

gicalism in the United States. The title should therefore have, for the sake of accuracy, included the adjective "American." In the same volume, Mark A. Noll ironically bemoans the way residents in the United States tend to be "scandalously ignorant" about Canadian church history, yet these two volumes will do little to alleviate this nescience. Such omissions seem to reflect a certain kind of ongoing ethnocentrism within American evangelical historiography that needs to be dislodged by a greater attentiveness to comparative international studies.

Despite my disappointment over the absence of Canadian material, I nevertheless highly recommend both volumes as valuable, complementary reference works capable of guiding both the beginner and the advanced scholar. Taken together, the two volumes provide a clear, panoramic view of the evangelical mosaic in America, i.e., the United States!

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***The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents.* Eds. and trans. Tom Scott and Bob Scribner. New Jersey and London: Humanities Press International, Inc., 1991. ISBN 0-391-03681-5. Pp. xvii+355.**

***The Radical Reformation.* Ed. and trans. Michael G. Baylor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991. ISBN 0-521-37073-6. Pp. xxxvii+295.**

***The German Peasants' War and Anabaptist Community of Goods.* By James M. Stayer. Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1991. ISBN 0-7735-0842-2. Pp. x+227.**

Three new books have recently appeared that expand our knowledge of the German Peasants' War of 1524-25 and how it significantly shaped religious attitudes during the period of the Reformation.

The German Peasants' War: A History in Documents is the most thorough and well-annotated anthology of source materials on the Peasants' War to appear in English translation to date. The collection consists of 162 documents that are topically arranged under twelve chapters, each with a specific focus: the causes underlying the revolt; the religious dimension of the social unrest; dissemination and organization of the movement; military aspects of the war; the involvement of the towns, the nobility, the rebels and their leaders; the political ideas that informed the rebellion; negotiations, punishment and repression; and the aftermath of the Peasants' War. The documents featured consist of abstracts from per-

sonal correspondence, official records, revolutionary tracts, lists of grievances, oaths sworn by the rebels, descriptions of battles, summaries of negotiations, the texts of treaties, accounts of executions, and character portrayals of those involved.

A context for interpreting this vast array of documents is provided through an excellent 64-page introductory section which clearly describes the significance, causes, organization, regional characteristics and military aspects of the peasants' revolt. A concise overview of events in each of five main areas of rebellion—together with carefully created maps showing the location of key events in each region—helps to clarify the diverse character of the Peasants' War, as well as the commonalities which characterize it as a whole. The fine organization of this introductory section, as well as the ordering of the documents themselves, will greatly assist both advanced scholars and students, in understanding the complex set of events which comprised the German Peasants' War.

A more limited anthology of writings from this period is contained in *The Radical Reformation*, the latest volume of the Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought. It focuses on the contributions made by various radical religious reformers to the political ideology of the peasants' revolution and vice versa between the years 1521 and 1527. Fresh translations of thirteen significant tracts are provided in this anthology. Three are by Müntzer, two by Karlstadt, and one each by Grebel, Manz, Denck, Hut, Sattler, Hubmaier, and Hergot, with one anonymous tract also included. As well, a collection of six "Programs of the Peasants' War"—mainly consisting of lists of grievances submitted by the peasants with calls for social restructuring of institutions—are included in an appendix. The translations are all well done, in a smoothly flowing contemporary style (which somewhat obscures the formality of address used at that time), with critical annotations supplied.

However, the documents included in this volume are really too few in number to provide an adequate representation of the breadth of thought among the individual radical reformers or to assess the complex interplay of ideas in a rebellion which was extremely diverse in character. Nor does the brief mention made of each document in the author's "Introduction" serve to sufficiently interpret its place or importance for the peasants' rebellion. Because many of the documents presented here already exist in fine English translations one wonders if a fresh translation of these particular documents was really needed when so many other noteworthy documents from this period have yet to appear in translation. If one were forced to make a choice, I would recommend the Scott/Scribner anthology on the German Peasants' War as a more valuable acquisition than the collection edited by Baylor.

James M. Stayer's *The German Peasants' War and Anabaptist Community of Goods* is an excellent scholarly study reassessing the influence of the German Peasants' War upon Anabaptist faith and practice. This latest volume in the McGill-Queens Studies in the History of Religion series consists of a collection of seven essays by Stayer—three on the Peasants' War and four on the Anabaptist principle of practising "community of goods." Despite the separate composition of these essays, they are effectively bound together by the thesis that "Anabaptist community of goods was the logical continuation of the social gospel of the Reformation . . . a very radical, albeit non-violent, expression of the commoners' Reformation during and after the suppression of the Peasants' War" (7).

Stayer's assertion that Anabaptism "owes a crucial, if indirect, debt to the Peasants' War" (3) runs counter to the earlier conclusion of Claus-Peter Clasen (*Anabaptism, A Social History*) that there was no significant relation between the Peasants' War and Anabaptism. Through a critical historiographical review of research on the Peasants' War over the past two decades, Stayer shows how more recent research indicates that the rebellion "was no mere 'peasant' phenomenon" (20); rather, it enlisted the broad support of peasants, village craftsmen, unprivileged townspeople, miners and reform-minded clergy, such that "a good deal less than 40% of the early Anabaptists lived in communities that stood apart from the Peasants' War" (5).

In the second chapter, Stayer examines the theological rationale reflected in the various formal petitions drafted by the peasants in the early stages of the revolt. He concludes that the writers deliberately appropriated the concept of "divine law" to justify their political, social and economic agenda, and that this conception of the social significance of divine law survived the immediate military failure of their agenda, and resurfaced in modified form as an integral part of Anabaptist thought (60).

In the final essay of this section (Chapter Three), Stayer, through painstaking research, increases substantially the number of Anabaptists who can be documented as being certain or quite probable participants in the Peasants' War. He expands Clasen's earlier number by nearly 80% (90). He concludes that "in eastern Hesse, Thuringia and Franconia, veterans of the Peasants' War provided the major leadership and probably most of the rank and file of the early Anabaptist movement" (92). He even entertains the possibility that Anabaptism itself was to some degree a religious after-affect of the Peasants' War (73).

The last four essays focus on the prevalence of the practice of community of goods among Anabaptists in various regions. Contrary to earlier studies which saw the community of goods being limited to Hutterite practice in Moravia, Stayer argues that the Hutterite model was not the norm, but rather the most

developed expression of an otherwise widely employed principle among Anabaptists based upon the communalistic principles of Acts 2 and 4. He sees the community of goods as “an expression of the economic and religious ethos . . . of sixteenth-century commoners generally,” and claims that “the rural and semi-rural groups that supported the uprising of 1525 . . . provided the social inspiration for Anabaptist community of goods” (9).

Stayer meticulously presents evidence for the widespread practice of community of goods in single-family households among the Swiss Anabaptists (Chapter Four) and the followers of Thomas Müntzer in southern Germany (Chapter Five)—both of which were directly affected by the events of the Peasants’ War. The final essay (Chapter Seven) examines the particular application of this principle in the communal multi-family households of the Anabaptist settlements in Moravia, which experienced the influx of many refugees who were personally affected by the Peasants’ War. Stayer also examines the practice of community of goods in the “war economy” of Anabaptist Münster (Chapter Six), which was *not* involved in the Peasants’ War, and the much different ideology operating there. The book concludes with a brief “Epilogue” showing how the practice of community of goods gradually became transformed into an ethic of Christian mutual aid, which remains a continuing part of the Anabaptist legacy (160-162).

The one regrettable feature of the book is that Stayer’s “Epilogue” does little to pull together the various significant findings of his study as they relate to his overall theme. Nevertheless, his breadth of research and mastery of detail provide a valuable contribution to understanding the German Peasants’ War and its impact on subsequent religious thought among the Anabaptists. His detailed notes also supply a treasure trove of references to primary and secondary sources. Throughout this work, Stayer challenges the conclusions of earlier studies and adds important detail and perspective which significantly modify our understanding of these events.

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***The Radical Reformation.* 3rd ed. By George Huntston Williams. Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies, 1992. ISBN 0-940474-15-8. Pp. xlvii+1516.**

Every discipline needs a “Synoptiker”—a person who sees and comprehends the chosen field of study in its broadest dimensions and who can identify