glossed over a little too quickly or put to one side. Four key areas deserve further investigation.

First, the sheer consistency of praise for MDS's work among clients invites examination into how and why Mennonite volunteers sustained this pattern of interaction. It is the absence of tension with clients that is of sociological interest. Mennonite sociologists and historians have long explored the fraught and schismatic nature of North American Mennonite identity, replete with deep-seated conflicts. How is it that none of these tensions were apparent to MDS clients? Part of the answer to this probably lies in the capacity for MDS to unify Mennonites in service to distant others. But this suggests a strikingly bifurcated politics that compels further analysis.

Second, how exactly does Mennonite or Anabaptist theology shape MDS practice? Phillips perceives unmediated continuity between theology and practice with Mennonite emphases on service, frugality, practicality, listening and relationships, and simplicity directly shaping all levels of MDS activity. Phillips's argues that these theological norms are cultivated in family and church practices, but exactly how this takes place is not entirely clear. Moreover, her characterization of Mennonite theology neglects significant differences within diverse Mennonite groups.

Third, although noting the remarkable fact that, in her surveys, "97.7 percent reported their race as Caucasian" (124), Phillips does little to unpack the implications of these racial dynamics on MDS's work. How Mennonite whiteness was performed, contested, and re-worked in this context, and the extent to which racial dynamics shaped their relief work, certainly merits further discussion.

Fourth, while the role of the US government is touched upon at various points, the complicated relationships between faith-based actors, such as MDS, and the state is given insufficient attention. Recent scholarship on the deeply flawed reconstruction effort following Hurricane Katrina has sharply critiqued the neoliberalization of disaster recovery services. It has further been suggested that the enormous growth of faith-based volunteer activity following Katrina actually further undermined the longstanding right of victims of disaster to receive government assistance by reconfiguring disaster aid in affective terms. Further investigations into the ways faith-based organizations are embroiled in the changing politics of the American government would be valuable.

Each of these lines of questioning raise broader questions than Phillips's evaluative study sought to answer and none of them, therefore, detract from the achievement that is Mennonite Disaster Service. The book deserves to be read widely. If it also helps inspire investigations into areas such as I have suggested above, it will be of tremendous service to scholars and relief actors alike.

Victoria University of Wellington

PHILIP FOUNTAIN

Mit den Wolken fliegen. Bericht aus einem fernen Land. By Roni Baerg. Basel, Switzerland: Zytglogge. 2016. Pp. 670. CHF/€36.00.

More than a quarter century after the publication of Katharina Zimmermann's novel *Die Furgge*, a literary portrayal of a historically attested eighteenth-century Anabaptist woman from the Emmental, the Swiss publishing house Zytglogge has released another narrative in the category of female Anabaptist/Mennonite biography. Roni Baerg's life story, *Mit den Wolken fliegen* (flying with the clouds), appears to be a reversal of the spiritual faith journey depicted in Zimmermann's novel. Baerg, a former member of the Neuland Colony, a Mennonite settlement in the western region of Paraguay, gives an account of her life in the colony, the physical and emotional abuse she experienced, her escape to Switzerland, and her long struggle to forgiveness.

In her autobiographical account, Roni Baerg begins her narrative not with her own early memories, but with the story of her ancestors—Mennonite

grandparents who had fled the Russian Revolution. In particular, she focuses on her paternal grandfather, Kornelius, who had left the village of Adsch-Mambet in the central part of the Crimean peninsula in early 1900 to settle with his family in southern Brazil. In the frame narrative, Baerg describes a recent visit to this region to see locations connected to her family history. This leads to the embedded story, in which she vividly describes the harsh working and living conditions of her grandparents and parents, and their frequent moves between the subtropical forest of southern Brazil and the dry forest of western Paraguay, where they eventually settle. Baerg moves back and forward in time until she reaches her own birth, narrates her life in the Mennonite colony, and catches up with the frame story and her journey to discover traces of her family history in South America.

The time between the frame story and her embedded story is marked by poverty, hardship, and conflict with the church. Baerg describes herself as a child with a rebellious and headstrong nature, in character similar to her father who was excommunicated from the church for challenging the socio-religious system of the colony and resisting its moral authority. His unsuccessful attempt to free himself from the restrictions of colony life resulted in alcoholism. As a young girl, the narrator dreams of leaving the settlement and traveling the world. In order to secure financial support for her university studies, she marries the son of a Mennonite pastor. As she defends herself against his abuses, she, too, is excommunicated and abandoned by most of her family members. She loses all her assets and flees to Switzerland where she experiences more physical abuse and exploitation in her employment. Although she visits Paraguay multiple times to reconnect with family and colony life, she is stigmatized as an outsider and ultimately chooses Switzerland as her new homeland.

Baerg's autobiography is a survivor story—not survival in the midst of violence and persecution committed by the outside, as many Anabaptists have experienced in the church's 500-year history—but a story of someone who experienced the violence and oppression from within a Mennonite community. The author tells her story to convert her abuse into speech, thereby working through the traumatic experience to find inner peace. While she has physically survived the abuses, she is concerned with her emotional well-being. The act of writing her autobiography becomes a form of therapy in which she learns to let go and to forgive.

This act of writing about traumatic experience is closely tied to issues of power and control over narrative: who gets to tell the story and whose memories are accurate. Baerg feels paralyzed by the disturbing stories and rumors that circulate in the colony after her departure. She is repeatedly confronted with these stories and fails to convince her family of their inaccuracy and perfidy. By writing about her life, as she remembers it, Baerg gives herself a voice and finds a platform to tell her side of the story. She aims to pull back the veil of silence drawn by her family and counter falsified stories with her own memories of the events. These memories not only comprise her experience of falling victim to the patriarchal structures of the colony but also include seemingly illogical actions on her part that can only be explained as desperate attempts to stand her ground in this male-dominated social system.

Against the backdrop of the Mennonite colony, the story addresses fundamental issues of moral authority, dogma, and misogyny. Although these aspects are not uniquely Mennonite, Baerg, after having experienced trauma in the Mennonite context, depicts them as exclusive to the Mennonite faith. There are various points throughout the book in which she generalizes her experience with Mennonites to a frustrating degree. She draws a negative picture of Mennonites who believe that God is angry and women who are deemed worth less than cattle—images that are colored by her personal experience in the Neuland colony. Yet, while her Mennonite-phobic attitudes may create confusion or irritation for some readers, it may also initiate a critical reflection of Mennonite identity and a discussion of religious enclaves within the Anabaptist tradition that are separated from the surrounding society not only by geographic and linguistic barriers but also by social and psychological mechanisms that put in danger the physical, emotional, and spiritual health of female members.

Along with criticism of archaic gender norms and difficulties of defection from the Mennonite enclave, expatriation and *Heimatlosigkeit* (the loss of actual homeland and spiritual home) appear as themes throughout the book. All three generations portrayed in the text leave their respective homelands and struggle with that loss throughout their lifetimes. In addition to tracing the author's geographic relocation from Russia to Brazil to Paraguay and, finally, to Switzerland, the book illustrates her gradual separation from the spiritual home, the Mennonite faith and its community. The book's subtitle, *Bericht aus einem fernen Land* (account of a faraway country), denotes both the travel to South America in the frame narrative and the geographic and spiritual relocations in the embedded story. In the end, after having lost her home in Paraguay and not quite settled in Switzerland, the narrator decides that home is not bound to a country or church community but rather to her heart.

Baerg captures feelings of home in the Mennonite colony through the use of short dialogue segments in Plattdeutsch (Low German). Apart from detailed descriptions of nature, a place in which the narrator feels most comfortable, the language of the text seemingly imitates the plain lifestyle of the colony as it is marked by simplicity and repetition. The author utilizes a very limited vocabulary to express emotions, perhaps a linguistic vacuum created by trauma. She draws language from a variety of sources, including diaries, travel notes, songs, poems, and the memory of personal conversations. The structure of her narrative resembles a mosaic, or, as she refers to it, a salad bowl, full of fragmentary scraps of memory that make Baerg's autobiography a rich, sometimes confusing, reading experience that leaves the reader with a sense of hope amid disorientation, anguish, and repulsion.

University of Colorado, Boulder

BERIT JANY

Rooted and Grounded: Essays on Land and Christian Discipleship. Edited by Ryan D. Harker and Janeen Bertsche Johnson. Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick Publications. 2016. Pp. 282. \$34.

Watershed Discipleship: Reinhabiting Bioregional Faith and Practice. Edited by Ched Myers. Eugene, Ore.: Cascade Publications. 2016. Pp. 246. \$30.

For the historic peace churches that interpret Scripture and view discipleship through a lens of nonviolent resistance to war, it should be a natural step to resist the systemic violence against the created order being done intentionally or carelessly with modern industrial technologies and institutions. That is the argument in a nutshell that courses through both of these anthologies.

The first one, *Rooted and Grounded*, is a selection of presentations and worship materials from the first conference by that name on the topic of land and Christian discipleship, which was convened at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in 2014. As a volume in the distinguished Studies in Peace and Scripture series from the Institute of Mennonite Studies, it retains a strong focus on interpretation of the Bible. This is especially clear in the first and lengthiest section of the book, "Biblical Reflections," which includes the conference's keynote addresses by Ellen Davis, Barbara Rossing, and S. Roy Kaufman. Davis and Rossing briefly summarize their well-known research in agrarian interpretation of the Old Testament and the New Testament apocalyptic, respectively. The third keynote address is an interesting outlier: Kaufman draws on his long career as a pastor on the Great Plains to push back against criticisms that rural congregations are too ethnically homogenous and out of touch with current culture to be relevant. "For generations we have been taught as Mennonites to despise our heritage as . . . 'the quiet in the land,'" he laments, as though they were mere diminished remnants of "a strong urban missionary movement [that] lost its edge as it devolved into local, rural, agrarian Mennonite communities" (21). He presents a compelling vision of rural congregations forming communities that can preserve a diversity of local agrarian cultures by resisting industrial agriculture conglomerates and the government bureaucracies that support them. "Rural people are called to represent what God's rule of love should be in every diverse and unique local setting" by forming "a community that is just, egalitarian, and able to live harmoniously with all other local communities" (19). In these passages Kaufman alludes to two important subsidiary themes in these conference proceedings: church members should tailor practices of discipleship to their local bioregion and should commit to restorative justice for the bioregion's first landholders.

As you would expect, the contributed papers for the conference are quite diverse in style and topic. Due to their brevity, they contain only cursory scholarly engagement with other views. Some are more interesting and suggestive for further development than others. In this first part of the anthology, I was most drawn to Elaine James's close agrarian reading of the Book of Ruth, perhaps because she remains focused and does not try to do too much.

The second and third parts of book are titled "Theological Reflections" and "Historical Reflections." The latter section contains some odd, but original and thought-provoking, gems: Nicholas Brown's critical appropriation for current environmentalism of St. Justin's second-century interpretation of Christ's

thousand-year reign; Ezra Miller's exploration of nineteenth-century documents that suggest Amish Mennonites willingly replaced the Native communities in the Michigan/Indiana landscape because they saw the region as an agricultural problem they were uniquely prepared to solve; Douglas Kaufman's recovery of Mennonite theologian John M. Brenneman's humility theology; and Rebecca Horner Shenton's discovery of significant Anabaptist reflection on creation care in Civil Public Service pamphlets from the Second World War. I marked up each of these essays and their bibliographies for further reading and reflection.

The essays in the second part, "Theological Reflections," seem to me, on the whole, to be more sketchy and derivative. The authors frequently reuse ideas from the writings of Wendell Berry, Ellen Davis, and Norman Wirzba, which is not a bad thing because these are worthy sources of inspiration. For instance, Winn Collier traces Christian spirituality in some characters in Wendell Berry's Port William stories and novels, and Richard Klinedinst contrasts Berry's vision of the kingdom of God, "the Great Economy," with the liberal economic theories inspired by Adam Smith.

I do encourage you to read Laura Schmidt Roberts's contribution in this section, "The Theological Place of Land: Watershed Discipleship as Re-placed Cultural Vision," because it is a perspicuous introduction to and friendly critique of Ched Myers's "watershed discipleship," the animating movement behind the next anthology reviewed here. "As watershed discipleship gains momentum," Roberts notes, "it is important to think carefully about its theological assumptions" (134). She identifies some recent work by Duane Friesen and Bradley Guhr as resources to complement and correct the watershed discipleship movement, because they point toward "a theology of creation that adequately recognizes the intrinsic, innate value of creation" and "a theological anthropology that frames humanity's unique role in a way that still asserts and values our full creatureliness" (135).

The second book, *Watershed Discipleship*, is a planned anthology of a different order. Ched Myers's thematic introduction and afterword comprise over a fifth of the volume; the remainder consists of eleven short essays by young ("under age forty") peace and justice activists who describe and commend their projects in regard to the themes outlined by Myers. These materials were created and assembled through a mentoring project at Myers's Bartimaeus Cooperative Ministries during 2014-2015.

Myers coined "watershed discipleship" a few years ago as a triple entendre of speaking points: we live in "a watershed historical moment of [social and ecological] crisis" precipitated by the violence of human technologies and systems on Earth's environment; a local congregation's response, which must be bioregional to be effective, should focus on understanding and caring for its local watershed; and church members must be "disciples" (students and caregivers) of those watersheds. I think the first speaking point is becoming increasingly obvious to everyone, though many details about the causes and best remedies for environmental damage remain debatable. The second point is not entirely helpful, for as Myers admits, "The 2,110 watersheds in the continental U.S. come in all sizes" (11), ranging from his local Ventura River that drains a humanly understandable and congregationally care-able 227 square miles to the Mississippi

River watershed that comprises an amazing 41 percent of the lower forty-eight states. On a charitable interpretation, Myers focuses on a watershed because it is an important ingredient in defining what bioregionalists call a “life-territory” (that is, a topography with its interrelated environmental systems and living things), and it reminds us that environmental problems and their solutions typically transcend city, county, and state political boundaries. The final speaking point requires careful unpacking. Myers means, first, that we must learn from the watershed/bioregion about its “geological features, soil types, climate zones, flora and fauna, as well as built environments and their social history” (16). Furthermore, we must develop “affection” for the watershed if we are to be properly motivated to care for its sustainable functioning. Finally, affection for a watershed in its historical dimension should lead us to seek restorative justice with earlier inhabitants who were unfairly dispossessed of it.

The use and elaboration of these fundamental themes varies quite a bit among the activists. For instance, two writers reflect on the Detroit water crisis. One of them commends the local organizations that protect the poor from water cutoffs, but refers only tangentially to the Detroit watershed; the other, a water engineer, reflects on how Detroit’s water structures have done violence to its watershed, critiques the city’s proposed remedies for not adequately addressing the needs of poor neighborhoods, and then brainstorms on systemic changes to the engineering profession that would make water engineers’ work more just and ecologically sustainable.

Often the activists’ writing is strongest when they tell their personal stories. I was moved, for instance, by one author’s testimony of learning the importance of being rooted in a place during a brief mission tour among indigenous people in the Philippines, but her attendant critique of missionary activity generally is hackneyed and incautious. Another writer’s description of the Alliance for Appalachia is inspiring, but his cursory and uncharitable interpretations of N. T. Wright’s eschatology and of some contemporary political theologies are unacceptable.

Myers’s anthology proposes to introduce watershed discipleship and “engage the current field of ecological theology with an approach [the contributors] believe is more radical in its critique of prevailing paradigms; more contextual in its praxis; and more constructive in its alternative proposals”(1). It would have been more successful on all these points if contributors listened and responded more charitably to opposing views, if the middle essays were more consistent in organization and theme, and if the volume had an annotated bibliography to guide further reading.

Institute for Faith and Learning, Baylor University

Robert B. Kruschwitz

Bundesbürger russlanddeutscher Herkunft. Historische Schlüsselerfahrungen und kollektives Gedächtnis. By Viktor Krieger. Münster: LIT Verlag, 2013. Pp. 264. EUR 29.90.

Dr. Viktor Krieger (Heidelberg) is one of the foremost historians in the field of German-Russian studies, but he may not be that well known to readers of *MQR*. He was born in 1959 in the province of Dzhambul (now Jambyl) in southern Kazakhstan. After completing studies in economics in Novosibirsk (1976-1981), he taught at the Institute of Technology for light-industry and food-industry in the city of Dzhambul (now Taras). From 1983-1987 he worked as a researcher in the Institute of Economics and Industrial Engineering (affiliated with the Russian Academy of Sciences) in Novosibirsk. In 1988, he returned to Kazakhstan and enrolled in a doctoral program at the Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography of Kazakhstan's Academy of Sciences in Alma-Ata. He completed the program in January 1992. Following his emigration to Germany, he worked in various archives and historical institutes; since 1999, he has been a lecturer at the Department of Eastern European History of the University of Heidelberg.¹

Whether by choice or by chance, the publication of Krieger's book in 2013 coincided with the 250th anniversary of Empress Catherine the Great's 1763 "Manifesto" inviting western Europeans, especially Germans, to settle in Russia. Thousands of German peasants and craftsmen from all parts of Germany, especially from the region of Baden-Württemberg in the southeast and from Prussia in the northwest, flocked to Russia, attracted by the offer of land, tax concessions, exemption from military service, and other privileges. They settled first in the Volga Region (Volga Germans) and after 1788 in the newly conquered lands of southern Russia, today's Ukraine (Black Sea Germans). Over the next 150 years the descendants of these ethnic Germans, known collectively as "Russlanddeutsche" (Russian-Germans), made themselves at home and contributed significantly to the agricultural, industrial, economic, and cultural development of the Tsarist Empire, and were widely recognized by Tsarist officials for their achievements.² However, by the last decades of the nineteenth century, strong ultra-nationalist sentiments and anti-German propaganda became widespread in Russia. The anti-German sentiment intensified during World War I and culminated in 1915-1916 with the infamous Land Liquidation Laws. This "Germano-Phobia," as Krieger calls it, continued into the Soviet period, intensified again during World War II, and remained a factor in the mistreatment and repression of ethnic Germans right up until the end of the Soviet Empire in 1991.

In a series of twenty essays, most of which appeared previously in various publications of the *Landsmannschaft der Deutschen aus Russland*³ between 2006 and 2011, Krieger examines key moments in the history of the Germans in Russia and the Soviet Union. He focuses especially on the repression and widespread

1. Further information on Dr. Krieger and his publications may be found on his trilingual website: <http://www.viktor-krieger.de>.

2. See, for example, Alexander Klaus, *Nashi Kolonii (1869) – Unsere Kolonien, Studien und Materialien zur Geschichte und Statistik der ausländischen Kolonisation in Russland* (1884).

3. See webpage of the *Landsmannschaft der Deutschen aus Russland* at <http://lmdr.de>.

human rights abuses perpetrated against them during the course of the twentieth century.

The essays are grouped into four chapters. The five essays in chapter 1 appear under the heading of “Verfolgung, Verbannung und Zwangsarbeit” (Persecution, Exile, and Forced Labour). The first essay tells the little-known story of the legal action—an early “show trial”—taken against the prominent Volga-German intellectuals Georg Dinges and Peter Sinner between 1930 and 1932.⁴

The second summarizes the story of the brutal deportation of Soviet Germans during World War II and the consequences of this Soviet policy. In the late summer and fall of 1941, as Nazi German forces neared the Dnepr River, almost 900,000 Soviet ethnic Germans were deported from their settlements in Crimea, Caucasus, eastern Ukraine, and other parts of European Russia to Kazakhstan and Siberia.⁵ Included in this number were more than 28,000 Mennonites from the Crimea, the Molochna villages, Memrik, Ignatyev, Am Trakt, Alt Samara, Arkadak, and Zentral. Mennonites living in Neu Samara and Orenburg were not deported, although thousands of men and women were later conscripted into the so-called *Trudarmiia* (labor army).

The *Trudarmiia* was merely a slogan for a new system of forced labor camps set up in late 1941 primarily for ethnic German men between the ages of 16 and 60 and for women ages 16-45. The third essay describes how over 350,000 Russian-Germans were “conscripted” into these labor camps spread throughout northern Russia, Siberia, and Kazakhstan. More than one-third perished in these camps; those who survived returned to their homes sick or crippled after ten years. The largest, and one of the most notorious, of these camps, discussed in the fourth essay, was established in the vicinity of Chelyabinsk.⁶

Chapter 2 contains a series of seven essays dealing with the theme of disobedience, protest, and resistance by German-Russians from 1917 until the end of the Soviet Era. These essays were published between February and December 2007 in *Volk auf dem Weg*.⁷ Active and armed resistance took the form of self-defense militias in Lutheran and Catholic settlements, as well as the *Selbstschutz* in Mennonite colonies. Some men, including Mennonites, volunteered for service in the White Army in order to combat the Bolsheviks.

Passive resistance took the form of emigration. The large numbers of Germans (especially Mennonites) leaving the “worker’s paradise” in the fall and winter of

4. An English translation of this essay is found in *Volga German Intellectuals as Victims of Political Persecution* (Lincoln, Neb.: American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, 2009).

5. Krieger gives the number of deported as 794,069 (p. 30) but acknowledges that it is incomplete. A more complete documentation is provided by *Deportation — Sondersiedlung — Arbeitsarmee*, ed. Alfred Eisfeld (Köln: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1996), 132-133.

6. An English translation by Alex Herzog can be found on the website of the Germans From Russia Heritage Collection (GRHC) at NDSU: *Chelyabmetallurgstroy of the NKVD of the USSR: The Largest Forced Labour Camp for Russian Germans*. —<http://lib.ndsu.nodak.edu/grhc/articles/magazines/german/kkvd.html>.

7. An English translation can be found on the website of the GRHC: <http://lib.ndsu.nodak.edu/grhc/articles/magazines/german/protest-resistance.html>.

1929-1930 proved especially embarrassing to the Soviet State. The two Mennonite agricultural associations established in the 1920s (Verband der Bürger holländischer Herkunft and Allrussischer Mennonitischer Landwirtschaftlicher Verein) also offered passive resistance to being swallowed up into the Bolshevik cooperative system by setting up their own regional credit, consumer, and agricultural cooperatives.

Chapter 3 contains five essays under the heading "Politische, geistige und sprachlich-kulturelle Tendenzen" ("Political, intellectual and linguistic-cultural tendencies"). The first is an essay surveying the entire history of anti-German sentiments in Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union.⁸ The second essay documents the "intellectual regression" of *Russlanddeutsche* during the Soviet era. Germans, along with Jews, were the most educated and literate components of Soviet society at its outset in the 1920s. But in the course of the next sixty years, Germans were subjected to increased restrictions on educational opportunities. In 1939 Germans ranked sixth among Soviet ethnic groups when it came to their educational level (i.e., the number of persons with university or college or high school education); by 1989 they ranked last among the eighteen largest ethnic groups in the USSR.

Chapter 4 presents the extensive Memorial Essay ("Denkschrift"), written on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of the 1941 deportation (2011).⁹ In it, Krieger draws together materials presented in the earlier chapters, summarizing the historical background and actual situation of the German minority in Russia and the Soviet Union since the time of the First World War. He estimates that some 480,000 Germans lost their lives due to arrest, execution, exile, famine, and disease during the seven decades of Soviet rule. The essay culminates with a description of the moving commemorative events of August 28, 2011.

Over the past forty years, more than 2.5 million ethnic Germans (including thousands of Mennonites) have left Russia and the other former Soviet republics to settle in the Federal Republic of Germany. They are known collectively as *Umsiedler* or *Aussiedler* (resettlers). Krieger's insightful book is intended both for these *Umsiedler*, as well as for present-day German citizens, many of whom discriminate against these *Umsiedler* as "foreigners" or "Russians." Krieger writes in order to make German citizens aware of the severe repression suffered by ethnic Germans in the Soviet Union, precisely because they were Germans. Krieger provides many new and interesting details on political developments, events that are almost totally unknown to readers in Europe or North America, for ethnic Germans in the years of "Perestroika" (1985-1990), the Yeltsin years (1991-1999), and continuing into the Putin years at the beginning of this century.

Along with dozens of other ethnic minorities in the former Soviet Union, Germans were victims of a policy of "ethnic cleansing." As victims of the most

8. A three-part English translation can be found on the website of the GRHC: <http://lib.ndsu.nodak.edu/grhc/articles/magazines/articles/germano.html>.

9. This essay is a reprint from *Keiner ist Vergessen, Gedenkbuch zum 70. Jahrestag* (Stuttgart: Landsmannschaft der Deutschen aus Russland, 2011), 24-45. For an English translation see: "A Memorial Essay," *Journal of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia*, 34, no. 4 (2011), 1-19.

brutal and repressive regime of the twentieth century, Germans in the Soviet Union suffered proportionally more per capita than any other ethnic minority. Hundreds of thousands of men and women were stripped of homes, property, and possessions. None received any compensation whatsoever from the former Soviet government, nor from the current Russian government, although there have been calls for the German government to appeal to Russian authorities (and leaders of the other former Soviet republics) to compensate the millions of Russian-Germans in Germany and those who still remain in Russia. Furthermore, Krieger calls for full recognition and equal rights for these German-Russians still living in modern day Russia and other former Soviet states such as Kazakhstan, Usbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan.

Winnipeg

Peter Letkemann

Reconsidering Intellectual Disability: L'Arche, Medical Ethics, and Christian Friendship. By Jason Reimer Greig. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press. 2015. Pp. 293. \$32.95.

In this book, Jason Reimer Greig considers how theological reflection on intellectual disability might contribute to some of the most pressing debates in contemporary bioethics. The starting point and moral center of the book is the case of Ashley X and the medical procedure popularly known as the “Ashley Treatment” (AT). Ashley X was a 6-year-old girl with profound physical and intellectual disabilities who in 2004 was subjected to medical therapy that would prematurely halt her physical growth. Faced with multiple challenges in raising their daughter, Ashley’s parents elected to go through with the treatment—which involved the surgical removal of her breast buds and uterus to prevent an early puberty—in order to continue to care for her and contribute to what they believed was in the best interest of maintaining her quality of life. The first chapter introduces the AT and the variety of responses the controversy elicited from religious and bioethical commentators. Some argued that the AT was justified because it was in Ashley’s best interest to be cared for at home by her family members. Critics of the AT (among whom Greig counts himself) argued that the treatment was an invasive violation of her dignity, and that persons with disabilities should not be viewed as “problems” to be “solved” through medical intervention. Keeping Ashley as the focus of its concern, the rest of the book is devoted to exploring how Christian understandings of humanity, disability, and community might help transform moral imagination.

The second chapter presents Greig’s diagnosis of the regnant medical mindset in the West, along with an alternative approach provided by a Christian view of the body. The target of his analysis is “the Baconian project”—the intellectual trajectory inaugurated by Francis Bacon, which views nature, and in particular the human body, as an object of technological control. Greig argues that the Baconian project has an influence that is pervasive in modern society; it operates through the free choice of individual agents, and it uses medicine as a tool to overcome the frailties, sufferings, and finitude of human existence. By contrast, the Christian perspective articulated by Greig focuses not on the body of the autonomous

subject, but on the body of Christ. According to this alternative logic, the purpose of medical intervention is not to transform people according to a normalized vision of health and wholeness, but to welcome and incorporate them into the community called the Body of Christ. Thus, people with disabilities do not need to be “cured”; they need to be welcomed as gifts. They are above all friends, not patients.

After critically discussing the emphasis on autonomy and self-determination still present in many theologies of disability, Greig presents his account of a politics that relies not on self-representation but on friendship. Much of Greig’s argument will be familiar to those with some acquaintance with the writings of Stanley Hauerwas or Hans Reinders, and this theological position is elaborated in the remainder of the book. Following the pattern of “asymmetrical” friendship displayed by God’s befriending of humanity and Jesus’ acts of friendship in the Gospel of John, he develops a theology of friendship that is inclusive of people with profound disabilities. The assertion of rights and access to inclusion in civic life can only do so much for those with intellectual disabilities. Instead, what such people need is friendship, and relations of genuine care and concern that welcome those with abnormal embodiment such as Ashley. What results is a politics of dependency that is exemplified in the Christian church as a community of friends. This “strange politics of the Kingdom” (158) offers an alternative to the individualist politics of the modern West, which is in thrall to the Baconian project. Here, Greig admirably draws upon a variety of theological, philosophical, and political sources in a way that bridges the somewhat artificial divide that often separates “religious ethics” and “systematic theology.”

To elaborate on this vision of a politics of friendship and community, Greig draws upon his own experiences as an assistant in a L’Arche community (part of an international federation of communities where people with and without disabilities live together). He finds in L’Arche a countercultural way of being wherein people with disabilities are viewed as friends to be cherished and welcomed rather than problems to be subjected to medicalized intervention. The way of living fostered in L’Arche communities is transformative for persons both with and without disabilities. The communal life and embodied practices such as Holy Thursday footwashing incorporate people into a community shaped according to the body of Christ. His discussion of L’Arche provides a moving, if somewhat idealized, portrayal of a common life shared between friends with and without disabilities.

The book is strongest when Greig discusses the bioethical debates surrounding the AT. With much care and attention, he presents arguments for and against the treatment, and he discusses what is at stake in the way Christians think about modern medicine. The care and nuance present in Greig’s initial discussion of the AT is less in evidence toward the end of the book. His portrayal of the radical Christian alternative to the modern medical mindset calcifies into a rigid opposition. On one side is “Baconian medicine,” or “late modernity in the West” with the attendant values of independence, choice, agency, and control; on the other side of the divide is the alternative polis of the Church, with the obverse values of dependence, belonging, suffering, and friendship. To the ears of this

Catholic reviewer, the antagonism between Church and culture sounds a bit severe—but there are reasons to question the usefulness of this opposition regardless of one’s ecclesial commitments. Greig himself notes that there were various conflicting responses to the AT coming from both the secular bioethics community as well as from Christians. Neither liberal society nor the Church is as monolithic or homogenous as Greig suggests, and so it is deceptive to present them as offering two starkly radical alternatives. The limits of Greig’s oppositional framework are evident when one considers how his principles might apply to other bioethical debates beyond the AT. At several points, Greig presents the question facing modern persons as a choice between either subjecting bodies to technological modification or accepting them as gifts from God. But many complex bioethical debates such as those surrounding the use of cochlear implants in deaf infants, for instance, cannot be reduced to a choice between accepting our bodies as created or medically modifying them. Given that Greig does not want to advocate a simple rejection of modern medicine, it is not clear how the resources he provides here can offer much guidance with respect to a proper Christian use of medical technology. Yet even if his conceptual framework remains bound to the oppositions that define much of the existing disability theology literature, Greig’s book offers a powerful account of how Christian communities can contribute to the transformation of the moral understanding of medicine in the West.

Seton Hall University

Kevin McCabe

BOOK NOTES

Mennonites in Dialogue: Official Reports from International and National Ecumenical Encounters, 1975-2012. Edited by Fernando Enns and Jonathan Seiling. Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick Publications. 2015. Pp. 484. \$61.

This source book contains the formal statements of the bilateral ecumenical dialogues in which Mennonites have participated on national and international levels since 1975, including the multilateral “Prague Consultations” (1986-2003). An introduction by Mennonite theologian Fernando Enns provides a context for each of the reports; Jonathan Seiling prepared the translations. The volume includes texts from Mennonite dialogues with Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Reformed, Baptists, and Seventh-day Adventists. The multilateral International Prague Consultations consisted of groups associated with the “first, radical and magisterial (second) Reformation.” Each text is preceded by a table of contents and often includes a bibliography of papers presented by dialogue participants. A historical timeline of Mennonite ecumenical dialogues (1975-2012) and index complement the volume. In general the collection replicates the German volume, *Heilung der Erinnerungen—befreit zur gemeinsamen Zukunft: Mennoniten im Dialog* (Lembeck/Bonifatius, 2008), with the addition of reports that have appeared since then. Some of the reports originally published in French, German, and Dutch are appearing here in English for the first time.

Called to Community: The Life Jesus Wants for His People. Edited by Charles Moore. Rifton, N.Y.: Plough Publishers. 2016. Pp. 378. \$18.

This collection of 52 essays—or excerpts from essays—by well-known religious writers is intended as a year-long study guide for anyone interested in the theme of Christian community. Charles Moore, editor of the volume, is a member of the Bruderhof Community, and writings by Eberhard Arnold, founder of the Bruderhof, and other authors associated with Plough Publishers, the Bruderhof publishing house, appear throughout the collection. But *Called to Community* also includes a wide spectrum of other writers, including Benedict of Nursia, George MacDonald, Dorothy Day, Eugene Peterson, Gerhard Lohfink, and Jean Vanier. The book is organized into four sections: A Call to Community; Forming Community; Life in Community; and Beyond Community. Each chapter is associated with a study guide that includes several relevant biblical texts and a series of questions designed to encourage conversation.

AUTHOR ADDRESSES

Brent L. Kipfer, 48 Lawrence Street, Wellesley, Ontario, N0B 2T0, Canada.

E-mail: brentsarahkipfer@gmail.com

Prof. Gary K. Waite, Department of History, University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, NB, Canada, E3B 5A2. E-mail: waite@unb.ca

Maxwell Kennel, RR3 Township Rd. 11, 887625, Bright, Ontario, Canada, N0J 1B0. E-mail: max.kennel@gmail.com