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C. Arnold Snyder. *Faith and Toleration: A Reformation Debate Revisited*. Winnipeg, MB: Canadian Mennonite University Press, 2018.

This book is a published version of the J.J. Thiessen and John and Margaret Friesen lectures delivered at Canadian Mennonite University on October 30-31, 2017. Many Protestants treat October 31, the date Martin Luther is said to have posted the 95 Theses on the door of the castle church in Wittenberg, as the beginning of the Reformation, and 2017 was widely celebrated as its 500th anniversary. It is only fitting, then, that lectures on faith and toleration from a Mennonite perspective be held to complement and challenge triumphalist celebrations of the event, especially those that credit it with beginning the process that led to calls for religious toleration in the West. Drawing on his work in a long and distinguished career as a historian of Anabaptism, Arnold Snyder addresses a topic whose contemporary relevance is uncontested. At the center of his message is a call for religious tolerance based in Christian humility to supplement secular arguments developed during the Enlightenment.

Snyder begins by revisiting Luther's challenge to the authority of the medieval church based on the authority of scripture. He explains how this led logically to the espousal of a principle of religious toleration, but subsequently, as the Reformation came to rely on the power of the state, Luther and other magisterial Reformers betrayed that principle. He then follows the developing case for compulsion in matters of belief in the hands of the Reformers and explains both how Anabaptists challenged the Reformers' conclusions and how they lived among their neighbors in rural communities of Switzerland, often peacefully and unmolested by authorities, despite official policies of intolerance.

The book's origins as a series of public lectures are evident throughout. It makes for an easy and enjoyable read. Snyder assumes that his listeners/readers have some knowledge of the history of the Protestant Reformation and of Anabaptism, but otherwise this volume is a very good general introduction to the topic. Furthermore, although the history he relates of the origins and development of Anabaptism and of its critique of the magisterial Reformation is not new, he updates it well, and his citations point interested readers to a wealth of new research, especially into the history of the Swiss

Brethren in the later 16th and 17th centuries. Possibly more importantly, he effectively emphasizes the urgent need for a serious discussion of a Gospel-based critique of religious intolerance to complement the secular critique derived from the Enlightenment. In fact, if anything, this point could have been made more forcefully. Research into the development of toleration more generally (e.g., Richard Tuck, "Scepticism and Toleration in the Seventeenth Century," in Susan Mendes, ed. *Justifying Toleration: Conceptual and Historical Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1988, 21-36) has suggested that the scepticism about religious truth seen to lie at the basis of so much of the Enlightenment enterprise could, and sometimes did, lead as easily to calls for religious intolerance as to calls for tolerance in early modern Europe.

On two other matters Snyder might have engaged more fully with recent literature on the topic of early modern toleration. First, his account at times appears to endorse common perceptions of a linear development of religious toleration from the early modern into the modern period of Western history. Yet, as the work of István Bejczy has shown, medieval forbearance of religious difference could sometimes be more "tolerant" than the principles espoused in the Renaissance and Reformation. (See "Tolerantia: A Medieval Concept," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 58 (1997): 365-84.) Second, our understanding of the development of religious toleration, and the role of Anabaptists in it, has changed significantly in recent years. Traditionally, practical toleration was treated as a consequence of great statements of the principle developed by people such as John Locke, and in some circles at least, Anabaptists were given credit for laying the groundwork for these principles. More recently, though, scholars have concluded that the practical toleration of everyday life was more likely the cause than the consequence of philosophical and official pronouncements. At this point, investigations of Anabaptist roles in this grassroots toleration are largely still in their infancy. Snyder hints at valuable avenues for that research, but he does not fully develop them.

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