

without explanation. For example, when River East MB in Winnipeg decided in 1990 that their next pastor could be male or female (194), was there any discussion in the record? Considering River East's move forced the hand of the denomination in several ways, how they processed the decision had significant consequences. Another aspect in the book that could be expanded on is the human drama, especially of ways in which women experienced these decades. To broaden this out, it may have been helpful to engage in interviews with some of the participants, now decades removed, women pastors, and others who were present.

Heidebrecht provides a helpful portrayal of a decision-making process, spanning generations, on fundamentally existential issues for the denomination. What this book does achieve is that it provides insight into how the Mennonite Brethren might want to go forward as newer issues that polarize churches emerge in the context of new processes in the future.

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David L. McConnell and Marilyn D. Loveless, *Nature and the Environment in Amish Life*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018. Pp. 312. Softcover, \$49.95 USD.

This accessible and well-researched book on the Amish and the environment counters any lingering romanticization of the Amish derived from John Hostetler's heyday as Amish expert in the 1960s or reinforced from bestsellers by David Kline in the 1990s. These works highlighted the Amish contestation of the modern world, their close-knit communities countering the ennui and atomization of modernity, and, with Kline's work in particular, presented the Amish as intricately tied to and in tune with nature. McConnell and Loveless's anthropological questioning of Hostetler and Kline's filiopiety, however, does not translate into overt criticism of the Amish; indeed, it cuts a path between two sharply contrasting views. On the one hand the authors present the Amish as small, highly self-sufficient, householder farmers enmeshed in nature, working with animals, and tending their gardens. And yet, they contest the idea that the Amish are environmentalists or even ecologically minded. The Amish, as presented to us by McConnell and Loveless, distrust both the science that illuminates climate change,

endangered species, etc., and the environmental laws that might interfere with Amish farming practices. It is a “paradox” honed earlier by the works of Steven Nolt, Donald Kraybill, and others, but here it is forcefully argued with reference to the Amish interaction with nature.

This dichotomy appears in each of the twelve chapters. They report on a rigorous ethnography based on interviews, household questionnaires, and a burgeoning Amish print culture, all set within a theoretical framework of political ecology. In the chapter on children, for example, McConnell and Loveless argue that while Amish youth play and work in nature, they have neither a sentimental attachment to it nor, given their schools’ serious science deficit, do they understand nature’s biological intricacy. In another chapter, based on a household questionnaire, the authors conclude that the “ecological footprint” of the Amish is not dissimilar to that of so-called “English” neighbours; indeed, the Amish love of meat and dairy, their travels by vans and buses, and their insistence on warm houses take their toll on nature. It is a pattern seen also in agriculture: the Amish are small, animal-powered householders and as such, they practice a sustainable agriculture, but they are also profit-driven. To generate the funds to purchase some of the most expensive land in the US, most Amish welcome GMO crops and the attending herbicide and insecticides. Ironically, the chemicalization of agriculture has made their otherwise primitive and inefficient technologies workable. Similar patterns are apparent in their approach to animal breeding, including creating herds of white-tailed deer for hunting ranges, and in forestry, where the Amish are often at loggerheads with state conservation officers. As the authors put it, the Amish “value the forest for its timber and remain unsentimental about cutting trees” (104).

And yet the authors argue that despite this patently anti-ecological outlook by the Amish, it is not their environmental intention that matters but their actions. The fact is that they live and play close to nature: 98 percent garden for themselves, many use herbal medicine, they travel less than most Americans, and they are contented with smaller farms and less income. They are also disproportionately involved in organic agriculture, as seen, for example, in the very successful cooperative Greenfield Farms, which has become famous for promoting macronutrients found in calcium-based compounds all the while indirectly profiting from the Amish brand.

In the end, the authors have not only illuminated the Amish ecological mindset, they have nuanced insights into environmentalism

and sustainability more broadly. Ultimately, for the health of the environment, it is not what you say that matters but what you do.

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Rebecca Janzen, *Liminal Sovereignty: Mennonites and Mormons in Mexican Culture*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2018. Pp. 254. Hardcover, \$95.00 USD.

The Mennonites and Mormons who migrated to Mexico between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries do not fit easily into Mexican cultural norms. Both groups migrated in order to practice their particular religious ideals more freely. For Mennonites the aim was to retain German as their primary educational and social language, at a time when this was being threatened by Canadian government policies, and to avoid the use of modern technology. Mormons were drawn by Mexico's flexible definition of family which allowed for the continuation of polygamy, a practice threatened by US laws. Traditionally perceived to occupy a marginalized space in Mexican society, the Mennonites and Mormons are granted a space at the edges of the nation by Janzen. She argues that these two groups align with central tenets of Mexican identity, including the concept of *mestizaje* (a term for Mexicans of mixed ethnicities), and have done so from the beginning of the twentieth century to the times of violence and death in the early twenty-first.

The book is organized into five chapters structured as a series of "windows" within a loosely organized chronological approach. Janzen begins her account with the arrival of the Mennonites in Mexico and the return of Mormons to Mexico, both during the 1920s (Mormons left Mexico in 1912 due to the upheaval created by the Mexican Revolution, 1910–1917). Chapter one focuses on how migration documents and photographs depict these two groups. Chapters two and three address the ways Mennonites and Mormons experienced the issue of land redistribution during the 1930, 1940s and 1950s, one of the principal features of the post-revolutionary constitution. In chapter four the book leaps chronologically to the 1980s, focusing on the involvement of Mennonites and Mormons as drug traffickers and victims within the rising drug trade at the US–Mexico border. Janzen contextualizes this