Joshua. Believers Church Bible Commentary. By Gordon H. Matties. Harrisonburg, Va.: Herald Press. 2012. Pp. 525. $29.99.

This is a fine addition to the Believers Church Commentary Series. The series is written from an Anabaptist standpoint and is intended for use in congregational Bible study by those not highly trained in specialized theological study. This does not mean that modern historical-critical questions are avoided. But technical arguments take a backseat to the search for the plain meaning of Scripture and implications for godly living. Matties has crafted a masterpiece.

How will a writer from a peace church position approach the militaristic book of Joshua? Many across the broad range of the Judeo-Christian spectrum already blanch at the warring and whoring of the Hebrew Bible. Can a writer steeped in the nonviolent pacifism of Jesus find a place for Joshua in the Christian canon? In a word, Yes.

Matties redeems Joshua's *cherem* (holy warfare; total destruction; genocide) in numerous ways. He is well aware of the contrasting impressions within the Joshua book itself. How can there be a swift and total conquest when there are also those nagging reminders that much of the land was not possessed? The neat and tidy taking of Jericho (chap. 6), the southern campaign (chap. 10), and the northern campaign (chap. 11) are summarized in chapter 12, but a careful reading of other parts of Joshua indicates that this picture is overdrawn. In his judicious review of the archaeological evidence, Matties indicates that the evidence is inconclusive; digs at Hazor and Lachish, for example, show destruction that seems to support the Joshua account, but Jericho and Ai are problematic. He finds other conquest narratives in extra-biblical Ancient Near Eastern writings that overstate the victories and that parallel the idealized accounts in Joshua. As one pays attention to genre and differences between history and historiography, it becomes clear that a lot of theologically oriented history in Joshua is concerned with portraying Yahweh as a warrior leading Israel into the promised land.

One cannot miss Matties' repeated reminders of the fascinating tension between the total annihilation of the Canaanites placed alongside Rahab and the Gibeonites who are spared. Their sparing and eventual inclusion stands in contrast to the severe demands of *cherem* as applied in Achan's failure. This exciting reading "against the grain" admits that some Canaanites did survive, and not only survived, but even eventually become "insiders" as Matties develops the idea. The understanding of God's mysterious grace confounds us; this is not favor that can be earned or simply "calculated through moral arithmetic." Somehow in the overarching scheme of things God's steadfast love trumps God's "strange work." As with many passages of Scripture, one section, one idea, should not be read in isolation from the overall emphases.

One of the balancing acts a writer in this commentary series faces is how to keep the material accessible to readers who are not highly trained and yet to do so without insulting their intelligence. Non-specialist readers might not fully appreciate how well Matties has integrated respected scholarly approaches and theories as he helpfully highlights recurring themes. What he gives us is also solid, academically respectable fare. He uses what is sometimes called modern literary critical methods, such as noting "bookends" that introduce and conclude sections, or "hinges" that mark a shift or a bridge, and close reading that pays attention to patterns, repeated terms, and recurring themes.

Matties also makes moderate literary and redaction critical observations that sharpen the analysis. Attention to Deuteronomic themes prepares us to see connections between Joshua and Deuteronomy, such as the anticipation of the land and then the taking and distributing of the land, or the calls to commitment—to "choose"—both in Deuteronomy 30 and also in Joshua 24, or the observation that over time Joshua can finally be called the "servant of the Lord" as Moses is so frequently named. The widely accepted scholarly theory of the Deuteronomistic History Writer(s) responsible for a larger "book" (Deuteronomy through II Kings) helps us to view Joshua's place in a still larger work where history is arranged, or the story is told, in such a way that it is clear that it is God who is at work, promising, fulfilling, punishing, and extending hope.

Almost one fourth of the book is taken up with essays and notes (eighty pages) and bibliography (twenty-five pages). Many of the essays give further explanation of key ideas and terms that reoccur or somehow connect to issues raised. The extensive bibliography and the meticulous notes further attest to the commentator's dedication and to decades of focused work.

This commentary is unabashedly Christian and Anabaptist; that is the intention of this series. But it could well be used for study and discussion by those of other faiths or traditions. Matties analyzes the Joshua book in nineteen sections and follows the pattern of other writers in this series by regularly including in each section a discussion of "The Text in Biblical Context" and a discussion of "The Text in the Life of the Church." Matties not only deals capably with the use of similar or contrasting ideas within the Hebrew Bible but he also easily moves into its uses in the New Testament. It is particularly in the "Life of the Church" essays that the applications can get interesting for discussion groups. Some of the New Testament use of Joshua is already rather figurative and typological, but when one of the Early Church fathers, Origen (d. 254), does his typical allegorizing with scriptural interpretation, one might question how useful it is, or how often it is worth mentioning.

In the "Life of the Church" there are opportunities to decry the overly simplistic use of Joshua by the medieval Crusaders or in modern times the application to Israeli-Palestinian land issues and Zionist perspectives. It is particularly here that if the commentary writer gets on a bandwagon for too long, or focuses in too much detail on a localized event or experience, the commentary can become "dated" pretty quickly. Again Matties manages to do well by making helpful connections without getting overly preachy or parochial.

As a reviewer I find little to criticize. Admittedly I read the text more as an academic than many readers will, but I have resonated with and benefitted at many points from Matties' diligent and reverent scholarship. At more than one point, I wanted to say, "Yes, I could preach this!" Thanks to Gordon Matties for his careful scholarship and to the editors for their meticulous work.

Eastern Mennonite Seminary JAMES R. ENGLE

Health, Healing and the Church's Mission: Biblical Perspectives and Moral Priorities. By Willard M. Swartley. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press. 2012. Pp. 268. $24.

Willard Swartley wrote *Health, Healing and the Church's Mission: Biblical Perspectives and Moral Priorities* out of his background as a distinguished New Testament scholar and teacher, an author of more than twenty books on theology and ethics, and a patient who has suffered a major heart attack. Swartley focuses the issue: "Is access to health care for all citizens and residents in United States a moral issue? Or put differently, do all people have a moral right to health care access?" (123). Readers get a sense of his approach from the frequency of certain words: "community," 241 times; "justice," 64 times; and "compassion," 41 times.

Swartley presents a forthright, biblically-based argument for universal health care. God's will and desire for humankind, individuals and communities, is for *shalom:* wellbeing that encompasses physical, emotional, and mental welfare. Shalom for one's self and one's neighbor includes health and justice for the entire community, especially the poor and marginalized. When some among us lack the means to shalom, we all suffer. Or, put more succinctly: "When some people are deprived of healthcare, communal shalom is threatened" (21).

Current political debate on health care centers on the lack of access for nearly fifty million uninsured people and costs that escalate at twice the rate of inflation when compared with other goods and services. Jesus modeled access to healing available to all: the poor and rich, the influential and socially ostracized, the stranger, and the demon possessed. Swartley emphasizes that biblical justice requires that special efforts are made to provide for those who are socially, economically, physically, and mentally disadvantaged in society.

Jesus looked with compassion on the ailing, both the individual and the multitudes. His compassion extended to all, including the outcast and resident aliens. "In the Christian tradition, compassion is essential for the healing ministry—a compassion that risks self in service to help and heal others" (69). Swartley reviews the history of medical mission efforts. He notes the motivating compassion for the medically needy around the world as attested to by the long line of medical missionaries who sacrificed (and continue to sacrifice) comfort, security, and accumulation of wealth to address medical needs.

Jesus' concern for the sick was that they are not only healed of their illness, but that they are made *whole*. Likewise, as we seek to heal the whole person, in addition to the acute illness, we address the physical, psychological, social, and environmental consequences of the illness that move individuals, families, and

communities toward wholesome living. Justice demands health care for all and compassion impels us to provide it. In providing health care, we follow the Gospel imperatives of peacemaking and service. Swartley concludes: "I regard universal coverage for basic health care a biblical moral priority" (192).

Swartley points out that our health-care system has built-in flaws that hinder providing universal care at reasonable cost: inefficiencies, duplication, unnecessary diagnosis and treatment fueled by profit-taking, and ever higher expectations of what modern health care can achieve. Our health-care system is the "victim of economic greed and political rancor." It raises the question: "Can the costs of health care be reduced without a fundamental rethinking of the relation between health care and the market-driven system the United States presently has?" Swartley points to the need for change and a renewed vision with "the need for conversion in the desire and expectations, sharing of resources and loving care for the sick that has characterized the church's mission through the ages" (193).

In my church we share our "joys and concerns" each Sunday. Invariably, prayer is requested for those suffering from life's uncertainties, illness, or pain. Implicit in the request for prayer is the recognition of God as Healer and Restorer. Then we leave church to reenter the world of modern medicine with its knowledge and gleaming machines to diagnose and treat and its attendant aura of (undeserved) infallibility. Swartley states that this creates a dilemma for us, "resulting in double talk: lip service to God as healer but practical obeisance to medicine as healer" (106). He resolves this issue by re-asserting that it is God who gives wholeness and well-being. Medical caregivers *assist* God in bestowing health.

The community—the church—motivated by an inner sense of social justice and compassion has a role in achieving the goal of universal health care. Swartley says that a "major renewal of commitment to the welfare of all in the community is desperately needed" (205). His proposal suggests at least these four areas: (1) The church welcomes and nurtures the neighbor and stranger in ways that point toward wholeness and *shalom*. Hospitality and inclusion would suggest that all members of the community have access to basic healthcare. (2) The church is the touchstone in times of illness for encouragement, comfort, and prayer. Members are available to the afflicted person for discernment for hard decisions: procedures to be undertaken; life support measures; or quality of life issues, to name a few. (3) Find innovative ways to promote and advocate for access to quality health care for all. As a congregation, consider how mutual aid can be applied locally. (4) Individuals can seek to communicate openly with their health-care providers to diminish their fears of malpractice lawsuits and decrease or eliminate the perceived need of doctors to perform unnecessary tests and treatment.

The book raised at least four responses and related questions. First, Swartley notes that people of faith face a dilemma at the time of a medical crisis. Where do we place our faith—in prayer or technology? Do we pray only when technology appears to be failing? What would it mean if health-care providers put into practice a belief that healing is of God?

Second, the church has a mission in providing universal health care. Mennonite Church USA recognized this role in 2005-2007 when the denomination's biennial assembly delegates urged congregations to focus on promoting access to healthcare in their local communities. Sixty-two local churches began innovative and holistic healthcare programs in their local communities. What else might be done?

Third, Swartley emphasizes improving efficiency in health-care delivery. More can be said about the role of consumers in the good stewardship of health care. For example, individuals should carry a summary of their medical record, cost shop for elective procedures, and know how to care for a chronic disease that will prevent hospitalizations.

Fourth, Swartley gives examples of other countries where universal health care is provided at lower cost and with better results. He points to the need for a single-payer system. Those who file insurance claims for a medical provider know about the hassles of dealing with fifty different insurance companies, each with its own policies and procedures.

As a retired health-care provider, I found *Health, Healing and the Church's Mission* a potent reminder of the undergirding theology and motivation for what we do. Congregational leaders—and indeed anyone interested in health care – will also be interested in what Swartley has to say about the vital role that congregations can play in improving health care for their members and communities.

Goshen, Ind. GLEN E. MILLER

Winds of the Spirit: A Profile of Anabaptist Churches in the Global South. By Conrad L. Kanagy, Tilahun Beyene, and Richard Showalter. Harrisonburg, Va.: Herald Press. 2012. Pp. 264. $13.99.

The authors of *Winds of the Spirit* have taken on an important task: trying to document precisely how Anabaptism—and Mennonite Anabaptism, in particular—is faring in the Global South. The task is important because the center of gravity of Christianity as a whole is moving southward. In 1800, almost 90 percent of all the world's Christians lived in either North America or Europe; now more than 60 percent of the world's Christians live in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Changes within global Anabaptism have been equally dramatic, and they have taken place much more rapidly. In 1978, roughly two-thirds of all Anabaptists lived in Europe or North America; today two-thirds live in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. These are stunning demographic shifts, and anyone who is interested in understanding the current state and future prospects of Christianity in the world needs to be aware of these developments. Good evidence-based information about Christianity in Africa, Asia, and Latin America is scarce, however, and the research reported in this book helps to fill that gap, especially in terms of Anabaptist-specific statistics.

The data presented in *Winds of the Spirit* come from a 2009 survey of twelve different Mennonite or Mennonite-affiliated denominations around the world, all

of them associated in some way with Eastern Mennonite Missions. Four of these churches are located in East Africa (two in Kenya, one in Ethiopia, and one in Tanzania, with a combined self-reported membership of about 440,000); four are Asian (India, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam, with a combined membership of 48,000); and three are Central American (two from Honduras and one from Guatemala, with a combined membership of 29,000). Lancaster Mennonite Conference (15,500 members), the twelfth church in the study, is used to represent the Global North—all of North America and, by extension, Europe—and the authors use it as a frequent point of comparison.

The questionnaire used to collect information was developed in cooperation with representatives from these twelve churches, and response rates across all the churches were generally high. Leaders from the churches met again after the survey had been completed to reflect together on the results. Thus, in addition to being a survey about global Anabaptism, this book also represents a laudable attempt at global cooperation in analyzing and interpreting data. Survey results are summarized in fifty-five tables spread somewhat randomly throughout the text. However, the information can be divided into three general categories: doctrine, ethics, and Christian life (worship, spirituality, and evangelism). The authors use the notions of the Global North (Europe and North America) and Global South (Africa, Asia, and Latin America) to frame their findings, but those categories may be too blunt and clumsy to do justice to the data. Occasionally North-South differences do emerge, but that is not the norm. Often there is widespread agreement or, more typically, random disagreements that are impossible to sort into any consistent pattern of regional differences.

Let me provide just a few snapshots of what the authors found. With regard to doctrine, there is high agreement across all the surveyed churches about believing in the inspiration of the Bible, the resurrection, the virgin birth, and heaven. Two areas of difference have to do with belief in the devil's activity in the world (two of the four African churches fall well below the norm here) and whether Christians should expect God to bless them with health and wealth (Lancaster Mennonites are the outliers here, with only 27 percent agreeing that God promises health and wealth compared with 84 percent of the members of the other eleven churches). On ethical matters, there is a similar mix of responses. All the churches in the survey agree that it is wrong to take a bribe or to engage in premarital sex. Most feel the same way about homosexuality, though the Kenyan Mennonite Church has a much more lenient attitude on this issue. Responses to questions about politics and involvement with the government are scattered. The proportion of church members who believe it is always wrong to serve in the military, for example, ranges from a low of 4 percent (the Indian Fellowship of Christian Assemblies) to a high of 76 percent (the National Evangelical Mennonite Church of Guatemala). On matters of Christian life, the twelve churches have widely divergent attitudes about the use of musical instruments and dancing in worship, but they all agree that Anabaptists should be committed to social justice.

Two issues deserve a closer look because the book highlights these concerns. The first is the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts. The authors claim to find a huge

"hemispheric difference" here (226). The Anabaptist Global South, they say, is decidedly more receptive to the work of the Spirit, and the authors propose that if the old Anabaptist churches of the North want to survive they will need to become—as the title of the book implies—much more attuned to the miraculous, Pentecostal *winds of the Spirit* that are blowing through the world today. The problem is that the data in the book's tables do not reflect anything like a huge hemispheric difference on this point. Three-quarters of the North American Anabaptists in the survey say they believe in the charismatic gifts of the Spirit and more than half say they have personally experienced those gifts. This is lower than most of the other churches, but not remarkably so (and seems relatively high given the North American cultural context). With regard to things like speaking in tongues, prophecy, and healing, the responses of North American Anabaptists align closely with the global Anabaptist average. There are only two items on which North Americans are out of step with some, but not all, of the other eleven churches: they are less likely to believe in deliverance from demons and that those who have died can be miraculously raised from the dead.

The other issue highlighted by the authors is evangelism and here again North American Anabaptism is presented as deficient. Only 16 percent of Lancaster Mennonite Church members, for example, say they regularly invite non-Christians to worship services, compared with more than 60 percent of the three Central American churches. However, this apparent difference raises questions about who exactly is being defined as "non-Christian" by survey participants in various parts of the world. Given the religious demographics of Central America, with its very substantial Catholic population, the 60 percent figure listed above seems possible only if Catholics are considered non-Christians. It is also likely that many of the people being invited to worship at these Central American churches are part of the extended families of church members, and inviting a sibling or cousin to church is a very different sort of outreach than inviting a co-worker or stranger. Without a more detailed description gleaned from on-the-ground observation rather than self-reporting, it may not be possible to make a fair comparison about evangelistic practices.

Given the discrepancy that exists between the survey results and the rather dramatic conclusions of the authors, it is worth asking where this interpretive bias comes from. The answer is readily apparent. The authors' interpretation is rooted in the views of the historian Philip Jenkins, who wrote a foreword for the book, and who is known for characterizing the emerging churches of the Global South as theologically conservative, morally demanding, Pentecostal in orientation, and flourishing in contrast to the older churches of Europe and North America, which are deemed to be liberal, morally relativistic, closed to the Holy Spirit, and dying. There is a nub of truth in Jenkins's perspective, but it is the truth of a caricature that highlights the deficiencies of the North and downplays the faults of the South. The authors of *Winds of the Spirit* share Jenkins's biases, urging Anabaptists in North America and Europe, where they say "counting the cost of Christian discipleship has become irrelevant," to repent from their spiritual lassitude, suggesting "that God is using the offspring of

North American and European Mennonites in the Global South to return the older churches to their original vibrancy and commitments" (202, 241).

This focus on the failings of the North may be a valid concern, but it is not a concern that flows naturally from the data in the book. What the survey responses reveal instead is that global Anabaptism contains a patchwork of similarities and differences that are very hard to force into any clear-cut patterns. Anabaptist churches share many characteristics, but they differ widely on others—and these similarities and differences are evident within specific regions of the world just as much as they are globally. This is an incredibly important finding. Globalization combined with the growth of the churches in the Global South is making the terrain of faith much more complex. Christians need to be in conversation with each other about how to move forward, but the better questions for Anabaptists to ask may be these: What can we, as Anabaptists, learn from each other—North from South, South from North, South from South, and North from North? How can Anabaptists around the globe work more effectively together to spread the Gospel and serve our neighbors? And finally, how can Anabaptists build better relations with other kinds of Christians (Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, and Pentecostal), and even with members of other religions, that might advance the work of God in the world? These questions are set aside in *Winds of the Spirit* in order to make the point that North American and European Anabaptists have strayed from their roots. Readers who are able to bracket this interpretive overreach will, however, be treated to a feast of data that can enrich the kinds of conversations that twenty-first-century Anabaptists really do need to have.

Messiah College DOUGLAS JACOBSEN

Prophetic Evangelicals: Envisioning a Just and Peaceable Kingdom. Bruce Ellis Benson, Malinda Elizabeth Berry, and Peter Goodwin Heltzel, eds. Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 2012. Pp. 219. $35.

As denominational numbers trend downward for groups like the Mennonite Church USA and the Church of the Brethren, it can feel like the slow demise of the Anabaptist movement. A book like *Prophetic Evangelicals*, however, shows that the ideas of the sixteenth-century Radical Reformation can be poured into new wineskins. The sixteen authors of this edited volume are "naked Anabaptists," to use the term Stuart Murray gives in his 2010 book by the same title for those who seek the essence of radical Christian faith without the cultural and institutional trappings of the Anabaptist movement. The authors of *Prophetic Evangelicals* don't go to the right churches or teach at the right colleges to bolster Anabaptist census counts. They bear surnames such as Nordling, Bacote, Fee Nordling, Slessarev-Jamir, and Benson, not Yoder or Friesen or Swartzentruber. And they represent institutions such as Wheaton College, Mercer University, and Lamb's Church of the Nazarene in New York City. But true to the subtitle of the book, "Envisioning a Just and Peaceable Kingdom," these self-identified

evangelical authors are parlaying evangelical thought in a surprisingly pacifist direction. Anabaptist catch-phrases such as "Jesus' life inaugurates a new social order" (5), "nonviolent activism" (28), and "Jesus' politics" (12) populate the texts, and the authors level pointed critique at American evangelicalism's "worldliness" (53), "new Constantinianism" in politics (57), "complicity with the 'powers and principalities' that rule the word" (73), and culpability for having too often "superimposed on the cross . . . a waving United States flag" (134). Many of the essays draw from Anabaptist thinkers like John Howard Yoder (and his protégé Stanley Hauerwas), Perry Yoder, Ronald Sider, and (without naming him) Howard Zehr and his work on restorative justice.

But as outsiders to Anabaptism proper, their take on a just and peaceable kingdom often draws from a wider sphere of thinkers and activists. An example is the discussion of Martin Luther King Jr.'s less noted writings on nonviolence and racism in the essays contributed by Bruce Ellis Benson, Malinda Elizabeth Berry, and Peter Goodwin Heltzel. They also engage two important recent contributions to the intellectual history of racism and Christian religion: Willie James Jennings's *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race* and J. Kameron Carter's *Race: A Theological Account*. Concluding that "evangelicalism as a white, male, and Western enterprise is over" and that "Prophetic evangelicalism's future is intercultural, gender just, and world Christians" (208), they recognize today's post-Jim Crow racism as being more implicit than explicit in its influence and as being embedded in systems and structures of respectable institutions, including churches. The level and tone of these discussions on shalom and racism resemble the work that Tobin Miller Shearer, a Mennonite, has done recently in understanding the implicit patronizing posture of white Mennonites toward urban black children (and their parents) who spent parts of summers on their farms (see "More Than Fresh Air: African-American Children's Influence on Mennonite Religious Practice, 1950-1979" in the May 2011 issue of *The Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Religion*). The editors argue that the way forward in transforming racial and other injustices in the world is through "shalom justice" since only shalom peace "can overcome the spiral of violence and war that undergirds our bent and broken human community" (208).

How representative of evangelicalism are these voices? A number of the biographies the essays contain point to a strained relationship between these authors and the evangelical movement's leaders and institutions. One such author is David Gushee, the son of a religiously indifferent chemical engineer who studied at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and worked in Washington, D.C., analyzing energy and environmental policy for the government. Spiritually hungry, Gushee walked into a Southern Baptist church at the age of 16, where committed his life to Jesus Christ "in a classic born-again experience" and became a "Bible-reading, Christian-music-listening, share-the-gospel-at-every–opportunity, future Baptist minister" (60). Later, at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, Gushee says he fell under the sway of professor Glen Stassen and turned toward academic Christian ethics as a professional career track. "Glen's combination of relentless study, academic production, commitment to students, and personal moral praxis (especially in peacemaking) left an enduring impression on me and countless others" (61).

Pursuing his Ph.D., Gushee next enrolled at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, where he struggled with scrutiny of his "privileged white male middle-class hetero self"—something he still works on: "I now see that I have not adequately shifted from a Euro-American-centered axis in my reading, thinking, and writing, but I am working on it" (61). Needing more income, Gushee looked for employment to support his young family and, "by God's providence, I am convinced, Ron Sider came calling with a position at his organization, Evangelicals for Social Action" (62). For three years Gushee and his family lived and worked in the low-income Germantown neighborhood of Philadelphia, learning from Sider, whom he describes as "a Canadian Mennonite committed to economic simplicity, peacemaking, racial reconciliation, and the development of a holistic global evangelicalism" (62).

In 1993 Gushee was hired at his alma mater, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, just before a conservative take-over of the school led by Al Mohler. He soon realized that the new policies of the institution that mandated, among other things, that professors teach against women in pastoral roles and other tenets of a "full-throttled Christian Right vision" at the seminary were impinging on his holistic ethic. When the opportunity arose, he took a position at the less politicized Union University in Tennessee. But as his academic stature and name grew with his increasingly vocal work on climate change and opposition to U.S.-sponsored torture policies, "the less happy my bosses were with me at Union" (64). Gushee then accepted a position at Mercer University, a more moderate S.B.C. school, where he continues today.

In the essay, Gushee uses his biographical story to expound on his growing understanding of the role of shalom in the Old and New Testaments, offering a powerful explication of this scriptural theme-motif in the essay. The punch in his writing, though, comes as he applies it to the response of much of the American church to issues like torture during the "War on Terrorism." He writes:

> While the Christian church often espouses the ideal of *shalom*, it often fails to live up to it through its complicity with the "powers and principalities" that rule the world. We see this today in the deep connection that the church often has to the military-industrial complex. Marin Luther King Jr. . . . argued that the United States was the worst purveyor of the violence around the world and called the church to stand up in its commitment to concrete practices and policies that usher in *shalom*. (73)

Noting that President George W. Bush was lauded by many white evangelicals as an evangelical, family-values Christian "until the bitter end," Gushee argues that, at the very least, the American church in its ostensible commitment to shalom should call for "an end to violence and war, which at least means that Christ-followers begin with opposition to violence and war rather than ready endorsement" (75).

Like the others in the book, Gushee is not an Anabaptist in name or institutional affiliation. Yet Anabaptists will find a welcoming—and familiar—ring to his words, words not unlike those of early Anabaptists like Menno Simons and Margaret Sattler and Hans Denck. Quoting Matthew 7:21, where Jesus says only those who do the will of the Father in heaven will enter the

kingdom of heaven, Gushee concludes his essay with these words: "The Christian faith is in fact a life-changing belief practice in which *we believe the story that Jesus tells about the world and practice the way of life he taught us to pursue*" (76). That story, Gushee contends, is the story of shalom.

Huntington University KEVIN D. MILLER

Go to Church, Change the World: Christian Community as Calling. By Gerald J. Mast. Harrisonburg, Va.: Herald Press. 2012. Pp. 189. $13.99, U.S.; $16, Can.

Gerald Mast, in *Go to Church, Change the World: Christian Community as Calling*, says some important things about "what the church must teach to be the church today," to borrow the words of James McClendon. Mast interacts with the biblical text regularly and, on occasion, uses extended biblical stories to help make his point. However, this little book is not biblical theology. While there are well-chosen stories here and there to illustrate and elaborate, Mast is not doing narrative theology either. Its size eliminates it as a systematic theology. He also draws on church history, especially Reformation and Anabaptist history, as the book unfolds, but neither has he prepared a historical theology. So a question to ask is, what exactly is *Go to Church, Change the World*?

One way to look at Mast's new book is to see it as a concise introduction to Anabaptist core values. Whether received by those new to the faith, those new to Anabaptism, or those wanting (or needing) a refresher, the book capably introduces Anabaptist faith and practice. In swiftly moving, flowing prose, he navigates the voluntary church, the Bible, membership, baptism, peace, stewardship, service, the Lord's Supper, yieldedness (or *Gelassenheit*), worship, and witness. The book divides into five alliterative practices (Word, Water, Wine, Witness, and We), somewhat reminiscent of J.H. Yoder's *Body Politics*. Although the number of chapters exceeds the thirteen-week pattern, the short chapters and the end-of-chapter questions make the book an ideal study for small groups, membership or new believers' classes, or Sunday school classes,.

However, another way to view *Go to Church, Change the World* is to see it as constructive theology. Seen this way, the book is *subversive*. Exploration here may lead to dangerous questions, serious introspection, and, ultimately, spiritual transformation. Mast provides a constructive theology for the times in which the church finds itself. When contemporary society questions and even rejects church and all things traditional and formal, *Go to Church, Change the World* presents a radical middle. Mast validates church as "institutional form" and as "the people of God." He wants both structure and relationship. He repeatedly argues that church has both an outward reality and an inward reality. This sounds suspiciously Anabaptist and especially like Pilgram Marpeck.

Mast wants to imbue the act of "going to church" with transformational power. He defines church as "a large building on a Sunday morning and sitting in a pew" (35). Then in the next breath he insists that "the church as Christ's

body is a community that exceeds the boundaries of nation, tribe or race" (39). Perhaps the tension Mast generates could be summarized as traditional church versus missional church. Can Mast have it both ways?

When Mast says, "Going to church might mean more time spent informally with friends, or more music practice, or even more time alone in a study reading books" (36), he sounds very postmodern, missional, and even emergent. This sounds like something the Simple Church movement might say. At the same time, Mast sounds very traditional, even Catholic or Orthodox, by saying, "When going to church becomes a habit for us, the church's routines of worship and teaching and decision-making can become a central force in our daily routines, when we are experiencing ordinary time" (36). I hear monastic overtones in this statement. I hear the echoes of high church, high liturgy, and memorized, formalized prayers. So perhaps Protestants and especially Anabaptists part company with him here.

He presents the tension of reason and experience in relation to Bible reading. There is certainly an intellectual information dimension to reading the Bible. There is history to learn. There are facts to gain. There are principles to apply. Yet he insists on "the complex and even contradictory quality of the text" (42) and an interpretive process best served by communal discernment and application that includes "performing the text" (46). He draws on Sara Wenger Shenk, who indicates that "knowing" is often "experienced through body and habit more than beliefs and ideas" (46).

Over fifteen chapters, Mast constructively engages contemporary culture with third-way responses to questions about authentic community, realistic defenselessness, environmental sustainability, and religious pluralism. Moreover, he indicates that third-way solutions to contemporary questions like these are countercultural in the extreme. He says, "I am advocating a baptism-empowered submission to brothers and sisters in Christ who have discovered in one another the delight and liberty of true friendship" (117). He pushes harder when he says, "Those of us who seek disruptive friendship rather than merely convenient friendliness must evaluate how technologies such as cars and computers present obstacles to deep and accountable forms of community" (119). This is not a call for a return to the horse and buggy. Rather, he calls for a more ancient kind of community accountability that modernity has lost and for which a postmodern, post-Christendom world yearns. He calls for a costly discipleship.

Mast sees church practices—repetitive, habitual forms embodied in the life of the church over centuries—as formative for the kind of contrast community that must "go to church," habitually, and in doing so "change the world." It is this dynamic tension of form and function, ritual and relationship, inner and outer, that Mast calls the contemporary church to engage, whether traditional, missional, or emergent:

> It should be apparent by now that the sort of church community to which we are subject in our daily lives is not primarily a denomination, a tradition, or any obviously established institution that calls itself "the church." I am advocating fidelity to what Peter Dula calls the "fugitive church," that gathering of two or three in the name of Christ where

> obedience to the call of Christ becomes visible—the "occasional intimacy of two or three" (132).

He offers a provocative and compelling vision of community. One does wonder, though, how, where, and if the Holy Spirit finds space in his construction. In this respect, Mast reminds me of the writings of John Howard Yoder, who consistently leaves me with similar questions. Is all of my doing (go to church; change the world) all about me (or we)? Does the church transform me (us), or does the Spirit of Christ?

So at this second, subversive level, can Mast have it both ways? I am compelled to say, we must have it both ways, or our vision fails.

Lancaster Mennonite Conference BRINTON L. RUTHERFORD

The Heterodox Yoder. By Paul Martens. Eugene, Ore.: Cascade Books. 2012. Pp. 166. $20.

Let me say at the outset that I think this book is profoundly wrong in its central argument. However, I also think it is instructive, perhaps importantly instructive, in a couple of ways.

What is its central argument? As indicated by the title, Martens's central claim is not subtle. It is intended to provoke. However, it is also intended to be precise. "To be as clear as possible at this point," says Martens early in the book,

> I argue that Yoder's distillation amounts to a complex narration of the early Christian church in primarily ethical terms. Thus, his narration provides an account of the early church's particularity (a particularity that eventually earns the title of the politics of Jesus), but, as Yoder's corpus progresses, his narration of the early church's particularity eventually—and perhaps unwittingly—advocates an ethical or political particularity that becomes so "distilled" that the defining activities of the early church become abstracted into a general and universalizable, not-particularly-Christian ethic: Jesus becomes merely an ethico-political example or paradigm within a form of ethical monotheism (at best) or a form of secular sociology (at worst). This, in my judgment, is a heterodox account of the particularity and uniqueness of Jesus Christ. (3-4).

Thus what Martens is arguing is that Yoder's "theology" is finally reducible to ethics or politics. Martens unfolds his argument in five chapters, roughly in chronological order. The first chapter sets up Martens's interpretive schema. Engaging various texts in chapters 2 and 3, Martens explores how Yoder discusses discipleship and church in a way that culminates in "the prioritization of politics," as announced in the title of chapter 3. The following two chapters attempt to establish—through a discussion of Yoder's work on Jewish-Christian engagement and ecumenism—that in fact his work following *The Politics of Jesus* most clearly displays the way in which "the prioritization of politics" or social ethics has become centrally defining for Yoder. Though Martens believes he has shown that this was always Yoder's tendency, it became particularly obvious

from the late 1970s to the end of Yoder's life in 1997 that his ethic is not a "particularly-Christian ethic," but rather a universalizable ethic for everyone.

Martens's claim that Yoder reduces theology to ethics is not unique. What is unique is the scope of the argument and the specific way he makes it. I've come to believe that one of Martens's central methodological moves is misleading. In the opening chapter he implies that it is only by privileging a certain inner canon of Yoder's writings that some of us can claim Yoder is deeply theological. We have excluded other writings that would challenge our claims. This is deceptive in at least two ways. First, serious Yoder scholars do not exclude any of Yoder's writings. However, we do respect the fact that Yoder himself intended some of his writings to be more centrally defining than others. But second, and more significantly, Martens is in fact implying through his use of the image of "the prioritization of politics" that Yoder's best-known work, *The Politics of Jesus*, is quite properly seen as central. Because really, according to Martens, this book announced Yoder's agenda. However, having suggested that some of us ignore certain important writings by Yoder, Martens can then claim to have given a more honest portrayal of Yoder's true theological colors. And then one of his tasks must be to engage in misdirection so that we forget, for example, that Yoder said in *The Politics of Jesus* that his convictions stated there were "more radically Nicene and Chalcedonian than other views." That he in fact was affirming "what the church has always said about Jesus as Word of the Father, as true God and true Man" and that his effort is simply to show that such claims should "be taken more seriously" when it comes to embodying social ethics.

Only those with extensive knowledge of Yoder's overall corpus can engage Martens's detailed argument. To refute his central claims requires a contextualizing of the many quotations from Yoder's writings over his career that Martens provides, as well as alternative contextualized quotes that would challenge his claims. I cannot offer such detailed rebuttal here. But, let me provide a small sample. Martens claims that one can see the "primacy of the ethical . . . especially as we turn to Yoder's articulation of community." However, I would suggest that it is particularly Yoder's view of the Christian community that shows Yoder's consistency in *not* reducing theology to ethics over his whole career, which is in fact precisely why many non-Mennonite critics have seen him as sectarian.

In his 1954 essay "The Anabaptist Dissent," Yoder was arguing against the dominant view regarding "responsibility" joined to an understanding of justification by grace through faith as merely forensic. In that context Yoder suggested that we ought not to be "optimistic about either the world's or the Christian's goodness." However, in Christ Christians know "empowering grace," so that "we may walk in newness of life." This is what sets the church apart, claimed Yoder. He affirmed this again in his provocative 1960 essay, "The Otherness of the Church," which he reaffirmed in 1994 by including it in the collection *The Royal Priesthood*. Among other things, here Yoder says, "the church's responsibility to and for the world is first and always to be the church. The short-circuited means used to 'Christianize' 'responsibly' the world in some easier way than by the gospel have had the effect of dechristianizing the

Occident and demonizing paganism." In his book *Nevertheless*, in both the 1971 and 1976 editions and the revision in 1992, Yoder distinguished his own understanding of pacifism from the many others described in the book. There he says: "To say that this is the pacifism of the *messianic* community is to affirm its dependence upon the confession that Jesus is Christ and that Jesus Christ is Lord." "Therefore," says Yoder, "in the person and work of Jesus, in his teachings and his passion, this kind of pacifism finds its rootage, and in his resurrection it finds its enablement." In critiques of Reinhold Niebuhr, Constantinianism, and H. Richard Niebuhr from the 1950s to the 1990s, Yoder argued that each of them had a distorted view of the church community that denied empowering grace, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the regeneration made possible in Christ.

Though I believe Martens is wrong in his central claim, nonetheless there are two reasons why I see the book as helpfully instructive. First, it helped me to see more clearly the strands within Yoder's writings that have led some mistakenly to claim that Yoder did not believe that true theological convictions mattered that much. That is to say, he believed that strictly theological matters regarding God, church, Jesus Christ, salvation, etc. are really not that important, except as means to an end; thus they are dispensable means to an end. Because the true end, really, of Yoder's central project is a full embracing of progressive politics and peacemaking—in an effort to transform the world over into a religious image of "Democracy Now," the most progressive political program on the National Public Radio network.

Second, I have come to agree with Martens that his book is a cautionary tale. Even more than Martens, James Davison Hunter, in his book *To Change the World*, in the midst of a caricaturing portrayal of Yoder and Hauerwas, has nonetheless helped me to see how the "politicization" language of neo-Anabaptism can easily become theologically reductionistic. I have come to believe—especially with influential writers like Yoder—it is not enough merely to signal reminders of what we should believe (for example, orthodox beliefs about Jesus and the trinity). We must continually offer theologically rich accounts of discipleship, social ethics, and "politics." Similarly, Yoder should have listened more carefully to the cautions of his teacher, Karl Barth, about apologetics. Yoder knew—especially after the popularity of *The Politics of Jesus*—that many dismissed him for being sectarian. Perhaps he worked too hard, or without enough theological carefulness, to demonstrate that he was not sectarian. And thus some of his very language for doing apologetics to convince the cultured despisers could be turned against him.

Sometimes it is helpfully clarifying to have a faulty argument that names important issues, such that it elicits careful, thoughtful critiques. In this sense, *The Heterodox Yoder* clarifies the elements of Yoder that have been drawn upon distortingly to make arguments that do not truly fit Yoder's *central* project. Thus I am hopeful that the more thoughtful critiques of Martens's book will bring some clarity to false ways of appropriating Yoder. In relation to Martens's basic argument as presented in earlier essays, I attempted to do this in an essay published last fall: "The 'Ecumenical' and 'Cosmopolitan' Yoder," *The Conrad*

Grebel Review (Fall 2011), 73-87. Already, a quite helpful, thirty-eight-page review of Martens's book has been written by Branson Parler as an e-booklet, "The Forest and the Trees," followed by an exchange between Martens and Parler in the online book review *The Englewood Review of Books*. Branson Parler's new book, *Things Hold Together: John Howard Yoder's Trinitarian Theology of Culture* (2013), also indirectly challenges Martens's argument.

Karl Barth wrote: "Our contention is, however, that the dogmatics of the Christian Church, and basically the Christian doctrine of God, is ethics" (*Church Dogmatics*, II/2, 515). Perhaps if we can convince deceptive Barth scholars to quit privileging the *Church Dogmatics* we could establish that Barth simply reduced theology to ethics.

Eastern Mennonite Seminary MARK THIESSEN NATION

The Heterodox Yoder. By Paul Martens. Eugene, Ore.: Cascade Books. 2012. Pp. 166. $20.

Was John Howard Yoder a heretic? Having read *The Heterodox Yoder*, I must admit to some disappointment—Yoder is apparently *not* a heretic, at least not according to Martens.

Why would this be disappointing? Because the word "heresy" seems bound up with the notion of a magisterial Christianity that clearly delineates what must be believed and practiced by an individual to count as a Christian. Such a definition is ostensibly drawn from Scripture, yet it is spelled out in texts that carry additional authority themselves (at times, historically, backed by state violence), because reading the text of Scripture may not (and often does not) generate sufficient informal consensus regarding the "must" list. To many, it seems that the only other options besides this magisterial "must" list are (a) a fundamentalist biblicism with naïve and untenable approaches to hermeneutics; or (b) a rejection of the Bible's authority, whether implicit or explicit. My inclination has often been to see Yoder as the contemporary theorist of a stream of Anabaptist-Mennonite thought that is committed to denying the necessity of a magisterial "must" list, while also rejecting the apparent alternatives. On that reading, Yoder would surely turn out to be a heretic from the viewpoint of any proponent of such a list; and so, at some level, I apparently nursed hope that Yoder would be recognized as such, which fueled my eagerness to see what Martens has to say and my subsequent disappointment.

But wait! What Martens says is that Yoder is "heterodox," but not "heretical." To my knowledge, there is no consistently established technical distinction between these two terms, though there is some precedent for seeing them as designating two different degrees to which one might depart from orthodoxy ("heterodox" being dangerous, but less egregious than "heretical"). Martens does seem to have something like this in mind: we might suspect Yoder of being heretical, but he is really not that bad; he is merely heterodox.

How so? It turns out that the answer to that question is complicated and potentially controversial. In fact, a substantial discussion has arisen online, and I recommend perusal of this entire unfolding conversation.[1] Issues broached in this discussion are of crucial significance for broader reflection among Anabaptist-Mennonite thinkers, quite apart from the accuracy of Martens's claims or his specific warrant for them. Martens and his interlocutors bring to the forefront a number of issues more prominent in my own fields of study (sociology, social theory, and philosophy) that, in contemporary Anabaptist-Mennonite discussions, are usually touched upon only superficially and fleetingly (if at all). The issues I have in mind rise to the surface here precisely because of the provocative tone that is set by the explicit foregrounding of orthodoxy and heresy/heterodoxy as evaluative categories.

A first cluster of issues, which becomes explicit early in the book, may be broadly characterized as hermeneutical, though not in the narrow sense of biblical hermeneutics. Rather, the issues relate to how a putative hermeneutic community (e.g., Mennonites, Anabaptists, or "Yoderians") develops quasi-traditional normative patterns for the reading of a major thinker associated with that community. Martens refers to such patterns as "the regulative framework" for reading the thinker in question. It is worth emphasizing that such normative patterns for interpretation are politically saturated, and may follow fault lines in the community at widely varying depths of discursive saliency. Martens discusses the issue primarily in terms of privileging particular texts by Yoder over others, but Martens seems fully aware that this is already a "sociology of knowledge" question; it is an issue of *who* has authority (legitimated power) to advance acceptable readings—that is, those who rightly understand the canon within the canon. Another fault line that rightly arises in the discussion is that between interpreters who knew Yoder personally and/or studied with him, and thus might constitute, however unwittingly, an elite of hermeneutical "insiders," and those who did not. There are other fault lines as well, including (a) Mennonite versus non-Mennonite (though sympathetic) interpreters; (b) "old" versus "new" interpreters; (c) institutionalized patriarchal biases versus feminist critiques, especially in light of allegations of abusive behavior on Yoder's part; (d) supposedly "Hauerwasian" readers of Yoder versus those who emphasize Yoder's differences from Hauerwas; and (e) Anabaptists putatively predisposed toward being "evangelical" or "creed-friendly" versus those who are not, and potentially many others. To recall Peter L. Berger's phrasing, these are "says who?" issues.[2]

1. See especially Ted Grimsrud, "Was John Howard Yoder a Heretic?" which is available in two parts on his blog, Thinking Pacifism (http://thinkingpacifism.net/2012/04/02/was-john-howard-yoder-a-heretic-part-i/); Branson Parler, "The Forest and the Trees" (http://erb.kingdomnow.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/BParler-Forest.pdf); and Martens's rebuttal posted at the *Englewood Review of Books* (http://erb.kingdomnow.org/paul-martens-responds-to-branson-parlers-review-of-the-heterodox-yoder/).

2. See chapter 2 in Peter C. Blum, *For a Church to Come: Experiments in Postmodern Theory and Anabaptist Thought* (Harrisonburg, Va.: Herald Press, 2013).

A second cluster of issues arises with regard to the relationship between belief and action, at both individual and corporate levels. The topmost way in which these are manifest in the discussion of Martens's book is in the relatively familiar form of the supposed danger of "reducing theology to ethics." In this regard, I believe that the discussion around *The Heterodox Yoder* is especially interesting, insofar as it straightforwardly addresses the potentially implicit operation of competing meta-ethical frameworks (especially Kantian, in this case). But the surface scratched here covers substantial questions of agency, axiology, and theological anthropology with which Anabaptist-Mennonite thinkers have only begun to wrestle. Beginnings of such wrestling are to be found not only in the "reducing theology to ethics" discussion but also in ongoing conversations about the alleged "spiritual poverty of the Anabaptist Vision."[3] The clearest indication to me of the need to broaden and deepen such wrestling is a tendency in recent decades for some Mennonites to suggest an emphasis on "orthopraxy" (or "orthopraxis") over orthodoxy. Yet the discursive oppositions of ethics/theology, ethics/spirituality, and (most obviously) orthopraxy/orthodoxy all presuppose a psychology—not in a disciplinary sense, but in the root sense of a "theory of the soul"—that is based on a recognizably Cartesian bifurcation of subjectivity/belief from embodiment/action. When that bifurcation is challenged or rejected, we must wrestle with what it means to be a believing and acting person. What is our anthropology, where the *anthropos* is a disciple? I believe that wrestling with these issues is unavoidable for anyone concerned about critical reflection on the shape of Christian discipleship in our contemporary context.

A third cluster of issues arises in connection with authority in the church, and this cluster really impinges upon, and perhaps engulfs, the others mentioned so far. All of the hermeneutical and sociology of knowledge issues touched upon above, far from being merely "academic," are increasingly urgent in relation to Anabaptist-Mennonite church life. In most assimilated (i.e., not Old Order) Anabaptist denominations and congregations, it seems clear that there is broad and deep *de facto* pluralism regarding how to understand authority. This is true, it seems to me, in connection with the authority of Scripture, the authority of any extra-biblical texts (creeds, confessions of faith, other official church documents, etc.), and the authority of persons or groups of persons. I do not just mean diversity with regard to what or who is or is not considered authoritative, but diversity with regard to what is denoted and implied by treating texts or persons as authoritative. In this situation, it is difficult to see how the notion of orthodoxy could actually have any footing. My own temptation, mentioned at the outset, has been to see orthodoxy as what magisterial (Constantinian) Christianity demands, and thus what Anabaptists must be willing to transgress. But the discussion around Martens's work shows that the issues of authority, implied by and underlying the notion of orthodoxy, are just as much Anabaptist struggles as Constantinian struggles. If I argue that Anabaptists should not be troubled by Yoder turning out to be heterodox, does this not amount to a claim as to what Anabaptist orthodoxy should be? I believe that it is in the spirit of Anabaptism to

3. Stephen F. Dintaman, "The Spiritual Poverty of the Anabaptist Vision," *The Conrad Grebel Review* 10 (Spring 1992), 205-208.

resist "orthodoxy" understood as a finalized formulation of a "must" list. Paul Martens is doing us a vital service by inquiring about John Howard Yoder's orthodoxy in a way that, if my reflections here are on target, highlights the necessity of careful and critical reflection on authority at a radical ("at the root") level.

Hillsdale College PETER C. BLUM

Revolutionary Christianity: The 1966 South American Lectures. By John Howard Yoder. Paul Martens, Mark Thiessen Nation, Matthew Porter, and Miles Werntz, eds. Eugene, Ore.: Cascade Books. 2011. Pp. 177. $22.

Over the summer of 1966, from May 22 to July 8, John Howard Yoder visited Mennonite communities in Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Brazil, lecturing and preaching. The three lecture series published here as *Revolutionary Christianity* were delivered in Buenos Aires and Montevideo, though not all lectures were given in each place. Although there is little new material here for anyone familiar with Yoder's major writings, *Revolutionary Christianity* provides fascinating insight into how themes he would develop at length over the next thirty years fit together from an early date as a basically coherent, unified whole.

The first lecture series, entitled "The Believers Church," offers richly theological definitions of the free church as "a community founded upon the redemptive activity of God in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit with its order based only upon that divine work" (9); and as rooted in "the Holy Spirit's freedom to constitute . . . that people of the new covenant whose daily existence reflects the reality that God has come in the midst of humanity to be their God and to make them his people" (12). Yoder identifies forgiveness (binding and loosing) and economic sharing (the Lord's Supper) as marks of the free church or, in other words, as central practices of a communitarian discipleship ethic that affects participation in the abundant resurrection life of the lamb who was slain (44).

This free church vision is meant to surpass Catholic and magisterial Protestant ecclesiologies as the most biblical, and therefore most ecumenical, option for a post-Christendom Latin America (4-5). In the second and third lecture series, "Peace" and "Church in a Revolutionary World," Yoder elaborates on the free church's credentials in detail. Lectures on the Sermon on the Mount, the politics of the cross, agapistic ethics, just war, the powers, biblical philosophy of history, and Constantinianism cover territory that is by now well known. (Part or all of several of these lectures have been published elsewhere.)

Given the collection's provenance and title, the final two lectures on "Revolution and Gospel" and "The Meaning of Our Revolutionary Age" are of particular interest. Here Yoder contrasts contemporary revolutions, rejected as "too much like the movements they oppose" (150), with Jesus' "genuine social revolution" (151). Yoder acknowledges the compatibility between contemporary (left-wing) revolutionaries' economic aims and the "equalitarian" economy of the New Jerusalem (166). The point of distinction, however, is the community that

lives in hope of the New Jerusalem places enemy love at the heart of its life and mission. Nonviolent reconciliation, not forced economic distribution, is primary for revolutionary Christianity.

This interpretation of revolution is fundamentally consistent with what Yoder says about the subject elsewhere, though it could be argued that over time he deemphasized the theological framework of his ecclesiology to the point of endorsing a reductive sociology of revolution. Regardless, a tension exists in all of his writings on revolution between a bold call for nonviolent revolutionary activism, issuing in endorsements of King and Gandhi, and a more cautious emphasis on the pacific witness of alternative communities scattered among the nations. It is clear that both tactics have the same revolutionary goal in mind, but it would be helpful to have a theoretical account of how they might work together as well as some case studies about how they have worked together. Otherwise it is too easy to perpetuate a division between activists and those committed to the modeling witness of the church.

The editors are right that "Yoder's knowledge of the Latin American context is evidently superficial as his default examples are drawn primarily from the hostilities in Vietnam and not the indigenous context" (xiii). It is surprising, then, that the editors do little to fill in the gaps and help their readers understand what was going on in Latin America around the time of Yoder's lecture tour. The sense of surprise increases when one finds that momentous events were occurring there, events that are surely relevant to an evaluation of the lectures. In Uruguay, the militant Tupamaro National Liberation Movement, which included many Christians, had formed a few years earlier and was offering a serious challenge from the left to government rule. More dramatically, the so-called "Argentine Revolution" occurred during Yoder's stay, in June 1966; in that conservative revolution, a military junta under the leadership of General Juan Carlos Onganía overthrew the democratically elected Arturo Illia administration and gave Onganía dictatorial powers. Onganía saw his revolution, which lasted four years, as essentially Christian, and he gained the support of many Argentine clergy.

More could be said about revolutionary and subversive activities in Paraguay, Brazil, and elsewhere in the region. Consideration of these events leads to pointed questions about the validity of Yoder's free church revolutionary model as a concrete alternative to the competing Latin American revolutions of the 1960s. Once the need to ask those questions is acknowledged, we are faced with new questions about our reception of Yoder and our participation in revolutionary Christianity today. There is no *a priori* reason to think that responding to such questions would undermine Yoder's perspective, but by not asking them we do nothing to contribute to revolutionary praxis. Well, perhaps it is unfair to say that we do nothing. We certainly sink a little deeper into our armchairs under the weight of a new book by Yoder.

Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary JAMIE PITTS

Atonement, Justice, and Peace: The Message of the Cross and the Mission of the Church. By Darrin Snyder Belousek. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans. 2012. Pp. 668. $55.

Atonement, Justice, and Peace is a long and difficult book. Its length and difficulty, however, allow it to be a very good book as well. By refusing to simplify the wide array of biblical material and the complexity of the attendant theological matters, *Atonement, Justice, and Peace* engages the meaning of Christ's death on the cross with tremendous patience and precision. And, although it might occasionally feel like a reference work, to describe it as such would do a tremendous disservice to the polemical argument that Snyder Belousek develops throughout.

The basic argument of the book is twofold: (1) the persistent interpretation of the atonement as penal substitution is untenable both biblically and theologically and, therefore, (2) it is necessary to reinterpret the atonement, for good biblical and theological reasons, in terms that link God's redemptive purpose, Christ's cruciform existence, and the mission of the church. That is, he argues that it is necessary to interpret the atonement as Christ's dying "for us" not in terms of Christ as substitute but in terms of Christ making it possible for Christians to take part in God's redemptive purpose for the world (and the book then ends with a significant list of individuals and organizations that exemplify how this plays out practically). Standing between—logically and chronologically—these respective deconstructive and constructive projects is an attempt to name and challenge the assumption that is common in many—especially contemporary evangelical—approaches to the atonement: the "retributive paradigm." On this matter, Snyder Belousek tirelessly seeks to identify the manner in which the logic of retribution has slipped from Western culture (whether ancient, medieval, contemporary, or any other) into the Western theological tradition, thereby fundamentally misshaping Christian understandings of the atonement.

Readers of *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* may also want to note two other important features of the argument contained in *Atonement, Justice, and Peace*. First, Snyder Belousek does not simply reiterate the argument of J. Denny Weaver's *The Nonviolent Atonement* (Eerdmans, 2001). In fact, alongside the familiar critiques of Weaver's historiography, Snyder Belousek is also quite critical of what he takes to be Weaver's simple appeal to nonviolence as the answer to the violence committed against Jesus that culminated in his death. Rather, Snyder Belousek, leaning heavily on Pauline texts, affirms that the suffering and death of Jesus were "integral" to his messianic mission and necessary for fulfilling God's purpose. In this way, he claims, it is the cross that reveals God's distinctive revelation in Christ and makes true peace and justice possible. Second and related, he further argues that Jesus and Paul are consistent and, taken together, they teach "non-retaliatory resistance," which is to say that Christians ought to resist systems of violence and structures of oppression in ways that are not determined by retaliation because this, of course, would be a return to the logic of retribution that Snyder Belousek has worked so hard to eradicate from the conversation.

There are many reasons to praise *Atonement, Justice, and Peace* and the following are merely a few representative samples. First, it is an incredibly energetic attempt to address the diverse and difficult biblical material on atonement in a manner that thoughtfully engages some of the better recent scholarship (e.g., Wright, Hays, and Dunn) while also attempting to synthesize this material into a coherent theological picture. Second, this text aptly demonstrates why one cannot treat any particular theological theme—especially Jesus' death on the cross—in isolation from the larger theological context of God's redemptive work. Or, to restate this in a positive fashion, the book demonstrates how Jesus' death on the cross determines the shape of Christian existence in the world today. Third, this text takes a huge step forward in the Anabaptist theological conversation concerned with the atonement in that it attempts to work within the framework of classical Christian confessions (e.g., the Nicene Creed and the Definition of Chalcedon) while also remaining critical of certain aspects of the tradition; it is an acute understatement to note that the care and nuance evident in this text exceeds previous Anabaptist attempts to articulate the relationship between the atonement and peace.

There are, however, moments of difficulty in the text that illustrate the challenges entailed in fulfilling its ambitions. First, for example, *Atonement, Justice, and Peace* begins with the rather naïve assertion that it will not try to see the cross in terms of an assumed understanding of justice and peace. Rather, it will seek "to understand justice and peace from the perspective of the cross" (3). It seems to me that the argument would be more honest if it acknowledged its rootedness in the Anabaptist tradition and then simply argued that this particular view coheres with the fullness of the biblical and theological witness, especially since the text subsequently provides "three rules" that will guide the biblical analysis, the third of which is that "the life-ministry, cross, and resurrection of Jesus Christ together reveal 'the justice of God' and 'the things that make for peace'" (20). I take this criticism to be easily addressed with a slight alteration of rhetoric.

A second sort of criticism, however, is more substantial and it gets to the heart of the relationship between the deconstructive and constructive elements of his argument. What I mean is that the target audience of the text seems to be North American evangelical Christians who tend to disconnect the message of salvation from "justice-doing" (what Snyder Belousek also refers to as "Protestant Christianity"). This is certainly understandable and, in effect, his argument proceeds toward (a) an affirmation of the cross, *along with* evangelicalism, as the most important moment in salvation (as opposed to the incarnation, resurrection, Pentecost, etc.), which (b), *against* evangelicalism, is described as an inclusive form of the moral influence interpretation of the atonement that leads to the conclusion (c) that Jesus' death on the cross is the central revelation of the manner in which God is working to redeem the world that (d) Christians are called to imitate. Framed this way, however, the strong christological emphasis forces some awkward exegetical and theological issues for his constructive solution. For example, when speaking about Mark 15:34—"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"—Snyder Belousek comments that Jesus' cry finds a silent sky "precisely because God is *already* fully present in and with him at the

cross" (308). Although I appreciate his attempt to hold on to a trinitarian theology, the affirmation of an "eternally unified" (303) Trinity in this manner suggests something that occasionally looks more like christomonism. Further, the resultant unity of salvation and justice-doing and the unity of the Trinity (both of which are affirmed strongly *in the face of* the tendencies of evangelicalism indicated above) naturally lead Snyder Belousek toward a description of redemption as becoming accomplished through justice-doing. This, too, is praiseworthy yet, by the end, it is unclear whether God's role in redemption is limited to motivation, modeling, and mandating (all of which are tied to Jesus' death on the cross), thereby leaving the continuing work of redeeming the world to the church alone. I doubt this is what Snyder Belousek intends to argue. But in allowing his intended audience to shape his argument in such a strong fashion he tends to diminish God's role in the continuing work of accomplishing justice and peace in the world today.

That said, these occasional issues certainly do not override the tremendous contribution that *Atonement, Justice, and Peace* offers to contemporary reflections on the atonement. Snyder Belousek has set the bar very high and any future endeavors to address these matters owe him a tremendous debt of gratitude for the very substantial foundational text he has provided.

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BOOK NOTES

Die Dignität des Ereignisses: Studien zu Heinrich Bullingers Reformationsgeschichtsschreibung. By Christian Moser. Leiden: Brill. 2012. 2 vols. Pp. 1,110. $292.

This substantive analysis of the published and unpublished writings related to the history of the Reformation in Switzerland, compiled by the Zurich reformer Heinrich Bullinger, first appeared as a doctoral dissertation, completed in 2008 at the University of Zurich. Volume one begins with an overview of Bullinger's historical and theological presuppositions, followed by a long chapter focusing more specifically on his efforts to gather sources relevant to his massive history of the Reformation. The main themes of Bullinger's historical interpretation of the Reformation are summarized in chapter 3. Here Christian Moser briefly addresses Bullinger's treatment of the Anabaptists in a section on "Anabaptists and the Zurich Reformation." Chapter 4 continues with a close analysis of Bullinger's historiographical and methodological approach, with a particular focus on the humanistic and confessional influences that shaped his interpretation. Chapter 5 traces the reception history of Bullinger's Reformation history, tracking later editions of his published works and the disposition of various manuscript collections related to the project, as well as the historical and theological influence of his Reformation history. The second volume consists primarily of a collection of transcriptions of manuscripts related to Bullinger's

history of the Reformation (510 in all), followed by an exhaustive description of extant manuscripts, several bibliographies, and three indexes (manuscripts, names, and places).

John D. Roth

John Holdeman: Life, Labors, Legacy, 1832-1900. By Don Gable. Moundridge, Kan.: Gospel Publishers. 2010. Pp. 531. $18.95.

Don Gable has assembled, edited, and translated a remarkable amount of extant material related to John Holdeman, the organizer, in 1859, of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite. This group, popularly known as Holdeman Mennonites, began as a renewal movement in (Old) Mennonite circles in Ohio, but its center of gravity soon shifted to Kansas and Manitoba as its message of evangelical fervor and vigorous discipline attracted so-called Russian Mennonite immigrants who arrived in the plains and prairies in the 1870s. Gable provides some editorial comment and narrative introduction, but most of the book is composed of primary sources, many of which appear in English translation here for the first time. The first part of the book includes ten sections that are largely biographical in scope and include genealogical materials and dozens of letters by Holdeman that reflect his roles as a husband, father, farmer, minister, and traveling evangelist, as well as excerpts of his doctrinal and polemical writings. The second part of the book, comprising some 200 pages, offers the full text of many of Holdeman's writings that are difficult to locate today or have never been available in English. This section includes thirty-four editorials that Holdeman penned for *Botschafter der Wahrheit* and three doctrinal treatises that include his responses to Swedenborgianism and Adventism. Appendices list baptisms and ordinations performed by Holdeman, as well as his numerous publications and a detailed record of his many decades of travels on behalf of the church.

Steven M. Nolt

God's Healing Strategy: An Introduction to the Bible's Main Themes. Revised edition. By Ted Grimsrud. Telford, Pa.: Cascadia Publishing House. 2011. Pp. 188. $17.95.

Ted Grimsrud, a professor of theology and peace studies at Eastern Mennonite University, has revised this introduction to the Bible that he had first published in 2000. Based on sermons Grimsrud preached while he was a pastor in Oregon and South Dakota, and on class lectures he delivered at Eastern Mennonite, the book provides an overview of the biblical narrative from Genesis to Revelation. In this new edition, Grimsrud provides additional material on the Old Testament. Chapter 6, "God Remains Committed to Healing," which discusses the prophet Isaiah and the Exile, now includes a section on 2 Kings 22-23 and on the prophet Jeremiah. There are also two entirely new chapters:

chapter 7, entitled "Sustaining Faith," discusses Jonah, Job, and Daniel, while chapter 8 focuses on the Psalms and explores eight psalms as representative examples. Grimsrud has also updated the sources "For Further Reading" that accompany each of the original chapters.

Steven M. Nolt

Mennonites in North America (1874-1910). Part II of *Die Alt-Evangelische Mennonitische Bruederschaft in Russland*. By Peter Martin Friesen. Jake K. Balzer, trans. Winnipeg, Man.: Kindred Productions. 2012. Pp. 211. $24.

In 1911, P. M. Friesen, a Mennonite Brethren minister, published at Halbstadt, Russian Empire, a massive history entitled *Alt-Evangelische Mennonitische Bruderschaft in Russland (1789-1910) im Rahmen der mennonitischen Gesamtgeschichte*. In 1980 the North American Mennonite Brethren Board of Christian Literature published an English translation of part I of Friesen's work, which dealt with the European origins of the Mennonites and the European history of the Mennonite Brethren in particular. The shorter, second part of the original work focused on North America and remained untranslated until now. Friesen relied on North American correspondents and some published sources to describe for his Russian Empire readers the scope of Mennonite life in North America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Part II's longest section describes the Mennonite Brethren and Krimmer Mennonite Brethren in the United States and Canada, and two other sections detail the history, institutions, publications, and missions of the General Conference Mennonites and the (Old) Mennonites.

In conjunction with the translation and publication of part II of Friesen's work, the Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies in Hillsboro, Kansas, and the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies in Winnipeg, Manitoba, have released a CD-ROM containing the entire English text of both parts I and II as a fully searchable PDF file. At present the CD is being included with any purchase of *Mennonites in North America*.

Steven M. Nolt

Called to Mission: Mennonite Women Missionaries in Central Africa in the Second Half of the 20th Century. By Mirjam Rahel Scarborough. Morrisville, N.C.: Lulu Press. 2012. Pp. 210. $18.

As a doctoral student in missiology at the University of Cape Town, South Africa, Mirjam Rahel Meier Scarborough (1957-2011) conducted in-depth interviews with twenty-three North American women missionaries who had served with Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission during the second half of the twentieth century. Scarborough sought to identify the women's sense of call to mission and to analyze whether or how such a call "was likely to act as a significant support factor in their cultural re-location experience" (190). She

found that although such a call did offer assurance in the short term, over the long term a sense of call often "turned against those who felt called" (187) as the gap between their call and the reality of their mission circumstances generated feelings of deep inadequacy. For most of the women, however, their sense of call was eventually and dramatically revised as their understanding of the divine caller (Holy Spirit) expanded and they experienced a new call grounded in "forgiveness, mercy, and love in Christ" (188). This publication of Scarborough's research gives attention to twentieth-century Mennonite theological and cultural context and includes scores of excerpts from her interviews—excerpts that offer windows into the inner world of Mennonite women missionaries, both married and single. Throughout the work she identifies the women only by number to protect their privacy and free them to speak candidly about their experiences and relationships with family, fellow missionaries, and North American communities.

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