

doi:[10.1017/S0036930614000635](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0036930614000635)

Paul M. Joyce and Diana Lipton, *Lamentations through the Centuries* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), pp. xiii+217. £55.00.

What a museum of delights! The range of questions and wealth of detail sampled in the introduction quickly catch the reader. Who wrote *Lamentations*? What makes it so generative and fertile? Who writes – and reads – reception history, and what is that anyway? The ethics of reception, and its diverse media; interpretation and context; structure and method of the commentary – all are deftly presented by a Christian man and a Jewish woman (each first-drafted most of the material relating to the tradition of the other). They recognise that some of their decisions about boundaries are controversial. Laments from Mesopotamia more than a millennium older than the biblical book have certainly impacted on its reception in the century since they became available. And the artwork of an Iranian Muslim exhibiting in New York, even without evidence that she or the tradition which formed her was aware of *Lamentations* and its afterlife, provides at least a powerful ‘intertext’.

The subtitles in chapter 1 give an impression of the commentary: gendered lament; music and church politics (Thomas Tallis); *Lamentations* in the Dead Sea Scrolls; Holy Week Polyphony; mourning Jerusalem in Tel Aviv; *Lamentations* at the races (the popularity of Couperin’s settings for *Tenebrae* as sung by the nuns at Longchamps); mourning Jerusalem in Rome; reformed and humanist; sacred and profane; body language; and Isaiah reading *Lamentations*. Does biblical *Lamentations* diminish the role of women? How does the poet use focus to contribute to outrage? As each brief portion of text is inspected, a fresh lens is tested. Chapter 2 bears us from Poland, experienced as Zion during the Cossack revolt, through London’s Great Fire in the same period, then interfaith lament to a fragment of the biblical book in the tale of a toddler flung on an electrified camp fence: is the catastrophe beyond words (Lam 2:13)? And it continues from false prophets and New Testament perspectives, through God’s tears and slave trading, to the influence of *Lamentations* on how Josephus presented Jerusalem’s fall.

If the opening of *Lamentations* 3 was important for St John of the Cross, ‘he has made me sit in darkness like those long dead’ (3:6) reinforces the link between (Jewish) ritual and the event commemorated. Krenek lamenting Vienna in his music, pastoral psychology and the four stages of grief, the midrashic parable of the abandoned bride, Yehuda Halevi’s failed attempt to reach Jerusalem, John Keble’s ‘New every morning’, the gospel at the heart of the chapter, Donne’s metaphysical laments, Chagall painting *Lamentations*, lamenting the war against terror no less than the expulsion of Jews from

Spain, culminate in the evocation of the closing verses by a Zimbabwean sculpting *objets trouvés*.

Lamentations 4, shorter than the previous chapters, concentrates on Jerusalem's fall: worse than Sodom, reflected in recent Balkan laments, evoked at the fall of Constantinople, read messianically and to recall the 'martyrdom' of King Charles I. Chapter 5 is shorter still, no longer acrostic nor in lament rhythm, and compared to the Psalms of communal complaint by a father of 'form criticism'. Comments on transgenerational guilt and protesting against God lead to the final verses. The more hopeful next-to-last ends the weekly Torah service while the book finishes in ambiguity: is it an 'if' without a 'then'? Joyce and Lipton are right to name their remarkable work not reception history but 'reception exegesis'; and they nicely remind us that God was the reader privileged by the authors of these ancient laments: prayers perfectly at home in liturgical settings.

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doi:[10.1017/S0036930614000829](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0036930614000829)

John Howard Yoder, *Theology of Mission: A Believers Church Perspective*, ed. Gayle Gerber Koontz and Andy Alexis-Baker (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), pp. 432. \$45.00.

Although John Howard Yoder died in 1997, *Theology of Mission* is the latest of at least a dozen books published posthumously in his name. Its contents come from a course Yoder taught between 1964 and 1983 at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, transcribed and edited by Gayle Gerber Koontz and Andy Alexis-Baker, based on tape recordings and lecture notes. The result is a book which is immediately essential for interpreting Yoder's thought and a contribution in its own right to the now ascendant field of missiology.

Yoder frames the book with a set of questions at the intersection of theology, mission and church (p. 36), which, understood as practical undertakings, he uses as critical interlocutors in order to discover the difference that 'theologizing in the context of mission' makes (p. 44). The crucial difference, in Yoder's view, is ecclesiological. As he writes in chapter 7, the book's fulcrum: 'Different understandings of the nature of the church illuminate and shape mission questions and issues' (p. 145). Yoder casts his vision (pp. 149–54, 175–81) of the believers' church in contrast to the Christendom model, focusing on such issues as baptism, discipleship, organisation and war. Underwriting and governing these is the bedrock difference concerning 'the relationship of church and world', since