
Book Reviews

Review Essay

John M. Janzen, Harold F. Miller, and John C. Yoder, eds., *Mennonites and Post-Colonial African Studies*, Routledge, New York, 2021. 298 pp. \$160 hardcover; \$44.05 e-book. ISBN: 9780367474324.

In *Mennonites and Post-Colonial African Studies*, editors John M. Janzen, Harold F. Miller, and John C. Yoder present the life stories of twenty-one mostly North American, mostly male Africanists who claim some connection to the Anabaptist-Mennonite movement. The editors frame the book as an exploration of how the scholarship and professional activities of these featured individuals interacted with, shaped, and were shaped by the vibrant and rapidly growing field of African Studies in the early post-colonial period (1960s and 1970s). In particular, the editors attempt to pinpoint how the Anabaptist background and values of these “pioneers,” “professors,” and “practitioners” shaped their contributions to African Studies.

Readers—who likely include non-Anabaptist Africanists as well as “insider” families and friends—are invited to appreciate the contributions of North American Mennonites to African Studies in a wide variety of areas, such as African religion, literature, music, development theory, history, anthropology, health, and theological extension education. All these contributions, the editors claim, “represent a distinctive Anabaptist perspective and approach to African studies,” which is shaped by (1) contributors’ “Anabaptist heritage”—notably, by the Anabaptist emphasis on “peace” as well as its “suspicion of state authority”; (2) the featured individuals’ own experiences of “ethnic markers” and their sympathetic awareness of religion; and (3) the institutional support of Mennonite mission and service institutions (16).

The stories are arranged into three sections: pioneers, professors, and practitioners. The three missionary “pioneers” first interacted with Africa through Mennonite mission agencies in the 1940s and 1950s, prior to Independence and to the development of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) programming in Africa, although their active careers continued into the 1970s and 1980s. The eleven scholars in the “professors” section and the seven “practitioners” (whose careers took a more applied direction) most strongly exemplify what contributor Curtis Keim calls “the remarkable MCC Africanist phenomenon” (76) in the immediate wake of Independence. MCC served as the channel to African studies for ten of the professors/practitioners: eight first served through MCC’s Teachers Abroad Program (TAP) (Donald Holsinger, Curtis Keim,

Karen Keim, John D. Metzler, John C. Yoder, Lauren Yoder, Ronald J.R. Mathies, and P. Stanley Yoder); one served in MCC's Pax program (John M. Janzen); and one served a regular MCC service worker term (Franklin Baer). It is noteworthy, however, that just over half of the featured scholars developed an interest in African studies primarily through a non-MCC connection. Five of them (Donald Jacobs, Melvin Loewen, David Shenk, David Shank, and Fremont/Sara Regier) served primarily through a Mennonite mission agency such as Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM), Congo Inland Mission (CIM), or Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM). One (Merrill Ewert) did Christian Service—a two-year Mennonite Brethren (MB) service opportunity similar to TAP/Pax. Five more developed a focus on African studies through familial or marital connections with Mennonite mission agencies (Saïd Sheikh Samatar, David Denlinger), African Mennonite churches (Musuto Chirangi), or North American Mennonite colleges (Mary Oyer, E. Wayne Nafziger).

In the introduction, the editors situate the contributors within the “formative early decades” of the emerging field of African studies, at a time when this field of study was in full flower but prior to its more recent focus on “intellectual decolonization.” They also offer a historical overview that positions the contributors with respect to the Anabaptist-Mennonite movement and to MCC in particular. This historical sketch focuses on the voluntarism of the sixteenth-century European Anabaptists, the resulting persecutions and migrations, and the twentieth-century attempts to preserve Anabaptist “distinctiveness” through the reiteration of believers church principles in a new context. MCC is presented as the “most important institutional expression” of this twentieth-century reinterpretation of Anabaptism (8). Indeed, the editors devote six of the eight pages of their “brief Anabaptist-Mennonite history” to this organization, covering its inspiring beginnings in Russia, its large-scale feeding and refugee resettlement programs before and after World War II, and the development of programs for conscientious objectors—such as Pax and TAP—that led to significant encounters with the people and challenges of the Global South (10).

Oddly, the narrative gives only cursory attention to the missionary movement that began to put North American Mennonites in touch with Global South brothers and sisters in the first place, several decades before the creation of MCC, despite the clearly central role that this movement has played both in the lives of most of the contributors and in the foundation of MCC itself, especially in Africa.¹ The editors narrate a shift within MCC from relief efforts

1 MCC's work in Africa is a direct outgrowth of early North American Mennonite missionary efforts on this continent. MCC's first interventions in Africa were all “developed and discussed” with Mennonite mission boards, if not directly initiated by them. See Tim Lind, “MCC Africa Program: Historical Background,” MCC Occasional Papers, no. 10 (Mennonite Central Committee, August 1989): 5–7, 13–15.

aimed at “blood relatives” to a primary focus on Global South contexts and on those “outside the Mennonite ethnic family” (11). However, although African members outnumber North Americans within the global Mennonite church today, the editors do not make this reality central to the “narrative arc” of their story; “Mennonites” are still implicitly assumed to be North Americans.²

Three closing chapters and a foreword by Aliko Songolo offer responses by voices “from outside” (255). These are perspectives from scholars, Mennonite or not, who are “close to the main story” but not part of it (17). These respondents tend to give the lie to the editors’ assertion that the contributions of the Anabaptist Africanists highlighted in this book can be explained by the “defining role” played by their “Anabaptist heritage” (16). Stephen Feierman, for example, kindly points out that Mennonite scholars, as “good and moral” as their scholarship may be, have no monopoly on virtue, and he invites them to become more aware of their own temptations to nationalism (258–60). Paul Gifford sees no particular common thread among the contributors and concludes that being Anabaptist-Mennonite does not give them a “unique perspective” (261). Emily Welty laments the shocking lack of preparation of these well-intentioned volunteers, who often saw service in Africa as an “adventure” and an escape from closed Mennonite communities in America, and decries the fact that “vulnerable people” in Africa suffered from the ignorance of the volunteers, who later, bolstered by male and white privilege, went on to develop careers that drew on this knowledge about Africa (270).

Despite the rather self-congratulatory editorial framing and the puzzled responses by “outside” voices to this activity of chronicling and celebrating “Mennonite” contributions to Africa, I found the twenty-one stories themselves to be vibrant and inspiring accounts of transformation. They illuminate the phenomenon of young (mostly) North American (mostly) Mennonite (mostly) men having their lives changed through an encounter with Africa through the channel of MCC or other Mennonite service agencies in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. They very clearly show the recurring factors that led these individuals to Africa, highlight how Africa changed them, and point out that their subsequent academic and professional contributions tended to focus on helping others better understand, appreciate, and develop kinship with Africans. The following examples of a “pioneer,” four “professors,” and a “practitioner” illustrate this transformation that was evident in all the stories and which differed in significant ways from the narrative proposed by the volume editors.

2 John D. Roth, “What Hath Zurich to do with Addis Ababa? Ecclesial Identity in the Global Anabaptist Church,” *The Conrad Grebel Review* 31, no. 1 (Winter 2013): 24–43, 32–33. Of the 2.13 million baptized Mennonites around the world, North American Mennonites make up 30 percent and Africans 36 percent. See Mennonite World Conference, “World Directory,” 2015, <https://www.mwc-cmm.org/article/world-directory>.

Donald Jacobs (1928–2020) was of Lutheran background, and while he and his family joined a Lancaster Mennonite congregation during his adolescence, they did not embrace “conventional conservative” Mennonite culture (21). For example, during World War II, some of his six older brothers were conscientious objectors while others joined the army or the marines—all with their parents’ support (21). As a young man working alongside Mennonite missionaries in Appalachia, Jacobs learned that a Germanic Mennonite “subculture” was an “obstacle” for missionary outreach (22)—a conviction that was later strengthened when he observed Lancaster Mennonite attempts at church planting in New York (25). While serving with his wife, Ruth, in Tanzania with Eastern Mennonite Missions in the 1950s, Jacobs’ life was transformed by the East African Revival. Although his initial admiration of the revival was tempered with skepticism, his resistance “collapsed” as he experienced the “kindness, love, and encouragement” of an African fellow teacher (23). He became a full participant in the practices of confession, worship, and fellowship that characterized this remarkable transnational and transcultural religious phenomenon.

In Jacobs’ subsequent doctoral studies, then throughout his years as a teacher in a Tanzanian Mennonite theological college, and as a mission administrator, he wrestled with the question of how newer churches would express their Mennonite or Anabaptist identity without copying Germanic Anabaptist cultural “trappings” (28). At the same time, he shared the message of revival with fellow Americans by leading a revival fellowship in New York (44). According to Jacobs’ younger EMM colleague, David Shenk (also featured in this volume), the revival message that American missionaries such as Jacobs brought back to the Lancaster Mennonites helped to profoundly revive and renew the Lancaster Mennonite Conference; it injected “a vibrant and personal spiritual life into an ethnic Mennonite community which regarded obedience to powerful bishops and adherence to outward cultural markers such as traditional attire as far more important than an inner experience of faith” (49).

Jacobs’ story includes little or no detail about how he may have influenced African Studies as a field of study, but it clearly shows how his spirituality and later career path were profoundly influenced by his interaction with and participation in the church in East Africa. Much of Jacobs’ contribution to mission theology took the form of promoting the need for African churches to “formulate and answer their own questions” within their own cultural framework while working out what it meant to be part of a global “Mennonite” body. The impetus for this lifelong focus mostly came not from American Mennonite culture but in spite of it.

John M. Janzen (1937–) is an example of the Pax/TAP phenomenon. His story showcases the remarkable confluence of factors that contributed to enlarging the worldviews of privileged young North American Mennonite men during the early post-colonial period. Janzen notes that his General-Conference-ori-

ented, liberal Mennonite upbringing was shaped by the influence of teachers and pastors with MCC service experience and/or University of Chicago PhDs, offering role models that combined overseas service with academic careers (68). At the same time, his experiences of living, working, and developing friendships with African men during his Pax term were transformative, leading to tension with established missionary modes of interaction and to a deeper understanding of the political and cultural context of Congo and of the “reality of decolonization” (66–67).

Pax participants, as young single men, had the freedom to sit around fires and chat, the time to learn local languages, and the space to try local foods that the “more senior missionaries” did not always have. For Janzen, this contributed to friendships that led to a deep appreciation for the richness of Chokwe culture and music (66). In his graduate studies and subsequent academic career, he drew on all these formative experiences. His academic work and service focused on prophet movements such as that of Simon Kimbangu, Central African concepts of health and healing, and responses to collective trauma in Africa’s Great Lakes region.

As Janzen reviews his life and career, he sees his trajectory as having been shaped in multiple ways by an “Anabaptist-Mennonite perspective,” which, in his view, includes the values of empathy instilled during Pax service; an inclination toward the historical method; a focus on peacemaking; and a penchant for the study of “religious continuity, renewal, and change” (75). As is the case for most of the individuals featured in this volume, Janzen’s chapter includes a degree of reflection about his own privilege and power—in his case, a developing awareness of his own power to represent or obscure the voices of others (74). However, it is the combined force of a dozen similar Pax/TAP stories that most strongly impresses upon the reader the extent of the privilege that allowed people like John—and not the “gifted Congolese individuals” who shaped his worldview—to pursue graduate studies and an academic career (66). And it is perplexing to see no analysis of this reality in the editors’ introduction, which frames these stories primarily as distinctively Anabaptist contributions to African Studies.

Mary Oyer, Curtis Keim, and Karen Keim

Other professors’ chapters illustrate some additional themes of the Pax/TAP phenomenon. First, while many of the professors point out the influence of Mennonite values, upbringing, or institutions in shaping their trajectory, most emphasize that it was the encounter with Africa that transformed them, helping to overcome the inertia, resistance, and conservatism (or liberalism!) of their narrow North American Mennonite worldviews. For example, for Goshen College professor and “dean” of Mennonite hymnody Mary Oyer—who was steeped in “highly Eurocentric” artistic paradigms—it was a US State-Depart-

ment-funded research trip to East Africa in 1969 that “transformed [her] into [a] cross-cultural broker with unremitting commitment to communicate with others the immense gift that Africa had brought” to her life (128) and to introduce African music into the “Mennonite canon” (132).

Second, almost all the professors refer to the generational tension between older Mennonite missionaries and younger MCC workers—a historical episode that is just beginning to receive scholarly attention.³

Third, the gendered nature of the phenomenon is illustrated by the stories of spouses Curtis Keim and Karen Keim (both contribute a chapter). It was Curtis’s need to find an avenue for alternative service that brought the couple to Africa (88). Curtis did his PhD first, followed by Karen, who was “interrupted” by a child along the way (84). How many other Pax/TAP couples have a similar story? There were plenty of women TAP teachers. Did they not get invited to contribute? Were they less likely in the 1970s to follow up a TAP term with a PhD? As Welty aptly notes, the editors pay distressingly little attention to these questions (268). I share her disappointment about the strong skewing of the volume toward white men’s stories.

For **Merrill Ewert**, listed as a “practitioner”—although he also had academic experience at Cornell University and Fresno Pacific University—personal and professional transformation was catalyzed by a confrontation with young high school students at the MB mission station of Kajiji in southern Congo. Ewert was reluctantly teaching math and religion in a local school at the request of church and mission leaders, even though his math skills were poor, his French nonexistent, and his Kituba based on only four weeks of study. In desperation, unable to tell students the right answers to math problems, and in the face of their criticism of his religion class, he resorted to teaching both classes primarily through questions, shifting from lectures to discussions in which students determined the answers themselves, sometimes through a vote (208–9).

Welty is right to point out how problematic it can be to celebrate such “mis-steps” that support the career development of an unprepared volunteer, while reducing “vulnerable people . . . to collateral damage of the Western volunteer’s learning” (270). Nevertheless, Ewert’s story provides a good example of how, at that historical juncture, a cadre of young and inexperienced, well-intentioned and unprepared North Americans teachers were transformed through an en-

3 Alain Epp Weaver, “A Habit of Social Concern?: Anxieties about the Relationship between Mennonite Central Committee’s Relief and Service Programs and Mennonite Missions from the 1950s to the 1970s,” *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 40 (2022, forthcoming); Jeremy Rich, “The Mennonite Central Committee in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 1960–1985” (Global Anabaptist-Mennonite Young Scholars Symposium, sponsored by the Institute for the Study of Global Anabaptism, Goshen [Ind.] College, June 30, 2017).

counter with African students, church leaders, and colleagues, even when that transformation was not as mutual as it should have been.

Certainly “Anabaptist” factors played some role: Ewert was encouraged to consider international service by a Tabor College professor, and his extended family’s “Anabaptist” values and MCC service experience instilled in him a “progressive” attitude toward development work that contrasted with the more “evangelical” approaches of his Mennonite Brethren context (204–6). However, although these experiences and orientations provided a doorway to service in Africa, it was a moment on the Kajiji basketball court, cringeworthy as it may have been, that transformed him and “redirected [his] life and career” (215).

As a collection of stories illustrating the TAP-Africanist pipeline, this book is fascinating. The various accounts describe a juxtaposition of factors pulling these young people to Africa that was nothing short of paradoxical. MCC alternative service options were born out of pacifist convictions, but these sat alongside the growing political sensibilities of a new generation of anti-colonial and civil-rights-minded young American Mennonites whose exposure to post-colonial theory led them to rebel against an earlier generation of missionary paternalism even as they had to learn, in Africa, to “act like elites” themselves (82).

Some drew deep motivation from the teaching of Goshen, Bethel, Messiah, and Tabor College professors, whether because of their Anabaptist peace theology (103), their expertise as historians (75), or their own experiences of overseas service (146, 205). For others, US federal funding for African Studies, at a high point in the 1960s and 1970s, played a non-negligible role in helping them translate their TAP experiences into a career as Africanists (79–80). Personal career considerations played a role alongside a genuine service mindset nurtured by the example of previous generations of Mennonite missionaries who the TAP/Pax workers now regarded as hopelessly colonialist (148, 235). English-speaking American Mennonites were attracted by the excitement of a year in Europe *en route* to Africa: French language training paid for by MCC was “appealing” (55) and even led some, such as David Shank, to doctoral studies in Europe (133). For Karen Keim, learning French in Belgium and Congo opened the door to a career in African literature. For John C. Yoder and his wife, Janet, the prospect of an all-expenses paid year in Europe was more of a draw than Africa itself; it served as a combination of “prolonged honeymoon” and *rumspringa* as young North American Mennonites could be freed from some of the constraints of the conservative Mennonite communities they had left (147). In the experience of Curtis Keim, TAP cohorts in Europe skipped out on church and enjoyed sampling alcohol despite having signed a no-drinking pledge with MCC (79).

In short, many North American Mennonites were drawn into African Studies because of some rather American, and not particularly “Anabaptist,” factors. These are stories about how a non-nationalist pipeline to service (one

that nevertheless flirted with nationalism, hence the aptness of Feierman’s warning) converged with a variety of contextual factors to produce some mostly male Africanist scholars who subsequently become ambassadors for a broader worldview among North American Mennonites. Being “Mennonite” was part of what drove this phenomenon; yet many of the participants reacted against Mennonitism, or saw their Pax/TAP terms as an escape from a narrow, ethnically defined identity.

As chronicles of the complex and fraught process of developing a more catholic and ecumenical self-conception, these are important stories, worth recording and even celebrating. But I would have loved to see the self-congratulations set aside long enough that readers could (1) more easily see and rejoice in how these young men and women were transformed by the global church; (2) critically reflect (as the “outsiders” in this book straightforwardly do) about the paradoxes of the nationalist structures that helped to push some Mennonites beyond themselves while simultaneously reifying ethnocentrism; (3) accurately recognize the role of Mennonite mission agencies in laying the groundwork for many of these transformations; and (4) begin to ask why such transformation has not been more long-lasting or profound.

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Felipe Hinojosa, *Apostles of Change: Latino Radical Politics, Church Occupations, and the Fight to Save the Barrio*, University of Texas Press, Austin, 2021. xiv + 219 pp. \$45.00 (cloth). ISBN: 978-1-4773-2198-0.

Felipe Hinojosa follows his award-winning book *Latino Mennonites* with another accomplished search into the intersection between religion and ethnicity. In *Apostles of Change*, he invites us to look to the past so that we may dream for the future. Describing the story of four significant Latino radical movements that occurred in 1969—one year after the assassination of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.—Hinojosa seamlessly weaves in historical detail with captivating narrative. The book reads as an invitation to enter the year 1969 and acknowledge the Latina/o radicals who made significant contributions to the work of barrio (neighborhood) advocacy. *Apostles of Change* both inspires me and challenges the way I live into my faith and advocacy as a Latina religious studies scholar, minister, Anabaptist, and immigration advocate.

Hinojosa begins by making the case for writing about religion within the Latina/o freedom movement. Previous scholarship has largely ignored (or not had the opportunity to write about) the religious traditions of Latino/a political actors. Beyond the often referenced and nonetheless significant Liberation movement or the study of Pentecostal appeal among Latina/os, Hinojosa writes about the intricacies of negotiating Latina/o barrio concerns with religious institutions and peoples, conscientiously describing the complexity and challenges between Latina/o radicals and religious leadership. The relationships were tenuous, he notes, but they were significant for providing resources to “the people” whose geographies these churches occupied. “At least for a moment,” he observes, “a robust relationship existed between young radicals and religious leaders.” (5). For example, chapter one tells of the occupation by the Young Lords Organization (YLO) of McCormick Theological Seminary to protect the Lincoln Park neighborhood from being displaced by a construction company while the Presbyterian Latin American Caucus (PLAC) refused to support their cause. Both the Latina/o radicals and the religious leadership had desired and needed partnership and resources, but their voices had been largely unacknowledged before the occupation. Afterward, however, their impact was incredible.

Apostles of Change outlines three themes I highly resonate with and am challenged by: (1) collaboration, (2) the insider/outsider paradigm, and (3) sacred space:

Collaboration. In current discussions on equity and inclusion, much work is being done to continue contesting the Black/White binary of anti-racism work. Even so, institutions still bias or attend to certain voices over others. Hinojosa, on the other hand, envisions collaboration, disrupts the notion of the binary as being historic, and invites partnership across racial and ethnic lines for the barrio, our neighborhoods. In various instances, he mentions that Latina/o radicals were supported by seminary students, Black activists, neighborhood leaders, mothers, and the Poor People’s coalition, to name a few. Reading *Apostles of Change* has provided me with encouraging examples showing that Black and “Brown” partnership has occurred in the past and will continue into the future.

Insider/Outsider Paradigm. The theme of insider/outsider arises in particular within a religious institutional view of activists. In other words, the insiders are the ordained clergy of the occupied spaces, and the outsiders are the Latina/o activists, regardless of their faith background. The insider/outsider paradigm does not discount the Latina/o activists’ faith or lack thereof but rather acknowledges the way that church leaders prevented organizing efforts. The dichotomy that Hinojosa raises is provocative. Religious leaders, myself included, are encouraged to consider how our platforms and resources are advancing or *thwarting* voices from marginalized neighborhoods and their advocates. Hi-

nojosa's examples point to pastors who were struggling for their own visibility within their denominations. Do we likewise thwart voices through the excuse that we are fighting our own struggles, or do we share these struggles with the emerging activists and seek partnership not just across religious inclinations but also across age, socioeconomic status, and geographies? These are the questions I continuously ask myself, and this book assures me they are questions to keep asking.

Sacred Space. One of the most potent illustrations of sacred space from *Apostles of Change* is the occupation of St. Basil church in Los Angeles, California, by the Católicos Por La Raza (CPLR: Catholics for the People), who were challenging the sacredness of a three-million-dollar building sitting geographically close to impoverished Mexican American and other communities of color. The juxtaposition between the (assumed) sacred church and the (assumed) non-sacred group of young Latina/o radicals makes for an intense story. In this and another of Hinojosa's chapters, blood was shed over a people whom a religious authority had deemed as not sacred, raising the question: where is the sacred in physical violence against one's neighbor? Or racial violence? By examining these spaces under the sacred paradigm, Hinojosa insinuates the profane and complicates traditionally held sacred spaces that became locations of struggle for survival for Latina/o communities.

As I read through the Católicos activism I was reminded of Friendship West Baptist Church's advocacy for the removal of a mountain of shingles in Dallas's southern sector. Dumped on a predominantly African American neighborhood, the illegal mountain of shingles was slowly destroying the vegetation and land as toxic chemicals seeped out of the materials and infiltrated the soil. Churches are sacred not only within their walls but also outside of them (good news for all during the pandemic restrictions). There is a sacredness, an act of worship to God, when church members embody the love and justice and mercy of God's love.

The most significant part of the book is its contribution to the emerging field of Latina/o religious history through story. Much more of such storytelling is needed to help guide the future. At present, over-resourced churches attempt to collaborate with their under-resourced Latina/o church plants, but the partnerships are usually not equitable, or the advocates are discounted for various reasons (not faithful enough, not mature enough, not able to comprehend enough, etc.). Hinojosa opens the door for such stories of present-day Latina/o church struggles to be told and documented. Personally, Hinojosa challenges me to listen to the stories and partner with emerging local activists from my neighborhoods over their legitimate concerns for the barrio.

Apostles of Change is not just really good storytelling of inspired Latina/o activists from history but also a “dreaming and imagining something new and then working to make it happen” (148). It is a reminder that Latina/o activists are not a new phenomenon; we have been around, we will continue to be around, and we invite you to the table to collaborate.

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Richard Lougheed, *Menno’s Descendants in Quebec: The Mission Activity of Four Anabaptist Groups 1956–2021*, Pandora, Kitchener, Ontario, 2021. 255 pp. \$28.00. ISBN: 978-1-926599-72-4.

Richard Lougheed, *Menno au Québec: Une histoire de la mission francophone de quatre groupes anabaptistes 1956–2021*, Société d’histoire du protestantisme franco-québécois, Montreal, Quebec, 2022. 253 pp. ISBN: 978-2-9819967-0-1.

Menno’s Descendants in Quebec provides Anglophone readers in Canada and the United States with a solid outline of the complex history of Mennonite mission within the largest French enclave in North America. The simultaneous release of *Menno au Québec* presents this same story in the language of the mission enterprise itself.⁴ Readers learn of the challenges, and the successes, of four Anabaptist groups: (1) the Mennonite Mission Board of Ontario, now Mennonite Church Canada (Église Mennonite du Canada), (2) the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches (Frères Mennonites), (3) the Church of God in Christ (Mennonite) (Holdeman) (Église de Dieu en Christ), and (4) the Brethren in Christ (In Canada, Be in Christ) (Frères en Christ), all of whom have established their presence in Quebec within the past sixty-five years.

Lougheed’s personal faith history—that includes training at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (Elkhart, Indiana) and an academic background specializing in the history of French Protestants in Quebec—has prepared him to teach and to write, in both French and English. He comes with a lifetime of expressing his heart for mission in service to the church in Quebec in a variety of ways. These diverse experiences have provided a rich context for writing a comprehensive history of Anabaptist mission in Quebec.⁵

⁴ The publishers of both versions request that it be ordered from Amazon.

⁵ In a recent interview with the author, I explored with him some of his background and motivation for writing his book. See Lucille Marr, “Menno’s descendants in Que-

With his expertise, Lougheed has situated this story skillfully in a broad framework that places the Anabaptist past within the history of evangelical mission in Quebec. Equally significant were the increased awareness of societal inequities created by the church's power and the English business monopoly over ordinary citizens. This understanding began a movement that came to replace theology with the social sciences. The so-called Quiet Revolution (La Révolution Tranquille) of the 1960s thus forever changed the religious, political, and social structures that had been in place in Quebec for two hundred years. This context Lougheed articulates well, with particular attention to how it affected Anabaptist mission, given that all four denominations had established their particular approach during these tumultuous times. Finally, Lougheed's discussion of parallel developments in France—the nation whose experience of the shift from the dominance of the Roman Catholic Church to becoming a secular society most closely parallels that of Quebec—provides a valuable point of reference.

Living and ministering in Quebec is complicated, and I have been wrestling with the rapid changes in Quebec from my vantage point of working largely on the English side of the “two solitudes” for the past twenty-one years.⁶ I chose to read the French version of the book *Menno au Québec* in the hope that this immersion in Francophone Anabaptist mission would shed light on a world that my Anglo background makes it difficult to fully understand. As I read the stories of the first Mennonite missionaries immersing themselves in French, I am encouraged in my own ongoing, slow accessing of enough of the language to communicate.

Language is essential for mission activity, not just to communicate but also to begin to enter into the culture of the other. Lougheed's discussion of how Mennonite Brethren (MB) mission—with its evangelistic methods—benefited from the *Réveil* (the revival that merged in 1970 and lasted for the next dozen years) gives readers some insight into the rapid change occurring in the province. Our understandings of this era, where massive conversions led to dramatic

bec: The Mission Activity of Four Anabaptist Groups, 1956-2021; A Conversation with Author Richard Lougheed,” April 6, 2022, <https://anabaptisthistorians.org/2022/04/06/mennos-descendants-in-quebec-the-mission-activity-of-four-anabaptist-groups-1956-2021-a-conversation-with-author-richard-lougheed/>.

⁶ The phrase “two solitudes” has come to be used to describe the lack of communication between French and English Canadians.

growth in evangelical circles, benefits from Lougheed's years of study, much of it published elsewhere. He also addresses the ensuing stagnation and decline in the context of cultural changes.⁷

Lougheed identifies conflicts and struggles of Quebecois Mennonites as they attempted to adapt to a new faith, one that was wrapped up in a culture vastly different from their own. He credits, for example, the late Eric Wingender, an MB pastor and director of the MB theological school *École de théologie évangélique du Québec (ETEQ)*, with "a prophetic understanding of the stagnation of French mission." Wingender spoke and wrote with passion, raising provocative questions about the Anabaptist practice of separation and the evangelical pietism of the mission workers. As Lougheed put it, "Eric Wingender croyait qu'un manque de contextualisation du message et de la pratique adaptés au Québec avait permis au piétisme européen du 19^e siècle et à l'évangélisme américain du 20^e siècle de se conjuguer pour mener les Églises du Québec dans un cul-de-sac" (*Menno au Québec*, 136). To put it in English, Wingender critiqued the early mission movement for producing "Christian enclaves, separated from the context of the world, where converts could not mention lapses or doubts and lived a pessimistic pietism disconnected from those outside" (*Menno's Descendants*, 136).

Although Lougheed claims no direct answers to questions raised by Wingender and others, his thoughtful outline and comparative discussion (culminating in a helpful "Assessment" [*Menno's Descendants*, 199–209]), provides a basis for theological discussion and a launching place for the kind of conversation necessary if Anabaptist mission is to continue providing a voice in both the French and the English mission in Quebec.

Many Mennonites in English North America will relate to Lougheed's helpful discussion of "Offshoots of French mission" and "Anabaptists Outside the Church Walls" (*Menno's Descendants*, 155–98). In these last two chapters, he includes Mennonite Central Committee, the English churches, *La Maison de l'amitié* (House of Friendship), immigrant congregations, and multi-ethnic congregations and periodicals, rounding out the narrative to give a full picture of Anabaptist work and presence in Quebec.

I commend my friend and colleague for this careful and thorough study of Anabaptist mission and presence in Quebec. I have been privileged to have the opportunity to discuss his ideas with him and our colleague Zacharie Leclair in meetings of *La Société d'histoire mennonite du Québec*. Our discussions, and now reading the French version of the book, have grounded me more deeply in the broad scope of Anabaptist mission and presence here in the province.

⁷ See, for instance, Richard Lougheed, "Clashes in World View: French Protestants and Catholics in the 19th Century," *French-Speaking Protestants in Canada: Historical Essays*, ed. Jason Zuidema (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), 99–118.

Finally, I was pleased to see that Lougheed included a postscript identifying the significant role that women have played in this mission. My hope is that even as we embrace the “two solitudes” characteristic of mission in Quebec, our understandings will also grow to more fully integrate gender in our conceptualizing of the history of our Anabaptist forebears in this context.

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Ryan S. Schellenberg, *Abject Joy: Paul, Prison, and the Art of Making Do*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2021. 248 pp. \$61.76. ISBN-10: 0190065516.

I thank my God for every remembrance of you, always in every one of my prayers for all of you, praying with joy for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. (Phil 1:3–5, NRSVue)

But even if I am being poured out as a libation over the sacrifice and the service of your faith, I rejoice, and I rejoice together with all of you; in the same way also you should rejoice and rejoice together with me. (Phil 2:17–18, NRSVue)

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved. (Phil 4:1, NRSVue)

Traditional Western views of Paul often conceive of the apostle as a stoic figure, detached from his physical status and the ebb and flow of feelings, thanks to a strong sense of religious virtue. Yet, an attentive read of the above verses cannot be so neatly squared with this portrait of bodily and emotional indifference.

In an intriguing new analysis of the letter to the Philippians, Ryan S. Schellenberg argues for a view of Paul *as prisoner*—one whose bodily, emotional, and social self-conceptualization influenced the words put to the page. Schellenberg takes as his starting points two important interpretive factors: (1) that Philippians ought to be studied without reliance upon the heroic narrative Paul of Acts (4–13), and (2) that the apostle’s historical imprisonments were the result of coercive force by local magistrates in response to public disturbances attached to his preaching (47–51). Such factors, per Schellenberg, guard against hagiographic readings of Paul’s letters and create space for his self-conceptualization to emerge from behind the text.

Schellenberg invites his readers to view the imprisoned Paul from the perspective of the poor, for whom imprisonment was yet another source of bodily degradation imposed by a system built upon the idea of embodied dominance (58). Such an approach contrasts with a tendency in scholarship to primarily reference comments from the social elites of Paul’s day. An analysis of Philippi-

ans from the vantage point of the non-elite is accomplished through the use of a variety of ancient and modern sources. From antiquity Schellenberg references letters of petition to regional magistrates, non-elite prisoner stock characters, and interpersonal correspondence. Weighed against such materials, Paul is seen as engaging in a process of self-identification as a divine messenger whose imprisonment played out on the cosmic stage (chapter 3). Such a battle found its locus in Paul's very embodiment, with social abjection reflected in his wounds and his hope placed in the expectation of a bodily transformation accompanying Christ's upending of earthly power dynamics at his return (87).

Also important for Schellenberg's arguments are modern prison diaries, which witness (from a historical distance) to affective components of prison life. Such materials illustrate two aspects of the letter's emotional functions: First, how Paul evidenced a "performative indifference" toward suffering and bodily degradation through rejecting traditional honor-shame categories (chapter 4). Second, that Paul, like many prisoners today, appears to have placed his hope and joy (at least in part) in moments of physical reunification with his beloved community outside of the prison's walls (chapter 5). His longing for physical proximity, whether with Christ following death or with the Philippian believers, is evident from the letter's opening chapter and remains an important concept throughout. And, although an imperfect substitute for physical presence, the sharing of letters served as an exercise in nurturing social and emotional bonds, further reinforced by visitations from the letter carriers to whom Paul alludes in the letter's second and fourth chapters. In other words, Philippians may have acted as "a sort of affective technology, wielded at once on the writer himself and on his addressees" (177).

Schellenberg's approach to the letter critiques traditional Western approaches to Philippians that downplay Paul's physicality, emotion, and self-interest in pursuit of a modern altruistic portrait. The Paul of Philippians, per Schellenberg, was not a disinterested philosopher waxing poetic about his stoic demeanor, but a fully embodied, emotive person whose hopes, fears, and joy bubbled over onto the page. This book invites us to see Paul afresh as one who suffered imprisonment not as a matter of indignity nor because of state hatred toward the church but as part of a larger cultural pattern of establishing control through the denigration of the poor (58). We are also invited to see how his ecstatic experiences of the risen Jesus, theologically influenced reflections on his present status, and emotional bonds with others enabled him to "make do" in an abject position.

In addition, this book challenges readers to reassess pious framings of earthly suffering and imprisonment. Whether in reference to the historical Paul, the modern martyr, or the imprisoned neighbor, Schellenberg helps readers reconceptualize their understanding of imprisonment. Such abjection is to be neither treated with revulsion nor romanticized but recognized as interplay between

body, emotion, and community on the parts of those in prison and those impacted by imprisonment.

This framework ought to assist Christian communities in interrogating our own views of the imprisoned. We must question whether culturally received ideas of bodily (in)violability cause us to withdraw in horror or shame from those imprisoned by our society. In addition, we must consider how both the “free” and the imprisoned in our communities can strengthen relational bonds to make “abject joy” attainable.”

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Ted Grimsrud, *To Follow the Lamb: A Peaceable Reading of the Book of Revelation*, Cascade, Eugene, Oregon, 2022. x, 278 pp. Paperback ISBN: 978-1-6667-3224-5 (\$34); hardcover ISBN: 978-1-6667-2569-8 (\$49); ebook ISBN: 978-1-6667-2570-4 (\$34).

Ted Grimsrud’s work on Revelation several decades ago changed my life. I edited his 1987 *Triumph of the Lamb: A Self-Study Guide to the Book of Revelation* for Herald Press. I had taken an undergraduate course on Revelation with Howard Charles at Goshen (Ind.) College, but Grimsrud’s book alerted me that Revelation has a relevant ethical message tied to Revelation’s Lamb Christology. I found it inspiring and exciting—a breath of fresh air and a hopeful new approach to the book.

A year later, I led a six-week study of Revelation using Grimsrud’s book in a small group at my church. My interest in Revelation, sparked by Grimsrud, eventuated in my dissertation on the Lamb Christology of the Apocalypse of John at Princeton Theological Seminary and a career of teaching and writing on Revelation.

It was therefore with great anticipation that I read Grimsrud’s newest book, *To Follow the Lamb*. As a theological ethicist, Grimsrud wrote a theological commentary, not an exegetical one. The subtitle is “A Peaceable Reading of the Book of Revelation.” This book is unapologetically an attempt to read Revelation in support of peacemaking in the world today. Grimsrud locates himself in “the peaceable Revelation stream of interpretation” (4), which includes G. B. Caird, J. P. M. Sweet, Richard Bauckham, Vernard Eller, and others. He writes to make the peace theme “more central and obvious” (5).

In the introduction, Grimsrud defends the importance and value of Revelation for the world today. In discussing how to read Revelation, he knows he is interpreting “against the grain” of Revelation scholarship, and he is okay

with that. He works through Revelation section by section, elucidating how it consistently supports a peaceable theology.

Central to Grimsrud's argument is his conviction that there is little prediction in the book of Revelation. Even the beautiful New Jerusalem in Revelation 21–22 is not primarily a prediction about what *will happen*—a happy ending—but an invitation to see human history in a different way (249).

There are few true “futurists” among academic interpreters of Revelation today, in marked contrast to the many conservative evangelical interpreters. Nevertheless, most Revelation scholars see the central “disasters” in the book (seals, trumpets, plagues) as a prediction about how God will judge the guilty, the violent. These series form the center of Revelation 6–19. Amid these judgment scenes, which futurists see as chronological and nonfuturists see as parallel, scenes of worship and other mini narratives occasionally interrupt the flow of God's judgment.

Not so fast, says Grimsrud! The *worship scenes*, not the scenes of disaster, are the stepping stones that advance the plot. In Revelation, the author shows again and again *how* the Lamb conquers and *how* refusal to follow the Lamb results in suffering and disaster.

These are *in a way* scenes of judgment, expressions of God's wrath, but not in a direct way. Judgment is the result of sin and violence collapsing in on itself, of not following the Lamb. God's “wrath” is essentially impersonal. (Grimsrud could have cited 1 Macc 1:64.) God does not express wrath directly in a retributive justice-like punishment. “‘Wrath’ in Revelation generally has the sense of the processes of life” (159). “If God actually does think punishment will bring repentance and change, God is not very smart” (118). Although no rebellion of Satan or the powers can ultimately escape being at some level part of God's sovereign will, the Lamb's breaking of the seals is not primarily a revelation of God's *will*; it is a revelation of what is really going on in the world when people do not follow the way of the Lamb. The hermeneutical problem is that even readers of Revelation who are committed to peace theology often remain convinced that God's justice demands that evildoers will ultimately be killed or relegated to everlasting suffering, and that Revelation seeks to narrate that judgment in some imprecise or impressionistic way.

Grimsrud understands the shocking introduction of Jesus as a standing, slaughtered Lamb in Revelation 5 to be the key to understanding the rest of Revelation. I am convinced he is right about that. The power of the Lamb consists of his faithful witness to God and to the way of love. John uses the word “blood” *exclusively* with relation to followers of the Lamb. *At no point in Revelation* (not even in Rev 14 or Rev 19) does the word “blood” apply to the blood of those opposed to the Lamb.

Given the crucial centrality of Revelation 5, nothing that follows should be understood as contradicting that key revelation. “Only the evil powers are ex-

plicitly thrown into that lake. The ‘destroyers of the earth’ who are ‘destroyed’ are the powers, not the people” (18). There is a strong universal theme in Revelation: the victory celebrated in Revelation is for everyone!

The primary task of the follower of the Lamb is to emulate the Lamb in the Lamb’s faithful witness through “*hypomonē*.” Grimsrud likes Brian Blount’s translation of *hypomonē* as “nonviolent resistance” (*contra* the typical “patient endurance”), which my own research on Revelation confirms as the best translation.⁸

One feature of the book that will be helpful to some and irritating to others is that at the end of each chapter, Grimsrud pauses to suggest how the message of Revelation connects with contemporary social and political issues. He addresses American militarism, consumerism, lack of environmental commitment, and empire-like world domination. In Revelation’s historical context, Babylon pointed to Rome. In ours, Babylon points to the American empire. Throughout, Grimsrud regularly comments on contemporary political issues in the United States.

Although I disagree with some of Grimsrud’s arguments, I highly recommend this book. It is one of the most sustained and most successful examples of reading Revelation with the book’s redefinition of power front and central. Revelation continually reminds us of “our need to undergo a genuine revolution in how we conceive power, victory, and the character of God” (69)—so does Grimsrud. This book should inform all future discussions of Revelation’s ethics and its contribution to peace theology.

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⁸ Brian K. Blount, *Revelation: A Commentary*, New Testament Library (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2009), 42. See also Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Revelation: Vision of a Just World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 51, and my *The Lamb Christology of the Apocalypse of John: An Investigation into Its Origins and Rhetorical Force* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003).