

Book Reviews

U2 Rock 'N' Roll to Change the World. By Timothy D. Neufeld. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield. 2017. Pp. 193. \$38.00

U2's success is rooted in bringing together music, art, faith, and activism—transcending the world of popular music and transforming its members into icons recognized as humanitarians and activists. Many writers have attempted to analyze the phenomenon that U2 has become: biographies, fact books, memoirs, and even the band's own autobiography. *U2 Rock 'n' Roll to Change the World*, however, is a fascinating and extensive examination of the symbiotic relationship between U2 and culture as the band shaped it and as U2 in return was inspired by the world around it. Timothy Neufeld's meticulously researched book is an engaging exploration of the prolific career of this musical organization, starting with the formation of the band in Dublin in the fall of 1976, and taking the reader through four decades of music making intertwined with activism and politics. In his introduction, Neufeld states that the purpose of the book is to demonstrate the always fluctuating influence that pop musicians have on culture as they are inversely shaped as well by the culture they inhabit, and he delivers a well-organized and engaging volume that chronicles the success U2 has achieved on its own terms on both the artistic and business sides of the music industry.

Neufeld begins with a detailed timeline that connects cultural stepping-stones and important events in U2's career. This framework is helpful in bringing understanding to the flow of history, making connections between events shaping general culture and their influence on the band's growth and transformation. Chapters 1 through 6 are a chronological exploration of the trajectory of U2, from the first meeting of the four young idealists with more passion than musical skill to the well-seasoned musician-activists that have reinvented themselves several times in the four decades they have been together. Chapters 7 and 8 veer away from a chronological investigation and turn into a discussion of U2's foundational values and engagements with spirituality.

In his first chapter, Neufeld explores Ireland's interplay of anger and violence derived from the political conflicts and the friction among Catholics and Protestants—circumstances that shaped the message of U2 even before its inception. From the beginning, he argues, the key elements in U2's music were a sense of community, activism, and faith; those were “as much a force on its environment as they have been a consequence of that environment” (1). The influences of family and school are also explored in this chapter, as the four members had very distinct experiences in these areas.

Chapter 2, “Innocence and Idealism,” chronicles the growth of the four young members, who used music to “express a hopeful view of the world” (23). Neufeld relates the journey of Bono, Edge, Larry, and Adam as they transitioned from a

family environment into Shalom—a Christian commune, and then leaving the commune with a newfound sense of faith as their band became increasingly popular. Around this time a new channel, MTV, began broadcasting and a new world of media and technology brought U2 to the United States. The following chapter, “Into the Arms of America,” relates the rise of U2 as it conquered the international music industry with the albums “Under a Blood Red Sky,” “The Unforgettable Fire,” “The Joshua Tree,” and “Rattle and Hum.” As the band played larger venues, their social message evolved into an invocation for peace, reaching and engaging audiences in unique ways. Their success led to more experimental approaches with technology, including the first concert video production that earned international approval from both film and music critics.

“Irony and Theatricality,” chapter 4, explores a transformative period where U2 redefined itself boldly, engaging issues with satire, tackling taboo subjects like sexuality and greed to “both baffled and delighted fans” (70). In this chapter, Neufeld explores the different ways U2 experimented with theatrics and satire, ranging from effects as simple as masks and costumes to very elaborate electronic and visual effects. This experimentation is rooted in the mid 1970s at the Lypton Village in an attempt to defeat the “crisis of apathy” (80). These and other projects, like film music, are also explored in this chapter.

“Rage Can Only Take You So Far,” chapter 5, relates U2’s return to its roots, as the band abandoned theatrics and “attempted to re-engage its fan base with intimacy and authenticity” (91), removing as many barriers as possible and connecting as closely as possible with the audience with a re-energized call to peace and justice.

Chapter 6, “New Horizons,” traces U2’s fourth decade, as band members continue to reinvent themselves, looking for ways to stay relevant while continuing to present a critical commentary on current issues. This period was also a time of vast technological innovation, and throughout this chapter, Neufeld relates the transition and the relationships with Apple, Blackberry, social media, and other forces that have influenced and impacted live performances, music distribution, and connections with fans.

Neufeld explores religion and social activism in the final two chapters of the book. These two subjects have been strong and consistent in the message that U2 has presented over the past forty years. Whether it is because war and violence were such a reality in their early years or because of their spirituality, both themes have become essential and expected of their music. Larry, Edge, Adam, and Bono have always been uncomfortable with institutional Christian churches. At times they have even been openly critical of organized religion in their music. This is one of the factors that drove them to Shalom Fellowship, searching for a spiritual identity supposedly free from the rigid dogma and narrow-minded sectarianism of the times. Neufeld presents an extensive discussion of biblical imagery in the music of U2, starting with the name of the band’s most popular album: “Joshua Tree.” Although the Christian content in their music has attracted non-Christians who also value community and social activism, U2’s music has not always been well received by the Christian church.

Overall, Timothy Neufeld proposes that U2 is a unique case of a pop band both shaping and being shaped by the culture around them. He successfully provides a well-organized and fully engaging work to support his thesis. The timeline, the organization of the book, the suggestions for further reading, and the listening guide with suggestions for further listening make *U2 Rock 'N' Roll to Change the World* a thoughtful and mindful study of the band and its connections with activism, faith, politics, and the relentless desire to change the world.

Goshen College

JOSE ROCHA

A Vietnam Presence: Mennonites in Vietnam During the American War. By Luke S. Martin. Morgantown, Pa.: Masthof Press. 2016. \$ 29.95.

The history of American religious missionary relief programs in Vietnam parallels and sometimes extends beyond the years of political and military involvement. For the Mennonite mission, these years offered a way to support the people of Vietnam through medical, food, and material aid while remaining conscientious objectors to the fighting. As the war intensified, however, so did the antiwar stance of the missionaries. Luke S. Martin's lengthy account of the Mennonite presence in Vietnam tells a story that is part organizational history and part memoir. His work spans from the early efforts to establish Mennonite support missions during the French Indo-China War through the height of their mission work during the American conflict and into the early post-war era. Martin's personal experiences in Vietnam and his access to institutional records combine to shed considerable light on Mennonite service during the war years in a detailed and thoughtful reflection.

Martin divided his exhaustive work into three "books" within the volume, covering the years 1954-1963, 1964-1970, and 1971-1975, respectively. Book one, "Engagement," begins with the Geneva Accords as a pivotal moment leading to the opening of the first Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) office in Saigon in December 1954. Early operations struggled to find a footing, Martin argues, as they navigated the complex political structure of Ngo Dinh Diem's South Vietnam while keeping church leadership happy back in the United States. Pushing through these barriers, Martin argues that the MCC staff found ways to succeed despite their uninterest in engaging with local politics. While Martin believes that the organization and its members contributed to "a 'free-world' coalition headed by the United States" — in a *de facto* sense by working alongside anti-communist forces—he also maintains that MCC members did not see themselves as political agents. Constituents in Vietnam described their primary concern as "ameliorating physical needs in the spirit of care exemplified by Jesus Christ" (41). In the early years, before the American war escalated, Mennonites in Vietnam built foundations for their traveling medical facilities and networks with ethnic minorities in need of aid.

One of the most compelling stories in the book comes from Martin's description of the relationship between the Evangelical Church of Vietnam and MCC, which illustrates the difficulty they faced while negotiating the need for medical

assistance with their desire to not overstep on the work of other Christian organizations, particularly those with strong Vietnamese leadership. In the early years, members of MCC also built their families in Vietnam, both traveling with and giving birth to children. Internal accounts depicting the rise of violence and kidnappings of their members reminds readers of the overlap between the mission and the dangers of war. Martin's intertwining of political, cultural, and family sagas in the early days of the MCC missions helps uncover the complex realities for managing large religious aid programs.

In book two, "Partnership," the reader learns more about Martin's firsthand experiences in Vietnam and the evolution of MCC's Vietnam mission. The middle chapters of the book describe the relationship between the MCC and fellow Protestant missions as they progressed throughout the escalation of the war. Beyond medical care, Martin describes growing programs that worked with orphans, conducted Bible studies, and provided English-language training. The conflicting views with fellow evangelicals on American military actions, anchored in Mennonite pacifism, presents a striking narrative in the volume. One account details a disappointing meeting with the Rev. Billy Graham in 1966. Paul Longacre of MCC wrote home about the divide, stating, "If American Evangelical Christianity thinks that American military and economic power is the only way to solve the world's problems, it is a dark hour for the world, for America, and above all for the Church" (250). Martin's personal accounts of the increasing security threats, especially around the timing of the Tet Offensive in 1968, add interest to the book by providing a different lens for viewing the hostilities and their meaning for the Vietnamese people and other non-combatants.

The years of Vietnamization and the North Vietnamese victory compose the third book, "Transitions." Martin's assessment of the final years of the conflict trace plans for post-war mission planning and the effort to achieve peace in Vietnam. The focus on social history in the final war years provides a window into the challenges faced by mission organizations like MCC to obtain basic food and aid items for local populations. Mennonite leadership continued to petition the American government to end the conflict, a story that falls in line with numerous other aid organizations by the late war years. Martin remained in Vietnam through late April 1975, and he details the hectic days ahead of his eventual exit from the country. His experience as a witness to the entirety of the war years, from 1962 to 1975, is enough to make this a worthwhile read.

Intimidating at first glance, *A Vietnam Presence* offers readers a lot of material to digest, but it does so in short chapters with clear and helpful titles that make the work useful both for those ready to take a deep dive into the topic as well as those interested in a few specific aspects of the Mennonite experience in Vietnam. As an organizational history, Martin's work has a lot to offer. He is detailed in his accounts of the people and places involved. To do this, Martin focused on MCC and other Mennonite records, instead of interviews or published accounts. The lack of interviews seems like a missed opportunity in this case, although Martin addressed this as part of his quest to remain an objective storyteller. The bibliography is thin on secondary sources, but this lack of situating the work within the historiography is fitting with the book's goal to discuss an organization

that existed somewhere on the periphery of the American war effort. In focusing on a relief agency from a pacifist denomination, the history of the Mennonite presence in Vietnam cannot rely on the existing historiography to model its story. Rather, Martin's work allows us a new perspective on Americans living in Vietnam and interacting with non-combatant Vietnamese populations during the war. While the book is much more than just a personal account, the fact that Martin spent the entirety of the escalation and war years in Vietnam adds a unique element. For scholars interested in religious missions or the intersections of religion and war, this work offers a detailed account of how day-to-day operations functioned in Vietnam, and is not to be missed.

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AMANDA BOCZAR

Plain Meetinghouses: Lancaster County Old Order Mennonites Gather to Worship. By Beth Oberholtzer; photographs by John Herr. Atglen, Pa.: Schiffer Publishing. 2017. \$34.99.

At the outset of *Plain Meetinghouses* Beth Oberholtzer and John Herr point out a key factor making this project unique: "After we gained acceptance through personal introductions—telling where we went to church, mentioning the names of our parents and grandparents, and figuring out what relatives and acquaintances we have in common—we were welcomed" (vii). This patient approach literally opened doors to document buildings that few outsiders can gain access to. The result is an extraordinary contribution to available works on religious architecture. It reflects Oberholtzer's precise writing style and attention to details, integrated with hundreds of artful photos by Herr. All of this makes for a delightfully beautiful and thoughtful publication documenting the architecture of Old Order meetinghouses specific to Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

The author's writing style echoes the subject of the book. The narrative is clear-spoken and simple. Explanations, whether theological, cultural, or practical, are set out in crisp, straightforward writing. The author accepts uncomplicated explanations without wordy clutter or dramatic flourish. And the narrative rarely speculates when information or access may have been lacking. Despite this narrative brevity, the book includes a wealth of detail introducing general readers to the architecture and furnishings of plain meetinghouses.

The book is organized around six chapters profiling twenty-eight meetinghouses. The buildings range from the earliest existing meeting location of Mennonites in the county, the Herr House, built in 1719, to the 2015 Pike Mennonite Meetinghouse, recently constructed to match its historic predecessor. Three additional chapters situate the architecture of plain meetinghouses within the Old Order tradition as it has unfolded in Lancaster County, plus an appendix adding more background information. Two of these chapters are especially insightful for understanding the beliefs and practices underlying architectural decisions: one, detailing the construction of the 2015 Pike meetinghouse to replace the congregation's 1845 building; and a second, lengthy chapter, "Faith and Design," outlining "practicalities, customs, and religious practice."

These two chapters elevate the book from an aesthetically pleasing compilation of architectural photography to a resource that thoughtfully introduces the reader to religious practices of the Old Order tradition. Examples of this introductory material include a diagram outlining the elaborate seating arrangement dividing congregations by gender, age, and family status, and the accompanying narrative describing seating norms (62-63). Likewise the chapter comparing the two Pike meetinghouses highlights how Old Order congregations make careful decisions about modernizing when needed (in this case complying with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act's accessibility requirements) and maintaining tradition when desired, such as repairing and reusing historic benches (27-53).

Herr's photographs are a defining feature of this publication. He overcame two challenging obstacles in documenting the subject matter. With sensitivity to the preferences of Old Order believers, the book includes only a handful of images of people making their way to and from services, and even then depicted only from behind and at a distance—just enough to remind the reader that these are living buildings with active weekly use. As a complement, a number of images show cars and buggies parked on Sunday morning, as well as clusters of bikes on warm weekends.

A second obstacle was the reality that plain meetinghouses are architecturally simple, humble, and quite similar. How does one keep the reader engaged with hundreds of somewhat similar images? The creators of the book acknowledge this challenge in a playful way by including an anecdote about a woman who grew up playing "name that meetinghouse" with her family at Christmastime. With an accompanying array of snapshots of a couple dozen buildings that all look about the same, the story points out how uniform Old Order design is (194).

Herr overcomes this challenge with obvious expertise for composing images that take advantage of the aesthetic richness of simple materials of wood, leather, and fabric. Images showcasing the interior framing of a parking shed (123), sweaters left hanging in a cloak room (187), and the simple beauty of sun rays radiating around Bibles stacked on a preacher's table (35) are some of the most charming examples. Here too the book itself transparently acknowledges this reality: "A pincushion with pins and stray buttons hanging in the women's cloakroom is a splash of color and decoration in a building defined by its simple beauty (94)." The images also effectively contrast colors and use pattern and repetition to make rows of church benches or hat and bonnet hooks artistically compelling themselves.

After exploring *Plain Meetinghouses* I found myself eager to dig deeper into at least two core areas of inquiry that Oberholtzer and Herr only briefly touch upon. Given the almost total lack of studies of Mennonite religious architecture, these are not deficiencies of this work but rather areas where other scholars can and should pick up the exploration.

First, there is much more to understand about Old Order concepts of sacredness or holiness pertaining to ritual objects and spaces. As Oberholtzer notes, "There is a mix of reverence and practicality in the Old Order approach to ritual objects" (79). The same is true of the approach to space set aside for worship. On the one hand, utility and practicality drive many decisions: benches tilt forward for ease

of cleaning floors, or as the author notes, “The same pitcher that stands ready on the preacher’s table each Sunday may also be used for baptism” (79).

Yet, despite these low church sensibilities, the spaces profiled in this book are clearly set aside from everyday life. This is underscored by the book’s short section on “fellowship centers,” built in more recent years for social gatherings deemed inappropriate for a meetinghouse setting (195-197).

So do Old Order believers think of these spaces as sacred or holy? If so, what makes them sacred? Is it something essential in their character such as their simplicity of design? Or is it something made through the community’s gathering there—the gentle wear of benches, tables, and books over decades of use—or their common labor to build the space? Perhaps there are subtler factors unique to Old Order theology. These are questions worthy of more study.

Second, there is considerable opportunity to study more carefully the architectural choices made by more assimilated Mennonite groups during the last half century. In Lancaster County and beyond there are many examples of how newer buildings constructed by Mennonite Church USA congregations have been influenced and inspired by plain or historic meetinghouse sensibilities. And there are many examples of how newer buildings turned away from these sensibilities toward more conventional mid-century and vernacular religious architectural designs.

Oberholtzer and Herr touch on this in their section on Lancaster Mennonite Conference church design (207-215). One could envision a full-length study on this question alone, even if restricted to modern Lancaster County church buildings. Such a study, if accompanied by a historical analysis of how congregations chose various building designs, interior furnishings, and ritual objects, would be an invaluable contribution to fields of religious architecture and Mennonite theologies of worship and aesthetics.

Overall, *Plain Meetinghouses* is a delightful book that is carefully researched and artfully composed. It both contributes to an understudied field and points to opportunities for further research and understanding.

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CHAD MARTIN

Menno Simons. Dutch Reformer between Luther, Erasmus, and the Holy Spirit. A Study in the Problem Areas of Menno’s Scholarship. By Abraham Friesen. Bloomington, Ind.: Xlibris Books. 2015. \$ 34.99.

Abe Friesen, an acknowledged Reformation history professor emeritus at the University of California, Santa Barbara, has written a remarkable book on the Dutch Anabaptist leader Menno Simons.

The book, with its almost 400 pages, divided into three parts, is quite dense reading. The first part, at 40 pages, describes the Reformation as “an era of recovery and conflict.” The second part (100 pages) deals with the story of Münster as “background and context.” Here Friesen is convinced that authorities wrongly linked Menno Simons to the Münster movement. “The moment he was rebaptized, therefore, Menno became a potential revolutionary who had to be eradicated. And

so he was persecuted, not for what he had done, but because what he would inevitably do given the opportunity. The Müntzer/Münster legacy therefore impacted him at every turn" (137). Evidence of Menno's distance from the Münster movement is found in Menno's writing "The Blasphemy of Jan van Leiden," which Friesen dates prior to Menno's conversion experience (177). This argument is a sharp response to revisionist claims that suggest Menno wrote the book much later as an effort to sanitize his involvement in the Münster episode. Friesen calls the encounter between Menno and the Münsterites a "relationship of opposition" (213).

The third and principal part of the book then covers what Friesen describes in his title: Menno Simons and his theology must be understood as occupying a space between Luther and Erasmus. The apocalyptic thinking that impacted Menno most came not from Melchior Hoffman but from the early Luther. Menno had his own independent intellectual/theological development. Friesen argues that Luther played a significant role in that development; but Erasmus played an even more important role.

Although Menno belonged to "what Hans-Jürgen Goertz has called the Bible believing church type" over against the apocalyptic vengeful type (213), his theology of incarnation and of the "heavenly flesh of Christ" was taken from Melchior Hoffman. Friesen traces this line of thinking to "Augustine's doctrine of original sin that was and remains the problem" (203).

But Menno strongly disagreed with Augustine's argument that the church must "be accommodated to the fluctuating tides of history" (318). This view of history had special importance for the application of the ban. Menno distanced himself from the Constantinian church model and Augustine's "Neoplatonic philosophy and falsification of the Parable of the Tares through which the whole world became part of the church (353). In this interpretation, the church became a "mixed body" (239). Wheat and tares should grow together until the end of times, with the power of church discipline largely delegated to the "Christian prince" and the state magistrates.

Over against that model Menno advocated for a disciplined believers' church, as Luther had proposed earlier in his prologue to the "German Mass." But while Luther stayed with infant baptism and "did little to disentangle the historical interwinding that had been going on for over a thousand years between church and state . . . infant baptism, the Christian prince, and Menno's option for adult and believer's baptism entailed the inevitable separation of church and state or church and world" (322-323).

Friesen is convinced that "Luther . . . changed his mind, perhaps under the impact of the 1523 Edict of Nuremberg. Menno never did change his mind." (323) Menno's church is not really a result of Reformation, but the founding of a whole new concept and type of church. (231) For this type of church the "born again experience" was foundational (233). This is evident also through Menno's autobiographical writings, where he graphically describes his own conversion experience.

Friesen's book covers all crucial issues or problem areas of Menno Simons research: his idea about incarnation and the "sword"; about church history; the

“Christian” prince and the ban; his biblicism and missional theology; his interpretation of persecution and believers’ baptism. It is not an easy read and requires concentration. Several topics seem to be unnecessarily repetitive: e.g., Menno’s distance to Münster; the reference to Erasmus and his interpretation of Matthew 28; the “false interpretation” of the Parable of the Tares; Menno as fulfiller of the early aspirations of the Reformers.

Nevertheless, this book is an important and very helpful contribution to newer Anabaptist research. After several decades of polygenesis research Friesen argues, it is time to again summarize and list the many commonalities between Dutch and Swiss Anabaptism. In my view Friesen also makes a convincing case that Erasmus and Luther exercised at least as strong a theological influence on Menno Simons as Melchior Hoffman or the Münster debacle. Furthermore, Menno’s conversion experience and his strong dependence on the leading of the Holy Spirit are two additional characteristics that speak in favor of his uniqueness. Since the author comes from the Mennonite Brethren tradition, to a certain extent he reflects a rather specific reading which Mennonite Brethren bring to Anabaptism, or what they call “Evangelical Anabaptism.”

Friesen’s thesis that Menno was actually the founder of a new type of church and not only a gatherer of scattered Anabaptist leftovers is worth considering. That he also is to a large extent the “founder” of the Baptist denomination and its theology is worth pondering in further research. This claim could reinvigorate the dialogue between Mennonites and Baptists.

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ALFRED NEUFELD

Education with the Grain of the Universe. Edited by J. Denny Weaver. Telford, Pa.: Cascadia Publishing House. 2017. \$ 27.95.

Throughout the history of the American education system, faith-based education has played a formative and critical role in shaping and serving the needs of students. Within this context, Mennonite schools and institutions of higher education have been rooted in the Anabaptist values of peace and justice, engaging the world, and walking in the way of Jesus. In the tradition of being a “third way,” Mennonite education has continued to offer rigorous and supportive academic environments that cultivate the exploration of new knowledge, inspire creativity, and challenge students to be living examples of their faith. As models for Christian education face new fiscal, enrollment, and curricular challenges, Mennonite institutions can draw on a rich history to craft a future that is authentic, inspiring, and sustaining.

Drawing on the scholarly work presented at the conference “Mennonite Education: Past, Present and Future,” *Education with the Grain of the Universe* brings forth the ideas and papers focused on connecting the church and Mennonite education through the lens of peacemaking. This collection assembles scholars from across academic disciplines who are committed to a strong future that is grounded in the history of the Anabaptist movement, the Mennonite Church, and educational frameworks. The book is organized into six parts and twenty chapters,

as the editor takes the reader across a broad landscape, addressing theology and ethics, listening to voices from the margins, concluding with examples of how education is being provided in the Mennonite context. The authors of each chapter are scholars and experts from fields including history, religion, peace studies, and English; they discuss how to best create an educational system that is relevant to current worldviews, inclusive of the voices present, and truly reflective of the Mennonite perspective.

Throughout *Education with the Grain of the Universe*, the papers make strong arguments and set aspirations for the future of Mennonite education as a model for cultivating peace and justice in the world. Changing demographics are a reality for Mennonite institutions and offer opportunities for impacting new racial, ethnic, and religious constituents. These diverse communities can positively influence how Mennonite education is delivered. In "From Goshen to Delano: Toward a Relational Mennonite Studies," Felipe Hinojosa makes the argument that Mennonite identity and culture is best examined from the "outside in" rather than "the inside out" (87). Hinojosa goes on to challenge the scholarly community to better understand race and the roles white Mennonites played in social justice issues. He observes: "One place to start is to rethink how Mennonite scholars approach and write about the civil rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Much of the Mennonite literature on this topic perpetuates the simplistic idea that white Mennonites were progressives on questions of race, social movements and protest (92)." Racial and gender inclusion within Mennonite education circles requires continued attention. In this volume additional diverse viewpoints are provided by Drew Hart in "Salvaging Mennonite Theological Education: Imitating Black Faith as It Imitates Christ"; Daniel Shank Cruz in "Learning to Listen in Greg Bechtel's 'Smut Stories'"; and Rebecca Janzen's "Mennonite and Mormon Women's Life Writing." These pieces provide valuable arguments for greater diversity, equity, and inclusion in Mennonite education.

While the articles mentioned above capture key diverse voices, one important element missing in *Education with the Grain of the Universe* is the international perspective. As the Mennonite faith has seen robust growth in the global church, opportunities exist to expand peace and justice education within the international context. The contribution "Peace Studies and International Law" by Lowell Ewert discusses international legal frameworks. The author concludes: "In my view, the traditional Mennonite practice of giving short shrift to the way that the law of war, human rights and international criminal prosecution can serve the interests of the vulnerable abdicates an important opportunity to build peace" (254). Additional work in this area is needed and would add depth to how peace theology can be applied through Mennonite educational initiatives.

While the papers included in this volume craft a narrative of Mennonite education going "with the grain," an examination Mennonite countercultural and radical practices would offer a provocative juxtaposition. This was not the intention of this work but an inclusion of this strong historical element of the Anabaptist tradition would be helpful to envisioning ways in which the future can be influenced by the past. The theological and ecclesiastical sections of the book touch on a Mennonite theology of the margins, but continued discussion of how

to apply this historical Anabaptist interpretation of scripture could be expanded, especially as it relates to future practice. Moving from theory to practice in the field of education is essential and more work is required to bring Mennonite theology forward in learning environments. As the scholarship around Mennonite education expands, additional research into radical movements within the church can provide interesting insights on the power of peace education.

Religious education, including Christian, continues to face shifting demands and changing demographics. The text provides a realistic and inspiring perspective on ways in which Mennonite educational institutions can thrive into the future. Through a multi-disciplinary approach, *Education with the Grain of the Universe*, provides a unique contribution by offering not only theoretical models but practice-based examples of how educators can live out the intentions of Mennonite education. Each discipline represented in this edited edition is enriched by the original scholarship presented in this work. While much has been written about the future of education and inherent challenges with current systems, this book creates space for optimism for the future by incorporating lessons from the history of Mennonite education and ways in which peace and justice can have meaningful impacts on the future. The editor and authors are successful in their collective effort to illustrate how Mennonite institutions of education can continue to offer genuine and authentic learning experiences rooted in an Anabaptist context while following the trajectory of overarching educational movements.

Mennonite education specifically and religious education in general will need to continue to innovate to remain vibrant and viable in current as well as future educational contexts. As the authors note, an approach that is aligned with the historical underpinnings of the church can provide a way forward in creating new opportunities to expand the reach of Mennonite education. Consistent with the Anabaptist tradition of providing a third way, this text offers scholarly grounding for how educational institutions can succeed in advancing access, quality, and learning. *Education with the Grain of the Universe* serves as a reminder of the rich history of Mennonite education while emphasizing opportunities for the future.

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KENNETH F. NEWBOLD JR.

What the Body Knows. By Jean Janzen. Telford, Pa.: DreamSeeker Books. 2015. \$12.95.

The body—its ailing, its shortcomings, its sexuality, its mortality—is a popular subject in contemporary poetry. At times, in the work of many acclaimed contemporary poets, it seems the only subject for poetry.

Jean Janzen's seventh poetry collection, *What the Body Knows*, is rooted in a deeply Anabaptist awareness of the body. Janzen has always been a masterful writer on the subject of what Julia Kasdorf calls "embodied spirituality." However, now in her 80s, Janzen writes without the contemporary urge to depict the body in its provocative flashes of embarrassment or transgression. The body she writes has little gore, carnal craving, or self-consciousness. Instead, her poems are

attentive and accepting, noticing the body, “the hunger and the song,” she says in *Writing the Fire*, without exposure or shame. The hunger and the song are subtle and steeped in mercy as her collection moves in a rough arc from childhood memories to her ninth decade.

She begins with early memories of farm and family. In the fifth poem, “Gallop,” she recalls:

my brother expanding the walls
with his rich baritone until father said,
“No, not inside. Practice in the barn!”
While the cow was being milked,
the “Gallop” song over and over.
This was as close to nobility as we
would come . . .

A sense of nobility haunts the work, and Janzen raises questions about her nearness and her distance from nobility. She recalls the nobility encountered over a lifetime, knowingly or unknowingly, as she reflects on the refrigerators in “Remple Electric,” the San Gabriel mountains in “Crossing Over,” the royally named Great Dane in “Meeting Catherine,” an encounter with an opera singer in “Renee Fleming in my Kitchen,” the wild, windy love in “On the Western Plain.” What imbues nobility? How close to nobility has her life come? Was it close enough? The answer to this last question is a soft *yes*, as Janzen lifts up the most dignified, composed memories of a lifetime.

One of the most stunning poems in the collection describes her arrival at her 70th birthday party in “a sleek black dress.” The tableau is ordinary and yet bathed with the grace and comfort of nobility:

. . . The family gathers.
She has provided a karaoke player
to fulfill my old dream to sing love songs
into a microphone. I’ve entered through
the back to croon “Smoke Gets in Your Eyes”
while my young grandson works the fog
machine . . .

Janzen collects nobility as she walks slowly through the gallery of her life, and she recalls her body and its ways of knowing. Yet she exposes the body cautiously, with guarded politeness.

The prologue poem, “Letting Out the Seams,” reveals her intention. She recalls the room where, as a younger woman, she “tucked, snipped, and knotted my way / toward perfection.” A hardworking, noble Anabaptist mission, to pursue unceasingly the worthy goal. Yet, she reflects,

. . . Now
I undo the years with pen and paper,
I pull out the threads, darts, and hems,
free the arms for stretching and for
the release of breath stitched tightly.

If this book is a release of breath, if it is a stretching, it is a polite and private one. The body is graceful, joyful, lacking the craving and carnal joy of earlier poems such as "Chicken Guts" and "Wild Grapes." Only in passing does she mention the difficulty of having a female body in a rural Mennonite community, as in "Never Say No," where she writes:

My mother's only marriage advice:
 Never say no. Comb your hair,
 and wear a clean apron.
 Only an apron, he murmured,
 leading me to bed. This
 after years of say no, say no

The ambiguity of Janzen's feelings about no and yes, about asserting the body and accepting the forces that act on the body, is jarring. Janzen allows questions of consent (assault?) to linger in the background, naming the past as it was with no clear sense of whether she reconciles or justifies it. For a collection titled *What the Body Knows*, Janzen is reluctant to share exactly what her female body knows about the patriarchal culture of Mennonite communities or the multiple pushes of women's liberation she lived through. Perhaps what the body knows is when it wishes to keep to itself.

The book is dedicated to the memory of Janzen's husband, Louis, but she holds that memory close, barely allowing the reader a glimpse of him. The most vivid characters are ones who passed through in rapid, vivid bursts, carrying their own joyful bodies: "Mr. Reimer, the mortician, who is flying downhill / in luminous spray with shout and laughter," the Great Dane Catherine the Great "who is all / invitation as she presses her nose / into my hand."

Beside these clarified figures, Janzen's husband lurks: a hardworking and often-absent medical resident during her pregnancy, perhaps the figure she speaks to in one of several hospital visits and reflections on aging. He emerges clearly only in one poem, "Pool," three-quarters of the way into the book, building a small uterus-shaped pool on his fiftieth birthday. Together, they look at the finished pool:

. . . "Womb," we whispered,
 little girls in church singing
 the word, the secret place . . .

Pulling memories from across a lifetime, Janzen knows which secrets she wishes to remain secret. She looks at the womb with awe, but no need to explore its blood and craving. Her politeness wins out as she remains, well into her life, a little girl singing the body with awe and trepidation. She is in no rush to expose dark places.

Janzen is one Anabaptist woman writer who, among her contemporaries, chose to stay in the church and its culture, participating heavily in the Mennonite Brethren church. She does not describe the cost or the burden of that choice, or the difference between what her body knows and what the bodies of the women who left or relocated to the margins—talented writers like Julia Kasdorf, Miriam

Toews, and Di Brandt—know. Aging, family, animals, and contemplation are all more crucial to Janzen’s knowing than sex or gender in this collection.

What the Body Knows, it knows humbly and privately. At the end of “Letting Out the Seams,” the opening poem, Janzen describes

. . . trying
 on words for fit, even as they
 refuse to stay, silk pieces falling,
 the whispers of my skin.

Are these poems, these the words, that refused to stay? Or are these the ones that wear easily and humbly in public, without calling attention to herself, without disrupting or revealing too much? Janzen’s collection is musical, gentle, embodied. But it is the body of a woman who settled and accepted her Mennonite legacy. It is perhaps a song back to the ones who left, the reasons she stayed, and the quiet admission that the arms were never quite free to stretch, the breath always stitched tightly, but still pushing through the chest to release its song.

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HILLARY WATSON

Die Furgge. By Katharina Zimmermann. Translated by Ruth Schwertfeger. Morgantown, Pa.: Mastoff Press. 2017. \$15.

A rugged mountain in the Emmental region near Bern, Switzerland, shapes the landscape for a poignant story of Anabaptists who struggled to maintain their faith in the face of brutal persecution in the early eighteenth century. Originally published in German, this historical novel by Katharina Zimmermann recounts the difficulties Mennonites faced in Canton Bern, Switzerland. The author’s main characters are Madleni and Hans Schilt, siblings, who lived near Schangnau, in a remote mountainous region where people were increasingly joining the Anabaptist movement. A third primary character in the novel is Christen Hirschi, who married Madleni Schilt. It is this Hirschi name that carries the weight of interest for North American Mennonites, as one or more of the Hirschi children emigrated to Pennsylvania in 1717, and a grand tricentennial celebration of the Hershey family arrival in America took place in 2017.

Katharina Zimmerman, a native Swiss writer and researcher, discovered the nearly forgotten story of the Anabaptist movement near Bern, while she assisted her pastor husband in the Reformed Church of Schangnau, Switzerland. Using historical characters throughout the 166-page novel, Zimmerman helps the reader experience the steep mountainsides, the streams, the snow, the long winters, and the joys of living high in the Alps in the early eighteenth century. All the while, Zimmerman creates the environment of persecution that Madleni, Hans, Christen, and others met when they left the Reformed Church and joined the Anabaptist Mennonites. It is a harrowing story of persecution from both civil and religious authorities who felt threatened by the growing number of mountain residents in their region who were joining the free church Anabaptists.

Die Furgge was first published in German in 1989. A review by John E. Engle that appeared in *Mennonite Family History* in 2007 is printed in the English translation of the book that came out in 2017, published by Mastoff Press. It was in Engle's essay that this reviewer began to realize that his own Yoder family story may appear in the novel, and the reading began in earnest. Zimmerman weaves into her story the conflict between the "Haftler," those who followed Jakob Ammann, and the Mennonites in the Emmental, followers of Hans Reist. Plenty of last names still found among Mennonites and Amish in North America are sprinkled throughout Zimmerman's novel. This reviewer's eleventh-generation ancestor, Jost Yoder, was among a group of eight Amish men who tried to reconcile Amish with Mennonites in 1711, but failed. Zimmerman humorously describes the Amish insistence on hooks and old-fashioned flaps as opposed to the Mennonites who wore buttons.

In 1711, when the failed attempt was made to reconcile the Amish and Mennonites, Madleni Hirschi got into a boat in Bern, Switzerland, with Amish and Mennonites, and began a journey downstream that would eventually take her all the way to the Netherlands. Madleni at the time was about 37 years old. She and her husband, Christen, had seven children, though two of her sons had already fled Switzerland with Christen to Germany several years earlier. Madleni left her daughters and youngest son in the care of others when she fled Bern because of persecution, as she went looking for her husband. Virtually any history book about Mennonites or Amish will give details of the famous 1711 boatloads of Amish and Mennonites who sailed away from persecution, assisted by the Dutch Mennonites. Very few of those who left Bern by boat in 1711 actually made it to the Netherlands, because Mennonites and Amish kept getting off at different places along the voyage. Madleni never found her husband and sons; and when she returned to Schangnau, she discovered that her five children had all been forcibly distributed to other Reformed families, leaving her without children or husband.

Katharina Zimmerman's historical novel starts slowly, as a second story is woven throughout the book, and with the two narratives alternating. Anna Bloch is a musician from Zurich who goes on vacation near Schangnau and discovers the story of Anabaptists Madleni and Christen Hirschi. Bloch does research to learn more of the nearly lost story of Anabaptists from the Furgge mountain region. The twentieth-century story of the musician and vacationer Anna Bloch seems to parallel the story of the author Katharina Zimmermann, who learned and uncovered the story of the Anabaptists in the Emmental.

At first, this English reader of the novel was lost geographically. Place names from the Swiss Alps were unknown, and the location of the storyline not readily understood. For Swiss or German readers, or North American Mennonites who have traveled in the Canton of Bern, Switzerland, the locations may be well known. But to make this English translation more accessible to the average North American reader, a good set of maps would greatly enhance the book.

Another initial hurdle was not seeing any quotation marks for dialogue. Since there were no quotation marks in the original German version, the translator and publisher of the English version decided to leave them out. Reading dialogue

without any quotation marks takes getting used to. Further, there were editorial issues with apostrophes and periods that should be cleaned up for an English reading audience. One final editorial note concerns the cast of characters. While the characters were all historical, at times there were so many characters that a list and description of each person at the end of the book would have been helpful.

Madleni Hirschi is a memorable character, and Katharina Zimmerman does an outstanding job taking the reader into the life of a young Swiss Mennonite woman of strength, fortitude, and courage. Madleni joined the Anabaptist movement well before her husband did, she stood for her beliefs when challenged, and she suffered the ultimate sacrifice for her convictions. Madleni also believed in signs, and she and others in the novel believed in hobgoblins, mountain spirits, ghosts, and witches' curses; they feared the devil who lurked at every turn. A riveting moment comes when an older Anabaptist woman visited Madleni in her home after Madleni's second child was born dead. Madleni's first child had also died during birth. Following the second death, Madleni nearly went mad with grief and rage, and she was considered possessed. The Anabaptist woman soothed, counseled, and comforted her, a sign to Madleni that she should accept the Anabaptist faith.

Katharina Zimmerman's wonderful historical novel gently makes a case for nonviolence in the world today. The twentieth-century vacationer Anna Bloch accepted the way of peace near the end of the book. This novel demonstrates the commitments and uncharted paths of the Anabaptists in the Emmental region near Bern, Switzerland, in the early 1700s, who went through fire and water, were martyred, fled, and resettled elsewhere, and who would be glad to see that their commitment to the way of peace continues in the world today.

Eastern Mennonite School

Elwood Yoder

BOOK NOTES

Cathedrals, Castles, Caves: The Origins of the Anabaptist Faith. Marcus A. Yoder. Winesburg, Ohio: JPV Press. 2018. 223 pp. \$19.99.

This survey, intended for a popular readership, narrates the history of the Anabaptist movement in four parts. Sections one and two offer a sweeping overview of Christian history from the time of Christ to the Reformation. Section three focuses on the Reformation and the early history of the Anabaptist movement. The final section summarizes the Anabaptist story through the middle of the sixteenth century. Occasional timelines, color photographs, and maps are interspersed throughout the text. The book concludes with a helpful glossary of terms, a comprehensive timeline, a list of books for further reading, and an index of names and places. The author, Marcus Yoder, is the executive director of the Amish & Mennonite Heritage Center and the Ohio Amish Library in Berlin, Ohio.

Stories and Scenes from a Brethren in Christ Heritage. E. Morris Sider. Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Brethren in Christ Historical Society. 2018. 330 pp. \$12.

For more than two decades E. Morris Sider has been the pre-eminent historian of the Brethren in Christ church, serving as the denominational archivist, the executive director of the Brethren in Christ Historical Society, and as editor of *Brethren in Christ History and Life*. He is the author or co-author of more than thirty books on Brethren in Christ history, and editor of a dozen more books. This collection of stories reflects the scope of Sider's work and captures the human dimension of the church's history. It includes chapters on themes such as courtship, family life, Bible conferences, confession and forgiveness, evangelism, separation from the world, and ministry. Many of the stories focus on the experiences of ordinary people, including numerous accounts of Brethren in Christ women. A final chapter offers ideas for how the book might be used in various settings.

Umstrittene Empörung: Zur Gewaltfrage in der frühen Reformation. Hans-Jürgen Goertz zum 80. Geburtstag. Edited by Thomas T. Müller. Mühlhausen: Thomas-Müntzer-Gesellschaft. 2017. 112 pp. €10.

This slender volume, the twenty-fourth in a series of publications by the Thomas Müntzer Society, was published as a Festschrift in honor of Hans-Jürgen Goertz, a renowned historian of the Radical Reformation and long-time member of the society. The theme of the book—the question of violence in the early Reformation—reflects one of Goertz's many historical interests and builds on his own contributions to the historiography of the topic. Goertz himself opens the collection with an essay on Thomas Müntzer's famous "Sermon to the Princes." His essay is followed by four other contributions: Sigfried Bräuer on Müntzer's early sermons; Nicole Grochowina on Hans Hut's understanding of the sword; Alejandro Zorzin on Karlstadt's rejection of Müntzer's defensive confederation; and Andreas Lindner on Luther and Melancthon's appeals to violence in their rejection of the Anabaptists.

The Wheat and the Tares: Doctrines of the Church in the Reformation, 1500-1590. Andrew Allan Chibi. Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick Publications. 2015. 486 pp. \$57.

This study of the ecclesiology—that is, the doctrine and theory of the church—during the Reformation era surveys shifting attitudes toward the church from the late Middle Ages through the Catholic Reformation at the end of the sixteenth century. The author devotes particular attention to Erasmus, Luther, Zwingli, and the ecclesiology of second-generation reformers, with a nod to the Church of England and the Counter-Reformation churches, tracing debates over ecclesiology

that separated not only Roman Catholics from emerging Protestants but also Protestants from each other. In these debates, Jesus' parable of the wheat and the tares in Matthew 13 surfaced repeatedly: By what means were the tares to be removed from the body of the church? When was this process of purification to happen? And who had the authority to do so? Disagreements over the answers to these questions led to the splintering of the church and remain unresolved today.

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