cannot allow such generosity because he would have to become a pacifist in order to do so.

That is, he would have to do more than confess painful awareness of misuse of the name of God. He would have to say "No!" not to misuse but to *false* conceptions of God and ways of following God. He would stand to gain if he did so, because it would allow him to turn the tables on the New Atheists more effectively – by saying that their critique is right but hasn't gone far enough. What we need, Haught could say, is a consequentialist analysis of not only religion but scientific naturalism also. After all, we wouldn't want to take scientific naturalism on faith, would we?

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Connie Braun. *The Steppes are the Colour of Sepia: A Mennonite Memoir.* Vancouver: Ronsdale Press, 2008.

The suffering and displacement of Mennonites during the Russian Revolution and its aftermath has been a main theme – perhaps *the* main theme – of Mennonite literature in Canada over the last half-century. Given the scope and intensity of these disasters, the attention that has been paid to them seems natural and right (though in the dismal history of the Revolution and the Stalin era, of course, the Mennonite role is a small part). As time passes, and more and more of the survivors pass on, recording their stories becomes ever more urgent.

The Steppes are the Colour of Sepia, Connie Braun's memoir, draws most deeply and dramatically on her father's memories of his family's long struggle for survival through the revolution, the massive restructuring, collectivization, and famines of the 1920s and '30s, and the further devastations of World War II. Fleshed out with material from photographs and numerous other literary, historical, and personal sources, this book is a significant addition to this literature of memory.

Braun's grandfather Jakob Letkemann was born in 1893 in the Ukraine. His parents died young, and in 1914 he joined a new Mennonite colony in Slavgorod in western Siberia. He served in the Russian medical corps during World War I, and married Maria Siemens, also of the Siberian colony, in 1918. A pastor forbidden to preach by Stalin's edicts, Jakob moved his family repeatedly between Siberia and Ukraine over the next dozen years, often hiding out to evade the authorities.

Braun's father Peter, born among the famines and collectivization of the early 1930s, began to offer Braun his detailed stories and memories only near the end of his life, and she has done substantial background research. This is not a scholarly book, however; its heart is in its sustained depictions of the daily life of an unassuming family caught up in such complicated and devastating times. World War II brings still more displacements: the family escapes from Ukraine to Dresden, then is relocated to Yugoslavia, where Peter becomes by default a member of the Hitler Youth. With the end of the war they must move again, eventually to occupied Austria (where Jakob dies of cancer in Salzburg), and finally in 1948 to Canada.

Braun recounts these moves, hardships, and daring escapes with consistent sympathy; the family, and the Mennonites in general, are consistently treated as faithful Christians and undeserving victims of both Communist and Nazi brutalities. Some of the most engaging sections describe young Peter's adventures in the midst of war. Here the elderly Peter remembers an encounter with a group of German soldiers who have been "fishing" a stream with hand grenades:

"They made us wade into the stream to collect their fish. It was April, still quite cold. They weren't nice to us, so after gathering up the floating fish, we said we couldn't find any more. They took what we brought out and then left." Father remembers the scene clearly.

In only their underwear, Isaac and Peter creep back into the frigid water, and breathlessly reach down to the stream bed to pick up the rest, fish whose air sacs had popped from the explosion, and sunk to the bottom.

"We took them home – fish for supper." (147)

Yet the author also notes the ironies of war, in which Mennonites were freed from their Soviet domination by the Nazi army, and then the Soviet army liberated Auschwitz: "through the sharp lens of hindsight, I

reflect on how the Mennonites, *Volksdeutsche*, and Ukrainians once viewed the German occupiers as their liberators from Stalin's purges. . . . The faces of oppressor and liberator blur, are indistinguishable. Suffering comes into focus" (144).

While the narrative is generally readable and the dramatic events themselves will keep many readers engaged, the writing is sometimes slow-moving, imprecise, and self-conscious: "His penmanship is indicative of my perception of an officer of the Reich. Precise. Systematic" (112). My advance reader's copy included only two photographs, but the Ronsdale Press description promises twelve in the finished version. A map or two to clarify the family's complex journeys would also have been welcome.

The Steppes are the Colour of Sepia tells an engrossing tale, and makes a worthy contribution to the preservation and understanding of the Mennonite diaspora of the last century. Recommended for all those interested in this time period, and libraries with even modest Mennonite collections.

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Paul Louis Metzger. *Consuming Jesus: Beyond Race and Class Divisions in a Consumer Church*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007.

"The coffee bar and the Lord's table are symbolic: both are symbols that communicate powerfully their use of 'sacred' space" (5). Paul Louis Metzger, professor of Christian theology at Multnomah Biblical Seminary in Portland, Oregon, introduces these symbols as a challenge to the evangelical church dwelling amidst the seductions of a consumer society. The sacred space of the market is infiltrating the church, says Metzger, whose book outlines how consumerism reinforces race and class divisions within society and within the church, and how the evangelical church must respond.

In an age of consumer culture, a relevant though not comfortable gospel calls for a counter-cultural approach. Metzger rightly identifies a crucial disconnect emerging from the evangelical tendency to focus on personal