Perry B. Yoder, *Leviticus*. Believers Church Bible Commentary 33. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 2017.

Perry B. Yoder's *Leviticus* was published in 2017 as the thirty-third volume in the Believers Church Bible Commentary (BCBC) series. As of 2023, thirty-six volumes have been published in the series, with eight still in the pipeline. In the BCBC series introduction, the editorial board says they conceived the series with "the desire to help as wide a range of readers as possible" (15) while also putting the biblical text in conversation with the best and most recent scholarship. Yoder's commentary succeeds in both endeavors. Yoder writes accessibly, inviting non-specialists to delight in the fascinating world revealed in a book modern readers often find opaque. At the same time, Yoder distills current scholarship on Leviticus with clarity and energy, offering a fresh interpretation of Leviticus that will appeal to scholars and laypeople alike. Completed after Yoder's retirement from twenty years of teaching at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, as well as teaching at Bethel College and Bluffton College (now Bluffton University) prior to that, this commentary bears the fruits of a lifetime spent in the classroom. Yoder's commitment to clear teaching is apparent in both his dedication to "plain sense" biblical interpretation (18, 307-309) and in the way he helps contemporary readers understand Leviticus as relevant to modern life.

Early in the commentary, Yoder introduces his readers to the defining work of Jacob Milgrom, who reconceptualized how Leviticus portrays purity and atonement, and then situates his work in a post-Milgrom interpretive landscape. Yoder redirects the reader's gaze toward the text of Leviticus itself, distancing himself from scholarly endeavors to theorize about the book's history of development or its specific date of composition. Instead, Yoder is especially concerned to help non-specialists understand exactly what the text says and the rhetorical effects its writers meant to evoke.

Throughout the volume, Yoder untangles the dense and technical vocabulary used to describe ancient Israel's sacrificial ritual system, which he divides into three categories: sacrifices for pleasing God, forgiveness rituals, and rituals for purity. Yoder interprets Leviticus 16:1-17:16 as a "hinge" for the book of Leviticus, echoing the scholarly consensus that Leviticus 17-26 (often called the Holiness Code) distinguishes itself from the first half of the

book by democratizing holiness. Yoder's elegant exploration of the Holiness Code traces the contours of its distinctive emphasis: that all members of the community live in "light of God's presence" (178) by following instructions for maintaining personal and priestly holiness and by celebrating festivals as a way of marking holy time. Though Yoder does not emphasize source criticism per se, source critics are likely to find themselves largely in agreement with Yoder's observations about the trends in two halves of the book.

With this commentary, Yoder's unique contributions include his commitment to a "plain sense" interpretive framework as well as his decision to interpret Leviticus alongside peace theology. The commentary invites the reader to consider how biblical *shalom* hews pathways throughout the book of Leviticus itself, from Yoder's argument that sacrifices were rituals enacting joyful friendship with God as well as covenant reconciliation (23-24), to the elegant way he explains the commands to love neighbour and foreigner in Leviticus 19 (196-204). Because Yoder's assumed reader is a modern Christian with commitments to a peace church tradition, he helpfully brings Leviticus in conversation with select New Testament writings from the gospels and epistles, especially those which borrow sacrificial language from the Hebrew scriptures.

Throughout the commentary, Yoder's approach is to give the reader the data necessary to come to a hermeneutical position themselves, a strength that makes the book a useful and productive conversation partner for multiple audiences. Readers of all kinds will benefit from the book's clear elucidation of a ritual and symbolic world which seems so distant from our own. Indeed, Yoder's explanation of the latent anti-semitism in the history of Christian interpretation is vitally important for all who read Leviticus today (187-189). I would have liked Yoder to disclose more frequently his preferred solutions to the thornier hermeneutical challenges posed by Leviticus (for the attentive reader, he drops hints like bread crumbs). In the chapter on rituals for purity, for example, Yoder might have reflected on the purity movement in modern evangelicalism and its misuse of biblical imagery; or, perhaps the Levitical laws about holy bodies could have been brought into conversation with recent work in disability studies. As his work stands, Yoder's enlivening commentary provides excellent interpretive guideposts

for modern Bible readers interested in pursuing these and similar questions. I am certain that Yoder's engaging and distinctive voice on Leviticus will ring out clearly for years to come.

Jackie Wyse-Rhodes, Associate Professor of Hebrew Bible, Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Indiana.

Mark Jantzen and John D. Thiesen, eds. *European Mennonites and the Holocaust.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020.

This edited collection opens by pairing the profiles of two individuals. The first, SS Captain Heinrich Wiens, was born into a Mennonite family in the former Molotschna colony of Ukraine. He planned and participated in the massacre of Jews as a member of Mobile Killing Squad D. The second, Geertje Pel, was a Dutch Mennonite woman who sheltered a Jewish baby. A neighbor betrayed her, and she was later murdered at the Ravensbrück concentration camp. Throughout Europe—from Holland to Germany to Ukraine—nearly 200,000 Mennonites lived alongside Jewish communities at the outbreak of the war. Yet the Holocaust has been largely absent in the extensive and immediate narration of Mennonite wartime actions at the individual, familial, and academic levels. Mennonite silence remained the norm through German re-examination of the Nazi past after 1968 and even as post-Communist historiography in Eastern Europe reassessed questions of national complicity in the nineties. The stories of Wiens and Pel, as the editors of this long overdue collection note, are indicative of a range of Mennonite roles in the Holocaust. While accounting for this diversity, the authors are unequivocal. This was a "spectrum tilted toward enabling, participating in, and benefiting from Nazi German rule, which included the genocide of Jews" (4).

The edited collection opens with a posthumously published portion of a manuscript by Gerhard Rempel. As Doris Bergen notes in an introduction, Rempel's work, unfinished at the time of his death, drew by necessity on an "eclectic and rather unconventional" source base (38). Exploratory in nature,