

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

and friendship evangelism, especially when that tendency is coupled with pragmatism toward social engagement: a fostering of the belief that social-structural problems like racism will be eliminated by changing the hearts of individuals through one-on-one encounters and friendships.

Metzger draws upon theologians, pastors, sociologists of religion, literary works, and scripture itself to build his case. Using sources as varied as Jonathan Edwards, Martin Luther King, Jr., and C.S. Lewis, the author critiques attempts to play to individualistic impulses, like the popular affinity-based model of church growth that depends upon homogeneity and further isolates people of diverse racial, ethnic, and class backgrounds from one another.

This book will be helpful for leaders and members of predominantly white congregations seeking to become multiracial, particularly churches located in areas with little racial or ethnic diversity. It is narrowly focused for readers who may not have theological or sociological analyses of oppressive systems, and it points to other works (primarily by other evangelicals, both black and white) that can assist with such analyses.

Metzger sticks primarily to the language of overcoming barriers and multiculturalism, rather than pointing towards the task of understanding how oppressive structures work and dismantling the system of racism. To be fair, Metzger knows his audience, noting in the introduction that he is an evangelical writing to/for evangelicals. He calls upon them to “be intentional about creating diversity groups that include members from different ethnic and economic subcultures in order to nurture sensitivity and build understanding and reconciliation among these groups” (66).

Drawing on the theology and ethics of Jonathan Edwards, Metzger makes an argument for evangelicalism to focus on the work of the spirit in order to foster a “proper relationship of transformed hearts to righteous acts.” The righteous acts will transform lifestyles from those of a consumer spirit into those of mission-mindedness. Re-ordering the church will begin with re-ordering the church’s space.

Consuming Jesus will not likely offend readers hungry for encouragement and direction towards recreating church structures that transcend boundaries of race and class.

Readers not seeking a reason to transgress boundaries, especially

in the context of church life and practice, may be offended as Metzger critiques the leaders and ministries of prosperous megachurches like Rick Warren's Saddleback and Joel Olsteen's Lakewood Church in Houston. For example, Metzger recounts that members of his own congregation expressed concern for the safety of the church's children after he preached a sermon calling upon the congregation to reach out to those in need within the local community, including the homeless. Other readers will say this book does not go far enough. The word "racism" rarely appears; the author prefers "racialization" and phrases like "racial reconciliation."

Metzger does introduce the language of powers and fallen powers, including those of empire. Jesus is the example of how the tables are turned on fallen principalities and powers, including the challenge to consumerism. Metzger in turn challenges the contemporary church's dearly-held doctrine of a God-given right to choose or select what it wants, including churches, based on preference and taste. The author recommends shaking up stagnant structures that impede the potential of the church, a shaking up that calls for a balance of the personal (changing the heart, calls for reconciliation and forgiveness) and the structural (rethinking the way church is done).

Sunday school classes and small groups will find this book a useful catalyst for discussions about church growth and congregational identity. It would also be a helpful addition to a seminary ministry course, especially if paired with a companion text written by a person of color addressing similar themes.

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