Massimo Capuani. *Christian Egypt: Coptic Art and Monuments Through Two Millennia*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2002; John W. Kiser. *The Monks of Tibhirine: Faith, Love, and Terror in Algeria*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002; Mary Jo Weaver. *Cloister and Community: Life Within a Carmelite Monastery*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002.

Whether it is a nun in habit or an Old Order person in a crowded public place, one encounters parallel attitudes of deference and discomfort. What to make of such folk who stand so clearly apart? Is their appearance – simple, outdated, black clothing – just superficially similar? Old Orders and monastics both try to live out the full counsels and implications of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount: nonconformity, simplicity and poverty, nonresistance, mutual aid.

Does monasticism have anything to do with, or say to, Anabaptism? Debate on this question has raged for centuries, ever since Protestants in the Reformation period (Luther being one) and as recently as the twentieth century drew disparaging comparisons between Anabaptists and monastics. The debate occasionally emerges in the pages of this journal as well. I live out such tensions as I encounter ambivalence among Mennonites to the fact that I am a Benedictine Oblate.

Three recent books consider monasticism, and they all suggest that whether Mennonites claim monastic ancestry or not, we have much to appreciate and learn. *Christian Egypt: Coptic Art and Monuments Through Two Millennia* deals with Coptic Orthodoxy, a Christian stream that today includes nine million people and is the largest Christian community in the Middle East. Coptic Orthodoxy practises rich and elaborate liturgies, and boasts some of the church's greatest theologians.

This Eastern tradition had its greatest influence on Christianity by being a major originator of monasticism. Early desert father and mother experiments in solitude and community fed directly into western monasticism, as is clear in the *Rule of St. Benedict*.

There were many reasons for the emergence of monasticism, but one was rejection of the church's affluence and establishment under Constantine. Not only Anabaptists see "Constantinianism" as problematic. Desert fathers and mothers strove to live literally by Jesus' counsels, especially the Sermon on the Mount. We who advocate nonviolence and nonresistance can still be

heartened and inspired by their example. Furthermore, monasticism was intended as a movement by and for lay people; priests were suspect. Sound familiar? Anabaptists can also relate to the fact that Copts regularly experienced persecution, destruction, and discrimination, right until this very day. Many Copts now live in a world-wide diaspora. One remarkable fact becomes clear: Coptic Christianity not only launched hundreds of monasteries, but is a church deeply formed by monasticism. To this day, its most important leaders come from monasteries. And the Coptic Church today is experiencing dramatic renewal, under the leadership of its Pope, a monk.

This lovely coffee-table book details Coptic buildings (churches, monasteries), sculptures, and icons that still exist. The surviving buildings, some almost 2,000 years old, are remarkable, especially as most were built with mud. A great pleasure is the stunningly beautiful color photos of various artifacts. A problem with volume, though, is that it covers a lot, perhaps too much.

Mary Jo Weaver's *Cloister and Community* is also coffee-table size, but focuses only on a small Carmelite monastery in Indianapolis. Weaver, a noted Catholic theologian, has an amicable relationship with this monastery. She set out to write a history of its striking building, which looks like a medieval European castle. Along the way, she works in a brief history of monasticism (also noting its rejection of Constantinianism), a survey of Carmelite monasticism in particular, an examination of various aspects of Saint Teresa of Avila's spiritual theology, and the history of the Indianapolis community. She sometimes jumps too abruptly from one topic to the next. At times – in contrast with Capuani – she gives too much detail about one place. But those quibbles aside, her book is delightful. Much will appeal to the Anabaptist reader, especially the grounded sense of the importance of balancing practical work and prayer. Not everything will sit comfortably with the reader, however. The reality of enclosure is difficult to grasp (a concept now also rejected by these particular Carmelites).

The Carmelite nuns gained a clearer vision of how to relate and minister to the wider world. They moved, says Weaver, from sealing themselves from the world to "a long and prayerful journey . . . to a perception that the world itself is a sacred space." Once enclosed and visible to no one, forbidden to see even their family, they now have a wonderful website, www.praythenews.com, which, among other things, helps people reflect prayerfully on world events.

They have also produced an inclusive Psalter and one of the most useful and accessible Daily Offices currently available, *People's Companion to the Breviary*.

In some ways, *The Monks of Tibhirine* will stretch our sensibilities the least. The commitment of these Trappists to ministry to the poor and witnessing for peace relates well to Anabaptist priorities. In other ways, partially because of the resonance, this will challenge us all the more. The Trappist monastery at Tibhirine in Algeria was established in 1938. A turbulent century of violence in that country had cost 60,000 to 100,000 lives. In spite of repeated threats of violence, the monks insisted on a prayerful witness of love and hospitality among Muslim neighbors. Many recognized the spirit of Trappist monasticism as closely related to Muslim values. (Muslims are often shocked by how little Christians pray, a charge that does not apply to Trappists.) In 1996, however, Islamic militants kidnapped and killed seven Trappists in an act that shocked the world. It shocked Algerians too, and some saw it as a turning point in Algerian politics. The Trappists knew the risk of staying in a country where militants ordered all foreigners to leave, but declared that if they were to lose their lives to terrorism then they would make this sacrifice willingly.

Author John Kiser was struck by how well these monks related to Muslims, especially when Christians have "all too often been bad advertisements for Christianity – dividing and excluding, rather than uniting people. . . ." He admirably meets his purpose of telling "a story of love and reconciliation amid fear and hatred." The Trappists wrestled hard, and often, with whether to stay or leave. They were not interested in collective suicide. But in the end they opted for staying close to their suffering neighbors. They managed a witness of peace and reconciliation, even offering blessings to their killers, a remarkable story in an era that is terrified about terrorism. Of the books reviewed, I shall most likely return to this one. I appreciate its narrative quality and Kiser's insights into monastic life and history.

In the final analysis, it probably does not matter whether Anabaptists acknowledge an indebtedness to monasticism, but all three of these books challenge us to deeper faithfulness – and that is an indebtedness that no-one should ignore.

Arthur Paul Boers, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, IN

Esther Epp-Tiessen, *J. J. Thiessen: A Leader for his Time*. Winnipeg, MB: CMBC Publications, 2001.

Esther Epp-Tiessen opens with the acknowledgment, "I never knew J. J. Thiessen personally." My own interest in this biography is linked to the fact that I did get to know Thiessen, when I was a university student attending First Mennonite Church in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan in the early 1960s. The photo of J. J. on the book cover launched my eager engagement with this story of his life. His grin got me in touch again with the fun-loving, confident, and caring pastor he was for me during my university years. I also observed his right hand, which appears prominently in this portrait. That was the hand that I felt on my shoulder when J. J. spoke the call, "Jake, I want you to consider the ministry."

This biography chronicles the emergence of Jacob Johan Thiessen as a major figure within the Canadian Mennonite story. His story from his birth in southern Russia in 1893 to his death in Saskatoon in 1977 is deeply intertwined with significant developments among Mennonites in Saskatchewan and beyond. It is abundantly evident that Epp-Tiessen engaged in thorough research to portray the life and contribution of this gifted leader. The "Sources and Bibliography" section at the book's conclusion identifies numerous secondary and primary sources, including interviews and conversations with people acquainted with Thiessen.

A Leader for His Time is organized into eleven chapters, each focusing on a period in Thiessen's life. The first four chapters trace his beginnings in Russia, his schooling, his early vocation as a teacher, and his work with the initial emigration of Mennonites to America. Successive chapters chronicle the Thiessen family's beginnings in Canada, J. J.'s early ministry in Saskatoon, and his expanding ministry during the Second World War. Chapters 8 and 9 deal with his travels and committee work internationally and within the Canadian conference. The final chapters detail what the author views as major "winds of change" during the 1950s and 1960s, plus the ways in which Thiessen made the transition from active ministry to retirement. In each chapter, the author effectively weaves together Thiessen's biography with narratives about Mennonite life and analysis of the larger local, national, and international scene.

This monograph makes a substantive contribution. Epp-Tiessen is careful to support her telling of the story by referring to primary sources, but she also occasionally offers more conjectural types of interpretation. Internal signals help the reader to know when interpretation of history moves into more narrative embellishment. For example, the author introduces a section on her subject's early faith development with, "This much we can surmise" (17). On a few occasions she may be overly dramatic, as in comments about "the veritable gale" of change that Thiessen had to deal with during the 1950s and '60s. All in all, however, Epp-Tiessen has done a masterful job of presenting a balanced story of a man whose legacy looms large within Canadian Mennonite history. She lets the record of Thiessen's accomplishments speak for itself while also discussing candidly some conflicts in which Thiessen became enmeshed.

A Leader for His Time can serve as a timely resource for congregational, college, or seminary studies. Thiessen made his contribution as a strong leader with multiple roles and responsibilities. This book serves as a good case study for discernment about what constitutes effective leadership in the church today, and how expectations have evolved within recent generations. Case studies could also be done in other areas. How does one preach and teach the Mennonite peace ethic among people who are at various stages in their convictions about peacemaking and citizenship? How does one maintain unity within the church while remaining committed to certain articulations of Christian orthodoxy?

Another fascinating aspect of reading this book was to sense the social location of its author. Epp-Tiessen frequently comments that leadership patterns within the church no longer can be as male-dominated or hierarchical as they were during Thiessen's lifetime. J. J. would say a hearty "amen."

Jacob W. Elias, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, IN

L. Gregory Jones and Stephanie Paulsell, eds., *The Scope of Our Art: The Vocation of the Theological Teacher*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2002.

"The scope of our art is to give wings to the soul. . . ," so Gregory of Nazianzuz (190). This image by a fourth-century theologian provides an underlying unity to this book of essays. To speak about theological teaching as "art" is in tune with understanding a job or career as a creative vocation. To talk about giving "wings to the soul" is ambiguous and dynamic enough so that both the formation of the scholar/teacher and that of the students can be included. And the variety of viewpoints in these essays conveys both the broad scope of the subject matter and the depth of the conversation among fourteen Catholic and Protestant scholars. I sensed that the space for mutual learning created during one-week-long consultations held at the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion over three consecutive summers has borne good fruit.

The essays are gathered together under three themes which intersect in various ways. In the first section the focus is on the formative practices of the teacher, that is, on study and research usually associated with a very concrete location, the desk. To understand reading and writing as spiritual disciplines is to put a different spin on the term academic "disciplines". So does imagining contemplation as being central to the chaotic and very diffused life of a scholar. Yet, the connection between spirituality and everyday work is drawn deliberately in these chapters. Becoming attentive and mindful about what we read and write, and becoming attentive to both God and neighbor are intertwined. This section ends with an account of how one scholar was shaped by someone with whom she shared "vocational kinship" (75). Attentiveness to that kinship can enhance our scholarly journey.

The second section shifts to the classroom. But there is also a noticeable shift in these essays to new conversation partners, the students, who can tell us much about teaching/learning. Though the power dynamics of the teacher/student relationship are acknowledged, the emphasis here is on the mutuality of the search for truth. Despite the many obstacles, this openness to each other can turn a simple circle of learning into a "site of a bonfire" where "fleeting manifestations of the sacred blaze up, and the God who speaks

consumes us" (119). The context of teaching is explored and diagnosed in this section. As a result teaching can be understood as a ministry of hope or as a practice of ceaseless prayer. Whether the institution understands itself as an "abbey, academy or apostolate"(40), it will need to cultivate wisdom in order to meet the challenges of this new age of globalization and consumerism.

As the essays move to the institution in which teaching takes place, another agenda begins to emerge. What if jobs are not readily available? Can one still practice the vocation of a theological teacher in the "outback"? How does one discern one's calling when decisions must be made about administrative tasks and teaching? How are professors affected if the institution has different visions than their own? What struck me here was the important contribution of mentors on the journey of claiming our work as a vocation. Whether these mentors come to us in writings from the past or include colleagues and companions from church or university, their insights and support are very much needed.

I wondered whether the frequent use of the term "formation " signaled an assumption that theological learning is always a gradual process. Only small hints were given that radical transformation and conversion are also needed as we required to look at the world through enlightened eyes and informed minds.

For scholars like myself who name our work a vocation, this book encourages us to think deeply about what we are engaged in and is a stimulation for further thought. But it also contains a profound challenge to the utilitarian focus of postmodern educational philosophies. Therefore it is especially recommended for administrators in our seminaries and graduate schools who need to attend to the spiritual shaping of professors and students in the midst of demands for thorough job preparation and career planning.

Lydia Neufeld Harder, Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, ON; Toronto School of Theology, Toronto, ON.

Lawrence Klippenstein and Jacob Dick. *Mennonite Alternative Service in Russia: The Story of Abram Dück and His Colleagues, 1911–1917*. Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2002. Calvin W. Redekop. *The Pax Story: Service in the Name of Christ, 1951–1976*. Telford, PA: Pandora Press US, 2001.

These two books tell quite different and fascinating stories about Mennonite alternatives to military service – stories widely separated in terms of geography, time, political context, cultural ethos, language, and forms of service permitted by the government (and acceptable to the Mennonite community). Yet they reflect a common desire on the part of Mennonites to avoid killing in their countries' wars and, over time and on the part of many, a desire to find constructive alternatives to combatant service that would entail something of the sacrifice of combatant service but that would meet human needs, needs often caused by war.

Mennonite Alternative Service in Russia opens with an excellent short essay by Lawrence Klippenstein tracing the history of "Mennonites and Military Service in Russia" from the first Mennonite settlement in 1789 until the end of World War I. When conscription was introduced and Mennonites protested, the Russian government initially offered the opportunity for Mennonites to perform noncombatant medical service, but this was rejected. Instead Mennonite leaders negotiated an arrangement through which Mennonite young men would be placed in forestry camps near Mennonite settlements, with Mennonites managing the camps and covering basic expenses. There were reports of poor discipline in some of the camps and a concern about the significance of such work and its relevance to pacifism, a concern heard again later in the U.S. about some assignments in CPS and 1-W. The war with Japan in 1904-05 saw Mennonite alternative service expanded to include medical work through the Red Cross. Many young men were enthusiastic about this possibility, while church elders were more skeptical. After the war ended quickly, debate over appropriate forms of service continued, along with expansion of the forestry camps. By early 1914 more than 1,200 Mennonites were in the camps.

As war loomed on the horizon that summer, the editor of the Mennonite newspaper *Friedensstimme* asked, "Do we not owe it to our government

and Russian neighbors to show that if a war . . . broke out, we would be ready to serve the interests of the Fatherland [Russia], and to help the needy?" (22) There seemed to be agreement that this service should not include fighting, but should include an active binding up of wounds. This resulted in the establishment of hospitals in Mennonite communities and in the departure of many men from forestry service to work as medical orderlies. Working together with Russian volunteer organizations, Mennonites established a "Mennonite Units Service Center" in Moscow to administer the caring for and transporting of wounded soldiers. Medical service was apparently the major form of alternative service but forestry work continued, and 700 Mennonites supervised a large prisoner of war camp. Responding to war needs drew Mennonites closer to the war effort – an interesting and troubling experience, by no means unique to them.

The second and longer part of *Mennonite Alternative Service in Russia*, written by Jacob Dick, tells the story of his father and a number of his colleagues who did alternative service in Russia between 1911 and 1917. Beginning with forestry service and moving to medical service, the account traces their experiences through narrative and a rich collection of photographs. Much of the text consists of excerpts from a memoir by John Mathies, a close friend of the author's father. It is a gripping story that opens a window on the dangers and wrestlings they faced during the war. Like others doing alternative service in later generations, they were exposed to realities far beyond their own relatively sheltered communities, and faced situations testing their strength and their convictions. The combination of narration and photos effectively transports us into their world. An impressive thread through the stories is the desire of these men to help others, often at significant risk to themselves. "I carried many a wounded or diseased person on my back," says one. "They were all so happy, whether friend or foe. To me they were all friends. I'm so thankful to God that I had opportunity to do this work. I like to believe the Mennonites were called to do this task and that they carried out this task as medical personnel in a trustworthy manner" (80-81).

The Pax Story is set in the mid-twentieth century and focuses on Mennonites in North America. It fills a significant niche in the larger story of Mennonite wrestling with war, and documents the development of the service ethos which has characterized Mennonites. Although it includes information

from a wide variety of sources and covers the entire twenty-five years of the Pax program's existence, it reflects substantially the involvement, memories, and documents of its author, sociologist Calvin Redekop. Thus it focuses mostly on the early years and the European side of the Pax experience. It tells of the effort to gain approval for service outside United States for conscientious objectors (something that had been sought in World War II but was denied) and of the strong sense of call to find a positive, costly alternative to military service. Good attention is given to the interaction between Europeans, especially European Mennonites, and MCC in the early years of Pax.

It is worthwhile to compare threads from these two books and raise questions about them. The alternative service programs they describe both arose as responses to conscription. But while Pax had its birth in conjunction with a renewal of conscription in the U.S., and while a large majority of men who served in Pax did so as an alternative to that conscription, there were also volunteers, especially from Canada. Pax did not consist only of conscripted men, as the program in Russia apparently did. In addition, *The Pax Story*, in contrast to *Mennonite Alternative Service in Russia*, tells the story of only a small minority of young Mennonites drafted by the U.S. government in Pax's twenty-five years: 1,200 out of 20,000 men drafted served in Pax (19). (Another book, to my knowledge still waiting to be written, would tell the story of 1-W service during the same years.) How did these differences affect the two programs? Would a service program similar to MCC have grown out of World War I experiences in Russia had conditions permitted it?

Like medical service in Russia, Pax (1) grew out of a desire to bind up the wounds of war, rather than to participate in war; (2) grew out of frustration with the relative meaninglessness of some work to which earlier conscientious objectors had been assigned; and (3) represented a desire to do something peaceful, meaningful, yet somehow "equivalent" to soldiers' hard and dangerous work. In both settings we see a rejection of the "quiet in the land" mentality which seeks to avoid participation in war but feels little obligation to make substantial contribution to healing or peacemaking. Yet there also seem to be key differences. The early forestry service in Russia seems very similar to CPS, with Mennonites administering the camps in both cases. Yet during World War II, and in the Pax era, Mennonites in North America as churches did not support noncombatant medical service working in conjunction with

armies, as happened in Russia. Rather, most clearly in Pax, the focus was on meeting humanitarian needs of noncombatants. Was this primarily due to living and serving away from current wars, or picking up after wars? Did it represent a more critical, less "patriotic" stance toward one's own government? (I found the expressions of Russian patriotism from Mennonites at the time of World War I rather surprising.)

While neither of these books definitively answers how Mennonite Christians should respond when governments seek military (or alternative) service from us, they offer wisdom for any who seek a faithful answer. And there is inspiration in them. The stories they tell remind us that creative, courageous, and costly solutions to this problem have been worked out, however imperfect they might be. Even more, they press the fundamental question upon us – in times of no conscription no less than in times of conscription: How do we live out our faith as Christian pacifists in ways that exemplify rejection of war and love of neighbor/enemy?

Ted Koontz, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, IN

Kimberley D. Schmidt, Diane Zimmerman Umble, and Steven D. Reschly, eds., *Strangers at Home: Amish and Mennonite Women in History*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2002.

This collection of fifteen essays has its roots in a 1995 academic conference at Millersville University in Pennsylvania, entitled "The Quiet in the Land? Women of Anabaptist Traditions in Historic Perspective." The conference brought together scholars engaged in using gender analysis as a tool for studying Amish and Mennonite history.

The title *Strangers at Home* articulates one of the book's recurring themes – namely, that women's experience has made women both insiders and outsiders within various Anabaptist communities. They are insiders by virtue of their existence and participation in the community; but they are outsiders because, as members of patriarchal groups, their voices and the articulation of their experience have been limited. The various essays examine

this insider-outsider dynamic within a range of historic, geographic, and denominational contexts, from the sixteenth century to the present, from Europe to Paraguay to the United States, from Old Order Amish to Quaker to evangelical Mennonite.

The editors and writers are self-conscious about their own "social location" and examine the insider-outsider dynamic as a methodological issue for themselves. They acknowledge, for example, the dilemma of academically trained scholars seeking to "uncover" and analyze stories of groups that have traditionally eschewed higher education. Such scholars may be insiders in that they have roots in the Anabaptist-Mennonite family, but they may be outsiders by virtue of the rigorous training that separates them from the people they are trying to study. There is a sense that the experience of being both inside and outside has something to teach us.

The essays examine a wide range of historical issues, sometimes offering sharp challenges to traditional interpretations. Jeni Hiett Umble, for example, explores the issue of class among early Anabaptist women; whereas previous scholarship noted that most Anabaptists came from the peasant classes, this does not appear true of women. Cathy Ann Trotta tells the story of Martha Moser Voth, Mennonite missionary among the Hopi people in the late nineteenth century and how her experience as a woman enabled her to become an insider in a way her husband could not. Beth Graybill explores plain dress and its multiple meanings for Conservative Mennonite women in eastern Pennsylvania. Margaret Reynolds analyzes a highly symbolic ritual of breadmaking among Old Order River Brethren and how it re-affirms women's subservient role in the community. Roy Loewen examines diaries, account books, newspaper columns, and family biographies to demonstrate the changing self-perceptions of twentieth-century Mennonite women in Meade, Kansas. In a concluding essay, Jane Marie Pederson argues that Amish and Mennonite communities have responded to the crisis of modernism and the threat of assimilation by shoring up male authority on the one hand and women's subordination on the other.

One might expect such a book to leave an overwhelming sense of the disempowerment of Anabaptist women at the hands of male patriarchy, but it does not. This is one of the book's strengths. It examines how women have acted from within positions and traditions of subordination to question,

challenge, and re-shape those realities. Women are not only "acted upon," they are actors themselves.

Canadian readers will be disappointed that their reality is not really reflected in this volume, except perhaps by inference. Although three of the contributors are Canadian, their essays are ironically about developments in Europe, Paraguay, and Kansas. Only one contributor, poet Julia Kasdorf, consciously examines the work of Canadian poets. If the book intended to speak to North American – as opposed to American – realities, as suggested on page one, it falls short.

I also experienced some discomfort in how a number of writers referred to Anabaptist groups exclusively as "ethnic" groups. While "ethnic" considerations do feature prominently in the life of certain communities, I felt that there is insufficient attention given to issues of faith and spirituality. Moreover, there is little acknowledgement that Anabaptist communities today may include people from beyond the original Dutch-North German, Swiss-South German, or Moravian streams. I wonder how the book will be perceived by Mennonites who are African-American, Hispanic, or who descend from some other non-European tradition.

Nevertheless, *Strangers at Home* represents a fine sampling of the work of a new generation of historians and other scholars using the lens of gender to examine Amish and Mennnonite history and, to some extent, sociology and literature. As such, this collection represents a fresh and much needed approach to Anabaptist studies.

Esther Epp-Tiessen, Mennonite Central Committee Canada, Winnipeg

Miroslav Volf and Dorothy C. Bass (eds.) *Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.

Just as theory is privileged over practice in the academy, so in most religious circles theology takes precedence over practice. Since most Mennonite scholars before John Howard Yoder wrote very little or no theology, our language has languished, often seeming inadequate to the task of describing our own profoundly experiential tradition to other Christians. Sometimes it

takes theologians from outside our tradition to help us find new language. Yale professor Miroslav Volf and Dorothy C. Bass, director of the Valparaiso Project on the Education and Formation of People in Faith, and the other authors of *Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life* have therefore given a gift to the larger academic and religious world which we would do well to study, discuss, and address.

Volf and Bass have written and edited other books on which the current volume builds. Volf's *Exclusion and Embrace: Theological Reflections on Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), broke exciting new ground in using current theory to bring the biblical mandate for reconciliation to life. Bass's *Practicing Our Faith* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997) and *Receiving the Day: Christian Practices for Opening the Gift of Time* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000) helped to elevate the value of disciplined Christian living while enlarging the definition of what such living includes.

Practicing Theology includes several essays that not only offer a theology of practice but also ground all theology in practice, something even more radical. Some of the most important words in the book appear in the final chapter, where Volf writes, "my contention is that *at the heart of every good theology lies not simply a plausible intellectual vision but more importantly a compelling account of a way of life, and that theology is therefore best done from within the pursuit of this way of life*" (247). The italics underscore the contrarian point Volf is making, and help point the way for future scholars in the Mennonite tradition.

Defined by Bass as "patterns of cooperative human activity in and through which life together takes shape over time in response to and in the light of God as known in Jesus Christ" (3), Christian practices are lived theology. In "A Theological Understanding of Christian Practices," a chapter co-authored by Bass and Lilly Endowment, Inc.'s vice-president for religion Craig Dykstra, the definition of practice enlarges. It includes activities that "address fundamental human needs in response to and in the light of God's active presence for the life of the world"(18). Their aptly named "problem of the too big and the too small" is a gap between large belief and quotidian practice that all thirteen of the writers try to close by reflecting on their own, different, traditions.

The one Anabaptist writer, Gilbert I. Bond, an assistant professor at Yale Divinity School and former assistant pastor of Chicago First Church of the Brethren, tells the only extended personal narrative in the collection. Bond employs a slightly exaggerated, ironic, style ("she was one of the tent-poles of the church – Brethren Churches don't have pillars," 143) in a story that describes numerous clashes between worship and service practices in the Brethren and Afro-Baptist communities. The methodology, if not the tone, might be useful to other Anabaptist scholars. Those involved in educational leadership will find L. Gregory Jones's chapter helpful for building up an Anabaptist theology of education.

The final chapter by Volf is theological writing at its best, at once layered with allusion to his vast biblical scope and his knowledge of thinkers across human history and at the heart's core, simple and profound. Volf artfully complicates, simplifies, and complicates again with the result that he does not tie up the ends of a paradox into a perfect bow. Instead, he makes a series of bows and lets the ends free to play out with the assumption that by God's grace they finally complete the circle.

Like all collections, this book will offer more to some readers than to others, and some chapters may not appeal at all. The lingering effect, however, will be to inspire desire for intellectual, spiritual – incarnate – abundance. Dykstra and Bass point to this state of grace at the end of their chapter by quoting Ephesians 3, wherein we find testimony to the "breadth and length and height and depth of the love of Christ" which is "beyond knowledge."

Shirley H. Showalter, President, Goshen College, Goshen, IN

Thomas L. Shaffer, *Moral Memoranda from John Howard Yoder: Conversations on Law, Ethics and the Church between a Mennonite Theologian and a Hoosier Lawyer.* Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2002.

Review One

Much of John Howard Yoder's most valuable material is often the hardest to find. Yoder was a prolific writer of papers and oral presentations that may or may not have made it into print. Furthermore, because Yoder liked nothing more than to attend the lectures of others across a wide field of disciplines, there to engage in post-lecture Q&A discussion, a goldmine of some of his best work never was written down or polished for publication. I have seen some European theologians followed around constantly by a bevy of assistants, writing down every word the master says, and from which results an industrial-sized output of large tomes and journal articles. I am sure many have shared my fantasy of such a bevy for JHY! Lately we have been getting the next best thing, as various collected essays are beginning to appear. Yet no matter how scattered and obscure the source journals for these collections, they still contain items polished for publication. What is missing is broader access to Yoder's 'Table Talk' material, the ad hoc, off-the-cuff, dialogical responses and reactions that have the rough edges showing through. This is the kind of material we find in Shaffer's book, and a welcome addition to Yoderiana it is.

Thomas L. Shaffer has been for many years a highly respected professor of law at Notre Dame University, where Yoder also taught. A Roman Catholic, he shares many of Yoder's basic Christian convictions and beliefs, and over a fifteen-year period he engaged Yoder in a significant exchange of letters, memoranda, emails and mutually critical discussion of essays, lectures and books, focused most specifically on law and government, but also ranging widely over other topics. Happily, Shaffer filed away such material, and this is the cache from which this book emerges.

Just as this volume emerged from interdisciplinary dialogue, people from various disciplines will find different sections most important and interesting. My own interests were captured by recurring discussions of how those holding minority moral convictions (especially, but not limited to, pacifism) could be most effective as citizens in a pluralistic society. Here we find Yoder's reactions to, and criticisms of, the books and lectures of visitors to Notre

Dame such as Stephen Carter, and his views on topics such as 'The Committee for Waco Justice' and the emerging Communitarian movement in political philosophy. Characteristically, when challenged by an ethical dilemma, Yoder is most likely to re-examine the historical and philosophical premises leading up to it and to suggest that we may be asking the wrong question or asking the right question wrongly. This is very instructive but also frustrating, as Yoder rarely, if ever, will come back around and indicate on which horn of the dilemma he sits in terms of the wider social discussion.

While this book focuses on John Howard Yoder, and that will be what most interests readers of this journal, it should also be noted what an able and probing dialogue partner Thomas Shaffer is. Had a future historian run across these notes, memoranda, and email messages in the raw, it is doubtful that such a meaningful narrative could have been produced. Shaffer does much more than string together raw data, and readers interested in pursuing his own creative and original analyses of major issues of law and religion will also find this book a valuable resource.

Shaffer has tried to make clear what in this volume is part of his dialogue with Yoder and what is present connecting narrative, by placing dialogical material in bold print throughout. However, it seems that a good number of paragraphs appearing in bold are clearly later reflective narrative. In general, Wipf and Stock relies heavily on authors to do their own critical editing of manuscripts, but the end product would have benefited from the critical eye of a professional text and layout editor. This does not at all, however, detract from having this valuable resource made available to the scholarly community.

Daniel Liechty, Normal, IL

Review Two

Thomas Shaffer, who describes himself as "a lawyer anxious to be a Christian" (iv), is a long-time colleague of John Howard Yoder's from the Notre Dame law school. In this little book (just 130 pages) he recreates discussions which he had with Yoder on law and theology, by assembling notes, correspondence, and other unpublished material from both his and Yoder's files, it is material that was mainly written in the 1990s. He uses Yoder's published works only

sparingly. The reader is able to easily follow the conversations between the two, with Shaffer's writing appearing in plain type while Yoder's assembled comments and rejoinders are in bold.

Shaffer gathers together his correspondence with Yoder on such topics as conscientious objection to military service, the death penalty, and civil disobedience. Not surprisingly, the subject of Christians as lawyers interests Shaffer the most. Yoder was frequently puzzled by the way that Shaffer posed questions to him. One that seemed to puzzle him most was Shaffer's concern that practicing law might in principle or in particular circumstances conflict with one's duty as a Christian. He felt that Shaffer saw lawyers as burdened with the question of divided loyalties to Christ and the state in a way that other professionals are not. In a 1991 letter Yoder warns about limiting the question of obedience to lawyers: "I would also ask whether a Christian can be a doctor, or a university professor, or a capitalist. My point is that any vocational choice has the burden of proof for a disciple of Jesus. . . . By linking this only with law you lay me open to a distortion of the importance of the issues of state and law as worse than something else. I have encouraged Mennonite young people to go into law. I do not see the polar opposition between Mennonite and legal identity which is promoted by the group of Mennonite lawyers with which you once met. The right way to put the question as ethics rather than pastoral care would be 'under what conditions can a disciple of Jesus be a lawyer?' or 'what kind of lawyer would a disciple of Jesus praise God by being?'"(91).

A significant problem with this book is that it lacks a clear purpose. In the preface, Shaffer asserts that there is "an implicit theology of law, a jurisprudence and a legal ethic" in Yoder's theology. It seems that Shaffer intends to spell out this implicit theology, and since he was the usual recipient of Yoder's thoughts on law, it is to be expected that their respective files would be Shaffer's primary support for such a thesis. But Shaffer does not indicate what the book's purpose or who its intended audience is, and we never do see this implicit theology of law. Instead, we are privileged to eavesdrop on several scattered discussions between him and Yoder. The ordering of the chapters and their sections seems arbitrary. Yoder's remarks are enjoyable to read, but they do not add anything to his published corpus. Even on the specific question of the law, there is little here which a keen reader of the published works could not extrapolate from them.

Also unsettling is Shaffer's tendency to make extraordinary claims for Yoder which are not supported by either his published works or the material presented in this book. For example, in one place he asserts: "John turned to the Bible as if it were a charter for law and government . . ." (vi). Or, in another questionable attempt to make Yoder's theology appear to be foremost addressing legal issues, he tacks the word "jurisprudence" onto politics. Shaffer writes: "He [Yoder] argued that politics (and jurisprudence), taken up in the community of the faithful, will turn out both more reliable and more critical than politics (and jurisprudence) taken up in the civil community or in the nation-state" (14). The simplistic connection between politics and jurisprudence is also reflected in Shaffer's characterization of Yoder's article "Ethics and Eschatology" as coming "as close as anything I know about to expressing John's jurisprudence" (28). We are not told how the article expresses Yoder's jurisprudence nor does Shaffer define that term. He merely proceeds to reproduce a large portion of the article over the next couple of pages. Just as puzzling is Shaffer's decision to quote from the rough copy of the paper in Yoder's file rather than the published version from *Ex Auditu* (1990).

Moral Memoranda from John Howard Yoder is not a book that scholars will find useful for research on Yoder's theology. There are thinkers whose unpublished writings and correspondence add to their published works; based on what is presented here, I do not believe that Yoder is one of them. Nevertheless, this volume will be enjoyed by those who read it for what it is: pieces of conversation, notes, and fragments of papers. It is regrettable that Shaffer does not consistently present the file material in this way rather than attempting to package it as "Yoder's jurisprudence." Notwithstanding some of these problematic characterizations of Yoder's thought, Shaffer is usually frank about his nonspecialist maneuverings in theology. Yoder took Schaffer's questions seriously and responded to them generously, and immersed himself in the books and articles which his friend sent his way. Some readers may even want to investigate some of that scholarship on law and Christian discipleship which Shaffer brings to our attention, as he once did toYoder's.

Paul Gallagher, Religious Studies, McMaster University

Richard N. Longenecker, ed., *Into God's Presence: Prayer in the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001.

Prayer is a topic that has not been discussed at great length in New Testament studies, and this collection of essays is a welcome addition to the discipline. The essays are grouped into three sections – the first is titled "The Setting." It includes "Prayer in the Old Testament or Hebrew Bible," by Christopher R. Seitz; "Prayer in the Greco-Roman World," by David E. Aune; "Prayer in Jewish Life of the First Century as Background to Early Christianity," by Asher Finkel and "Prayer in the Dead Sea Scrolls," by Eileen M. Schuller. These four essays, although limited in what they say because of the scope of material covered, are most interesting and helpful. Seitz's comments about sacred naming and its power is a crucial insight for understanding biblical prayer. Aune's description of Greco-Roman prayer is likely new material for many. Aune distinguishes between reciprocity as the characteristic basis of Greco-Roman prayer and the promises God made to the people as the characteristic basis of biblical prayer. Finkel's description of first-century *avodah* (the way of awe and love) is delightful. He gives readers a "feel for" how Jesus experienced his faith, plus a wealth of information on practices of devotion that illuminate a host of NT references. Schuller's comments on the Dead Sea Scrolls are also fascinating, prompting the question of whether the practices of the Daily Office have their roots in the prayer routines of this community.

The second section, "Jesus and the Gospels," includes Stephen Farris's "The Canticles of Luke's Infancy Narrative: The Appropriation of a Biblical Tradition;" "Jesus – Example and Teacher of Prayer in the Synoptic Gospels," by I. Howard Marshall; "The Lord's prayer as a Paradigm of Christian Prayer," by N. T. Wright; and Andrew T. Lincoln's "God's Name, Jesus' Name, and Prayer in the Fourth Gospel." Farris's real contribution comes in his analysis of how the canticles emerge from Israel's "river" of praise tradition. Marshall compares how each synoptic evangelist uses the concept and theme of prayer. Two strengths of this article are the clarity of the discussion of *Abba* as a name for God and of how prayer fits into Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom. Wright exegetes the Lord's Prayer as an "exodus" prayer, demonstrating how each line resonates with an exodus theme, and calls the person of prayer to be a "New Exodus person." Lincoln describes how prayer

functioned in the intimate relationship between Jesus and God in John's gospel, and analyzes John 17 as an example of that relationship.

The final section, "Acts through the Apocalypse," includes "Persevering Together in Prayer: The Significance of Prayer in the Acts of the Apostles" by Joel B. Green; "Prayer in the Pauline Letters," by Richard N. Longenecker; "Finding Yourself an Intercessor: New Testament Prayer from Hebrews to Jude," by J. Ramsey Michaels, and Prayer in the Book of Revelation" by Richard Bauckham. The first three do more cataloguing of information than most of the other articles. Much of it is useful but makes for tedious reading. But Green's article has an intriguing analysis of how prayer in Acts lends itself to boundary dissolution rather than boundary maintenance. And Longenecker makes an interesting correlation between Paul's letters and the Jewish prayers, particularly the *Shemoneh Esreh*, or "Eighteen Benedictions," that Paul would have grown up praying. Michaels offers a nice, compact survey of the general epistles; I especially enjoyed his lifting out the theme of intersession as the common thread in a diverse group of texts. Bauckham's article on Revelation is fascinating. The author examines the relatively few mentions of prayer in the document, relating them to questions of practical theodicy raised in other parts of the biblical record, particularly the Psalms, and to questions of the mission of the kingdom, relating them to the final, eschatological "prayer for everything" where vengeance is dissolved in the conversion of the nations – Come, Lord Jesus.

This is a book I will use in teaching and church work for years to come. Of course it has weaknesses – I would have welcomed more women's perspectives, particularly on a topic such as the addressing of God as Father, and an article that attempted to do some synthesis of the NT material – an integrative effort similar to what Seitz does for the Hebrew Bible, for instance. But as a whole it is a wonderful addition to a pastor or teacher's library. For that matter, it is a book I would recommend for any praying Christian.

Mary Schertz, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, IN

David Weaver-Zercher. *The Amish in the American Imagination*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.

While the Amish may remain "the quiet in the land," many who seek to represent them do not. Throughout the twentieth century spokespersons for Pennsylvania German groups, voices in the US media, tourism entrepreneurs, novelists, and Hollywood movie directors made public and persuasive statements about who the Amish are and what they mean. In *The Amish in the American Imagination* David Weaver-Zercher reads these public statements (both linguistic and visual) in their historical context to display these meanings and how they have functioned in the US popular imagination. In addition, the author seeks to decipher from these meanings their authors' intentions. Thus he gives us a glimpse into the "domestication" of the Amish, how they have been made to signify for the benefit of the rest of us. By constituting the Amish according to our needs, desires, fears, and anxieties, "domesticators" have made the Amish soothe our souls, whether by constituting them as our "saving remnant" or as our "fallen saints" (185).

This book makes a critical intervention into "Amish studies" by turning the gaze typically focused on the Amish toward those doing the gazing – researchers, tourists, Hollywood directors, et al. Domesticators' efforts to constitute the Amish as exotic Americans have been crucial in attracting the tourist gaze, and that gaze in turn has shaped Amish life. As an inquiry into the dynamics of this domestication, this book raises critical questions for all of us, whether we are scholars or tourists, religious cousins or Hollywood movie directors, novelists or entrepreneurs, about who we are and what we are doing whenever we represent the Amish. Importantly, Weaver-Zercher makes no prescription for our engagement with the Amish. But he positions himself in a manner we may consider adopting ourselves – as one who seeks understanding of self and culture in the context of the other as other (i.e., different) rather than trying to constitute the other in a certain way in order to effect some desired understanding of the self.

This book also serves as good history. In chapter 4, for instance, Weaver-Zercher tells fascinating stories about authors, novels, audiences (real and imagined), and the Mennonite Publishing House that help us understand the pressures under which the MPH was working in the third quarter of the twentieth century. Not only does such history provide insight into how certain

representations of the Amish came to be published and popularized, but also how the MPH was working to tell the "truth" about the Amish, to represent them in positive ways, and to operate in a financially self-sustaining manner.

This book should be on the reading list of anyone interested in "Amish studies." Beyond that readership, sociologists, anthropologists, communication scholars and historians interested in how sub-cultures are represented by others will learn much from it. But it is not just for scholars. All cousins of the Amish should read this book, not only in order to learn how our representations of the Amish have shaped both them and us, but also to squarely face the questions emerging out of that relationship.

Susan Biesecker-Mast, Bluffton College, Bluffton, OH

Anna Lännström, ed., *Promise and Peril: The Paradox of Religion as Resource and Threat*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003.

Promise and Peril: The Paradox of Religion as Resource and Threat is an eclectic collection of seven essays, lectures that were initially presented at the Boston University Institute for Philosophy and Religion. Outlined under "Religion and Politics" and "Religion in Itself," the essays clarify the "ambivalence of the sacred." Religions, though intrinsically value-neutral, have the capacity to produce the best or worst of human endeavor.

Following Karen Armstrong's strong essay on fundamentalism, writers focus on religions in particular places or distinct concepts. Authors are Marc Gopin, Gerald James Larson, Bhikhu Parekh, Huston Smith, Ian Reader, and Wendy Doniger. They examine negotiations between Jews and Muslims in Israel and Palestine, interactions between Pakistan and India over nuclear capability, issues that pose state-religion questions, the "entheogenic" quality of religious awe (see below), the Aum movement's brief but perilous development in Japan, and five paradoxes within Hinduism.

A test of any world faith is whether it leads to compassion – whether selfishness decreases and empathy for others increases. Yet, "almost all

religions contain traditions that support an inferior status for women" (69). A basic problem as well as strength (peril and promise), then, of religious traditions and texts is their ambiguity. A given religious idea can be interpreted in such different ways; texts are open to diverse explanations. The Aum leader Asahara could easily find teachings to fit his worldview from Buddist texts and the New Testament book of Revelation. The prevailing mindset also determines approach. A Partition or Discourse mindset – whether to resist or favor dialogue, mutual understanding, and synthesis – shapes attitudes and actions between adherents of Islam and Hinduism in India.

According to Armstrong, fundamentalists often begin by critiquing their own group but move beyond that to fault modern secular society. People choose new expressions of piety, one being fundamentalism, when unable to be religious as before. Or, if they are deeply fearful of being blotted out, a pent-up helplessness, or hatred, or intense feeling of inferiority can fuel their religious militancy. September 11 taught some in the US about how its support of repressive regimes, its thwarting of positive change for many West/Central/South Asian people, led extremists to be violent. So, also, perceived arrogance among countries with 'approved' nuclear power leads some Indians and Pakistanis to resent their own poverty and feeling of being inferior. They may choose to nuclearize in order to divert attention or to awaken national pride.

Gopin writes about peacemakers in circumstances of conflict between religions. Third parties worsen the problem if they "do not have the discipline of 'radical empathy' simultaneously with all sides" (29). People of different faiths need to learn not to demonize the other. They reduce tension if they *together* mourn, study, help the poor, and care for the land. But biased leaders may see such cooperation as betrayal.

Attitudes toward leaders add further peril as surely as promise. Intense devotion toward Asahara led to a dangerous development among Aum followers – the expectation to obey him totally. "Violence became acceptable and legitimate when ordered by the guru, and his authority became paramount and unquestioned" (96). Between 1984, the beginning of the movement, and 1995, the year of an attack on people in a subway, the "paradox of religion" emerged. Initially intent to spiritually transform and save the world, Aum followers came to believe that only the devout, chosen few deserved to live. They killed in order to 'save' those doomed.

Smith discusses the paradox of awe. This central religious emotion unites two emotions – fear and fascination. He explains how *entheogens* – nonaddictive plants and chemicals – can prompt mystical experiences. He identifies both their perils and promises. Doniger explains paradoxes that prompt degrees of violence within Hinduism. She provides insight into *ahimsa*, a term for nonviolence or noninjury. It refers to "the absence of the desire to injure or kill"; it reflects a "state of mind, not a policy for behavior" (111).

Having accepted the disparate nature of these chapters, I found them to be quite informative. The essay on state-religion questions intrigued me the least, although I agree with the principle that the "state should be neither identified with nor indifferent to religion" (62). An essay that directly addresses Christian perils and promises would enhance the book, especially if readers are primarily Christians who reflect less often on the perils of their faith. Anyone who deals with issues of conflict between religions will benefit from reading this collection. Honesty about both the perils of religion and the promises is essential.

Dorothy Yoder Nyce, Goshen IN