

Book Reviews

History and Social Science Reviews

Ronald C. Jantz, *Living in the World: How Conservative Mennonites Preserved the Anabaptism of the Sixteenth Century*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2020. Pp. 212. Softcover. \$29 US.

In his preface, Ronald C. Jantz, librarian emeritus from Rutgers University, states that his book “is best thought of as a cultural history albeit an unusual hybrid—part history, part culture, part national identity and, in the end, part message to the American people” (3). As such, it is written with multiple readerships in mind, including those both familiar and unfamiliar with Anabaptism broadly, and Mennonites specifically. Although not revealed in the book’s title or subtitle, the main group in focus is the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite (CGCM), known more informally as the Holdeman Mennonite church. Having grown up in a Holdeman community, the author draws on his extensive firsthand knowledge of this group throughout.

Living in the World is divided into two parts of six chapters each. Part one, “The European Experience,” traces the history of Anabaptism in Europe with a focus on Mennonites of mostly northwestern Germanic (Flemish, Dutch, Frisian, northern German) ancestry who migrated to Russia in the eighteenth century, though there are brief references to the Swiss roots of the Anabaptist movement. The sixth chapter in this first part, “From Ostrog to Lone Tree, Kansas” (77–90), discusses the migration of Groningen Old Flemish Mennonites from Volhynia, located in present-day Ukraine, who after their arrival in Kansas became affiliated with the CGCM.

In the book's second part, "Nonresistance and a People Apart," the first of its six chapters, "Building the Church" (93–104), continues this historical discussion to describe how the Ostrogers, as well as members of the Kleine Gemeinde, came to be affiliated with the CGCM, which was founded by John Holdeman, a former (Old) Mennonite Church member from Ohio. The remaining five chapters in this section discuss how classic Anabaptist doctrines, including non-resistance and separation from the world, are reflected in the CGCM. The book concludes with two appendices of genealogical interest, "The Kansas Ostrogers" (150–157), "Dutch-Prussian Family Names (158–164), and a third, "Holdeman Congregations in the United States" (165–171).

For readers unfamiliar with Anabaptist migration history, it may be a challenge to form a clear picture of just how the CGCM came to be. John Holdeman, the church's founder, was a descendant of ethnic Swiss Mennonites who settled in Pennsylvania in the early eighteenth century, yet most of his followers ended up being of Flemish and Dutch background. The book would have benefitted from an overview of both major ethnic groups represented among North America's Anabaptist migrants, the colonial-era Swiss–South German Mennonites and Amish and the Flemish–Dutch Mennonites who came to the United States and Canada by way of Russia in the nineteenth century. Also desirable would have been a comparison of Holdeman Mennonites with their more traditional Anabaptist brethren, Old Order Mennonites and Old Colony Mennonites. The book contains occasional references to Amish and Hutterites, but the Old Order and Old Colony Mennonites, who arguably have done just as much as the Holdemans to "preserve the Anabaptism of the sixteenth century," are not discussed.

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Paola Canova, *Frontier Intimacies: Ayoreo Women and the Sexual Economy of the Paraguayan Chaco*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2020. Pp. 208. Softcover, \$29.95 US.

At the 2009 Mennonite World Conference in Paraguay, a performance of reconciliation took place when Helmut Isaak delivered a statement of forgiveness to Ayoreo Chief Jonoine, who had killed his brother Kornelius Isaak over fifty years earlier in one of the first