"... It is a great credit to Bert Becker to have discovered this hitherto both "forgotten" and contradictory historical person. He has not only visited more than 30 archives but has also made use of an impressive number of primary and secondary sources.

.... Becker constructs an altogether impressive and in many parts exciting panorama of the life and work of a representative of the oft-cited Prussian-German bureaucracy about whose collective official deeds - Prussian-German politics - we are rather well informed but whose individual actions and motives are mostly obscured in the dark recesses of history. By making systematic use not only of publications by and about Michaelis but also of notebooks for long periods of time, and especially the so-called family circle letters, Becker provides essential insights into the self-image and the motives of his protagonist. That is especially important because Michaelis, who was very pious, had distanced himself from the church in his early and mid-40s.

... Therefore the impulse to accept the chancellorship had come from a verse from the Bible of the daily calendar of the Brudergemeinde, a Protestant brotherhood. This may sound strange to an atheist but it is Becker's merit to have provided a deep insight into the mentality of an important representative of the Prussian-German administrative elite of the late-Wilhelminian period without in any way abandoning a critical stance towards his sources; for all periods of Michaelis' life the hard facts are separated from subjective evaluations, and are measured against each other.

.... It should be noted that, without pursuing Becker's far-reaching descriptions, this monograph offers important new and inspiring material for further research on several aspects that go beyond biographical interest. This is valid for the sections dealing with the war food organisation, where the close links between the food situation in Germany, in the German-occupied territories and in allied countries is not only described in much detail, the active influence of the German government on the occupation authorities and on the governments of countries fighting on her side is also worked out. Secondly, Becker does not confine himself to the detailed description of Michaelis' time as chancellor and Prussian minister-president but also offers voluminous explanations about the historiography on the Reichstag Peace Resolution and the Vatican's peace efforts.

.... Thirdly, the explanations about the Christian Students' Movement ... are deserving of special attention in such a way that they highlight the catastrophic social situation students found themselves in after the world war and the numerous aid projects as a topic in the history of academic sciences and education. Fourthly, the explanations for
Michaelis’ social and life reform activities after 1919 enhance existing knowledge about the early history of ecological ideas, something which is important at present. ... ".