Daniel Izuzquiza. *Rooted in Jesus Christ: Toward a Radical Ecclesiology.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.

Daniel Izuzquiza, S.J. is one of a new generation of Roman Catholic theologians committed to developing a theological foundation for Catholic social teaching and practices. *Rooted in Jesus Christ* is his proposal for an ecclesiology centred on the lived experience of the church and founded on the person of Christ. The first part of the book is a dialogue – with post-liberal George Lindbeck, radical orthodoxy's John Milbank, Mennonite theologian John Howard Yoder, and Dorothy Day of the Catholic Worker Movement – on how the Christian community when rooted in the life and death of Christ can embody a radical alternative to the dominant Western worldview. Izuzquiza orders this dialogue through four themes drawn from liberation theology: methodology, God, martyrdom, and the option for the poor.

The method of liberation theology gives primacy to praxis, the lived experience of Christian communities. The result is the creation of an alternative community that embodies Christian practices based on the members' experience of God in the incarnation of Christ. In order to avoid falling into sectarianism, the community must develop a theological discourse grounded in those shared experiences which can then be translated into a discourse that is intelligible in a pluralistic society.

The nature of this alternative social reality is based on a theology of lived martyrdom and the option for the poor. Izuzquiza makes lived martyrdom a necessary ethical imperative by inextricably linking Jesus' life and death to reveal a nonviolent way of peace and justice that overcomes the structures of sin, evil, and oppression. By living in imitation of Jesus' revolutionary nonviolence, Christian communities demonstrate how human culture can be radically transformed: creating a real alternative to the oppressive capitalist economic system, participating in nonviolent direct political action, and promoting the common good in solidarity with the poor.

The second half of the book is more explicitly Roman Catholic in both subject matter and method. Using Scripture, tradition, and ecclesial teachings, the author develops the notion of the body of Christ as the guiding

image for understanding the nature and role of the church in the world. Echoing Yoder's approach in *Body Politics*, Izuzquiza reveals the social, political, and economic transformative power in the sacramental practices of the Christian community. The seven sacraments encompass all aspects of life – social, economic, and political – uniting the whole of the individual and the community with the new eschatological reality created by Jesus' life and death. If Yoder were Roman Catholic, this could be exactly what he would have written.

Izuzquiza's ecclesiology may not seem particularly radical to those from the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition, but it is a departure in Roman Catholic thought. First, the author draws more from the ecclesiology of non-Catholic Christian traditions than is typical for Catholic theologians. He also gives a more significant role to the people in Christian communities; it is the laity, not the priesthood, that is the essence of the church. Affinities with Mennonite theology continue in his re-imagining of the relationship between the church and world – a counter-cultural role he feels is well suited for a pluralistic post-Christendom age.

The reduced role for the priesthood and the virtual absence of the Catholic hierarchy in Izuzquiza's ecclesiology is both a strength and a weakness. Izuzquiza's Christian communities mediate the radical transformation they experience through Jesus Christ to the world while renouncing worldly structures of power and domination. But in reality, the hierarchy forms the primary structure of the Catholic church, one in which power and domination are embedded. The author's ecclesiology is that of a minority church in a powerless position, and the Catholic church in the Western world has yet to realize that this is the state she is in. Izuzquiza's congregationalist critique of the power structure of the Catholic church while remaining faithful to that church is a strong challenge for the Anabaptist-Mennonite church to contemplate how essential schism is to its own identity.

Izuzquiza acknowledges that the second half of the book may be slightly tedious or technical for non-Catholic readers. He's right. The book is written for those with some level of formal theological education and familiarity with Catholic tradition. Yet his openness and clear desire to engage with the practices of the broader Christian tradition – and the Mennonite

tradition in particular – make this book worth engaging regardless of one's tradition.

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Ralf K. Wüstenberg. *The Political Dimensions of Reconciliation: A Theological Analysis of Ways of Dealing with Guilt During the Transition to Democracy in South Africa and East Germany.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.

Ralf Wüstenberg's exhaustive empirical study of guilt and reconciliation within the transitional systems of governance in South Africa and East Germany comes to a central conclusion: political reconciliation for the purpose of (re)building nations after structural collapse and historical trauma is not connected to theological reconciliation and related ways of dealing with guilt. It is only in the interpersonal realm that theological and national reconciliation interface, since "[g]uilt and reconciliation can only be thought of as occurring between people … [not] national entities" (261).

This conclusion requires Wüstenberg to explain concepts of truth, freedom, justice, reconciliation, and guilt from various perspectives. The categories of truth, for example, are described as concepts "that pave the way for the theological reconstruction of reconciliation in political reality" (258). This is because they allow for the possibility of reparations and new beginnings in interpersonal relationships. Justice "does not produce [effective] reconciliation, but it can lead to it and can guide the processes to an acceptance of guilt" (259). Justice is connected theologically to politics through its understanding of the need to honor basic humanity.

Interpersonal reconciliation is examined within the political forums of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the Investigation Commission of the German Parliament (EK). Wüstenberg directs the reader to the principles of systematic theology regarding process,

Pauline commentary on reconciling deeds, and to the Synoptic Gospels, especially the path of reconciliation in Matthew. He argues that theologically and linguistically "process" is distinct from "path," since "the political process of reconciliation is open and indeterminate. The spiritual path to reconciliation is defined by hope" (267). It is hope that often breaks into the political process of reconciliation, manifesting in acts of remorse, apology, and forgiveness.

Through the TRC and EK, offenders and victims were given the opportunity to walk the spiritual path of new beginnings. Some chose this path, while others did not. When chosen, new relationships were formed and a new narrative begun; and justice went beyond a legal/punitive model, taking on the biblical meaning of right relationship with one's fellow human being, made possible by God's love for humanity.

This last point is poignantly reflected in the apology of a Mr. Benzien to his torture victims during a TRC Amnesty Committee hearing. The confessional stories he told, the remorse he showed, and the forgiveness offered by one of his victims, a Mr. Forbes, demonstrates for Wüstenberg the transformation of the political formula "reconciliation through truth" from the secular into the spiritual realm (275). Interpersonal reconciliation was possible because Benzien could awaken from the nightmare of apartheid through a process of confessing and accepting his guilt; and Forbes could come to a place of forgiving the person who violated his human rights and dignity. For the author, this was interpreted as an act of God through Christ that occurred, as it must, through human actors. Reconciliation didn't happen between all victims and offenders in this case or in the EK processes, which indicates an "open ended" quality of the reconciliation process within the political sphere. The door of reconciliation is offered, but not all choose to pass through it.

The justice question requires further examination, specifically the tension between retributive and restorative justice and their relationship to the criminal justice system and reconciliation. Wüstenberg's analysis differentiates "justice as punishment" in the South African and German contexts; in the former the "wrongdoer goes to jail and the victim receives recompense" while in the latter it is seen as less effective and implemented in only a small number of cases (188). Justice is also explained in terms

of acknowledgement and restoring human dignity, following a restorative trajectory.

Restorative justice "includes moral, political, as well as legal dimensions [and because of that] exceeds the limitations of the possibilities open to a constitutional government" (190). The author's argument is that the constitutional state is bound by legal principles and can provide only formal and therefore punitive justice procedures. Restorative justice goes beyond the possibilities of criminal law, although the author acknowledges it can be constructively used outside the criminal justice system.

If victims and offenders are to be given the opportunity to reconcile, Wüstenberg must recognize that restorative justice, which holds reconciliation as a fundamental principle, can be an effective part of the criminal justice system and therefore the political process of reconciliation.

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Jon Isaak, ed. *The Old Testament in the Life of God's People: Essays in Honor of Elmer A. Martens.* Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009.

This festschrift was written in honor of Elmer A. Martens, Professor Emeritus of Old Testament and President Emeritus of the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary in Fresno, California. Martens was, and is, a biblical theologian. His interests extend beyond textual study to asking questions about how to formulate a coherent theology that includes both Testaments. This volume focuses on that issue.

After a brief biographical sketch, the book is divided into three parts, each dealing with a major area of Martens's scholarly interests: Christian Use of the Old Testament, Aligning God's People with God's Call for Justice, and Addressing the Issue of Land in the Life of God's People. Each section starts with an article written by Martens himself, followed by articles by his colleagues, friends, and former students.

In the first section, Martens describes his approach to biblical law (torah) as wholistic and "grounded in Heilsgeschichte" (24), which places him squarely in the biblical theology movement of the mid-20th century. Although he affirms that the law was rightly received as a gift from God by ancient Israel and was meant to serve the purposes of faith, in the end "the law is superseded by God's latest gift, Jesus, the Christ" (27). Some of the articles that follow Marten's continue in a similar vein, interpreting the NT witness (though not the church) as either continuing or superseding the OT witness. A couple of essays in this section, such as Marlene Enns's study of intercultural theological education, though interesting, seem only tangentially related to the general topic of law.

The second section focuses on justice and religious pluralism. Martens's article defines and describes the concepts of justice/righteousness through use of a wide variety of texts in both Testaments. In his reading of texts that speak about other religions, he concludes there is truth in other religions. The truth in them, however, is determined by "Yahweh's standard of justice" (136). Some religions are roundly condemned by Scripture – those that are polytheistic. But salvation may very well be possible for others who do not know Christ, and that, he concludes, is "best left to God" (141). This article is followed by a rather eclectic collection related in some way to the general theme of religious pluralism in biblical texts.

In the third section, Martens's essay examines references to "land" in the NT. He does not find many, so he examines metaphorical language that might be carrying forward the concepts expressed through land theology in the OT. Land, he notices, is a place of economic and political security and a place of rest in the OT. What is the equivalent in the NT? He writes that "land may be a metaphor for salvation" (231). Metaphors related to creation in Romans may be expressing some of the ideas of land in the first part of the Bible, he argues. It is surprising that Martens makes only a brief reference to negative aspects of land, such as the connection between land, conflict, and war, and the way land possession changed the theology of God from one who travels with the whole community of people to one who is connected to one place served by an elite priesthood.

This book as a whole is grounded in a middle-of-the-road conservative evangelical tradition that seeks a unified biblical theology that in some way

finds consistencies between the Testaments or sees the NT as a continuation of the OT, though not every essay fits that tradition. Any attempt to do this must deal with the presence of Judaism, a religion that claims the same material, less the NT, as its heritage. Many of the authors affirm the integrity of the Jewish tradition that grows out of what Christians call the Old Testament. But they still hold to a kind of supersessionism, expressed by Martens as "Christ has superseded the law" (26). Evangelical language such as Timothy Geddert's "Jews who believed" (255) as being the "continuation of Israel" (260) would be interpreted as supersessionism by many.

Because many of the articles summarize the research of other prominent conservative evangelical scholars and an occasional liberal one, readers get a good sense of the thinking of this section of the Christian community on the chosen topics.

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Gale Heide. *System and Story: Narrative Critique and Construction in Theology.* Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2009.

This is a book about the theological ethics of Stanley Hauerwas, and it is mostly affirming of his project. In broad strokes its basic affirmations are on target, and its central critique names a weakness within Hauerwas that deserves attention. But then the detailed execution – in terms of affirmations, critiques and substantive correction – leaves much to be desired. All this is to say that what is valuable here could have made a decent article, but when filled out in detail it unfortunately does not make for a good book.

Let me begin with a summary of the first half of Heide's volume. Serious students of Hauerwas are aware that he critiques modernist tendencies in philosophy, ethics, and theology; that is, approaches to these disciplines that assume a rootedness in abstract rational claims that are intelligible to anyone. These critiques appear in his writings negatively through narrations

of such modernist approaches; sometimes for shorthand Hauerwas uses labels such as "liberalism" or "foundationalism." Sometimes the critiques are more specific, as in the case of some forms of systematic theology.

Hauerwas has many ways of countering such approaches to knowledge, claims regarding truth and ways to think about ethics. Among them are reclaiming a focus on narrative and tradition, and attempting to embed ethics within a rich theological account having Jesus at the center and made fully intelligible only within the context of the church. Heide is aware of these general contours of Hauerwas's approach to theological ethics, and expresses his appreciation of it.

The overarching problem with Heide's account is that too often there seems to be a less-than-clear use of key terms such as foundationalism, universalism, and systematic theology as these relate to Hauerwas's project. Here I can focus only on what is intended to be most central to the book: a naming of Hauerwas's theologically deficient ecclesiology. In fact, the author claims that Hauerwas's ecclesiology is "mere anthropology." Heide's proffered solution is "ecclesiology as pneumatology," that is, a communal and enfleshed pneumatology.

There are several ways in which this analysis of Hauerwas's ecclesiology is deficient. First, I think Heide has really failed to enter empathetically into Hauerwas's understanding of the sacraments. If one accepts the central role Hauerwas claims for the sacraments, and enters understandingly into the theologies and traditions that provide textured, detailed accounts of the ways these serve as vehicles for Christ's redemptive presence, then the church is hardly reduced to a merely human reality.

Second, apart from the emphasis on the sacraments, there are many ways that Hauerwas attempts to signal that the community he is describing is unintelligible without God's presence. One could argue he has not developed this fully enough. But it would seem to me to make more sense for someone sympathetic to Hauerwas to end chapters with discussions of, say, Joe R. Jones or James Wm. McClendon, Jr., suggesting how the systematic theologies of these friends of Hauerwas might be employed to fill out his suggestive comments (rather than the apparently arbitrary use of Wolfhart Pannenberg).

Third, it is inexplicable that John Howard Yoder is mostly absent from

Heide's book. Given how dependent Hauerwas is on Yoder theologically, it would have been instructive to provide a detailed account of Yoder's ecclesiology, noting how it underlies much of what Hauerwas writes. (Then again, one might supplement Yoder with cues from Thomas, Barth, Jones or McClendon.)

I would affirm Heide's sense that Hauerwas's ecclesiology could be improved through a more adequate pneumatology, but I would suggest that his account is deficient. That his account of the Spirit is both communal and enfleshed comports with emphases in Hauerwas's work. But the way in which these foci are elaborated is not carefully nuanced either in terms of New Testament theology or in connection with Hauerwas's theological ethics.

I was also taken aback by the absence of considerable recent New Testament scholarship that might have been helpful. Here I think especially of those directly influenced by Yoder and Hauerwas such as Michael Gorman and Doug Harrink. But, as with a suggestive article, Heide has certainly named areas for future constructive research.

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Dennis P. Hollinger. *The Meaning of Sex: Christian Ethics and the Moral Life.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009.

In this book Dennis Hollinger sets out to articulate the meaning of sex in a sex-crazed and sexually-confused world. He argues that there is inherent meaning in sex that is given by the God who designed sex and that is revealed through the Bible. Hollinger begins with his Christian ethicist professor hat on and lays out how the theories of consequentialist ethics, principle ethics, and virtue ethics are not adequate grounds for a Christian sexual ethic. He evaluates the worldviews of asceticism, naturalism, humanism, monism, and pluralism, and finds them inadequate as well. In contrast to these views,

Hollinger articulates his Christian worldview based on the biblical story of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation.

The author builds his sexual ethic on the "divine givens"; the primary one is that God created two ways of being human, male and female. Drawing significantly on Genesis 2:24, he bases his sexual ethic on God's intention for male and female to become "one flesh" in marriage. Hollinger contends that the God-designed purpose for human sexual intimacy is four-fold: consummation of marriage, procreation, love, and pleasure. "These four purposes are found in only one location, the marriage of a man and a woman. This is where God designed sexual intimacy to be" (115).

In the introductory chapter Hollinger makes a helpful distinction between sexuality and sex, and declares his book is primarily about the latter. However, his use of the terms "sexual intimacy" and "sex" interchangeably obscures a range of physical acts other than intercourse that express sexual intimacy.

When one defines the meaning of God's good gift of sexual intimacy only within marriage, the meaning of sexual wholeness for singles and homosexually-oriented persons is largely ignored. A sexual ethic that holds up marriage as the God-intended fulfillment of sexual being denigrates other ways of being sexually whole within God's good design. Hollinger admits that churches have not done well in reaching out to singles and homosexuals. He doesn't seem to recognize, however, that his predominantly marriage-focused sexual ethic contributes to this invisibility and inattentiveness to the sexual health and well-being of these persons. If the Creator's orientation is toward males and females experiencing sexual intimacy within marriage, then churches that embrace this perspective tend not to address the real sexual yearnings for intimacy that all God's children have been given.

A strength of the book is Hollinger's focused and pastoral attention to four current sexual ethics issues: sex before marriage, sex in marriage, homosexuality, and reproductive therapies. Pastors and congregations dealing with these issues will find these chapters of particular interest.

As one who experienced infertility, I welcome more open and forthright discussion in our faith communities about ethical decision-making about reproductive options. Infertile couples are often alone in discerning the morality of the technologies offered to them in medical offices. I

commend Hollinger for giving this issue attention and raising important ethical questions that ought to be considered. In the intensity of desiring to create a child, couples can lose sight of the longer-term moral implications of the procedures they accept. The broader Christian community's wisdom and discernment is needed on these matters.

In the chapter addressing "The Challenge of Homosexuality," Hollinger not only makes the usual distinction between homosexual orientation and behavior but also discusses homosexual identity. He claims that a homosexual orientation is not chosen, and that homosexual identity and behaviors are the result of personal choices. It is important for him also to make distinctions between Christian ethics, pastoral care, and public policy. He argues "the Christian ethic of sex cannot capitulate to our fallen impulses … [and] cannot sanction homosexual behavior" (197). He calls for churches to have compassion for those who struggle with homosexual desire without compromising the Christian sexual ethic. He urges churches to "hold together truth and compassion, righteousness and mercy" (197).

Those who genuinely need to re-examine the church's traditional sexual ethic or explore other Christian positions on homosexuality will not find much to support their efforts in this book. Hollinger stifles ongoing meaningful dialogue and further discernment on this controversial issue with his claim that "We fail the world and struggling individuals when we continually appeal to more dialogue, ambiguity, and merely compassion" (194). Nonetheless, he does contribute to the dialogue by providing a clear, thoughtful articulation of the traditional Christian understanding of the meaning of sex.

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Virgil Vogt, ed. *The Roots of Concern: Writings on Anabaptist Renewal 1952-1957*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009.

World War II catapulted North American Mennonites into a world for which they were scarcely prepared. This reality was particularly true for those who left the confines of their predictable regional Mennonitism for the far shores of war-ravaged Europe. A group of seven men, including John Howard Yoder, Calvin Redekop, and John W. Miller, who all had firsthand experience in Mennonite relief work in postwar Europe and at the same time were involved in graduate studies at European universities, met in Amsterdam in 1952 to discuss the disjunction between their American Mennonite theology and their European experience. As one participant put it, "We were unable to define or to communicate the message that seemed implicit in our professed position. … What we in effect proclaimed as an answer for people in devastated countries was no longer a dynamic transforming leaven in our own midst" (2). These men had been influenced by the scholarly research of Anabaptist history and sociology, but their international experiences awakened them to both its inadequacy and its possibility.

Not only did the 1952 meeting mark the beginning of a crucial shift in thinking about Anabaptism that shook the "Old" Mennonite Church, the main target of its critique, but some of the ideas first heralded by this group are still resonant in theology today. Although the Concern movement resisted formal organization, it offered its ideas through eighteen pamphlet publications beginning in 1954 and ending in 1971.

The Roots of Concern: Writings on Anabaptist Renewal 1952-1957 is a compilation of the first four volumes published between 1954 and 1957. Here the concerns and ideals of the group, and those with similar views, are promoted through articles, letters, and an annotated bibliography. These writings are a mix of visceral responses and academic insights, making the mood more personal and spiritual than strictly academic and theological. The first volume addresses the problems and solutions generally, but by 1957, in response to requests for greater clarity, the issues are more specific.

Although the men behind the Concern movement had been schooled in the "Anabaptist vision," they were critical of it. "Neo-anabaptism is chiefly academic, an interesting subject to build libraries, journals, lectures around – but not to adopt personally in our daily lives….," said one participant

(146). They discovered in Europe a new dimension of their history which brought into "sharp focus the genius of the sixteenth-century Anabaptists [and] their faithful application of New Testament Christianity…." This resulted in the conclusion that "our American Mennonite tradition is not the one of the Bible" (131).

These sharp criticisms are a few of those largely aimed at the perceived rigid institutional and doctrinal structure of the "Old" Mennonite Church. At the heart of this critique was a new realization of Anabaptism as formed and inspired by the Holy Spirit experienced in community. The Concern group perceived the Mennonite Church as compromising the genius of the Spirit-filled church through accommodating to a denominationalism more concerned with preserving the status quo. One reaction was against non-conformity, which in previous decades had been a theological category resulting in judgments on clothes and life insurance. In contrast, the Concern pamphlets endorse a faith focused on "living relationship with a living God" (159), so that "the Church … is realized in the real presence of Christ in its midst" (160). It is in the dynamic Spirit-filled meeting of two or three in Christ where church happens, and this spontaneous existentialist spirit is central in this upstart movement. .

While the Concern group criticized preceding historical and theological interpretations of Anabaptism, they too founded their conclusions on some faulty historical research. For instance, Yoder contended that Anabaptism derived from the Reformed movement and he understood the Swiss Anabaptists as the true forebears of the movement. I believe that a broader, deeper understanding of the roots of Anabaptism leads to different conclusions about ecclesiology and ethics and a greater emphasis on spirituality.

The re-evaluation of "the Anabaptist vision" by the Concern group requires another assessment today, one that takes seriously their existential spirituality. *The Roots of Concern* is a good resource for anyone interested in ecclesiology, ethics, the early writing of Yoder, or Anabaptist-Mennonite history and spirituality. However, its special contribution is the challenge to live the Spirit-led life in community today.

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Roger Epp. *We Are All Treaty People: Prairie Essays*. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2008.

Roger Epp, a political scientist and dean of the Augustana campus of the University of Alberta, has written a thoughtful compendium of ten essays, many of which have appeared in prior incarnations, grouped together under the general theme of rural Canadian prairie life. Though displaying an idiosyncratic style, it is an instructive and at times deeply moving book.

The first three chapters are of a personal nature. Epp offers nostalgic descriptions of the Battle River, whose surrounding countryside lies in the heart of Treaty 6 territory, the area demarcated by the momentous 1876 agreement between the Crown and Cree First Nations. Next, he takes us on a journey to Oklahoma, recalling how his maternal great-grandfather, a farmer and pastor, moved from there to Saskatchewan in 1918 after his homestead had been claimed in the expansion of Indian Territory allotted to the Cheyenne. Epp then turns his attention to Hanley, Saskatchewan, a lonely little town where he was raised in the 1960s. Canada has lived off "both the economic *and* cultural capital" of places like Hanley; the country as a whole "will be impoverished by their decline and disappearance" (50).

Prairie politics is a recurring theme in the fifth, sixth and eighth chapters. Epp longs for a revival of agrarian tradition of the sort that Kentuckian Wendell Berry represents, which would empower farmers to act and reclaim their own history. Many prairie farmers today come from ancestors who were deeply suspicious of socialist tendencies that sprang from Rousseau's notion of the people as a single entity with a common will. Consequently, they supported "the pluralist Canada, the one that promised an undisturbed, side-by-side home for diverse peoples" (118).

This pluralist vision, however, has recently been impeded by a farm crisis that extends to abandoned railway lines and grain elevators, diminished government services, and a general lack of leadership. Here Epp's historical analysis sheds light on why many prairie farmers are reticent to cast their vote for the New Democratic Party, reticence stemming in no small measure from their forebears' disillusionment with homogenizing socialism.

Alberta constitutes another key theme of the book. In the fourth chapter Epp explains how the United Farmers of Alberta became one of the

greatest Canadian populist democratic movements, unexpectedly winning a majority of seats in the 1921 Alberta general election and subsequently paving the way for the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) in Saskatchewan.

Today's Alberta is actually "two Albertas" (chapter 9), one urban and one rural. Though the latter is no longer at the center of Albertan life, Epp opines, urbanites nonetheless mimic the ranch lifestyle of cowboy boots, pickup trucks, and country music. Rural Alberta has become the "other Alberta," but it has survived in the Conservative dynasty through a patron-client relationship: oil revenue is exchanged for voter support. The reality of two Albertas has prompted Epp to think about the rural situatedness of the institution where he teaches (chapter 10). He concludes that a rural university should possess its own local pedagogy and curriculum that would encourage graduates to enter the rural workplace.

The seventh chapter, bearing the same title as the book, was provoked by the Canadian government's 1998 response to the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Canadians at large must be disabused of the myth of *terra nullius*, which views pre-contact North America as a land belonging to no one. It is just this myth, the author argues, that allows many Canadians to view treaties as historically inconsequential with no meaning in perpetuity.

However, based on their "birthright" (a concept borrowed from political theorist Sheldon Wolin), "most Canadians exercise a treaty right simply by living where they do" (133). This is an arresting argument deserving careful pondering. What does it mean, say, for a Mennonite settler to "exercise a treaty right"? Could this become a barrier to healing and reconciliation with First Nations peoples? Or, if Canadians finally recognize that "we are all treaty people," are we then one step closer to reconciliation? Epp is to be commended for raising the issue of treaties in a candid, unrestrained manner.

Altogether, the ten chapters present a full account of Epp's own political vision, which stems from his identity as a treaty person from the rural prairies. Though the rationale for the ordering of the essays and the conceptual links between them are sometimes not obvious, each essay is readable and illuminating. The book is well annotated and contains a helpful

index of names and subjects. I recommend it unreservedly to political scientists, sociologists, anthropologists, scholars of literature, theologians, and anyone interested in the meaning of rural Canadian prairie life.

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