

2016

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Recommended Citation

Savage, Dale. 2016. "Review of Bailey, Keith. 2009. *They Counted the Cost: The History of the Dunkard Brethren Church from 1926 to 2008*. Dunkard Brethren Church Board of Publication. Pp. 535." *Journal of Amish and Plain Anabaptist Studies* 4(1):112-14.

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Book Reviews

Review of **Bailey, Keith. 2009. *They Counted the Cost: The History of the Dunkard Brethren Church from 1926 to 2008*. Dunkard Brethren Church Board of Publication. Pp. 535.**

By Dale Savage, *Brethren Heritage Center, Brookville, OH*

A book dedicated to the history of the Dunkard Brethren Church was a long time in coming. Although a desire for such a book was expressed and moved upon by the Standing Committee of the church's Annual Conference as early as 1984, the fruition of that action was not realized until published in 2009. During that period of time, much historical material and data was collected by various individuals, of which two were Frank Reed and Shirley Frick. In one sense, Keith Bailey was more of the editor in putting together this denominational history rather than its author. This is partly due to Bailey not having been from the Dunkard Brethren tradition.

Keith Bailey affiliated with the Dunkard Brethren in the mid-1990s. Although he had ministered in the (Ashland) Brethren Church as a young man, he was an active leader in the Christian & Missionary Alliance denomination for more than fifty years. Although this does not change the facts, it does change how the facts are interpreted or presented. As much as an historian may try to be objective, a measure of subjectivity and personal perspective comes through. This is found in some of the vocabulary that is used to describe events and people. For example, on page 26 it states, "The cornerstone for the early brethren was Jesus Christ as Redeemer, Savior, Sanctifier, Lord, and King." This is clearly a statement belonging more to a history of A.B. Simpson's movement than the Brethren movement. Other examples include, "A great outpouring of the Spirit fell on the congregation..." (pg. 34), references to Brethren leaders John Kline and James Quinter as "great soul winners" (pg. 39), and to those who are "saved and baptized into the church" which does not seem to support the Brethren understanding of the necessity of baptism in salvation. When giving a presentation on his book, Bailey also referred to the Dunkard Brethren founder as being "gloriously saved". The reader needs to keep in mind the author's background when encountering language usually associated with Evangelical and Holiness settings.

As this is a history of the Dunkard Brethren church, Bailey spends little time in background for the Brethren movement. The Early Church through Protestant Reformation occupies 1½ page of chapter one. The movements which more directly affected the Brethren, Anabaptism and Pietism, are given approximately five pages. The remainder of the first chapter, seven pages, relates the story of the Brethren expansion in Europe. Although it appears that Bailey rushed through this important formation of the Brethren, it should be kept in mind that there are many books that can be referenced for further reading on these subjects should one desire to have a deeper understanding of them.

At the beginning of chapter two, Bailey relates some of the issues the Brethren faced in the early years in the New World and how they brought about the formation of the Annual Meeting (which is still held in some form by most Brethren groups today). Unfortunately, he does not give many details of how the Annual Meeting or Conference functions and the role of the Standing Committee. This knowledge is important in order to understand the Old Order, Conservative, and Progressive divisions discussed later in this chapter as well as the discussion of the *Bible Monitor* movement with the resulting formation of the Dunkard Brethren Church.

As Bailey moves more into the direct history of the forces which helped form the Dunkard Brethren Church, he begins to bring out more details. His reports on the causes and actions of the separation from the parent body, the Church of the Brethren, in 1926. He rightly enumerates the differences between the Old German Baptist Brethren who separated in 1881 and the Dunkard Brethren of 1926. The Old Order division focused on how the ordinances were practiced, higher education, and innovations related to church programs (Sunday Schools, foreign missions, prayer meetings, revival meetings, etc.) Those involved with the Dunkard Brethren split had already accepted the changes brought in by the Church of the Brethren after 1881. Those involved in the controversy of 1926 wanted to hold on to the innovations but practice them in a “plain” way, avoiding what they called acculturation. However, it seems that did not look the same for all who supported the forming of a new denomination. This is alluded to in chapter give with the listing of the radio, women in ministry, dress, and leadership and governmental structures as issues. Unfortunately, one cannot tell what the controversy was related to some of these issues. Clarification in this would have helped to understand better the position of the Dunkard Brethren Church.

The majority of this book is the specific histories of leaders, congregations, and mission work. One interesting chapter is entitled “New Wine Skins”. This chapter lists the newer ministries and programs supported by the Dunkard Brethren Church. These include: Mt. Hope Dunkard Brethren Rest Home, Youth Retreat, Men’s Retreat, Annual Leadership Conference, The Dunkard Brethren Bible School, and the Dunkard Brethren Ladies’ Retreat. The conclusion of this chapter reads,

As these new ministries were born, some in the brotherhood became apprehensive that such efforts might erode the biblical stand historically held by the Dunkard Brethren. As time passed it became evident that these new wine skins brought new vitality to the Brotherhood without altering Brethren beliefs and practice.

The outcome of these new programs is yet to be seen. As stated there was apprehension about them being a form of acculturation to the wider church environment, however, the history of the Dunkard Brethren Church allows for adoptions and adaptations of this kind as seen in Sunday schools, revival meetings, etc.

In conclusion, when reading *They Counted the Cost*, it is again clear how the history of

the Brethren mirrors so much the history of the Mennonites, the divisions of the Progressives and Old Orders from the Conservatives in the 1800s. Afterwards, the Conservatives moved toward a more mainstream church position resulting in the emergence of the “conservative” bodies in the early to middle 1900s. For those who desire to gain a glimpse into what they look like today, Keith Bailey’s book gives a picture of what the conservatives in the Brethren movement look like in the early 2000s.

Review of Loewen, Royden. 2013. *Village among Nations: “Canadian” Mennonites in a Transnational World, 1916-2006*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press. Pp. 301.

By Kira Turner, *York University*

Intent on preserving their deep-seated beliefs and values, the most conservative of the Russian Mennonites (Old Colony) made their way to Western Canada with promises of religious freedom, exemption from military service, the right to maintain their distinctive Low German language, and the right to educate their children within their own schools. However, in the early 1900s, Canada was changing and developing its own cultural and nationalistic identity. Under threat of compulsory attendance at public schools, and drawing from past experiences of governments retracting special dispensations afforded to the Mennonite population, Old Colony religious leaders, fearing what was to come, began searching for a new home, one that would allow them to maintain their unique culture separate from nationalistic boundaries.

Similar to the Canadian government’s efforts, in the nineteenth century, to build up its population in central Canada, Mexico, intent on reproducing a western styled modernity, desired experienced farmers from the global north (39) and were willing to grant the Old Colony the same freedoms they had originally negotiated in Canada. This marked the beginning of a new transnational migration to Mexico and eventually deeper south into British Honduras, Paraguay, and Bolivia, resulting in some eventually returning to Canada, and some continue today to shuttle back and forth between North and South America.

In *Village among Nations*, historian Royden Loewen argues that academic inquiry concerning nationalism excludes those who are unwilling to conform to or integrate within a specific country (9). Taking up Benedict Anderson’s conceptualization of nationhood and imagined communities, Loewen asserts that traditional Mennonites, in their desire to remain separate, and through a pattern of persistent migration, developed an “imagined transnational village” not tied to any specific nation-state. Rather, through extensive social networks, they formed alternative engagements both locally and globally living “among nations.” To support this claim, Loewen offers an analysis of various texts dating between the period of 1916 to 2006, including letters, memoirs, diaries, reflections, and newspaper articles written both by Mennonites and outsiders, and oral histories gathered through academic research, painting a well-rounded picture of an distinctive transnational community. Adding significantly to a global