



ON THE ROAD

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THE VIEW FROM EPHESIANS FOUR

MARK AND MARY HURST

...to prepare all God's people for the work of Christian service

“Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come... Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.” - Mark 13:33-37

Beware, keep alert! Another Australian government message on a fridge magnet? No, these are Jesus' words to his disciples when they asked about the future. What is to come and when? “Jesus tries to prepare them for events that will precede his return to earth, but he resists answering the when question. As he says in verse 32, not even he knows. Some things really are meant to be a mystery.”

Jesus' response to his disciples was to “not give them all the answers but to give them practices to help them do the work at hand. Stay alert, beware, stay awake,

pray. Jesus knew these practices would shift their focus from ‘What will *it* look like when you come again?’ to ‘What will we look like when you come again?’” (*The Upper Room Disciplines 2005*, 343)

Advent is the season to be looking for the arrival of Jesus. May we be wide awake and alert when Jesus comes again! May we look like our Lord when he returns!

This issue of **ON THE ROAD** is packed with book reviews. We present numerous options for your summer reading. We are pleased to feature writers from Sydney, Perth, Melbourne, Canberra, Wellington, Christchurch, and Davao City in the Philippines. This broad spectrum represents the growth of the AAANZ network over the past year.

Be alert for changes in 2006. Our “new look” website will be unveiled early in the year. The new AAANZ executive committee will meet over a weekend in February to dream and plan for the future. If there are ideas you have for AAANZ, send them to us and we will add them to the mix.

On The Road

The AAANZ quarterly journal publishes news, articles, book reviews, and resource information. It is published online with a paper edition available for those without computer facilities. (Paper edition A\$25 per year) To be added to the mailing list write:

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COVER SYMBOL: The lamb in the midst of briars is a traditional Anabaptist symbol. It illustrates the suffering Lamb of God, who calls the faithful to obedient service and discipleship on the road. This particular rendition is from *Hymnal A Worship Book*. Copyright 1992. Reprinted with permission of Mennonite Publishing House, Scottsdale, PA, USA.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

ROSS COLEMAN*



The last twelve months are a record of positive direction and energy for AAANZ. Our membership has expanded, the opportunities for teaching and equipping nationally and internationally have increased. There is a growing sense of awareness of Anabaptism through emails, our newsletter and the website as well. In New Zealand and many states of Australia and beyond the movement of AAANZ continues to provoke, motivate and challenge. However, in a culture which embraces violence as a way to resolve conflict, where some aspects of the church affirms government stands on war, there remains a lot to do. The challenge ahead for AAANZ is one that is financial, visionary and prophetic. Together with Jesus, our peacemaker, the influence and ownership of Biblical values can continue to be a subversive mix in a culture needing transformation. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve you.

*Ross Coleman is stepping down as President after serving well in that role for several years. He will remain on the AAANZ executive as one of the NSW representatives. He and his wife Diane, both Baptist pastors, continue to minister in the Glebe community.

Globalisation and the Ten Commandments

JOHN MCKINNON

Throughout the latter half of the twentieth century an ideological battle raged between the forces of communism on the one hand and those of capitalism on the other. As is often the case, this ideological battle assumed religious fervour with capitalism and, in particular, it's more laissez-faire forms, assuming the mantle of the "Christian" economic system. By the early 21st century, free market economics and its close cousin, globalisation, appear to have won wide acceptance, at least in the West, as embodying Christianity in society.

The foundation of these beliefs, as well as springing from the battles of the 20th century, appears to be in the belief in individual freedom and reward for effort. Texts such as 2 Thessalonians 3:10 and the parable of the talents lend support to such idealization of entrepreneurship. However, with widening inequalities and 20% of the world in dire poverty (1.1 billion live on less than one dollar per day), it is worth re-examining whether further globalisation and spreading of free-market capitalism is in fact a biblical response to the current crisis.

The Eighth Commandment

In looking to the Bible for ethical guidelines at a societal level, the Pentateuch is a natural starting point. Here we find the Ten Commandments, universally accepted by Christians as the ethical foundation for a just society. The eighth commandment "You shall not steal" (Exodus 20:15) not only seems clear in its implications but also is accepted beyond Christianity as foundational in any societal context. However, as we shall discover, the elaborations and specific applications of this law given throughout the Pentateuch demonstrate a much deeper principle than a simple prohibition and raise significant ethical implications for today's economic debate.

Patrick Miller, in his essay "Property and possession in the Light of the Ten Commandments" (Schweiker and Mathewes, 2004, 17-51), demonstrates that far from being a simple statement protecting general property rights, the eighth commandment has a complex trajectory throughout both the books of the law and the narrative sections of the Old Testament. This trajectory, discussed briefly below, highlights the positive ethical implications of the commandment.

Miller first looks at the prohibitions against stealing people "Whoever steals a man, whether he sells him or is found in possession of him, shall be put to death" (Exodus 21:16). The version found in Deuteronomy (Deut. 24:7) specifically refers to slave labour or sale for gain. The force of this commandment is that no one can appropriate another person for economic gain. That is, people are not goods to be bought and sold or used for economic exploitation.

This point is furthered in some of the Sabbath regulations. Slaves (as a result of economic deprivation, not kidnap) are not only to be released every seven years but this freedom must be accompanied with liberal economic benefit (Deut. 15). Thus the commandments ensure that one who is in bondage, even through economic deprivation, becomes a recipient of economic benefit. An individual's freedom and economic possibility was not permitted to be stolen, regardless of how it came to be imperilled in the first place. While the commandments acknowledge that humans become caught in economic bondage, it insists that this situation never become permanent and that people always have opportunity for a fresh start.

Secondly, Miller examines what he calls the legal trajectory of the eighth commandment in each of Exodus and Deuteronomy. Exodus 22:1-15 contains a set of laws relating to theft and restitution. In most cases, the theft relates to those objects that are means of livelihood and

production. It is not property rights as such that are addressed but particularly those things that people need to provide food, clothing and the other necessities of life. Verses 5-6 address the wider issue of loss of the means of subsistence, either deliberate or accidental. The underlying principle here is that of justice and fair dealing. In verses 10-13, the concern is to provide protection in the case where someone has lent property or provided safekeeping for property. It appears that God wishes to ensure that these social virtues are not endangered by concern about the liability or risks taken on. A further interesting law is described in Exodus 23:4-5. Here, one is required to look after the property of an enemy.

Deuteronomy 22:1-4 elaborates this command and makes it clear that there is a positive responsibility to care for a neighbour's economic wellbeing. As Miller states: "The divine instruction about loving one's enemy thus begins not in the New Testament but in the moral dynamic effected by the eighth commandment." In Deuteronomy 24:10-13 the laws relate to the situation of a person becoming indebted. In this case, the creditor is not permitted to use his economic advantage to deprive others of basic necessities. In verses 12-13 the emphasis is not on the loan or debt but on ensuring that the poor have access to basic necessities. This is expanded to include the payment of wages in verse 15. Chapter 24 concludes with laws describing a process whereby the poor can have access to the land and its productivity. This highlights the fact that the property laws were not about protection of property of the rich from the poor but about ensuring that the poor had access to basic needs and to the means to provide a livelihood for themselves and their families.

Finally, Ephesians provides a relevant summary of the Pentateuch property laws. Ephesians 4:28 says: "He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, ..., that he may have something to share with those in need." Just as in the Pentateuch, Paul here describes a positive action. In Miller's words, "the trajectory of the eighth commandment explicitly opens up from a narrow reading of the commandment as a guard of private property to a positive inducement to generosity."

Globalisation and Trade

Economic globalisation is simply the term used to describe the phenomena of increasing international trade in goods, services and capital. As such, it involves diminishing national sovereignty in favour of increased power for the owners of capital and the producers of the goods and services. As this power has become increasingly concentrated, we can identify clear breaches of the ethical principles derived from the eighth commandment and its applications in Hebrew law.

A major cause of poverty in the world today is debt. In the 1970 and 80s many poorer nations borrowed heavily from banks in the richer nations. Much of this money was squandered by corrupt dictators leaving poor nations with massive debt and no means to repay. The situation is such that debt servicing far exceeds aid payments and has resulted in the decline in many essential services such as health and education. African countries spend four times as much on debt servicing as on healthcare.

In some cases the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has assisted in debt restructuring but this has usually involved conditions such as privatisations of utilities, reductions in government spending and the introduction of user pays principles. This can be contrasted with the Pentateuchal principle that debt, no matter how incurred, not be permitted to deprive the debtor of basic necessities or economic well-being.

The increasing freedom of international investment and finances has allowed many companies to become "multinationals", that is, to operate across national borders. In fact, this freedom has resulted in a concentration of market power as companies have purchased competitors and used their size to dominate small markets. The aim of corporations is, of course, to increase profit. Poorer countries generally earn money by selling primary produce to richer countries. In the case of at least three of these commodities, coffee, cocoa and bananas, the market is dominated by a small number of large corporations.

The market power of these corporations means that the prices received by the producers has remained low and a tiny fraction of the price of the final product as sold in the US or Europe. In many cases these "cash" crops have replaced subsistence food crops thus making the producers totally dependent on the global markets and a few large

Frank and Ernest



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multinationals. Coffee prices have fallen 70% since 1997 and many small producers have been forced to forego basic necessities. Retail prices of coffee products have not fallen since monopolistic corporations have increased profit margins. Once again, we must consider this in the light of the commandment's insistence on economic well-being and the assurance that fair wages are paid and that people have the means to provide their necessities.

The third aspect of globalisation is the move to free trade and the removal of barriers to trade. While increased trade is a way to increased prosperity, free trade has often eroded the ability of national governments to protect their citizens against exploitation by foreign corporations. Just five companies control 87% of worldwide banana production. These companies have sought to use free trade rules to prevent the European Union from choosing to import higher cost bananas from former colonies. This would devastate the incomes of producers in these former colonies.

First world countries also maintain high subsidies for agricultural producers. These subsidies not only lock out imports from the poorer countries but also encourage significant over-production. This surplus gets dumped on poorer countries thus further damaging the market of local producers. Such "theft" of markets denies these producers the means of economic livelihood and surely comes within the moral ambit of the eighth commandment.

Free trade is actually something of a misnomer. Protectionism is still rampant throughout the world. However, international bodies dominated by richer countries have been able to shift the balance of the rules so that poor countries exporting to rich countries face four times the tariff barriers. Similarly, intellectual property and patent rules protect rich country corporations and

effectively lock poor countries out of the market for life-saving medicines and technological advancements. Patent protection for seeds and fertilizers directly impinges upon the productive capabilities of third world farmers. Once again, we see the basic needs of the poor subjected to the need of the rich for high profitability, in contravention of the eighth commandment.

Similarly, cases of multinational corporations moving factories into poorer countries to exploit low wages bring to mind the commandment's applications to slavery. This exploitation, which involves very low wages and appalling conditions, is often the only possible employment or income the workers have access to. They therefore have no option but to remain in the exploitative situations. They are not free and do not make enough money to have any other options.

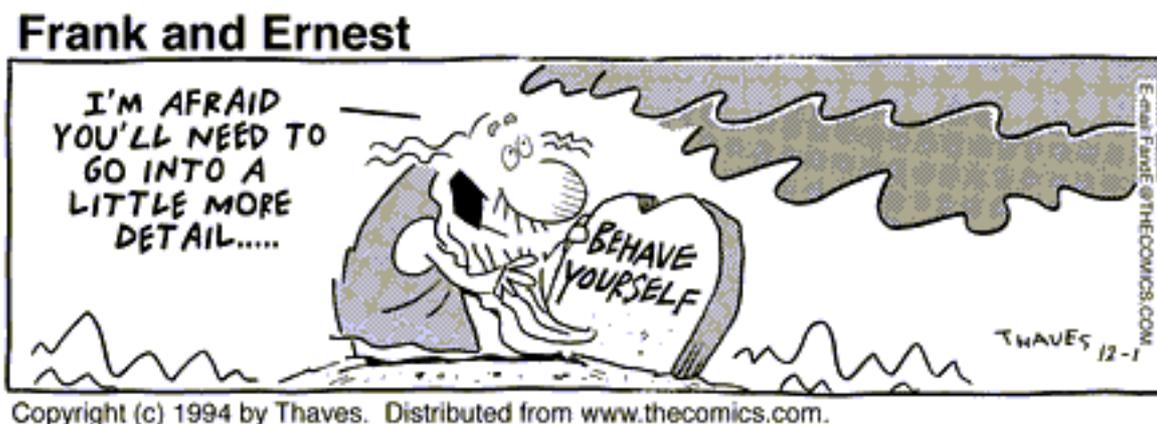
Summary

The commandment against stealing is far more than a simple protection of private property. It is expanded within the Pentateuch into a positive encouragement to generosity and a set of principles for caring for the poorer members of society. When the principles behind these expansions are applied to the forces of globalisation and global capitalism at work in the world today we find much that contravenes the commandment: "Do not steal". We must face the conclusion that a significant amount of activity within the global economy is simply stealing.

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John McKinnon, NSW State Coordinator, Tear Australia



Jesus and the Religious Leaders of his Day – Whose Authority?

EVAN HYND

[Editors' Note: This is an edited version of a paper written by Evan Hynd, a university student in Canberra who wrote the original paper for his Knowledge and Society subject. He was interested in the conflict between Jesus and the religious authorities over the issue of authority. The original paper, complete with footnotes and references, is available from the AAANZ office.]

In the Beginning...

Epistemology, from the Greek words *episteme* (knowledge) and *logos* (word/speech) is the branch of philosophy that deals with the nature, origin and scope of knowledge. The question of religious knowledge, from an epistemological standpoint, was the starting point for my interest in Jesus Christ and the authority he claimed over the other religious epistemic authorities of his time. What will be attempted here is an examination of how the authority of the major religious communities, the Sadducees, the Temple Order and the Pharisees of the time, were challenged by the claims of Jesus. Using the theme of a play being acted out, I will depict the context of the situation Jesus operated in, the commonalities and differences between the antagonists involved, and finally how Jesus both represented a continuity and break from the Judaic socio-religious order of first century Palestine. In the process of exploring this question, I will attempt to focus as much as possible on the subject of knowledge, of how it is produced, validated, stored and disseminated in relation to the various religious epistemic authorities referred to here.

Before exploring the dynamic of Jesus' epistemological challenge I would like to briefly explain a number of key concepts that will be referred to in this analysis. Epistemic authority is understood as individuals or collectives that have the right to, or are in a position to; determine how both individuals and societies in general know what they know. Everybody's ontology is thus more or less determined, to varying degrees, by these authorities. As will be depicted later on in the case of Jesus, tension exists between various epistemic authorities as they are in competition with each other for the populations' attention and/or allegiance.

Historical Context

Act I begins. Let me set the scene - first century Palestine. Rome has incorporated Palestine into its' empire, it is under military occupation. The colonial administration includes Pilate, Caesar's representative, along with a Roman military presence. The two most important parties from the indigenous population working within the establishment are the Herodians and Sadducees. The Herodians were the more politically inclined of the two, the equivalent of the modern bureaucracy. The Sadducees, who will be looked at in closer detail later, had a more religious orientation.

While both the Herodians and Sadducees could reasonably be described as collaborators, they "were able to keep the temple worship going to maintain the public recognition and teaching of the Jewish law. They

preserved a breathing space for the Jewish people and culture; a unique, legally guaranteed status for the production of a non-Roman monotheist religion." This space provided by the Imperial Occupation regime allowed for the continuation of a number of Judaic religious epistemic authorities to operate in Palestine. The two major ones were (1) the Sadducees and the Temple Order and, (2) the Pharisees. As they were the largest and most influential religious parties at the time, they had the most conflict with the epistemic authority that was claimed by Jesus and so the most appropriate to examine here.

Common Source of Knowledge

The Torah formed the source from which knowledge in the Judaic tradition was interpreted, validated and disseminated. This applied in the cases of the Sadducees, the Temple Order and Pharisees. The Jewish law was extrapolated from the Torah, instructing "people how to live," and explaining, "the central meaning of human life ...based on authority from God." Included were regulations concerning such things as purity rules, observing the Sabbath and Temple worship. The Torah was held as an unassailable authority, supplemented, interpreted and predominately communicated through the oral tradition.

The three above-mentioned parties all used the oral tradition in the transmission of knowledge from their various interpretations of the Torah. The style they shared was called the *talmidim*. The participants, "gathered themselves around the teacher and...would sit at his feet and listen as the rabbi repeated and commented on the written and oral law." The oral tradition was extremely important in the dissemination of knowledge however there were differences between these authorities.

The Sadducees and the Temple Order

The first group of antagonists are the Sadducees and the Temple Order. The Sadducees came from a priestly and aristocratic background. As effective members of the ruling class, it is not surprising that after the Romans occupied Palestine, the Sadducees cooperated with them. "The Sadducees were willing to serve as puppet authorities for the Romans in order to preserve their position, and their control of the temple, including its treasury." As part of the privileged elite, the Sadducees possessed property and wealth but, "the Temple system was so strong that it had its own dynamic and was run by a smaller elite, centred on the high priests." The Temple formed both the power base for this Temple Order while also proving a great economic success story as well.

The Temple itself had a role in maintaining the authority of the imperial order along with social stability. The Temple was only allowed to operate with the permission of the Roman occupiers, and so the interpretation and dissemination of knowledge through the Temple would be tainted and be at the very least ambiguous in its stance towards the occupiers. Furthermore, under the pressure of Roman taxation, the demands made for tithing and sacrifices vis-à-vis the

religious authorities were typically unable to be satisfied by the ordinary worshipper. Tithes hurt the poor, while condemning them in the eyes of God according to the priestly order. This was a deliberate abuse of their authority by interpreting the Torah in order to keep the Romans content whilst leaving their material interests intact.

The Pharisees

The second set of antagonists is the Pharisees. The epistemic authority of the Pharisees and the synagogue system they ran only vaguely competed with the Sadducees and the Temple Order. In the case of the Pharisees, the rabbis concentrated their teaching on a more local level, on the periphery, at synagogues rather than at the temple. The transmission process, “consisted of a senior rabbi and students, who undertook to learn from their master,” and because the “law defined the Jewish way of life and politics, the rabbis were considered authoritative teachers of the law.” In the case of the Pharisees, the epistemic authority lay securely in the hands of the senior rabbi.

At the heart of the Pharisaic ideology was the halakah. “Halakah interprets the commandments of Scripture carefully following exegetical rules...the result was halakoth, specific and authoritative prescriptions and prohibitions which made the biblical law relevant to new and concrete questions of conduct.” The transmission of halakah was known as “Haggadah, a narrative that requires reflection. It is midrash, verse-by-verse interpretation, exegesis and commentary, or Mishnah, verse-by-verse systematisation.” Halakah was not inclusive, but rather an elitist ideology and process of the production, validation, storage, and dissemination of religious knowledge. Moreover, the halakah functioned in part to safeguard the status quo, the existing political economy and social structure.

Jesus’ Epistemic Authority and his Challenge

Act II begins and our protagonist emerges on the scene. The degree to which Jesus represented a continuity, as well as a break from the socio-religious order of first century Palestine order will be examined in the following four aspects (a) claiming divine authority from God, (b) his relationship to the Jewish prophetic tradition, (c) rabbinical training and knowledge of the law, and finally, (d) the oral tradition and use of parables. The approach used in this study will specifically focus on the production, validation, storage and dissemination of knowledge.

Claimed divine authority from God

Jesus’ claimed that he was a “new” and direct access to divine power that was based on the will of God - revealed on the basis of Jesus’ authority and words. This was a clear break, a revolutionary one in fact against the epistemic authorities of the time. As the Son of God, Jesus claimed himself as the ultimate source of religious

knowledge, an epistemic authority manifested in a single person. “Indeed...he spoke ‘as one having authority, and not as the scribes’ (Mark 1:22). Here is no pious interpreter of the law; here is rather one who claims to announce the will of God himself. So he sets his own authority, ‘But I say unto you,’ over against the authority of the law as the rabbis had used and interpreted it.”

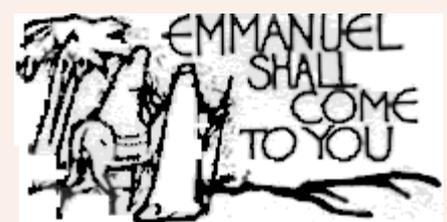
“Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, ‘the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees are the official interpreters of the Scriptures. So practice and obey whatever they say to you, but don’t follow their example. For they don’t practice what they preach.’ (Matthew 23:1-4)

Jesus directly challenged the authority of the socio-religious authorities. In the case of the Sadducees, Temple Order and Pharisees, they had to varying degrees diverted from God, from the law. Jesus and his Kingdom represented the new authority from God, one that would unite the world, both Jew and Gentile. This in a sense was a social revolution that usurped all other epistemic authorities, including their ability to produce, validate, store and transmit knowledge. “The coming of the kingdom of God meant a revolution in the way people behaved toward each other and their recognition that they should have no Caesars...or other overlords above them except for the one God and Creator of the World.” From this point on, God’s law – Love - was now the core of how people should direct their lives and the announcement of the “Kingdom of God” was an invitation to repent and believe the gospel.

Jesus’ announcement of the “Kingdom of God” offered more than an abstract utopian vision; it was the beginning of a social movement aiming towards a radical transformation of society, which included a reconstitution of the Temple. This meant trusting in Jesus as a source of divine knowledge and forgiveness instead of worshipping in the Temple. “In Judaism, repentance and forgiveness were focused...on the temple itself, where the sacrificial system existed to provide the way of restitution for those who, through their sin, had...jeopardised their membership within Israel. Jesus was offering forgiveness to all and sundry...without requiring that they go through the normal channels.” Jesus offered himself as the alternative to all that the temple stood for, a new source of epistemic authority that would forgive people in the name of God. Jesus manifested a critical challenge to the Sadducees and the Temple Order as the recognised legitimate authority over Judaic religious authority in the Temple.

Continuation of the prophetic tradition

Jesus’ claim to religious authority represented both a continuation and break from the Jewish socio-religious tradition. Jesus declared he was not only a prophet, but in fact the Messiah, the last of God’s prophets. Prophecies of the coming of the



“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!” Luke 2:14

Messiah, the one who would bring justice to Israel from God, can be read in, for example, Isaiah 9:1-7 and Malachi 3:1-5. Jesus was the realisation of God's promise, as was depicted in the event referred to as the Transfiguration, which represented the fulfilment of both the law (represented by Moses) and the prophetic tradition (represented by Elijah) in Matthew 17:1-13.

There is a minor point of departure in Jesus' arguments concerning the law from the older understanding of it. The summary of the law, according to Jesus, is that love fulfils the law and ranks above the observance of the Sabbath, purity regulations etc. Jesus said, "Don't misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the Law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to fulfil them. I assure you, until heaven and earth disappear, even the smallest detail of God's law will remain until its purpose is achieved'." (Mt 5:17-18) While he was following in the Jewish prophetic tradition and claimed to be fulfilling God's law, his beliefs and actions challenged the assumptions of the existing socio-religious authorities. The emphasis in the production and validation process had been shifted towards love as the greatest commandment of the law, while the importance of the other parts had been reduced in comparison.

No rabbinical training, no authority

In the eyes of the rabbis and others regarded as having exclusive religious authority in the Temple and synagogues, Jesus teaching about the Torah certainly would have appeared to be undermining their authority because Jesus was not trained at rabbinical school and had no authority to interpret scriptures. The validation and dissemination process of Jewish religious knowledge was being conducted by one who was not authorised to do so. However, Jesus had a profound understanding of the law. In Luke 2:41-52 the gospels depict Jesus as a young lad intensely studying at the Temple. Moreover, his understanding of the Torah was so advanced that he held the, "status of a senior rabbi just by the power of is teaching." As we can see from this example:

"After dark one evening, a Jewish religious leader named Nicodemus, a Pharisee, came to speak with Jesus. 'Teacher [Rabbi],' he said, 'we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are proof enough that God is with you'." (John 3:1-2)

Despite having not undertaken rabbinical training, Jesus was regarded as having the religious authority of a senior rabbi. Jesus was thus a figure that challenged the very pattern of how one underwent the process of attaining religious epistemological authority.

Use of oral tradition to pass down stories

Religious knowledge was transmitted within the Judaic tradition primarily based upon oral teaching from the written Torah. Furthermore the use of parable to communicate the message of the law in a concrete fashion was quite standard. Jesus himself did not stray from these

practices, as is evident in examples like the Sermon on the Mount (Luke 6:20-23) and also the use of parables, like the story of the Vineyard Workers (20:1-16). In this instance, there was a direct line of continuity from the existing form of disseminating knowledge used by the Sadducees, Pharisees and Jesus.

Summing up – Continuity and Revolution

Jesus cuts an interesting historical epistemological figure, both offering continuity in regards to the Judaic order, but also radically breaking from it in different ways. The Sadducees, the Temple Order, and the Pharisees, as the best representatives of the major religious epistemic authorities in the first century, could see some continuity in the claims and actions of Jesus. He was following in the Jewish prophetic tradition and also claimed to be the Messiah. Also he adhered to the oral tradition of the times, using similar styles of knowledge dissemination used by other rabbis and teachers. However, it is clear that Jesus also represented a revolutionary movement away from the socio-religious order.

Jesus claimed divine authority, a mandate from God in fact, to be the new source of religious knowledge and thus authority over the Judaic tradition. In the individual person of Jesus a new epistemic authority is created, bringing forth the "Kingdom of God", if you like God's epistemic community. Beyond co-opting the Judaic tradition, Jesus also challenged the authority of the Temple to forgive peoples' sins, and also the process of how one undertook to become an officially authorised teacher of religious knowledge. The epistemic authority of the Sadducees, the Temple Order and the Pharisees was under attack. Not only was their right to control the process of knowledge production, validation, storage and dissemination being undermined, this attack also threatened the material interests of these religious authorities. Something had to be done...

The Finale

"In the temple...the Chief Priests and those running the Temple are prepared to kill to maintain their system... The Pharisees are slightly different, removed from power, but also frustrated and aware that Jesus the Rabbi can cut through their teaching like a hot knife through butter. They think they need to oppose Jesus' teaching in the Temple. Many influential ones accept the Temple party's conclusion that he must die. For most of the others, rabbinic debate is to be won, and submission to God's law is recessed in their thinking. Thus, the political leaders of the day gather to plot against the person who is threatening their power and control."

Discussion questions: What does seeing Jesus in this context mean for us today? Is there a status quo that he threatens? Where is authority located for present-day Christians?



Praying with the Hoff

JARROD MCKENNA

Australian youth grow up on a steady diet of Americana. The indoctrination in American culture via the media is so strong that even when mocking it we perpetuated it. A recent example being at the ARIA's (the Aussie equivalent to the Grammy's) the two biggest awards of the night were presented by David Hasselhoff who was described as a 'cultural icon'.

I laughed out loud when I heard that. Over the past few years praying with icons has become an increasingly frequent spiritual discipline for me so the use of the term to describe Hasselhoff seemed even more ridiculous (No offence to Hasselhoff, who apparently is well respected as a musician in Germany). As one of my favourite iconographers Robert Lentz has said, an icon is "much more than a picture.... It makes present something that is sacred so that the person worshipping has a mystical way of touching the divine." Icons are a window to reality, the reality of what is going on in ourselves, what is going on in our world, and the Spirit's movement in the midst of that. The more I thought about the use of the word 'icon', in the context of what is happening politically in the US, Australia and the UK and the current ecological crisis we are living through (yet are unsure whether our future generations will be able to live through) the more sense this nonsense made to me. The "Hoff", through no fault of his own, has become for us an icon of the 'sound and fury signifying nothing' which distracts us from the pain our world is feeling. We fear being overpowered by pain, so we structure society to escape the pain that would transform us if only we would enter into it and let it pass through us.

In Australia, on the periphery of the mainstream media radar, is another American that I would like to offer as an alternative 'icon' for a more fruitful contemplation. This lesser known figure will never be able to generate the kind of frenzied fluff that forms the content of the 'infotainment' which increasingly replaces the art of journalism in this country. His name is Scott Parkin. While respected for his work in the States he has never received the kind of national attention he has been getting in Australia of late. What happened to Scott Parkin is of concern to everyone because his experience offers us a window to see the disturbing trends present in so many Western Democracies at this time in history.

Scott's trip to Australia include what most backpacking tourists do when coming 'down under': enjoying the beaches, seeing the sights and maybe even learning to surf. However on the 12th of September Scott experienced something that you will not find in any tourist brochures. In his own words:

"Walking out of a café in Melbourne, I was snatched off the street by four Australian Federal Police and two Immigration Compliant Officers. They informed me



I was being placed into "questioning detention" so that the Department of Immigration could assess if they were going to cancel my tourist visa or not. In truth, "a competent Australian authority" had already assessed me to be a "direct or indirect risk to Australian national security," cancelled my visa and had begun the process of removing me from the country"

You're correct in thinking Scott isn't just your average tourist. Like Rosa Parks who recently died at the age of 92, Scott was inspired by the work of Martin Luther King jr., and 'Mahatma' Gandhi and has dedicated his life to teaching nonviolent social

change in their tradition. What is the risk to national security? As Scott shared in his defence to interrogating officials "I'm a nonviolent person, a peace activist. I organise peace events. I do talks." These talks, where Scott shared his stories and experiences of being a peace activist with interested groups of people, was what must have been this 'risk' that had him incarcerated in a high-security prison facility before his forced deportation. It's hard to know exactly why because Scott was not charged with a crime nor was he given any further grounds for his arrest, just a bill for \$11,000.

The hilarity of the "Hoff-factor" and other meaningless fluff we are fed dazzles and distracts us from the windows, or 'icons', which reveal our current situation. Like the killing of an innocent Brazilian man by London police at a train station, or the unprovoked brutalising of farmer and Christian peace activist Jim Dowling by Queensland police, the deportation of professional peacemaker Scott Parkin is a dark and disturbing icon on which to gaze at our current political climate.

The Scott Parkin situation I suggest is a window to the condition of many Western democracies that were part of the 'coalition of the willing'. Increasingly in Australia, The United States of America and the United Kingdom we are seeing legislation which erodes and undermines human rights all ushered in on a wave of fear named 'anti-terrorism'.

The upcoming Anti-Terror Legislation in Australia, much like the Patriot Act (I&II) in the US and the Anti-Terrorism laws in the UK, all share similar characteristics. None of them address the causes of terrorism. Rather, they serve to silence through intimidation views opposed to those in Government. These same dynamics of citizens in democratic countries giving over their rights because of the fear of terrorism is not new to history.

As John Croft has recently pointed out, *the recent anti-terror laws introduced in Australia, the UK and the US all share* remarkable similarities with something called the Enabling Act. The Enabling Act was passed over 70 years ago in response to what was thought to be a terrorist attack on the Reichstag or Parliament. People were so

fearful of the threat of terrorism; there was little opposition in the passing of this Act which altered Germany's constitution. After the act was past German citizens had little power to oppose the will of the new Chancellor, Adolph Hitler.

How interesting it is that the counties that made up the coalition of the willing to import democracy and impose freedom have become increasingly fearful and are seriously hurting the freedom of their own citizens by passing laws which undermine our democracy.

Hitler's right hand man, Hermann Goering, in his war crimes trial explained how easy it was for the Nazi's to hijack Germany's democratic government with these words:

"The people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works

the same way in any country."

American Pacifist, Scott Parkin was denounced and attacked in Australia as "exposing the country to danger." In responding to the alarming restrictions on our civil liberties, I return to the idea of praying with icons. Fixing our eyes on icons allows them to speak to us, often speaking what we do not wish to hear. I as much as anyone would like to opt out of the darkness of our current situation and instead enjoy mocking some poor guy who made a career of talking to a car named 'Kit' and running down Californian beaches in slow motion with unnaturally proportioned part-plastic women. I hope however we will find the courage to, as Joanna Macy puts it, "sustain the gaze" with our own pain and see the current reality as manifest in the icon of Scott Parkin's experience. In struggling to maintain our human rights, may the Hoff bless you.

Reviewed by **Jarrold McKenna**, Perth. This article was originally written for *The Big Issue*.

AROUND THE NETWORK

Anglican Couple Finds Home at AMBS

BY RICH PREHEIM

FOR MENNONITE WEEKLY REVIEW

Elkhart, Indiana. — It was an unusual move by a rookie legislator. In his first speech before his colleagues, Jim Longley identified himself as a Christian.

That's a regular occurrence in the United States, where religion is becoming an important albeit complicated political dynamic. But that is not the case in Longley's Australia.

"To use Christian language there is very unusual," said Longley's wife, Sally. "They feel sorry for you in Australia if you go to church."

Nevertheless, when Longley joined the state parliament of New South Wales in Australia two decades ago, he proclaimed his faith in Jesus Christ in his "maiden speech" — a ritual by which newly elected members introduce themselves.

"I've never made a secret of being Christian," he said.

While Sally Longley claimed that his extremely public declaration of faith could have been political suicide, it didn't stop him from rising to top-tier governmental positions in New South Wales, Australia's most populous state. It hasn't stopped him from becoming an executive in one of the country's largest banks.

Now their faith has propelled the Longleys, who are Anglicans, to Elkhart and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

They and their two children, Philip, 12, and Claire, 11, arrived this fall from Sydney. Jim, who is taking a

year of unpaid leave from his job, is a full-time AMBS student, while Sally, a popular Christian speaker Down Under, is taking one class for credit and auditing two others this fall.

The Longleys' spiritual and geographic journeys provide a glimpse into an environment where Christianity has a low profile and Anabaptism is virtually unknown.

Sally, who said she was raised in an "anti-Christian" home in Sydney, became a Christian when she went to college in South Africa in the 1970s. Apartheid was in full force, prompting her to wrestle with social justice issues. Her college major was urban studies, but Sally wanted more religious education, so she moved to England and enrolled in the interdenominational London School of Theology.

One of Sally's lecturers in London was Alan Kreider, a longtime Mennonite Mission Network worker in England. He introduced her to Anabaptism, which immediately resonated with her peace and justice concerns. "And that has never left me," Sally said.

She returned to South Africa, where she was a university chaplain and involved in multiracial mission efforts. She also met Jim, who was attending the same Anglican congregation in Sydney as her mother, who had since become a Christian. Sally and Jim were married in 1991.

Jim, also a Sydney native, came from a nominally Christian home but as a youth started pursuing truth "with a capital T," he said. He read the Quran, Bhagavad Gita, Plato and Buddhist texts, in addition to Christian works. Led to Christianity, he joined the Anglican Church when he was 14.

While Jim's faith was developing, so was his interest in politics. At 23 he



Jim and Sally Longley with their children, Philip and Claire. — Photo by Rich Preheim for MWR

was both a lay preacher and president of the local party organization.

After graduating from college, Jim was hired by one of the largest banks in Australia and moved up the ranks. But he gave that up in 1986 when he was asked to run for the New South Wales parliament.

Jim was elected, served for 10 years and also became the government's minister of community services, overseeing activities such as services to people with disabilities, domestic violence and charitable organizations.

"So I was instantly to blame for all of society's ills," Jim said with a laugh. He also eventually became minister of aboriginal affairs and minister of aging.

Jim left parliament in 1996 and became the head of Anglican Retirement Villages, overseeing 22 senior-care facilities. In 2000 he took his current position, directing the government-related work of another bank.

Sally, meanwhile, became a lecturer in urban studies and, occasionally, ethics and politics at a Sydney university. She also spoke at religious conferences and retreats.

The Longleys became active in the Anabaptist Association of Australia and New Zealand. Formed in the mid-1990s by people influenced by Anabaptism, its activities include biannual conferences, mediation services and Anabaptist resources and education. Mark and Mary Hurst of Mennonite Mission Network work with the AAANZ.

While AAANZ membership is only about 45 people, the Longleys said Anabaptist teachings are well received in some circles. Presentations by visitors such as Alan Kreider, who now teaches at AMBS, and Mennonite Mission Network president Stanley Green have drawn nice-sized audiences, and AAANZ publications are widely read.

"It's the way you live, the way you see life that really draws people like a moth to light," said Sally, who has served as AAANZ secretary.

Jim contrasted the appeal of Anabaptism's "lived-out faith" with Australian Christianity, which is "highly

intellectual."

Among the AAANZ's members are New Zealand's leading proponent of restorative justice and a physician who, while living in the United States, was supported by Mennonite neighbors when his son was seriously ill.

The Longleys also reported a new group emerging in the city of Perth that has developed a study series on *The Politics of Jesus* by John Howard Yoder.

But the attraction is still quite limited. While Mennonites are often confused with Amish in the United States, most Australians can't even make that connection because they lack general Christian understandings. Jim said explaining Anabaptism in such context is "explaining in a vacuum."

The few who have heard of Anabaptism are hampered by misperceptions of 16th-century heretics. In a correspondence theology course he competed, Jim said, "I think Anabaptism received about three sentences."

The Longleys had long planned to take time to pursue theological education, and they said the time was now right. They looked at schools in Canada, Great Britain and New Zealand but chose AMBS. Jim was particularly drawn by the class "Theology and Religious Pluralism," taught this fall by professor Gail Gerber Koontz. It's a topic pertinent to contemporary Australia.

"At one end of the theological spectrum you've got a very conservative [Christian] outlook where you've got no discussion because everything is nicely packaged," Jim said. "At the other end of the spectrum, the liberal end, there's nothing sufficiently Christian, so there's no point having a discussion because there's nothing to discuss."

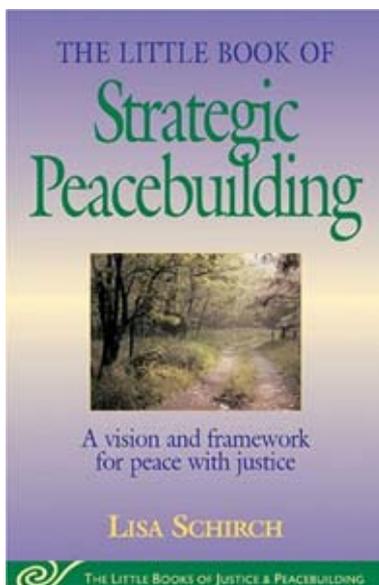
The Longleys will spend the academic year at AMBS before going back to Australia. Jim plans to take online courses and eventually return to Elkhart to finish his degree.

BOOK REVIEWS AND RESOURCES

The Little Book of Strategic Peacebuilding

LISA SCHIRCH, GOOD BOOKS, 2004

I have used various resources in putting together the Mindanao Peacebuilding Institute (MPI) course called "Fundamentals of Peacebuilding." First there is a manual by Caritas called *Peacebuilding: A Caritas Training Manual*. I would also use the ones from the Responding To Conflict folk in the UK called *Working With Conflict: Skills* and *Strategies for Action*. Finally, I use the Mennonite Conciliation Services fourth edition of their *Mediation and Facilitation Training Manual*. All these manuals are large and bulky but packed with useful models, diagrams and exercises that assist a facilitator in the training setting. I have just added another, more diminutive, book to the mainstays of



my course preparation. *The Little Book of Strategic Peacebuilding* by Lisa Schirch has quickly become a favourite in my line up of resources.

Once again, Good Books has offered us an easy reading book on a crucial peace topic. *Strategic Peacebuilding* is a small yet surprisingly complete summary of the necessary parts of peacebuilding. First of all, Schirch defines peacebuilding and the values needed when working at peace. She then works through relational skills, analysis, process, and nonviolence as crucial components. She ends the book with transforming relationships, building capacity design and evaluation/coordination as critical actions needed for sustainable peace.

I found the book refreshing in its accessibility. Some points challenged me to simplify my

thinking in certain areas while other parts of the book spurred my thinking to areas I had not thought of before. For example, good relationships are central to any peacebuilding effort. Simple yet profound. Because conflict is about relationships, it stands to reason that tools for healing and strengthening relationships are critical skills needed in any peacebuilding program. But what skills? Forgiveness? Nonviolent communications? Ritual? I have

been challenged to explore all of these facets of relationship as topics in the peacebuilding course at MPI.

Other *Little Books* in this series include topics on restorative justice, conflict transformation, family group conferences and strategic negotiation.

Reviewed by **Jon Rudy**, MCC Asia Peace Resource, Davao City, Philippines

Healing Our History: The Challenge of the Treaty of Waitangi

ROBERT AND JOANNA CONSEDINE, PENGUIN BOOKS, 2005

Robert Consedine is a fourth-generation Irish Catholic Pakeha New Zealander who has been a Treaty educator for twenty years. He has delivered Treaty workshops to thousands of New Zealanders and is assisted by the journalistic gifts of his daughter Joanna in writing this book.

The scope of this book is a critique of colonisation with a special emphasis on New Zealand. Like the messages of the Old Testament prophets, written first for local hearers, Robert has a wider prophetic word for all who have ears to hear. All of us who are part of colonising countries can be challenged by what Robert and Joanna write.

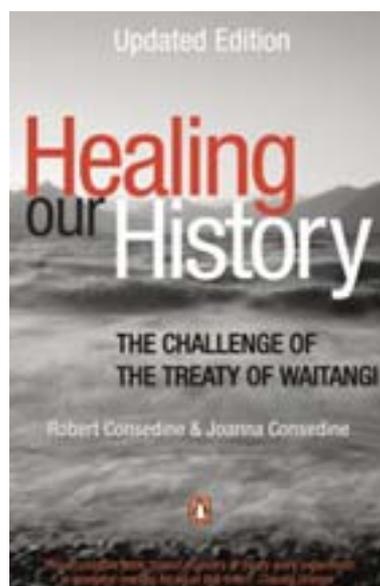
First published in 2001, the 2005 edition also addresses the area of white privilege and the position of the Treaty relationship higher in the political agenda. Sadly, the ink is scarcely dry on this edition before the pendulum swings as NZ voters swing massively to the right, almost returning the National Party to power, with its promises of securing white privilege by abolishing Maori seats in parliament.

This is no soft read, although highly readable. There are no historical/environmental excuses for colonial excesses here. Consedine works from the premise that it is only when we face the truth that there is any possibility of reconciliation. There is much in his writing that reflects the processes of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa.

The book is divided into two sections; Part One: The history, and Part Two: The Healing. In each section Robert cleverly interweaves his own personal history and personal healing with the history of his own Irish people, British Columbia, Australia and New Zealand.

The historical sections on Ireland, Australia and Canada cover around four pages for each, compared to a similar number of chapters for New Zealand. However, for readers from those countries, there are both extensive book and web bibliographies. Robert reflects in his writing his Irish Catholic cultural heritage.

I first met Robert at Hui Whakamana Tiriti, a quarterly discussion/think tank/support group for Pakeha who support Te Tiriti (the Treaty) in Otautahi/Christchurch, where we have been living for three years. He can tell a ripping good yarn and his storytelling gifts are also



reflected in his writing and the delivery of Treaty workshops.

Robert was born into the Irish Catholic sub-culture of working class Addington, where his parents were “Sermon on the Mounties”, frequently reaching out to those in the adjacent prison, the intellectually disabled, and homeless. His happy primary days were abruptly ended when he was awarded a scholarship to St Bedes College. This Catholic high school reinforced the Christchurch class system and reflected the oppressed, violent, narrow educational orthodoxy of the 1950’s.

For some years after school, Robert worked as the CORSO organiser for Canterbury, Westland, Marlborough and Nelson. Preoccupied with raising funds for overseas projects, he did not take on

board the challenges of Maori Activist Dun Mihaka; “How can you focus on injustice in the world and ignore the plight of Maori in New Zealand?” His work in peace and justice took him all over the world engaging in non-violent peaceful protests. Yet it was his part in burning the South African and New Zealand flags that brought a life-changing experience. His two weeks as a resident at Addington jail opened his eyes and heart. For the first time he was impacted with oppression here. The jail was overcrowded with mainly Maori prisoners in a city where only 7% of the population are Maori. He had trouble getting into prison. They struggled to get out. That was 1981. By 1985 the first of the Project Waitangi workshops were being run. By Pakeha for Pakeha, they continue still and have also been run in Canada.

In the historical section, Robert traces the impact of missionary conquest, not avoiding the hard questions of the paradox of a Church that has inspired his journey through its teaching on human rights and social justice but whose teaching is also obscured by its own abuse of power - a question we could do well to apply to our own spiritual heritages. Other chapter headings are: “Shattering the Myths”, “Confronting the Myths” and “Why don’t we Know” - a chapter that has a penetrating look at the way successive governments have deceived settlers into a form of amnesia on their cultural genocide.

I found his section on Australia particularly interesting, though perhaps a little brief. He looks at the '94

Mabo Conference, the fiction of "Terra Nullus" that was propagated for many years, and the '97 "Stolen Generations" report. He quotes extensively from Colin Tatz's "Genocide in Australia" - AIATSIS Resource Discussion Paper No.8 (www.aiatsis.gov.au/research/dp8/genocide.htm and www.austlii.edu.au/au/spec).

Throughout the book he illustrates that the outcome of colonisation is evident in all groups of indigenous peoples in the social statistics which show that they continue to suffer poorer health, die younger, maintain lower employment and scholastic achievement, and that disproportionate numbers of indigenous peoples are incarcerated, homeless or in poorer health and poverty.

In Part Two Robert comes back to his personal story and the spiritual challenges that confronted him as he wrestled with the question of why he had known so little about colonisation and what had happened to Maori. His chapters in this section cover getting involved, honouring our stories, respecting identities, white privilege and the paradox of hope. Here he looks at globalisation, the many guises of racism and the prospect of power-sharing. Throughout, his own call from God to engage in Treaty education is evident.

At the close of the book are useful appendices, not least of which is the actual wording of the Treaty of Waitangi.

There is yet another chapter not in these 300 pages. In June, Robert shared with us at Hui Whakamana Tiriti the approach he had had from the Maori Party to become

number six on their party list, the highest ranking for any Pakeha. The media were quick to pick up on the fact that it wasn't everyday that an accomplished Pakeha author chooses to propagate the political values of a party whose name suggests favour over his own cultural background.

After discussion with his family and Hui Whakamana supporters, Robert agreed. For him, it was the next stage of his spiritual journey. He was clear that Maori needed direct representation in Parliament, not via the patronage of major parties,

To me, his selection by Maori as a candidate for Maori showed the huge mana (standing) they placed on his Treaty education work and the re-publication of this challenging book. Robert is a man whose outworking of his faith is evident to friend and foe alike. His mahi (work) and korero(talk) are aligned.

Robert and Joanna can be contacted at robert@waitangi.co.nz or www.waitangi.co.nz. Robert's brother, Father Jim, is author of **Restorative Justice: Healing the Effects of Crime**, Ploughshare Publications, 1995.

Reviewed by **Margaret Young** who works with husband Stephen in the Christchurch Prison Chaplaincy Team, and is a Restorative Justice Services Board Member. She represents New Zealand on the AAANZ executive committee and can be reached at youngclan@paradise.net.nz.

ADVENT REFLECTION

Remaining awake through a great revolution

Rip Van Winkle fell asleep when one George was King and awoke when another George was President. He slept through a revolution.

On March 31, 1968, at the Washington National Cathedral, Martin Luther King Jr. preached his final Sunday sermon. Four days later he was dead. The title of that sermon was "Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution," and it is a good Advent reminder as we reflect on Jesus' instruction to "Keep awake."

[HTTP://WWW.STANFORD.EDU/GROUP/KING/PUBLICATIONS/SERMONS/680331.000_REMAINING_AWAKE.HTML](http://WWW.STANFORD.EDU/GROUP/KING/PUBLICATIONS/SERMONS/680331.000_REMAINING_AWAKE.HTML)

Violence, Hospitality, and the Cross: Reappropriating the Atonement Tradition

HANS BOERSMA, BAKER ACADEMIC, 2004

Hans Boersma has recently been appointed to the J.I. Packer Chair of Theology at Regent College in Canada. In this lucid and wide-ranging book, Boersma tackles head-on one of the most controversial questions in contemporary theological discussion – the extent to which traditional theologies of atonement implicate God in violence and thus serve to underwrite violence and abuse in human relationships. Much has been written on this subject in recent years, although, as Boersma observes, "the issue of the relationship between atonement and violence has hardly been discussed at all within the evangelical orbit" (195). Boersma acknowledges the importance of the question, even if he considers many of the criticisms levelled against traditional atonement theology to be seriously exaggerated.

Boersma makes many valuable observations in the course of his discussion. His use of the metaphor of hospitality offers a fresh and suggestive way to conceive of

God's grace disclosed in the cross. His insistence that the problem of divine violence is present in all the traditional atonement models, not just the satisfaction model, is important for critics of penal substitution to hear. So too his argument that the insights of each model ought to be combined rather than viewed as alternatives, with Ireneaus' brilliant theology of recapitulation proving that such an integration is possible. Also valuable is Boersma's penetrating critique of the way in which individualistic conceptions of election, double-predestination, and limited atonement in the Calvinist tradition have served to inscribe violence on the heart of God. From a different angle, he endorses Milbank's critique of Girard's famous theory of mimetic desire as also depending on an ontology of violence. Yet Boersma is not persuaded by Milbank's insistence that the church alone is where God's non-violent justice is to be found. Radical Orthodoxy, Boersma argues, confuses the *centrality* of the church in God's purposes with the *monopoly* of the church. In the best spirit of the Reformed tradition, Boersma insists that Christians ought to be engaged in pursuing justice in the public as

well as the ecclesial sphere. Beyond these and other points, I also appreciated the general tone of Boersma's discussion. It is marked by a gentleness and generosity of spirit that one doesn't naturally associate with Reformed theologians.

Yet there are features of Boersma's case that I found less than satisfying. For all his erudition and analysis, ultimately Boersma does little to resolve the problem of divine violence as such. He does not wrestle with the immense hermeneutical and moral problems created by the violence ascribed to God in the biblical record. His solution is to argue that violence is not an inherently negative reality; there is "good" violence as well as bad. In a sinful world violence is necessary to defend the boundaries which enable hospitality to function. In such a world God's employs "redemptive" violence, a violence that is justified by the need to uphold monotheism, to punish immorality, and to protect the poor and underprivileged.

This is also how the violence of the cross is to be understood – although, as I read him, Boersma never really explains *why* God *had* to use violent punishment in order to vouchsafe eschatological hospitality. The meaning of hospitality's "boundaries" in connection with the atonement is never spelled out in detail. With Augustine (162), Boersma seems to take for granted that retributive punishment resolves the problem of human guilt. But, to my mind, it is not punishment that removes our guilt but rather the grace of forgiveness, and grace, by definition, cannot be merited or purchased by punishment. If there is a penal dimension to the cross, it is not a matter of God administering retributive punishment on sinners but of Christ's voluntary self-identification with the plight of enslaved humanity languishing under the punishing lordship of sin.

Boersma makes an important point when he argues that God's redemptive entry to a world pervaded by sin and violence meant that God had to get "messed up" with violence too. This is one way of beginning to make sense of divinely-endorsed violence in Scripture and in the atonement. But surely the story of the cross is one in which God works ultimate redemption *in the midst* of violence but not by the means of violence. God does not add his own "just" violence to the demonic violence of crucifixion. Boersma is right to observe that all atonement theology involves God in violence. But it is the nature and purpose of that involvement that is crucial to specify. God's involvement is as victorious victim, not as righteous perpetrator.

At several points Boersma repudiates Christian pacifism on the grounds that absolute non-violence is impossible on this side of the eschaton. Violence permeates the very fabric of the created order, so there is no escaping its reach. Boersma accepts the Augustinian understanding of violence as any act that contravenes the rights of another and causes injury to life, property or

person. "Any use of force or coercion that involves some kind of hurt or injury – whether the coercion is physical or non-physical – is a form of violence" (47). With this broad understanding he is not only able to charge Wink and other Christian activists with making arbitrary distinctions between violence and non-physical forms of coercion but also to snare Jesus himself in the web of violence. Jesus' protest in the temple was "a rather violent action" (92) and many of his words and actions "encroached on people's personal, space and well-being" (92). The God who meets us in Jesus is one who "avoids violence wherever possible" (54), but who is still prepared to act and speak violently when needed.

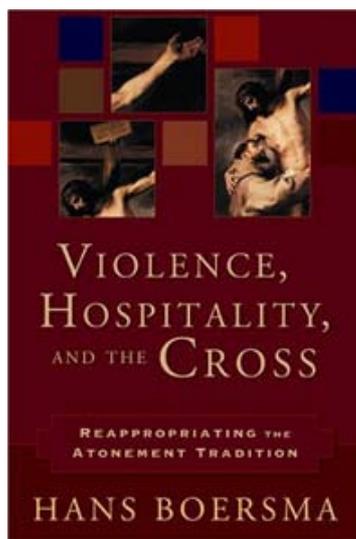
But this broad definition of violence hinders rather than helps moral analysis. Certainly there are similarities between coercion and violence. But it is misleading to lump all forms coercion under the generic rubric of violence. What distinguishes them is just as important as what resemblances they share. It is better to envisage a continuum from complete non-resistance at one end to instrumental uses of lethal violence at the other, and to plot various levels and styles of persuasion or coercion between these points. The term "violence" should be reserved for those actions that are intended to kill or violate or physically hurt or disempower or

cause severe emotional harm to another person, as a means of exerting control over them against their will. Both intention and impact need to be present for an action to be interpreted or experienced as violence.

There is also a difference between *violence*, which intends to cause significant harm, and *force*, which uses limited coercion with the intention to restrain or protect. A distinction exists, too, between violent *events*, like car accidents or hurricanes, which result in harm, and violent *actions*, which are deliberately intended to harm. For unintentional events, "violence" is best seen as a metaphor for the sheer impact of the occurrence (e.g., a violent storm). Similarly for intentional acts that cause lesser harm, it is better to use an adjective (e.g., verbal violence) in order to establish an analogy but not an identity with physical violence that causes lasting damage.

These distinctions are never cut and dried. But it is more helpful to attempt to make such discriminations than it is to define violence in such an all-inclusive way that it becomes meaningless to speak of any normative commitment to non-violence. To do so is a bit like saying that sexual fidelity is impossible to attain in a sinful world because everyone is caught up in the sexual brokenness of humanity. Or that because everyone experiences lustful desires it is arbitrary to forbid lustful actions. Few theologians are prepared to argue that, because Jesus highlights the kinship between adultery and lustful thoughts, adultery is a sad necessity in a fallen world, or even potentially beneficial!

Boersma is mistaken, I think, to assume that a Christian commitment to non-violence is a commitment to *absolute* non-violence. It is, rather, a commitment to stop



at a particular point on the continuum, just as Jesus himself did, even if the transition points are, as in all continuums, fuzzy. Christian pacifism insists that there is a substantial moral difference between non-lethal forms of coercion and the intentional taking of human life or the inflicting lasting damage on people. Acts of intentional violence are not appropriate for those called to bear witness to the inbreaking of eschatological peace in Jesus Christ.

Something similar could be said in connection with Boersma's central thesis that, in this age at least, hospitality requires boundaries and that defending boundaries necessarily involves violence. "As long as we restrain violence as much as possible and only employ it in the interest of God's eschatological, undeconstructible justice, violence is a necessary and acceptable accompaniment both of God's and our practice of hospitality" (51). But is this what we see enacted in the Jesus story? When the disciples asked permission to call down fire on the inhospitable Samaritan village, Jesus refused. When Peter drew a sword to defend the boundaries of the messianic community, Jesus rebuked

him. Certainly the call to discipleship entails sharp boundaries, and boundaries imply exclusion as well as inclusion. But exclusion can be self-chosen and boundaries need not be defended by lethal means. Also, in these days of religiously-sanctioned violence, it behoves us all to avoid statements that suggest human violence can ever serve "the interests of God's eschatological justice". That is precisely what religious terrorists believe as they prime their bombs and load their guns.

These disagreements with Boersma stem from our differing views on the appropriateness of Christians engaging in violence. Boersma subscribes to the just war theory; I do not. But there is also a deep agreement between us. We both know that, even if God's involvement in violence is impossible to avoid in the text of Scripture, violence does *not* belong to the inherent character of God. The Christian God is not a violent God but a God of peace, a God who overcomes violence through the blood of the cross, a God who one day will usher in the age of absolute and unconditional hospitality where no one shall learn war anymore. Come the day!

Reviewed by **Chris Marshall**, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

War Is a Force That Gives Us Meaning

CHRIS HEDGES, ANCHOR BOOKS, 2002

As I crested the hill outside our home, a refugee camp with 40,000 refugees in northern Somalia, I suddenly saw soldiers taut with fear that had guns pointed at me. I noted one soldier prone on the road with an AK-47, one in the bushes with his finger on the trigger of a rocket propelled grenade, and several more at various other points scattered around who had me in their cross hairs. It seems a "rebel" Land Rover like mine had been involved in mowing down government soldiers at this checkpoint just days before and my arrival made this group of government soldiers think another attack was imminent. I emerged from that standoff physically intact but this story was not the only time that a fear-induced surge of adrenaline coursed through my veins during this MCC Somali experience.

In the national bestseller book, *War Is a Force That Gives Us Meaning*, Chris Hedges waxes philosophically about his fifteen years experience as a war correspondent. He admits that "the rush of battle is a potent and often lethal addiction" which gives us "purpose, meaning, a reason for living." He continues, "Only when we are in the midst of conflict does the shallowness and vapidness of much of our lives become apparent."(3) He continues; "there is a part of me that remains nostalgic for war's simplicity and high, even as I cope with the scars it has left behind, mourn the deaths of those I worked with and struggle with the bestiality I would have been better off not witnessing."(5)

From my experience with war in Somalia, I can



attest to the truth of these words. I left northern Somalia on the last commercial flight in 1988, just seventeen hours before the sack of Hargeisa. While Hedges' experience in war is far more extensive than mine, his words have reopened some long buried emotions from that experience. As a first public confession of these suppressed feelings of an event sixteen years ago, I admit to feeling regret and guilt for not having stayed and endured the destruction of the city as my colleagues did. As a pacifist who has gotten a glimpse of the ugly reality of armed conflict, Hedges' book gives credence to my mixed emotions of that which I abhor - war.

Hedges exposes war for what it is, brutal, intentional killing where the myth of ultimate sacrifice in the cause, yields, at least to those damaged by it, realization of war's true nature. Leaders of nations manufacture enemies, incite incidents, and promote "just" causes in a promise that each war will be the last and bring ultimate security. In a rush to battle, leaders protect their own failures by rallying a flimsy nationalistic or ethnic unity that is co-opted to hide the truth.

Hedges firmly puts to rest any notions of an ability to maintain morality in war. "War breaks down long-established prohibitions against violence, destruction, and murder. And with this often comes the crumbling of sexual, social and political norms as the brutality of the battlefield is carried back home into the personal lives of combatants. (103) "We dismantle our moral universe to serve the cause of war" says Hedges. (150) It is supremely ironic that George Bush, the "war president" was re-elected because of his stand on moral values.

This is a dark book. It chronicles, through graphic and close up detail, the addiction to violence, mass industrialized death on the battlefields and human depravity in war time. However, through it all Hedges discovers one force that holds mayhem in balance, love. He reports that when he found people sharing the bond of love, he “found sanity and was reminded of what it means to be human.” (161) Further, Hedges recounts how poorly he slept during his stints in war zones but when he was in the presence of people who loved each other, he slept peacefully under a “protective blanket” which kept him grounded in that which counteracted the madness around him.

Love - the only force capable of opposing a despotic leader drunk with self-aggrandizement and unaccountable power. Love - the only currency that can challenge \$500 billion a year in defence spending with its Washington lobby. Love - the only healing balm for our own fallenness. Hedges does not dwell very long on the topic of love in contested areas but another journalist has seen love in action up close on the front lines.

“It is a vast Front stretching from the most impoverished reaches of the Developing world to the hectic struggle to preserve caring values in our own towns and cities,” said Brian Stewart, veteran journalist of forty years while addressing the 160th Convocation of Knox College. “I have never been able to reach these Front lines without finding Christian volunteers already in the thick of it, mobilizing congregations that care, and being a faithful witness to truth, the primary light in the darkness, and so often, the only light.” To love greatly is something

central to Christian mission on the front lines. A friend who is currently working with Somalis was told “the way you work is good because you love people and then people ask why.” Christian mission, grounded in love, is the only force powerful enough to run counter to the self-destructive current of nations and tyrannical rulers with their battlegrounds strewn with death.

Love is also truth telling in the face of the tired rhetoric of war. Anabaptists have a lengthy history of “speaking the truth in love” to state power. (Ephesians 4:15) Holding to the truth means being grounded as a body of believers in something beyond patriotism, nationalism, or ethnocentrism. It means trying to live the example of Jesus in actions and words. Perhaps this is why, as Anabaptists, we always find ourselves standing outside the mainstream of conventional thought in the world. We want to be co-opted by God for His grand purpose, not co-opting God for the government’s small purposes. But misunderstood outsiders they will remain, those who espouse Jesus’ path of compassion and nonviolence.

Hedges is not a pacifist. He is not calling for inaction by nation states in the face of genocide or repression. But, through truth-telling, he unmasks the powers that are keeping people blinded to the myth of glory in war. Hedges, through his woundedness in witnessing unspeakable atrocity, is calling his readers to something startlingly simple yet impossible in a human sense, repentance. Can I claim this for the Somalias of the world?

Christ have mercy.

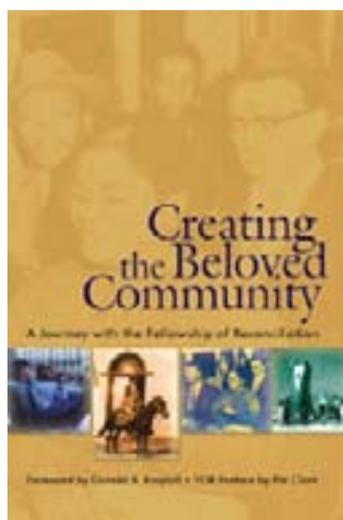
Reviewed by **Jon Rudy**, MCC Asia Peace Resource

Cascadia Publishing House Books

• **CREATING THE BELOVED COMMUNITY: A JOURNEY WITH THE FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION**

by Paul R. Dekar

This history of the Fellowship of Reconciliation in the United States shows that FOR members have been practical dreamers, both imagining a more peaceful world and working to realize the dream. FOR has inspired and empowered generations of peacemakers working to replace cultures of violence and war with cultures of nonviolence. The book grows out of the author’s 40-year involvement with the peace movement, including experience as a founder of the peace studies program at McMaster University. Dekar has combined personal acquaintance with FOR and careful



research to produce a history both passionate and thorough.

“With compassion and conviction, Dekar has written not only an engaging narrative of the FOR-its religious roots, its comprehensive moral actions through the years, and its indispensable role in our collective future-but also a manifesto of hope for those of us who still dream of a beloved community emerging out of our broken world.” - Michael G. Long, Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, Elizabethtown College; Author of **Martin Luther King Jr. on Creative Living**

Paul R. Dekar, Memphis, Tennessee, is Niswonger Professor at Memphis Theological Seminary and Adjunct Professor at the University of Memphis. In addition to teacher, he is a peacemaker, social activist, and visionary. Over a 30-year teaching career, he has sought to unite scholarship, spirituality, and a passion for transformative peacemaking. Dekar has taught introductory and elective courses in peace studies, religious studies, history, and theology at universities in Australia, Canada, and the United States.

The book is co-published with Herald Press and in association with FOR. Explore it in depth at <http://www.CascadiaPublishingHouse.com/cbc/cbc.htm>.

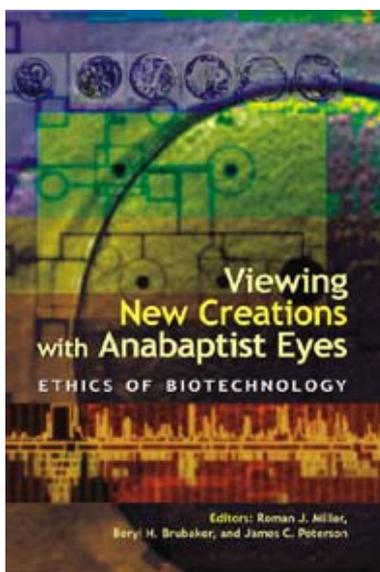
• **VIEWING NEW CREATIONS WITH ANABAPTIST EYES**

edited by Roman J. Miller, Beryl H. Brubaker, and James C. Peterson

Viewing New Creations with Anabaptist Eyes investigates the promise and perils of current genetic biotechnology. The varied authors describe the factual bases of biotechnology in a popular format, bring up the ethical problems that emerge, and provide ethical reasoning to meet those challenges.

“It is so good to have a book that brings typical Anabaptist concerns and questions to the field of bioethics. These authors emphasize communal discernment in facing tough ethical choices.” —Nancey Murphy, Professor of Christian Philosophy, Fuller Theological Seminary.

“This work on bioethics comes with a passion for integrity. It does not claim to



His recent publications include **Genetic Turning Points**.

The book is co-published with Herald Press and in association with Eastern Mennonite University. Explore it in depth at <http://www.CascadiaPublishingHouse.com/vnc/vnc.htm>.

David Penman

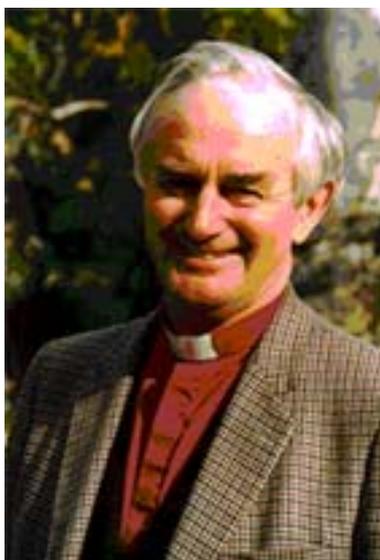
ALAN NICHOLS, ALBATROSS, 1991

In my continuing search for stories about Australian peacemakers, a AAANZ member from Tasmania gave me this book about David Penman. I was struck by the similarities in David Penman’s story to Frank Coaldrake’s that we featured in the March 2004 issue of **ON THE ROAD**.

Both men were Anglican missionaries, raised in working class families, loved sports, were committed to a biblical faith that took social justice and peacemaking seriously, worked in Melbourne at some point in their ministries, were chosen as archbishop in surprising circumstances, and both died prematurely, not realizing their full potential for bringing reform to their respective archdioceses. Both men reached out to others across traditional cultural and religious lines without compromising their deep Christian faith.

I was impressed to see on the back cover of this book, tributes to Penman from representatives of both the Palestinian PLO and the Jewish Zionist Federation of Australia. Archbishop Desmond Tutu also praises Penman for his contribution to the people of South Africa. Penman was a man who touched many around the world.

Penman was born and raised in New Zealand, served as a missionary in Pakistan and Lebanon, did his masters and doctorate on Islam, served churches in New Zealand, and was Archbishop of Melbourne from 1984 until his untimely death in 1989 at the age fifty-three. He was a supporter of a number of Evangelical causes including the Australian Evangelical Alliance and TEAR.



have all of the answers but does call us to a faith that seeks to think with God through ‘the truth as it is in Jesus.’” — Myron S. Augsburger, Author of **The Robe of God**; President Emeritus, Eastern Mennonite University; Evangelist

Dr. Roman J. Miller is the Daniel B. Suter Endowed Professor of Biology at Eastern Mennonite University where he teaches courses in physiology, development biology, philosophy of science, and bioethics. Dr. Beryl H. Brubaker is provost at Eastern Mennonite University. She co-edited **Bioethics and the Beginning of Life** with Roman Miller. Dr. James C. Peterson is the R. A. Hope Professor of Theology and Ethics at McMaster University Divinity College and a member of the University’s Research Ethics Board.

He also supported the cause of women in ministry that put him offside with many other evangelicals, particularly Sydney Anglicans.

He was an early advocate of AIDS victims and spoke out on a number of social justice and peace issues. In a 1983 peace rally in Melbourne, he said:

Militarism is one of the most deadly sicknesses known to humanity...It is a scourge that threatens us all...Jesus never appeared as a military leader. He denied all the popular secular expectations of his leadership. He became known as the one who sought to bring peace and who offered an alternative way for living – loving one another. What can one or two people do in the face of the superpowers?

First, seek peace with God in our own hearts and relationships with one another and invite others to find alternative ways of being peacemakers instead of warmongers. (110-111)

Good advice even twenty-two years later. He closed his talk with this prayer:

*Lead me from death to life,
From falsehood to truth.
Lead me from despair to hope,
From fear to trust.
Lead me from hate to love,
From war to peace.
Let peace fill our heart,
Our world, our universe.
Amen. (111)*

Reviewed by Mark Hurst

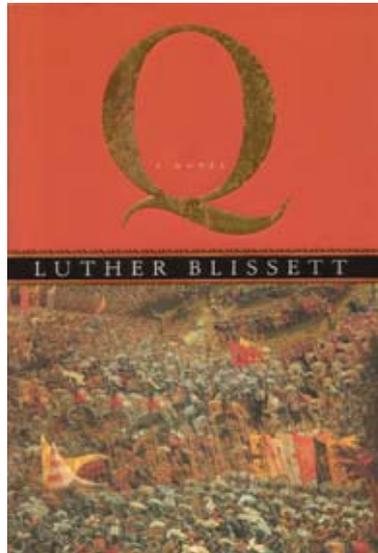
Q

LUTHER BLISSETT, HARCOURT BOOKS, 2003

One of the first things to state at the outset for any soccer aficionados reading is that the 1980's Jamaican soccer player Luther Blissett is not the author of this book. His name has been taken as a pseudonym for a group of four young Italian anarchists who have undertaken to write a grand novel set during the early years of the Reformation with the Anabaptists as central figures.

This 650 page novel follows the adventures of a young theology student Gustav Metzger who negotiates both multiple identities and the world of revolutionary Anabaptism from Thomas Muntzer, the Peasant's War and the Anabaptist theocracy of Munster. Metzger is shadowed by a mysterious adversary known only as Q, a papal spy actively involved in destabilising Anabaptist dreams of a heavenly kingdom on earth. However, it is not till towards the final third of the book that Metzger realises that he has an adversary in Q. This leads eventually, through twists and turns, to a final showdown between Metzger, now Tiziano Rinato (Titian), purveyor of a heretical pamphlet, and Q.

The novel is well researched historically and is peopled with a colourful cast of both real and fictional characters that bring vividly to life the turbulent early years of the Reformation and in particular, the world of revolutionary Anabaptism. It is a heady narrative of violence, betrayal, and sex. The novel also manages to communicate in part the ideas espoused by a variety of radicals. The authors are clearly sympathetic to the



revolutionary Anabaptists and by telling the story they subtly make points consistent with their own modern-day radical beliefs and practices.

The novel has been a bestseller in Italy and Europe generally. Unfortunately, the English translation is erratic in parts – with long formal passages standing alongside modern slang. The effect is rather jarring and does detract from one being able to immerse in the novel. Also quite disorienting is the use of time shifting – the novel jumps around in time during the forty year period 1518

through to 1555. However, this rather chaotic manner of telling the story manages to convey a sense of breathlessness and turbulence that mirrors the chaos of the Reformation. There is an appendix at the end that gives some interesting reproductions of portraits, medieval city maps and polemical illustrations.

The novel does not make for pious reading and it upholds in part for emulation the example of revolutionary Anabaptists that perhaps modern Anabaptists would be reluctant to adopt. That said, despite the flaws of the novel, it does bring to life the pathos and hopes of those who genuinely desired a new heaven on earth and even goes a long way to evoke sympathy.

Reviewed by - **Danny Klopovic**, Melbourne



Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever." Luke 1:46-54

The Last Things: Biblical and Theological Perspectives on Eschatology

**EDITED BY CARL E. BRAATEN & ROBERT W.
JENSEN, EERDMANS, 2002**

The contributors to this useful collection of essays share the conviction that an authentic biblical eschatology remains essential to the life, faith and mission of the church in post-modern times.

In the first essay, Wolfhart Pannenberg examines the theme of the resurrection of the dead. He concedes that belief in individual resurrection encounters major objections, given the cessation of personal existence at death and the decay of our corpses. The only satisfactory answer, Pannenberg, insists, is the assurance that each individual's unique, temporal life is preserved in the memory of God, who is able to grant each a new form of existence that stands in continuity with their earthly existence.

Carl Braaten argues that contemporary Christians

have largely lost “the apocalyptic imagination” – that ability to discern the spiritual realities that lie behind institutional structures and cultural developments. Robert Jensen proposes that the Great Transformation at the end of history is not a series of chronological events but a single great event depicted in Scripture from various perspectives.

Paul Hanson identifies five models of political engagement found in biblical history. He focuses most attention on the *prophetic model* and the *apocalyptic model*. He sees the former, which stresses the priority of God’s universal will and the penultimate nature of all human governance, as the model which offers most guidance to the modern Western church. The apocalyptic model, which stresses patient endurance of present suffering in the hope of God’s ultimate intervention to defeat evil, is only appropriate in situations of extreme persecution, where no prophetic engagement is possible. Fundamentalist distortions of biblical apocalyptic, such as that of Hal Lindsay, are not only a form of political escapism, they are also acts of violence against the human soul.

In a perceptive essay, Arland Hultgren surveys attempts by some recent North American scholars, especially those associated with the Jesus Seminar, to dispense with the eschatological Jesus in favour of Jesus the wisdom teacher. He levels five methodological objections against such an enterprise. Hultgren concludes that behind the attempt to supplant Jesus the eschatological prophet with Jesus the sage lies a theological commitment to nothing less than the reinvention of Christianity.

The highlight of the book, for me, is a rich essay by Jewish theologian David Novak which traces the dialectical interaction between Jewish and Christian eschatological doctrine. Novak shows how the history of Jewish thought on the relationship between law and eschatology has been profoundly influenced by its need to respond to Christian claims.

John McGuckin traces the ambiguous reception of the Book of Revelation in the Eastern theological tradition. Even after the book was reluctantly accepted into the Eastern canon, its influence was minimised through its almost total neglect in the liturgical tradition. Its influence on the iconographic tradition was more overt however. Yet in icons that draw upon scenes in Revelation, the severity of God’s judgment is tempered by the Eastern Church’s profound insight into Final Judgment as an exercise of God’s compassion and healing mercy.

Philip Krey discusses Luther’s notorious disdain for the Book of Revelation. “I can in no way detect that the Holy Spirit produced it”, Luther wrote. “I stick to the books which present Christ to me”.

The final essay explores what current scientific speculation about the far-future of the cosmos may contribute to Christian eschatology. With theoretical physics now taking seriously the possibility of faster-than-light travel and movement through time, affirmations about the resurrection of Jesus being a foretaste of the temporal future seem less scientifically inconceivable than before.

The diversity of subjects tackled, the clarity of presentation, and the stature of the contributors together make this book a useful resource on an important topic.

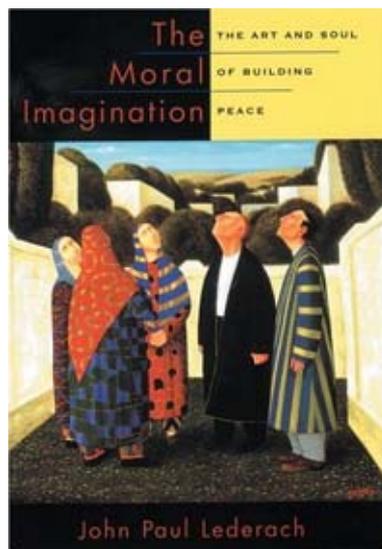
Reviewed by **Chris Marshall**

The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace

JOHN PAUL LEDERACH, OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2005

Last summer, in a seminar, I heard that donors were growing weary of funding “peace projects.” It was as if they said “We gave a million dollars, where’s the peace?” This kind of thinking is, of course, silly since peace is not a commodity which can be bought, sold or marketed. Yet many NGOs proposing peace projects to funders need to put expected results on their log frame planning grid and thus fall into the trap that peace is achievable if only a certain formula is followed.

For years, it has been clear to me that a central part of peacebuilding is restoration of right relationships. Human interactions are complex and full of irrationality. Therefore peace, by virtue of the centrality of human relationships, will be full of contradictions and ambiguity. How do we understand the path to peace? Are the models we work with the whole picture or is there some other way to understand the labyrinthine of choices and actions laid



before the peacebuilder?

John Paul Lederach in his latest book, *The Moral Imagination; The Art and Soul of Building Peace*, is suggesting a fresh look at the essence of transforming violent conflict. Though his background is sociology, Lederach offers a wide variety of insights to a spectrum of disciplines from anthropology to missiology. The moral imagination, he proposes in the book, “develops a capacity to perceive things beyond and at a deeper level than what initially meets the eye.” (26-27)

The moral imagination, Lederach suggests, has four features that have been present in some of the of the world’s hot spots where serendipitous peace has seemingly broken out. The first is the centrality of relationships. He comments

that “where cycles of violence are overcome, people demonstrate a capacity to envision and give birth to that which already exists, a wider set of interdependent relationships.” (34). This gives rise to the second feature of

the moral imagination, paradoxical curiosity, which, according to Lederach, “respects complexity and refuses to fall into forced containers of dualism and either-or categories.” (36) Creative actions are the third aspect and the willingness to risk with recognition of mystery is the fourth element of the moral imagination.

Peppered with personal accounts of encounters with peacebuilders all over the world, Lederach introduces a whole range of new words and images into the academic understanding of peace. Simplicity, spider webs, the gift of pessimism, humility, sagacity, critical yeast, the artistry of peacebuilding, vocation and the past that lies before us are some of the unconventional concepts he spins out in the book.

For the practitioner, much about the books will be affirming. These concepts are intuitive for one attempting to stem the haemorrhage of life blood in violent contexts. For the peacebuilding trainer/facilitator the book offers renewed inventiveness for the tired models so well worn in the classroom setting. For those looking for a “how to” book, ...well there is bound to be some head scratching and maybe even scoffing. Why? Because Lederach, at his own admission, is far better at posing a good question than providing answers. And a pat answer, as any practitioner knows, does not go very far in the heat of conflict intervention.

Reviewed by **Jon Rudy**, MCC Asia Peace Resource, Davao City, Philippines

Herald Press

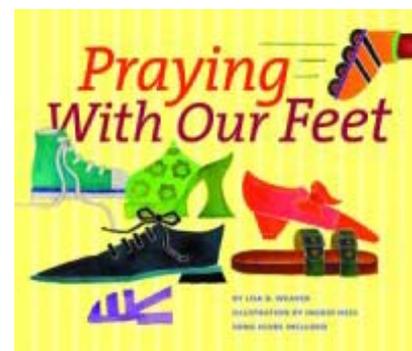
- **PRAYING WITH OUR FEET**, by Lisa D. Weaver

This children’s picture story book tells of a group of friends getting together to go on a special walk. They want to remind their neighbours that war doesn’t bring peace in our world. They know that Jesus wants us to love everyone. Jesus even wants us to love our enemies, who are just like us in many ways!

The walkers wear shoes of all sizes, colours, and shapes. They’re praying with their feet, walking with the God of Peace.

Praying with Our Feet is a story told from the point of view of a young girl who takes part in a walk for peace, along with her parents and members of her church. It includes a score of a song “Praying with Our Feet” by the author and an Afterword for adults by Tonya Ramer Wenger.

Lisa D. Weaver teaches English as a Second Language at a public elementary school in Madison, Wisconsin, allowing her to connect daily with families from many countries and cultures. She is a graduate of Goshen College in Indiana, and an active member of Madison Mennonite Church.



Cecelia’s Sin

WILLIAM D. CAMPBELL, MERCER UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1997

In a very different key from **Q**, Cecilia’s Sin can only be described as exquisite in the skill in which it is written. It is a novella and can easily be read within the short space of an afternoon. There is a lengthy introduction that provides a history of the 16th century Anabaptists and how they are connected to and differ from the later Baptists. The author William Campbell is a well-known radical Baptist preacher living in the South in the USA.

The novel is set in the 1550’s in the Netherlands and recounts the story of a small band of Anabaptists and their leader, pastor, counsellor, preacher, and friend, Cecelia Geronymus. Cecelia has undertaken to write the story of the Anabaptists for preservation. To that end she collects and transcribes the stories from visiting Anabaptists wherever possible.

However, as Cecelia finishes her book, they are betrayed and they sit and wait for their captors. Yet Cecelia has an unexpected realisation – one that prompts her to take out the pages of the book and burn them one by one. She comes to realise that, as pointed out to her by a travelling Anabaptist, “the writing of the story is not the Story”, but only the living out of it. Her sin, as she comes to acknowledge, is the attempt to appropriate and possess

the Story – and to presume to write the end to that Story.

Bill Moyers describes the novel as a story of courage against the odds, of faith transcendent, and love triumphant. It is not a romance, however. This is life as a struggle, and of the human will- braced by divine inspiration- overcoming persecution to become transcendent witness of the ages. This is history at its best because we find our own roots in it, and fiction at its best because it contains great truths.

The novella draws attention to the importance of the Story. This is to say, the story of the radical Christ and how we tell his Story in the lives of his disciples not by reducing it to a text that we can control and manipulate – but rather by living it out. We can learn from Cecelia on how we should tell the story:

“A finished story which has no ending,” she said as they reached the last page which was the first. We have reached the beginning. There is no ending,” she said, as if to clarify what she had just said. Goris continued to sit between them, whimpering softly, making no effort to conceal the sound. “That was the error of Rome and Wittenburg. Of Geneva and Zurich. And almost us as well. To end the story. The end of a story can only be defended with violence. Nothing else is left.”

Cecelia continued to speak, softer now. “The tattered coat can never be possessed.”

Reviewed by - **Danny Klopovic**, Melbourne

Websites

• Micah Challenge - What's Happening

2.5 billion people depend on agriculture for their living - including 2/3 of the world's poorest people. The USA and Europe spend \$1 billion a day on agricultural subsidies to their farmers, which is 6 times more than they spend on aid. (OXFAM, 2005) Why should Christians care? Because God cares about justice for all his people.

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favourably on his people and redeemed them. He has raised up a mighty saviour for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us. Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors, and has remembered his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham, to grant us that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins. By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.” Luke 1:68-79



Bono puts it like this: “Not letting the poorest of the poor put their products on our shelves whilst pushing the free market down their throats, that’s a justice issue to me – not charity.”

On December 10/11:

- √ Wear a /Make Poverty History /white band
- √ Pray for the meetings in Hong Kong - prayer points are given in the [resource kit](#)
- √ Set up a fair trade stall selling tea and coffee - all the info you need is in the [resource kit](#)
- √ Ask people to sign a [petition](#) to Mark Vaile on trade issues
- √ Learn about the issues by reading and promoting [Why Trade Matters](#)

www.micahchallenge.org.au

• Christian Peacemaker Teams

What would happen if Christians devoted the same discipline and self-sacrifice to nonviolent peacemaking that armies devote to war?

Jesus said: “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” Matthew 5: 44 (NIV) www.cpt.org

• Korea Anabaptist Center

The Korea Anabaptist Center works with individuals, groups and churches to actively participate in the mission of God by cultivating biblical discipleship, peace and Christian community and by developing and providing resources, education, training and relationships in the Anabaptist/Mennonite faith tradition. www.kac.or.kr

• The Anabaptist Network

The Anabaptist Network is a loose-knit network of individuals and churches in Britain and Ireland interested in the insights of the Anabaptist tradition. Check out their updated website. www.anabaptistnetwork.com

The Anabaptist Association of Australia and New Zealand Inc.

The purposes of the Association are:

- To nurture and support the Christian faith of individuals and groups in Australia and New Zealand who identify with the Anabaptist tradition.
- To network and link individuals, churches and groups of Christians who share a common Anabaptist understanding of the Christian faith.
- To provide religious services including teaching, training, pastoral care, mediation, and counsel to its members and others interested in the Anabaptist tradition.
- To provide resources and materials relating to the tradition, perspectives, and teaching of Anabaptists to both the Christian and general public.
- To convene conferences and gatherings which provide opportunity for worship, teaching, training, consultation, celebration, and prayer in the Anabaptist tradition.
- To extend the awareness of Anabaptism in Australia and New Zealand assisting individuals, churches and groups discover and express their links with the Anabaptist tradition.
- To provide an opportunity for affiliation for churches and groups who wish to be known in Australia and New Zealand as Anabaptists.

What is Anabaptism?

Anabaptism is a radical Christian renewal movement that emerged in Europe during the sixteenth-century Reformation. Whilst Anabaptism was a grassroots movement with diverse expressions in its early development, its enduring legacy usually has included the following:

- Baptism upon profession of faith
- A view of the church in which membership is voluntary and members are accountable to the Bible and to each other
- A commitment to the way of peace and other teachings of Jesus as a rule for life
- Separation of church and state
- Worshipping congregations which create authentic community and reach out through vision and service

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