locations are wondrous gifts. So is the opportunity for prayer and reflection in places of incredible natural beauty, such as the Isle of Iona in Scotland, Glendalough in Ireland, or Holy Isle in England. Because pilgrimage often strips one of the usual sense of security and certainty, pilgrims are opened to new perspectives on life, vocation, and the church. Admittedly, no pilgrimage can guarantee such an outcome. As the ancient Irish Christians understood so well,

> *To go to Rome*
> *Is much of trouble, little of profit;*
> *The King whom thou seekest there,*
> *Unless thou bring him with thee, thou wilt not find.*
>
> – Kuno Meyer (tr.), *Selections from Ancient Irish Poetry* (Constable, 1911, new ed., 1959), 100

Explorations in a Christian Theology of Pilgrimage opens up key issues for the church and provides a rich biblical framework as well as historical and pastoral perspectives. Perhaps a useful next step would be to engage in this conversation with economically deprived parts of the church. Are the gifts of pilgrimage meant only for those who can afford to travel or are they meant for the whole church?

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Karl Koop, *Anabaptist-Mennonite Confessions of Faith: The Development of a Tradition*. Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2004.

This book's title recognizes and describes its subject matter, namely the diachronic identity that defines the continuity and discontinuity between the original Anabaptist movement in the Netherlands and its development into denominationalism in the following centuries. The author contends that the sixteenth-century Anabaptist concerns and character were essentially preserved in the seventeenth-century Dutch Mennonite confessions as their socio-economic situation and political standing changed rather radically.

The study focuses on the seventeenth-century Dutch confessions, especially three: the "Short Confession" of 1610, the Jan Cents Confession

of 1630, and the Dordrecht Confession of 1632. Each of these confessional statements represents what might be called denominational factions within the Holland Anabaptist-Mennonite movement—the Waterlanders, the Frisian-High German, and the Flemish. Each statement represents continuing social-cultural developments, and the author tries to show how the groups attempted to maintain authentic continuity with the original movement in Holland and North Germany, which itself was highly fractured.

Koop notes that the nature and uses of these confessions characterize them as "confessions," not creeds, and locate them within the Anabaptist movement. In his words, "the [confessional] tradition is not some normative, externally-fixed authority . . . ; rather, it is a constantly changing expression of belief, representing a plurality of perspectives, which can provide an orientation for theological reflection. . . ." (22). Although too often unsuccessful, a good number of the confessions within the purview of this study were intended for rapprochement, not as definitions of orthodoxy for the exclusion of those who differed.

In addition to their function of seeking consensus, confessions in the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition have provided self-identity markers and teaching standards, as the author notes. They depict "a unique and coherent tradition shaped by the broader Christian milieu" (114). In general they are characterized by a close approximation to biblical language and voluminous textual referencing. They approach theological definitions more from the perspective of ecclesial, experiential, and ethical applications of Christian behavior than from technical precision. However, as one might expect, they reflect the time and place of their origin, and generally follow Protestant and Catholic theological precedents. Judging from these seventeenth-century confessions, one concludes that their framers were very aware of, and engaged in, the ongoing theological and ecclesiastical debates of the century.

Besides filling a gap in English language historical studies of Anabaptist-Mennonite developments, this descriptive analysis of seventeenth-century Mennonite statements of faith when Dutch Anabaptists were moving from their original societal position as a radical Gemeinde to participation in the politico-economic order (Gesellshaft) is highly relevant to the twenty-first North American Mennonite church experience. As Mennonite denominational groups continue to splinter and regroup, the need for self-identity and reconciling consensus statements continues unabated! And when we add the globalization

factor of mission expansion and Mennonite World organization, these needs are maximized. Churches around the world that are related to the European and American Mennonite churches are asking what it means to be Mennonite and/or Anabaptist. Karl Koop is to be commended on a carefully researched, well-written, and thoroughly documented essay.

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Thomas N. Finger, *A Contemporary Anabaptist Theology: Biblical, Historical, Constructive.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004.

In *A Contemporary Anabaptist Theology*, Thomas Finger first sketches today's North Atlantic cultural context of a globalizing society in transition from modern to postmodern cultures. Is theology with its "universal truths" able to engage "postmodernity's affective, popular, fragmenting and pluriform sensibilities" without appearing imperialistic? He believes theology must face this challenge and submits that aid may come from an unexpected source: the small, unassuming Anabaptist communions, descended from the Radical Reformation. These communions may offer help to a society with postmodern tendencies and possibly bridge the gaps between the historical Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant churches, and between them and the evangelical churches (11f, 103).

Part one (chs. 1-4) deals with "the contemporary and historical context," including a masterful sketch of Anabaptism's "tumultuous beginnings" (polygenesis) in diverse regions; part two (chs. 5-7) treats "the coming of the new creation," which the different Anabaptist groups held as their common center (157) despite differing theological emphases; and part three (chs. 8-10) outlines "the convictional framework" that powered historic Anabaptists and is needed today for engaging the world with the Gospel. Throughout, the author critically relates the theological works of current Anabaptist-Mennonites to the legacy of the Anabaptists, and creates a dialogue between these and historic and current "mainline" and "marginal" theologies.

Although discussion of "The Last Things" comes at the end (ch. 10), the eschatological dimension reverberates throughout in the theme tying the book together: "The coming of the new creation" (106). This theme, Finger