

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Presence: Giving and Receiving God.* By J. Alexander Sider and Isaac Villegas. Eugene, Ore.: Cascade Books. 2011. Pp. 217. \$22.

In *Presence: Giving and Receiving God*, a book of collected sermons, Isaac Villegas and Alexander Sider offer readers a window into congregational life at Chapel Hill Mennonite Fellowship, a congregation where God's life is discerned communally and where the perspective of the preacher is intentionally balanced by immediate response from the congregation. In their introduction, Sider and Villegas acquaint readers with their worship context and describe their homiletic as explicitly dialogical, vulnerable, and highly contextual. While the sermons are arranged topically within chapters or sections entitled "Hope," "Communion," "Desire," "Power," "Money," "Salvation," and "Strangers," a given sermon may range across doctrines or issues. For example, sermons from each of the sections discuss aspects of salvation, in addition to those sermons in the "Salvation" chapter.

The sermons are liturgically sensitive, theologically rich, and socially aware. Sider and Villegas offer insight into specific seasons or festivals in the church year such as Advent, Christ the King Sunday, and Trinity Sunday. The "Communion" section of the book offers examples of integrating sacramental acts into the life of the church by allowing the sermon to shed light on the actions of the eucharist and footwashing. Sider and Villegas do not shy away from addressing challenging doctrines such as Sider's discussion of sin and God's economy of forgiveness in "Faith and Love" (62-68) and Villegas's discussion of the Trinity as relational experience in "Closer" (69-73). In "Lament and Repent" and "Bodies Matter," Villegas brings the Gospel into the realm of social action, naming his own North American middle-class discomfort when encountering poverty and oppression (4-5) and harnessing the theology of incarnation and the loving and humanizing practice of footwashing in John 13 to highlight injustice perpetrated against undocumented immigrants at a local detention center (50-53). In fact, the first half of "Bodies Matter" was preached at the detention center as part of an organized protest, and the text of the sermon is interspersed with quotes from a news account of the protest (50-51).

While rightly attending to these social aspects of the Gospel, Villegas and Sider also preach good news that addresses personal lives and relationships. For example, in his Advent sermon "Waiting with Mary," Villegas addresses the challenge of waiting for God's advent in our lives and the fear that we are not ready for the new life that God is bringing to our world, ending his message with God's relentless love that does not depend on our preparedness and a note of encouragement taken from the Angel Gabriel: "nothing is impossible with God" (22-27). In "If Our Hearts Condemn Us," Sider addresses the fallen aspects of our desire to love and be loved, refusing to allow God's love to be held captive by

our limited understanding of love while highlighting Jesus Christ's unique self-giving love (74-78).

Sider and Villegas draw from a rich variety of sources, including Scripture, recent biblical scholarship, and theological giants such as Karl Barth and Martin Luther, as well as from local and global news events, politics, classic films, fiction, popular nonfiction, and Broadway shows. In keeping with their explicit homiletical approach, Villegas and Sider are self-aware preachers, frequently bringing their own particular experiences and perspectives into the sermon. While this is increasingly seen as an acceptable practice in homiletics and reflects trends present in other late-modern forms of discourse, some sense of balance is helpful in weekly preaching to keep the preacher's life from becoming too large of a theme. Because the sermons collected in this volume were preached from 2001 to 2010 and some were preached in contexts beyond Chapel Hill Mennonite Fellowship, they cannot be treated as the sole representation of weekly preaching practices in that congregation.

The topical structure of the book could lend itself to personal reading as well as potential material for a small group or Sunday school class. However, some minor changes would make the sermons even more accessible to readers. The introduction encourages readers to "meditate" over the Scriptures associated with each sermon before and after reading the sermon. Editors could have facilitated this by printing the relevant Scripture passages prior to the sermon as is common in other volumes of printed sermons (x). Similarly, the notes for each sermon included at the end of the book supply helpful contextual information and bibliographic material. This information would arguably serve the reader better if included with each sermon either following the sermon or in the form of an introduction to situate the reader. Such a shift might have prevented the editorial error of a difference in titles between the notes, "Cries from the Darkness" (206), and the corresponding sermon, "Gone Missing" (7-10).

In keeping with their communal homiletic, the book is dedicated to the members of Chapel Hill Mennonite Fellowship; and the full names of some members appear in the sermons. The highly contextual, dialogical practice envisioned by the introduction might arguably be better represented by including some sense of reflection or response after each sermon. While the authors certainly must have obtained prior permission to use the full names of church members, the lack of any specific mention of granted permission may raise concerns about pastoral confidentiality for some readers.

The practice of preaching described by Villegas and Sider embodies some recent trends in the field of homiletics and represents a growing form. As such it could serve as a helpful companion volume for those interested in a variant of the "round-table," listener-centered homiletics proposed by John McClure and Lucy Rose, who advocate for a similar shared homiletic that actively involves multiple voices and perspectives in proclamation.

*Razing Hell: Rethinking Everything You've Been Taught about God's Wrath and Judgment.* By Sharon L. Baker. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press. 2010. Pp. 222. \$17.

The mother of a former student of mine just emailed to say that her son had suddenly, tragically died after a short illness. Total shock. I had been closer to Sam (not his real name) than to any other student. Over many years he would occasionally call to talk about science, philosophy, politics, or personal matters of faith. Sam had grown up in a conservative church, and as he matured and questioned his faith, he rejected some of its teachings and felt judged by many in his former congregation. He wasn't sure anymore that a loving God existed.

I phoned Sam's mother and after we talked and cried together, she asked me her burning question: will she ever see him again? The need to "accept Jesus as your personal Savior" lay at the core of her theology. Sam had taken this step as a young boy—but what about now? Did that still count? Hell was never mentioned, but I sensed her fear—and half the grief I felt was for her.

Sharon Baker writes *Razing Hell* out of a similar religious context. "When I was twenty-six, I found out I was going to hell," she begins. "The pastor of a church I was visiting . . . described the torturous, unquenchable flames that would burn human bodies . . . forever. . . . So I took out the proper fire insurance and asked Jesus to save me from my sins and, therefore, from eternal torment in hell. Whew!"

Now a theology professor at Messiah College in Grantham, Pennsylvania, Baker dramatizes her discussions on hell and God's justice with three people close to her: Eric, one of her college students; Brooke, a high school student; and Lisa, a longtime, childhood friend. All of them are troubled with these questions, but Lisa's concern is immediate. Her beloved grandmother is dying, and she has not "received Jesus as her personal Savior." Will she go to hell?

The book has three main parts: (1) traditional views of hell and God's wrath; (2) Baker's challenge to traditional views; and (3) a new view of hell and the ethical implications if we accept this view. Her writing style is readable and pastoral, accessible to both college students and lay Christians. To avoid footnotes, an appendix details the sources used in each chapter, followed by study and reflection questions. I consider it a fine example of careful theology clearly explained, although at times the writing seemed repetitious and slow-moving. But I did not grow up with the fear of hell hanging over my head (other than occasional attendance at one of the Mennonite revivalist George R. Brunk II's tent meetings). Those raised with a punitive God no doubt need repeated assurances of God's love and forgiveness.

In part I, Baker outlines the troubling questions traditional views of hell raise: How can a good God allow evil to exist eternally and people to suffer eternally without hope? If God is both loving and wrathful, does God have a split personality? Doesn't the image of God as a violent, merciless judge create violent, punishing human beings and societies? If people suffer eternally for temporal sin, how does the punishment fit the crime?

The next three chapters outline traditional solutions to God's puzzling behavior. Though God's violence underlies stories of Noah's flood or Sodom's destruction or the killing of all Egyptian firstborn, Christians find ways to explain this—by citing the "greater good" or progressive revelation or by arguing that "God's ways are beyond human reason." In "The Forgiveness of God," Baker outlines the four classical views of the atonement, presenting each as inadequate (43-47). However, I find her description of *Christus Victor* too limited, omitting its current formulations as Christ versus the Powers—structures of evil in the world. The other three are satisfaction, moral exemplar, and penal substitutionary.

Part II rethinks God's violence, God's image, and God's justice and forgiveness. Baker insists that the weight of Scripture rests on God's love and mercy, which we can see best through "Jesus-colored glasses" (70). She notes, in contrast, that in 2000 the Southern Baptist Convention removed this guideline from their confessional statement: "The criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ" (76).

One strength of this book is Baker's contrast between retributive (punishing) justice and restorative justice, the latter of which she ties to God's righteousness, mercy, and forgiveness. It's an Anabaptist position—though I'd have liked more emphasis on human accountability. God may forgive sinners, but God may still ask them to make restitution when possible.

I found part III the most stimulating section. Using the image of fire, which Christian tradition has associated with hell, Baker finds positive references, mostly in Old Testament texts. Fire symbolizes the presence and glory of God, sometimes purifying and refining (see list on pages 112-113). Hell as a place of eternal fiery torture does not originate with the Hebrew people but comes from Persian religions like Zoroastrianism and "seeped little by little into Jewish culture and belief systems" (128). References to the term "hell" are all from the New Testament (130-131). In Jesus' day, hell referred to the garbage dump in the Gehenna Valley near Jerusalem, where worms and maggots crawled and underneath the fire smoldered eternally (128-130). Baker redefines "eternal" as a metaphor for something that feels endless (136-139).

Drawing together her theology, Baker then imagines what it must mean for an ethical believer to stand in God's burning presence at the end of life, and what it would mean for an unbeliever full of violent deeds. Anne, a hypothetical believer, sees God's fire as burning love, whereas wicked Otto then has the choice of having his sin burned away and entering eternal life. Or, if he refuses to repent, he is burned up completely—annihilated.

A final chapter on ethics encourages believers, as stated in the Lord's Prayer, "to bring the heavenly rule of God right here on earth" (169) rather than simply make sure we "go to heaven when we die."

Throughout, Baker heavily tilts toward God's forgiveness, trusting that even after death "every knee shall bow" in the presence of this burning Love. She may be right, though I am not quite so optimistic about human nature with its grudges and hatreds. I fear some people would rather "go to hell" than repent to

spend eternity with those whom they have despised or wronged or been victimized by.

One last observation: I know this is not the main point, but in a book so focused on the afterlife, I found no mention of the New Testament emphasis on bodily resurrection of those in Christ.

In the meantime, though I grieve for Sam and the earthly future denied him, I am confident he is held in the heart of God. May Sam's mother, through her terrible loss, not lose hope of seeing him again.

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RETA HALTEMAN FINGER

*The Church Made Strange for the Nations: Essays in Ecclesiology and Political Theology.* Paul G. Doerksen and Karl Koop, eds. Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick Publications. 2011. Pp. 192. \$22.

*The Church Made Strange for the Nations* is a collection of essays offered as a tribute to Harry Huebner. Nowhere is the book specifically called a *festshrift*; the title doesn't even mention Huebner's name. Nevertheless, honoring Huebner is the purpose to which the editors, Paul G. Doerksen and Karl Koop, dedicate the book, and Huebner's work and theological concerns are the points of contact for the diverse pieces that constitute this volume. *The Church Made Strange* is composed of fifteen articles from various authors and disciplines loosely related to the study of the church. In the opening essay Gerald Gerbrandt narrates Huebner's contribution to academia, the church, and university education, describing him as "an inspiring professor and mentor, an influential scholar, a valued colleague, and a theological leader of the church" (1).

The book's first challenge is to prove that it has consequence outside the honoree's circle of friends. *The Church Made Strange* passes this test. It does so because its central question is important to Christians trying to negotiate late modern pluralist societies. One way to put this question is to ask to what extent the church's being *for* the nations can actually be recognized by the nations. To the extent that this is not always the case, the church is "strange." How then is this strangeness navigated? Some of the emphases of Huebner's response to this question can be seen through the various accounts of his work given within this book. Essayists highlight his commitment to the church, his depiction of theology as a tradition-based inquiry, his insistence on the visibility of the church, and his contention that the church should develop alternative structures to the world's institutions. Some of the essays respond directly to these positions, others only in footnotes or in the reader's expectant imagination.

A glance at the table of contents lets readers in on another central feature of this collection—its chief scholarly reference points. Beyond Huebner himself, many of the essays engage the work of John Howard Yoder, John Milbank, Alasdair MacIntyre, and Stanley Hauerwas. Hauerwas actually contributed the last essay in the collection, a piece that considers the fundamental question of how, in a religiously pluralist world, we might avoid the devolution of politics to

tribalism. Reflecting on the ancient stories of Babel and Pentecost, Hauerwas argues that Christians can best name the universal as the catholic character of the loving and vulnerable church.

Do the essays in *The Church Made Strange* offer anything constructive beyond the work of the key scholars mentioned above? One that clearly does is written by Alain Epp Weaver, who challenges Rowan Williams's identification of homeland with nation-state. Weaver argues that the Zionist notion of a "return to history" is an attempt at negating exile, framing it as abnormal and undesirable, in an effort to underwrite a homeland entailing demographic hegemony in a clearly bounded territory. Instead, he advocates a position derived from Yoder and Giorgio Agamben that affirms "true political identity is discovered from the perspective of the exile or refugee" (32). The essay shrewdly placed immediately after Epp Weaver's is by Waldemar Janzen, who narrates his own encounter with Yoder's ecclesiology. Janzen, who lived for a time as a refugee in Germany, is not so appreciative. Also notably going beyond the work of the four scholars of reference is an essay by Jane Barter Moulaison that engages the topic of memory and justice. Moulaison takes issue with Miroslav Volf's position that love of an enemy may on occasion require the limitation of memory. Instead, she leverages Augustine's view that God's grace fashions memory anew.

A question raised by the volume as a whole is what is meant by the term *church*? Most of the book's contributors are not interested in talking specifically about Christians, but prefer to discuss "the church." Travis Kroecker's characteristically pointed contribution is something of an exception, for he is concerned precisely with the ambiguity of the individual's life of faith with respect to the church. Even if the corporate notion of church is generally being privileged, one still wonders why few essays are interested in congregational life, assuming the term "church" hasn't become a theological trope. Of course there are also important exceptions here. Irma Fast Dueck's striking set of reflections on worship is one. Dueck explains that worship is strange because it "reminds us that we are not in control" (113). Worship's strangeness is compounded because it appears purposeless and invites us to encounter the otherness of the Triune God. In Dueck's essay the church actually becomes a worshipping community. Something similar happens in Helmut Harder's account of recent Catholic-Mennonite dialogue. In general, though, the discussion skirts the issue of what exactly this thing called "church" is or why one would want to participate in it. Unsatisfactory neologisms like "dispossession" and "fugitive" are on occasion used to cover this lack of concreteness.

Another question that this collection of essays prompts is to what extent we can talk about the church without talking much about God. It is curious how little God is discussed in this book. Sheila Klassen-Wiebe's reflection on church and world in John's Gospel does invoke Jesus, and A. James Reimer's advocacy for an ethic based on universal principles refers to his scholarly work on the Trinity. Yet beyond a number of such cameos, God is mostly a supporting actor in an overwhelmingly ecclesial drama.

The strength of this collection is its breadth. Arnold Neufeldt-Fast's description of the young Karl Barth's response to Anabaptism, Joseph Wiebe's

re-reading of *Antigone*, and Chris Huebner's reflections on the idea of a Christian university are especially pertinent examples. Of course this breadth does make for some bouts of discordant reading. Nevertheless, it is striking that so many of the contributors are connected to Huebner and Canadian Mennonite University. This surely demonstrates the persistent strength of this institution and its theological faculty. On a related note, some readers will be disappointed by the fact that there is little peculiarly Canadian about this set of theological reflections. Not that we would expect some sort of biblical ruminations on nationalist concerns like Meech Lake or tired hockey and lumberjack stereotypes. Rather, we might wonder to what extent Anabaptist theology done in Canada is affected by place, history, or social climate. No less an authority than Margaret Atwood has identified the great preoccupation of Canadian literature as "survival." To what extent might this be true of Canadian theology? What of the connections between this entity called "church" and the realities facing Canada's aboriginal population? That a *festschrift* prompts these sorts of questions is proof that it is more than a group of friends celebrating the contribution of one of their own. Huebner would be right to feel honored by the work done in *The Church Made Strange for the Nations*, and if he is at all responsible for the theological fertility it represents, the book is rightly dedicated.

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ANTHONY G. SIEGRIST

*A Peaceable Psychology: Christian Therapy in a World of Many Cultures.* By Alvin Dueck and Kevin Reimer. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Brazos Press. 2009. Pp. 288. \$24.99.

What would it mean if one were to fully embrace the narrative of Christ's life as the foundation by which counselors enter into relationships with clients from various cultural backgrounds? How does the life of Christ inform Christian therapists as they view and participate in therapeutic relationships with clients? How does the suffering of Christ help in understanding the suffering of clients? Alvin Dueck and Kevin Reimer suggest a *peaceable psychology* approach that challenges the secular approach to counseling. They hope that this book will "generate conversation from a theologically, culturally, and politically sensitive psychotherapy" (10).

At the center of a peaceable psychology is the life of Christ. The authors state that Jesus' "response to violence was to absorb it and to propose an alternate system not based on domination. A peaceable psychology will not forget that Jesus was a political scapegoat, that his death was a gift to God, and provided forgiveness of his enemies. A peaceable psychology is concerned with the meaning of suffering," not just symptoms or diagnoses (216). It respects and honors the deep traditions, faith, and language of clients. It believes that "ethnic and religious groups should flourish" (219). It encourages the use of spiritual language and views differences as gifts (219). Those who believe in a peaceable psychology are aware that there may be political forces or situations that are beyond themselves that may have a negative impact on the relationships they have with clients.

Dueck and Reimer begin by observing that suffering needs to be understood within a political as well as an ethnic framework. Importing a Western psychology into another culture may further marginalize people already affected by political or ethnic turmoil. Counselors need to be sensitive to the political, ethnic, and institutional violence that many individuals experience (20). “Therapists who seek to be Christian are sensitive to issues of peace and justice, not simply self-fulfillment” (225). A peaceable psychology is political in the sense that Christian psychologists can “advocate for the voiceless” (74). Politically, Christ suffered innocently “at the hands of the Roman Empire” (216) just as many others suffer in the midst of unjust political situations. Dueck and Reimer suggest that looking at Christ’s suffering helps “give meaning and dignity” to others’ suffering.

Dueck and Reimer question whether or not “mental-health professionals understand profound suffering” (21). In the West, behaviors and emotions are explained through symptomatology and diagnoses. For Westerners, this may help to understand the issue, but the use of symptoms and diagnoses may distance a client from the counselor. The authors suggest that healing takes place in the context of the relationship of the client and counselor. Allowing clients to tell stories in their own language is a peaceable way to assist in the healing and redemptive process.

The authors trace the change from a religiously informed psychology to a secular psychology as universities moved to a more secular administration. As this occurred, religion simply became a department, separate from other departments and less influential. Psychology became secularized and the speaking of religious language was discouraged. The authors suggest that speaking a secularized, neutral language that is devoid of religion “replaces traditions . . . and is capable of violence” (220). It is their hope that in a peaceable psychology the language of faith can be “centrally honored” (98).

Dueck and Reimer suggest that a peaceable psychology encourages clients to use their own language in counseling sessions—preferably their mother tongue, if they choose to do so. In any language, the translation of particular words or thoughts may not adequately describe the situation or emotional content. In addition, counselors are trained to explain suffering through the use of psychological terms which they then teach to their clients. The client begins to use this language in the counseling setting and thoughts and feelings may get lost in translation. Language influences how people think about themselves. The authors describe how individuals reported that they felt differently when speaking another language. In fact, Dueck and Reimer propose that when the language of psychology is universally applied to all people (as in the secular approach to psychology), ethnic and religious traditions are lost. “Therapists would do well to remember that if they are to do no harm, they will need to learn how the religious language shapes the way their clients view pathology” (116).

Dueck and Reimer suggest that when therapists operate from a thin culture, one that assumes and interprets behaviors and emotions out of context and believes that personality traits are universal, then the cultural values of the client (beliefs, faith, values, language that is implicit or explicit) is lost. A counselor



who follows a peaceable psychology approach will “seek to recognize God’s presence in the life of the client’s community and learn her or his language of particularity. In doing so, the therapist empowers the client who would otherwise be marginalized by differences in translation, when linguistic and ideological particularities might result in exclusion” (77).

According to Dueck and Reimer, a peaceable psychology is sensitive to traditions, valuing and honoring indigenous stories and beliefs. It sees those stories and beliefs as resources to assist in the client’s healing process. The authors refer to a tradition-sensitive therapy that “affirms the clients’ narrative with its traditions, symbols, and need to articulate differences. Tradition-sensitive therapy empowers individuals to resolve the pain of mental illness from within the shared meaning of the clients’ own community, consistent with local virtues and practices” (135).

The authors do an admirable job of integrating counseling and theology. Those who do not have a theological background may find this text challenging to follow at times, yet it is well worth the effort. For individuals who might not be as interested in theological discussions, the case studies that are used throughout the text help illustrate the main points.

*A Peaceable Psychology* is a welcome alternative guide to Christian counseling. It challenges the notion that if one is a Christian counselor, then Christian values and beliefs will be imposed on the client. This text shows how understanding the life of Christ can help build the foundation for a therapeutic approach to counseling that values cultural differences and honors indigenous practices and beliefs while working with clients. Dueck and Reimer urge Christian counselors to “live with the imperative to be students of the culture within which they work” (224).

This book would be beneficial for the Christian counselor or more advanced graduate student who works with others from different cultural backgrounds. The text is also appropriate for academicians in universities with religious affiliations who want to pursue discussions about how their approach to teaching psychology or counseling may be distinctively different from that of their counterparts at secular universities.

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KIM G. BRENNEMAN

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*Worship and Mission After Christendom.* By Alan Kreider and Eleanor Kreider. Harrisonburg, Va.: Herald Press. 2011. Pp. 328. \$19.99, U.S.; \$22.99, Can.

In this ambitious volume, Eleanor Kreider and Alan Kreider bring their missional vocation and theological passions together with practical sensibilities and weigh into the current discussion of the relationship of worship and mission. The emerging interest in the relationship between worship and mission is intriguing because until recently there had been little or no attention paid to their relationship. Those who studied worship rarely mentioned mission, though the

relationship of worship and ethics received some attention. Those working with a theology of mission appeared to have little interest in the liturgy, never mind its bearing on mission. Until now mission and worship have been discrete areas of theological investigation and their relationship has been considered somewhat irrelevant. As the Kreiders themselves say, worship was considered central to what the church did and mission was what took place “way out there” (23).

Why the new interest in examining the relationship? A few reasons emerge, and they become the foil for the Kreiders’ book. First, there is a growing concern that worship is being used in utilitarian ways to do mission. Seeker services, popular music, and movie clips, chosen to attract outsiders, have raised concerns among many about the pragmatic turn of worship to achieve goods extrinsic to worship; that is, a fear that worship is being used (misused? abused?) instrumentally to accomplish mission. Second, the current emphasis on hospitality has at times diminished worship practices so that the church can become more welcoming. While the authors are critical of how the desire for hospitality has led to the movement of worship as a tool for mission, they argue that hospitality to outsiders and the stranger remains critical to mission in a post-Christendom church. Hospitality is a persistent theme throughout the Gospels and Jesus’ own ministry and is central to the Christian faith, and should be central to what the church is about and to what mission, at its best, is all about. We welcome others as Christ welcomed us. Christian worship is that place where we are known – it’s the “welcome mat” to our home, the church, the Christian faith; and because of this it must always be true to that faith to have integrity.

The authors are adamant that the purpose of worship is to glorify God and is about the sanctification of persons. Worship is misdirected if it becomes focused on bringing outsiders to the Christian faith. However, if worship is truly about God it will be intrinsically connected to mission in “that worship affects the church’s growth by building up the members so they will participate effectively in God’s mission” (140). In keeping with missional theology, it is the *missio Dei*, the mission of God, that animates the relationship of worship and mission. And as the authors state, “God’s mission is bigger than saving souls; it is bigger than building the church” (52), for it includes wholeness, shalom, reconciliation, and peace. It is this grand narrative that shapes both the practice of worship and the practice of mission and holds them together.

The first part of the book examines the relationship of worship and mission in post-Christendom, Christendom, and the early church (pre-Christendom). The critique of the Christendom church is harsh and risks alienating those readers whose faith has been nurtured and sustained in Christendom contexts. According to the authors, in the Christendom church mission is considered “out there” and done by specialists while worship focuses “in here.” Drawing on Scripture and the early church the authors appeal for a vision of worship and mission that is intimately connected. Their case is built significantly on the writings of Paul in 1 Corinthians 11-14, emphasizing the fellowship meal and ensuing conversation as a model for word and table. Worship is multivoiced, where a variety of people from all stages of life and faith are present, participating together. This becomes a model for Christian worship and mission.

The reality is that remarkably little is known about early Christian worship and the authors' emphasis on this one particular text as normative for understanding worship and mission is somewhat suspect. Nonetheless the Corinthians text does provide valuable clues for understanding worship and mission even as the specific description of early worship provided by the texts cannot necessarily be considered prescriptive for contemporary worship practices.

At the center of the concern for worship and mission is an understanding that worship is at the heart of who Christians are. Worship embodies the identity of the church—what Christians hold to be true and good and right. For centuries we have known that to change worship is to change the church. For the early Anabaptists, the most striking example of this was the reform of a key ritual of worship—the movement from infant baptism to believer's baptism. Out of this emerged a whole new way of understanding the church. Because of this intimate connection of worship to ecclesiology and Christian identity, the questions remains: What kind of church lies at the heart of this volume? What is the purpose of the church? The book provides a harsh critique of the church, particularly the church of Christendom. Was the church *not* the church during Christendom? Was it not the Body of Christ in the world during that period? The post-Christendom temptation, as was the temptation of the Protestant and radical reformers, is to somehow believe that the contemporary church can transcend years of the church's history and tradition and begin again with the pre-Constantinian, early church. And the risk is also to romanticize the pre-Christendom period of the church's life. The grand narrative of God's reconciling mission does not end with the early church and begin again with the post-Christendom church but extends through all history.

The book ends rather abruptly with a conversation on open or closed communion. The centrality of communion/eucharist to worship cannot be avoided if one is to take seriously the relationship of worship and mission. However, there is minimal attention given to baptism, which is odd given the book's emphasis on worship and mission. From the early church on, the rite of baptism in the context of worship has always been the way that catechumens and new converts have entered into the Christian faith and community. At the heart of the current debate on open or closed Communion is baptism—why are there so many people who yearn to participate in the Lord's Table who are not baptized? What has happened to the ritual of baptism in the post-Christendom church?

*Worship and Mission After Christendom* is a valuable resource on worship and mission and is rich in the way it draws on biblical, historical, theological, and liturgical sources in shaping a vision for the church in a post-Christendom era. Yet at the same time the book is imminently practical with concrete suggestions for the practice of worship in various contexts and settings. The authors recognize that worship is always culturally conditioned and yet at the same time will always, in light of Jesus Christ, be alien within any cultural context. We are called into God's presence not God into ours. And because of this, worship will always be strange and never fit culturally imposed expectations. In our contemporary culture, worship speaks a foreign language, the language of

gratitude and praise, the truthful language of confession and reconciliation, the language of Scripture, a normative story, which can be contextualized but never relativized.

*Canadian Mennonite University*

IRMA FAST DUECK

*The Gift of Difference: Radical Orthodoxy, Radical Reformation.* Chris K. Huebner and Tripp York, eds. Winnipeg, Man.: CMU Press. 2010. Pp. 220. \$29.50.

I take the drift of the title *The Gift of Difference: Radical Orthodoxy, Radical Reformation* to be the *productive* difference that results when Radical Orthodoxy and Radical Reformation are put in conversation. One might expect that these two, which seemingly sit at opposite ends of the theological spectrum, would have little to say to each other. And what they would have to say, one might guess, would be antagonistic or, more likely, incommensurable. After all, Radical Orthodoxy speaks at the level of fundamental ontology; portends the benefits of a regnant Christendom; charges Christian nonviolence with deceptive, and voyeuristic, violence; pays homage to creedal traditions; and uses language like nihilism, theurgic participation, and *poesis*. Not exactly par for the course for contemporary harbingers of Radical Reformation with their scripturally-disciplined language, anathema to all things Constantinian, apostolic succession traced through the historic peace churches, association of creeds with imperial order, and attention to place, simplicity, and ordinary speech. One would think little could be said here. One would think. The essays collected in this volume help us think otherwise. At the center of this welcome, if surprising, collection stands Stanley Hauerwas, of Mennonite Catholic or High Church Mennonite (pick your oxymoron) fame, who has held these diverse theological tendencies together for over two decades and has never felt the need to explain his strange bedfellows. If there is an embodiment of this productive gift of difference, surely it is Stanley Hauerwas. No wonder so many of the book's essays on either side appeal so regularly to him.

*The Gift of Difference* gathers some key voices from both sides. Radical Reformation is well represented by figures like Harry Huebner and Peter Dula, thinkers who have kept the theology of John Howard Yoder alive and offered fresh perspectives and challenges. The volume contains fewer essays from Radical Orthodoxy proponents, but weighty offerings by John Milbank (Mr. Radical Orthodoxy himself) and D. Stephen Long (of occasional Radical Orthodoxy persuasion) more than make up for their smaller numbers. Ten well-paced essays follow Milbank's provocative foreword (and its very interesting suggestion of anti-Constantinianism's gnosticism), and while perhaps a bit disappointing for those looking for a more spirited fight, the book offers informed, nuanced, and creative proposals of the compare-and-contrast variety.

Following patterns since the Reformation, the tone of the volume presumes that the burden of proof falls on the Anabaptists, with Radical Orthodoxy's Anglo-Catholic ecclesial primacy understood from the start. And so it should be,

given the critical positioning of the radical reformers around the magisterium. Showing just why they should be taken seriously, Radical Reformation's contingent here offers some of the most measured and sophisticated readings of Radical Orthodoxy one will find, careful assessments that embody in form the content of their most forceful arguments about patience and nonviolence. Such form and content is on full display in the closing comments of Kevin Derksen's essay: "My intent with this essay has been to suggest that, in order to sustain such counter-gifts, Mennonite theology must attend to the ways in which Milbank's work shows up the dangers of a pre-theological commitment to peace 'as such'" (48). Those familiar with Radical Orthodoxy and its sustained rejection of "false humility" will notice right away the difference of Derksen's Anabaptist voice and posture, which may be Radical Reformation's ultimate point, that peace always "shows up" impatience and overconfidence.

Not surprisingly the central point of connection between these two radicalisms has to do with Milbank's well-known critique of Christian pacifism, and many of the contributors direct their efforts toward this question. The genuine insight here is the authors' intuitions that Milbank's openness to moral war issues from Radical Orthodoxy's mode of inquiry, recognizing that the most profound challenge Anabaptist thought advances has to do with Radical Orthodoxy's epistemological (over)confidence, that it thinks it can, and indeed must, speak at the level of what Milbank calls "fundamental ontology" as if Jesus Christ himself only witnessed (though with greatest intensity) to a more primary metaphysical order. Many of the authors point out how Milbank's thesis about social theory's "ontology of violence" ironically issues in an odd allowance for tragic somewhat-just violence, but then take the next step by showing how that allowance for violence naturally follows the confidence Milbank champions.

Radical Orthodoxy's out-narrating is a very different exercise than Radical Reformation's out-witnessing, for the former presumes a semblance between orders of knowing and being that the latter might hope for, but can never presuppose. Milbank rightly argues that a properly *theological* ontology configures human knowing as ready reception for God as its fulfillment, following the Thomistic dictum that nature, reason, and philosophy require, indeed desire, grace, faith, and theology for the completion of their own ends. However, that knowing things requires knowing God does not mean knowing God guarantees knowing things (a tension D. Stephen Long's essay presses especially well), but precisely such a presumption undergirds Milbank's positive correlation between metaphysics and politics, or as I have been putting it here, orders of being and knowing. For Yoder, this is precisely what is wrong with violence, that it preempts orders of knowing and being in ways that map one's politics onto one's metaphysics (and vice versa), such that one can go about the world deeming some violence acceptable and, as telling, some not; the inability to make precisely these kinds of moral judgments forbade, in Yoder's mind, the church's role in such moral determinations. In other words, committing war as a moral enterprise requires a kind of metaphysical certainty Yoder did not think we possess and so his nonviolence stemmed from an epistemological reticence that C. Rosalee Velloso Ewell's essay describes as a practiced scriptural modesty (something Milbank's confidence in fundamental ontology would no doubt

deem a false humility), one that allowed our seeing Jesus, as Yoder put it and as several of the authors in this volume intend, as giving us all that we can have, and more than we need. We might think of these fine essays, and more generally the grand movements they represent, as intentional and unintentional gestures of modesty, and this volume as sharing in good company the anxiety that modesty requires. For as Cherly Pauls writes, "Such anxieties are not to be celebrated, but listened to, carefully, for in their wake lies fledgling practices whose hope is nourished through the commitment to share in God's ongoing gifts of reconciliation" (160).

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*Nonviolence: A Brief History. The Warsaw Lectures.* By John Howard Yoder. Paul Martens, Matthew Porter, and Myles Werntz, eds. Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press. 2010. Pp. 150. \$29.95.

This posthumous publication presents lectures delivered by John Howard Yoder in Warsaw, Poland, in 1983. The book consists of eleven chapters that trace the history of nonviolence via a historical, albeit not strictly chronological, structure.

The first three chapters include an investigation of the work of Leo Tolstoy, Mahatma Gandhi, and Martin Luther King Jr. Yoder takes as his task not so much a biography of these figures as the process of distillation, whereby he wishes "to seek to perceive through and beneath them the larger pattern which they brought to light" (41). Following a description of the history of the just war tradition and a study of how several social science disciplines can enhance an understanding of nonviolence, Yoder looks at the Jewish roots of nonviolence and the politics of Jesus; Yoder also includes a chapter regarding early church cosmology, and concludes with three chapters discussing developments in Catholic peace theology. The thread, or perhaps better, the single trajectory that holds these lectures together, is "the increasing relevance of nonviolent thought and action" (3).

Those who are looking for novel, heretofore undiscovered material to add to Yoder's oeuvre will not find it in these lectures, which include material Yoder had already published by 1983 (for example, *The Politics of Jesus*, published originally in 1972), as well as themes and topics that he addressed in publications soon to follow these lectures (for example, *When War is Unjust and The Priestly Kingdom* were both published in 1984).

The importance of the publication of these lectures is the opportunity to witness the way in which Yoder worked with his material in a very specific context. (The editors do a fine job of describing the particularities of the situation in which these lectures were delivered, 1-3; 8-12). For example, Yoder's very positive appropriation of thinkers Christian or not, as well as several social science disciplines, is striking. It is rare that Yoder's depiction of something or somebody can be described as "effusive," as Michael Baxter does in the book's

foreword, but it is the case that Yoder's treatment of sources and interlocutors here is remarkably positive. And yet, as we have come to expect, Yoder takes these sources seriously enough to challenge them to embrace fully their own best impulses, and in so doing, these sources find themselves pressed into support for nonviolent thought and action. And so several of the social science disciplines are pressed into service in the development of theological perspectives regarding nonviolence.

Yoder's "recruiting" of these kinds of ideas to support his own theological and historical work on nonviolence raises an important question, a version of which is highlighted by the editors of the book. That is, does Yoder use material either from denominations or religions other than his own, or from disciplines other than theology, to serve his own ends, but in ways that are not true to those sources? The editors' version of this question asks whether it might be the case that "perhaps it is not only Jews who should be worried about whether their particular religious convictions have been superseded by the claims of Yoder's 'larger pattern' of reality?" (12). As I have argued elsewhere, Yoder displays a propensity to praise others when it so happens that they agree with or support nonviolence, when their best impulses echo his own views, a tendency that finds its way into these lectures as well.

It is important in reviewing this kind of publication to reflect on the editorial work done in bringing these lectures to public attention nearly thirty years after their presentation, and more than a decade after Yoder's untimely death. Posthumous publication of Yoder's work has proliferated—and it must be said that there is a certain unevenness to this kind of enterprise, both in terms of the material being published and the editorial labor in bringing it to view. The editing of posthumous material is delicate work, including as it does a plethora of interpretive decisions made without the benefit of the immediate input of the author—some decisions may have been made before the author's passing, but surely many still remain in the hands of the editor(s), which raises questions regarding the nature of the publication—how much shaping has been done by the editors, in terms of sequence, exclusion, interpolation, and so on?

The editors here have been very careful to let Yoder's work speak for itself as much as possible. In addition to their introductory essay, in itself surely a significant shaping mechanism, they have limited themselves to primarily two kinds of work—the task of copy editing, and a second more obviously interpretive kind of influence, the addition of a number of footnotes, pointing the reader to sources, explaining references to individuals, organizations, and movements, or clarifying terms or concepts—all of which expresses a philosophy of editing that seems appropriately modest.

To conclude, this book is a welcome addition to Yoder's published corpus of work. Despite the fact that it includes a significant amount of material that can be found elsewhere, this collection of lectures shows Yoder working with that material in a singular setting, displaying in an important way the contribution of someone who remains perhaps the most important expositor of Christian nonviolence in our current age.

## BOOK NOTES

*The Eucharistic Pamphlets of Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt.* Trans. and ed. Amy Nelson Burnett. Kirksville, Mo.: Truman State University Press. 2011. Pp. 300. \$39.95.

In 1521 Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, then a colleague with Martin Luther in the emerging reformation movement, wrote several tracts calling for a reform of the Mass. In the following four years, Karlstadt published numerous additional pamphlets on the Eucharist that pushed those ideas even further, ultimately rejecting the belief that Christ was physically present in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper. This collection brings together thirteen of Karlstadt's writings on the Eucharist in a new translation, thereby making nearly all of his writings on the subject available in English for the first time. The book includes a bibliography along with a Scripture and subject index.

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*Menno Simons und die frühen Täufer. Drei Vorlesungen von Hans-Jürgen Goertz mit zwei Predigten von Hans-Jochen Jaschke und Christoph Wiebe.* Bolanden: Mennonitischer Geschichtsverein. 2011. Pp. 80. €10.

The year 2011 marked the 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Menno Simons. Although Menno's name is remembered around the world in the name "Mennonite," relatively few people today know very much about Menno's life, teachings, or significance. The first essay in this small edited collection provides an overview of the Anabaptist movement by the noted historian Hans-Jürgen Goertz, followed by two additional essays by Goertz on the Anabaptist Kingdom at Münster and the influential role of Menno Simons in redirecting the Anabaptist movement in the aftermath of the Münster debacle. A Mennonite pastor, Christoph Wiebe, and a Catholic bishop, Hans-Jochen Jaschke, conclude the volume with two sermons—both focused on Menno's favorite text, 1 Corinthians 3:11—that reflect on the significance of Menno Simons for the Christian church today.

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*Gedoopt. Vijf Eeuwen Doopsgezinden in Nederland.* Amsterdam: Doopsgezinde Historische Kring. 2011.

In 2011 the Mennonite church of the Netherlands observed a series of historical commemorations, including the 475<sup>th</sup> year of Menno's departure from the Catholic church (as well as the 450<sup>th</sup> year of his death), the 200<sup>th</sup> year of the Algemeen Doopsgezinde Sociëteit, the 275<sup>th</sup> year of the Anabaptist seminary, and the 100<sup>th</sup> year of the ordination of Anne Zernike as the first female preacher in the Netherlands. As part of the many different celebrations planned by the Dutch Mennonite church in 2010-2011, the Dutch Mennonite Historical Society created an exhibit at the Free University of Amsterdam focusing on key leaders



throughout their history. Instead of issuing a standard catalog, organizers of the exhibit chose to reproduce more than forty portraits of leaders on card stock, with illustrations and text on the reverse side that explain the context and significance of each person. The set of portraits, accompanied by a well-illustrated pamphlet surveying the sweep of Dutch Mennonite history, fit into an accompanying slipcover.

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*A Pacifist Way of Knowing. John Howard Yoder's Nonviolent Epistemology.* Ed. Christian E. Early and Ted G. Grimsrud. Eugene, Ore.: Cascade Books. 2010. Pp. 159. \$20.

This volume contributes to an emerging genre of edited collections of writings by John Howard Yoder, organized around specific themes. Here the focus is on the relationship between the Gospel, peace, and human ways of knowing, and Yoder's description of a pacifist epistemology that avoids both the aggrandizing narratives of empire and the vacuous nihilism of relativism. Although the prologue and epilogue are original contributions by the editors, all of the essays by Yoder in this volume have appeared elsewhere in print.

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*Gott in der Welt feiern. Auf dem Weg zum missionalen Gottesdienst.* By Johannes Reimer. Schwarzenfeld: Neufeld Verlag. 2010. Pp. 203. €12.90.

Johannes Reimer, professor of missiology at the University of South Africa, is well-known in Russian-German Mennonite and evangelical circles as a missiologist, popular speaker, church planter, and author. He has published numerous books on Russian Mennonite history, ecclesiology and missions. This volume takes up the question of why church attendance is diminished in so many parts of Western Europe. The path to missional renewal, Reimer argues, leads through a fresh approach to worship in which the presence of the Spirit—in many different expressions—becomes the primary focus. “Missional worship” recognizes that the church exists for worship; only when congregations are attentive to worship practices will they be truly empowered for mission.

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*Découvrir le réformateur Menno Simons. Premiers traits de Menno Simon.* Trans. François Caudwell. Charols. Editions Excelsuis—Collection *Perspectives anabaptistes*. 2011. Pp. 311. €22.

Protestant Christians in Europe have recently expressed a growing interest in the writings of the Radical Reformers. Yet few primary sources are available in French. This translation, the first to make the thought of Menno Simons widely available to a Francophone readership, includes three basic treatises: *A Meditation on the Twenty-fifth Psalm* (c. 1537); *The New Birth* (c. 1537); and *Foundation of Christian Doctrine* (1539). The translator, who has served as a pastor in both Mennonite and Reformed congregations, provides an interpretive

introduction to the volume. The book includes a bibliography of primary and secondary sources and a detailed Scripture index.

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