

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

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**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).

Arab culture is very gracious to the guest. I wonder if the missionaries were aware of this work that Gabriel did on their behalf.

By the 1920s, missionaries were better prepared culturally, mentally, and with language training. They now admired and found appealing the same foods, dress, and traditions that earlier missionaries had scorned. Such a change was facilitated by the ability to see value in something different rather than holding one's own culture as the standard and finding anything different to be lacking. When you have declared something lacking, you become certain of your right to change it.

Over time, the Quakers, as well as some other Protestant mission groups, came to decide that in Palestine success could not be measured by converts (who were very few). Hanan Ashwari, a graduate of the Friends Girls' School, relates what her mother told the mission workers when they came to her door: "You didn't have to come here. We don't need missionaries to come all the way from the United States to Palestine. We are the ones who know Christianity directly, culturally, historically. Jesus was born here, right next door" (12). Mania David, a 1925 graduate of the school, noted that "[the Friends'] manner of worship and teaching is that of simplicity and informality . . . do not appeal to the oriental mind which is inclined to formal and gorgeous worship" (121).

Instead, success would be measured through "the way they shaped the character of their students who absorbed the Quakers' ideals and acted upon them in their lives after graduation" (121). Hammad Othman notes that despite the school's commitment to Christian religious instruction for all students, the number of Muslim students enrolled in the school only grew. Palestinian families then and now, regardless of faith, value education and so seek out the best they are able to for their children. Muslim families, she writes, found the Quaker values of simplicity, peacemaking, and collaboration universal and therefore palatable.

While telling the central story of Friends School, Hammad Othman also gives her readers glimpses of what it felt like to live in the years prior to the *Nakba*, the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. When the school opened, the area was under Ottoman Empire rule as it had been since the early 1500s, its seat in modern-day Turkey. Following WWI, the school was under the jurisdiction of the British Mandate. In 1937, the American Friends in Ramallah Mission reported home

that "ill-feeling and bitterness has been stirred up among the Arabs in Palestine because the President of the United States and the Federal Council of Churches in America have gone on record as favoring and encouraging the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jews, without considering the unethical elements in the movement as now carried on."

These actions were "sowing the seeds of war" (164).

This book grew out of Hammad Othman's dissertation, so it reads like a scholarly work. Her exhaustive research will benefit anyone seeking to understand the effect of mission efforts intersecting with education. Though it is tempting to skip pages of footnotes in chunks, extra details are hidden here that, for the interested reader, serve as a guide for further knowledge. (For instance, a former student is quoted from what turns out to be her 1939 book on the first 70 years of the Quaker mission in Ramallah—though I was disappointed to realize it's only in Arabic.) The author's sources range from the microfiche of multiple Quaker college libraries to archives at the Friends School in Ramallah to interviews with former teachers and students, as well as their personal papers in private family collections.

Hammad Othman is assistant professor of Arabic Language and cultural studies at Marquette University (Milwaukee, WI), and founder of the Arab and Muslim Women's Research and Resource Institute. The latter uses oral histories and other means to combat stereotypes and raise awareness of the situation of Arab and Muslim women in the United States. I look forward to the work Hammad Othman will continue to produce on these subjects.

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**Vincent W. Lloyd, *Black Natural Law*, Oxford University Press, New York, NY, 2016. 200 pp. \$53.00. ISBN: 9780199362189.**

As a white, male, middle-class ministering person living in the untreated, stolen territory of what is now known as the Fraser Valley of British Columbia, I come to this dynamic text saturated with the influence of my privileged experience. My ministry experience in this Canadian context has required that I encounter people whose social status, gender, sexuality, and/or race are different from mine. And as I encounter these divinely crafted people, I am simultaneously confronted with my morality—that is, my understandings of law and nature, what is “right” and “good” and “ought to be”—and that which informs the performance of my particular morality. Natural law, according to Vincent Lloyd, is a rich and variegated tradition, imagined and practiced by many communities, including Jewish, Christian, and Muslim. But according to Lloyd, it is the black community and black natural law that “gets things right” (ix).

I find Lloyd's claim provocative and persuasive. Black natural law offers a stunning critique of the sociological ideologies that lay the foundation for oppression. It assumes the integrity of all humans—which is the basis for its “normativity”—and asserts that we can know “God's law,” “the dictates of conscience, or simply justice” (5). But, and this is key, it contends that blacks are “in a particularly privileged position with regard to natural law” (xiii). Like liberation theology, with its episte-