

Book Reviews

Comedy and Crisis: Pieter Langendijk, the Dutch, and the Speculative Bubbles of 1720. Edited by Joyce Goggin and Frans De Bruyn. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press. 2020. \$130.

The Western European economy was hit by a serious economic crisis in 1720, a series of financial “bubbles” associated with the financial manipulator John Law. In the wild speculation, stocks went up and then burst. Some speculators made fortunes, but many lost heavily and dropped into bankruptcy. The countries most affected were France, with the Mississippi Bubble, and England, with its South Sea Bubble. The Netherlands also had a “1720 Bubble,” which is the topic of this book. In addition to the economic consequences, there were also cultural responses in satirical poetry and theater. Pieter Langendijk (1683-1756), the Dutch Mennonite playwright, led the way in bringing the “Bubble story” to the stage with two plays. These were “comedies of manners” somewhat in the style of Molière, thus Langendijk’s reputation as the “Dutch Molière.”

Langendijk’s bubble plays were “Quincampoix, or the Wind Traders” and “Harlequin Stock-Jobber,” both quite popular and performed several times on the stage of the Amsterdam Schouwburg in 1720. “Quincampoix” is a satire of bourgeois family life with two themes: a family arranging a marriage for the daughter with two competing suiters, and the wild speculation in stock shares among the characters. The characters are mostly standard stage figures: Bonaventure, Noble-Heart, Windbag, and First Jew and Second Jew, who go around shouting: “The Bubble! The Bubble! Bless the Bubble!” (38). Another character is Fransje-the Hunchback, based on an actual person from the Paris bubble. He prospered and became famous for renting out his hump to be used as a desk for speculators wanting to write up trade documents in the midst of the trading melee. “Harlequin Stock-Jobber” is much shorter and deals with similar clownish antics of the stock speculators.

The title word “Quincampoix” derived from several sources. An English coffeehouse, nicknamed the Quincampoix, on Amsterdam’s Kalver Street, was the place of much of the speculative Dutch stock trading. Rue Quincampoix in Paris was the main site of the frenzied speculation in Paris. “Quincampoix” therefore became a general byword for wild speculative action arising from John Law’s schemes, in this case applied to the Dutch scene. The term “wind traders” refers to speculators in stocks.

The Dutch wind trading inspired a great output of pamphlets, poems, plays, and engravings. Publishers collected many of these bubble pieces and produced in 1720 a large folio volume entitled *Het Grootte Tafereel der Dwaasheid* (The Great

Mirror of Folly). Langendijk's plays were included in this volume. The quantity of publications "attests to the cultural outpouring that the wind trade occasioned" (1).

Goggin and De Bruyn, editors of the volume, give the first English translation of both plays and provide an introduction and thorough scholarly notes. Also provided are six chapters dealing with historical material about the Dutch Bubble, analyzing the financial and cultural aspects, two of these by editors Goggin and De Bruyn, the others by Helen J. Paul, Henk Looijesteijn, Inger Leemans, and Eve Rosenhaft. One chapter deals with the translation into German of "Quincampoix." Also included are notes and an essay by C. H. P. Meijer from an earlier edition of "Quincampoix" in 1892.

These plays are not great literature. However, they still are interesting for study. C. H. P. Meijer wrote about "Quincampoix": "This comedy boasts neither fascinating intrigue nor vivid characterisations," yet when viewed as a morality play, one "that seeks to expose not only the folly but also the criminality of the wind trade, then one can only acknowledge that Langendijk succeeded admirably . . ." (246). De Bruyn made a similar point: that our interest is not much in the plays as literary text but as "cultural artifacts attesting to a pivotal historic moment in the emergence of modern financial capital" (2). Langendijk made his ethical points by skewering the money-hungry bourgeoisie, but without attacking the heart of the economic system. Other examples of culture in conversation with economics could, no doubt, be found in the area of art, including Mennonite art.

Langendijk, born in Haarlem in 1683, had a Mennonite background. His family on his father's side came from the district of Langendijk in North Holland where they had Mennonite connections. Young Langendijk received his education from Quaker scholar William Sewell (a relation of his mother). The editors did not highlight the Mennonite influence as a significant factor in his writing but noted that his Mennonite and Quaker connections were "undoubtedly an important formative influence" (4). His early years were difficult as the family fell into bad times. To make a living, before his writing career, he did linen damask weaving and applied his skills in damask design. He also had talent in drawing. His career as a playwright and poet took off after moving to Amsterdam, where he built up a good reputation. He was not very active in Mennonite church life; in fact, he was not baptized until he was on his death bed (while in retirement in Haarlem). Mennonite historians, however, argue that Mennonite values strongly permeate his writings, evidenced by his satirical pictures of self-satisfied bourgeois life and, in writings directed to Mennonites, his call for simplicity and against corrupted manners. In an article on Langendijk, Irvin and Ada Horst wrote that he "prized piety and despised all hypocrisy."¹

In providing us with Langendijk's plays in English translation and with scholarly commentary, Goggin and De Bruyn have made a contribution to Mennonite studies as well as to the wider scholarly world. Although most Mennonites had great suspicion of the theater, Mennonite writers like Langendijk used the stage to tell a "morality" story. Joost van den Vondel, an earlier Dutch

1. Cf. Irvin and Ava Horst, "Swiss Simplicity Laments Corrupted Manners," *Mennonite Life* (July 1955), 129-131.

Mennonite poet, also saw the connection between theater and life: “The World is a Stage: we all play our part and get our share” (179).

Bethel College

KEITH L. SPRUNGER

Nonviolent Word: Anabaptism, the Bible, and the Grain of the Universe. By J. Denny Weaver and Gerald J. Mast. Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick. 2020. \$23.

Nonviolent Word has as its twin centers of gravity two phrases with distinct but overlapping references, one ancient, the other modern: the “Word of God” and “the grain of the universe.” For Denny Weaver and Gerald Mast, each idiom expresses “the creative power that both establishes and sustains the cosmos in a manner that reflects the peaceable character of Jesus Christ” (12). While readers of the authors’ previous work—especially their earlier collaboration, *Defenseless Christianity* (Cascadia, 2009)—will find many familiar themes, this volume extends their paradigm in two complementary directions: analysis of early Anabaptist conceptions of the nonviolent Word of God and engagement with contemporary expressions of the nonviolent grain of the universe within and beyond historic peace churches.

A brief introduction outlines Weaver and Mast’s understanding of the Word of God, a Word made flesh in Jesus Christ and revealed in Scripture, creation, and “our own inner experiences of sacred knowledge” (4). This creating, dividing, and reconciling Word enacts the weak and nonviolent power of God—what Paul called the “wisdom of the cross” and John Howard Yoder once described as “the grain of the universe.”

Part 1 explores the meaning of the Word of God among early Anabaptists. Its first chapter highlights several hymns in the *Ausbund*, where the Word of God is figured as a spiritual seed that also provides solid ground and sure illumination. As divine gift, this Word does not compel or coerce but can only be received in faith. Chapter 2 affirms the novelty of Pilgram Marpeck’s theology, which is grounded not in classical trinitarian convictions but rather in the “crucified, patient, and loving Christ”—that is, in the story of the earthly Jesus, the revelatory Word of God. Chapter 3 revisits the oft-derided “celestial flesh Christology” of Menno Simons, correlating his insistence on an “undivided Christ” (vs. a Chalcedonian two-natures Christology) with his vision of undivided believers whose peaceable lives are the natural fruit of the spiritual seed planted within them (vs. a Protestant two-kingdom theology that expressed itself in the violent suppression of dissidents).

Part 2 turns from the sixteenth century to the twenty-first, reflecting on the meaning of the Anabaptist legacy explored in Part 1 for contemporary believers’ churches. In Chapter 4, the authors outline a contemporary Anabaptist perspective on Scripture that centers on the story of Jesus in the Gospels. Texts in the Old Testament that depict divine or divinely mandated violence should, they suggest, be understood as part of a “conversation” regarding the nature of God and God’s work in the world—a conversation now resolved in the narrative of Jesus. It is with

reference to this “narrative of Jesus” that Weaver and Mast invoke the Yoderian phrase that provides the book’s subtitle: “If God is truly revealed in the New Testament’s narrative of Jesus, as we believe it is, then that story reveals the grain of the universe God created, that is, how the universe truly works as an ecology of life and light” (79).

The book’s final two chapters draw out the ecumenical implications of this cosmic vision, inviting modern Christians who identify with historic Anabaptism into conversation with others who “work with the grain of the universe” as revealed in the story of Jesus. Chapter 5 explores commonalities between believers’ churches and Black churches, especially their experiences of persecution and creative theological and lived responses to it. The point here is not to recruit Black churches as believers’ churches in all but name, but rather to provoke “mutual learning” (97)—which, for white Anabaptists, must begin with an acknowledgment of white privilege. Finally, in Chapter 6, Weaver and Mast explore how various forms of active nonviolent witness express the grain of the universe, with examples ranging from the *Martyrs Mirror* to the Muslim peacemaker Badshah Khan to Jesus himself.

Appendices provide a historically informed Anabaptist lectionary; a note on the reluctance of Anabaptists cited in the *Martyrs Mirror* to use classical trinitarian formulations; a brief discussion of Anabaptist use of the Apocrypha; and a translation and musical setting of a sixteenth-century hymn by Michael Schneider.

Viewed as a whole, one might describe this book as a welcome attempt to put a neo-Anabaptist historical, hermeneutic, and theological paradigm into conversation with a new set of concerns facing North American Mennonite congregations, particularly racism, homophobia, and the resurgence of Christian nationalism. In our fractured and embittered social context, where “no peace without justice” is for many movements an urgent rallying cry, do “defenseless Christians” stand on the sidelines or do they hit the streets? What sort of distinctive witness might a legacy of commitment to the “nonviolent Word” sponsor? Weaver and Mast seek to address these questions by deepening and broadening the Anabaptist vision. This they do with clarity and a refreshingly ecumenical orientation, though readers less invested in this construal of the Anabaptist tradition may perhaps wonder if the authors are putting new wine in old wineskins.

My own reservations I will state very briefly. Given the prominence in the book of Yoder’s assertion that “people who bear crosses are working with the grain of the universe,” a more thorough reckoning with the sexual abuse Yoder perpetrated is needed (see only 79 n. 11), especially since abuses of power and injunctions to bear one’s cross too often go hand in hand.

Missing here also is substantive engagement with the eschatological vision that informed Yoder’s own use of the phrase, which emerged from his reading of Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature. In a world where ants raid and enslave rival colonies and lions unashamedly eat lambs, to speak of the nonviolent grain of the universe without also speaking eschatologically is to risk drifting into wishful thinking.

A related omission, perhaps, is the authors' exclusion from the story of Jesus its triumphant final chapter. Given the diversity even of canonical witnesses, I am less confident than are Weaver and Mast that it is accurate to speak of "the story of Jesus" in the singular. But if the Gospels do attest to such a story, it is important to see that it ends not with the cross, nor even the resurrection (cf. 68, 82), but with the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. Glory does not have much place in the theological imagination of Weaver and Mast, but it figured prominently in the hopes of the earliest Christians, whose "defenselessness" was predicated on their conviction that Christ would soon come triumphantly to judge. By what mystery, we might ask, will every knee bow uncoerced before him?

Here we might ponder what are perhaps the most striking words in the book, which come from Menno Simons: "With the King, and in his Kingdom and reign, it is nothing but peace. Everything that is seen, heard, and done is peace" (59). Weaver and Mast should be commended for their persistence in pursuing the implications of this paradoxical vision in our own turbulent time.

Methodist Theological School, Ohio

RYAN SCHELLENBERG

Safehold. By Ann Hostetler. Telford, Pa.: DreamSeeker Books. 2018. \$12.95.

The title of Ann Hostetler's poetry collection, *Safehold*, is less a promise than a question. Once innocence is ripped away—whether by harm committed against us, the harm committed against our ancestors, or harms our ancestors committed against others—is there ever a safehold to which we can return? Far from offering assurance or refuge, the poems chase fleeting memories and dreams of shelter. By turns, the poems are comforting, hopeful, resigned, grieving. Generations and geographies mix, collapsing time and place as only a skilled poet can.

Not every person finds a safehold. In the "Sonnets for the Amish Girls of Nickel Mines," Hostetler grieves the tragic school shooting that shattered the Nickel Mines community in 2006.

"We are left," writes Hostetler in the second sonnet (60)

without a verse or story to console
us on an autumn day whose shining grass
reflects the sun, a blue sky of clouds bereft.

And yet, walking through the rubble of grief, Hostetler notices the feeble shelters where refuge—or something like it—can still be found. The sonnets conclude with an image of a mourning family's kitchen heaped high with gleaming homemade casseroles and preserves. "Forgiveness is the unexpected guest," the final sonnet concludes (62). Hostetler depicts other tragedies with less resolution. In "Lesson, After 9/11," she ends with the unsettling, unresolved observation, "We are forced to learn / at the hands of our enemies" (73).

Between headline-gripping tragedies, ordinary people wander in the safeholds and danger zones of their lives and legacies. Whether navigating the heartbreak of

aging and memory loss in "Too Big for Words," recovering from self-harm in "Martyrs Mirror," or wrestling to reconcile the choices of parents and grandparents in "Legacy," Hostetler's poems are littered with family members loving, leaving, destroying, rebuilding, seeking, avoiding, or transforming their safeholds.

The author moves fluidly across time and space. Some safeholds are revealed for their dangers, and some risks prove to offer shelter. She keeps the reader on uneven footing, unsure whether a poem will end in harm or delight.

Mennonite poetry is difficult to craft, and can be rife with rustic clichés, overbaked metaphors, recycled hymn lines, and half-hearted jokes that are not really jokes. At times Hostetler's work flirts with the insular and expository, as in "Topeka, Indiana," an altogether too ordinary portrait of life, with as much momentum as the author's broken-down car. At other times, it flirts with the cliché, such as the final poem, "Dancing with Mennonites," which barely dodges the trite only by returning once again to the image of the safehold, finding shelter in the multi-generational literal dance of time and change.

These poems may taste stale for those who have ever wondered if they are "Mennonite enough." First-generation Mennonites, or those who grew up in urban, non-English-speaking Mennonite communities, may feel the poems collapsing faith story into ethnic identity. As many Mennonite communities struggle to reconcile how diverse the church has become in the last three generations, some of these poems may feel like a door slammed against anyone who brings a "non-traditional" Mennonite legacy. As a second-generation Mennonite, this reviewer sometimes heaved a sigh at poems naval-gazing, hair-splittingly narrow images of Mennonite diversity, such as "Kishacoquillas Valley Ride."

Those who find Hostetler's Mennonite imagery indulgent or excessive can take joy from the moments where she raises the particular into the universal. Familiar followers of the author as well as new readers can find horror and delight in "Evidence," as the author raises a heavy stack of student papers to the paper shredder,

Like Tibetan monks pouring
the colored sands of their finished
mosaic into a stream, the cycle
continues. (78)

There is no safehold for the student who poured hours into the essay; but, perhaps, a safehold is crafted from shreds of paper for the hurried, stressed student as well as the overburdened professor. Hostetler tops the exquisite irony of this image with a cherry of humor:

One former student,
a teacher now, calls to tell me,
"The bond between a teacher and
student can never be broken."

I repeat this like a mantra.
The shredder is slow

And the stack is large. (79)

Even with these glimmers of universality and connection, the particularity of the images throughout the collection advance the narrative that to be a Mennonite writer, one must have grown up in a town with a population under 50,000; possessed a copy of *Martyrs Mirror*; and have a relative who was shunned. This contemporary collection, for better and worse, stays within eyesight of the old farmstead. Those who grew up in the lineage of Old Order, Amish, or other conservative Mennonite communities may feel Hostetler is reading their minds and writing their biographies. Those who read Mennonite writers and wonder “Can I ever be a Mennonite writer?” may be left with a sense of unease or exclusion. Hostetler is a modern Mennonite who does yoga and dances with only a tiny teaspoon of irony, but she is an insider advancing the familiar narratives of Mennonite identity, and the readers who find the strongest safehold in its words will be the readers whose stories are closest to the author’s.

Poetry exists only within the vacuum of our own limited vision; the narrowness of the collection ought to be as much a wake-up call for DreamSeeker Books and Cascadia Publishing House as for its readers and authors. Can future collections widen our vision of Mennonite poetry? Or will DreamSeeker books continue choosing to make space only for those who remember the old language, but are too enlightened to speak it? Poetry is too intricate and unruly to tell only one story, and as long as DreamSeeker Books clings to only the traditional Mennonite voice, it silences the breadth and diversity of contemporary Mennonite writing.

Does the world need another traditional Mennonite poetry collection? Perhaps not. But if Hostetler’s gaze widens with the empathy and awe that marks this collection, the world will certainly want to read more of her work, and we should be so lucky to be on the journey her next collection takes us.

So many characters dance, mourn, and struggle through *Safehold*. It is a delight to see a writer late in her career using the depth of space, time, and story to surprise us and seek grace for every person. No one is static; no one is safe; and no one is so victimized that they cannot find at least a sliver of light and warmth to shelter in. There is a quiet grace—the empathy of the poet—that permeates this collection.

No safehold is truly safe, Hostetler suggests, but it can offer us the courage to go loudly and bravely in the good night that awaits us.

Ypsilanti, Michigan

HILLARY WATSON

Leben in Grenzen. Die Mennoniten in der SBZ und der DDR von 1945 bis 1990. By Bernhard Thiessen. Mennonitischer Geschichtsverein. 2020.

Many Western readers associate the Eastern Bloc with the repression of religion and free expression. To learn that a small but vibrant Mennonite community lived and thrived within socialist East Germany and even maintained global connections might then come as a surprise. Bernhard Thiessen’s collaborative project, *Leben in Grenzen. Die Mennoniten in der SBZ und der DDR von 1945 bis 1990*,

or *Life Within Boundaries: Mennonites in the Soviet Occupation Zone and the German Democratic Republic, 1945-1990*, brings to life the experiences of a minority religious community that was able to carve out a space for itself within a socialist state ostensibly hostile to its existence. This book highlights the complexity of the Mennonite experience within the Soviet Occupation Zone (SBZ) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Life for Mennonites, like other East German religious communities, was characterized by legal restrictions, negotiation with state actors, and engagement in society—whether as peace activists or simply as citizens with daily routines. By bringing out this project (in the midst of a pandemic no less), Thiessen and his team—Maren Schamp-Wiebe, Matthias Bartel, and Thomas Schamp—make an important contribution to the history of religion and everyday life in the GDR, proving that for most people existence was defined neither by wholesale accommodation nor constant resistance.

The book, with sections in both German and English, is divided into five historical phases that clearly outline the postwar history of East Germany alongside the specific experiences of the Mennonite community. The first phase documents the years from 1945 to 1953, a period of great uncertainty for most Europeans. Mennonite refugees from East and West Prussia settled in the Soviet zone that would become the GDR in 1949. Scholars typically mark this early period as one of the most repressive for churches, which contributed to the anxiety for many religious people trying to establish congregations in the newly-formed socialist state. Thiessen documents the constant surveillance of Mennonite worship services and itinerant preachers (37-38). Yet this was also a period of exchange with Mennonites in West Germany and abroad. Already in 1945, the relief organization Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), from its base in North America, established relationships in Germany that would continue throughout the duration of the GDR (27). The funneling of hard currency and products from the West to the East was typical for most religious groups within East Germany and something state officials tolerated and at times encouraged. It would be worthwhile for a future study to expand on these negotiations between Mennonite leadership and GDR officials.

The second phase, from 1953-1961, describes how Mennonites established a community in East Germany while still enjoying unrestricted travel to worship in West Berlin. Most striking here are the personal stories of happy childhoods and everyday interactions with other East Germans. For instance, one interviewee, Helga Köppe, described enjoying Catholic mass with the family's nanny and playing "funeral" with neighborhood children in Chemnitz (83-84). Rather than being eradicated, religion and ritual remained a part of daily life for many people under state socialism. State officials in the GDR were more tolerant of religious communities than other Eastern Bloc states, in particular because East Germans maintained close ties to their West German counterparts. The easy exchange between East and West, however, would end with the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 and the beginning of the book's next chronological development, 1961-1980.

The Berlin Wall marked a period of physical isolation for East Germans—it truly became a "life within borders" and travel to worship at centers like Menno-

Heim in West Berlin proved impossible. This isolation precipitated the leadership of Walter and Berta Jantzen, a Mennonite couple who lived in East Berlin. During this time, Walter Jantzen traveled throughout East Germany to provide pastoral care, while Berta often hosted guests from all over the world in their Prenzlauer Berg apartment (94). Certainly, by the 1970s and 1980s, travel became easier, especially for prominent figures, such as Knuth Hansen, a pastor who had connections to the Protestant Church in the GDR. The state's shared commitment to peace activism afforded East German Mennonites some latitude and provided opportunities for travel to international conferences, such as the Mennonite World Conference in 1984 (145).

The most fascinating element of the book (detailed in the sections focusing on 1961-1980 and 1980-1990) illustrates how Mennonites recognized that some socialist ideals were commensurate with their own, namely peace activism. For instance, the Socialist Unity Party and MCC worked together to promote peace in Vietnam from 1967-1975 (100). In the 1980s, East German Mennonites opposed the Cold War arms race, attended international ecumenical peace conferences, and held retreats centered on the theme of peace (133). Using personal testimonies and archival sources, *Leben in Grenzen* paints a picture of an East German Mennonite community that actively participated in international movements. Thiessen's work places the East German Mennonites in a much broader context by connecting East German history to global events. East German Mennonites were not an isolated people under persecution. Instead, as this project reveals, they, like the Roman Catholic Church and other so-called "Free Churches" in East Germany, remained intimately connected to global counterparts—not only in West Germany but also in other parts of the Eastern Bloc, Western Europe, and the Americas.

Thiessen weaves together a rich variety of essays, images, and primary sources—from letters to state documents to photographs to interviews—that tell the story of people who adapted to postwar adversity and created a life for themselves within the confines of a socialist state. The book project is part of a larger open-access project with an online component called "Mennoniten in der DDR," or Mennonites in the GDR, that makes this history accessible to a wider public. In this same spirit, the book is refreshingly free of jargon and indecipherable academic language that too often hinders the readability of scholarly histories. The inclusion of texts in both English and German, supplementary articles and essays, clear timelines and historical overviews, and important images and primary sources make *Leben in Grenzen* an excellent resource for German-language students and for undergraduate history students working with primary sources. This book is likewise an important resource for historians of East Germany and religious studies as well as anyone interested in postwar life in Europe or the history of religious communities in socialism.

The impressive work Thiessen and his team have produced provides a bridge between academic research and the public sphere. This book and exhibition will attract interest beyond the Mennonite community or the niche religious scholar. Because this project is meant for a wider readership, there are opportunities for additional scholarship that could expand the historiography and develop theoretical concepts about the nature of religious minorities living within

repressive political systems. Hopefully, this work in turn will inspire others in German Studies to create more public-facing and collaborative scholarship. “Mennoniten in der DDR” succeeds in making accessible and engaging the stories of an often-overlooked minority who lived, worked, and found joy within East German society.

Westminster College, Salt Lake City

KATHRYN JULIAN

Religion and the Environment: The Case of Judaism. By Hava Tirosh-Samuelsan; edited by Carl Helrich. Kitchener, Ont.: Pandora Press. 2020. \$39.95.

In this volume, the Proceedings of the Sixteenth Annual Goshen College Conference on Science and Religion, Hava Tirosh-Samuelsan presents an intellectual history of Jewish views of nature and human duties toward nature as God’s creation from the Torah (the Pentateuch) to modern times. Tirosh-Samuelsan tries to treat all views impartially. Her own views appear only in the discussions. The book includes an introduction; three chapters, each expanded from a conference lecture; and transcriptions of four discussions, edited for clarity.

The introduction accurately describes the environmental crisis and argues that science needs religion’s help to motivate the changes required in human behavior to reverse the crisis. Tirosh-Samuelsan shows how practitioners of all religions, responding to Lynn White’s (1967) claim that the human dominion over Creation as proclaimed in Genesis led to overexploitation and this crisis, now preach our duties to the environment we depend on. Since Christianity and Islam consider the Hebrew scriptures authoritative, Judaism has a special role in discerning these duties. Christian books on practical environmental ethics found their teaching on the Hebrew Law and Prophets.²

The first chapter asks what duties we owe our environment and how we discern them. One guide is Jewish normative environmental ethics, especially those regarding the Promised Land. God owns Israel: Israelites are tenants who can be ejected if they mistreat or overexploit the land or its animals and plants. Tirosh-Samuelsan shows how the Law strives to prevent this. The Law states that social injustice breeds environmental degradation (70-76). This is fact. Communities of small farmers with secure, heritable land tenure who can benefit from their improvements have maintained dense populations sustainably for centuries.³ Farms worked by overtaxed peasants, slaves, or landless laborers, who lack time or motive to care for the land, degrade it. In agro-industry, workers either do not understand the land or cannot influence their bosses’ decisions.

2. See, for example, P. K. Tull, *Inhabiting Eden: Christians, the Bible, and the Ecological Crisis* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013).

3. Robert McC. Netting, *Smallholders, Householders: Farm Families and the Ecology of Intensive, Sustainable Agriculture* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993).

Environmental degradation also creates social injustice.⁴ The Law accordingly demands a just allocation of nature's bounty, not without effect. Mennonite Old Testament scholar Millard Lind views pre-kingdom Israel as an egalitarian tribal society: unlike Israel, late eighth-century BCE Judaeen towns still showed few signs of extreme wealth or poverty.⁵ The chapter concludes by discussing attempts by three twentieth-century Jewish philosophers—Martin Buber, Hans Jonas, and Emmanuel Levinas—to extend Jewish ethics beyond Judaism. Jonas succeeded essentially by extending to all nature Spinoza's argument that because each person's well-being depends on the work of so many others, known and unknown, intelligent self-interest demands that we treat all people honorably and fairly.

The second chapter treats Jewish theologies of nature. Before 1000 CE, rabbinic studies of Torah dominated, overshadowing the Jewish Platonist philosopher Philo. The rabbis respected the Law's environmental ethics, but prized Torah studies above all else and deprecated interest in nature. The more Aristotelean medieval philosopher Maimonides respected the Law's ethics but insisted that study of the natural world was needed to understand Torah better and praise God more intelligently. Maimonides was soon overshadowed by Kabbalism, a mythology with occult, even magical, overtones whose later stages resemble Gnosticism in multiplying entities between God and humanity, and viewing creation as emanation. One version viewed creation as an accident (176). Kabbalism's influence endures, but no longer dominates Judaism. When Jews were granted civil rights in the nineteenth century, many entered science, the only occupation open to them. As science seemingly obviated the need for God, many became secular non-believers, opening a gap between Judaism and science.

To heal this gap, the nineteenth-century rabbi Rafael Hirsch explained the rationale and philosophy of the Torah and argued that we must respect nature as God's creation, where we are stewards and caretakers. His grandson Joseph Breuer emphasized the need for both Torah and secular knowledge. Finally, Zionism developed after 1900, partly to renew contact between Jews and nature.

The last chapter considers environmentalism, faith, and science. Jewish environmentalism began by using the Torah to discern our duties to creation. Fulfilling these duties—by education, advocacy, and activism—came later. Eco-Kosher, for example, combined concern about industrial agriculture, global warming, and injustice to farm workers with Jewish dietary laws that limited livestock suffering. Religion, not science, has been the main driver of Jewish environmentalism. Some Jews applied the Torah to environmental problems; others felt compelled to reinvent Judaism by sacralizing nature and rejecting human lordship of creation. Jews accepting the traditional doctrine of creation are more receptive to and better informed about science than Judaism's re-inventors.

4. P. K. Tull, *Inhabiting Eden* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013), esp. 115-126.

5. Millard Lind, *Monotheism, Power, Justice: Collected Old Testament Essays* (Elkhart, Ind.: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 1990), 216-221, 224.

Tirosh-Samuelsan believes that religion is recovering its appeal and is increasingly motivating action to counter the environmental crisis.

Tirosh-Samuelsan accepts the traditional view of God as transcendent creator.⁶ As she shows no sign of rejecting evolution, the traditional view must imply to her creation's goodness, lawfulness, and lack of divinity, which justify its scientific study. Therefore, we must be responsible care-takers (243) of creation (best achieved by understanding it and the processes organizing it). As a practicing evolutionary biologist, I think her approach is the sanest on offer, especially because we are not just another species, but de facto lords of creation. We must fulfill the duties of lordship if creation is to remain hospitable to us.

A gap has indeed opened between Judaism and science (192, 247, 250). Science induces secularism, for it enables us to solve problems ourselves. Scholars of other religions have raged against Aquinas's second causes, whereby some phenomena can be studied scientifically without invoking God.⁷ Yet many would agree with Simone Weil that the proper study of science is the beauty of the world, and with G. E. Hutchinson that scientific understanding of nature increases our appreciation of its beauty, which enhances our love of and desire to care for this creation.⁸ Tirosh-Samuelsan views modern ecology as having shifted from a balance-of-nature perspective fundamental to conservation biology and inspiring wonder at the creation, to a non-equilibrium flux-in-nature ecology (251). Things are changing: It now appears that predation and competition favor cooperation within and among species to avoid being eaten or replaced by competitors, which in turn favors diverse, productive ecosystems.⁹ Indeed, I find a world where evolution by natural selection produces such marvels to be a wondrous praise of its creator. It demands our care.

The book's main conclusion is that science needs religion's help as a motivation in overcoming the environmental crisis. As a Christian, I can only agree with Hirosh-Samuelsan's deductions from the Torah. A growing number of U. S. "evangelical Christians," however, do not believe in global warming: Atheists care more about God's creation than they do. Greater understanding of our faiths' teachings is needed to fulfill her expectation.

Independent scholar

EGBERT GILES LEIGH JR.

6. See p. 245 and Hava Tirosh-Samuelsan, "Religion, Ecology and Gender: A Jewish Perspective," *Feminist Theology* 13:3 (2005), 373-397.

7. Alexander Schmemmann, "Worship in a Secular Age," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 16, no. 1 (1972): 3-16, see, especially, p. 12 [reprinted in A. Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World* (Yonkers, N.Y.: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2018), 139-159; esp. 153]; S. H. Nasr, *Religion and the Order of Nature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 136-137.

8. G. E. Hutchinson, *The Itinerant Ivory Tower* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1953). See title page for the quotation from Simone Weil, and p. 227 for science enhancing our appreciation of creation's beauty and our desire to preserve it.

9. G. J. Vermeij, "On Escalation," *Annual Review of Earth and Planetary Sciences* 41 (2013), 1-19, esp. 8-9; E. G. Leigh Jr. and C. Ziegler, *Nature Strange and Beautiful: How Living Beings Evolved and Made the Earth a Home* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2019).

Research Grant: The Mennonite Historical Society announces an “Open Research Grant” of \$2,500 to promote research and publication in Anabaptist-Mennonite studies. To apply, send the following materials by March 1, 2022, to Carrie Philipps (phillipsc@bluffton.edu), Secretary, Mennonite Historical Society, Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526: a two- or three-page summary of the project stating its significance to the field of Anabaptist-Mennonite history, a budget of anticipated expenses, a vitae, and one letter of recommendation. All applicants must be members of the Mennonite Historical Society. Recipients of the award will be announced at the May meeting of the MHS Board of Directors. Disbursements will be made by June 1. The Prize Selection Committee may choose not to award the grant if none of the applications is deemed acceptable. The Mennonite Quarterly Review has the “right of first refusal” for scholarly articles that result from research funded by the grant.

The **Schafer-Friesen Research Fellowship** is awarded annually by the Mennonite Historical Library (MHL) at Goshen College to support scholarship in Reformation and Anabaptist History. First priority for the award is to individuals doing advanced research using the resources of the Mennonite Historical Library. The award will support travel costs to the Mennonite Historical Library, and up to three weeks of room and board. The Fellowship may also be used, secondarily, to support publications on Reformation and Anabaptist topics. To apply, please send a letter of interest, along with a one-page research plan and budget, by March 1, 2022, to John D. Roth at johndr@goshen.edu.

19th Believers' Churches Conference

CALL for PAPERS

Duke Divinity School Office of Black Church Studies, Shaw Divinity School and The Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology will co-host the 19th Believers' Churches Conference 20 – 22 January 2022 on the campus of Shaw University, Raleigh, North Carolina, USA. Founded in 1865, Shaw is among the oldest Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the nation and enjoys a rich history of activism and service.

Call for Papers for the 19th Believers' Churches Conference

With an interest in exploring the global impact of Believers' Churches with a focus on their public witness as communities called by God, gathered in Christ Jesus, and scattered by the Holy Spirit, we invite proposals for papers to be presented around the conference theme:

Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Global Witness of Believers' Churches

King is a product of the Believers' Churches movement. His theology and ministry continue to inform and inspire churches and movements in various countries to work toward freedom from economic exploitation, racial/ethnic marginalization, local and global militarization, and freedom for human flourishing and community wellbeing.

Gathering during the month of King's birth, the Conference is informed by his public witness, prophetic vision, and global impact. Paper proposals, however, are not restricted to explicit explorations concerning King. Examples of themes that might be explored could include, but are not limited to:

- How has the public witness of Believers' Churches been expressed locally, nationally, or globally?
- In what ways do denominational or regional expressions of the Believers' Churches movement engage concerns about racism, capitalism, and militarism?
- How is the present pastoral and prophetic work of Believers' Churches informed by the past and/or inspired the future?
- Where are Believers' Churches in the journey toward racial justice?
- Other topics that may or may not be directly connected to the theme.

Presentations should reflect a thoughtful engagement with scholarship while being accessible to a broad audience including scholars, practitioners, students, and interested lay people. Presentations should last approximately 30 minutes to be followed by interaction with attendees who will participate on-campus and online.

Please submit a one-page CV and a 250-word abstract for a paper or a complete panel/workshop session (with presenters indicated) by 1 August 2021 to David Emmanuel Goatley (obcs@div.duke.edu). Conference organizers will respond by 1 September 2021.



**DUKE
DIVINITY
SCHOOL**

**BLACK
CHURCH
STUDIES**

