

and highly sensitive to criticism though passionate.

These concerns aside, Schlabach has done an important service by placing Hershberger solidly in the story of 20th-century North American Mennonitism as it relates to church-state relations, institutional development, ethical debate, and pacifism. I recommend this volume to anyone interested in questions of North American Mennonites, intellectual biography, and the precarious balancing act of pacifism in a time of real – even necessary – military pressure in the world. This is a very impressive book about an impressive figure in American Mennonite history; in many ways this biography is a history of Mennonite Church thought in the 20th century.

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Jeremy M. Bergen and Anthony G. Siegrist, eds. *Power and Practices: Engaging the Work of John Howard Yoder*. Waterloo, ON: Herald Press, 2009.

This collection of essays emerged from a conference at the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre in 2007 where primarily, but not exclusively, younger Mennonite theologians gathered to discuss the receptivity of John Howard Yoder's work and explore what lines of development should be pursued. The collection includes ten essays, along with a foreword by Glenn Stassen and a preface by the editors. Each essay interrogates Yoder's work and allows Yoder to raise critical questions about a wide variety of matters of theological import. The breadth of Yoder's legacy is on display in the diversity of issues under consideration, which range from his biblical readings of war in the Old Testament to his approach to scholasticism and engineering. While nothing more binds the essays together than that each author deals with the receptivity of Yoder's work, this is sufficient for a lively, interesting volume that truly represents the state of Yoder scholarship today.

Chris Huebner begins the collection with a discussion on “what it might mean to inherit John Howard Yoder” (24), doing so through Yoder’s own wrestling with receptivity. Receptivity is not an end in itself but must have at its center “new modes of faithfulness and new examples of the truth of Christ” (26). This points the collection in an important direction, but what follows is somewhat confusing, albeit intriguing. For instance, the juxtaposition of Philip Stolfus and Andrew Brubaker-Kaethler’s essays in chapters two and three was a brilliant decision by the editors because these pieces seem to take Yoder’s inheritance in very different, if not opposite, directions.

Stolfus admonishes Anabaptist theology to consider Kant’s claim “*Sapere Aude!* [be bold to know...],” and get about correcting Yoder’s inattention to a “critical and constructive” doctrine of God more in tune with modern theologians such as Gordon Kaufmann and Sallie McFague. He wants to develop Yoder’s insistence that theology should always “start from scratch.” Brubaker-Kaethler finds Yoder too dismissive of scholasticism and the Middle Ages, and believes attention to that era can be beneficial to demonstrate Anabaptist theology’s deep roots in the tradition. These would appear to be different trajectories raising interesting questions of receptivity.

Branson Parler takes Yoder’s receptivity in yet a different direction, showing how the “neo-Calvinist tradition” could benefit from Yoder’s Christological reading of creation, whereas Yoder could benefit through more attention to the neo-Calvinist emphasis on the “*imago Dei*.” Parler gives one of the best accounts of how Yoder is for the nations, and yet sees a fuller task to which the Christian is called. He writes, “Yoder sees the Christian holding political office as analogous to the first violinist doing the job of the usher. . .” (75). That line alone is worth the cost of the book.

Then follow a series of essays engaging with particular theological issues that emerge from Yoder or should so emerge. Nekeisha Alexis-Baker brings womanist theology into conversation with his call for “revolutionary subordination.” She does not simply reject Yoder’s controversial claim but translates it into “creative transformation,” which is language Yoder also used. Richard Bourne’s discussion of Yoder, Foucault, and governmentality nicely follows her, for it offers a sympathetic critique of “revolutionary

subordination,” making sense of it through Yoder’s later “exilic ecclesiology.” This is the same ecclesiology that Paul Martens queries in a chapter on Yoder’s increasing use of Jeremiah in his later work.

Between Bourne and Martens, Paul Heidebrecht questions Yoder’s criticisms of “engineering,” showing how Yoder’s concern not to make history come out right through technique still has a place for the “engineer.” Andy Alexis-Baker sharply challenges appropriations of Yoder for “policing” and certain forms of “just peacemaking,” which he says do not “befit his legacy” (148). The final chapter by John Nugent picks up on a similar theme found in Martens and discusses Yoder’s use of Jewish history and its increasing transition to a Jeremianic vision, raising questions about “Yoder’s needlessly pejorative reading of palestinocentric existence, the city of Jerusalem and the return from exile” (174).

This book demonstrates that the charge that Anabaptists withdraw from society and/or are sectarian assumes more coherence among the Anabaptist witness than actually exists, but who should be surprised by that? Many of these theologians are as marked by their doctoral training and its concerns as they are by their Anabaptist ecclesial location. Moreover, many of the same disagreements besetting mainline Protestants and Roman Catholics are on display here. Nonetheless, these essays also demonstrate significant continuities, especially a preoccupation with how Scripture should be read in order “to own the Lamb’s victory in one’s own time,” as Huebner puts it. This is an important book by an important group of stellar theologians from whom we will hear more in future.

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