

Book Reviews

Augustinian and Ecclesial Christian Ethics: On Loving Enemies. By D. Stephen Long. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books/Fortress Academic. 2018. \$110.

Reading *Augustinian and Ecclesial Christian Ethics* was like rediscovering my graduate school coursework. In one sense, this impression didn't surprise me. Stephen Long and I had strikingly similar educations, right down to sharing a doctoral adviser, Stanley Hauerwas, who once told me that Long and I were his two most similar students: Because we obsessed over giving our interlocutors a fair hearing, we had a problem seeing forests for the trees. True to form, Long's latest book weaves a complex web of people, movements, and issues, providing much food for thought about the connections, tensions, and misunderstandings that construct and get caught in that web. It is, however, a daunting book. Full of asides, nuance, and qualification, it is written for ethicists thoroughly initiated into the predominately white male world of theological ethics at Duke, Princeton, the University of Virginia, and Yale. So, when Long reflects on the theological tensions bequeathed to him by his education, as he does throughout *Augustinian and Ecclesial Christian Ethics*, I'm on familiar terrain. But, to be honest, that familiarity bothers me. I finished graduate school in 2004; Long finished in 1991--sixteen and twenty-nine years ago, respectively. That time frame feels like a different era in Christian ethics, and I have reservations about insisting on its relevance today. In this review, I'd like to comment on this work under three headings: argument, sources, and audience.

First, what is Long's basic argument? He structures the text around a question: Should Christian ethics be an "ecclesial" or a "national" project"? Disjunctions in academic ethics are usually red herrings, and that is certainly the case here. Instead of an either/or, Long opts for a creative middle ground position. He writes,

The civic republicanism that the Augustinians [his term for Christians who favor a national moral project] call us to is something more than nationalism, and should be taken up by the neo-Anabaptists [those who favor a church-based moral project] through a theology of the nations. Yet it should be accomplished without abandoning the important ecclesial project that the neo-Anabaptists brought to Christian ethics (xviii).

Dissecting these appellations, let alone exactly who Long means by "us," would demand another essay, but allow me to at least register my discomfort. Overall, however, his claim is clear: Christian ethics today should be both Augustinian and ecclesial.

To make the case, Long breaks his book into three main chapters, excluding an introduction and conclusion. In chapter 1, the "Origin and Development of the Augustinian Approach," Long traces the development of Augustinian ethics from

the second half of the twentieth century into the twenty-first. Here, he does three things. First, he argues that Christian ethics has moved past a point where rehearsing the critique of Reinhold Niebuhr made by John Howard Yoder is necessary. This is a point, which he reiterates throughout the book, with which I couldn't agree more. As I have said before, Yoder and Niebuhr should be important to contemporary Christian ethics as history. Yet, throughout the book, Long rehearses Niebuhr's and Yoder's arguments at length, doing just what he claims ought not be done any longer. He justifies this move by claiming that such a rehearsal is necessary in order to understand his second main point, namely, that contemporary Augustinians, like Timothy Jackson, Charles Matthews, Eric Gregory, and Jennifer Herdt, have improved upon Niebuhr's political theology by making it more responsive to "specific Christian doctrine" than Niebuhr did. It is to them, Long says, and to their summons to take up "specific national projects" that Christian ethics should attend today. As the third element of his first chapter, Long records a list of fifteen criticisms, ranging "across intellectual disciplines, mixing theology, ethics, politics, and metaphysics" that these Augustinian thinkers put to Christian ethicists, particularly to those who espouse the ecclesial mode of ethics common to neo-Anabaptism (101).

In the second chapter, the "Origin and Development of the Ecclesial Approach," Long does for neo-Anabaptist ethicists what he did in the first chapter for Augustinians. In it, he claims to lay out "what matters most for the ecclesial approach to ethics," namely the centrality of ecclesiology and eschatology for Christian ethics. For ecclesial ethicists, unlike the Augustinians, "the primary social location for ethical discernment will be the church." Yet for the church to function as the principal site of Christianity, one can't simply point to the church "as it is . . . inadequate, mired in sinful divisions" (154). Instead, Long says, the church must be an object of an eschatological faith that depends on the "repetitive apocalyptic inbreaking found in Word and Sacrament" (155). Just as Niebuhr provided the measuring stick for Long's argument in the first chapter, so also Yoder provides it in the second. And, just as the Augustinians received approbation for having moved past Niebuhr, so also the neo-Anabaptists receive it for having moved past Yoder. The end result in Long's view is that the two groups of ethicists "are best understood as differences within a common tradition" that place different emphasis upon two poles of a relationship. "Is ethics an ecclesial or national project?" he writes. "Must we choose between them?" (156).

Chapter 3 is entitled "Addressing the Critiques." Here, Long sets out to show how the neo-Anabaptist/ecclesial ethicists respond (or could respond) to the criticisms set forth by the Augustinians in chapter 1. These are criticisms like "They lack an adequate doctrine of sin," or "They seek a pure church that refuses to concede its worldliness" (171-181). According to my count, no fewer than eleven of the fifteen are textbook examples of begging the question, where the criticisms presume a definition of the very thing being contested. In each case, however, Long frames a response that shows how the neo-Anabaptists can meet the Augustinians' criticisms, with the proper cavils and caveats. He concludes that Christian ethics should be both ecclesial and national in character, and reminds partisans of each approach that neither the church nor the nation are finished projects. There is the need for growth in each.

Long's source work is more than extensive; the chapter endnotes comprise roughly a third of the text. Additionally, the sources read like a vita of Hauerwas students, or rather, like a vita of Hauerwas students plus all the books on all the syllabi of Hauerwas's graduate classes. As I said with regard to Long's arguments, so also his sources are extremely familiar to me; and as I read, I found myself wondering, "What would have had to be the case for me to write a book like this?" On the one hand, I can imagine this book as professional development. Long got some release time, and said, "I want to read up on Hauerwas's students since I graduated," and found someone to pay for him to do that. That's cynical, of course, so let me suggest on the other hand an alternative hypothesis. This book is an *apologia pro Hauerwas*. After all, who more exemplifies the book's central tension between ethics as a "national" and "ecclesial" project than Hauerwas? True, Hauerwas has claimed to stand firmly on the side of "ecclesial" ethics, but he also quickly acknowledges that the reason he says "the first task of the church is not to make the world more just but to be the church" so often is that he has to keep convincing himself. Now, Hauerwas is my friend, as he is Long's, and as Hauerwas edged toward retirement, it was difficult to watch his arguments continue to be misconstrued, ignored, and maligned by other guild members, whether such misconstruals are accidental or not. And, all of Hauerwas's friends know that "Stan the Man" looms larger for most people than his arguments. So, it is terribly tempting in each case to jump into the fray armed with clarifications and defenses so as to set the record straight, which is just what I think Long has done in this book. *Augustinian and Ecclesial Christian Ethics* is Long playing Melancthon to Hauerwas's Luther.

That comparison brings me to my last point about audience, which I will make briefly. I don't think Long wrote this book just for me, but I bet its appeal will be limited to people a lot like me. It is not a general audience book--its main argument is far too abstract. It is *not* a seminary or graduate school text--it demands exhaustive familiarity with primary sources, of the kind seminarians and graduate students are only beginning to develop. It is unlikely to serve in generations to come as a sourcebook. It is equally unlikely to convince ethicists who have already dismissed Hauerwas and his ilk that we deserve another hearing. So, who is it for? Long, me, and a few dozen other people from Duke, Princeton, UVA, and perhaps Yale. Most of them, like me, will probably have been convinced about its argument before they read it. I wonder if, like me, they will also think that it is time to move on.

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Making Believe: Questions about Mennonites and Art. By Magdalene Redekop. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba. 2020. Illustrations, bibliography, and index. \$27.50 CAD/\$31.95 USD.

Magdalene Redekop's thesis in *Making Believe* is that the arts emerge where boundaries of language, culture, styles, and religion are in juxtaposition and clash.

A sub-thesis is that the arts enable us to overcome these divisions and find avenues of unity. Redekop begins by defining a methodology she will apply to a variety of art forms (dance, music, poetry, performance art) and their connections with a religious heritage (32).

She examines multiple artistic and critical voices from that decade of “making (Aristotle’s *poiesis*) believe” (52) that has been called the Mennonite renaissance (1980s). The author contends that the emotionalism of the evangelical movement that swept over the Canadian Mennonites (Manitoba, primarily) in the 1950s, and reactions to it, were the contributing factors in spawning the arts for this Mennonite renaissance (36-39). In scrutinizing that decade, its origins, and its aftermath, Redekop proposes that art negotiates gaps wherever religion, politics, identity, and social institutions impose boundaries. Those borders are the fertile ground for the arts.

In a sweeping introduction (3-47), Redekop also identifies the interplay of all the arts as a necessity for a Mennonite aesthetic. She is not just identifying who Canadian Mennonites (Kanadiar, Rusländer, or Swiss) are, what Mennonite art is, and how they interact in harmony, or more frequently, in dissonance. Her aesthetic emerges from investigating those fault lines.

The book is divided in two parts. Part I, “Reframing Old Questions,” consists of three chapters and an interlude. Part II covers the Mennonite renaissance in the arts in the 1980s: “Witnessing a New Phenomenon.” Each chapter examines Mennonite arts from a variety of angles, including observations from outside the tradition. Her analysis focuses not just on the works themselves, but also on probing the dynamics that spawned these works and where they reside, move, and have their being (Acts 17:28). Redekop focuses on cultural, linguistic, and stylistic boundaries with attention to satire (Paul Hiebert), cultural critiques (Rudy Wiebe), transformative agendas (Ben Horch), overlooked imagery (Gathie Falk), and religious distancing (Patrick Friesen and Miriam Toews).

Chapter 1 introduces the *Spielraum* (playroom), a liminal space where ethnic dialogue can occur in order to make believe (76). Elements in this tradition are being transformed in those spaces in order to participate in re-creating the foundations for identity and belief. Chapter 2 expands the central theme introduced in the apologia: Mennonite artists are a “stand-in for the very *idea* of difference” (xvii). She investigates identity and difference by comparing the aesthetics of literary texts and visual imagery and their interaction. Thus, with a wide range of references, including the Dutch Golden Age, John Lennon, W. E. B. DuBois, Northrup Frye, and Charles Taylor, she illustrates how the arts redefine tradition and individual identity. The first interlude is an autobiographical account of her performances of *Sush* (Sarah) based on Paul Hiebert’s sardonic *Sarah Binks*. Chapter 3 introduces the theme that performance literature is an act of resistance: Plato condemned it and Aristotle described it sympathetically. Redekop sides with Aristotle. She references John Weier’s *Steppe* (Low German *Shtaph*) as *Spielraum* where, with satirical references, Mennonite society is critiqued. A triple-word comparison (*steppe*, *shtaph*, and *fleckj*) illustrates Redekop’s method for locating meaning among the boundaries. Low German

terms are essential because they express pleasure and displeasure with “sounds” that cannot be translated (198). Exactly so!

Part II, “Witnessing a New Phenomenon,” begins with twenty colored plates and three chapters that explore literary works, visual arts, and performance. Chapter 4, “Location, Dislocation,” continues the examination of Mennonite artistic expression that began in the 1980s with an additional section on literary voices, visual arts, and performance art. Here, Redekop examines writers who address dislocation, the aesthetic journey away from tradition, with particular attention to twenty-nine poets and novelists of that decade. She identifies the origins for this artistic struggle that spawned the Mennonite renaissance of the 1980s: the Brunk brothers’ revivals in Manitoba in 1957. A number of the artists, especially Patrick Friesen, identify those revivals as the origin of their “dislocation” because they were being subjected to “Those voodoo evenings of spiritual violence” (34). Similarly, Di Brandt wrote of opening a window to “resistance” (187) by critiquing evangelical religion and the limited roles for women. The second interlude, “Clowning with Masks,” references Plate 1 and reflects on the multiple, interpretive layers created by a mask. Chapter 5, “Melos and Logos: Talking about Music,” opens up the greatest challenge of using discourse to unpack non-discursive meaning (Suzanne K. Langer). Her examination of music includes Ben Horch’s commission to Victor Davis, who composed “Mennonite Piano Concerto.” On the other hand, Glenn Gould’s CBC documentaries on the “quiet in the land” focused on Mennonite singing as a definitive artistic and cultural phenomenon (89). This homage to Mennonite religious music seemingly fell short of its goal: It did not sustain a listening audience. The concluding chapter, “Iconoclasm: Redecorating the *Spielraum*,” returns to the mystery of art in performance, from dance to preaching. Redekop makes two observations. The first is that a performance “moves the pilgrim forward” (325), and the second is that performances are a “collective form of making believe” (327).

Redekop explores how visual artists are redecorating interior, psychological spaces. Mennonite artists who have created a new *Spielraum* for Redekop include Wanda Koop (see “Tear,” Plate 4); Gathie Falk (“Herd 2,” Figure 11); and Elizabeth Falk (“*Met Pahpe opp’s Shtaph*,” Plate 20). The art is transformative (274). Experiencing each of these works altered her sense of self and thereby also her view of the world. She connects, aesthetically, a Mennonite pastor’s tears with the famous leap by the dancer Nijinski (322)! That takes intellectual dexterity. They are both redecorating the *Spielraum*.

Redekop examines a large artistic canon and an even greater library of criticism. Her views are those of a seasoned scholar and artist. The value she places on artistic encounters is consistent with Immanuel Kant’s emphasis on “aesthetic moments” that occur only in the present but, in a teleological manner, direct the viewer to the future (*Critique of Judgement*, 35-83). Two factual corrections, however, are in order. Barbara Claassen Smucker’s ancestors immigrated (1870s) from Prussia and not Switzerland (23). Also, Conrad Grebel died in 1526, and therefore could not have attended the Schleithem conference in 1527 (13). All in all, however, this reviewer is not aware of any other comparable work on

Mennonite aesthetics. The closest might be Robert Kroetsch's reframing of Rudy Wiebe in *Seed Catalog* (Turnstone, 1997) and Robert Zacharias's interrogations of identity. *Making Believe*, on the other hand, examines the interconnectedness of many artists, art forms, and theorists. In the field of religion, comparable questions can be found in Gordon D. Kaufman's *In the Beginning . . . Creativity* (Fortress Press, 2007) and Duane Friesen's *Artists, Citizens, Philosophers* (Herald Press, 2000).

One review cannot do justice to the comprehensive nature of the book. Redekop offers an encyclopedic compendium of artistic, critical, and cultural observations. In *Irma Voth*, Miriam Toews speaks of "just being with others in a place where we can make believe together" (210). Because today, for Mennonite artists, is different from all other days.

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Liminal Sovereignty: Mennonites and Mormons in Mexican Culture. By Rebecca Janzen. Albany: State University of New York Press. 2018. \$32.95.

Liminal Sovereignty is about the flexibility and shifting nature of the boundaries of the Mexican nation. Getting at nuances of race and belonging, the book engages with existing research and contributes to interdisciplinary conversations about modern Mexico's evolving identity. It explores how Mennonites and Mormons exist at once inside and outside the society. The degrees of inclusion and exclusion vary by time, region, and circumstance. By looking at how these religious minorities have entered into Mexico's landscape in different ways throughout the twentieth century, the author argues that their diverse experiences can shed light on larger issues around belonging and *mestizaje*—racial and cultural fusion and the centerpiece of modern Mexican nationalism. Drawing creatively on an array of sources and using vivid, textured descriptions, the book complicates our understanding of the edges of Mexico.

Taking an interdisciplinary approach, the book is structured around a series of case studies the author describes as discrete windows. Sources include archival documents, photography, film, comics, and other visual material. Janzen analyzes representations of Mennonites and Mormons for what they can tell us about the relationships the groups have with Mexico as well as national culture more broadly. The author finds that two views have dominated. On one hand, these religious minorities are seen as making positive economic contributions to the regions where they settle; on the other hand, they are dismissed as maintaining separate languages and cultural practices rather than becoming part of the nation.

Janzen offers a more complex picture. Opening with a chapter on foreigners' registration cards, she shows how these records point to mixed patterns of inclusion and exclusion. Sometimes the documents given to foreigners evince significant cross-cultural encounter. They demonstrate, for instance, greater knowledge of Spanish language among these groups than is often popularly assumed. Through a gender analysis, the author studies how Mexican constructions of femininity and masculinity are rendered in the cards. While

Mennonite and Mormon women are generally shown to fit notions of good women and good mothers, men are more often portrayed as weak—as opposed to philandering, the other Mexican male archetype.

Illuminating inconsistencies in modern Mexico's changing land redistribution policies and the *ejido* (communal land) system, the book examines intricate—and in some cases long-lasting—disputes over land. At times authorities have sided with Mennonites and Mormons in land cases. Other times officials have worked against them. Appreciating the benefits brought to their communities, Mexicans have lauded the tendency toward productive land use among these religious minorities. Mexicans have also expressed bitterness, complaining that the immigrant groups are granted more leeway and treated better than native citizens. The latter sentiment is part of a larger resentment around Mexico's pattern of welcoming foreigners—as a historical saying noted by the author goes: *Mexico, mother of foreigners and stepmother of Mexicans*.

Engaging the key concepts of *mestizaje* and *indigenismo* in modern Mexican national identity, the book adds to a larger tale about race, belonging, and rejection. Mexico has had a long and complicated relationship to white foreigners. Since the independence period the nation has welcomed them, beginning with Moses and Stephen Austin's group of Anglo-American colonists in Texas. During the Porfiriato, Mexico invited southern and eastern Europeans, and when these groups failed to materialize, the nation turned to Chinese—who would suffer grotesque violence and intense vilification during the Mexican Revolution and mass expulsion from northern states two decades later. During the Spanish Civil War, Mexico embraced thousands of Spanish republican refugees—at a time when very few countries accepted them in great numbers—in part because they belonged to a desired racial group. A convenient elasticity has characterized inclusion and exclusion in Mexico. In particular white settlers have been granted admittance and allowances, though these have limits, as Janzen shows. *Liminal Sovereignty* also contributes to Mexican immigration history, an area in which we need more work. With American, European, Chinese, Lebanese, Jewish, and other immigrants, with overlapping waves and diverse experiences including assimilation, modern Mexico could qualify as a land of immigrants, even though this is not a common view of the nation.

Unsurprisingly, popular representations of Mennonites and Mormons have promoted unfortunate stereotypes. A chapter on television shows and comics gives especially gripping examples—some quite disturbing—of how these religious minorities are portrayed in connection to criminality and the ongoing and recently intensifying drug wars in Mexico. While Mormons have been presented as innocent victims of violence, Mennonites have been depicted as criminals whose experiences of violence within their communities at times leads them to enact severe brutality on others in the context of the cross-border drug world, as in the American television series “The Bridge.” The sections of the book on violence against Mormons take on special meaning in light of events that have occurred since publication: horrific killings of Mormon families, including infants, and the resulting flight of Mormons from northern Mexico.

The book explores how notions of death, technology, and language among religious minorities are portrayed in photograph collections and film consumed by a broader Mexican public. Janzen considers some of these portrayals as cultural crossings or contact zones between these groups and Mexican society at large. For example, the film *Silent Light* introduces Mennonites to a wider group of Mexicans. Even as the film depicts cross-cultural interaction, it freezes the group in time and shows a less-than-nuanced picture of its way of life in Mexico.

I had hoped to read more about the connections between Mennonites and Mormons in Mexico. Unfortunately, few sources seem to highlight such bonds, though the author includes personal experiences and anecdotes, and ends on a hopeful note in this vein.

Mennonites and Mormons have tended to exist at the edges of Mexican society. Sometimes they have maintained a strong separateness in language and culture, and this is generally the way they appear in popular culture, though there are exceptions. Janzen has mined a rich and diverse collection of material that shows how cross-racial and cross-cultural interaction has been part of their story in Mexico as well. These religious minorities have helped forge modern Mexico's shifting culture, identity, and boundaries. In different ways, they have become part of the nation.

Students and scholars of Mexico and the US-Mexico borderlands should find this book engaging and enlightening. It would work especially well in upper-level seminars and graduate classes on ethnicity and race and immigration in modern Mexico.

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JULIA MARÍA SCHIAVONE CAMACHO

Finding Father: Stories from Mennonite Daughters. By Mary Ann Loewen, ed. Regina, Sask.: University of Regina Press. 2019. \$16.95.

Some of the most powerful experiences in my life have unfolded while sitting in a circle with others, sharing our stories. In *Finding Fathers: Stories from Mennonite Daughters*, the companion collection to the anthology *Sons and Mothers*, editor Mary Ann Loewen has created this type of sacred space, gathering accomplished Canadian and US American Mennonite women—authors (Raylene Hinz-Penner, Carrie Snyder), poets (Jean Janzen, Julia Spicher Kasdorf, and Ann Hostetler), musicians (Maggie Dyck), historians (Rebecca Plett, Elise K. Neufeld), public figures (Ruth Lowen, Cari Penner), and professors (Magdalene Redekop, Hildi Froese Tiessen)—into a sharing circle. In each of the thirteen chapters, the talking piece is passed from one woman to another to share their distinct experiences of being daughters of Mennonite fathers.

These stories are not easy to tell. This reality is felt in the white space between the words, letters, and lyric lines. To read this collection of narrative essays is to sit quietly in the room while a woman remembers—gazing at a grainy photograph or staring out the window into a field where she once walked with her father,

hand-in-hand speaking or only touching thick silence. "I had his ears, his companionable silence. . . the night felt limitless and open. . ." (Hostetler, 48). I see wrestling with the unknowns and gaps in memory: "the secrets of his real life were kept elsewhere, buried deep. . . and I will have to be content with the small glimpses into the heart of the first man I loved" (Cari Penner, 40). I see tears dotting the page; I sometimes hear soft laughter or the release of breath when anger rises and forgiveness flows through: "What I cannot change I accept patiently for the sake of my peace" (Redekop, 67). In each midwifing of words I see a daughter seeking to honor her father, her family, and herself with a gracious honesty, respectful compassion, tough courage, and, more than anything, enduring love: "I admired him and he adored me" (Kasdorf, 73).

Even the stories we might label as "happy" are surrounded by the challenge of capturing the nuanced relationship with the person, who, as Carrie Synder writes in the opening chapter, "once held me in the palm of his hand" (10). Already in that first moment of beholding life, a relationship with a father can be filled with expectations; religious, ethnic, and cultural messaging; social conditioning; gender relations; inherited trauma; sibling and extended family dynamics; personality differences; and much else. This collage of personal memoir touches on each of these layers of complexity and many others. The narratives stand alone as they must, but placed side-by-side they shimmer with resonance and the collection is a seamless whole.

In the introduction, Loewen quotes novelist Ann Patchett on the topic of writing family stories: "I want full access to my life. . ." (xi). The respectful compassion in *Finding Father* offers lessons on how to write with full access. These essays do not sugar-coat: "I didn't shed a tear at the funeral of my father. He was a stranger to me" (Cari Penner, 31). With tough grace they open up space for us to be with the real relationships in our own lives: "Dad was a person of contradictions. Aren't we all?" (Snyder, 4). We can model the same sensitive love-soaked bravery in acknowledging what was and what is, even if only with ourselves, and that is healing.

The stories are as much about the daughters as the fathers. Shaped by pain and love, "some of Dad's early attempts to influence me did eventually have effect, if only years later" (Ruth Lowen, 19).

The honesty with which the essays are written is, in itself, a testament to the fathers. The essays go the emotional distance, sometimes doing this by acknowledging a father's struggle to do so: "Because of my dad's inability to establish close relationships within his family, each member had to try to balance the family mobile in their own fashion" (Cari Penner, 34).

As a daughter of a father, I was gifted by reading this book. As a daughter of a Mennonite man, one who grew up in a different faith tradition and came to the Peace Church as a 20-year-old, I found less resonance. I am a generation or two younger than most of the daughters in the book and this was evident to me as I read it. As Lowen notes in her introduction, "All life stories are colored by time, by personal context" (xiv). I feel curious as I wonder what a mirror collection written by daughters of Mennonite fathers in my generation (millennials) might look like. The skin colors, languages spoken, and ways of being a Mennonite

would be diverse, and I hope that some of the emotional unavailability, delineated gender roles, and religious constriction—themes threaded through several of the essays—would be less. “He was a product of his generation as I was of mine . . . and once I was able to forgive his shortcomings, I could also embrace my own” (Cari Penner, 39).

What this collection offers is a historical snapshot, an important archive for the Mennonite community and the community beyond. “Like many a Russian Mennonite saga, my story could be interpreted as a microcosm of the profound transformation that our people experienced. . . .” (Dyck, 113). This essential storytelling shows where we have been and what we have been shaped by. The shadows and traditions of the first-generation immigrant fathers illumine many of the stories: “He would tell me stories of Russia and sing me Russian folk songs, tears streaming down his cheeks” (Dyck, 114). For many, this heritage is presented as both a burden and a gift: “I can’t think of him apart from his Mennonite roots. They shaped him and also influenced my life” (Dyck, 82). The preservation of these stories gives us an opportunity to look back and forward. How does this memory-keeping inform us as we live now, as daughters, fathers, mothers, sons—as family in Christ?

I have long loved that the word *remember* calls us to the body. Memories are sewn into our sinews and tissues. Embodiment is central to this collection; it is what our lives are made of—a first period, coming out to a parent, *zwiebach* for Sunday dinner, car rides to school, planting side-by-side in a garden. These essays speak of the touch of a father: “warm glow on my cheek from my father rubbing it with his cheek” (Redekop, 59); and the longing for it: “the last time I saw him, how I longed to hug him and did not dare” (Redekop, 60).

We begin and end our lives with the messy wonder of touch. Often held first by our fathers. And then we are the holders as they leave the world: “I caress him this wonderful man. . . who I adored all my life, try to calm him, my usually calm parent with words” (Janzen, 105). These beautiful essays go the whole circle, letting the fullness of life in all its complex wonder be expressed: “My father’s old age has brought me the insight that the present is all we truly have. Being in another’s presence is the greatest gift” (Hostetler, 54). This is a collection of presence.

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Transformation on the Southern Ukrainian Steppe: Letters and Papers of Johann Cornies, Volume II: 1836–1842. By Harvey L. Dyck, Ingrid I. Epp, and John R. Staples, eds. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 2020. \$82.50.

These letters and reports provide new insights into reforms in the South Russian Mennonite Molochna Colony based on the correspondence and papers of the powerful leader Johann Cornies. Included are letters to and from Cornies on a wide range of topics and of varying length. An appendix contains reports of archaeological excavations of ancient burial mounds conducted under Cornies’

supervision for Russian experts in St. Petersburg. The letters and reports are from the Ukrainian State Archive of the Odessa Region and were translated directly from German into English by the late Ingrid Epp. John Staples has provided a detailed introduction.

The documents illustrate how Cornies' interests continued to expand from the 1820s, promoting further reforms in agriculture using his experimental farm at Iushanle and his private estate at Tashchenak as models. In the Molochna Colony he also supported the expansion of schooling and changes in governance through the establishment of secular organizations, most notably the Agricultural Society. But his interests ranged beyond the colony and included the neighboring Nogai Tartars, Doukhobors, Molokans, and Ukrainian peasants. His activities also extended into the Crimea, and for a period he considered expanding towards Sarepta on the Volga, but he abandoned these plans.

Cornies established powerful allies among officials of the Imperial Russian government who were as eager as he was to see the economy of the region improve and the lives of its inhabitants reformed. Cornies' efforts were widely recognized among members of the Imperial household, including Tsar Nicholas I. Late in 1837 all state peasants, including "foreign" colonists such as Mennonites, were brought under the control of a new Ministry of State Domains. The ministry expanded earlier programs of reform, and, as the correspondence indicates, Cornies was soon drawn into its activities. This involved expanding potato cultivation to provide an alternative food supply in time of crop failure and drought as well as the cultivation of a range of other crops. While Cornies was a willing participant in this work, occasionally he was reluctant to meet the demands placed upon him. The ministry requested that he take on young non-Mennonites to be "trained" on his estate: the boys in horticulture and husbandry, and the girls for domestic roles in his household. This, however, often proved difficult and the correspondence relates how he was forced to dismiss a number of the youth selected by their communities. In other roles he was also forced to intervene in cases involving non-Mennonites when petitioners turned to him for help and he reported their complaints to officials and suggested appropriate action and even punishment.

The correspondence and reports reflected a period of rapid economic change and commercial expansion of the entire region of southern Russia, with important consequences for Mennonites. The local economy in the 1820s through the first half of the 1830s was still dominated by sheep and wool production. Cornies, through careful husbandry, the improvement of his flocks, and the development of new markets, had made himself extraordinarily wealthy. His wool was sold as far away as Moscow, where he had established a good relationship with a Moravian merchant who on-sold his wool to Moscow manufacturers. But during the 1830s the market for wool collapsed as some manufacturers went bankrupt. Luckily, however, new markets emerged. Silk could be produced in Mennonite households. But the most important development involved wheat and other grains, whose production was greatly assisted by the opening of the port of Berdiansk on the Sea of Azov; within a short period, merchants, including Mennonites, established themselves in the new city. Gradually, grain became a more secure source of income than wool. Its cultivation, harvesting, and

processing created a demand for new machinery, including wagons to transport grain to the port. Cornies also convinced the government to support the establishment of a new craftsmen settlement, Neu Halbstadt. In the colony he also ordered that old timber houses be replaced by brick buildings, roofed with tile to replace straw and reed.

A number of craftsmen and some Mennonite merchants who established themselves in Berdiansk were new immigrants from Prussia. Cornies maintained contact with Mennonites in Prussia and when they faced the prospect of the loss of their nonresistant privileges and changes in land ownership, they requested he intervene with the Russian authorities to settle in Russia. In this way, Cornies had a hand in the establishment of new Mennonite settlements on the Volga.

Cornies had a rather negative view of the capabilities of many of his fellow Mennonites. He believed they required "encouragement, instruction, and serious support" but "left to themselves, they would not make the advancement they should." They were, he suggested, still essentially "peasant[s] with a limited view and without proper insight" (485). But Cornies was even more critical of the Mennonites' neighbors. The Nogai were "uncivilized" (135), "a people living in ignorance and far removed from any culture" (225); Doukhobors were a people who "make promises but break them as easily, without embarrassment" (331); Molokans could be crafty and untrustworthy (247); "Little Russian" (Ukrainian) peasants were "unenlightened, indolent, and attached to tradition" (357).

In a letter to his friend Andrei Fadeev in 1839, Cornies revealed his personal philosophy: "If one wants to be a citizen of this world and a member of a larger community, one cannot disregard the wellbeing of one's neighbour any more than of one's own. Without this, true joy and happiness are not possible" (183). Yet the changing tone of his letters as his power and responsibilities grew suggests a rather different person. Cornies became increasingly authoritarian and intolerant of anyone who opposed him. He was quite willing to appeal well beyond his fellow Mennonites to achieve his ends, seeking the support of high Russian officials. For Cornies the ends justified the means. The changes in official policy and Cornies' growing power inevitably culminated in confrontation, especially between the conservative religious leadership and the secular Mennonite authorities led by Cornies. Differences between these two sources of authority had existed since the first Mennonite colonies were established in New Russia. But in the new atmosphere of reform they re-emerged. In Molochna, the elder of the largest congregation, Jacob Warkentin, asserted his authority and attempted to subordinate the District Office and the Agricultural Society to his congregation's control. His strategy was to promote his own candidates to key positions in the secular government, often people who were connected through kinship ties. Cornies would have none of this, so he convinced the Russian authorities to disallow election results and have his own candidates appointed or reappointed to office. This was undemocratic and contrary to the Colonial Statutes and Mennonite ways; but Russia was an autocracy, not a democracy, so Cornies got his way.

In his introduction, Staples devotes particular attention to what he refers to as the Warkentin affair, a subject on which he has also written elsewhere in the

Journal of Mennonite Studies (2003). This emphasis is surprising since the correspondence and a report on the affair only address the matter in the latter part of the book. There are, however, earlier indications of a growing tension between Cornies, the civil administrators, and the religious leadership. The Warkentin affair resulted in the Russian authorities dismissing Warkentin as elder and forcing his large congregation to be divided into three smaller congregations. This was an unprecedented move. It was not, however, the end of the affair as one elder of the newly-formed congregations, Heinrich Wiens, suffered a fate similar to Warkentin in 1843. But as this collection ends in 1842, that dispute is not discussed. Readers and researchers will have to await the publication of Volume 3 to trace the full story.

Staples does not explain why the elders of the other Molochna congregations failed to stand by their religious principles when Warkentin was removed from office and his congregation divided. They earlier had expressed doubts concerning the growing power of the District Office and the activities of the Agricultural Society. In 1837, five years before the Warkentin affair, the District Office warned these other elders not to question the authority and directives of the office and society, apparently after the elders, on religious grounds, had expressed concerns about the right of secular bodies to punish their members (41-42). The exact details of this earlier affair are unclear as only the letter from the District Office and Agricultural Society is included, but according to this the elders had accused them of being "tyrants, forsaken by God." Only a congregation could punish members. But by 1842 the elders may have been cowed by this earlier response and Cornies' increased power.

There are related issues that Staples also fails to address in his discussion of the Warkentin affair. Cornies was quite willing to advise government officials to remove Nogai, Molokan, and Doukhobor leaders, including religious leaders, that he believed were frustrating plans for reform. After a Molokan elder encouraged his people to migrate to Georgia, Cornies suggested that anyone who supported him be threatened with a summons to conscript their firstborn and second-born sons (524). At this time peasants considered military conscription akin to a death sentence, and a funeral service was often held as a conscript departed. A pattern therefore begins to emerge from the correspondence. Cornies considered that religious leaders who were opposed to policies of reform, whether Mennonite or non-Mennonite, be removed from office.

A collection such as this one, which presents a wide selection of random letters chronologically, is a challenge to read from cover to cover. It requires a good index, but the one provided is inadequate. A long list of entries under the heading "Cornies," for example, does not help, and a number of entries on other topics are missing. For instance, only nine entries appear under "Privilegium/privileges," all but one referring to Staples's introduction; I noted a further nine in the main text. The required scholarly context identifying people named is mostly absent and as with the first volume, the names of individuals and titles of books are often misspelled or poorly transliterated.

BOOK NOTES

The Amish-Mennonites Across the Globe. By Cory and Jennifer Anderson. Millersburg, Ohio: Acorn Publishing. 2019. 320 pp. \$45.

This coffee-table style book is a sequel to Cory Anderson's *Amish-Mennonites of North America*. Organized by continent or geographic region, it documents the presence of Amish-Mennonites in Africa, Eastern Europe, South America, the Caribbean, Central America, Western Europe and Australia. It provides brief vignettes of the cultures, ethnicities, politics, and religions of each host country. The bulk of the book consists of photographs of Amish-Mennonite meetinghouses and congregations, accompanied by captions that give the name, founding date, number of members and attendees, and the affiliation for each of the congregations. Maps showing the location of congregations and general statistical tables and graphs accompany the text. It concludes with an essay, "Do You Want to be a 'Missionary'?"

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