

Christian Anarchist: Ammon Hennacy, a Life on the Catholic Left. By William Marling. New York: New York University Press, 2022. x + 319 pp. \$45 cloth.

Ammon Hennacy (1893–1970), the self-styled “one man revolution,” figures as a colorful, yet relatively unfamiliar, American radical Christian activist of the twentieth century. From the First World War through the maturation of the nuclear era, Hennacy stood unrelentingly opposed to war and its paraphernalia: conscription, war tax, accumulation of weapons of mass destruction, and the evolution of the modern national security state. William Marling’s biography, the first scholarly book-length study, chronicles Hennacy’s life, revealing multiple conversions, religious and political, and a stubborn insistence on his own righteousness. Underpinning this project are ambitious goals. The author posits Hennacy’s “embodiment” of antistate and antiwar beliefs as “foundations for twenty-first century social-justice initiatives” while highlighting “political ideas now largely lost” (5).

Born to a respectable family in a tiny Ohio farm community near the Pennsylvania border, young Hennacy read the Bible and heeded political debates. Exposed to his grandmother’s Quakerism and his family’s Baptist faith, nonetheless, at age sixteen he temporarily abandoned religion to devote himself to socialism. From factory worker and International Workers of the World (IWW) member to door-to-door cornflakes salesman and Socialist while in high school, as a college student he developed an interest in anarchism. Socialist equivocation on participation in the First World War eventually led to his identifying as anarchist or communist. He engaged in antidraft propagandizing and refused conscription in 1917 and 1918. Imprisoned in Atlanta, although agnostic, he reread the Bible and underwent a profound conversion, grounded in the Sermon on the Mount. As a Christian pacifist, he aimed to avoid hateful thought or deeds. His reading of Tolstoy further sensitized him to challenge authority, promote agrarianism, and more faithfully practice vegetarianism. Over the course of his life, he drew from diverse sources, including Christian Science, Hopi elders, and, notably, from Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker movement.

Attracted to the ideal of an independent “new woman,” while ironically hoping to possess her, Hennacy entered a common law relationship with Selma Melms, daughter of a socialist sheriff, and a woman who held lofty ambitions for herself, and for their two daughters. The peripatetic couple settled down to engage in self-sufficient farming, but the Depression ended their experiment, and frayed the bond uniting them. Influenced by the I AM movement, much to Hennacy’s regret, and irked by the likelihood of his imprisonment for war resistance, Selma went to great lengths to remain apart from him while expecting financial support. He settled on performing farm labor in the Southwest, thus avoiding payment of income tax for war, and remaining faithful to simple living and vegetarianism while providing generously for his daughters’ education.

Having met Dorothy Day, Hennacy began writing for her *Catholic Worker* paper during World War II. Romantically inclined toward her, he joined the New York Catholic Worker community during the 1950s, converted to Catholicism, and became a larger-than-life example of dedication to anarchism, resistance to war, and self-discipline. Day’s refusal to enter a romantic relationship with Hennacy and his bristling opposition to organized religion eventually contributed to his departure from New York

and the Catholic church. He continued his campaign against war after moving West, marrying the much younger Joan Thomas, living simply, and caring for poor men with the opening of Joe Hill House in Salt Lake City. Faithful to his ideals, Hennacy died at age 76.

This biography brings Hennacy's one-man revolution to the wider public, unfortunately, with mixed results. On the positive side, Marling has consulted archival sources, including Joan Thomas's unpublished Hennacy biography and a variety of published primary and secondary sources. It provides a sympathetic account of his activism before, during, and after his time with the New York Catholic Worker, while teasing out key ideas, life experiences, and friendships that supported his Christian anarchism. Factual errors abound throughout, however, compromising the book's academic merit. The Socialist candidate for president in 1912 was Eugene Debs, not Edward Ellis Carr (33) and in 1916 Debs ran for the House of Representatives, not for the Senate (34). The United States Post Office Department, not the United States Postal Service, existed in 1939 (110). Sputnik orbited in 1957, not 1960 (215). "His long-simmering romance with Dorothy Day" (4) might better have been described as an infatuation. Arrested many times, Daniel Berrigan's participation in the 1968 Catonsville Nine draft board raid did not cause his 1965 "exile" to Latin America (245). Day was never jailed for anti-nuclear or antitax protests (4), nor did she live a "bureaucratic life" (168). *Catholic Worker* sometimes refers incorrectly to the Catholic Worker movement rather than exclusively to *The Catholic Worker* paper. The book lacks robust substantiation of the link between Hennacy's legacy and the claim that he "created foundations for the social-justice movements of today" (5). These and numerous errors diminish what might have been a first-rate biography.

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***Age of the Spirit: Charismatic Renewal, the Anglo-World, and Global Christianity, 1945–1980.* By John Maiden. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2023. xviii + 261. £99.00 hardback.**

Age of the Spirit: Charismatic Renewal, the Anglo-World, and Global Christianity, 1945–1980, makes a welcome addition to the renewal studies bookshelf. A work of broad scope, it remains nonetheless a targeted monograph largely restricted to the chronological parameters stated in the title and the "zone of charismatic exchange" (8) comprising seven English-speaking states: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the Republic of Ireland, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States. While providing a topically oriented historical narrative of the early Charismatic movement within this zone—a narrative that relates it to such themes as secularization, authenticity, and cosmopolitanism—the book's signal achievement is to flesh out the tone and texture of this "distinctive religious subculture" (3) more richly than any other volume to date.