Book Reviews

Claire Dawson and Mick Pope, *Climate of Hope: Church and Mission in a Warming World*, Dandenong, Victoria, Australia, 2014. 298 pp. ebook $5.95. ISBN: 9780994202321.

Climate of Hope is, surprisingly, a hopeful book. While the title should give as much away, hope characterizes the entire text in a way that is refreshing for a book on climate change—a topic that typically evokes doomsday metaphors. At the same time, *Climate of Hope* does not shy away from talking about the real dangers climate change poses; Dawson and Pope honestly wrestle with the current ecological crisis. Yet they also turn our trust toward a God who creates, redeems, and sustains the world—a God who calls the church to turn away from consumerism and denial to living in "climate truth."

The book is also hopeful in its ambition. It is directed at evangelicals—perhaps the most entrenched demographic in denial about both the reality and danger of climate change. Dawson and Pope, climate scientist and theologian respectively, are themselves evangelicals based in Australia, and as good communicators, they've consciously adjusted their content to speak to their audience. They engage many of the deeply held beliefs that evangelicals often use to deny the reality and gravity of climate change: God's sovereignty, dispensationalism, young-earth creationism, and the emphasis on salvation in the (often-nonmaterial) afterlife.

The structure of the book itself seems to follow a familiar revivalist pattern—biblical theology (section one), apologetics (sections two and three), testimonies (section four), and finally an altar call (section five). This familiarity in style is not to be misunderstood as accommodation. Rather, it helps the reader ease into the theological content, which seeks to turn standard evangelical theology on its feet and to provide a clear mandate to turn away from complicity in the destruction of God's good creation.

The theology of climate change presented in the book contextualizes the insights of missional theology to the ecological crisis. In other words, how does the whole church live out the life-giving mission of God in the face of climate change? Center stage is a critique of consumerism and the obsession with economic growth that is driving human-made climate change. The authors identify capitalism, especially in its current neoliberal version, as an imperial regime that colonizes land and resources as well as minds. Dawson and Pope present two countercultural alternatives that might even be attractive to non-Christians whose passion for the earth is ultimately spiritual in nature: "resisting" consumerism through a simple lifestyle and building communal resilience. Section four, titled "Stories of Hope," expands this missional strategy of building hospitable community modeling a post-carbon

future. Testimonies of neighborhood gardens, green investment, and political campaigns "fuel the imagination" beyond the constraints of individualism and neoliberal market-based solutions, providing examples to draw from if one chooses to follow the altar call to "live in climate truth."

I appreciate this theologically grounded and pragmatic introduction to creation care. Yet I wonder whether it is enough. Despite Dawson and Pope's critique of the way neoliberalism has conditioned us to think only of individuals, the main avenue for change that they sketch seems to be for middle-class individuals to make better consumer choices and petition governments to change. While they name other avenues, I fear these are lost to readers unfamiliar with the topic because of the offhand way they are lifted up. For example, they briefly mention using civil disobedience campaigns to hasten transition to green energy, but then they continue to use the term "resistance" primarily as a call for shopping less.

While I was reading *Climate of Hope*, tropical storms destroyed Puerto Rico and Houston (Texas), and a fire fueled by drought burned for weeks in California. Yet the media commentary seldom connected these events to climate change. This shows the necessity of talking about climate change, including what is most needed to address it. I do not believe mere individualistic self-restraint is enough. We need collective resistance to the fossil fuel industries, demanding a just transition to green energy. And we need it now.

Climate of Hope may not go far enough in addressing this need, but nevertheless, it is an important book. With its accessible language and helpful summaries at the beginning of each chapter, it is ideal for Sunday schools or small groups beginning to wrestle with the reality of climate change. Dawson and Pope address their text specifically to Australian evangelicals, but the message is just as applicable to their North American or European sisters and brothers. Anabaptists will resonate with the book's emphasis on communal discipleship and "living more with less." Yet we should also ask how our imaginations are captive to individualism and economic privilege, and pursue ways to participate in the movement to end fossil fuel extraction. We must also resist the false dichotomy between ecology and "just work" for all, and seize the opportunity of transitioning to green energy as an avenue for creating more equitable economic structures as well.

Climate of Hope has inspired me and given me hope; it's encouraging to see that this debate is happening in parts of the evangelical community. Personally, it's helped me reflect on how I talk about climate change to ""the unconverted," whether Christian or not. And I'm reconsidering how my choices line up with my values and how they point others to a post-carbon future. While our individual choices are not enough, and only collective resistance to fossil fuel extraction and collective pursuit of a green transition stand a chance, it remains true that example inspires

more than words. May the church hear the groaning of a creation and heed the call to "live in climate truth."

Benjamin Isaak-Krauss, originally from Germany, studies theology and peace studies (MDiv) at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Indiana, and bikes most places to offset flying home over Christmas.

Enaya Hammad Othman, *Negotiating Palestinian Womanhood: Encounters between Palestinian Women and American Missionaries, 1880s–1940s*, Lexington Books, Lanham, MD, 2016. 217 pp. ISBN: 978-1-4985-0923-7.

Anyone with a passing knowledge of Ramallah in West Bank, Palestine, will be familiar with the Ramallah Friends School. An internationally respected institution, it now serves almost 1,400 students in grades pre-K to 12. Enaya Hammad Othman's book focuses on the school's history from the 1880s through the 1940s, particularly on the Friends Girls' School as a site of interaction between the American Quaker missionary women and Palestinian female students and staff. She examines the ways this education influenced gender expression and national identity.

The author grew up in the Ramallah area and graduated from nearby Birzeit University. There is great value in a book about Quaker mission in Palestine being written by a scholar with firsthand knowledge of Palestinian life and culture; because of her background, Othman is able to share a perspective and understanding that similar works lack. As a researcher, Hammad Othman does not inject her personal perspective; however, her background allows her to be aware of avenues to pursue that may not have been clear to other researchers whose perspectives align with those of the mission workers.

A focus of the Friends School was to enhance the students' skills in the domestic sphere—to be effective wives and mothers. In the late 1800s, this domestic focus clearly depended on the superiority of Western ways. Missionaries described Palestinian homes as dirty and dim, with little understanding that the thick stone walls of traditional homes were intentionally built to endure the hot climate. They also described traditions as strange and food as unappealing. In addition, they taught and lauded a wide variety of sewing skills without realizing that sewing, as evidenced by the long tradition of detailed regional embroidery work, was a skill already prized and taught by the Palestinians.

In 1889, a Syrian Arab woman, Katie Gabriel, was hired as a head teacher and served as mediator. Former student Anisa Ma'louf said of the position: "This was not an easy task; it was a very difficult one because of the constant differences among the foreign employees within the mission, every newcomer mistakenly tried to implement (his/her) ideas in the new position. So it was up to Katie to fix these mistakes and ease the missionaries' method of interaction with the nationals" (50).