BOOK REVIEWS

Pennsylvania Germans: An Interpretative Encyclopedia. Edited by Simon J. Bronner and Joshua R. Brown. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. 2017. $80.

Pennsylvania German studies have been dominated by two tracks: one focusing on the *history* of the group and its cultural expressions beginning in the colonial period and the other, more recent and more ethnographic in nature, concentrating on *contemporary* developments among Amish and Old Order Mennonites and the concurrent rise in tourism, which often is sparked by outsiders' interests in those same groups. Folklorist Simon J. Bronner of the Harrisburg campus at Pennsylvania State University and Joshua R. Brown, professor of German at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Clair, unite these two academic tracks—historical and contemporary—in their broadly conceived volume on Pennsylvania Germans.

Bronner and Brown have engaged sixteen additional contributors in what is subtitled an "Interpretative Encyclopedia." The majority of the scholars drawn to this endeavor are based in the United States, at academic and cultural institutions such as the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies of Elizabethtown College, Millersville and Kutztown universities, and the Schwenkfelder Library and Heritage Center. Mark Häberlein of Otto-Friedrich-University in Bamberg, Germany, is the sole European contributor; he adds to the volume a chapter entitled "The Old World Background."

Running over 500 pages, the book is divided into a preface and introduction by the editors, two sections that form the body of the volume, and a very useful and extensive reference list. The first section, on "History and Geography," provides an overview of the Pennsylvania Germans as a group in three chronologically oriented chapters by Häberlein, John B. Frantz, and Diane Wenger and Bronner. This beginning is more synthetic than original, but it provides important background to help understand the material in the more lengthy second section, entitled "Culture and Society," which includes sixteen chapters. The history and geography section is also an important contribution to the field because it condenses extensive scholarship on the Pennsylvania Germans from immigration through today into just fifty-five pages.

In their preface, editors Bronner and Brown refer to this volume as an assessment based on the "new Pennsylvania German studies" (ix). They identify four key ways that the book expands upon previous work. First is its geographic coverage, which includes Pennsylvania, but also other locations where Pennsylvania Germans later settled, not only to the south in Maryland and Virginia, but also to the north in Canada and to the west. Second, there is an emphasis not only on colonial and early national period history but also on the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Third, cultural coverage includes material

culture, foodways, medicine, and folklore, as well as language and literature. And fourth, various authors explore the rise of Pennsylvania Dutch tourism and the heritage industry as shaped by Pennsylvania Germans themselves and by others (xi).

Several themes permeate the volume. Various authors address the topics of ethnic distinctiveness and cultural identity by exploring the extent to which Pennsylvania German culture developed in the new world versus the old and how it changed over time. Several authors reference a continuum of responses ranging from assimilation to resistance and explore complex cultural interactions between Pennsylvania Germans and others. Using the interpretative framework of "resystemization," for example, David W. Kriebel in the chapter "Medicine" explains how powwowing—the practice of healing using non-medical, magical means that was brought by early German immigrants—has been adopted by neo-pagan and neo-heathen practitioners who may or may not be of Pennsylvania German descent but are attracted to powwowing's pre-Christian Germanic ties.

A second theme revolves around the importance of Anabaptist history and culture within the field of Pennsylvania German studies. Frantz authors a chapter on "Religion," Karen M. Johnson-Weiner and Brown on "The Amish," and Donald B. Kraybill, Steven M. Nolt, and Edsel Burge Jr. on "Language Use among Anabaptist Groups." This last chapter seems a bit out of step coming after a chapter on language and before any discussion of religious beliefs, but it offers important demographic information about the growth of Old Order communities and their role in the continuation of the Pennsylvania German language. Later chapters on "Heritage and Tourism" and "Popular Culture and the Media" by William W. Donner and Bronner, respectively, return to the subject of religious distinctiveness, focusing less on faith than on lived experience and the popular understanding (or misunderstanding) thereof.

As is often the case in edited volumes of this magnitude, there is some unevenness across the various chapters. In the best cases, including Mark L. Loudon's chapter "The Pennsylvania German Language" and Yvonne J. Milspaw's on "Food and Cooking," the essays offer concise and well organized overviews of their stated topics. Shelia Rohrer's chapter "Literature" stands out because she not only summarizes the field as it relates to Pennsylvania German studies but also ties her analysis to larger national literary trends. Donner should also be commended for his ability to link the history of Pennsylvania German schooling in the chapter "Education" to contemporary concerns about bilingual and multicultural education today.

Other authors take a different approach. Lisa Minardi's chapter "Furniture and Decorative Arts," which is divided into subsections based on materials and object types, emphasizes the evolving *study* of Pennsylvania German material culture as much as the material culture itself. Historiography is also highlighted in the introduction, all three of the history chapters in the first section, Minardi's chapter "Fraktur and Visual Culture," and Bronner's "Folklore and Folklife."

There is also uneven coverage of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Gabrielle Lanier's chapter "Architecture and Culture Landscapes" shifts from an account of real places to a more historiographical approach as she moves closer to

the present. Her analysis does not extend to the tourist-oriented strip development in Lancaster County or the free stall barns of modern dairy farms.

What becomes clear in reading this volume is that it is not intended to be read cover to cover. As in a more traditional encyclopedia, the chapters do well when they stand alone. The contributors have each supplied essays that bring to the fore their own expertise. They do not always provide comparable content or even use the same style of citation. (Most essays have parenthetical author-date citations, but one has endnotes, and several have a combination of endnotes and author-date). There is additionally some repetition between the various essays. However, in using this book as a reference volume, it is clear why Milton Hershey's story is mentioned in R. Troy Boyer's chapter "Agriculture and Industry," Donner's on "Heritage and Tourism," and Bronner's on "Popular Culture and Media"—the reader of one chapter may not have read the others. The history of the founding of the Pennsylvania German Society similarly appears more than once.

The editors missed the opportunity in several cases to encourage the authors of the various chapters to dialogue with each other. Milspaw's chapter on foodways includes references to kitchens that could have been reinforced in Lanier's chapter on architecture and landscape. Boyer's chapter on agriculture introduces a chronology of development that likewise could have informed the discussion of the physical layout of the farm. Lewis Miller (1796-1882), a carpenter, artist, and poet from York, Pennsylvania, is mentioned in chapters by Loudon on language and Minardi on visual culture with no recognition that he is the same person. Additionally, both Lanier and Milspaw use images produced by Miller to support conclusions about architecture and foodways, and those images are printed not only in black and white but also in color. Some mention by the authors of the other references to Miller (beyond the index, which lists his first name as Lewis and Louis in two different entries) could potentially have added to the interpretation.

As this example may suggest, the illustrations as a whole could be better integrated into the overall project. The book is well illustrated with black-and-white figures interspersed with text and a separate sixteen-page color insert. Some authors, such as Candace Kintzer Perry, who wrote the chapter "Textiles," make good use of images, keying them to the text and providing clear captions indicating their importance in terms of content. Other images, although provocative and potentially significant, seem to serve more as attention getters rather than critical components to the story.

Bronner and Brown imply this volume is transdisciplinary (ix). As a whole, that is an apt characterization. The editors have engaged a wide variety of authors from various fields with varied interests and research questions. But as is often the case among academics, the contributors to this volume are not always able to truly transcend their own disciplines. That type of synthesis is left to the reader. Yet the strength of this volume is that it provides ample material to make the connections. The essays cover material that spans the entire history of the Pennsylvania Germans, whom the editors define as those who arrived in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and their descendants. Material on the twentieth century, including World War I and World War II as well as the interwar years, is strong. But so too are descriptions of the much earlier Atlantic passage.

Although described as an encyclopedia, Bronner and Brown's volume recognizes there is still research to be done in this field. Kriebel calls for more ethnographic work on powwowing. And despite the multitude of chapters, there are still others that could be written. There are tantalizing references, for example, to legal battles and politics. Multiple authors mention Pennsylvania German women, but no chapter thoroughly explores gender. Music is dealt with within the context of popular culture of the twentieth century but earlier iterations are largely lacking, except in a brief discussion of musical instruments by Minardi.

While the editors refer to the new Pennsylvania German studies as transnational and comparative, the reader is also left with questions about relations among cultural groups. How did colonial-era immigrants relate with the indigenous North American population? How exactly were post-1848 German immigrants different from earlier arrivals and did the two groups (including later Amish immigrants) ever interact, positively or negatively? How did Pennsylvania Germans respond to racialized slavery, Jim Crow, and Civil Rights? And how did religious views influence these human interactions? This volume admirably expands its analysis of culture to include the visual, from *Taufscheine* to Hollywood movies, yet it reminds us that there is still more to be done to truly understand, and contextualize, Pennsylvania Germans, past and present.

Cooperstown Graduate Program, SUNY Oneonta CYNTHIA G. FALK

The Word Became Flesh: A Rapprochement of Christian Natural Law and Radical Christological Ethics. By David Ray Griffin. Eugene, Ore.: Wipf and Stock. 2016.

This delightfully ambitious book aims to weave together the natural law tradition (Catholic and ancient) and the discipleship tradition (Radical and recent) through Christology. The strength of the natural law tradition lies in its articulation of human origins, ends, and purposes—human nature—which then in turn provide substantive warrants for universal moral claims. Natural law theorists, however, have tended not to anchor those claims in Jesus Christ and in failing to do so their results have not been particularly Christian. The strength of the discipleship tradition, by contrast, is precisely its insistence on the moral normativity of the (actual) life of Jesus of Nazareth. Critics point out, however, that when Jesus of Nazareth is historically situated as a fully embodied human in the socio-economic world of first-century occupied Israel, then universal and timeless appeals—which to Griffin require a realism with respect to metaphysics—to his way become compromised and the proposed normative ethic becomes either voluntarist sectarian or, in a bid for some universality, blandly liberal. The way through the impasse, so Griffin argues, is to take the path that Chalcedonian Christology provides—double *homoousios* and Logos (Divine Word become human flesh)—such that natural law is relocated to its proper position within Christology.

What follows next is a discussion of Barth's and Bonhoeffer's treatment of act and being. For Barth, the act of God (revelation/economic Trinity), and the being

of God (Godself/immanent Trinity), are in the closest possible relationship. Barth's thematic of act/being ground the *imitatio Christi* of radical discipleship ethics in a transcendental Christology as God's revealing acts form the constant divine line of Christ's singular life. In Griffen's words, "the actualist nature of the divine Subject, crowned in Incarnation, serves as the mode and model of an actualist human-nature ethic" (132). For Bonhoeffer, being human is to be in community, and Christ, the second Adam, exists as holy community, *sanctorum communio*. In establishing human-in-community, Christ acted as a vicarious representative in being-for-others revealing a new way of being human. His action makes our being-for-each-other "a basic form of humanity and ethics in communion with him. Moral and ethical deliberation, then, must begin and end within Jesus Christ whose life reveals natural law, which cannot be determined by means of self-evident reason or by empirical observation of natural inclinations. These methods will lead to conclusions about what it means to be human that are grounded in the first, dysfunctional Adam.

Griffin interestingly extends Barth's and Bonhoeffer's being/act thematic to Nancey Murphy and George Ellis's pacifist kenotic ethic found in their *On the Moral Nature of the Universe* (1996). For Griffin, God's kenotic nature lies in "the divine decision of the Father, and in the Son's act, of becoming incarnate [which] provides a realist and metaphysical doctrine of divine kenosis, revealed in the Incarnation" (204). Pacifism "follows trivially from an ethic that is grounded, first, in the example and words of Jesus, and second, in a realist doctrine of God where his being coheres in his acts, and the central act of his person is self-giving love towards his enemies, leading to death" (204). "As God is not, in a realist sense," Griffin continues,

> violent in his immanent triune self, then a realist divine ethic must also eschew violence. Further, if natural law as a realist ethic is metaphysically grounded in divine nature that only exists hypostatically, then violence cannot be argued on metaphysical/theological natural law grounds (204).

He elaborates, "[t]hus Jesus' kenotic servanthood and love of enemies, so central in radical ethics, can no longer be considered un-natural, but is proper to the self-giving nature of God *and* created humanity" (205, emphasis added). Finally, he concludes that

> the Murphy/Ellis approach suggests a model of reality and its attendant disciplines that enable a simple Chalcedonian framing of ethics. If ethics must be framed from above by theology/metaphysics, and framed from below by history and the social sciences, then the one person of Christ in two natures offers the focused concentration of this framing (205).

In short, "Jesus is the good and the right that is proper to both God and humanity" (205).

Some reflective comments come to mind. The argument, with which I am in full agreement, is very simple: if humans are the created children of God, and the character and will of God is revealed in the shape of the life of Jesus who is God, then humans naturally ought to be like Jesus. This argument stands or falls with the divinity of Jesus, which is why it is puzzling that some Anabaptist theologians, who have a radical discipleship ethic, tend to pull back from a high Christology as

they distance themselves from Nicaea and Chalcedon due to the entanglements with empire surrounding the creeds. The alternative, which some take, is to ground the discipleship ethic not ultimately in *imitatio Dei*, but in divine commands—namely, God is free to be violent while commanding us to be peaceful. Strictly speaking, this strategy does not actually require the divinity of Jesus, yet, remarkably, divine command ethicists overwhelmingly prefer a Chalcedonian Christology. One of the ways this book might be useful, then, is to encourage those of us who seek to ground ethics in the revealed being of God not to concede the polemic ground of creedal orthodoxy to divine command theorists. Moreover, it might also encourage us to pursue arguments for radical discipleship that make contact with human nature. I take both tasks to be crucial and therefore welcome and recommend Griffin's careful and ambitious effort. But the recommendation comes with two concerns and a clarification.

My first concern is that the section of the book that attends to the pacifist kenotic arguments of Murphy and Ellis is thirteen pages long from start to finish, and of that only two pages are dedicated to drawing out the conclusion that self-emptying enemy love entails pacifism. In a book that is over 260 pages long, it is a sketched argument at best. To be sure, there is a longer discussion of mimetic ethics and kenotic love in a reading of Barth, but that discussion never really becomes concrete in terms of what love means. From a radical discipleship point of view, it is possibly the most significant argument of the whole book yet it hangs by the thinnest of threads. Does pacifism really follow "trivially" from an ethic grounded in the example of Jesus and the divine nature? The history of the Church and theology would suggest that it does not. So if this is what Griffin intended to accomplish, then the book is very far indeed from reaching its goal. If pacifists want to use this book, they will need to work out that argument on their own.

This leads to my second concern. Throughout the book, there is a strong sense that any investigation into human nature that is not from the very beginning Christological will inevitably be flawed. This (Reformed?) position leaves theology no way to point to more evidence for a "natural" pacifist ethic, which now has to be made on purely theological grounds. I think this is an unnecessary mistake. If theological ethics did open up the playing ground to the voices of science, what might those sciences say? They might say that what makes humans human is our capacity to care for each other's inner world—that we care deeply about how the other person is doing and what they are feeling—and that of all organisms on earth we are vulnerable and dependent because we need love (which we cannot supply for ourselves) in order to live. In short, we are fundamentally *homo caritas*. Such an anthropology might be a place for *imitatio Dei* pacifists—who believe that God is self-emptying love as definitively revealed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth the Christ—to begin to talk about love and natural law. This is emphatically not to say that Chalcedon, Barth, and Bonhoeffer are suddenly irrelevant. But, surely neither are Charles Darwin and John Bowlby. Yet Griffin cuts off that conversation, leaving pacifist ethics only a theological leg to stand on.

Finally, a note of clarification. Anabaptist radical discipleship ethics does not rely on voluntarism (a kind of anthropology that enthrones the will above reason and emotion), sectarianism, or liberalism—and it is conjuring of a strawman to

suggest so. Discipleship ethics relies, by contrast, on a whole-world invitation (*euangelion*) that lands on the hearer's heart as both "good" (involving emotional discernment) and "news" (involving rational discernment). It recognizes, of course, that not all who hear the good news will take Jesus up on the invitation—the sower sows the word. But that is confirmation that the word was offered without coercion. A sensitivity to the subtleties of coercion and idealized tribal projection is often disturbingly lacking in natural law ethics, particularly around sexuality and gender, and Griffin's effort disappointingly seems to continue in that vein. Consequently, radical discipleship ethics does not result in "a reticent moral posture"; instead, it results in a witnessing (*martyria*) posture in the recognition that to follow Jesus and to invite the whole world to do so is a costly way of life. There is nothing blandly liberal about this. This is not to say that Anabaptists do not at times sound voluntarist, sectarian, liberal, and reticent, but that when they do so, they are not offering radical discipleship ethics.

Eastern Mennonite University CHRISTIAN EARLY

Rebel Mother, My Childhood Chasing the Revolution. By Peter Andreas. New York: Simon & Schuster. 2017. Pp. 323. $26.

Rebel Mother is a fascinating memoir of the childhood of Peter Andreas, professor of international studies at Brown University, and his complex relationship with his politically radical and self-centered mother. The book is of special interest to a Mennonite audience since the "rebel mother" of this story is Carol Rich Andreas (1933-2004), who grew up on the Bethel College campus in North Newton, Kansas. She was the daughter of Willis Rich, public relations director at Bethel, and Hulda Penner Rich.

The author's narrative is enlivened by exceptionally rich sources. Carol Rich Andreas was a faithful diarist. Her son inherited more than a hundred of her diary notebooks, in addition to copies of extensive correspondence. The diary and the letters don't always agree with each other. The author has a good memory of conversations with his mother and with friends. He seems less interested in his mother's career and writings as a professional sociologist.

At age 17, Carol married Carl Andreas, seven years her senior. Carl and Carol both graduated from Bethel College. After graduate study and a time of work in Pakistan, they settled in Detroit, where they had three sons. Peter, the youngest, was born on July 8, 1965, while his mother was working on a Ph.D. degree in sociology. As he remembered, his parents were both "stubborn and self righteous," and with irreconcilable differences of personality and ideology. Carol became an ardent socialist and feminist. Carl was a buttoned-up workaholic.

The couple separated in June 1969. The separation was painful for Peter, who loved both his parents. The divorce court judge granted custody of Peter to his father, but Carol refused to accept the decision. Twice in this story (in 1970 and in 1975) she kidnapped her son from his school in the Detroit area. She took him to California and then to Latin America where she hoped they would become part of

the Marxist Socialist revolution. At first neither of them spoke Spanish. The audacity of Carol Andreas's adventures in "chasing the revolution" is amazing. She and her son spent weekends on work brigades in the Chilean countryside.

Beyond family breakups, two tragedies dominate this book. One is the failure of the revolution. Carol came to Chile with great hope that Salvador Allende's Socialist government was the front line of world revolution. To her father in Kansas she wrote from Santiago, "One can see clearly that the underdogs have come to power. This is a little preview of what revolution might look like in the USA twenty years from now" (52). But after Carol and her son had been in Chile for barely one year, the Allende government was overthrown by the military dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet. Carol and Peter escaped to Argentina and thence to Peru. All of Carol's notes for a planned sociology book documenting the revolution were burned, although she did publish a book about her personal experiences and observations in Chile.

The second tragedy was Carol's failure to win her son over to her Marxist revolutionary ideology. Peter survived remarkably well in Latin America under poor living conditions, his mother's frequent absences, and lack of privacy in the bedroom where Carol hosted a large number of younger men for passionate lovemaking. Despite her rejection of monogamy, she married one of her lovers—a street theater performer whom Peter heartily disliked. That marriage was also doomed, undermined in part by Carol's depression and suicidal impulses. But Peter loved his mother. His final break with her revolutionary ideology did not come until after they were back in the United States and he left for college. Her son's rejection of her radical ideology was intensely painful for Carol.

Peter Andreas explains much of his mother's personality in terms of her rebellion against the conservative restrictions of her Mennonite community. "She had never been allowed to dance in public growing up as a Mennonite and spent much of her life making up for it" (314). This view certainly was part of Carol's self-image. But in this book her son did not explore in any depth the idealistic Christian-Anabaptist teachings that his mother absorbed in church and Sunday school. Carol's great uncle, Peter A. Penner, a pioneer Mennonite missionary in India, believed in his time that the world would be won for Christ in a single generation. Marx and Lenin provided Carol Rich Andreas with an equally optimistic hope.

North Newton was not as solidly Republican as the author reports. During World War II Mennonite pacifism made them into a counter-cultural community. It would be possible to argue that the atheistic revolutionary idealism of Carol's adult ideology was a secular transposition of Mennonite Christian teachings about the coming nonviolent kingdom of God. She learned early that it was possible to know the will of God and to do it. Peter, a middle-class scholar who lacks faith in the coming revolution, may in this sense be further apart from his mother than she was from her parents.

This well-written memoir will be a best seller, in no way dependent on a Mennonite audience. Peter Andreas effectively balances a critique of his mother's faults with appreciation for her love and for the non-normal childhood experiences she provided. Yes, he says, his mother fell into some "bad mothering."

But "without her I would have led a more narrow, insular life, less aware of other peoples and cultures and less concerned about the world's great injustices and inequalities" (320).

Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. JAMES JUHNKE

Kingdom Conspiracy: Returning to the Radical Mission of the Local Church. By Scot McKnight. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Brazos. 2014.

In *Kingdom Conspiracy: Returning to the Radical Mission of the Local Church*, Scot McKnight sets out to clarify what Scripture means by "the Kingdom of God." In so doing, he begins with a (somewhat caricatured) presentation of two contemporary viewpoints on the kingdom. He labels these as the "Skinny Jeans" view of the kingdom and the "Pleated Pants" view. For McKnight, the "skinny jeans" group is basically millennial Christians who reject "church" work or involvement for "kingdom" work. In other words, for this group, "kingdom means good deeds done by good people (Christian or not) in the public sector for the common good" (4). In a word, this is activist Christianity. This is a contemporary representation of the classic Protestant liberal "social gospel" movement, and for McKnight, it gets "kingdom" dangerously wrong. The work of the kingdom is not primarily concerned with the common good.

The "pleated pants" group, on the other hand, is McKnight's presentation of good, typical church folks (including, it seems, most biblical scholars and theologians). This group understands salvation as primarily an individual benefit and sees "kingdom" as anywhere God rules, the "abstract dynamic that God is now at work redeeming individuals in Jesus Christ" (13). Kingdom work, then, becomes anything that a saved individual does in the world. It becomes, in other words, anything, everything, and nothing. McKnight is right to reject both the "skinny jeans" and the "pleated pants" treatments of kingdom and church work.

To begin his counter of both of these views, McKnight presents what he sees as the "story" (a word McKnight uses to a fault) of the Bible, which is the story of God and God's Kingdom. First, though, McKnight outlines two rival conceptions of the Bible's "story": the "CFRC" story and the "A-B-A" story. The CFRC story is the classic Evangelical conception of the Bible's grand narrative: Creation (C)-> Fall (F)->Redemption (R)->Consummation (C). As McKnight makes clear, telling the story this way reduces the Bible's story to an account of individual redemption, and we lose sight of much of the Bible's actual story, not least most of the Old Testament. One possible alternative to the CFRC story is the A-B-A' story, for which McKnight relies mostly on N. T. Wright's conception of the arc of the biblical narrative. Put succinctly, this is the story of God's "Plan A"—God ruling the world through his elect people (Israel) as the one and only King (28); God's "Plan B"—David, God's human king; and God's "Plan A'"—God reestablishes his divine rule in Jesus Christ, his Davidic Messiah. For McKnight, the "kingdom story" of the Bible is a kind of combination of both stories, though the accent strongly falls on Wright's A-B-A' telling. For McKnight, in the A-B-A' story (with

some of the CFRC story as well), we can begin to see the connection between the church and the kingdom.

Though McKnight states the thesis of the book in various ways throughout, perhaps his most succinct articulation of the book's point comes in the following claim: "kingdom mission is church mission, church mission is kingdom mission, and there is no kingdom mission that is not church mission" (96). The people of God, the church, is an eschatological reality existing now but awaiting its full glory. As G. K. Beale, Douglas Moo, and many others past and present have shown, this conception of God's action in a people is fundamental to New Testament eschatology. And this is an eschatology that the entire New Testament, in all its diversity, shares. God is redeeming creation, and the church is the first-fruits (Jas. 1:18), the locus of God's redemption now that is a glimpse of the redemption to come (Rom. 8: 18-25).

As McKnight acknowledges, many see the messiness of the church and conclude that kingdom and church are, at worst, not compatible or, at best, only ambiguously related. To see the two as the same thing, as McKnight does, is not to deny the messiness of the church; instead, it is to take seriously the vocation of the church as God's eschatological body in the present through which God acts in the world and that looks forward to full redemption. Or as McKnight says, "the inaugurated kingdom of the here and now" is the "inaugurated church of the here and now . . . the one people of God that journeys toward, but has not yet reached, the perfect eschatological people of God" (96).

McKnight's important study accomplishes several things that the contemporary church, including Anabaptists, needs to hear. First, McKnight calls into serious question the idea that God's kingdom is somehow bigger than the church and that the church should be about the business of catching up to the Kingdom. In this view, the church is a problem that often gets in the way of kingdom work. As McKnight shows, however, we need to take seriously the biblical narrative of a God who resolutely works through a people—Israel then as well as "Israel expanded (i.e. the church)," as McKnight says. If we take this seriously, then we are going to have to acknowledge that there is "no kingdom outside of the church" (81). Indeed, the church is the kingdom of God on earth—a "community under the God of Israel and King Jesus, over against those who are not part of that people of God" (91).

Second, McKnight's study reinstates the mission of the local church as of first importance. In its common life of worship, Bible study, evangelism, and community involvement, the church is supposed to be the primary locus through which God's redemption of creation is daily put on display. As the subtitle of his volume makes clear, this is a radically important calling. The local body of Christ, in all its messiness, is the community through which God's work is made visible.

After he makes the case for his main thesis, culminating in the sixth chapter ("No Kingdom Outside the Church"), the climax of the book, McKnight spends the rest of the volume elucidating the implications of his vision of the church as coterminous with the kingdom. In this section, McKnight is to be commended for managing to hold together two things that are so often ripped asunder—evangelism and social justice. For McKnight, the local church is a place where the

social mission of the church flows out of its sense of holistic redemption, which includes both a spiritual and a social dimension of salvation. To separate them is to fall either into social activism or a focus on individual spiritual salvation. Only after he elucidates his sense of "holistic redemption," then, can McKnight discuss the kingdom as a "moral fellowship" and the hope to which this fellowship looks (chap. 11). McKnight then finishes the volume with a concluding chapter in which he lists his "Kingdom Theses" that are a helpful and succinct summary of his entire argument.

McKnight's argument is strong. He draws out an element of New Testament eschatology that is missing from much of the church today. I do, however, have one major criticism. Throughout this much-needed volume, McKnight assumes an urban model of church. At key points, McKnight helpfully relates vignettes of what his vision of kingdom/church mission looks like—but they are all urban examples. I am sure that Lawndale Community Church in Chicago, the source of many of McKnight's examples, is a vibrant local representation of the body of Christ in its neighborhood; but what about the rural church? Is there no "radical mission" for the rural church? In assuming an urban ecclesiological model, McKnight follows a typical pattern of recent books on mission or ecclesiology. I could cite a few dozen examples, but in each case a rural reader is left with two equally unfortunate impressions: (1) that the rural church has no real mission; and (2) if he/she wants to take part in the real "radical mission" of the church, he/she needs to move to a city. Both conclusions are disastrously incorrect, and I wish McKnight had done more to combat this.

Another criticism of the book is McKnight's reliance on the "story" conception of biblical unity put forth by N. T. Wright. Although I agree with this narrative to a large extent, it fails to take full account of the apocalyptic element in the New Testament's eschatology. For example, McKnight fails to include in this framework Paul's idea that in redeeming a people through the cross, God, who invades the world in Christ, has defeated the cosmic powers that are at war with God. Those who are redeemed then look forward to the age to come, when full redemption will be realized. Toward the end of the book (chap. 9), McKnight does acknowledge that Jesus' redemption is cosmic (151-156). In doing so, he emphasizes the Gospels' important record of Jesus' ministry of deliverance from demonic oppression. But this particular ministry of Jesus is a manifestation of the larger cosmic battle. As such, the apocalyptic element of redemption should have at least an equal place in any account of the Bible's "story" as does the place of Israel or the church in relation to Israel.

We catch glimpses of the cosmic battle in the Gospels and Acts, but it is most fully articulated in Paul's letters. Too often, this perspective is placed at odds with a "covenantal" perspective on Paul or the New Testament that sees, with McKnight, the fulfillment of God's covenant promises in Christ and does not move beyond that to a Creator God defending his creation. Perhaps it is beyond the scope of this volume, but McKnight's thesis would be strengthened if he framed New Testament ecclesiology as both "Israel expanded" *and* the people who have been redeemed (in the literal sense of that term) from slavery to the powers of evil, sin, and death in the world.

My criticisms are not intended to detract from the value of the book. Overall, *Kingdom Conspiracy* is to be warmly commended, especially for the courageous thesis that "kingdom work" is "church work." This is a point that the church—and particularly many contemporary Anabaptist churches—desperately needs to hear. McKnight's ideas resonate quite well with historic Anabaptist views of the church as a set-apart people of God, separate from the world on behalf of the world. In an increasingly post-Christian context, this is a vision of the church that we would do well to remember. As a popular-level volume, I hope to see this book used in Sunday school classes and enjoying a prominent place on pastors' bookshelves.

Baylor University RYAN D. HARKER

Not Talking Union: An Oral History of North American Mennonites and Labour. By Janis Thiessen. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press. 2016. Pp. 232. $37.95.

"How does one write a labour history," asks Janis Thiessen in the opening line of her engaging analysis, "of people who have not been involved in the labour movement and, historically, have opposed union membership?" (3). Her answer proceeds along several different parallel tracks, but all take their cues from the fundamental approach of oral history. According to Thiessen, approaching Mennonites from this angle, with their record of indifference or sometimes hostility to organized labor, demonstrates what similar studies have revealed for other North Americans: "the significance of the private sphere in labor history" and "individuals' understandings of class" (45).

To obtain her interviews, ultimately totaling 115, Thiessen situated herself in six different Mennonite intellectual centers, three each in Canada and the United States, and solicited them by word of mouth and "snowball sampling" (9). This produced a study that is "qualitative rather than quantitative in nature" (10) and raises some questions about the representativeness of her sample. Occupationally, her interviewees reflected about the same percentage of Mennonites in professional occupations as in North America as a whole (about a third), whereas the number of interviewees who had been union members represents a much higher percentage of the population than would hold true for Mennonites or for North Americans overall. This result is an analysis that is both an "atypical labour history" and an "atypical religious history," focused not so much on labor ideology or religious doctrine as on Mennonite "lived religion . . . the ways in which people connect their religious beliefs to their daily lives" (12-13).

These approaches led Thiessen to a basic thesis: contemporary Mennonite responses to unions do not reflect any coherent theological response to organized labor, but instead devolve from fragmented attitudes rooted in "personal and familial experience" (38) and reflect the deep power of individualism in modern Mennonite life.

Thiessen unfolds this thesis in six packed chapters. In her first, subtitled "Narratives of Religious Belief," she develops oral histories of some individuals

who she argues are representative of five different types of religious narrative: those primarily taking their shape around death or problem narratives and affective narratives, or those shaped by themes of counterculture or progress. The Mennonites she interviewed, she argues, primarily reflect the latter two types, but all demonstrate individuals who have "expressed their connection to the divine through individual experiences rather than doctrinal statements" (37).

This theme redounds through her text. Chapters 3-5 comprise the heart of Thiessen's historical analysis. She focuses on two arenas of Mennonite conflict with organized labor: first, with Latino farm workers in 1960s and 1970s in California, and then among Mennonites who pressed for release from union membership in Manitoba in the later 1970s. She concisely narrates the birth of the United Farm Workers and the largely negative response to it by Mennonite growers in California's central valley, along with the efforts by various officials from Mennonite Central Committee to mediate the conflict. By and large, Thiessen finds this response reluctant and ineffective, fragmented by Mennonite class, ethnic, and denominational differences and demonstrative of the "broad extent of capitalist commodification" (108) that had embedded itself in Mennonite life. Likewise, as Mennonite workers in Manitoba in the 1970s pushed government officials for exemption from union membership, she argues, they increasingly articulated arguments not so much based on competing religious authority as on their rights as individuals to determine God's will for themselves.

In Thiessen's penultimate chapter, she explores Mennonites who worked for church-based institutions—in this case, for Mennonite Brethren (MB) ones. Her examination of their efforts to integrate their work and their religious lives outlines a difficult process, "even in environments seemingly tailor-made for such integration" (15). The connecting thread to the four individuals whose stories she traces is that all saw themselves, and not their Mennonite employers, as fundamentally the problem. They all tried to find workplaces that would allow them to integrate their religious and their work lives, but their hopes were betrayed in different ways. The cultural and structural domination of the North American corporate ethos, Thiessen suggests, renders a true faith-based workplace difficult if not impossible.

Throughout the text, Thiessen's reliance on oral historical approaches proves to be the resounding strength of her analysis, as well as a small weakness. This is seen in her first two chapters as well as elsewhere in the text. In her exploration of Mennonite attitudes towards unions in Chapter 2, for instance, she contrasts the more nuanced views on unions expressed by MB leader John Redekop in her interview with his more negative perspectives published decades ago. The process, she suggests, shows how "the act of participating in an interview creates new interpretations of the person's story, for both the narrator and the oral historian" (67). In a similar manner, in Thiessen's analysis of how Mennonites remembered their participation in the struggle with Latino labor organizers in California's central valley, she uses basic oral historical concepts of "reticence" and "covert silence" to "reveal the way power relations in the Mennonite community have shaped collective memory of this subject" (106). At a few places, however, Thiessen's respect for the power of her interviewees' remembered stories obscures

the main thrust of her analysis. While powerful and moving, the different "affective" and "progress" narratives in Chapter 1, for instance, seem a long way from a focus on Mennonites and labor relations.

Even so, this is a relatively small problem in an otherwise superb text that offers a number of important contributions to scholarship. Thiessen's analysis breaks down the compartmentalization that has too often dominated the separate worlds of labor scholars and those working in religion. Not only is the book thoroughly interdisciplinary, moving seamlessly between history, religion, sociology, and labor studies, but it's one of the few contemporary analyses that straddles Mennonites on both sides of the US/Canada border, allowing for some fascinating comparative analyses to emerge. Moreover, it penetrates to the heart of Mennonite cultural conservatism, while at the same time measuring Mennonites' deep absorption of the pervasive individualism of North American societies.

Finally, *Not Talking Unions* sheds a good deal of light on a subject long neglected by Mennonite scholars: the Mennonite indifference to unions in particular and to domestic issues of economic justice in general. If Mennonites pay attention to Thiessen's book, some long-overdue conversation on such matters will be sparked.

Bluffton University PERRY BUSH

Practicing to Aim at Truth: Theological Engagements in Honor of Nancey Murphy. By Ryan Andrew Newson and Brad J. Kallenberg, eds. Eugene, Ore.: Cascade Books. 2015. $28.

Practicing to Aim at Truth is an engaging, eclectic collection of essays that honor and creatively extend Nancey Murphy's contributions to Christian thought (5). The diversity of the essays narrows the scope of most critiques, so this review emphasizes broad coverage and summary for the reader's own benefit and critical interests. Indeed, the essays' diversity reflect Murphy's genuinely interdisciplinary career, nourished from Anabaptist roots and branching across many theological, scientific, and philosophical positions and movements. Fittingly, then, each essay is written by a student or colleague associated with Murphy, writing from a variety of fields and perspectives, from theology and philosophy to cognitive neuroscience, mereology, Christian metaphysics, and social psychology. Yet Murphy's theoretical touchstones provide unity to the volume: her critiques of Enlightenment foundationalist epistemology and Cartesian dualism; advocacy of non-reductive physicalist anthropology; development of a Lakatosian and MacIntyrean theological method and theory of rationality; defense of a Radical Reformational ecclesiology, politics, and ethics; articulation of freedom and divine activity in a materialistic universe; and commitment to Christian philosophical theology as a practiced and politically charged form of life. Moreover, the essays touch upon the thought of those who have most influenced Murphy's work—Paul Feyerabend, Imre Lakatos, Alasdair MacIntyre, John Howard Yoder, and Ludwig Wittgenstein—and advance her thought toward others who enrich it—Romand Coles, Stephen Mulhall, Jeremy

Begbie, Ilya Prigogine, and Andy Clark (7). Beginning with an excellent summarizing introduction by Ryan Newson, the book's organization is accessible and conceptually coherent, arranged in four thematic sections drawn from Murphy's research: (I) theological methodology; (II) theological anthropology; (III) metaphysics and ontology; and (IV) ethical and political implications of her work.

Section I focuses on Murphy's appropriation of Imre Lakatos's scientific methodology for theological inquiry, and of Alasdair MacIntyre's critique of enlightenment rationality. Robert Russell argues that Murphy's use of Lakatosian theory can function as a way to distinguish between healthy and languishing theological and scientific theoretical programs, allowing for constructive methodological interactivity between them (16, 23). Richard Heyduck expands Murphy's engagement with MacIntyre's tradition-constituted rationality whereby, when paired with James McClendon's "baptist vision" (34) and Lakatosian holist epistemology, postmodern evangelicals can surpass the modernist dichotomy between fundamentalist and liberal theological traditions (34, 38). Finally, co-editor Ryan Newson also engages MacIntyre (and Lakatos), helpfully summarizing Murphy's critiques of "foundationalism" in its propensities for "reductionism, individualism, generalizability, and unidirectional justification" (49), and defending Murphy's theological postmodern epistemology against critiques of "epistemological insularity" (8, 53).

Section II focuses on theological anthropology, with each author teasing out the philosophical and theological implications of non-reductive physicalism for ethics, spirituality, ecclesiology, or philosophy of mind. Warren Brown and Brad Strawn summarize recent research in the cognitive and brain sciences and its "embedded" and "embodied" (70, 72-73) implications for Christian spirituality, providing also an original discussion of spirituality and extended cognition theory (74-82). Similarly, Paul Markham discusses the communal, neurobiological foundations of moral sentiment and character formation, as well as religious conversion (93, 95). Finally, in one of the more original and interdisciplinary pieces in the volume—touching on philosophy of technology and time, narrative anthropology, and the application of music theory to existential temporality—co-editor Brad Kallenberg defends Murphy's claim that we do not "have" souls. He argues that we *are* holistic "bodysouls" (as extended temporalities) engaging the world through biological, technological, and linguistic "skins" (103).

Section III of the volume collects essays relevant to Murphy's interests in cosmology and metaphysics. Christian Early argues that Murphy's reconceptualization of divine action entails a dynamic world and active matter, but also requires that God's very nature must be as dynamic as the created order, while J. B. Phillips critiques recent philosophies of religion that leave metaphysical and metaphilosophical assumptions unquestioned and undeveloped. Finally, George Ellis's technical and metaphysically rigorous essay on "Possibility Spaces" corrects some overly sanguine adoptions of non-reductive physicalism elsewhere in the volume. Extending prior co-authored work with Murphy, Ellis deftly defends the metaphysical and epistemological necessity of non-physical aspects of being such as mental entities, Aristotelian possibilities, and Platonic abstractions,

presenting them as essential to critiquing scientism and appreciating the deep moral structure of reality (9, 146-149, 162ff.).

Finally, section IV covers the social, political, and ethical implications of Murphy's work. Discussed are Murphy's implicit democratic political radicalism contained in the notion of kenotic self-limitation (Wright); Murphy's MacIntyre as a frame for her treatment of Yoder in grounding incarnated communities of resistance to principalities and powers (Walgenbach); a Murphy-inspired way to handle the twin dangers of pluralism and parochialism (Nation); a kenotic integration of ethics and theology with our evolutionary sexual inheritance (Van Slyke); and an appreciation—with emphasis on the practice of mourning—of Murphy's turn toward Christian ethics and practices that paves the way for a distinctively Christian political theology (Hovey).

Overall, the volume raises many critical questions, with several noted here. First, is "foundationalism" really so corrupted by Enlightenment theory and intrinsically inimical to Christian theology? After all, there are *many* non-Cartesian foundationalisms that have pre-Enlightenment provenance (Aquinas, for example), are inherently *social* in character, and allow for "complex" belief "interactivity" (50). An overly simplistic rejection of "foundationalism" may categorically limit our progressive theological options. Second, if Lakatosian holism correctly critiques all fixed methodological paradigms, then when *this* fixed paradigm is superseded, where do we plant our methodological feet for a "progressive," scientifically literate theological program? Further, many essays offer creative developments of Christian ethics and spirituality within a (broadly) non-reductive physicalist paradigm, but often too uncritically. If causal interactivity between spiritual and material substance is problematic for Cartesian dualism (68), problematic also is a physicalist capacity for "awareness of the presence of God's spirit" (77). Relatedly, "dualism" tends to function as a quickly dispensed straw man in many essays. Presumably, *Cartesian substance* dualism is the target, while more defensible dualisms that allow for embodied, anti-individualist, and narrative realist spirituality and ethics are ignored (for example, Augustinian ontological dependence identity, Thomistic hylomorphic dualism, and minimalist holistic dualism). Moreover, as embodied identity politics shows, hyper-individualist spirituality is quite compatible with physicalism (90), as well as with extended cognition (Clark's "Otto" is, after all, *alone* with his notebook, 77-78); individualism is not uniquely a dualist problem. Next, while descriptive realism is an ethical and theological desideratum, a general overconfidence in the *positive* normative implications of scientific data is common in the volume (though helpfully avoided by Kallenberg, Ellis, and Van Slyke). *Simply* from a description of biological or neurological information, especially given a doctrine of sin, no specific normative valence necessarily follows.

Finally, the extensions of MacIntyre's methodological, ethical, and socio-political thought to Christian spirituality and practice are among the richest contributions of the volume to current theological reflection and scholarship. Certainly, some criticisms of MacIntyre are misguided (failing to listen to those outside one's tradition is a *human*, not MacIntyrean problem, 61), while others are more cogent (MacIntyrean practices are not intrinsically valuable, and his strong

group membership distinction may subvert radically egalitarian Anabaptist Christian politics, 62). Nonetheless, many essays provide refreshing (often Anabaptist) correctives to and theological extensions of MacIntyre's best work. Overall, the book is to be highly commended to any reader interested in Nancey Murphy's prolific work, and in cutting edge Christian scholarship that theologically integrates interdisciplinary reflection in philosophy, ethics, anthropology, metaphysics, and the empirical sciences.

Fresno Pacific University NATHAN P. CARSON

Thomas Müntzer im Bauernkrieg. Fakten – Fiktionen – Desiderate. By Thomas T. Müller. Thomas-Müntzer-Gesellschaft. Veröffentlichung Nr 23. Mühlhausen: Thomas-Müntzer-Gesellschaft e.V. 2016. € 5.

This brief (sixty-three pages) but important publication summarizes the state of research on Müntzer's role in the Peasants' War and notes areas in which further work is required. Two major new biographies of Müntzer—H-J. Goertz's *Thomas Müntzer. Revolutionär am Ende der Zeiten* (Munich, 2015) and Siegfried Bräuer and Günter Vogler's *Thomas Müntzer, Neu Ordnung in der Welt* (Gütersloh, 2016) have recently reminded us of the significant progress made in moving toward a more balanced view of this radical reformer. Müller's intimate knowledge of the source material equips him well to tackle the contentious, often ideologically grounded, issues around the Peasants' War and Müntzer's participation in it.

Fictionalized accounts about Müntzer have abounded and keep surfacing, even in recent times–he has figured, for example, as a proto-Communist, as a blood-thirsty fanatic, and even as the main military leader of the peasant host. Müller notes the urgent need of the Wittenberg reformers to distance themselves from responsibility for the uprising, which led to their demonizing Müntzer. What is surprising is how long it has taken historians to recognize the complexity of the interests involved in the war, not to mention the difficulty of interpreting the contemporary source material. Müntzer was an important player, but only one among many. The unrest in Mühlhausen in 1523, for instance, should not be seen as heralding the Peasants' War. (Karlstadt's influence seems to have been as important as Müntzer's for the reforming pastors there.)

After Müntzer's expulsion in autumn of 1524 Müller traces from the meager source material his brief stays in Fulda, Nuremberg, Basel, and Grießen, and how he then went on to preach to the peasants in the Klettgau, where unrest was already well underway. Of interest here are his contacts with Hut, Hugwald, Oecolampadius, and, perhaps, Grebel.

The influence of Pfeiffer and Müntzer on the election and subsequent actions of the Mühlhausen "Eternal Council" in the Spring of 1525 has been exaggerated. The raid on the Cistercian monastery of Volkenroda on April 27, 1525, marked the first real involvement of Mühlhausen in the Peasants' War. The grisly reports, however, of four monks being maltreated and hanged is a good example of the legends around Müntzer, in this case stemming from the eighteenth century.

Müller shows that the alleged dispute between Pfeiffer and Müntzer leading to the diversion to help the Eichsfelder rather than pressing on to Nordhausen and Heldrungen has no factual base. A long line of speculation about this culminated in Manfred Bensing's widely accepted view that Müntzer's more strategic plans were vitiated by Pfeiffer's short-sightedness. It is clear that both men always intended to head for Heldrungen, and that the desperate appeal of Frankenhausen for help in May only speeded up the process.

Müller has not only corrected many details in this slender volume but also reminded us of much broader errors of interpretation when the sources are read with our modern eyes. Müntzer's apocalyptic language cannot be cashed out simplistically into a call to "bring class divisions to an end" (55). Despite the fact, too, "that not a single monk, not a single nun came to grief" (58) in the course of the Mühlhausen raids, it was the wild accusations of Luther that were to be engrained in the historical accounts. Luther needed a truly devilish opponent. Finally, Bensing's judgment that Müntzer was the "key figure (*Schlüsselfigur*) not only of the events in Thuringia but of the whole movement" (60) finds no support in the sources.

Müller concludes by hoping that further research may throw more light on Müntzer's connections with Hesse, Franconia, and the Upper Rhine. Müntzer was frequently called upon to act as a mediator (*Friedensrichter*) during the hostilities. This, too, needs to be pursued.

Müller's sober judgments nudge us closer to the truth about this turbulent uprising, however much we may be inclined to heroize or demonize. He concludes: "Thomas Müntzer did not bring about the Peasants' War, nor was he its *spiritus rector*; in no way at all was he its military leader" (62).

University of Otago, New Zealand PETER MATHESON

Take and Read: Reflecting Theologically on Books. By Paul G. Doerksen. Eugene, Ore.: Wipf and Stock. 2016. $33.

Paul Doerksen, a theology and Anabaptist studies professor at Canadian Mennonite University, shares with the public a collection of essays that were previously part of a theological book discussion group that has been meeting in Winnipeg, Manitoba, for decades (xi). This volume is a collection of essays on nearly thirty books that the group has examined since Doerksen began leading the group in 2004. The collection includes several sermons by the author wrote and delivered in a variety of church settings and occasions. These sermons are included because, according to Doerksen, they are "closely related to the other essays" (xii).

Each essay begins with a brief paragraph that the author used to promote the book to the reading group. These paragraphs are similar to what might be found on the back cover of books. The essays then read like theological book reviews of the volumes Doerksen and his reading group discussed. In addition to summarizing the books and evaluating their arguments, the essays include

Doerksen's theological conversation with the books in which he engages with the author, other theologians, and other reviewers of the book being discussed. This offers the reader supplemental insights alongside those by Doerksen.

Doerksen's own theological reflections on the selected texts are brief; each essay averages five pages or so. I appreciated being able to enter into the discussion of books that I have read (which admittedly did not include all the books in this volume). My memories of those books were often stimulated in interesting ways as I found myself agreeing or disagreeing with Doerksen's points. Doerksen has a strong centrist theological voice, and one that certainly echoes his Anabaptist commitments. This was particularly clear in essays directly related to those commitments such as Daniel Bell Jr.'s *Just War as Christian Discipleship*. The essays themselves would have been stronger if they had included more information about the intended audience for the book being discussed—I frequently found myself wishing the essays had wrestled more with how a book might have been received by that audience. I found myself particularly wondering this in response to Doerksen's essay on Rob Bell's *Love Wins*. That book was immensely popular when it was released (though certainly not because it was without significant disagreement), and has continued to enjoy traction in Christian circles. I would be interested in a theological discussion that addresses why so many people were taken with the book.

The books included are diverse in form, intent, content, and time period. The oldest is probably St. Augustine's *Confessions*. Some of the more contemporary books treated in this volume include Wendell Berry's *Jayber Crow* (2000), A.J. Jacobs's *The Year of Living Biblically* (2007), and Diana Butler Bass's *Christianity after Religion* (2013). Doerksen mentions in his introduction that he does not limit his book choices for the discussion group to "Christian" books, but the vast majority of the texts treated in this volume are by Christian authors and focused on Christian themes. It would be interesting to see this theological conversation engage more non-Christian texts.

In reading the book, I sometimes found it a bit tedious to go from one theological book review to another. This book is probably not intended to be read straight through. It would be more beneficial to engage the texts in a process like Doerksen's discussion group: a theological reading group that would read a book in this volume, and then read the corresponding essay to aid in conversation. To that end, it would have been helpful if this volume had included questions for discussion at the end of each essay.

Eastern Mennonite Seminary EMILY A. PECK-MCCLAIN

Chosen Nation: Mennonites and Germany in a Global Era. By Benjamin W. Goossen. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 2017. $49.50.

The "invention" of a Mennonite nation is the prominent theme in Benjamin Goossen's *Chosen Nation: Mennonites and Germany in a Global Era*. Others themes include the tension between German Mennonites and those in the "diaspora"

(Russia and North America) over pacifism after the mid-nineteenth century, Mennonite aloofness from the surrounding culture, and a work ethic that coalesced well with the values of the German Nazi movement.

Goossen, a Mennonite from Kansas with Russian-Ukrainian roots, points out that the theory of a Mennonite "nation" was based on the assumed existence of a Jewish one. In both cases, a religious-ethnic grouping present in many cultures was regarded as part of a larger nation that transcended traditional cultural and linguistic boundaries. In the fascist-controlled regions of Europe after World War I, Mennonites—even those of Dutch heritage—had celebrated themselves as champions of "Germandom." But for opportunistic reasons, the concept of a transnational Mennonite "nation" kicked in after 1945.

According to Goossen, the Mennonite icon Peter J. Dyck (1914-2010) was honest enough to admit in 1988 that the claim of being a nation had been "a temporary cloak woven from the wool of political expediency." The refugees from Russia had "changed their identity when it suited them" (199). Dyck himself, under Mennonite Central Committee tutelage, had helped fashion this construct at the end of World War II. The claim was used to spare once-Nazi Mennonites their deserved retribution. Privileged taxation was very much a part of their decision to move to Russia (now eastern Ukraine) in the 1780s. Goossen points out that the ethnic and racial criteria prevalent during the Nazi period survived into the postwar era. Agnostics and Catholics posed as Mennonites in hopes of obtaining equal privilege for emigrating to the Americas. The criteria remained cultural and racial.

A particularly strong point of this book is its descriptions of the Nazi fascination with the Mennonite colonies of Eastern Europe, an appeal underscored by Heinrich Himmler's visit to the Molotschna colony in October 1942. Mennonites in the USSR were one of "Germandom's" most impressive specimens and "groundbreakers for Germandom." Though scattered across the globe, Mennonites' "church discipline and religious racial defense system have protected [them] one-hundred-percent against the dilution of their blood through the infiltration of foreign elements. There is likely no other confession in the world that demonstrates such a racially uniform character as the Mennonites" (131). This characteristic made Mennonites, supposedly the most Aryan of all, prime targets for Nazi anthropologists and eugenicists.

The issue of pacifism was a source of tension between Mennonites in Germany and the diaspora. Germany had no Mennonite conscientious objectors after the 1870s, and in 1912 the Danzig "modernizer" Hermann Mannhardt (1855-1927) was very much opposed to the repatriation of Russian Mennonites. After all, writes Goossen, "Mannhardt and his associates had spent the last half-century ridding pacifism from their own congregations. At the very moment that charges of cowardice were finally dissipating, it would be madness to import 100,000 colonists" (102). At the turn of the twentieth century, the pacifists were rural and traditional, located primarily in Russia and North America. It was the urban Mennonite middle-class in Germany and Holland that had opted to "modernize."

Goossen refers to simple Mennonites who participated in Nazi genocide in an unsavory set of anecdotes. No less questionable were persons mentioned as close

allies of the Mennonites. Adolf Ehrt (1902-1975), the head of the Nazi "Anti-Comintern," wrote his dissertation on the Mennonites. Georg Leibbrandt (1891-1982), a "long-time scholar of Mennonitism" (163), participated in the "Wannsee Conference" of 1942 and bore partial responsibility for the mass extermination of Jews in Nazi Germany. Mennonite contractors were also involved in erecting the Stutthof concentration camp in a region of dense Mennonite settlements near Danzig. Mennonites served there later as guards.

Mennonite encyclopedic entries do not mention the pro-fascist dealings of Benjamin H. Unruh (1881-1959) or the militarism of Hermann Mannhardt. Goossen has inched their biographies closer to reality. Along with Peter Dyck, Cornelius F. Klassen (1894-1954) was a second icon of twentieth-century Russian-German Mennonitism. Yet Goossen points out that Klassen "aligned himself with Hitler's Germany, railing against social-democratic rot, the Communist insanity, and the machinations of the Jews" (143). Apparently, a part of the essential story on C. F. Klassen remains untold.

My primary criticism of Goossen's book pertains to the fact that he tells only half the Mennonite story. *Chosen Nation* leaves the impression that Mennonite "ethnicity" was essentially a product of European nationalisms and Nazism. But by World War II, the notion of Mennonites as an "ethnicity"—a people, not just a religion—was already over 150 years old in North America. The Mennonites described by Goossen between 1941 and 1943, and their North American relatives, provide nowhere near the only starting point for today's North American-based "ethnic" Mennonites.

In addition, he tells the story from the perspective of the Mennonite émigré from Russia, but not from the perspective of those who "remained behind." Surely there were many Mennonites who did not desert the Red Army to join the retreating German army. Goossen reports that after World War I a "subset" of Mennonites joined the Bolsheviks and attempted to foment class struggle (110), but he does not elaborate on their story; nor does he tell the story of those who suffered under Stalin in the decades that followed.

Most importantly of all, the book does not tell the Mennonite story as perceived through the eyes of their Slavic neighbors. Why, in 1920, did the anarchists and Bolsheviks of eastern Ukraine react as they did? Bolsheviks included Mennonites among the most counter-revolutionary of Russia's minorities. Western Mennonites have produced hundreds of treatises describing communist guilt; it is now time to hear the other half. And, though untold here, Goossen probably understands that another, Slavic narrative exists. When Mennonite farmers moved into Russia, no amalgamation took place (211). Concerned little about the good of the whole, these colonists tended to remain an ark in a Slavic sea.

In several instances Goossen refers to the Mennonite narrative's bias: refugees, for example, were "lost" until Mennonite Central Committee located them; Mennonites were "rescued out" of Russia. The author describes the "lost" Baltic homeland as "a place of mystic tragedy." Mennonites have "constructed an intricate memorial culture"; minute details of their former lives are "obsolete and therefore fascinating" (191). Yet sadly, this "outpouring of minutiae" has not resulted in much interest for the present and future of these Slavic societies.

A further problem involves the fact that this study harbors an ideological agenda not requisite to the story. The author clearly rejects mission as a colonial enterprise, and he places the word "heathen" in quotation marks (33). According to Goossen, the denunciation of a Jewish neighbor in Nazi-occupied Ukraine or the shaming of the "queer" in the USA are "at least as Mennonite as bonnets, buggies and pacifism" (211).

This libertarian, individualist, secular agenda grafted into Western Mennonitism during the past three decades may well be a result of the old desire of the intellectual to "be modern," to conform. Yet it was precisely the educated who brought down pacifism in Germany and Holland in the nineteenth century and encouraged the ensuing Mennonite involvement in Germany's wars. Had German Mennonites remained "old-fashioned," they likely would not have been guarding the condemned at Stutthof. Pacifism protects believers who might have pro-Fascist leanings—or liberals currently supporting "humanitarian" wars in the Middle East—from doing greater harm. Non-pacifism leads to ethical anarchy in countries with an aggressive foreign policy. In the context of the US it meant that Mennonites who dropped pacifism in the late 1950's soon had their sons dropping Agent Orange on the hapless peasants of Southeast Asia.

We all see through a glass darkly. In hopes of learning from past mistakes, I encourage Goossen and others to press onward with their research.

Russian Evangelical Alliance WILLIAM YODER

AUTHOR ADDRESSES

Willem de Bakker, 133 Chataway Blvd., Winnipeg, MB, Canada, R3P 0A2. E-mail: wdebakker@hotmail.com

Prof. Rebecca Janzen, Dept. of Languages, Literatures and Cultures, 1620 College Street, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208. Email: janzenr@mailbox.sc.edu

Prof. Peter Matheson, E-Mail: peter.m@compassnet.co.nz

Prof. Keith Sprunger, P.O. Box 322, North Newton, Kansas, 67117. E-Mail: sprunger@bethelks.edu

Prof. Mary Sprunger, Dept. of History, Eastern Mennonite University, 1200 Park Rd., Harrisonburg VA 22802. E-Mail: mary.sprunger@emu.edu

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

Carol Wert, 3 Coeden Dal, Pentwyn, Cardiff, CF23 7DH, Wales, UK. E-Mail: clwert17@gmail.com