

being developed to address this concern, but how can these initiatives be applied and effectively integrated into LG Mennonite communities? Ultimately, application of the findings from the book to the delivery of better health and social services to LG Mennonite communities remains a daunting task.

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Laura Schmidt Roberts, Paul Martens, and Myron A. Penner, eds., *Recovering from the Anabaptist Vision: New Essays in Anabaptist Identity and Theological Method*. T&T Clark Studies in Anabaptist Theology and Ethics. London: T&T Clark, 2020. Pp. 200. Softcover, \$24.26 USD.

Being the first volume in a new book series from the Institute of Mennonite Studies at the Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, *Recovering from the Anabaptist Vision* collects essays that were first presented at a 2017 conference on Methods and Practices in Anabaptist Theology held at the Humanitas Anabaptist Mennonite Centre in Langley, British Columbia. The edited collection contains nine of the twenty-seven papers presented at the conference, and its cover description suggests that the volume “performs a critical and vibrant reconstruction of Anabaptist identity and theological method.” Situating its chapters after revelations of John Howard Yoder’s sexual abuse, the volume aims toward a recovery of Anabaptist theology that is “ecumenically engaged, philosophically astute, psychologically attuned, and resolutely vulnerable.” In the preface, editor Myron Penner describes the volume further as “integrating established and emerging voices across academic disciplines, in order to engage both the academy and a wider public” (viii), while focusing on the question: “Is there an Anabaptist theological method?” (viii). The chapters in the volume then provide various answers to this important question.

In chapter 1, “Challenge and Opportunity: The Quest for Anabaptist Theology Today,” Paul Martens challenges certain configurations of the relationships between church and state, personal and political, and church and world in Yoder’s work, suggesting that “today, there is no single voice that speaks for Anabaptist theology” (16). In the second chapter, “Contours and Possibilities for an Anabaptist Theology,” Karl Koop navigates between the ecumenical and

particularist impulses in recent Mennonite theology, and seeks out a coherent Anabaptist theology that is careful with its use of the past and cognizant of its diversity, while proceeding from the basis of the Trinity, Scripture, and Christian community. Chapter 3 is titled “Refiguration, Configuration: Tradition, Text, and Narrative Identity,” and in it Laura Schmidt Roberts draws on the work of Paul Ricoeur to deepen an Anabaptist approach to texts by treating “tradition” as a verb and moving from understanding to explanation to configure a kind of narrative identity that can mediate between identity and diversity. In the fourth chapter, “Mennonite Women Doing Theology: A Methodological Reflection on Twenty-Five Years of Conferences,” Carol Penner helpfully surveys the work of the “Women Doing Theology” conferences that ran from the 1990s to the present, and concludes that the feminist methodology common to the conferences is marked by its movement toward worship and beyond divisions between participants and presenters, and academics and lay-people.

In chapter 5, “Queering Anabaptist Theology: An Endeavor in Breaking Binaries as Hermeneutical Community,” Stephanie Chandler Burns sets out to queer Anabaptist theology by bringing queer theory and the Wesleyan quadrilateral together in new ways and giving voice to queer Mennonite experiences and narratives through a combination of suspicion and reclamation. In chapter 6, “On the Need for Critical-Contextual and Trauma-Informed Methods in Mennonite Theology,” Melanie Kampen furthers her work on Mennonite theology and Canada’s Residential Schools, arguing that the desire for purity in Mennonite theology has resulted in sexual, racial, and gender violence that require a trauma informed approach. In the seventh chapter, “The Ecumenical Vocation of Anabaptist Theology,” Jeremy Bergen argues programmatically that “The Anabaptist tradition ought to be regarded as a reforming movement *within*, and *for the sake of*, the (capital-C) Church identified by the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed as one, holy, catholic, and apostolic” (103). Chapter 8 is titled “Dialogue as Theological Method: Mennonite Missionaries, West African Churches, and Twenty-First-Century Anabaptist Identity,” and in it R. Bruce Yoder draws on the missiology of Wilbert R. Shenk, whose work grew out of “the missionary values of indigenization and self-theologizing” (128) in historical contexts of decolonization, all while attempting to “accommodate diversity while cultivating shared theological identity” (129). The volume closes with Paul Doerksen’s chapter, “Restlessness as Theological Method,” in which he resists the “grasping, holding, and possessing impulse in theology” (152), embracing an

“educated ignorance” (158) that can better approach the wonder and brokenness that theology attempts to understand.

How to assess such a diverse volume except by its own stated goals? The editors suggest that the essay collection integrates “learning across academic disciplines” (viii), and in many ways the authors do draw upon a wide breadth of resources to further their aims. However, it is also important to notice that the contributions of the volume remain firmly within the domain of Christian theology. Although the book contains a wealth of insights that seek to revise Anabaptist and Mennonite theological method, I wonder what it would mean to take interdisciplinarity more seriously and practice a kind of ecumenism across academic disciplines (see, for example, the May 2021 special issue of *Political Theology*). For example, the conversation initiated by the book could be furthered by considering how theological methods—generously understood—can be found within the literary conversation on Mennonite/s Writing in which no confessional position is assumed. The interdisciplinarity of the volume could also have been broadened by considering the works of secular Mennonites, ex-Mennonites, and near-Mennonites (as explored in the 2015 issue of the *Journal of Mennonite Studies*). At issue in the contributions to *Recovering from the Anabaptist Vision* is the question of identity, and it is worth considering how even in recovery, normative assumptions about identity formation continue to animate the discourse in ways that deserve further scrutiny (for example, in the assumption that all Mennonites understand themselves to be Christians).

The question “Is there an Anabaptist theological method?” is an important one that is answered in many fruitful ways throughout the volume. In an effort to both recover from and reckon with the past, Anabaptist theological methods draw from political theology, ecumenical encounters, trinitarian orientations, LGBTQ* experiences, trauma theories, and dialogical restlessness in order to reimagine the tradition in the present and give it a future. *Recovering from the Anabaptist Vision* collects fascinating and important new work in and around the Anabaptist Mennonite tradition, and it moves the conversation on Mennonite identity forward in several significant ways.

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